



QUALITY COUNTS

Striving for High Quality Early Learning



QUALITY COUNTS PROVIDER MANUAL

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Section I. The Program

About Quality Counts

Quality Counts is a voluntary quality improvement system that reviews early learning programs in Miami-Dade County according to clearly defined, high quality standards and offers supports and incentives to help providers reach their goals. Our goal is to improve the quality of early care and education programs in Miami-Dade County.

Quality Counts is different from both child care licensing and accreditation. Child care licensing regulations are basic requirements that must be met in order to be a legally operating child care program. Accreditation represents an achievement of quality, typically through self-study and verification, yet does not focus on continuous quality improvement. Quality Counts is a comprehensive quality improvement and support system that creates high quality early learning programs through fostering a culture of continuous reflection and quality improvement.

Quality Counts is currently in its 9th year of operation and serves over 400 providers, including licensed centers, family child care homes, Head Start programs, and Redlands Christian Migrant Association programs. The system has recently undergone a transformation with major changes to the standards, supports, benefits, and general procedures. This document describes in detail, the policies and procedures of Quality Counts.

Our Partners

The Children's Trust and the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe County partner with several organizations to implement Quality Counts in Miami-Dade County. You will come to know and work with many of these partners as a result of your participation in Quality Counts. Please see the list of partners and their role in serving the participants of Quality Counts.

[The Children's Trust](#) is the primary funder of Quality Counts as well as many other early childhood programs throughout the county. Their mission is to partner with the community to improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County by making strategic investments in their futures. Their team of experts is

responsible for collaborating with Quality Counts partners in determining the design and strategic planning of Quality Counts.

[The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe County](#) (ELC) is the organization that implements Quality Counts in collaboration with The Children's Trust. The ELC employs the Director of Quality Counts, a Project Manager, a Project Coordinator, a Rating and Support Specialist, a Support Grant Coordinator, and a Research Assistant. This team is responsible for Quality Counts operations.

[Devereux Florida](#) is the agency responsible for conducting all formal assessments for Quality Counts providers. Their team of reliable assessors is trained in the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R), the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS-R), the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS-R) and the Pre-K, Toddler, and Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

[Florida International University](#) (FIU) is the organization that offers technical assistance and accreditation support to Quality Counts providers in the southern part of Miami-Dade County. Their team consists of a manager and several highly qualified Quality Improvement Specialists (QIS) that offer targeted support to providers during the quality improvement process.

[Family Central, Inc.](#) (FCI) is the organization that offers technical assistance, accreditation support, and child mental health supports to Quality Counts providers in the northern part of Miami-Dade County. FCI also offers county-wide school readiness enhancements. Their team consists of a manager, several highly qualified Quality Improvement Specialists (QIS), mental health clinicians, and a specialized instructor that offer targeted support to providers during the quality improvement process.

[United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education](#) (UW) is the organization that provides technical assistance, career advising, and accreditation support to Quality Counts providers in the central area of Miami-Dade County. Providers located in this area are piloting a hybrid technical assistance model where their QIS will serve as Quality Improvement Specialists and Career Advisors. Their team consists of a manager and several highly qualified Quality Improvement Specialists/Career Advisors (QIS/CA) that offer targeted support to providers during the quality improvement process. UW is also responsible for providing

Quality Counts programs with county-wide training to support each component of the Quality Counts Standards. The Center is an innovative learning, teaching, and training institute dedicated to elevating the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade and beyond. The Center models proven best practices through its Demonstration School, and shares those practices with adult learners including parents, educators and child care providers.

[The Children's Forum](#) administers the Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Project, which provides education-based salary supplements to early childhood teachers, and the Quality Counts scholarship program funded by The Children's Trust. They also operate the [Quality Counts Career Center](#) (QCCC) and the [Professional Development Registry](#). The QCCC employs a team of Career Advisors (CA) that guide practitioners in their career and education goals as well as work with directors and owners of programs to create an environment conducive to continuing education and training. The Registry is responsible for gathering and verifying practitioners' information in Miami-Dade County for the purpose of generating a score in the Staff Qualification standard for Quality Counts.

[University of Miami Mailman Center for Child Development](#) (UM) is the organization that offers child mental health supports to Quality Counts providers in the southern part of Miami-Dade County. Their team consists of a coordinator and several highly qualified Mental Health Specialists that offer individual intervention for children and parent/ primary caregiver consultation.

[Citrus Health Network](#) is the organization that offers child mental health supports to Quality Counts providers in the central part of Miami-Dade County. Their team consists of a coordinator and several highly qualified Mental Health Specialists that offer individual intervention for children and parent/ primary caregiver consultation.

Quality Standards

The standards represent two features of an early learning experience that have the greatest impact on children. They are based on research as well as national trends in

QRIS. Each standard has specific requirements at different levels of quality. Quality Counts focuses on two (2) standards: Staff Qualifications and Learning Environment. You can access the full standards document by visiting the [Quality Counts](http://www.maimiqualitycounts.com) website (www.maimiqualitycounts.com). The standards for centers and for family child care homes are available in English and Spanish.

Providers must answer questions and upload supporting evidence to show that the program meets each requirement in order to receive credit. In addition to uploading evidence, providers will have their classrooms observed by independent assessors. Programs will complete the renewal process every 18 months, and are expected to improve their quality each time.

Supplemental Guidelines for Quality Improvement

Providers that are interested in additional quality improvement guidelines can refer to the Supplemental Guidelines found on the Quality Counts website. They are available in both English and Spanish. As a supplement to the Quality Counts standards, this document is meant to be an additional resource in quality improvement and includes three areas:

1. Health and Safety
2. Ratio and Group Size
3. Program Administration

As such, it outlines guidelines and provides a breakdown of indicators that describe what a program's general level of quality will be when the guidelines are being met.

It is important to note that these guidelines are not a requirement for participating in Quality Counts. They are, however, strongly encouraged to attain a high quality of care.

Benefits to Providers

Support services and financial incentives available for programs include:

1. On-site coaching and technical assistance for quality improvement: Each program participating in Quality Counts is assigned a Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS) who is dedicated to supporting the program in the quality improvement process. A QIS works closely with program staff, specifically teaching staff, to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP is a guide that outlines necessary goals and action plans in order to promote a healthy learning environment for the children in care. The QIS may also assist programs in achieving first-time accreditation.
2. Support Grants for materials and equipment: Once a program has completed their Quality Improvement plan, they are able to apply for a Support Grant. Support Grants are used to purchase equipment or materials to address programmatic needs and will address health and safety concerns first. Only programs providing services to children receiving a subsidy from the School Readiness Program and engage in continuous quality improvement are eligible.
3. Career advising: Each program participating in Quality Counts is assigned a Career Advisor (CA) who is dedicated to supporting the program in the quality improvement process. A CA helps practitioners identify how they can increase their knowledge, skills, and qualifications for teaching in early care and education settings or working in other capacities in the field. Career advisors assist practitioners in developing and following a career plan in order to help meet their educational goals.
4. Educational scholarships and training: In order to further assist programs on their path to quality improvement, Quality Counts offers educational scholarships to practitioners teaching in Quality Counts programs through the Quality Counts Career Center. Quality Counts also provides practitioners with high quality training opportunities to support each component of the Quality Counts Standards through the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education.
5. Wage supplements for staff: Practitioners working directly with children in a Quality Counts program may be eligible to receive a wage supplement. WAGE\$ stipends serve to reward practitioners as they grow professionally and remain working for the same Quality Counts program. WAGE\$ is used as an incentive to advance practitioners in their Career Pathway, to increase retention, and decrease turnover.
6. Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute (ECPAI): United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education works with childcare owners and directors to increase the quality of their program administration and leadership, and to build capacity of childcare providers. Administrators enrolled in ECPAI are eligible to receive three

college-level courses in early childhood education, providing an accessible path to a secondary degree and/or obtaining a certification in program administration.

7. Child Mental Health Supports: Provide child mental health consultation and short-term intervention by mental health clinicians with specialized training in serving young children birth to five. The focus is on children who exhibit challenging behaviors in early childhood education programs (ECE) and/or concerns on developmental screening. Children may be identified based on their behavior at home and/or in the classroom. Intervention may range from nine to twelve sessions including the child, teacher and family. Sessions may take place in the ECE program or in the child's home.
8. Director Support Communities of Practice (CoP): Leadership training, support, and resources for directors to lead and support staff in each standard level are essential for building capacity and sustaining site leadership. Director Support CoP participants are grouped by program type and review content including, but is not limited to: meeting and exceeding quality standards, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), leading purposeful change, and supporting classroom teaching and learning. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are provided for participation, meeting the professional developmental hours required for each level.
9. Communities of Practice for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CoP): Program practitioners partner on professional development topics led by a CoP facilitator. Topics addressed include, but are not limited to: curriculum, development, documentation, and child assessments by age group. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are provided for participation, meeting the professional developmental hours required for each level.

Section II. The Process

Eligibility

Licensed child care centers, Head Start & Early Head Start programs, Early Head Start Child Care Partnership programs, Miami-Dade County Public School classrooms, and family child care homes are eligible to participate in Quality Counts. These programs must meet *three basic criteria* in order to be eligible:

- 1) Program must meet the Early Learning Coalition's [Child Safety Licensing Policy \(CSLP\)](#) which requires providers to have no more than three (3) Class 2 licensing violations of the same type or one (1) Class 1 licensing violation in the past 12 months, and
- 2) Program must not have a probationary license, and
- 3) Program must have been operating (the license active) for at least 1 year.

If a program is ineligible due to licensing violations, it will become eligible one year from the last disqualifying violation (assuming there were no additional violations during that period). If a program has not been operating with an active license for at least one year, it will become eligible one year from the active date. If a program is ineligible due to operating on a probationary license, it will become eligible once it obtains an annual license.

Getting Started

To begin the process, choose a Quality Counts designee from your program who is responsible for viewing the Quality Counts Overview, submitting the application and completing the Self-Study. We strongly recommend that it is the director of the program. The designee will first need to create an account in the Quality Counts Portal. Each program is allowed one (1) login in the Quality Counts portal.

A multi-site organization, however, can choose to have multiple logins and designees (one for each program) since accounts are tied to the program's DCF license number.

If you already have an account in the Quality Counts Portal, simply visit www.portal.miamiqualitycounts.org and log in. You can proceed directly to the Quality Counts Overview.

Creating an Account

The Quality Counts Portal is the secure website used by Quality Counts to gather information about programs, provide resources, and aid in the quality improvement process. Follow the steps below to create an account:

1. Visit www.portal.miamiqualitycounts.org and click **Sign Up**.
2. User Information:

Email Address – Provide an email address that your Quality Counts designee is able to access. You will be receiving frequent emails from the Quality Counts staff regarding the status of your program, so be sure to check your email **at least once per day** once you begin the process.

Password and Password Question – Create a unique password and password question. The password question will help you reset your password should you forget it.

Name and Work Phone – Provide the first and last name of the Quality Counts designee along with the program's phone number where they can be reached by Quality Counts staff if necessary.

3. Site Information:

Organization – Provide the name of the program as it appears on the DCF license.

License Number – Provide the license number assigned to the program as it appears on the DCF license.

4. Click **Sign Up**.

5. Confirm that the name and address is correct. If it is not correct, please contact a Rating Support Specialist at ratingspecialist@elcmdm.org.

Step 1. Quality Counts Overview

Before opening the application, you must view the Quality Counts Overview available in the Training tab in the Portal. This applies to first-time participants and renewal participants, primarily because of the substantial changes to Quality Counts since current participants' last rating. The Overview should be completed within 24 hours of starting it. If the 24 hour time period lapses, you will be required to start the Overview from the beginning. This is required before you can begin the application. It provides a comprehensive overview of Quality Counts participation, and should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Timeframe: The Overview should be completed within 24 hours of starting it.

Step 2. Eligibility Check

Once you've completed the Quality Counts Overview, the Portal will automatically check to verify that your program meets the three (3) basic criteria previously mentioned (see *Eligibility* on page 8). If your program is eligible, the application will become available immediately. If your program is not eligible, an email notification will be sent to you by QC staff.

Step 3. Application

First-time participants are required to complete an application. The application gathers basic information about your program that will help us better serve you. You may see that some information on the application is pre-populated; some information you will be able to change and other information you will not. If something is incorrect, please make any changes if you are able. However, if it is in grey and you cannot edit the information, please email us at ratingspecialist@elcmdm.org.

The application also includes a Memorandum of Understanding, which states the roles and responsibilities of the early learning program and those of the Early Learning Coalition. Your program must agree to the Memorandum of Understanding in order to participate in Quality Counts. **The MOU must be signed by the program owner.**

You will notice that there is no "save" button on any of the pages. This is because the system is saving automatically as you enter information. You can log out, come back and make changes before submitting your application. You will have 72 hours from the time you open the application to complete it. If you do not complete the application within this timeframe, the information you previously entered will be cleared and you will need to start from the beginning. Once you submit your application, you cannot change any information.

Timeframe: You have 72 hours from the time you open the application to complete it.

Follow the steps below to complete your application:

1. Log in to www.portal.miamiqualitycounts.org using the username and password you created.

2. From the Home Page, click on **My Organization**. A list of your program(s) and activities will appear.
3. Click on the **Application** tab, and then on **Start an Application**. This will take you to the Application Wizard. Read the introduction statement and click **Next**.
4. Site Information:
 - Program Name and License Number – This information is pre-populated. You will not be able to edit it.
 - Corporate/Other Name – This field is not required, however, if your program is known by a name other than the one on your DCF license, please list it here. Click **Next**.
5. Address: This information is pre-populated. You will not be able to edit it.
6. Contact Information:
 - Owner – Provide the name of the program's owner.
 - Director – Provide the name of the director of your program. Be sure that the name you provide is the person that is on file with the Department of Children and Families as the director.
 - Phone/Fax/Alternate Number – Provide phone and fax numbers for your program.
 - Email Address – This will pre-populate with the email address used to register your account. Please be sure this is a valid email address.
 - Website – Provide a link to your program's website (if applicable).
 - Daily Opening and Closing Time – This information is pre-populated. Please make any changes necessary.
7. Days of Operation – Check off the days of the week you program is open.
8. Does your program close or change significantly during the summer? - Answer yes or no.
9. Program Staff: Provide the number of staff for each category listed. The system will calculate a total for you. Please note, this includes directors, curriculum specialists and teaching staff only.
10. Spoken Languages: Provide the number of staff that speaks each of the languages listed.

11. Training Languages: Provide the number of staff that prefers training in each of the languages listed.
12. Children Enrolled: Provide the number of children enrolled for each age group. Also, answer the four (4) questions regarding School Readiness, VPK, USDA Food Program, and school-aged children.
13. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Electronic Signature: Review the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Be sure to scroll down and read the entire document. It is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of your program and the ELC and agree to these terms. You must sign this document in order to participate in Quality Counts. In the “Electronic Signature of Program Owner” box, the owner of the program must type his/her name, and this will serve as his/her signature confirming that the information provided is true and accurate and the owner agrees to the terms of the participation as stated in the MOU.
14. Review and Submit: Click the green **Review the Application** button to view your completed application. Please be sure to check for any errors. Click the **Return to Application** button if you need to make any changes. If your application is ready to submit, click the **Submit** button. You will then see confirmation that your application was submitted. You will also receive an automated email notification of your submission.

The Quality Counts staff will receive your application via the Quality Counts Portal and will review it. You will then receive an email message notifying you that it is time to begin your Self-Study.

Steps 4 & 5: Self-Study

The Self-Study is a means to efficiently gather documentation and evidence that shows the level of quality your program is meeting in each standard. It allows you to compile information on staff qualifications and learning environment in your program to identify the level of quality already met, as well as the areas of particular need. The Registry verifies the documents in the Staff Qualifications section, and Rating and Support

Specialists verify information entered in the Classroom Roster section of the Self-Study. All information and evidence must be submitted through the Quality Counts Portal.

It is important to note the timeframes and due dates for submitting the various sections of the Self-Study. The system will guide you through the completion of each item within the allotted timeframe. You will also receive automated emails notifying you of your deadlines at each step in the process.

To access your Self-Study, log in to the portal and click on **My Organization**, then select the **Self-Study** tab. From there you will see a link to **Visit Registry Website**. You must complete and submit your staff qualifications to the Registry before moving on to the classroom roster. When your staff qualifications are submitted, the link, **Start a Self-Study**, will become active and you will move on to complete the remaining portion of the Self-Study. You will have ten (10) business days to submit the staff qualifications and three (3) business days to submit the classroom roster. For your convenience, Quality Counts will send you automated email reminders of approaching due dates throughout the process.

Timeframe: The Self-Study is divided into two sections. You have ten (10) business days to complete and submit evidence for the Staff Qualifications standard. Then, you have three (3) business days to complete and submit the classroom roster.

Section 1. Staff Qualifications

The first step of the Self-Study process is submission of staff qualifications. This includes documentation of training, education and credentials for the Owner, Director, Assistant Director, Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Substitutes, Floaters, Curriculum Specialists, and Student Teachers. The score for this section is determined by the level of education and the amount and type of training your staff members have completed. This ensures that your staff is consistently staying informed and up to date on topics related to their work in the program. The training requirements of the Staff Qualifications section must have been completed during a specified 18 month period, referred to as the “selection period.” The selection period is automatically determined by the system as the 18 months prior to beginning the process. This typically corresponds to the 18 months between renewals; however, in certain circumstances, the selection period may not exactly reflect the 18 months between renewals.

You are responsible for electronically submitting (uploading to Portal) the supporting documentation for review by the Registry team within 10 business days. The Registry

staff will initially review the documents to be sure they are adequate and complete. They will notify you via email of any obvious errors or missing documents so that you may correct and re-submit them during the 10-day timeframe. Once you submit all necessary information and documents, the Registry staff will complete a thorough verification of all documents submitted in order to generate a level in the Staff Qualifications standard. At this time, you will not be able to submit any further information or documentation.

Follow the steps below to complete your Staff Qualifications section of the Self-Study:

1. Log into the Quality Counts Portal and select the Self-Study tab. From there, you will click on the **Visit Registry Website** link.
2. You will see a pop-up message appear on your screen. Please read the notice carefully to be sure that you fully understand the requirements for getting started and the timeframes allotted once you begin. Click **Go to Registry** button if you are ready to get started, or click **Cancel** if you'd like to start at a later time. If you choose to continue, you will be directed to the Professional Development Registry. Be sure to read all notifications prior to moving on. *It is strongly recommended that you read the "help" link before you begin the process. This will explain what you will need to gather from staff, have access to, etc. in order to complete the Staff Qualifications section.*
3. The Homepage allows you to see what step you are on in the process as well as important dates. In the yellow box, you will see the first due date, the due date for Participation Agreements from all staff. Please note this is only one part of the Staff Qualifications section. You will also see the selection period dates; you will want to collect supporting documentation for all training completed during this time period by your staff. You will also notice Steps 1 through 5. These boxes will guide you through the process.
4. To begin, click on the pencil in the box for Step 1. You will be directed to create or update your staff roster. Please follow the instructions provided on the page when doing so. The roster collects the demographic and employment information of your staff. If you have had a baseline or Star Rating already, you may see staff already listed. Please add any staff that have been hired since your last renewal, delete any staff that are no longer employed with you, or make appropriate edits when necessary. If this is your first time in Quality Counts, you will have to create a roster. Once you complete the roster, you will be required to lock it in order to

move on to the next step. You will not be able to make changes once the roster is locked.

5. In Step 2, you will be required to download and print Participation Agreements for your staff to sign. The system will create these forms for you by using the information you entered into the staff roster in Step 1. Each employee must read, fill out and sign the Participation Agreement form and return it to you. *Please note: complete Social Security Numbers are required for everyone as this is how we are able to link with DCF's website to verify training and credentials. There are no exceptions.* Once you have collected all the agreements, you will scan the documents in PDF form and upload them to the Registry. You have 4 days to submit the agreements; this is the first deadline within the Staff Qualifications section. You will not be able to move on to Step 3 until the Registry team reviews and accepts your staff roster and the participation agreement forms, which will likely occur on the next business after submission. Please check your email daily as you will be notified to proceed onto Step 3 via email. You may want to begin the collection of documentation from your staff in the meantime.
6. Step 3 consists of entering information about education, training and credentials for all staff. You will add only items for which you have documentation as evidence. This includes, but is not limited to, DCF transcripts, First Aid/CPR cards, CEU training certificates, college/university transcripts, high-school/college/university diplomas, translation of transcripts and degrees, and certificates of credentials. You will then confirm that you have completed entering your staff's education and move on to Step 4.
7. In order to verify the data entered in Step 3, the Registry requires evidence for all items listed. Therefore, in Step 4 you will need to collect the above-mentioned documents (if applicable) for each employee and submit them to the Registry for verification. To do this, the system will generate Educational Cover Sheets for each employee based on the information you entered. Please download and print the educational coversheet and organize the documents in the preferred order listed on the form. You will end up with an individual packet for each staff member. These packets should be scanned separately and saved as a PDF file followed by uploading them separately to the Registry.
8. You will receive confirmation via email from the Registry that your packets have been received. If you submit your documents several days before the deadline, the Registry will conduct a basic review to ensure there aren't any obvious items

missing or incorrect. This will allow you to submit any changes prior to the formal verification. It is strongly recommended that you upload the documents before the deadline so that the Registry can examine their quality before they begin their formal verification process.

Once you have completed Step 4, you have finished the Staff Qualifications section. In Step 5, the Registry team will conduct a thorough verification of your documents and will keep you updated via email on the status of your program. During this time you will move on to the remaining portion of the Self-Study.

Timeframe: Although you have ten (10) business days to complete the entire Staff Qualifications standard, there are actually two separate deadlines for this section. You have four (4) business days to complete Step 1 & 2, and then you have the remaining days (of the 10) to complete Step 3 & 4. (Therefore, if it takes you two (2) business days to complete Steps 1-2, then you will have eight (8) business days to complete the rest of the process. If you take the full four (4) business days to complete Steps 1-2, then you will only have six (6) business days to complete Steps 3-4.)

Section 2. Classroom Roster

You will now move on to the rest of the Self-Study in the Quality Counts Portal. In this section you will enter your classroom roster. You will need to enter all information within three (3) business days. A Rating and Support Specialist will then verify this information in order to refer the program to Devereux for assessment.

Timeframe: You have 3 business days to complete and submit your roster.

The steps below describe the remaining portion of the Self-Study. You can also refer to the **Quality Counts Self-Study Help Guide** in the Quality Counts Portal Resources tab for a detailed look at the Classroom Roster.

1. Log into the Quality Counts Portal and select the **Self-Study** tab. From there you will click on the **Start a Self-Study** link. Read the brief statement, and click **next**.
2. Staff Roster – This is a list of the staff you entered in the Staff Qualifications section of the Self-Study. You will not be able to edit this information.
3. Classroom Roster – This section requires that you list all classrooms in your program that have children up to the age of 5 years. You do not need to include

your school-aged classrooms or after-school groups if you offer them in your program. You will be asked to provide the name of the group (exactly as you refer to it in your program), the age group of the children in the classroom at the beginning of the school year, the capacity of the room as determined by the Department of Children and Families, and the current enrollment. You will also identify the teachers that work in each classroom

4. Review and Submit – Once you have completed the Classroom Roster, you will be given the opportunity to review it prior to submitting by clicking the **Download Self-Study** link. This will open a PDF document for you to review and save for your records. If you need to make corrections, you can do so by closing the PDF document and clicking the blue hyperlink on the left side of the page for the section that requires editing. After making any corrections, be sure to save an updated version of the Self-Study and then click on the **Submit** link. Please note, once the Self-Study is submitted, you will not be able to make any changes.

5. **Note: If you miss a deadline for submitting any portion of the Self-Study, your program will be placed on hold.** If you miss your submission deadline, you will be given a second opportunity to complete the Self-Study. Should you not complete the Self-Study by the second deadline, your program's participation will be suspended from Quality Counts for 12 months. After the 12 month period, you are welcome to apply and begin participating in Quality Counts again. If your program is new to Quality Counts and you miss the second deadline, your program's participation will be suspended from Quality Counts, however you may re-apply at any time.

Once you submit your Self-Study it will be reviewed by a Rating and Support Specialist.

Step 6. Assessment

Once your Self-Study has been submitted, your program will be referred to the assessment team at our partner organization, Devereux. A representative from the assessment team will contact you to schedule a three-week window during which time your program will be assessed. You will also be given the opportunity to black out three (3) days within that three-week window on which Devereux will not assess your program.

On the day of your assessment, Devereux assessors will arrive unannounced prior to 9:00am. You can expect to have them on site for half of the day. They will conduct the appropriate number of assessments dependent on the type of program you operate and the number of children you serve. For infant or toddler classrooms, they will use the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R) and for preschool classrooms, they will use the Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) Provisions for Learning Factor. This means that 1/3 of the infant/toddler rooms and 1/3 of the preschool rooms in your program will be assessed. For example, if your program consists of 4 infant/toddler rooms and 5 preschool rooms, you will have 2 rooms assessed using the ITERS-R and 2 rooms assessed using CLASS and the ECERS-R Provisions for Learning Factor. The assessor will conduct a brief health and safety monitoring of the interior and exterior environments of the program. The assessors will only be present to conduct assessments; you will not receive scores that same day. Using the results of your assessments, Devereux will generate a score for the Learning Environment standard.

Note: In order to maintain the extremely high interrater reliability of the Devereux assessment team, a full ECERS-R will be conducted instead of an ECERS-R Provisions for Learning Factor in 20% of classrooms assessed. This means that 1 out of every 5 classrooms the Devereux team assesses will have a full ECERS-R conducted in addition to the CLASS Pre-K. This will not affect your program's Learning Environment Level in any way, but you will benefit from having a full ECERS-R report available to you to assist in your quality improvement work.

Step 7. Support Services and Continuous Quality Improvement

Upon completing the Quality Counts process, the Rating and Support Specialist will refer your program to the appropriate Technical Assistance Agency. You will be able to receive quality improvement support from a Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS) and a Career Advisor (CA). In addition to this, your program may be eligible to apply for a Support Grant based on certain eligibility criteria.

You will work with the QIS to create a Quality Improvement Plan and the CA to create a Career Development Plan, and will make quality improvements based on the results of your assessments, verified Self-Study, and goals for the future. Quality improvement will

take place over 18 months, at which time you will complete a new Self-Study and have new assessments conducted. This is referred to as the renewal process.

Need Help? Contact Us!

The Quality Counts phone line rings directly to our department, which means reaching us is easy and quick! You can also email us at one of our email addresses. We aim to respond to all communication in one business day.

Quality Counts phone line: 305-646-7242

For general questions about Quality Counts: qualitycounts@elcmdm.org

If you are in the rating process (at any step) and need help or have questions: ratingspecialist@elcmdm.org

Our team consists of 7 people:

Fiorella Altare Christie, Director of Quality Counts

Paloma Lopez-Barcena, Project Manager

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