FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Q-DOT PILOT STUDY

What is the purpose of the Q-DOT Pilot study? The purpose of the Q-DOT pilot is to learn more about the associations among the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) ratings, quality-related features, and measures of observed quality for early care and education settings.

What is a pilot study? How is the pilot study different from the larger Q-DOT study? A pilot is a smaller study conducted in preparation for a larger study. The purpose of the Q-DOT pilot is to determine the best data collection methods and instruments for conducting classroom observations and data collection in the larger Q-DOT study. This pilot study will include classroom observations and self-administered paper surveys for center directors and teachers. It is anticipated that the larger Q-DOT study will include additional data collection components that were not part of the pilot.

Who is conducting the study? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) is sponsoring this important study. Mathematica Policy Research, an independent research company, is conducting the survey to assist ACF in improving its support of child care centers and staff like you. Mathematica is a non-partisan research organization that conducts studies in early childhood education and other public policy areas. More information about Mathematica can be found on the web at http://www.mathematica-mpr.com.

If my center participates in this pilot study, are we automatically enrolled in the larger Q-DOT Study? No, choosing to participate in the pilot phase in no way obligates you to participate in the larger Q-DOT study. If you agree to assist us in the pilot, your only obligation would be allowing our field staff to observe a few of the classrooms in your center and completing the center director and teacher questionnaires.

How will participating in the pilot study affect my program? The focus of the pilot study is to learn more about the associations among QRIS ratings, quality-related features, and measures of observed quality for early care and education settings NOT an evaluation of your program, your teachers, or your students. Any scores obtained through classroom observations will not be reported externally, and no program or staff names will be associated with any of the results.

What is expected of my center/program and staff for the pilot study? We are asking each center to select up to three preschool

classrooms (classes with children ages 3–5), for a total of three classrooms per program, for the classroom observations. Centers may select the specific preschool classrooms to be observed. Teachers will not be asked to make any changes to their daily routine. Center directors and teachers will also each be asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. As a token of our appreciation for assisting us in this important pilot study, Mathematica will provide your center with a $100.00 check as well as a classroom gift valued at $20.00 for each teacher who completes a teacher questionnaire.

When will the pilot study take place? How long will it last? Classroom observations are expected to begin in late February 2014 and continue through the end of March 2014. Study team members will visit a given site for no more than three days. Mathematica will work with your center staff to schedule the exact date(s).

What will the study team do at our center? What can we expect when the observers visit? The study team will act as observers and not interact with the students or cause any disruption of the daily routine. One or two study team members will conduct each observation. The observation period will be one to three consecutive days, from morning until lunch, until all selected classrooms have been observed once. Each observation will last approximately three hours.

How was my program/center selected for the study? We selected both Head Start programs and community center-based child care centers to participate in the pilot study. All of the programs were selected due to their geographic locations and in some cases, Mathematica has worked with these programs in previous studies.

Will the information collected be kept private? All information collected by the study is strictly private to the extent permitted by law. The results will be reported internally to determine the best data collection method for the larger Q-DOT study. None of the results from the observations will be associated with your program, center, or a teacher's classroom. No names or identifying information will be released.

How big is the pilot study? Forty-five classrooms in approximately 15 child care centers that participate in the QRIS quality rating system and are located in the state of [STATE] will be participating in the Q-DOT pilot study.

Are there any gifts of appreciation? Yes. As a token of our appreciation, we will provide your program with $100.00 for participating in

the classroom observations and send a classroom gift valued at $20.00 to each teacher that completes a teacher questionnaire.

What about parental consent? Since we are not collecting any individual student data, parental consent is not required for the pilot study. If your center has its own parental consent requirements, we would be happy to work with you to meet them.

What classroom observation instruments are being used? The study team will use the CLASS instrument to collect data during the classroom observation.

Who do I call if I have a question about the pilot study? Please contact Cassandra Meagher at (202) 250-3599 or via email at cmeagher@mathematica-mpr.com with questions about the study. You may also contact Caroline Lauver at (202) 250-3508 or via email at clauver@mathematica-mpr.com.