

Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Programs



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Context:

**Good Early Childhood
Education programs are good
for children and families. ****

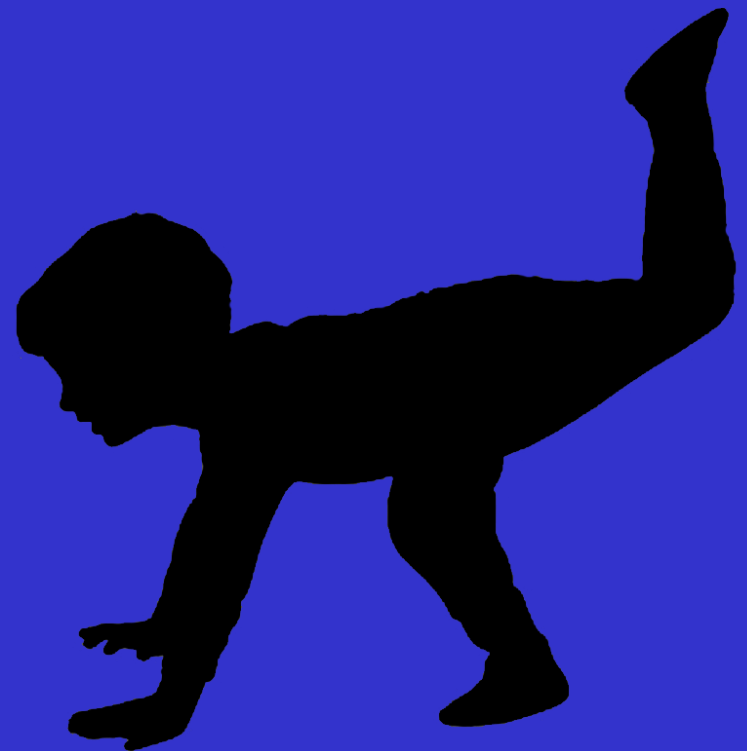
** Most research in this area is based on samples of children from deprived backgrounds.



Context:

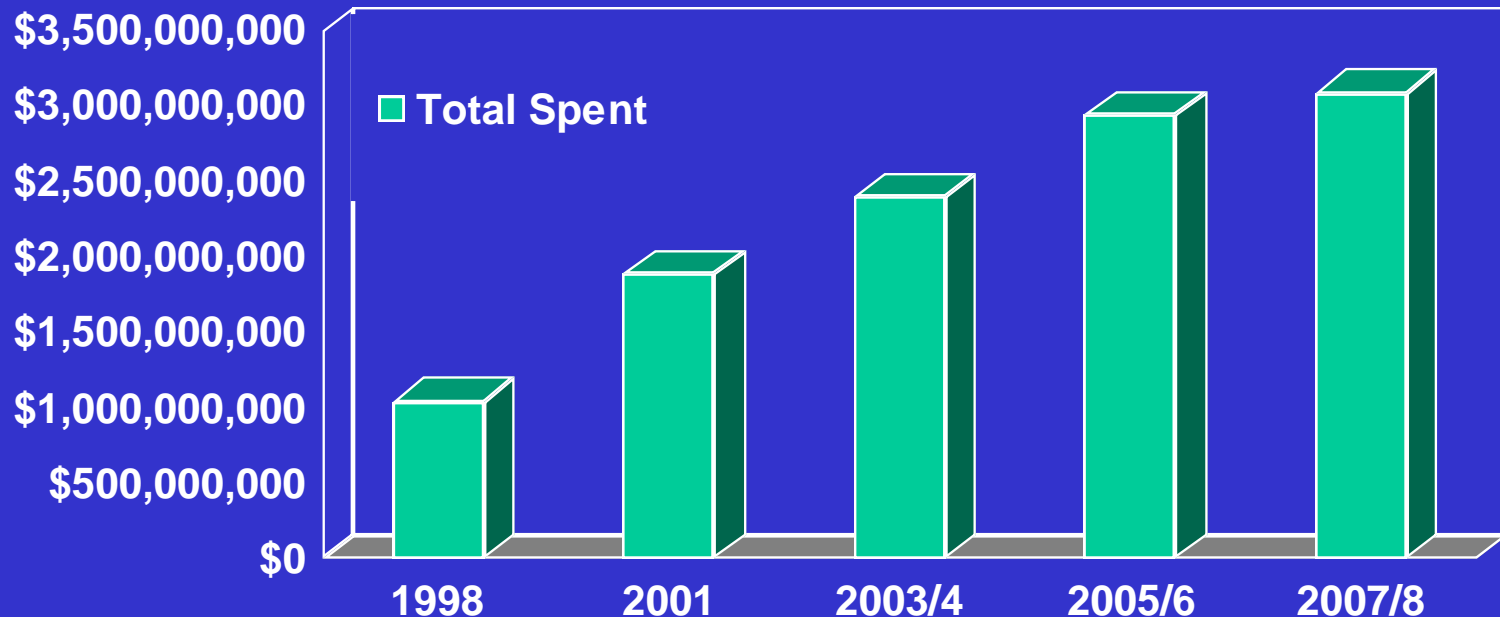
Increasing numbers of children are attending Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Programs.

Public spending on ECEC programs is increasing.



Context: Canada

Provincial/Territorial budget allocations for regulated childcare by year.

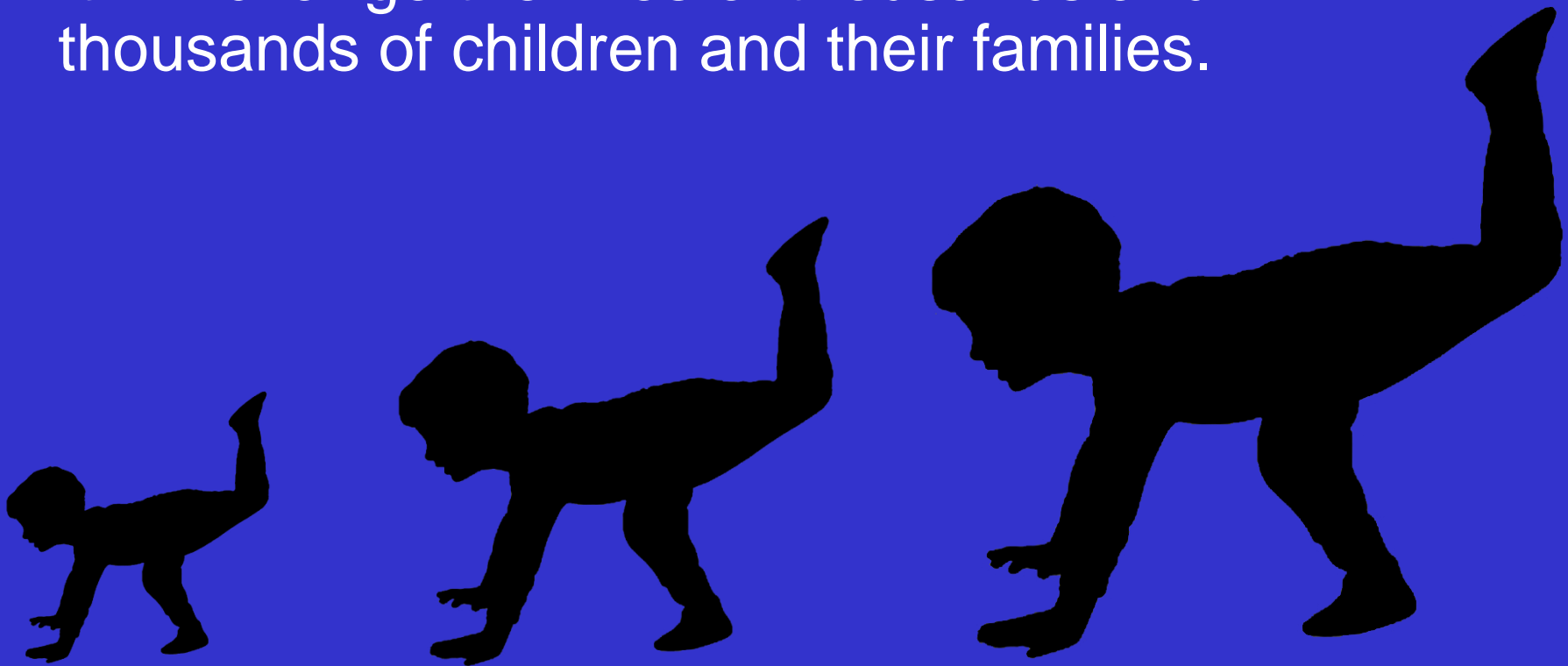


Figures taken from ECEC in Canada 2008.

Context: Ontario

Full-day JK & SK comes with a large price tag

It will change the lives of thousands and thousands of children and their families.



Context: What is quality?

Good ECEC programs provide children with:

- Warm and nurturing environments.
- Activities and materials that children can interact with and that have been selected by staff to further specific educational goals.
- Useful and supportive feedback about their own performance.



Context: What is quality? (con't)

Good ECEC programs:

- Meet the needs of children from diverse backgrounds with different learning needs.
- Facilitate the connection between home and the early childhood education program.
- Provide good adult:child ratios with low staff turnover.
- Have experienced staff who have trained in early childhood education.



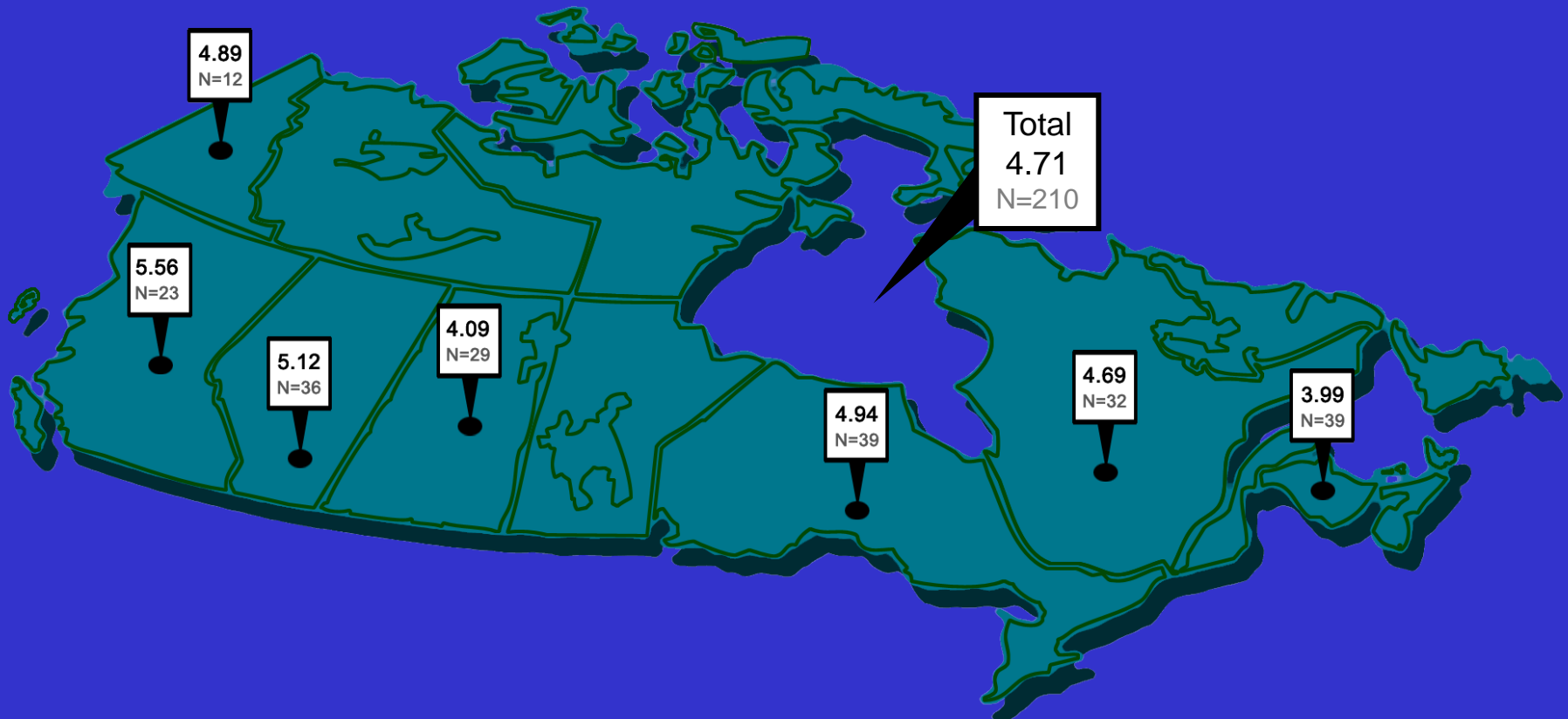
Context

What do we know about the current quality of our ECEC programs?



Context:

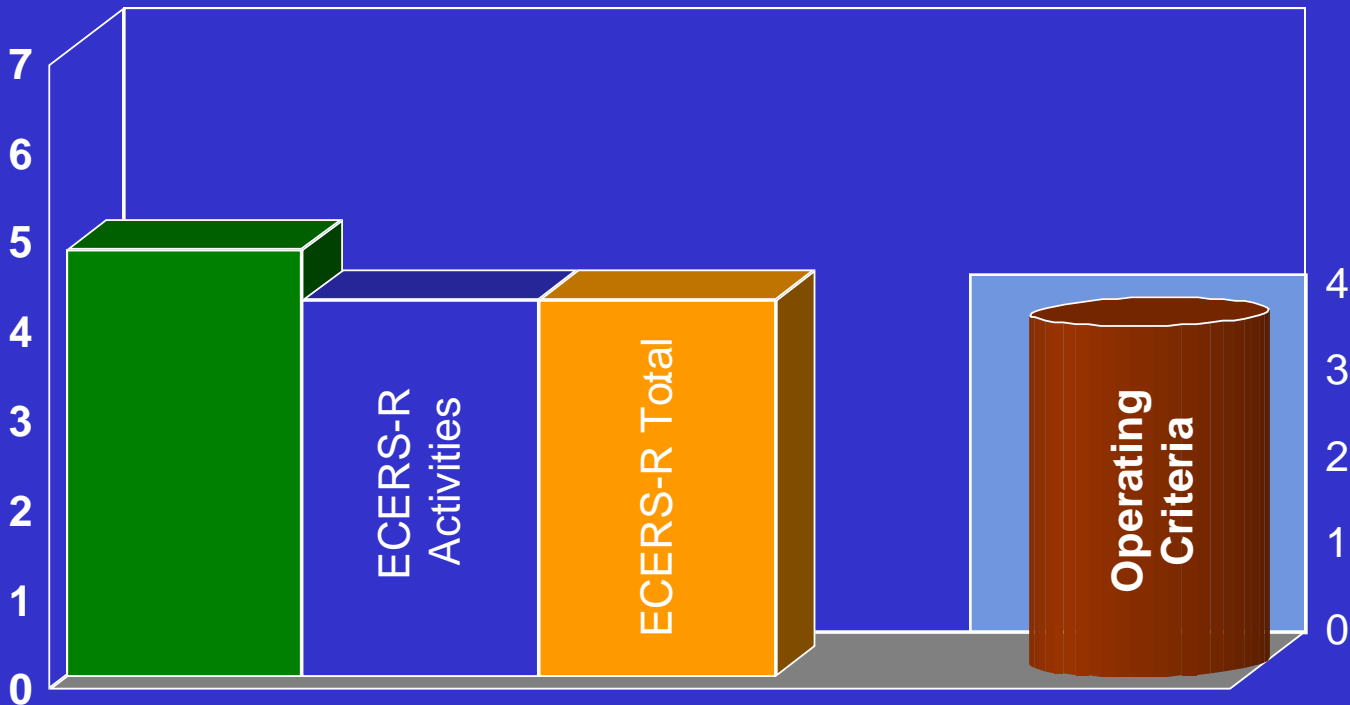
ECERS data across Canada.



Data from You Bet I Care survey. Goelman et al., (2006).

Context:

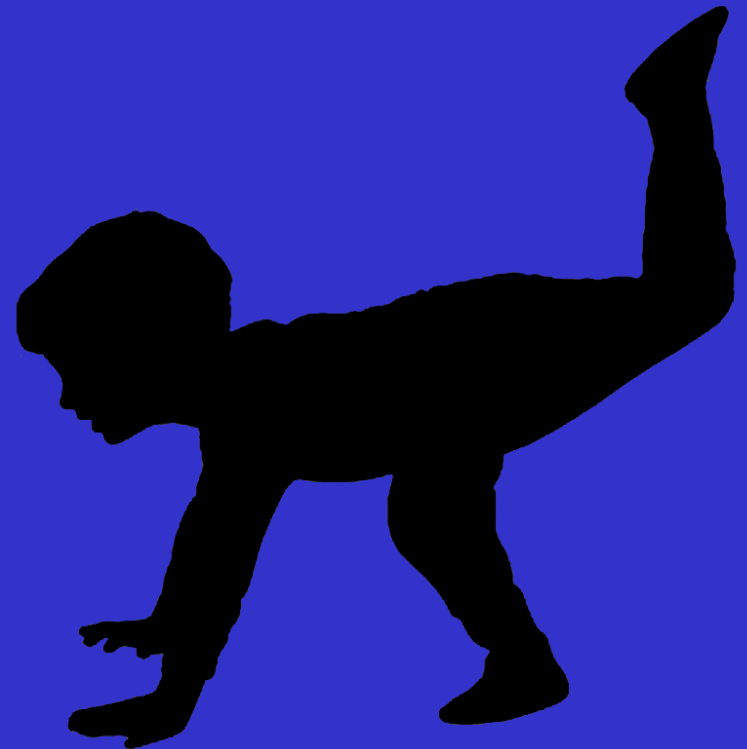
ECERS-R data from 116 randomly selected child care centre classrooms in Toronto.



Context

So, what do we know about the current quality of our ECEC programs?

- Not a whole lot.
- What we do know suggests there is lots of room for improvement.



Context:

We have virtually no information about the quality of...

- Junior and Senior Kindergarten classrooms.
- Programs for infants and toddlers.

Whether we will need to think about the quality of “wrap-around” services remains to be seen.

Context:

Herein lies the reason for today's meeting:

We're spending more and more money and increasing children's exposure to ECEC programs...

Yet we know very little about the quality of these programs!

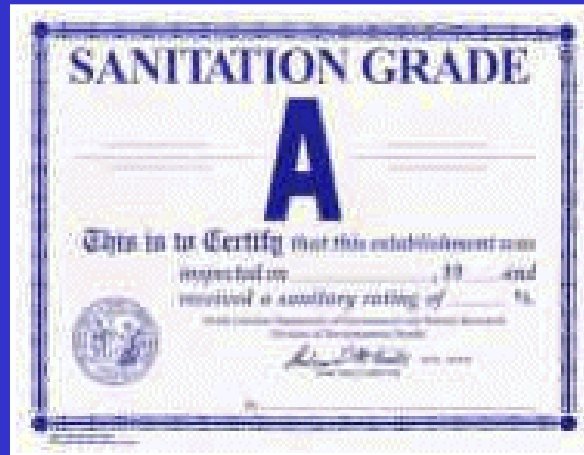
Monitoring Quality: Why?

- Quality Improvement.
- Accountability.
- Public Education.



Monitoring Quality: Why?

Rating systems are used as part of accountability systems to drive improvement.

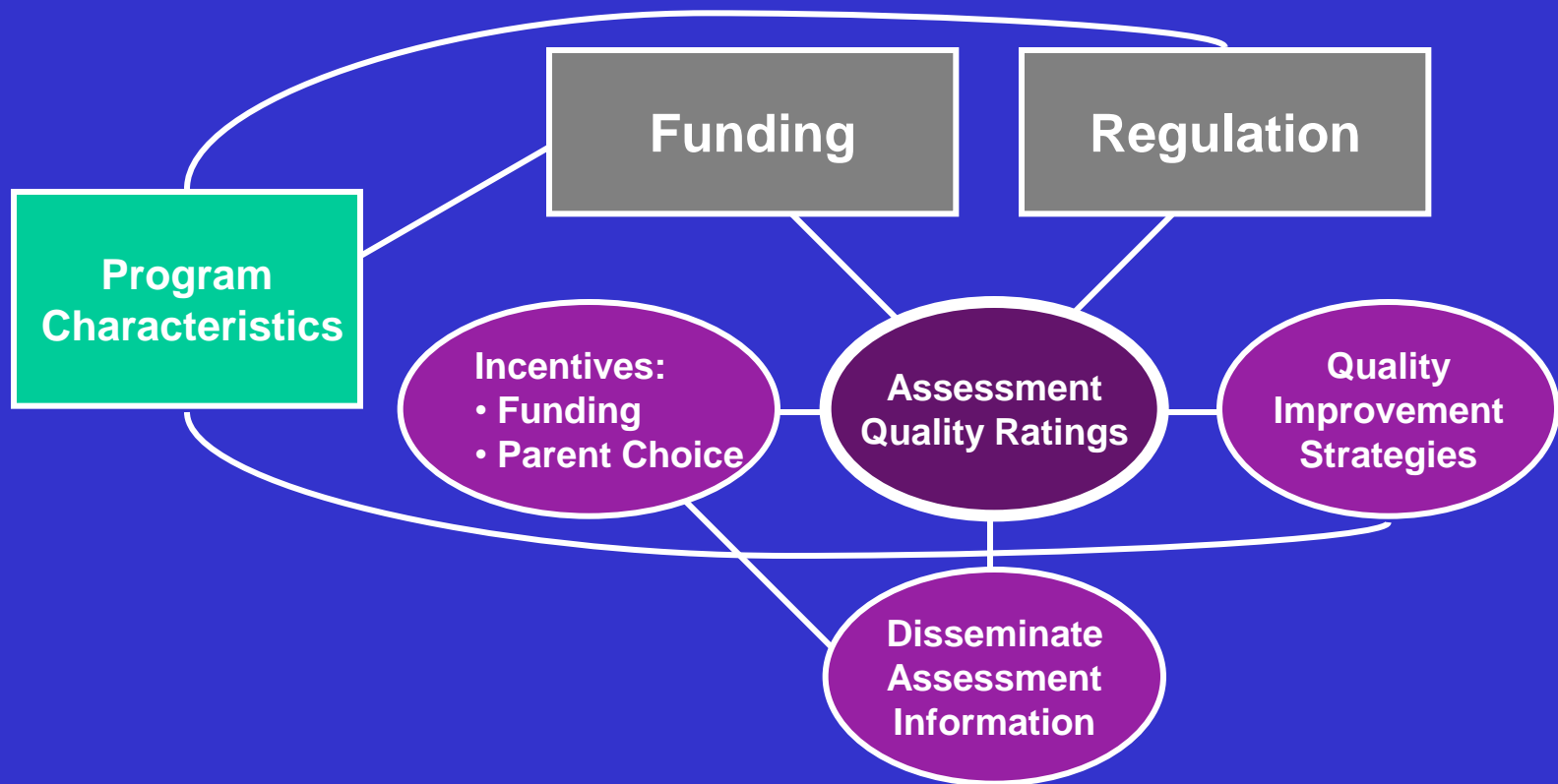


← common restaurant rating system

Test scores have consequences associated with them.

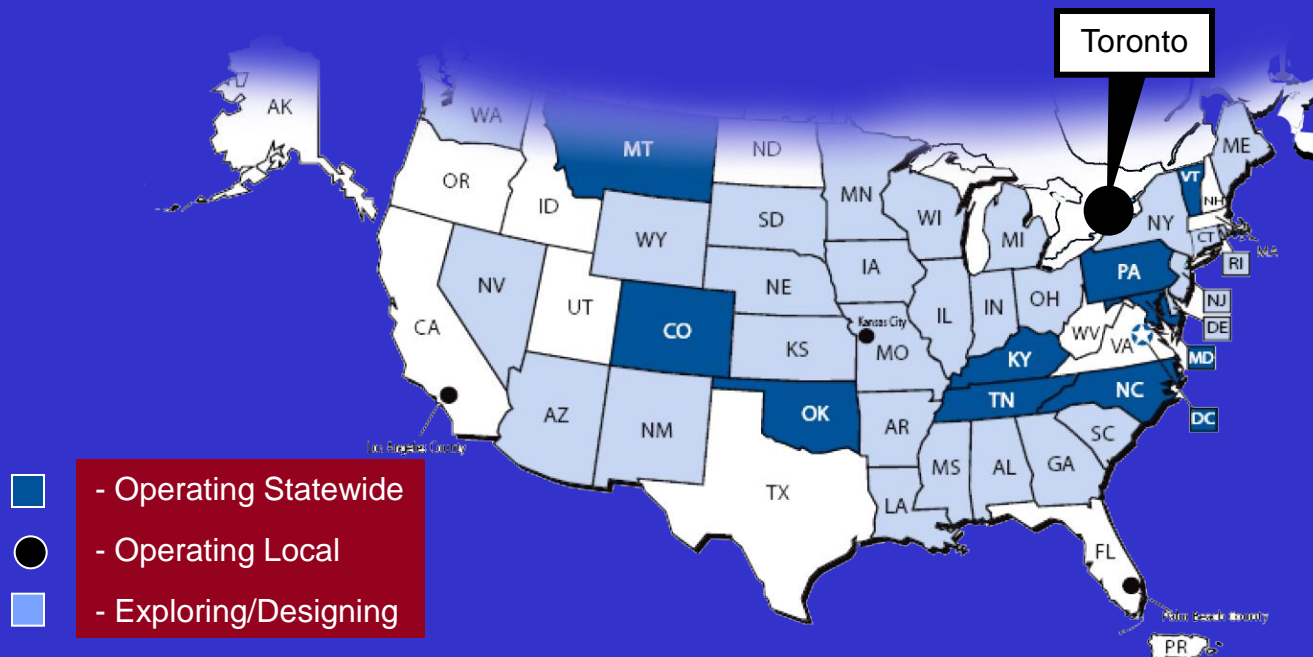
Monitoring Quality: Why?

Quality improvement, accountability, public education



Monitoring Quality: *Why?*

Many states are using QRIS's in centres, preschools and pre-kindergarten programs



Source: NCCIC (2004), UWA (2005)

Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**



*Monitoring Quality: **How?***

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**

- Valid.

(The measure actually tests what it's supposed to measure.)



Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**

- Valid.
- Reliable.

(The measure must be applied objectively.)



Monitoring Quality: How?

**Reliability across observers,
time & location.**



Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**
 - Valid.
 - Reliable.
- **Include objective measures.**

Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**
 - Valid.
 - Reliable.
- **Include objective measures.**
 - Reduce self-presentation bias.

Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**
 - Valid.
 - Reliable.
- **Include objective measures.**
 - Reduce self-presentation bias.
 - Provide rich feedback.

Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**
 - Valid.
 - Reliable.
- **Include objective measures.**
 - Reduce self-presentation bias.
 - Provide rich feedback.
- **Efficient.**

Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**
 - Valid.
 - Reliable.
- **Include objective measures.**
 - Reduce self-presentation bias.
 - Provide rich feedback.
- **Efficient.**
 - Cost of monitoring must be minimized.

Monitoring Quality: How?

Quality measures must be:

- **Fair.**
- **Include objective measures.**
- **Efficient.**

To achieve these standards quality monitoring must be *empirically based*.

Monitoring Quality: Which measures?

- **Operating Criteria** – Valid and efficient.
(about one hour per room)
- **Classroom Assessment Scoring System** – Valid and provides rich feedback.
(about 3 hours per room)
- **Caregiver Interaction Scale** – Valid and provides general feedback.
(5-minutes per staff, but must be in the room for 45 minutes)
- **Ratios & Staff Training / Education**



*Monitoring Quality: **Who?***

All types of ECEC programs need to be assessed using the same standards.

A four-year-old child has the same developmental needs regardless of program type.



Monitoring Quality: When?

- On an ongoing basis.
 - Annually?
(Schedule should be determined empirically.)
- In ***school*** classrooms.
- In ***child care centre*** classrooms.



Monitoring Quality: What else?

Any evaluation of the impact of Ontario's Full Day Early Learning initiative should include measures of child outcomes.

But today we're focusing on program quality...



*Monitoring Quality: **Barriers?***

Culture

We need to break down silos based on precedent and logistics.

Cost

Not so large when we keep the magnitude of spending in mind.



Conclusions:

We have a fantastic opportunity to redesign the system in a way that supports program quality:

- For example, with a small increase of resources allocated to licensing of childcare centres, we can get much deeper information on program quality.
- This is a naturalistic experiment that will provide a once-in-a-lifetime learning opportunity.



Conclusions:

- **Monitoring quality is hard but doable.**
- **Make decisions based on data where it exists.**
- **Collect data where it is needed.**
- **Let's learn from other localities.**



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