



Great Start to Quality Northwest Resource Center Myth Busters and FAQs

Myth # 1.

The consortium now responsible for the delivery of resource center services (ISDs, Head Start, and private partners) means that the unique quality of in home and private providers will be forgotten in favor of more “center based” and/or preschool like settings.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Every partner within the consortium is dedicated to directly support the in home and private providers within their communities on the most individual level possible. We feel very, very strongly that all those caring for young children, including non licensed providers, should have equal access to expertise, materials, and support for the important work they are doing – caring for our children. Through the existing network represented by the consortium ALL providers will have equal access to training, materials, and support.

Myth #2.

There will be no more access to lending library materials.

We know that those who have accessed materials in recent years have valued them a great deal. However, the majority of providers in our 10 county area did not take advantage of these materials. We do not want materials sitting on shelves. It is for this reason that we are making an intentional effort to make these materials more widely available using a less restrictive process. To do so we have deployed them strategically for more easy access. These materials are now placed in Boyne City, Cadillac, Manistee and Traverse City. During the transition we were able to honor many pending requests by providing them directly to you during the moving process.

Moving forward, we would like to help providers access materials by utilizing a system which is not as restrictive. We do not want to have filled shelves of materials unused; we are doing everything we can to have these materials out in the centers and homes where children, providers, and their families will be using them. Rather than a traditional library format, you will have access to these materials by contacting a staff member, or by calling the 877 number. Karen Giudice, who answers the phone, will connect you with the consultant in your area. In working with your consultant to form a goal-based plan, future materials purchased for lending will be determined on a more individualized level to directly fit your personal needs. We are administering the resource funds to support you and you alone. By working with you to promote

quality, it is our intention to support you in doing all you can do and being the best you can be. Our funding is specific to this and we fully intend to serve your needs.

Myth # 3.

I am being forced out of business by Michigan's quality rating system.

Our nation is increasing investments in early childhood care and education. Part of this investment is targeted for early care and education supports for those not connected to other funding supports. With increased investments, there is an increased need for accountability so that dollars are targeted towards specific goals and measures. Michigan (along with 40 states across the country) is committed to providing high quality care during the most significant years of life. While many states have done this for some time, Michigan only recently came aboard. Quality rating systems are designed to use research findings shown to impact positive and optimal child development. The specific elements throughout the rating system have shown to significantly impact the early years. Rather than forcing providers out of business, the quality rating system is an opportunity to show the importance of your work and demonstrate your professionalism. We know that high quality and professionalism occurs in varied settings using varied approaches. The quality rating system and the support provided by the resource center is designed to elevate understanding and recognition of the value of your work and the early childhood care and education profession. Linking dollars with measurable quality indicators in all settings requires consistent measures to be used. This measure is the quality rating system in Michigan known as STARS.

Myth # 4.

The new center stopped the Make Me A Star meetings that I really liked.

We recognize how much those who attended these meetings valued them. It was never our intent to stop them but rather to use them to develop provider learning communities as we continue to support everyone's work. As the transition to the new resource center takes place, the staff intends to utilize the strengths of the prior meeting formats and enhance the program in order to serve your needs to a greater degree. We are committed to the learning community concept and will begin these supportive communities in June. RC staff will be working with you to use quality data to direct the content. These provider learning communities will offer training hours and hands on learning.

Myth 5

"Quality Improvement" means you think that the current level of care is poor.

Absolutely not! During the past year several consortium members were part of a national demonstration project to develop ways to increase the amount of available care in communities... specifically in home care. Rather than intending to eliminate this exceptional option, we want to increase it! This project revealed that rural, in home providers did not have access to the same supports for family engagement, behavioral supports, and ongoing professional development to the same degree that center based programs have. The consortium has set its course on changing that. Rather than eliminate in home child care we want to showcase it and demonstrate how it can uniquely offer high quality experiences and care. We believe in you. Similarly, private centers without additional supports will benefit from the

strength of the consortium through greater access to resources and support in order to continue their important work.

FAQ's

I need my CDA and other trainings to increase my STARS rating...how can I do that?

Good news – the 120 hour CDA course you need to meet this requirement will be offered at a significantly reduced cost to you. We are working with TEACH to ensure more providers in our region can and will access these scholarships as well as work toward developing a regional scholarship program to cover that fee – stay tuned. We intend to significantly increase the number of CDA child care professionals in our region, and will announce the first course offerings just as quickly as our plan is ready to implement .

Why is someone coming to my home/center to do a PQA, and what is it?

The Program Quality Assessment (PQA) will be used as part of the validation process and is a new concept to many providers. We feel it will help you prepare for your validation if you understand this essential tool to be used to assess the quality of your environment and care. Beginning in July, we will be offering “getting to know the PQA” for providers across the region. Our consultants on staff are also available to help prepare you for validation and assessment on an individualized level. These are just two examples of our intention to support you in showcasing your programs and make the quality of your care visible to all. We intend to offer every opportunity for you to feel well prepared for your PQA visit.

I need my GSO training to ensure my reimbursement rate how will I get it?

We will offer monthly GSO opportunities in multiple locations. Trainings will no longer be canceled based on numbers attending. Continue to check the CONNECT calendar for announcements of GSO trainings as well as other professional development opportunities.

How will I know who I go to or where for support? Where is the GStQ Resource Center?

The new resource center and services is not located in one location. In an effort to offer direct service within each of the 10 counties we have staff, services, and resources available through our consortium members. As a provider you will have access to a CONNECT computer and support from an Early Head Start Resource Specialist whose support will provide you with resource materials you may need for your families, provide office type services, and offer community based trainings to meet your training hour needs and to offer to your families. Comprehensive training to accumulate CEUs, hours, and academic credit will be coordinated by 2 Workforce Development Specialists. Rene Beyette from Pine Rest, another consortium partner, will offer social emotional supports, consultations and trainings for all providers. Her services will coordinate social/emotional and behavior support so that all providers can work through the challenges of serving all children. Our 3 Quality Improvement Consultants will guide you in the quality rating systems, your self assessment and developing and achieving your quality improvement plans as informed by your self assessment.

Karen Giudice is the voice behind the 877 phone number that the Resource Center provides. Because she is located at the Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District offices, it might be a little confusing for you to call our number and hear the ISD mentioned on the other end of the phone rather than “Northwest Resource Center.” Karen is tremendously helpful, will guide you to the answer to any questions you have, or direct you to your locally based consultant for more in depth conversations.

When will my quality rating be made public on the CONNECT system?

At this time the notification of the rating system will go public in December 2012 to allow for programs in the process to receive their validation and have time to put in place systems that will ensure their rating is as high as possible. This notification was originally slated for October 2012, however, providers voiced concerns and those have been heard. Therefore, in order to ensure a successful and accurate rating system for providers and parents alike, public access has been shifted accordingly.

What about my CEUs?

Many providers have expressed concern that the CEUs they applied for and paid for are lost – rest assured they are not. The process used by the former center required paper processing that takes some time. We have been in contact with Northwestern Michigan College Extended Education Services, who have assured us that they are trying to speed this process along. You will be receiving this documentation in the mail as you previously did. From this point forward all trainings will use the CEU process facilitated by the ISDs. This is done online, costs only \$2. and maintains an online record of your awarded CEUs that you can access at any time. As trainings occur our staff and consortium partners will walk you through the process to sign up for CEUs at every training you attend.

Why should I feel like this change is going to be for the better?

While we are attempting to communicate as much as possible, time will prove the worth of the consortiums approach as your GStQ Resource Center. As your center director I hope that as questions, concerns, or problems occur you give me a chance to hear them. I am providing you with my personal cell phone number to use 231.409.0048. I cannot more sincerely express that I am here as your advocate and to support you in offering the highest quality of care for our children and support for their families. My commitment to you and to this work is to offering all children and all providers the experience and opportunity to succeed.