

(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.  
(15 points)

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

*In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.*

*In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.*

**(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the state Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.**

Parent Aware's hallmarks include rigorous evaluation, forthright reporting of results, and using results to continuously improve the rating system. Private funding has been committed to continue these efforts. The core evaluation question—what is the correlation between ratings and child progress toward school readiness?—will remain the same, with additional focus on examining the revised Program Standards and indicators. Minnesota will also continuously examine the patterns of quality improvement, particularly as they relate to the statewide rollout of Building Quality (B2) and the more intensive quality supports offered in the Target Communities, including Child Care Health Consultants (B2).

Since the inception of the pilot, the Parent Aware program developers and evaluators jointly defined TQRIS validation as a multi-dimensional *process* that produces recommendations and options for refinement at each stage of implementation. Examples of this process are evident in the evaluation work done to date. Key elements of the evaluation and results are highlighted below and in the Appendices 23, 24 and 25.

**Parent Aware Evaluation**

Validation early in the Parent Aware pilot was aimed at understanding the extent to which key stakeholders and the public perceived that Parent Aware had the potential to achieve its goals of improving quality, providing information to parents, and improving outcomes for young children (Tout, Starr, & Cleveland, 2008). At this stage, stakeholders were optimistic about Parent Aware. However, they expressed concerns about the challenges of engaging parents and providers, providing adequate supports for quality improvement, and recruiting and rating culturally and linguistically diverse providers. Evaluation conducted in the first year of the pilot made it clear that providing an accelerated rating process for accredited programs (as well as Head Start/Early Head Start and School Readiness programs) facilitated participation in Parent Aware.

Scoring patterns were explored in-depth in the Year 3 Parent Aware evaluation report (Tout, et al., 2010b). The purpose of the validation analyses conducted at this later stage of the pilot (after three years of implementation) was to test how scores in each of the quality domains related to the observational measures, which included the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005); the Classroom Assessment and

Scoring System™ (CLASS™; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008); and, the literacy, mathematics, and diversity subscales of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extended (ECERS-E; Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2006). Observation measures were examined for all programs that had received a full rating, as well as for a sample of programs that received an accelerated rating.

### **CHILD PROGRESS TOWARD SCHOOL READINESS—B5b**

Measures of children's progress were also examined in the Year 3 evaluation report. To collect the sample of child assessments, 4-year-old children were recruited from rated programs and assessed in the fall and spring on a variety of assessment tools, selected to align with the domains of school readiness assessed in Minnesota's Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (see Tout, et al., 2010b; also see E1). While rating levels could not be linked to children's functioning in Year 3 due to the limited number of programs involved in the pilot, the evaluation did examine children's progress overall. Children made significant gains from the fall to the spring on measures of expressive and receptive vocabulary, print knowledge, phonological awareness, reduced anxiety/withdrawal, and persistence. No gains were observed on the measures of early math skills and reduced anger/aggression. Effect sizes for the measures of early literacy and expressive and receptive vocabulary were in the medium range for Children with High Needs.

### **DIFFERENTIATING LEVELS OF QUALITY—B5a**

Analyses were also conducted to determine how programs at the various rating levels scored on the observational measures in Parent Aware to understand how well the rating system was differentiating quality levels. Results indicated that fully-rated, 4-star programs tended to outscore programs at other levels on several of the observational measures, though they were not always different from 3-star programs or 4-star automatically rated programs (see Table 1). This provides some evidence for the effectiveness of distinguishing a 4-star program in Parent Aware, but it demonstrates that further refinement is needed to differentiate the other levels in the TQRIS. The next evaluation report, to be released in November 2011, will examine these patterns in greater depth, with a larger number of programs.

**Table 1. Results examining how observational measures differentiate Parent Aware star levels.**

<b>Observational Measure</b>	<b>1-star</b>	<b>2-star</b>	<b>3-star</b>	<b>4-star</b>	<b>4-star automatic</b>	<b>Statistically significant results for 4-star programs</b>
<b>ECRS-R</b>	Not available	3.33	4.16	4.54	3.73	4-star fully rated greater than 4-star auto and 2-star
<b>ITRS-R</b>	Not available	2.69	3.40	3.86	3.18	4-star fully rated and 3-star greater than 2-star
<b>FCCERS-R</b>	2.82	3.1	3.17	3.9	Not available	4-star fully rated greater than all other levels
<b>ECERS—Extended literacy</b>	Not available	3.19	3.99	4.47	3.98	4-star fully rated and 4-star auto greater than 2-star
<b>CLASS™—emotional support</b>	Not available	5.18	5.8	5.96	5.52	4-star fully rated and 3-star greater than 2-star
<b>CLASS™—classroom organization</b>	Not available	4.68	5.28	5.51	5.0	4-star fully rated greater than 2-star

Source: Year 3 Evaluation Report (Tout, et al., 2010b)

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

This validation Plan builds on evaluation results and lessons learned to date about the validation process. It also adds new elements to ensure that the evaluation is aligned with other state activities to develop a Comprehensive Assessment System and effective data practices.

### **Goal 1. Analyze the effectiveness of the indicators in the updated Parent Aware Program Standards.**

**Activity 1.1:** Work collaboratively with the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services to determine standards of evidence and decision rules for documentation. Develop an evaluation plan to that outlines the data needed and a strategy for completing the analyses.

**Activity 1.2:** Obtain indicator and rating level data after 150 programs have received full ratings and again after 500 programs. Coordinate the collection of data from programs in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process. Prepare data for analysis. Examine how the new

indicators are functioning and where there are significant differences among or within ELD Program types.

**Activity 1.3:** Describe patterns observed and make recommendations for the indicators in reports produced early in 2013 and 2015.

**Goal 2. Determine the effectiveness of the hybrid rating structure.**

**Activity 2.1:** Work collaboratively with the Departments of Education and Human Services to develop an evaluation plan that outlines how the analysis of the rating structure will be conducted and includes a timeline for reporting.

**Activity 2.2:** Obtain indicator data (points achieved on each indicator and scores on the CLASS™) and rating level data after 500 programs have been fully rated using the hybrid structure.

Coordinate the collection of Environment Rating Scale data from fully rated programs and comparable observation and indicator data from a random sample of programs in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating. Prepare data for analysis. Examine whether and how the hybrid structure is functioning as an effective process for differentiating quality by conducting analyses to understand: 1) scoring variations and the proportion of programs achieving each rating level; 2) scores on the Environment Rating Scales and CLASS™ and differential associations with each of the levels in the hybrid structure; and 3) variations in rating patterns by ELD Program or other characteristics.

**Activity 2.3:** Reporting and recommendations for continuous improvement.

Report patterns observed and make recommendations for modifying or strengthening the hybrid structure in a report produced at the end of 2014. Examine the extent to which there are discernable differences between levels.

**Goal 3. Examine the linkages between ratings and children's progress toward school readiness.**

**Activity 3.1:** Work collaboratively with the Departments to develop an effective plan for recruitment of children that is stratified by program type and county.

**Activity 3.2:** Begin data collection, focusing on children after the first full year of expansion, using a battery of direct and teacher-reported measures. Work with the Comprehensive Assessment Team to develop a process for phasing in the new assessment process in the final year of the grant. Collect data from teachers, directors, family child care providers, and families.

Conduct two rounds of data collection: one in fall 2013 and spring 2014, and one in fall 2014 and spring 2015.

**Activity 3.3:** Report findings in two phases that mirror the data collection schedule.

#### **Goal 4. Examine patterns of quality improvement in Parent Aware.**

**Activity 4.1:** Work with the Departments of Education and Human Services to develop a plan for examining the patterns and predictors of quality improvement. Focus evaluation on the degree to which the rating scale can detect changes in program quality. Examine what services and supports are most effective in promoting quality.

**Activity 4.2:** Establish the data elements that will be collected and analyzed in order to gather information about the type (e.g., financial or consultation), frequency, dosage, and content of quality improvement supports. Survey administrators, teachers/providers, and quality coaches annually. Analyze patterns of supports, perceptions of how effective supports are, and scoring in the QRIS.

**Activity 4.3:** Summarize the patterns of quality improvement and the services and supports provided in reports in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Make recommendations for modifications and implement them as possible.

#### **Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>B5. Validating TQRIS Effectiveness</b>																
<b>Goal 1: Analyze effectiveness of revised indicators</b>																
1.1: Collaborative planning																
1.2: Data collection & analysis																
1.3 Reporting & recommendations																
<b>Goal 2: Determine effectiveness of hybrid structure</b>																
2.1 Collaborative planning																
2.2 Data collection & analysis																
2.3 Reporting & recommendations																
<b>Goal 3: Examine linkages between</b>																

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>B5. Validating TQRIS Effectiveness ratings &amp; child progress</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 Collaborative planning																
3.2 Data collection & analysis																
3.3 Reporting & recommendations																
<b>Goal 4: Examine patters of quality improvement</b>																
4.1 Collaborative planning																
4.2 Data collection & analysis																
4.3 Reporting & recommendations																

### Responsible Parties

All funding for the evaluation to validate the effectiveness of Parent Aware is provided through private funders (Parent Aware for School Readiness and Greater Twin Cities United Way). They have indicated that Child Trends will be responsible for conducting each of the activities outlined in this section, in coordination with key staff from the Departments of Human Services, Education, and Health. Dr. Kathryn Tout, the Evaluation Director at Child Trends, will be the key evaluation partner. See Appendix 22 for a description of Child Trends' capacity to conduct the evaluation and for a description of management processes. To foster the development of strong community relationships and to gather input on plans, strategies for recruitment, and input on findings and recommendations, Child Trends will convene a Parent Aware Evaluation Advisory Committee that will meet semi-annually.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

Note the financial resources listed here support all Parent Aware TQRIS activities, including B1, B2, B3, and B5:

**\$9,760,457 Public Funds (CCDF)**

**\$7,600,000 Private Funds**

**\$7,978,232 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$25,338,689 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 22: Description of Child Trends' capacity
- Appendices 23 – 25: Parent Aware Evaluation Report summaries (Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3)
- Letters of support: Child Trends, Parent Aware for School Readiness

**Performance Measures:** Not applicable.

**Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

The evaluation will include all of the ELD Programs eligible to participate in Parent Aware. Programs that enter Parent Aware in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process will be required to participate in observational assessments and documentation reviews so that the effectiveness of the accelerated rating pathway can be evaluated. The evaluation will also develop protocols to examine the effectiveness of efforts to recruit more programs with children with an IEP or IFSP to participate in highly rated programs and increase capacity of highly rated programs to serve children with disabilities. The experiences of programs and participants will be explored so that recommendations can be made for improving these strategies.

**Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

The evaluation conducted during the Parent Aware pilot prioritized recruitment of Children with High Needs. These recruitment strategies will be further strengthened during the next phase of Parent Aware by working closely with members of the Parent Aware Advisory Committee. Analyses will be completed to examine participation of Children with High Needs in Parent Aware rated programs and to understand the supports that facilitate participation in these programs. Analyses will also focus on the gains Children with High Needs make from the fall to the spring in the year before kindergarten. The evaluation will also determine a process for gathering information about Children with High Needs who are infants and toddlers.