



Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Assigning Ratings~

A consideration when developing a statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is how to designate ratings. States vary in their approaches for designating ratings but three common ways to assign ratings include: **building block approach** (or tiered approach), **points system** or **combination approach** (Child Care Bulletin, 2007). The **building block approach** is when all standards at a lower rating must be met before a higher designated level can be assigned. In a **point system approach** is when every standard is assigned a number of points with higher ratings requiring more points. A **combination** is when together the building block approach and point system determines the program's rating (Child Care Bulletin, 2007)

The most common number of steps is four and the differences between the steps needs to be manageable and achievable (Mitchell, 2005). The goals of a state's QRIS can determine the role of licensing when assigning ratings. If the goal of the state is to recognize existing high quality, then beginning a designation with licensing may not fitting (Mitchell, 2005). However, if the goal is to include as many programs as possible, then beginning with licensing is more appropriate (Mitchell, 2005).

Another piece to assigning ratings is using easily understood symbols to identify each level (Mitchell, 2005). The most common symbol used is stars although some states use gold, silver and bronze seals (Mitchell, 2005).

State Examples:

State	Rating Approach	Number of Steps	Designation Symbols
Colorado	Points	5	Stars
District of Columbia	Building Block	3	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Illinois	Building Block	4	Stars
Indiana	Building Block	4	Levels
Iowa	Combination	5	Levels
Kentucky	Building Block	4	Stars
Maryland	Building Block	4	Level 1, Gold, Silver, Bronze
Montana	Building Block	3	Stars
New Hampshire	Building Block	3	Licensed, Licensed PLUS, Accreditation
New Mexico	Building Block	5	Stars
North Carolina	Points	5	Stars
Ohio	Building Block	4	Stars
Oklahoma	Building Block	4	Stars
Pennsylvania	Building Block	4	Stars
Tennessee	Building Block	4	Stars
Vermont	Points	4	Stars

Resources:

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