

Quality Rated Webinar – 2027 Updates

Attendee Questions

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

These are the questions participants asked during the Quality Rated webinar that took place on Tuesday, August 25, 2026. Excluding a few minor grammatical and spelling edits made by DECAL staff, the questions listed here are written as they were originally submitted in the webinar.

Q Good afternoon, we are still waiting for guidance on when to pick a cohort?

A Cohort selection opens September 28, 2026, with a priority window for those programs that expire in 2027. The priority window closes October 19. Beginning October 20, any program seeking a rating or rerating may choose from the remaining cohort slots. All 2027 expiring providers will continue to have access to the cohort selection screens after their priority window ends on October 19th.

Q During an observation, how do we handle a teacher call out and that is the teacher listed on our portfolio?

A When assessors arrive, they confirm the teacher(s) in the selected classroom(s). If a teacher listed in the portfolio is absent, the classroom will still be observed. The assessor will update the observation's general information to accurately reflect the teachers present during the observation.

Q. Hello, are the new trainings for Standard 2, Item 2.2 (nutrition, physical activity, children's mental health, and language/literacy) the only ones we are required to complete? Will there be a flow chart or "to be done list"?

A The trainings for Item 2.2 are not the only portfolio trainings required. Programs must also complete any training requirements listed in the guidance for other Standards. The portfolio will include additional information for Item 2.2 to help guide completion of that section. Please note: to earn points for language and literacy trainings, staff must complete training beyond the 2 hours required by licensing.

Q Is there going to be a new rating rubric with all the new changes? When and where will it be available?

A Yes, the QR team is working with the DECAL IT Development team to update the current rating rubric. More information will follow as the new rubric is completed. Please note: the new rubric will take effect with programs being rated in 2027. Programs in Cohorts 3 and 4 of 2026 are being rated with the current rubric.

Q Did you say that the trainings will show up in this section (2.2) for the individuals listed in the portfolio or will you view their trainings in Standard 1?

A Once you verify the staff list in Standard 1 by checking the staff who are working in your program, the same list will populate in Standard 2, Item 2.2. The "complete" button must be checked at the bottom of this Item to ensure all staff checked in Standard 1 are correct and appear again in this Standard 2 item.

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Q So we are currently a 3-star FCCLH, but we do not have CAPS children. What do we benefit from continuing to do QR?

A Currently, your program qualifies for the annual QR Workforce Bonus of \$500 per eligible staff person. As a 3-Star provider you carry the prestige and recognition of being committed to the highest levels of quality care and have access to DECAL grants such as Project LITTLE as well as other competitive funding opportunities as they become available. Your program receives priority exposure on the child care search engine within DECAL FAST – the agency’s newly launched website for families, and you can market to your community that quality childcare is of the utmost importance to you.

Q If we are expiring in February, do we have to do Cohort 1 or can we choose 2 or 3?

A At this time, you can choose from any cohort for 2027. You must select the cohort before your expiration date in February, otherwise your rating will expire at that time. Securing a 2027 cohort slot will protect your rating from expiring while you complete the rating process during the cohort you select.

Q Should the nutrition trainings be taken by teachers as well?

A The new Child Well-Being trainings can be taken by any staff person in any combination to earn 4 hours. For example, a teacher could take nutrition training about Farm to ECE for 2 hours and another 2-hour training to better support children’s social/emotional development to earn a total of 4 hours, or they can choose to take 4 hours from one category. Likewise, a non-teaching staff member can take 4 hours of similar training or a combination of training from the various categories to earn their 4 hours.

Q Will there be a tab added on GAPDS for these new Child Well-Being trainings?

A There are no current plans for a tab to be added, but training can be taken in many different forms from different trainers, as well as from OLLI, providing they are DECAL approved. Please work with your CCR&R Coach/Specialist to help select training courses that work best for you and/or your staff. These trainings may also count toward the points you can earn in both Standard 1 and Standard 2.

Q Will material bonuses ever return? As we know, our materials are quite expensive and indoor and outdoor materials really helped.

A As we mentioned during the webinar, we would love to have been able to continue offering materials packages, however the funds that were used to pay for the materials during the early years of Quality Rated were raised by many generous philanthropic partners and organizations to help launch QR. Over the years we have received additional funds which have helped pay for things like the 10-year anniversary materials and marketing refresh for banners/wind signs, etc. The last round of additional federal funding was in response to the COVID Pandemic, and we were able to offer the Quality Rated Restoration Grants. We currently do not have any grants or funding opportunities but are able to use federal funds to continue the QR Workforce Bonus payments. Should any additional grants or philanthropic funds again become available we will continue to look for ways to provide the best support.

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Q Is a Provider required to participate in QR to receive CAPS Scholarship payments?

A Yes, all licensed child care providers are required to be 1, 2, or 3-Star Rated to be eligible to participate in the CAPS program. Newly licensed, or new-to-CAPS providers who have not been rated before are eligible to enroll in the CAPS Provisional Designation which will allow them to be scholarship eligible for 12 months while they work on earning their first rating.

Q If a program has a serious issue that causes probation what timeframe are the CAPS scholarships protected? Compliance should be required quickly so the children are protected along with the QR program.

A We are continuing to develop and refine the parameters for all three of the new Progressive Accountability Designations and will have many more details to share later in 2026.

Q Will centers who participated in the 3-Star Extension Pilot 2026 program need to get reevaluated and join a cohort for 2027?

A Yes! All providers who were extended to 2027 should notice in their QR account that their expiration date was updated to reflect 2027 as the year they expire. This means that as a 2027 expiring provider you will be included in the priority window to select the 2027 rating cohort of choice starting **September 28, 2026**. The priority window ends on October 20, at which time the slots will be made available to all providers who wish to select a slot for 2027. All expiring providers will continue to have access to the cohort selection screens.

Q Will providers that are **already** provisional, but not yet in a group be included in this change?

A No. All CAPS providers who are already designated with the CAPS/QR Provisional Status will either complete the rating process in 2026 or will be placed in Group 1 or 2 for 2027. Only providers who are newly enrolled into the CAPS Provisional Designation from September 1, 2026, onward will be self-selecting their 2027 rating cohort in their Quality Rated account when the cohort selection grid becomes available to them October 20th.

Q How can we get involved in the advisory committee?

A Providers selected to serve on the Quality Rated Advisory Committee serve an 18-month term. The first official in-person meeting of the inaugural committee was March 2026; their term will end September 2027. We hold a competitive application process to invite providers to serve on the committee. During late spring of 2027 we will post an application inviting providers to apply to serve on the next advisory committee. A virtual orientation for incoming committee members will be held in December 2027 with the first official meeting of the second QRAC cohort being held in March 2028.

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Q Is there funding for the QRWB in the budget for 2027?

A Yes! We are planning to continue the QRWB in 2027.