

## **Association for the Education of Young Children of Missouri Position Statement on a Quality Rating System for Missouri**

An investment in quality early childhood and school-age/after-school programs supports children's school readiness and future success AND yields significant economic returns (\$3.78-\$8.74 return/\$1 investment in early childhood<sup>i</sup> and \$3.19/\$1 invested in school-age programs<sup>ii</sup>). In the short-term, children who attend high-quality programs have higher rates of high school completion, above average test scores, and positive attitudes toward school among children and parents. In the long-term, these children become adults who have higher rates of stable employment, home & car ownership, family involvement, and education attainment. Overall, this translates into savings in lower rates of remedial education, special education, social service use, criminal involvement, and substance abuse.<sup>iii iv</sup>

The Missouri Quality Rating System (QRS) is a reliable and valid method to comprehensively assess the quality of early childhood and school-age/after-school programs using a five-star rating system.

Programs are rated on the following eight components:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Administrator Education and Training | 5. Learning Environment                  |
| 2. Staff Education                      | 6. Program Curriculum                    |
| 3. Education Specialization             | 7. Family Involvement                    |
| 4. Annual Training                      | 8. Business and Administrative Practices |

The QRS identifies programs' strengths and where improvements are needed to reach higher thresholds of quality. Examples of how targeted technical assistance and support services impact the quality of programs participating in the QRS were seen in several Missouri communities. In Kansas City, of 50 programs that received ratings for three years, 42% increased their rating by at least one star, and, of these, 24% increased their rating by at least two stars. In St. Joseph, programs received an average of 22.6 hours of technical assistance over a year and 82% of these programs improved their QRS rating.

AEYC-MO supports the establishment of a Quality Rating System for Missouri as it will

- improve the quality of early childhood and school-age/after-school programs for Missouri's young children and youth;
- raise public understanding about high-quality programs; and
- allow subsidy-receiving children access to higher quality programs by linking state child care subsidies to the various QRS levels (pending state approval)

Additionally, AEYC-MO supports

- creation of the Quality Rating System Program Improvement Grant Fund and
- the development of a plan by the Early Childhood Coordinating Board for a tiered child care subsidy system based on the quality rating scores (1-5 stars).

---

<sup>i</sup> Lynch, R. G. (2004). *Exceptional returns: Economic, fiscal, and social benefits of investments in early childhood development*. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute.

<sup>ii</sup> Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. (2004, March.). *Cost and benefits of after-school programs*. Retrieved December 31, 2007, from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Web site: [http://www.kauffman.org/pdf/afterschool\\_report\\_020205.pdf](http://www.kauffman.org/pdf/afterschool_report_020205.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Schweinhart, L.J. (2005). *High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 40*. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation: Author.

<sup>iv</sup> Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. (2004, March.). *Cost and benefits of after-school programs*. Retrieved December 31, 2007, from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Web site: [http://www.kauffman.org/pdf/afterschool\\_report\\_020205.pdf](http://www.kauffman.org/pdf/afterschool_report_020205.pdf)