

# Quality Rated Informational Webinar, March 25, 2021

## Questions and Comments

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## CAPS/QR Goal

**Q:** Are child care providers required to accept CAPS scholarships if they become Quality Rated?

**A:** No, there is no requirement that QR providers must enroll children that receive CAPS scholarships. We do want to encourage all providers who have demonstrated high levels of quality to accept CAPS scholarships because children who qualify for scholarships often benefit the most from high-quality early care and learning.

**Q:** If I have a new program, will I be able to meet the deadline for CAPS? I just signed up for Quality Rated.

**A:** There is a possibility that there will be additional cohort slots available this year for which providers may sign up. Further communication on this will be coming. You may also want to speak with your CAPS Family Support Specialist to ask about the policy for new providers.

**Q:** What is the actual benefit of Quality Rated? Many programs feel they don't need to be rated as they already have a good program.

**A:** Georgia's Quality Rated system is research-based and designed to foster improved child outcomes, better preparing young children for school. There are many benefits to participating in and becoming Quality Rated. First and foremost, children benefit when they have the opportunity to attend a high quality program. Becoming rated allows programs to show their commitment to quality and acknowledge to others that they work continuously to improve the quality of care they provide to children and families.

Parents and families are smart consumers. They use the online Quality Rated search engine, [www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org), to find providers who deliver care and education that exceeds licensing requirements. Quality Rated providers can use the search engine to market their programs. Only Quality Rated programs can include special features and information about their program to the search tool, including adding photographs of their program for families to see.

DECAL requires all CAPS providers to become Quality Rated because the most vulnerable children benefit the most from high-quality care. An additional benefit for Quality Rated CAPS providers is the tiered reimbursement for their CAPS scholarships. Increased reimbursement rates are based on the number of stars a CAPS provider earns.

Providers that participate in Quality Rated also receive free Technical Assistance (TA) from the Regional Resource and Referral Agencies, making them available for additional grant funding opportunities.

## Quality Rated

### General

**Q:** Can you create a status of "in progress" on [www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org) for customers who want to know that we are in process of becoming quality rated?

**A:** The search engine [www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org) was designed to promote and link families to providers that have achieved a star rating. This is one of the benefits of completing the rating process. Once a star level is associated with a provider, that rating is made public to help inform parents and families when making child care decisions. We do not have an "in progress" status in Quality Rated that could be displayed on [www.qualityrated.org](http://www.qualityrated.org), however, programs are encouraged to make their families and communities aware that they are participating in Quality Rated and welcome them to be part of the improvement process.

**Q:** Can you share contact information for our Child Care Resource and Referral? Who do we call if we don't hear back from our R&R?

**A:** You can find contact information for all the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies on the DECAL website at [Child Care Resource & Referral System \(ga.gov\)](http://www.ga.gov/childcare). Here you can locate the six regions and the counties served by each region, as well as their primary phone number and link to their website.

Should you have trouble contacting your specific CCR&R please call or email the Quality Rated Help Desk and we will put you in touch.

**Q:** I was just approved to care for children from ages 0-12 years in January 2021. I am interested in becoming Quality Rated. Where do I find more information about Quality Rated, including if I am eligible?

**A:** As a licensed provider you are eligible to become Quality Rated. You can find out all the information you need to complete the process by going to our provider website at [Georgia's Quality Rated System \(ga.gov\)](https://www.ga.gov/quality-rated). Here you will find step by step directions on completing your application. All you need is your license number to get started.

**Q:** Hiring qualified staff is a struggle for a lot of child care providers right now. Has this been considered and/or are you aware of this hiring difficulty providers are facing right now?

**A:** We recognize that hiring and retaining qualified staff can be difficult at any time but acknowledge that it has become especially challenging during the pandemic. In recognition of this Quality Rated is proposing to increase the staff bonuses associated with programs that sign up for a cohort and become rated during this time. We are also expanding provider eligibility for these incentives. Rating incentives are paid when a provider receives their rating and are not linked to star rating level.

**Q:** What happens when a star rated provider moves to a new location? Is there anything in place to help them get rated by the deadline?

**A:** During the pandemic, providers have the ability to be considered for a star rating transfer if their program undergoes a change of ownership or a change of location. When providers receive their new license number and their old number closes, they will also receive an email from Quality Rated with the Change or Ownership or Change of Location Request for Transfer of Star Rating Application form. Complete the application form and return to the email address on the form. The information will be processed, and in most situations a transfer of rating is granted. If a provider does not see the email with application attached, please contact the Quality Rated Help Desk as soon as possible and our friendly staff will be happy to assist you.

**Q:** Will teachers without credentials have a grace period?

**A:** In the portfolio, points are awarded for the percentage of teachers that have a specific career level. It is still possible to earn points in the portfolio even if some of the teachers do not have an education credential. Once teachers earn a credential, they should submit evidence as soon as possible to the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) to allow sufficient time for verification.

## 2022 Renewals

**Q:** How do we know what cohort my program is in, or how do I select a cohort? When I log onto my account my renewal date is not until Sept 2022. I would like to be evaluated using TARO option B or TARO option C.

**A:** If your renewal is due in 2022, you are not eligible to be in a 2021 cohort and do not need to be in one this year. We hope to resume traditional on-site observations for programs being rated in 2022. You will be able to select your 2022 cohort later this year when the cohort selection window opens. Please read any correspondence you receive from Quality Rated to best plan for your 2022 renewal and be prepared to select a cohort when they are released.

**Q:** My rating does not expire until January 31, 2022; is this information relevant for me? When will you have more information about 2022 cohorts?

**A:** We will have more information regarding 2022 cohorts later in 2021. Typically, the cohort selection window is available in October for you to select a cohort slot for the following year. Please be on the lookout for and read all correspondence you receive from Quality Rated.

**Q:** We are scheduled to renew in September 2022, and we want to keep that timeline. Do we have to change anything?

**A:** There is nothing for you to do or change at this time. The 2022 cohort selection window will be available to you later this year. Please be on the lookout for and read all correspondence you receive from Quality Rated.

**Q:** Our renewal date is January 18, 2022. When do I need to start the process of QR?

**A:** There is no set timeline for when providers are required to “start the process.” Quality Rated is a system that encourages and promotes ongoing continuous improvement. We urge you to consistently be self-evaluating and reflective of your practices to make all improvement efforts sustainable and tangible every day. Your Required Reassessment portfolio is always available to you and can be updated and reviewed any time as you prepare for its submission. You are encouraged to reach out to your TA to discuss a plan for any TA needs that you may have. The 2022 cohort selection window will be available to you later this year and you are encouraged to select the cohort that best suits your program needs. Please be on the lookout for and read all correspondence you receive from Quality Rated.

## TARO

### General

**Q:** Do currently rated centers need to go through TARO?

**A:** If you are due for a re-rating in 2021, you will be rated with one of the TARO options. During May 2021, you will be able to choose which TARO option you prefer to use during your Cohort 3 or 4 window. Please be on the lookout for and read all correspondence you receive from Quality Rated to help you make the best decision for your program when selecting your TARO option.

**Q:** I think in all fairness the TARO options should be available to everyone. It will afford everyone the opportunity to be successful. Will the TARO be available in 2022?

**A:** Thank you for your valuable feedback. At this time, offering TARO in 2022 is undecided.

**Q:** It's not fair that other programs have the advantage of TARO and we have been Quality Rated since 2014 and should also receive the advantage to be given the chance to move up on star rating. We were 2-stars and 2019 there was some misfortune which caused the star rating to become 1-star.

**A:** At this time, TARO is only available to providers who are required to be re-rated this year and to those who are seeking their initial rating. It is unknown at this time if TARO will be implemented for programs who will need to be re-rated in 2022, as we hope to resume live observations in 2022. We encourage you to reach out to your CCR&R for additional support to help with increasing your star rating based on the feedback given to you from your last observations conducted.

**Q:** We are QR now so where do we fit in all of this?

**A:** If you are due for a re-rating in 2021, TARO options will be available to you if you are currently signed up for Cohorts 3 or 4. Please contact the QR Help Desk at 1.855.800.7747 to discuss your situation and receive more guidance on your present needs.

**Q:** Will TARO resources be available to everyone even if they are not part of the cohorts to prepare for reassessments?

**A:** The TARO resources are unique to QRVP (Quality Rated Virtual Process). For further support with preparing for reassessments, please contact your regional CCR&R office. Locations and phone numbers can be found on the DECAL website.

## Change in Cohorts 3 & 4

**Q:** Does this mean that if we chose Cohort 4 for 2021, we need to transition to participation to TARO?

**A:** Providers in Cohorts 3 and 4 will automatically be switched to TARO Option A in May 2021. Option A is portfolio-only for a maximum 1-star rating. If you want to choose Option B or Option C, you will need to log into your account and choose the option you prefer. We will email you when it's time to make your choice.

**Q:** Is everyone being automatically switched to a TARO option in 2021?

**A:** Cohorts 1 and 2 were already designated as TARO, but Cohorts 3 and 4 will automatically be switched to TARO Option A in May 2021. Option A is portfolio-only for a maximum 1-star rating. If you want to choose Option B or Option C, you will need to log into your account and choose the option you prefer. We will let you know when it's time to make your choice.

## Cohort Deadlines

**Q:** Is the Cohort 2 deadline for portfolios still March 31, 2021?

**A:** The deadline for Cohort 2 portfolio submission was extended to April 15, 2021.

**Q:** If our portfolio due date is March 31<sup>st</sup>, can we change to a different Cohort?

**A:** Currently, there are no additional openings in Cohorts 3 and 4. The portfolio submission window was extended to April 15 to allow extra time to submit your portfolio and remain in Cohort 2.

**Q:** So, instead of submitting the Cohort 2 portfolio on March 31<sup>st</sup>, it has been extended to April 15?

**A:** Yes, the portfolio submission deadline has been extended through April 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Cohort Selection

**Q:** How do we change our cohort date?

**A:** Currently, there are no additional openings in remaining 2021 cohorts. If you are already signed up for a 2021 cohort, you need to remain in that cohort.

**Q:** If we have a 1 star right now can we choose TARO option B? We were given a star in October 2020 so we will have to be rerated by October this year, correct?

**A:** No. If you received a temporary 1-star rating in October 2020, your rating will expire in January 2022. You will choose a 2022 cohort in the fall of 2021.

**Q:** What if you are not in a pre-selected cohort?

**A:** Currently, there are no additional openings in remaining 2021 cohorts. There will be an opportunity for non-rated CAPS providers to be placed in cohorts 3 or 4 later this year, but the TARO Option may be limited to Option A. If you are not a CAPS provider, the 2022 cohorts will be published in October. You will be notified of the timeframe in which you may sign up for a 2022 cohort.

**Q:** Will the cohorts be opened back up? It was closed out completely when I signed up.

**A:** There will be additional 2021 cohort slots available later this spring/summer available for unrated CAPS providers only. Occasionally a few slots do become available in a cohort if a provider withdraws before the start of the cohort and notifies Quality Rated. If this happens, a slot becomes available. It is always worth checking in your QR account to see if any slots have become available as the year progresses.

## TARO Eligibility

**Q:** Does TARO eligibility apply to Family Child Care Learning Homes in the same way as centers? Do FCCLHs have the same options?

**A:** Yes, Family Child Care homes have all the same options and eligibility as centers.

**Q:** Who is eligible to participate in a TARO option?

**A:** All providers that have a required reassessment in 2021, unrated providers seeking an initial rating that are already signed up for a 2021 cohort, and those providers who received a TARO rating in 2020 that were required to rerate in 2021 are eligible to participate in TARO. Additional slots will be made available to unrated CAPS providers that need to select a 2021 cohort later this spring. Be on the lookout for correspondence for Quality Rated regarding this.

**Q:** I signed up for the 3-Star but I'm new. Can we still do that?

**A:** If you are seeking an initial rating, you are not eligible to choose TARO Option C. At this time only providers who have been previously rated with an on-site observation are eligible to attempt to maintain or achieve a 3-star rating. However, you are eligible to attempt the Quality Rated Virtual Process – TARO Option B, which allows you to earn up to a 2-Star, two year rating that will help prepare you for an on-site observation when you come up for renewal.

**Q:** If you are in cohort 3 can you participate in option C?

**A:** If you are currently rated with a 1, 2, or 3-star rating that was earned under the traditional QR model with an on-site ERS observation, you can choose Option C.

## ERS

**Q:** Are the Environment Rating Scales being used in the TARO options?

**A:** The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are not used in TARO to assess, observe, score, or rate providers. The ERS instruments are research-based best practices, and the concepts within them have been drawn upon to develop both the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP) – TARO Option B, and the Live Observation – Virtual Experience (LO-VE) – TARO Option C. Participation in either of these two options will help lay a strong foundation for your program's continuous quality improvement and prepare you for future observations with the scales.

## Incentives

**Q:** If you choose option B and you have already been rated before will you get incentives?

**A:** The CAPS/QR Rating Incentives packages will only be available once. If you received a bonus package in 2020, you would not be eligible for a second package. However, we anticipate that there will be some differences in award amounts between the packages offered in 2020 and the revised packages in 2021. If your program and staff received less with the 2020 package than you would receive in 2021, we will pay you the difference. We are still working on this process, and more information will be forthcoming. The Quality Rated Help Desk will have all of the latest information.

## Option C

**Q:** Any options to get a 3 star rating if we were already in a TARO Cohort for a 2 star rating?

**A:** If you are a provider that was previously rated with an on-site observation and signed up for a TARO Cohort Option B (QRVP) you are eligible to switch over to Option C (LO-VE). Option C allows for the issuance

<p>of a 3 Star rating based on the scores achieved in all three TARO components: portfolio completion, Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP), and the Live Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE). The 3 Star Option is available only to those providers who have previously been rated with an on-site observation.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> How long is the LO-VE observation?</p> <p><b>A:</b> The LO-VE observation will last in each classroom for approximately 45 minutes. In Child Care Learning Centers, at least one classroom of each age group enrolled will be scheduled (infants, toddlers, and preschool).</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> How quickly am I observed after I choose Option C?</p> <p><b>A:</b> The LO-VE observation occurs after the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP). All five Topics in the QRVP must be completed before the LO-VE observation will be scheduled. Providers complete the QRVP during the 12-week QRVP Window according to the selected cohort, although providers may finish earlier depending on how quickly they work through the topics. The LO-VE observation/s will be scheduled to occur during the month following completion of the QRVP topics.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> How will the live observation occur, and will it be a one-day virtual observation or over time?</p> <p><b>A:</b> In Child Care Learning Centers, at least one classroom of each age group enrolled will be scheduled (infants, toddlers, and preschool). These observations may all be scheduled to occur on one day, or they could be scheduled with you to occur over a succession of days. We are exploring the use of robotic technology that will be set up in the classroom to fully automate the process, providers will not be required to hold camera phones, laptops, or tablets in order to participate in the observation, and they will not have to supply their own internet for the live link to be established for our LO-VE Auditor to conduct the remote session.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> What if I still do not have any children present at the time of observation?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Only providers that have children physically attending their program can participate in Option B, the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP) and Option C, the Live Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE). Both components require the submission of evidence that documents daily practices with children using video and photographs. Completion of the QRVP occurs prior to the LO-VE visit. You would not be able to get to the LO-VE component if you do not have children in physical attendance.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> Will a provider that was QR in 2018 and experienced a change in location be eligible for Option C?</p> <p><b>A:</b> If you were rated in 2018, you are not currently eligible to be rated this year; your rating was extended to 2022. If you experienced a change of location you may be eligible to have your rating transferred to your new location. Please contact the Quality Rated Help Desk to ask for a Request for Rating Transfer Application.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> If we completed the Pilot and received a two-star rating, do we need to sign up for a cohort in August?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Providers that completed the QRVP pilot (Option B) will have their rating extended to a two-year rating that will expire in 2023. These providers will sign up for a cohort near the end of 2022.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> To clarify, programs rated in the pilot under Option B will receive their rating for 2 years?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Providers that completed the QRVP pilot (Option B) will have a two-year rating.</p>

## QRIG/TA

<p><b>Q:</b> How do I receive a TA and QRIG (Quality Rated Improvement Guide)?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Your TA is typically assigned to you from your regional Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&amp;R) when you click the "Request TA" button in your portfolio. If you do not have a TA and would like one, please visit the DECAL website at <a href="http://www.dec.al.gov/CCS/CCRRSystem.aspx">http://www.dec.al.gov/CCS/CCRRSystem.aspx</a> where you can locate your local CCR&amp;R regional office and request TA assistance. If you are in a 2021 cohort with a TARO Option B or C, we will ensure that you have an assigned TA and QRIG to assist you through the entire QRVP</p>
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process. Your QRIG will invite you to the cohort Orientation that you will need to attend prior to the start of your selected cohort.

**Q:** When and where are the guides going to be available?

**A:** The Quality Rated Improvement Guide's (QRIGs or IGs) will be available to you throughout the three-month QRVP cohort period. They are available by phone, email, and text to assist you with any needs you may have.

**Q:** When will we be assigned an IG?

**A:** You will receive an email from your assigned QRIG the week before the cohort begins, inviting you to a Cohort Orientation session.

## QRVP

**Q:** If some of the OLLI trainings have been previously taken, will they have to be retaken for the required assignments?

**A:** OLLI trainings are not part of the QRVP required assignments. Selected trainings in OLLI are included in the QRVP optional assignments only. The online trainings included in QRVP optional assignments have all been added to OLLI since 2020 and will not have to be repeated for credit, provided the person who took them meets the requirements for credit per QRVP optional assignment instructions.

**Q:** Where/when can we locate the rubrics for QRVP?

**A:** Rubrics are located within ShareFile in the Topic Assignment Folders. Option B participants will receive access to each subsequent topic assignment folder as they complete the previous topic. Due to the expedited timeline for Option C, these providers will receive access to all topic assignment folders at the beginning of the cohort.

**Q:** We were supposed to renew this year but opted to push it until next year. We have a lot of new hires and are having to retrain new staff. Are all the new required trainings on OLLI now?

**A:** OLLI is rapidly expanding to offer more courses. For a current course list, please visit: [www.gapds.decal.ga.gov](http://www.gapds.decal.ga.gov).

**Q:** Will the resources and worksheets that were shown during the webinar be available for providers?

**A:** Yes, the resources and worksheets shown during the webinar were examples of actual samples and resources that are included in the QRVP to support providers as they strive to increase quality in daily practices through their guided QRVP assignments. These resources are located in the ShareFile account that you will be given access to once the QRVP window opens for your cohort, if you are signed up for Option B or Option C.

## QRVP – Topic Assignments

**Q:** Does each classroom have to do the webinars as well as the quizzes at the center, etc.?

**A:** We recommend sharing all pre-requisite webinars and reading materials with all classroom teachers. Reviewing these materials will help teachers gain a foundational understanding of each topic so they can make informed choices about daily practices that promote quality.

Webinar quizzes are completed only by the program director at centers and the family child care provider at Family Child Care programs.

**Q:** Is the QRVP done by every classroom? If you pick option B or C, will all your classes complete the topics or only certain ones?

**A:** QRVP evidence requested is representative of each age group currently enrolled, rather than specific classrooms, and the evidence submitted for that age group represents all classrooms at the site in that age group. Providers are able to select which classrooms within each age group they choose to submit the required evidence from. This is the same regardless of Option B or C choice.

**Q:** If we are in cohort 4, when would the assignments start to be assigned? Our Head Start staff do not work over the summer.

**A:** Following are the cohort timelines for 2021 Cohorts 3 and 4.

*Cohort 3:*

Providers in Cohort 3 need to submit their portfolios by June 30, 2021. QRVP work will be July 1 - September 30, 2021.

*Cohort 4:*

Providers in Cohort 4 need to submit their portfolios by September 30, 2021. QRVP work will be October 1 - December 31, 2021.

**Q:** Where did these topics come from? Are the teachers supposed to do these or administrators?

**A:** These topics are foundational concepts drawn from the Environment Ratings Scales (ERS). They are important to understand and implement into sustainable high quality daily practices. Without a solid understanding of these concepts, directors and teachers alike are not well equipped to consistently implement quality early care and learning on a daily basis. Given the integral nature of these topics on the quality of care and education children receive, it is recommended that both the director and the teachers work together with their TA to complete the QRVP guided CQI process and all required assignments. We found during the pilot that providers actually enjoyed the assignments in the topics and found them helpful in improving their program for all staff levels.

**Q:** Who is responsible for completing the assignments, the teachers, or the director?

**A:** The director completes the online webinar quizzes, while the video evidence requires classroom teachers to participate. Typically, all other tasks within assignments are a coordinated team effort between the director and teachers, directed and chosen by the provider. However, it is typically the director's responsibility to ensure that all evidence is submitted to the ShareFile evidence files so that progression through the topics can occur in a timely manner.

## Ratings

**Q:** How long is the rating good for with option B?

**A:** Providers completing the QRVP (Option B) will earn a two-year rating, regardless of star level achieved. All tasks in the required topic assignments must be completed and submitted for scoring to be eligible for the two-year rating.

**Q:** If this is my first time being rated and I'm being rated with TARO, can I be three stars?

**A:** No. Only providers that have an existing rating which included an on-site observation have the ability to choose Option C, the option that allows up to a 3-star rating.

**Q:** If I am renewing Quality Rated this year via TARO, how many years will this rating last for?

**A:** Providers completing Option A will have a one-year rating. Providers completing Option B or Option C will have a two-year rating. All tasks within the required topic assignments for Option B and C must be completed and submitted for scoring to be eligible for the two-year rating.

**Q:** We are a 3 star center that was signed up for cohort 4. How will this impact us keeping our 3 star rating?

**A:** Providers that have an existing rating which included an on-site observation have the ability to choose Option C. This option allows for up to a 3-star rating to be awarded based on an accumulation of points from the three completed components: Portfolio + QRVP + LO-VE.

**Q:** We are a new center in cohort 3. Does this mean we will not be able to try for 3 stars?

**A:** During 2021, providers that do not have an existing rating can earn a rating of up to two stars. Only providers that have an existing rating which included an on-site observation have the ability to choose Option C, the option that allows up to a 3-star rating.

## Other

**Q:** Where are Instructional Supports located?

**A:** Instructional Supports is the division at DECAL that houses much of DECAL's Professional Development initiatives as well other critical workforce support programs. More information can be found at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/InstructionalSupports/Default.aspx?m>.

**Q:** Why are not all family childcare providers Tier 1 for USDA at this time? Food and supplies have gone up and all schoolchildren are getting free breakfast and lunch so this affects the number of families applying for free or reduced lunch. Is this something Bright From The Start can help with? Being able to provide the children with healthy food should be part of QR.

**A:** We forwarded this question to our nutrition division and received the following response: "While USDA has provided several waiver flexibilities due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, they have not announced a waiver that would automatically qualify family child care learning homes as Tier 1 at this time. (All of the current USDA waivers can be found here:

<http://www.decal.ga.gov/Nutrition/Covid19Resources.aspx>.) There are currently three ways a home can qualify as Tier 1: area eligibility using school or census data, the provider's own income, or the income of the enrolled participants. Please feel free to contact the Nutrition Services Division with any additional questions related the Child and Adult Care Food Program."