What is High-Quality Early Care & Learning?
The phrase “high-quality early care & education” is often misinterpreted to mean that early care programs should focus on a very narrow set of academic and cognitive skills. In reality, high-quality early learning programs follow research-based practices that are beneficial to the overall development of children. These programs provide a safe and nurturing place for children to play and grow, through activities that help children develop physical, social, emotional, and intellectual skills. The key elements of a high-quality program include: a learning environment with activities on social-emotional, physical and cognitive development; qualified teachers that create a positive environment that supports active learning; and a focus on health and safety where children have 30+ minute each day of physical activity and access to healthy foods, including more fresh fruits and vegetables.

What is Quality Rated?
Quality Rated is a systemic approach to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. It is similar to rating systems for hotels or restaurants and awards quality ratings to programs that meet a set of defined program standards. Early care and education providers who choose to participate in Quality Rated display a commitment to continuous quality improvements.

Who Can Participate in Quality Rated?
The following entities are eligible to participate in Quality Rated:
- Licensed Child Care Learning Centers and Family Child Care Learning Homes
- Military child care programs licensed by the Department of Defense
- Georgia’s Pre-K programs in local school systems
- Early Head Start and Head Start programs
- University and technical college lab schools
- Early learning and development programs funded by Part B or C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

How Does Quality Rated Measure Quality?
Quality Rated assesses each early learning program individually. Each program submits a portfolio that highlights how the program complies with defined quality standards in areas such as family partnerships, teaching practices, and staff qualifications. Quality Rated also assesses the classroom environment and staff/child interactions using internationally valid environment rating scales. Based on the portfolio and the environment rating scales, an overall rating of quality is assigned - indicated by one, two or three stars.

How Does a Program Become Quality Rated?

To learn more about quality rated, visit www.qualityrated.org or call 404-479-4230
What do the Quality Rated Stars Mean?
It is important to understand that all programs participating in Quality Rated are declaring their commitment to provide the highest quality care possible in their program. They are committed to go above and beyond Georgia’s licensing standards. When a site receives a rating, whether it is one, two, or three stars, it reflects that the program has demonstrated that they are providing high-quality experiences to the children and the families they serve above and beyond minimal requirements.

To better understand the star rating system, consider the Olympics for a moment. Each team or individual in a given event performs the same task—whether a specific gymnastics move, swimming, or distance running. Winners earn their medal based on having one of the best scores or the fastest times. A team or individual that earns any medal – gold, silver, or bronze – all have performed at a high level. Quality Rated programs have all demonstrated that they provide excellent service to children and their families. The star ratings they receive are simply a reflection of their level of execution.

What are the Benefits of Quality Rated?
There are many benefits and incentives available to programs who choose to participate in Quality Rated and for those that receive a star rating. Here are just some of the benefits and resources available:

- **Free Training:** A completed Quality Rated application allows early learning professionals to attend Quality Rated training for free.

- **Mini-Grant:** Programs enrolled in TA for their first portfolio submission will be eligible for $1,000 - $1,600, based on the size of the program. They may be eligible for additional money if they serve children who are subsidized by CAPS.

- **Peer Support & Networking Opportunities:** Opportunities to attend specialized leadership training.

- **Free On-site Support & Coaching:** Programs receive monthly coaching visits where they receive direct support to the classroom teachers and program leadership to help the program meet their quality improvement goals.

- **Bonus Packages:** Bonus packages ranging in value from $3,000 – $6,000 are awarded to rated programs, based on the designated star level. Programs rated at the 3 star level will also receive monetary bonuses for staff and specialized conference scholarships and special mentorship opportunities. Begin working towards earning your rating because bonus packages will not be available forever.

- **Increased CAPS Reimbursement:** Programs participating in the Child and Parent Services program (CAPS) are eligible for increased reimbursement rates above and beyond what they would normally receive. 1 Star programs receive a 5% quality bonus, 2 Star programs receive a 10% quality bonus, and 3 Star programs receive a 25% quality bonus.

- **Better Parent & Staff Partnerships:** Going through the Quality Rated process helps teachers gain confidence in their skills and provides them with language to articulate what high quality early care and learning looks like.

- **Higher Teacher Retention:** Various research supports that the leading factor in teacher retention for early learning professionals is professional growth and development. Quality Rated encourages program leadership to invest in teachers and help them create plans for professional development.

- **Increased Parent & Family Satisfaction:** When teachers are invested in and are better equipped to communicate with parents they are much more satisfied and confident in their work. They are recognized as professionals and parents gain an increased respect and trust in their chosen child care provider.

- **Marketing and Branding Tools:** Quality Rated materials have been created for use by programs who receive a rating. Programs can access Quality Rated materials through their Quality Rated account. They can also order supplies and other branded materials through the Quality Rated store to support marketing your program.

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