

**Screeners on Quality Rating System Data, Monitoring and Use of
Data for System Improvement (OMB 0970-0356)**

Supporting Statement Part A for OMB Approval

Child Care Quality Rating System Assessment

March 31, 2009

A. JUSTIFICATION

The Child Care Quality Rating System (QRS) Assessment is a new project designed to analyze and organize existing information on Quality Rating System implementation and evaluation as well as to gather, analyze, and synthesize new qualitative and quantitative data. Quality Rating Systems (QRS) that rate the quality of child care and education programs, promote ratings to the public, and provide supports and incentives to promote quality improvement, are currently operating or being piloted in multiple states and local areas. As the basic QRS program model becomes integrated into the landscape of care and education service delivery, policy and the decisions parents make about child care across the United States, there is an increasing need for descriptive and comparative information about QRS implementation and evaluation.

Acknowledging this need, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is supporting the QRS Assessment.¹ The goal of the QRS Assessment is to provide information, analysis and resources about QRS for states and other key stakeholders.

Using selection criteria, QRS from 27 states/localities have been identified as a sample for this study. ACF requests permission to contact administrators from the 27 QRS (Appendix A) by email and telephone to administer a screener designed to collect information on QRS data, monitoring and evaluation (Appendix B). Information gathered using the screener will be used for internal-decision making, research planning, and putting research findings in context for subsequent work of the Child Care Quality Rating System Assessment project. Specifically, data collected from the screener will directly inform (1) the selection of QRS sites for more in-depth case study, (2) the potential of conducting secondary data analyses of existing QRS evaluation data, and 3) a toolkit that will act as a resource for states regarding best practices in the evaluation of QRS. Permission to contact programs for this limited purpose is requested under ACF's generic clearance for information gathering (OMB Number 0970-0356). Under the terms of clearance for this generic ICR, all of the methods and the data approved are limited to informing OPRE and ACF's internal decision-making, research planning, and contextualization of research findings – as noted above in this paragraph, we will limit data collected to these ends. Additionally, per the terms of the clearance, the information collected will be used for internal purposes only and will not be released to the public.

A.1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Preliminary scans of material on Quality Rating Systems has indicated that there is limited publicly available information on QRS data (type of data collected and linkages among QRS data and other systems such as licensing and child care subsidies), and the use of data for monitoring, system improvement, and research/evaluation. In order to gather data on these topics, a plan for systematic data collection is necessary. To this end, a Screener on QRS Data, Monitoring and Evaluation has been developed to be administered via a telephone interview. The Screener is a series of yes/no questions and multiple-choice items to be answered by QRS administrators within each of the 27 states/localities. The responses will not be disseminated to the public.

¹ Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) is conducting the QRS Assessment in partnership with Child Trends and Christian and Tvedt Consulting.

Rather, the responses (individual and aggregated) will inform further study of this emerging policy area as part of the Child Care Quality Rating System Assessment project.

A.2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

QRS were selected in late winter 2009. Two selection criteria were employed in a scan of QRS programs from all fifty states and the District of Columbia: 1) programs must have in place a process for defining, rating, or monitoring quality indicators and 2) programs must be currently in operation. QRS administrators from each of these states will be asked questions related to QRS data, monitoring and evaluation using a common screener.

The purpose of information collection is to gather data that are currently not publicly available to inform the subsequent work of the Child Care Quality Rating System Assessment project. The overarching goal of this project is to gather and synthesize data in a way that will help states better understand the QRS landscape, the interactions between system elements that support quality improvements, and the intended and unintended consequences of QRS policy and implementation. Specific goals include 1) providing descriptive and comparative information as well as evaluation evidence regarding QRS through the development of a compendium on QRS, 2) conducting an in-depth, comparative, multi-case study of selected QRS and efforts to evaluate their effectiveness, 3) conducting a comprehensive secondary analysis of data from existing evaluations of QRS, 4) producing a paper that synthesizes and evaluates the information from both the case studies and the secondary data analysis, and 5) developing a toolkit that will act as a resource for states regarding best practices in the evaluation of QRS. Information collected will be used to inform these five goals as well support the overarching goal of the project.

An email will be sent to QRS administrators identified as being knowledgeable about QRS data, monitoring and evaluation in the selected states/localities to introduce the organization, research team members, the project goals, and the importance of the project. QRS administrators will be asked if they are willing to participate in a telephone interview regarding QRS data, monitoring and evaluation with members of the Child Trends research team. The email will provide specific information about what participation entails for the QRS administrators including that the information provided will not be published. Once QRS administrators agree to participate, an interview will take place according to QRS administrators' schedule. We anticipate that the interview will last between 15 to 60 minutes. Child Trends researchers will structure the interview around a prescribed set of questions (see Appendix B: Screener on QRS Data, Monitoring and Evaluation).

A.3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The burden on QRS administrators for this data collection is minimal. Email will be used to set up the telephone interviews to increase the ease and convenience of responding to the research team.

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

Efforts have been made to identify other sources of information on QRS (for example, compiling data on QRS gathered by other organizations such as the National Association for Young Children and National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center) to ensure that information is not duplicated. This project is designed to maximize the use of existing data sources before conducting telephone interviews.

A.5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

No small businesses are impacted by the data collection in this project.

A.6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

Data collection is scheduled for Spring 2009. This timeline will allow subsequent Child Care Quality Rating System Assessment project work to be completed on schedule.

A.7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances requiring deviation from these guidelines.

A.8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency.

The first Federal Register notice for ACF's generic clearance for information gathering was published in the Federal Register, Volume 73, page 19072 on April 4, 2008.

The second Federal Register notice was published in the Federal Register, Volume 73, page 34753 on June 18, 2008.

A.9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

QRS administrators will not be paid for providing the information that is sought.

A.10. Assurance of Privacy Provided to Respondents

QRS administrators will be asked a set of questions about the data, monitoring, and evaluation of the QRS in states/localities. Specifically, QRS staff will be asked to provide responses to yes/no and multiple-choice questions. Respondents will be informed verbally by the interviewer that all responses will be private. The results will not be disseminated for individual respondents or for the group of respondents.

A.11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions.

A.12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

QRS administrators will review and respond to email and speak with a research team member about their QRS program. These respondents will not incur any expense other than the time spent answering questions.

The estimated annual burden for QRS administrators is listed in Table A.1. The total annual burden for this information gathering activity is expected to be 62 hours.

TABLE A.1

ESTIMATED ANNUAL RESPONSE BURDEN AND ANNUAL COST

Instrument	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden Hours per Response	Total Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
Informational email for QRS administrators	41	1	0.5	21	\$26.80	\$563
Telephone screener for QRS administrators	41	1	1.0	41	\$26.80	\$1,099
Estimated Total				62		\$1,662

Estimate of Annualized Costs. To compute the total estimated annual cost, it is estimated that Child Trends researchers will contact on average 1.5 QRS administrators in each of the 27 state/localities. While some states/localities will require one respondent, we anticipate that some states/localities will require two respondents to complete screener questions. The total burden hours were multiplied by the average hourly wage for QRS administrators, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, by selected characteristics, 2007 annual averages (<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswom2007.pdf>). For QRS administrators, we used the mean salary for full-time employees over age 25 with a bachelor's degree and higher (\$1072 per week or \$26.80 per hour).

A.13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

Not applicable.

A.14. Annualized Cost to Federal Government

The total cost to the federal government of contacting and gathering information from 41 QRS staff is estimated to be \$6,264 including direct and indirect costs and fees. This amount is also the annual cost since the collection will only occur one time in spring 2009.

A.15. Explanations for Program Changes or Adjustments

No program changes or adjustments are proposed.

A.16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

Information gathered from QRS administrators will not be published. The information that is collected will be reviewed systematically for internal use only.

All contacts with QRS program administrators the purpose of collecting data on QRS monitoring and evaluation will occur in spring 2009. QRS administrators will be sent emails in May 2009 and called by a member of the study team beginning mid May through early June. All telephone interviews with QRS administrators will be complete by July 2009.

A.17. Display of Expiration Date for OMB Approval

The OMB number and expiration date will be displayed in the informational email and in the header of the screener. We will offer to read the OMB number and expiration date at the start of the telephone call.

A.18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this data collection.