



Quality Improvement Journey Packet

NOTE: This document is subject to change.

Revised 7-15-21

Make sure to take a look at the free resource on our [website](#) to see how to list job and childcare openings at your facility, add your organization to our Resource Roadmap and more!

Specific to our Colorado Shines program, we have created several documents and webinars to support participating programs.

Go to: <https://rmecc.org/colorado-shines/>

- This webpage referenced throughout this packet -

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Section 1

Introduction



Welcome to Fiscal Year '22! It is our pleasure to continue to be a small part of everyone's hard work and dedication to providing high quality care for children and their families throughout our four-county region!

To date, with the collaboration of our region's Coaching Agencies and their highly credentialed coaches, we continue to support more than 100 programs on a variety of initiatives. Currently, 77 out of 120 licensed programs in Eagle, Garfield, Lake and Pitkin counties have ratings of Level 2 or higher (68%) and 45 of those are Level 3-5 (39%) which is considered high quality as defined by the state.

Whether you are brand new or have been participating in Colorado Shines over the past five years, this is a helpful packet that has a variety of important, updated documents you may need during your quality improvement journey. It is meant to be a user's manual to help you accomplish all you need to do in Colorado Shines.

Good luck and let us know how we can continue to support you on your quality improvement journey!

This section includes:

- ✓ Who is the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council?

Who is the RMECC?

Mission: To promote and support a system of quality, accessibility, and affordability of early childhood for families in the rural resort region.

The Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council (RMECC) is a coalition of community members and agencies working together to create a high quality, comprehensive early childhood system to benefit all young children, families and providers. We are a 4-county collaborative that covers Eagle, Garfield, Lake and Pitkin counties, and we are continually striving to build strong local partnerships to assure young children and their families have access to high quality health, mental health, early care and learning systems and family supports.

The RMECC receives funds from Federal, State and local foundations that support our regional Early Childhood efforts. The Council works closely with coaches, agencies and other professionals in our region who deliver direct services to eligible licensed early childhood programs.

RMECC Contact information

Stacy Petty, MS

Director

rmecc@mtnvalley.org

719-486-7273

Kristin Sparkman, BA

Early Childhood Specialist

rmeccspecialist@mtnvalley.org

719-293-2378

Contact Stacy if you are in need of help with the following:

- ✓ Membership
- ✓ Available grant funding
- ✓ PDIS Credentials
- ✓ Active Council Committees

Call Kristin if you are in need of help with the following:

- ✓ Technical Assistance with your QRIS or PDIS account
- ✓ This QI Journey Packet
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Events and Training

Section 2

Colorado Shines Quality Improvement Information

This section includes:

- ✓ OEC Funding Overview and Eligibility
- ✓ The Program Guide and helpful links

STUCK?

Kristin Sparkman can help you!
719-293-2378

*Make sure to use **Google Chrome** while working in Colorado Shines

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
Funding Overview & Eligibility

Available Colorado Shines Funding

Coaching



CSQI Funding Application

Requirements:

- Actively participate in coaching with your assigned CSQI coach
- Improve the program's overall quality and Colorado Shines rating
- Implement coaching recommendations to achieve QI goals

Quality Improvement



Allowable QI Expenses:

- Approved, allowable quality improvement materials
- Substitutes or overtime expenses related to Quality Improvement activities
- Professional Development

Capital Improvement



CI Application

Eligibility:

- Serve infants and toddlers.
- Signed CSQI MOU
- Active CCAP Fiscal Agreement
- Programs can apply every other year.
- Have an eligible project

Focus:

- Expansion of I/T slots
- Enhancing quality experiences of infant and toddler settings

CSQI FUNDING – COACHING & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ONLY

- As long as funding is available, programs are eligible for a one-time award per fiscal year.
- Quality Improvement dollars are split equally between coaching and quality improvement in order to meet grant requirements.
- Your coach will work with you on the best way to support your program and improve quality to meet state grant requirements.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

- If your program is participating in CSQI funding described above, has an active CCAP agreement, has not received capital improvement before and you are licensed to serve infants and/or toddlers, you may qualify for additional capital improvement funding
- Programs interested in CI funding must watch our webinar and set up a meeting with Stacy to discuss your project idea and details about the process.
- RMECC Webinar and application materials: <https://rmecc.org/colorado-shines/>
- To schedule a time to meet with Stacy via Zoom follow [this](#) link (45 minutes is recommended)

Colorado Shines Program Guide

The Program Guide offers resources to support you on the journey with the Colorado Shines Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS). Its purposes are to:

- Help programs understand the structure, requirements and benefits associated with Colorado Shines.
- Provide a detailed overview of the rating levels and what is expected of each level.
- Serve as an ongoing reference tool for programs.



Program Guide Links-Quick Reference: These are video links to the mostly commonly used resources in the Program Guide!

- **How to update your QRIS Portal Information:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0jzr_lfcds&list=PL25prHXT-MchyDA3FMR31UVilreSr4YGy&index=3
- **How to apply for QI funds:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCKWaVNrUkk>
- **How to submit for a Level 2:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyk40vEOrc&list=PL25prHXT-MchyDA3FMR31UVilreSr4YGy&index=6>
- **How to submit for a Level 3-5 rating:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzngU8GDzQQ&list=PL25prHXT-MchyDA3FMR31UVilreSr4YGy&index=4>

For the **full** Colorado Shines Program Guide visit

<https://www.coloradoshines.com/> or click on the link below:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fb0kM1aGo7OwqUYFXEDHnShQ0od3gcc0/view>

Section 3

Coaching Services

This section includes:

- ✓ Coaching Services
- ✓ Coaching Agency Contacts
- ✓ Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)

Coaching & Consultation Services

The purpose of CSQI coaching involves actively working with a CSQI coach. Your assigned coach will help support your program and your QI goals to maximize spending impacts and act as a local resource to help improve overall quality and help you increase your Colorado Shines rating.

Coaching is based on individual program needs for Levels 2-5. You will work with one of our very experienced, credentialed coaches from your area! To ensure quality support, the RMECC and your coach work closely together.

This menu is not meant to be exclusive but a way to show the scope of available supports. Other supports/topics are available based on program need. The experienced, credentialed coach will partner with the director to identify program needs and the best way to achieve program goals.

Assessments:

- Conducting Environment Rating Scales (ECERS/ ITERS/FCCERS)
- CLASS Assessments (Infant/Toddler/Pre-K)
- DECA Assessments & follow-up
- Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)
- Business Administration Scale
- Program Administration Scale
- Certified Playground Safety Inspection
- TPOT/TPITOS (Pyramid Plus Assessments)
- Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD Scale)

Colorado Shines:

- Colorado Shines activities including but not limited to:
 - Building Quality Improvement goals and plans based on assessment results
 - Colorado Shines Level 3-5 rating preparation
 - Policy development
 - Post-rating coaching & supports

Professional Development:

- Professional Development planning for professionals
- Professional Development Information System (PDIS) supports
- Reflective Supervision for directors and/or staff
- Staff Development topics based on program/individual staff need
- Practice Based Coaching (observation, informed feedback, goal setting, reflection)
- Expanding Quality Infant & Toddler training and coaching
 - With class enrollment or for participants in the past 2 years
 - LENA Grow - Program currently operating as a limited pilot, but will be expanding over the next year
- Training days for individual programs based on topics identified by Directors that will address:
 - Health and safety
 - Quality improvement
 - Social emotional development/teacher-child interaction
 - Trauma informed care
 - Self-care
 - Curriculum and activities
 - Child development
 - Dual Language
 - Other topics based on program need

Program & Family:

- Classroom environment, schedule, transitions, activities, and lesson planning
- Curriculum development & implementation
- Guidance strategies training and individualized behavior supports
- Referral to services
- Family Supports
- Support with licensing issues
- Developmentally Appropriate and Best Practices
- Parent Coaching

Social/Emotional:

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Flip-It training and implementation coaching
- Incredible Years Dinosaur School training and implementation coaching
- Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management training and implementation coaching
- Pyramid Plus Coaching
- Early Intervention Services for children who do not qualify at 33% level

Coaching Agency Contacts

Eagle and Lake Counties:

Liz Costaldo, Program Director
Early Childhood Partners
970-390-8362

<https://earlychildhoodpartnerscolorado.org/>



Garfield County:

Kelly Esch, Executive Director
Early Childhood Network
970-928-7111

<https://www.earlychildhoodnet.org/>



Pitkin County:

Shirley Ritter, Executive Director
Kids First
970-920-5363

<https://www.cityofaspen.com/235/Kids-First>

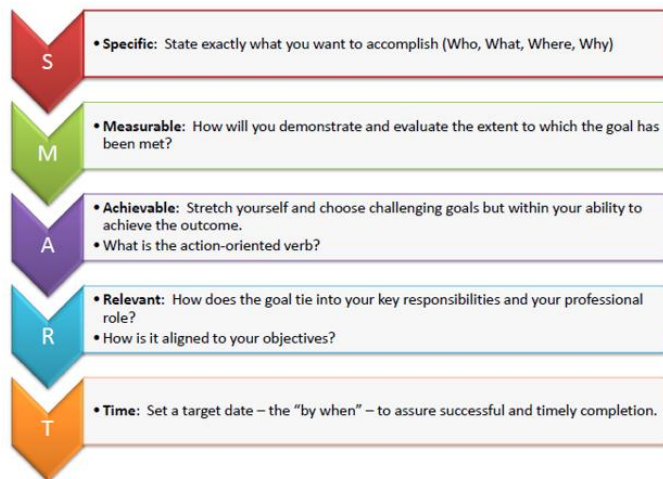


Quality Improvement Plans

All grant expenditures must tie to a Quality Improvement Plan Goal. Your coach will support you in developing the goals for your program. Orders *cannot* be approved unless we have a goal to tie the order to.

How to Create/Update QIP Goals:

1. Log in to your QRIS portal
2. Click on *Quality Improvement*
3. Under each Domain, select the Category and Criteria that best fits your desired goal.
4. Choose "On-Going," or "High" Status for each **active** goal
5. Mark any previous goals, you are no longer working on, as **Completed**.
6. In the main box, develop a SMART goal using the process below (see example as well).



Example: By June of 20___, our program will purchase and begin implementing the Creative Curriculum in both of our preschool classrooms. This curriculum will help us improve the quality and consistency of our school because of its alignment with Colorado's ELDGs.

Section 4

Spending QI Dollars in EcConnect

This section includes:

- ✓ Frequently Asked Questions
- ✓ Spending QI Dollars in EcConnect
- ✓ Reimbursements
- ✓ Contact Directory

STUCK?

Kristin Sparkman can help you!
719-293-2378

Frequently Asked Questions

EcConnect site: <https://home.ecconnectcolorado.org/auth/login>

- **I think I'm ready to spend my dollars, where do I start?** Once you have met with your coach to develop your QI Plan and have chosen appropriate materials that will help increase quality in your program, choose which *Approved Vendor* you want to shop with (see pg. 16).
- **What kind of materials can I purchase with my QI dollars?** Materials that will benefit children *directly* and/or help increase your Colorado Shines rating. Also allowed: evidence-based professional development that count towards a professional's credential. Your coach or Council staff can answer questions about allowability.
- **Do I need approval for the materials I purchase?** Yes, both your Coach and the Council must approve all QI spending. In some cases, we must secure special approval from the state.
- **What type of furniture is best?** The state requires "commercial grade" furniture with a warranty; see Approved Vendor list.
- **How long does it take to receive my materials?** It can take up to 12 weeks depending on the vendor. Please plan accordingly, allowing yourself plenty of time to receive your items.
- **What is a PO #?** This is the Purchase Order Number. This is the main number to use when referencing your order. This number will be on the confirmation email you receive after your request has been approved.
- **Can I go back into ecConnect to see previous orders?** No, however, Kristin will send you a copy of your items once the order is placed with the vendor.



Don't forget:

- Choose your items thoughtfully**, as changing your order once it is placed may not be possible.
- Always use vendor's ONLINE catalogs for current pricing!**
- Create only ONE QI Request PER Vendor** (ie: place your order with *Lakeshore*, then go back to the home page, and place a different order with the next vendor).
- DO NOT enter discounts or shipping costs**, as these are calculated by each individual vendor.
- DO NOT contact the vendor!** If you contact the vendor and place a new order or change/alter an existing order, you will be held fiscally responsible for any invoices.
- Oops! I'm having problems with ecConnect...An item is broken...I received a duplicate order... I need to exchange something... Who do I call?** Never fear- Kristin Sparkman is here! Please call if you have ANY problems or questions.
- Your shipping address is your physical address** and where your materials will be delivered. Shippers cannot deliver to PO boxes.
- Enter your QIP goals** before placing your requests. It can take up to 3 days for the new goals to sync with the system.

Spending QI Dollars in ecConnect

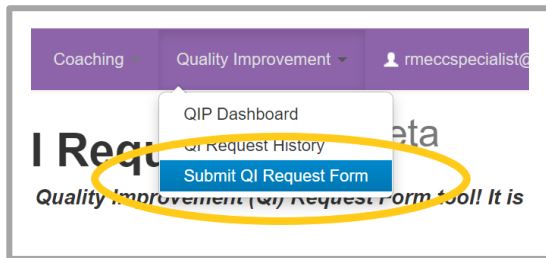
For resources and step-by-step video instructions, check out our [website!](#)

To get started:

- ✓ Read through the Frequently Asked Questions
- ✓ Use the **ecConnect Order Form**, located on our website. Using the order form and the vendor's website will help you to capture the Item Name, Number, Quantity, and Total Price on one document
- ✓ For help placing a QI request refer to page 16 in this packet for a full list and follow the links to step-by-step videos:
 - Marketplace Vendors (Lakeshore, Kaplan, Discount School Supply & School Specialty) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2lciDRBAzw>
 - Preferred Vendors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSYyJqHWEus>

General Spending Directions:

1. **Log in** to ecConnect (or create an account if you have never logged in before).
2. Click on **Quality Improvement/Submit QI Request Form:**



3. Select the correct funding stream and QI requisition
4. **Verify your shipping (physical) address** is accurate. Click the "Make a correction" button if need be.
5. Here you can choose to shop with a **Market Place Vendor** or **Other Approved Vendor**.
6. Select **Learning Environment** for the QIP Goal Category and **Direct to Approved Vendor**.
7. You will then type **a short explanation** of how these materials will help increase quality throughout the program. "**Sign**" your name and click **submit!**

Once your QI Request is approved and placed:

8. Kristin will email you a copy of your items once your order is placed with the vendor.
9. Once the vendor has shipped the order, Kristin will e-mail you a detailed invoice.

LAST STEP! Verify Receipt of Materials:

10. Make sure all of your materials are accounted for, verifying the packing slips with the **detailed invoice**.
11. Simply respond to the email verifying receipt of all materials.

Reimbursements:

ALLOWABLE REIMBURSEMENTS:

You might submit a reimbursement for a number of circumstances including the following:

- ✓ Capital Improvement projects
- ✓ Temporary Teacher expenses
- ✓ Professional development expenses

The process and paperwork needed will vary depending on the specific circumstance. Due to the complexity and individual nature of reimbursements, you will need to work directly with Kristin for deadlines, information needed and next steps.

REMEMBER:

- ✓ **Important: Any and ALL reimbursements need Coach and Council pre-approval**
- ✓ Reimbursements cannot be processed until **all** documents are received.
- ✓ It takes approximately 6-8 weeks to receive a reimbursement due to the state billing process.

MATERIALS:

Approved vendors generally must be used when purchasing materials and reimbursements will only be accepted in *unusual* circumstances. You can certainly discuss any materials with your coach and she will be able to determine if the items meet the high standards set by the state before bringing it to the Council for consideration.

What are the perks for using Approved Vendors?

- Free shipping and discounted prices
- No out-of-pocket costs to you (except in rare circumstances)
- Great warranties (5 years for materials and limited lifetime for furniture)
- Commercial grade materials meant for the childcare industry
- You get the opportunity to buy first-class, high-quality materials that will last
- All materials meet state and federal standards
- Developmentally appropriate materials
- The Council processes all paperwork
- We are a liaison between the vendors and programs

APPROVED VENDOR SHEET - Updated 7-1-21

NOTE: Programs should utilize vendor websites to estimate the most current pricing.

ONLY THE VENDOR OR COUNCIL CAN ENTER DISCOUNTS OR SHIPPING COSTS!!!

Marketplace Vendors

Utilizes the Punchout (Shopping Cart) System

Rating	VENDOR	WEBSITE	DISCOUNT
★★	Lakeshore Learning Materials	lakeshorelearning.com	7% off all non-sale items processed through the ecConnect Punchout (Shopping Cart) Process and free shipping.
★★	Discount School Supply	discountschoolsupply.com	20% off & Free Shipping on all items processed through the ecConnect Punchout Process
★★	Kaplan Early Learning Company	kaplanco.com	18% on all items purchased through the ecConnect Punchout Process* & free Shipping over \$100 *Excluded items include sale, product promotion, coupons, gift certificates, bids, quotes, playground & assessment tools.
★★	School Specialty / Child Craft	schoolspecialty.com	30% on regularly priced supplies 15% on all regularly priced furniture Free Shipping on all items processed through the ecConnect Punchout Process

Preferred Vendors

Rating	VENDOR	WEBSITE	DISCOUNT
★	Becker's School Supplies	shopbecker.com	15% off regularly priced items and free shipping on orders over \$99, excluding furniture and equipment items marked with freight truck icons on the website or a red check mark in the printed catalog
★	Community Playthings	communityplaythings.com	Free shipping and 10 year warranty
★	Kodo Kids	kodokids.com	Free shipping
★	Constructive Playthings	constructiveplaythings.com	*10% off items from catalog or website. Free shipping over \$200 *Exclusions apply
★	Teaching Strategies	teachingstrategies.com	Free shipping
★	Autism Community Store	autismcommunitystore.com	5% discount + Free Shipping
★	Bookies Bookstore	thebookies.com	Up to \$749.99 = 15%, \$750-\$2,999.99 = 20%, over \$3,000 = 25% In-store pickup & reimbursement only
★	Brookes Publishing	brookespublishing.com	10% and free shipping

Rating Legend

Ratings based on service and performance experience of both the Council and providers

★★	Great customer service and uses the punchout ordering system
★★	Good customer service and uses the punchout ordering system
★	Great customer service
★	Good customer service
★	Little or no experience with this vendor

Contact Directory

Coaching Agencies			
Liz Costaldo Early Childhood Partners	Eagle & Lake	liz@ecpartners.org https://earlychildhoodpartnerscolorado.org	970-390-8362
Kelly Esch Early Childhood Network	Garfield	Kelly@earlychildhoodnet.org https://www.earlychildhoodnet.org	970-928-7111
Shirley Ritter Kids First	Pitkin	Shirley.ritter@cityofaspen.com https://www.cityofaspen.com/235/Kids-First	970-920-5370
Colorado Shines (QRIS) & Professional Development Information System (PDIS)			
QRIS & PDIS Help Desk		cdhs_coshines@state.co.us cdhs_pdishelp@state.co.us	844-447-4441
Colorado Child Care Assistance Program			
Samantha Markovitz	Eagle County	sam.markovitz@eaglecounty.us	970-401-0722
Sonia Luna	Lake County	Sonia.Luna@state.co.us	719-293-1504
Magali Ruiz	Garfield County	mruiz@garfield-county.com	970-625-5282, X 3212
Diane Cerise	Garfield County	dcerise@garfield-county.com	970-625-5282, X 3251
Ligia Bonilla	Pitkin County	ligia.bonilla@pitkincounty.com	970-319-4211
Child Care Licensing Contacts			
Sandy Jennings	Eagle County	Sandra.jennings@state.co.us	720-660-7136
Katie Fightmaster	Lake County	kfightmaster@discovermygoodwill.org	719-243-1953
Rebecca Romeyn	Garfield & Pitkin	romeyn@garfield-county.com	970-945-9191, X 3066
Mark Lapka	County	mlapka@garfield-county.com	970-319-3570
Licensing Hotline	Statewide		303-866-5948
Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Council			
Stacy Petty Director		rmecc@mtnvalley.org	719-486-7273
Kristin Sparkman Early Childhood Specialist		rmeccspecialist@mtnvalley.org	719-293-2378