FOCUS
STATEWIDE
INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Presented by:
The Office of Child Development

July 2012
The 3rd generation of New Mexico’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS)

WELCOME!

FOCUS
The History of New Mexico’s Quality Rating and Improvement System....
Gold - Silver – Bronze

- Started in 1997
- Three Levels
- One of the first
- No financial incentive
- No on-site consultation
Lessons Learned from Gold – Silver - Bronze

Programs serving low income children on subsidy didn’t participate

- Low-income families don’t “shop”/travel to select child care based on quality

- Programs serving high percentages of low-income children can’t afford to improve quality

- Programs serving high percentages of low-income children are willing to improve quality if provided with financial and other support
AIM HIGH

- Started in 1999
- Expanded from 3 to 5 Levels
- Differentiated subsidy to provide financial support for quality improvements
- On-site consultation
- Quality set-aside available
Three Goals of AIM HIGH:

1. Systematically improve New Mexico’s Child Care Regulations

2. Increase the number of high quality Child Care programs

3. Increase the number of low income children on subsidy in high quality Child Care programs
AIM HIGH was successful:

- For many years had the highest percentage of accredited programs in the country
- Significantly increased percentage of
  - High quality Child Care programs
  - Low income children in high quality programs
- Look for the STARS - 2005
- Embedded AIM HIGH criteria into licensing regulations
  - 2005 (1-STAR criteria)
  - 2010 (2-STAR criteria)
Lessons Learned from AIM HIGH

It has been difficult for programs to maintain quality after “graduating” from AIM HIGH

- Consultation has focused on working in classrooms with teachers rather than directors
- High turnover rate of teachers

Research has not supported assumptions made regarding the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and Accreditation

It has been difficult to base 5 STAR recognition on multiple independent external accrediting entities

- e.g. NAEYC significantly increased their accreditation standards in 2005 – increasingly creating an “uneven playing field”

System encourages programs to focus more on the criteria of the Environmental Rating Scales and accreditation than on WHY the criteria is important for children’s learning
Established an AIM HIGH Task Force in 2010 at the request of child care programs, TTAP staff and CYFD administration.....
Task Force Report Findings

"All programs should have access to participate in AIM HIGH"

"Provide training on the Environmental Rating Scales to assist providers in understanding that items are best practice - not just a tool used in the quality rating system"
Many recommendations focused on accreditation:

"Develop a system to track inconsistencies between accreditation bodies"
"Develop procedures to strengthen accountability between state agency and accrediting bodies when programs not maintaining accreditation standards"

"Develop a state accreditation option that would be 5-STAR with the same subsidy reimbursement structure"
Simultaneously:

- NM’s Early Learning Guidelines have been developed and used successfully in NM PreK as the foundation of authentic observation and curriculum planning.

- The federal Office of Child Care challenges states to emphasize quality and establish a system to track child outcomes for children on subsidy.

- There is an increasing body of research regarding TQRIS & child outcomes related to specific quality criteria (Environmental Rating Scales and accreditation).

- Data CONSISTENTLY shows that NM children (especially low income) are at risk for school failure - 75% don’t have literacy skills necessary for kindergarten.
FOCUS (on children’s learning)

Pilot Phase starting
January 1, 2013
"How will FOCUS affect my program?"

- Like AIM HIGH, FOCUS is VOLUNTARY
- Gradually, we will phase out programs being rated using AIM HIGH criteria and we’ll use FOCUS criteria
- TTAP training will provide training on best practices – validation process will remain
- Restructured centralized FOCUS consultation and training system aligned with NM PreK
Highlight of Major Areas
Authentic child assessment and curriculum planning process
Using the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines

- Observing
- Happy
- Healthy
- Successful
- Children
- Reflecting
- Planning
- Recording
Family Engagement Strategies
Health, Safety and Health Promotion Practices
Comprehensive Program Assessment and Continuous Improvement
Early Childhood Educator Qualifications
“How will FOCUS be implemented?”
Research–Based Refinement and Validation of FOCUS

(Jan. 1, 2013)

- Research-Based Revisions of FOCUS* and Validation Plan
  - 9 Consultants/45 Programs**

Year 2 (2013-14) Phase I Implementation

- Validation & Evaluation of FOCUS criteria
  - 12 Consultants/120 programs

Year 3 (2014-15) Phase II Implementation

- Validation and Evaluation of FOCUS criteria
  - 15 Consultants/150 programs

*Currently using ERS (Environmental Rating Scales), CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), PAS (Program Administration Scale), for program self-study. Will create 1 self-study vs. 3 based on current research.

** RTT/Early Learning Challenge Fund will enable us to speed up implementation.

February 03, 2012
"What is the application process for programs that would like to participate in the Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 Pilot?"
"How will I continue to be informed about FOCUS?"
Can I choose to not be in FOCUS and still be a LEVEL 5 program by being nationally accredited?

Yes, accreditation will remain an option for STAR Level 5.
Which accrediting entities will be recognized by the state for STAR Level 5?

- COA for after school programs
- NAFCC for family child care
- NAEYC and other national accrediting entities that have equivalent standards to NAEYC and have requested state approval