# Oregon Equity Lens: Adopted 2013

# Equity Subcommittee Report: 2015

The Early Learning Council adopted the Oregon Equity Lens in July 2013 to guide policy recommendations and community engagement as the state took on the ambitious task of concurrent state system transformations to better support each and every child. The purpose of the Oregon Equity Lens is to clearly articulate the shared goals of our state, the intentional investments we must make to reach our goals of an equitable educational system, and to create clear accountability structures to ensure that we are actively making progress and

Correcting where there is no progress, such as disparities in our graduation rates. The core beliefs around equity, an essential part of the Equity Lens, were created to recognize the institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that have limited access for many children in the Oregon educational system.

The Oregon Equity Lens shall assure kindergarten readiness of Oregon’s underserved children through implemented strategies that align programs, systems and funding in early childhood with a focus on children of color and children living in poverty.

The Early Learning Council (ELC) has directed the Council’s Equity Subcommittee to develop recommendations and a toolkit to align all early learning policy and practice with the Oregon Equity Lens.

**QRIS recommendations in Equity Subcommittee Report:**

Utilize a Language Access Plan

Disaggregate data by Race and Ethnicity

Increase in number of QRIS providers serving underserved communities

Increase in percentage of underserved children in Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) in a 3, 4 or 5 tier QRIS program.

Equity Questions and Concerns regarding QRIS from ELC and ELD response: 2015

The equity questions and concerns that have been raised about QRIS include:

**1) Although community engagement was conducted during the creation of QRIS, some communities of color were not explicitly invited to be deeply engaged in the creation of QRIS.**

1. Obtained feedback from community leaders and Early Learning Council Equity Subcommittee on an engagement plan to listen to and respond to concerns and questions.

2) Conducted focus groups and best-practice-informed surveys with parents, child care providers and

advocates. Questions will be related to practices and values around early childhood. What do parents want

for their children at this age? What’s currently working for them and what isn’t? What are the hopes and

dreams for their children? What currently informs parenting decisions? What currently informs programs’

decisions?

Partnered with culturally-specific community based organizations, early learning hubs, and child care

resource and referral agencies to engage with Spanish speaking, Eastern European, African American, Native

American and rural communities with additional communities identified through ongoing community

engagement work

(See Community Engagement Summary)

Seek an independent, third-party to conduct engagement.

3) Identify relevant race, ethnicity and cultural characteristics of populations participating in QRIS (TRI

QRIS Process Evaluation). (See Equity Data)

4) Disaggregate current process evaluation data and program feedback by relevant race, ethnicity and

cultural characteristics to understand barriers, needs, benefits, cultural relevancy of the QRIS specifically (TRI

QRIS Process Evaluation).(See DHS data facts, Equity deliverable facts)

5) Conduct focus groups with underserved populations participating in the QRIS to understand barriers, needs,

benefits, cultural relevancy of the QRIS specifically. (See community engagement summary)

6) Conduct focus groups with those not participating in QRIS to understand barriers, needs, benefits, cultural

relevancy of the QRIS specifically. (See community engagement summary)

7) Circle back with focus groups and community leaders to share what was heard and invite feedback on next

steps.

8) Added individuals from underserved communities to the QRIS leadership - including providers, community based organizations and researchers with expertise in increasing quality in racially/ethnically diverse programs

and in working with culturally specific populations of parents to access early learning services (Build participation, Think Tank participation, Implementation Team participation)

**2) There is a concern about the quality standards and whether they inherently favor dominant culture providers.**

1) Define a process and team for mapping the standards to an inclusive vision of quality and equity.

2) Update a literature review on culturally responsive practice in child care to inform the equity mapping of the standards.

3) Complete the mapping of standards.

4) Compile a listing of gaps and identified needs to be used with the results of the Validations Studies 1 and 2 and the QRIS Process Evaluation Study to revise QRIS Standards.

5) Continue work to highlight a broad range of exemplars of “quality”- based on QRIS Standards and demonstrate through video, photos, and interviews what the range and diversity of standards can look like in practice and meet the criteria of quality (TRI QRIS Team)

**3) There is a concern about whether there is an equity lens applied within the standards. Are providers that have a focus on equity being recognized for that commitment?**

Once engagement work has been conducted determine whether additional equity standards should be created.

**4) There are concerns about which child care providers are currently accessing the QRIS. Are resources going to those who need them most?**

1) Elevate programs and policies that serve children and families in all forms of care settings.

2) Once engagement and standards equity mapping has taken place, evaluate current and potential strategies for reaching underserved communities. (See Spark entry guidelines)

3) Shift communications around QRIS to focus less on the number of providers involved, and focus more on the fact that the project is still in a field test and highlight learnings and challenges as well as successes.

4) Communicate about QRIS in a manner that provides valuable insight and tools for license-exempt providers

5) Consider hiring an outside firm to conduct an evaluation of the extent to which racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse child care providers and families are accessing the QRIS

6) Engage ELC Equity subcommittee and key partners in identifying how to collect data on equity and diversity in a responsible manner

7) Based on feedback and in partnership, evaluate effectiveness of and make adjustments to the Focused Child Care Networks grants.

8) Based on feedback and in partnership, adjust contracting practices, requiring more concrete action from Child Care Resource and Referral related to equity and culturally specific providers, including evaluating the racial/ethnic diversity of staff. (See Contractors’ Equity Deliverables)

9) Based on feedback and in partnership, adjust contracting practices to diversify quality improvement contractors, expanding beyond the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, working with community based organizations that have cultural expertise and trust in communities of color.

10) Based on feedback, consider increasing submission incentives for non-English speaking QRIS portfolio submission

11) Add an addendum to the Quarterly QRIS Process Evaluation Report focused specifically on equity and convene QRIS implementation team for discussion of implications

12) Focus intentionally on increasing the diversity of participation in the Child Care and Education Coordinating Council (CCECC)

5) There are questions about the extent to which the state should be focusing on licensed providers. Does the focus on the QRIS (and as a result, licensed child care providers) unintentionally exacerbate inequities?

1) Elevate programs and policies that serve

children and families in all forms of care

settings.

2) Communicate about QRIS in a manner that provides valuable insight and tools for license exempt providers

3) Bring together a quality learning environments campaign planning team with membership from culturally-specific community based organizations, rural communities and the Early Learning Division among others

**6) There is concern that the QRIS could lead providers to increase prices and price-out families they previously served.**

1) Hire an independent contractor to investigate how star-rated programs have shifted their practices (specifically rates) and who they serve.

2) Share results of investigation with Early Learning Division Equity Subcommittee and other partners

3) Use results of analyzing shift in programs practice with other QRIS Process Evaluation Study and Validation Studies results to adjust QRIS Standards and processes.

## Creation of QRIS Revision Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles: Fall, 2015

Ensure inclusion of diversity of cultures, communities of color, ethnicities, languages and abilities using the Oregon Equity Lens

 Be comprehensive but not cumbersome for providers

 Be sustainable and prioritize resources to increase access to quality care

for children, families and communities furthest from opportunity

 Increase professionalism of the Early Learning field by encouraging

continuous quality improvement across all levels of the system (system,

workforce, program)

 Be efficient, effective and build upon existing systems

 Build upon the rich knowledge and expertise of Oregon’s families and

communities to support families as they choose child care

 Provide objective and understandable standards in accessible formats

 Be understood and valued by all stakeholders

Explicitly focus on equity and reflecting diversity of cultures, communities of color, ethnicities, languages and abilities

Revision Recommendations: 2016 NEED TO ADD  
Highlight equity

## Equity Deliverables added to Early Learning Division Contracts: 2016

All contractors required to complete specific equity deliverables including an equity self assessment, action plan, structural racism training, and equity data review.

## Spark Combined Standards:

## Changes to Spark based upon the above equity concerns: 2017

**Participation:**

Field Test:

Only licensed programs could participate.

Spark:

Any program serving children can enter into Spark, access resources, and participate in CQI process. At 3-Star level programs need to meet licensing requirements.

**Standards:**

**3 star Standards:**

Create an achievable meaningful entry level rating for programs. Programs and providers facing structural or systemic barriers can achieve a rating. Programs have access to sustainable funding (DHS provider incentives) earlier in their quality improvement process. Increase the supply of 3-Star programs for parents (parents with subsidy can have greater access to reduced copays).

**1. Title: Environment (3-Star)**

Standard: The program’s indoor and outdoor environments, furnishings, and materials support children’s learning and development.

Equity rationale: This standard is designed to recognize programs for providing appropriate activities, materials, routines and schedules for children without the need to purchase a curriculum or do lesson planning. This change makes it achievable for programs that have barriers to using a standardized curriculum, such as limited English language proficiency.

**2. Title: Inclusiveness of Children, Families, and Cultures (3-Star)**

Standard: The program welcomes all children and families.

Equity rationale : This standard supports authentic engagement of diverse families and children.

**3. Title: Educator Qualifications (3-Star, 4 star, 5 star)**

Standard: Educators are presently qualified to serve in their positions through education, training, and experience**.**

Equity rationale: Structural barriers exist which have caused undue burden for some communities. Increasing access to ERDC incentive payments enables providers to utilize these funds to offset professional development costs.

**4 star Standards:**

**1. Title: Environment (4-Star)**

Standard: The indoor and outdoor environments are purposefully arranged and organized to support current interests, developmental stages, and routines.

Equity rationale: This standard is intentional in representing the cultures of children and families in the program.

**2. Title: Inclusiveness of children, families, and cultures (4-Star)**

Standard: Programs partner with families to support children’s learning and development.

Equity rationale: Requiring the ASQ created equity issues, as it is not available in all languages. ASQ will continue to be an option but not required for all programs. This standard is intentional in representing the cultures of children and families in the program. This standard is intentional in guiding programs to respect and incorporate the values and beliefs of families into the caregiving practices. This standard supports authentic engagement of diverse families and children.

**5 star Standards:**

**1. Title: Family Engagement (5-Star)**

Standard: Program provides opportunities for families to be engaged in program planning, develop relationships with other families, and access parenting resources.

Equity rationale: Programs serving culturally and linguistically families may have limited access to community resources. Standard creates the opportunity for families to be connected to resources they may not have been aware of. Standard addresses the ways in which different program types engage families for input.

2**. Title: Individualized Curriculum (5-Star)**

Standard: Program uses planned curriculum that supports children’s learning and development. Program uses information from multiple sources (assessments, ongoing child observations, child’s interests, and family input) to individualize curriculum for each child.

Equity rationale: This approach to curriculum allows programs to demonstrate intentionality in individualized curriculum without requiring a specific, formal curriculum. This removes barriers for culturally and linguistically diverse programs.

Flexibility in the choice of assessment strategies removes the barriers of expense and accessibility related to some formal assessment tools and related training. The practice of individualizing for all children addresses each child’s unique needs and strengths. This standard is intentional in representing the cultures of children and families in the program. Assessment options rather than specific formal assessment requirements allow successful completion of this standard, as most formal assessment tools are not available in multiple languages, culturally responsive or accessible to all program types**.**

**3. Title: Supporting Relationships (5-Star)**

Standard: Program practices support children and families in building positive relationships with staff, other children, and families in the program.

Equity rationale: This standard recognizes and supports relationships on multiple levels that enhance the experience of children, families and staff and creates strong communities. Positive and consistent relationships mitigate other risk factors that may be experienced by children and families, particularly those furthest from opportunity.

## Coming: Equity Driven Spark Supports, Incentives, Recruitment: 2017