



## Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) Developmental Evaluation

Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) is Los Angeles' (LA) county-wide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) designed to empower early learning providers to build upon and improve the quality of care they provide to children birth to five. Additionally, the program helps families understand what makes an early learning program effective and how to find the right program for their child.

In 2015, key L.A. County early childhood education stakeholders, known as the QRIS Architects, were convened to design a single QRIS model for L.A. County that would be: built on lessons learned from previous quality improvement efforts, and unrestrained by the various funding sources supporting quality improvement efforts in the county. In 2016, the Architects launched a four-phase, systems-building approach to design a countywide model, now known as QSLA. Currently, QSLA is in the Scale Phase, which focuses on expanding quality improvement efforts to licensed based early care and education providers in L.A. County.

In November 2018, First 5 LA contracted with the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute, to conduct a developmental evaluation of selected QSLA components. The primary goal of the developmental evaluation is to generate real-time actionable information that will inform modifications to the QSLA model and/or implementation as it is expanded in L.A. County during the Scale Phase and beyond.

The evaluation is focused on three topics: 1) The assessment process and assessment technical assistance; 2) QRIS tier ratings and; 3) coaching. The research is being conducted in two waves. The first wave of data collection began in early 2019 and continued throughout the year. Data collection activities included focus groups with multiple QSLA stakeholders, such as QSLA providers, coaches, and assessment technical assistance providers; key informant interviews with QSLA stakeholders; a QSLA provider survey; observations of coaching sessions; and administrative data analysis. In January 2020, the second data collection wave began. As part of wave 2, RAND will hold additional focus groups with QSLA providers, coaches, and assessment technical assistance providers; conduct another round of administrative data analysis; and conduct a landscape analysis of non-QSLA early childhood coaching agencies in L.A. County that also serve QSLA providers.

Throughout the developmental evaluation, emerging results and recommendations will continue to be provided to QSLA stakeholders as they work to build a sustainable quality improvement model for L.A. county. Additionally, at the end of the study, RAND will prepare a public final report, a research brief and public presentations that detail the developmental evaluation process, findings and recommendations to be considered for the QSLA in the Scale Phase and beyond.

For more information on the study, please contact Anamarie Auger Whitaker ([anawhit@rand.org](mailto:anawhit@rand.org)) or Jill Cannon ([cannon@rand.org](mailto:cannon@rand.org)).

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