



## QUALITY COUNTS NAPA COUNTY FAQ

The Napa County Quality Counts Consortium, representing over 20 county agencies supporting children and families, is excited to be launching a new project in Napa County aimed at supporting early care and education providers, along with community resource agencies and the friends, families, and neighbors who care for young children. This innovative, five-year project, Quality Counts Napa County, is funded by First 5 Napa County, First 5 California and the California Department of Education. California, along with 48 other states, is engaged in improving the quality of early education programs through statewide Quality Improvement and Rating Systems (QIRS).

### **What is Quality Counts?**

Quality Counts is Napa County's Early Childhood Quality Improvement Rating System (QIRS). Quality Counts Napa County enhances early care and education of children ages 0-5. Childcare providers receive support and recognition for implementing research-based practices to provide high-quality environments and experiences for our community's children.

### **What is a Quality Improvement and Rating System (QIRS)?**

A QIRS is a method to define, measure, support, and improve the level of quality in early childhood care and education settings. A QIRS includes quality standards, supports and incentives for meeting the quality standards, monitoring and accountability systems, and a rating system that identifies the level of quality of a program or provider.

A QIRS supports early care and education programs using consistent criteria and provides ongoing support to help early care and education programs support and improve their quality. A QIRS creates a system to continually improve the overall quality of early care and education available, and can help families easily identify high-quality early care and education programs for their children.

### **What is the goal of Quality Counts?**

Our goal is to enhance the quality of learning programs, as well as to recognize the wonderful work that is already being done in our region. Quality Counts addresses:

- Child development
- School readiness
- Social-emotional development
- Health, nutrition, and physical activity
- Early childhood environments
- Effective teacher-child interactions
- Professional development
- Program administration
- Family engagement

### **Who is eligible to participate in Quality Counts?**

Eligible programs include State Preschool Programs, licensed child care center programs, family child care home providers, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, public school early childhood programs, and alternative care sites (libraries, family resource centers, home visiting).

### **Why should I participate in Quality Counts?**

Participants will receive:

- Professional development and advising for early childhood educators
- Programs and classroom materials incentives
- Access to training and technical assistance from an early education coach
- Recognition of participation in Quality Counts, including a display at your site promoting your commitment to providing quality care and education for young children

### **What if I choose not to participate in Quality Counts?**

Participation in Quality Counts is voluntary for most programs and providers, with the exception of California State Preschool Programs.

### **Is there a cost to participate in Quality Counts?**

No, there is no cost to programs or staff to participate in Quality Counts.

### **What is the time commitment?**

Time commitment is based on individual site needs, interests, and goals.

### **How long can a site participate in Quality Counts?**

We are currently funded for five years and we hope everyone will remain involved for the duration of the project, as the main goal is to support all participating sites to move towards higher quality. Sites will continue to receive support as they progress along the continuum as long as funding at the state level continues.

### **How can I make this a successful experience?**

Recognizing that quality improvement is a process, work with your coach to set priorities and create a plan that will make sense for your program and your staff. The ultimate goal is to help your program improve quality. Each of your efforts will improve the services you provide.

### **How does Quality Counts help young children?**

Research shows that children learn best in stimulating environments with well-trained and well-educated teachers. Because the early years are the most important time in a child's development, the higher the quality of early care and education children receive, the more children benefit.

### **How do I get started?**

It's easy! Give us a call or email, and we will walk you through the steps. Please contact:

First 5 Napa County  
Michelle Burhorn  
707-492-5450  
mburhorn@first5napa.org

Community Resources for  
Children  
Judy Nielsen  
707-253-0376 x 128  
jnielsen@crwnapa.org

Napa County of Education  
(CSPP Funded Programs)  
Je Ton Carey  
707-259-5998  
jcarey@napacoe.org