

Q-DOT PILOT STUDY

PROGRAM DIRECTOR INFORMATION CALL SCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am calling from Mathematica Policy Research to talk about your program's participation in the child care and early education quality or the Q-DOT Pilot study. We recently sent you a letter informing you that your program was selected to be part of a research project for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We included a fact sheet with information about the study. Did you receive a letter from Dr. Louisa Tarullo about the visit and the other materials? [HAVE LETTER AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION IF PERSON IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE STUDY]

Is this a good time to talk? I would like to take about 15 minutes and answer any questions you may have about Q-DOT, and discuss the logistics of the study with you. I would also like to explain more about how classrooms will be selected for the study.

[ALLOW TIME FOR QUESTIONS, RESPOND OR DEFER UNTIL LATER IN THE CALL WHEN THE TOPIC IS PRESENTED].

SITE VISIT PURPOSE AND BASIC ACTIVITIES

First, I would like to make sure you are aware that participation in the Q-DOT pilot is voluntary. I'd like to review some of the details about the purpose and design of the Q-DOT Pilot. The purpose of the Q-DOT pilot study is to evaluate whether the use of center-level Quality Rating and Improvement System (or QRIS) ratings can accurately predict average levels of classroom process quality, in other words, we are investigating whether the QRIS ratings can be used as a discriminating indicator of high vs. low classroom quality.

The letter outlines some of the activities that will take place when we visit your center, including classroom observation and self-administered questionnaires for both you and selected teachers in your center. Please stop me at any time if you have questions.

- The Q-DOT pilot study is designed to evaluate whether the use of center-level QRIS ratings can accurately predict average levels of classroom process quality.
- The pilot study will assess whether QRIS ratings within a jurisdiction can be sorted into discrete categories of high and low process quality.

- Additionally, the pilot study will explore whether the use of an observational measure, such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), can be used to validate these ratings.
- We will conduct morning classroom observations in up to 3 of your preschool classrooms. We consider a classroom to be preschool level if the ages of the children range from 3 to 5 years old.
- We will ask the teachers who have agreed to host us for the classroom observation to complete a brief 15 minute self-administered questionnaire.
- We will ask you, as the Center Director, to also complete a brief 15 minute self-administered questionnaire.
- The information that comes from this Q-DOT Pilot study will be used to refine our methods for conducting a wider study to systematically test which features, thresholds, and dosages of child care quality are linked to child outcomes

Site Visit Details:

- We will send a team of at least two Mathematica staff members to spend about two days at your center.
- During the visit, we will encourage staff members to complete their self-administered questionnaires if they haven't already done so, and any that have been completed.
- We will conduct one three-hour classroom observation in each selected classroom and our staff will be mindful not to disrupt the class.

Privacy. Please be assured that everything staff members tell us during our visit and any information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. None of the results from the observations will be associated with your program, center, or teacher classrooms. No names or identifying information will be released and we will not collect any individual-level data. Any reports will be used for internal purposes only, with the goal of refining our procedures for conducting observations in a future study. All Mathematica staff members are required to sign a privacy agreement as a condition of employment

Information is not for accountability or monitoring. We want to assure you that the information collected during this visit will not be used for program accountability or monitoring purposes. The purpose of the study is to examine QRIS ratings, quality-related features, and measures of observed quality, NOT to evaluate your center or your staff.

Do you have any questions so far?

Next, I want to confirm and collect some basic information about your center. [CONFIRM AND/OR UPDATE THE FOLLOWING INTO THE Q-DOT DATABASE OR ON THE CONTACT SHEET FOR LATER DATA ENTRY]:

- CONFIRM CONTACT INFORMATION: Would you mind confirming the following information? I want to be sure I have the correct information and spelling for each: (program/center director name, physical and mailing addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses)
- CENTER TYPE: Is your child care center program funded by Head Start, by the state of Virginia, or are you private child care center?
- CENTER OPTION: Is your child care program a full-day or part-day program?
- CONFIRM TEACHER AND CLASSROOM INFORMATION:
 - Would you mind telling me the names of teachers who serve 3 - 5 yr olds in your center?
 - Of these teachers, who would be willing to participate in the classroom observation?
 - Is English the primary language spoken in the classroom?
 - [IF ENGLISH IS NOT THE PRIMARY LANGUAGE]: What is the primary language in the classroom?
- What days of the week do you operate the children's classrooms? Is it FIVE DAYS A WEEK, FOUR, OR SOME OTHER SCHEDULE? DOES it vary by classroom? [SOME PROGRAMS DO NOT HAVE CLASSES ON MONDAYS OR FRIDAYS].
- When does your program start and end the program year?

CENTER AND CLASSROOM SELECTION

Finally, I would like to explain to you the way in which we are selecting the centers and classrooms to participate in the study.

- Center Selection. Mathematica compiled a list of programs located in Northern Virginia representing high and low quality, as determined by the QRIS scores. This list included community child care programs, Head Start programs, and state-funded pre-kindergartens.
- Classroom Selection. Mathematica staff will work with center directors to identify up to three classrooms per program, taking into account whether or not the program operates on a full or half-day schedule. If a center has three or fewer classrooms, we would like to include them all.

NEXT STEPS

- I would like to send you detailed information about the study. In the near-future, I would like to contact you to arrange a time for us to discuss and schedule the classroom observations.
- In case I need to follow up with you for any other reason, which is the easiest way to reach you—by phone or e-mail? [CONFIRM THAT THIS PERSON IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE YOUR REGULAR CONTACT].
- Do you have any questions at this point? If questions or concerns come up, please feel free to contact me at [PHONE or E-MAIL ADDRESS].

Thank you for participating in this important study. We appreciate your cooperation, and I look forward to working with you and your program.