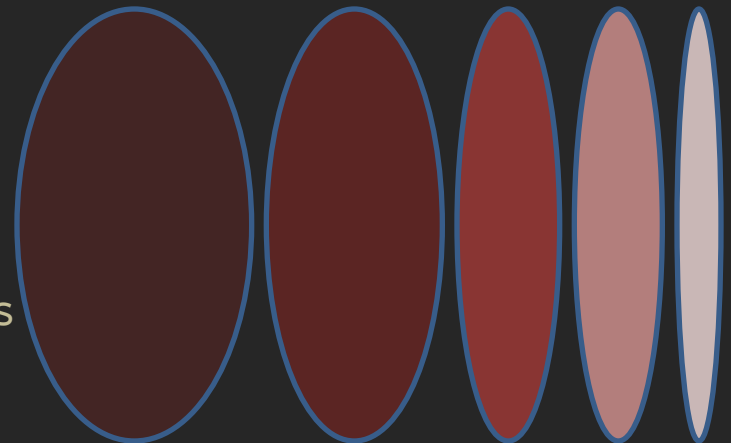


# Integrating research • theory • practice

## Promoting Quality in Early Childhood Programs

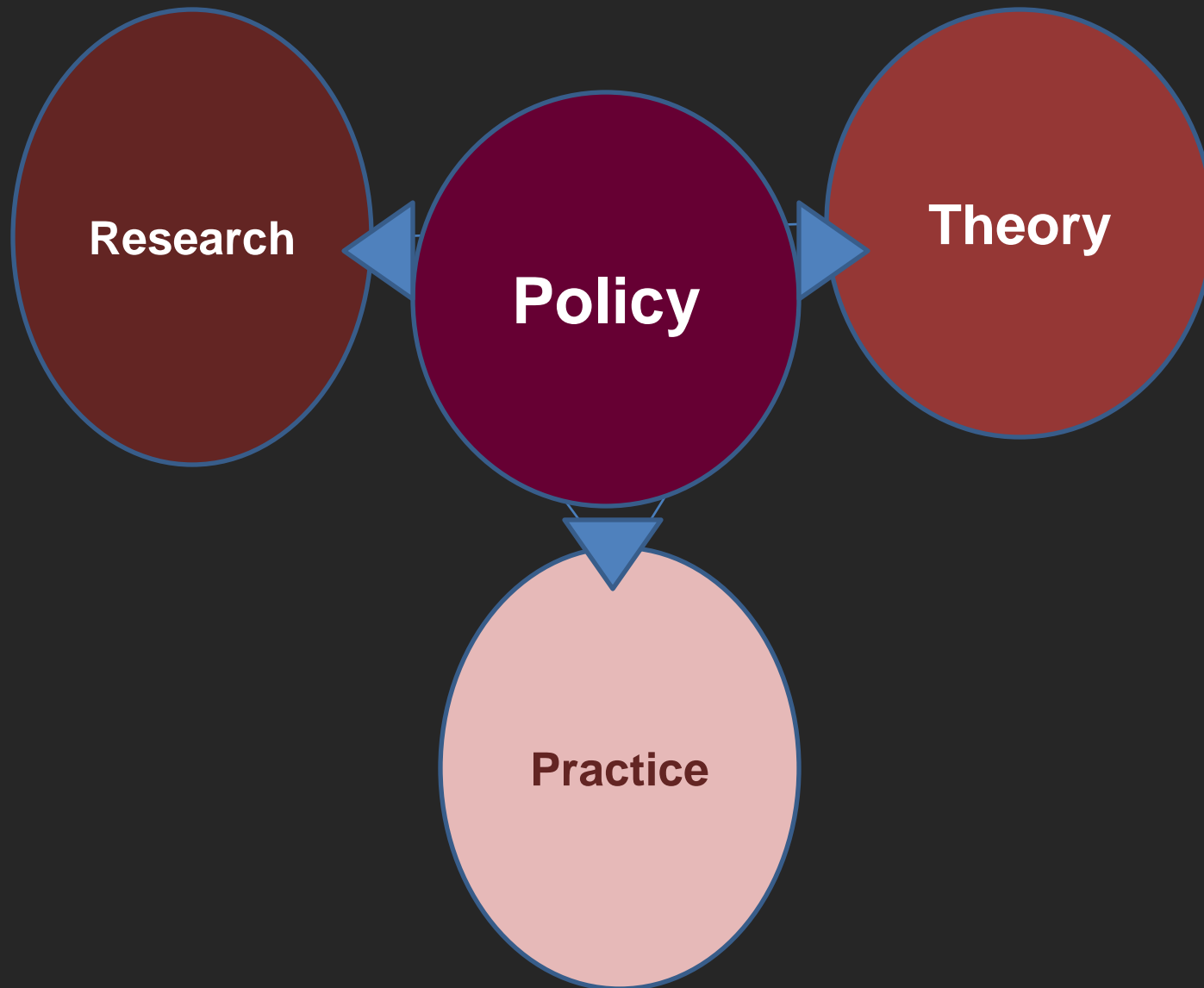
Dr. Joel Lopata , PhD., Western University  
Cynthia Grundmann, M.T., Toronto Children Services  
Jane Tousignant, BA, RECE, Sudbury Children Services  
Laura Urso, BA, RECE, Sudbury Children Services



# **Toronto's Research**

## The Quality Standards Inventory

**Promoting Quality in Early Childhood Programs**



There's a growing trend to use **quantitative research methods**, such as comparing the effectiveness of different program types or different pedagogical strategies, **in early childhood programs.**

(OECD, Starting Strong III - A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care, 2012)



What was our research about?

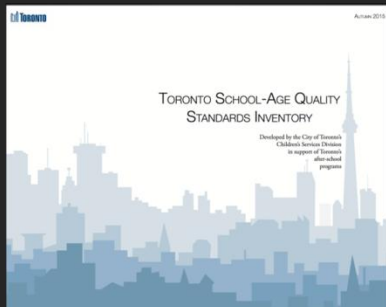


# We wanted to know...

the characteristics of high quality school-age (after-school) programs

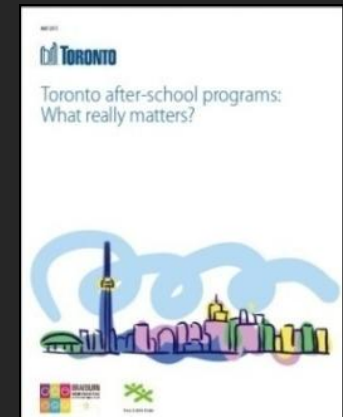


the impact of supporting resources that prioritize program empowerment on programs' ability to implement Quality programming.



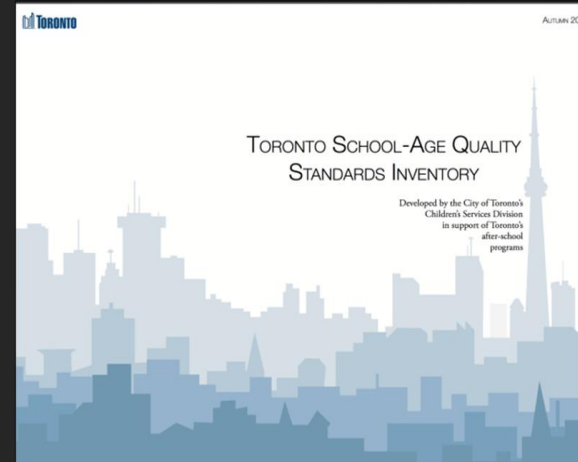
# 10 Quality Standards for Toronto's after-school programs

- Strong Leadership and Staffing Practices
- Quality Interactions & Relationships
- Provides Positive Atmosphere
- Safe & Healthy
- Fosters Well-Being and Healthy Self-Beliefs
- Quality Programming
- Intentional Pedagogical Practices
- Culturally Responsive & Inclusive
- Integrated Community Partnerships
- Evaluates Effectiveness



# What does that look like in practice?

**Operationalized** the *Quality Standards* by developing a School-age **Inventory**





Does the Inventory make a difference?



## Overview:

- Piloted the Inventory between September to December 2015
- Research project involving 34 after-school programs in Toronto
  - 20 experimental participants
  - 14 pilot participants
- Investigated the effectiveness of the School-age Quality Standards Inventory

## Methodology:

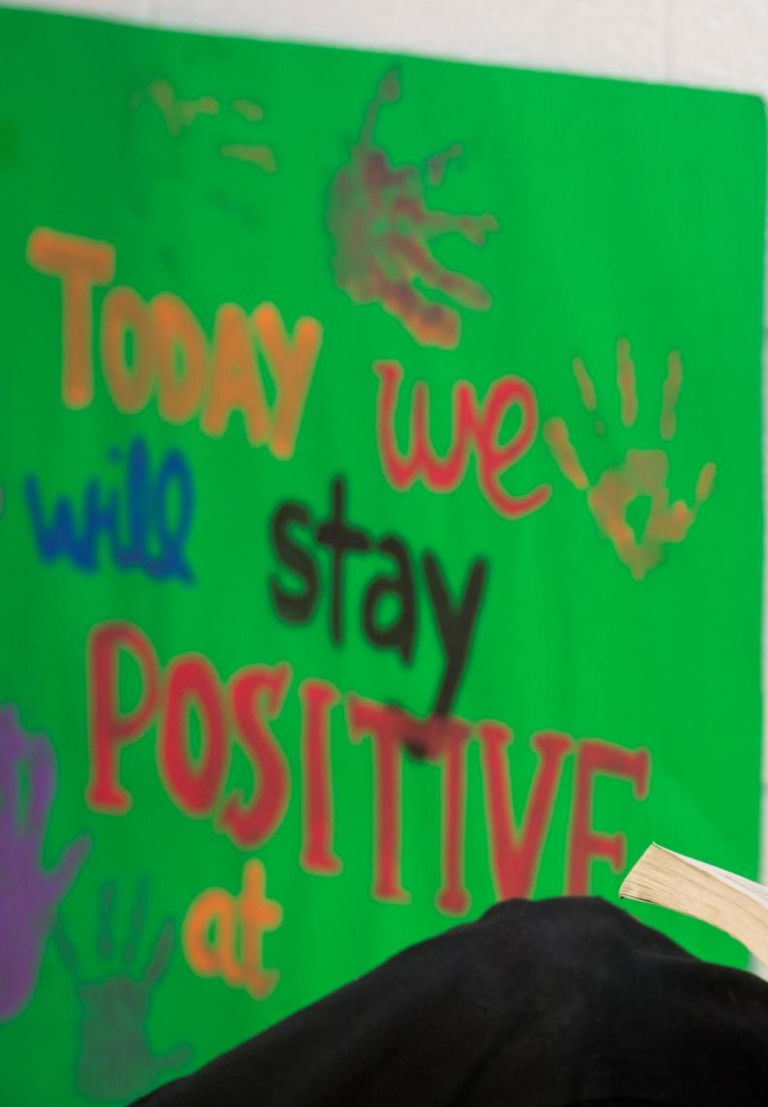
Single variable, pretest-post-test control group design

## Participants:

- Completed a *Program Reflection Questionnaire* at 3 points over 3 months
- Used the *Inventory* in their after-school programs
- Engaged in interviews
- Documented useful/successful strategies

**What did we find?**

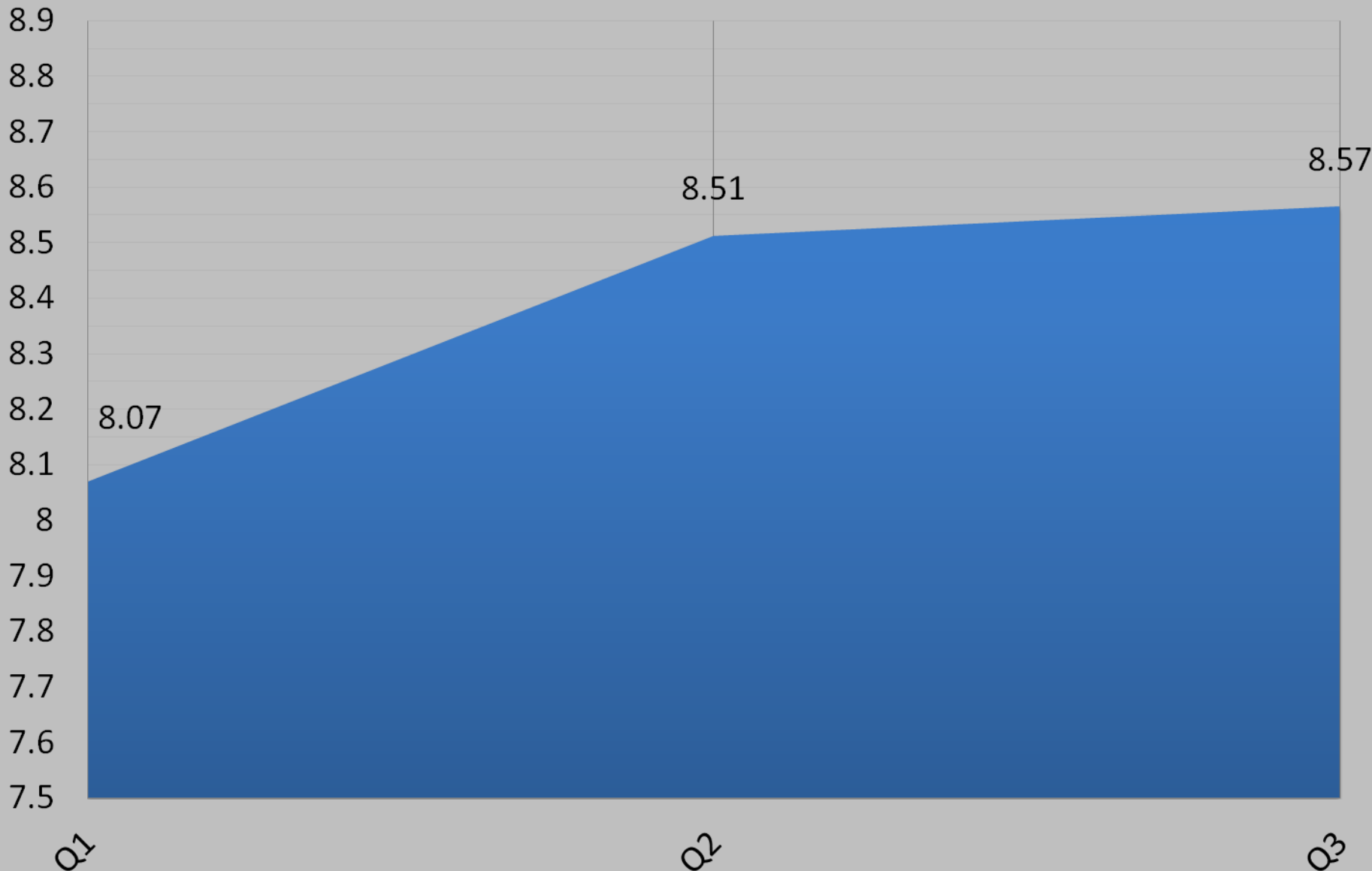
**What was the impact?**



# Findings

## Overall Q1 - Q2 - Q3 Growth

Figure 1.



# Findings

Q1  
Q2

after-school program quality questionnaire Q1 - Q2

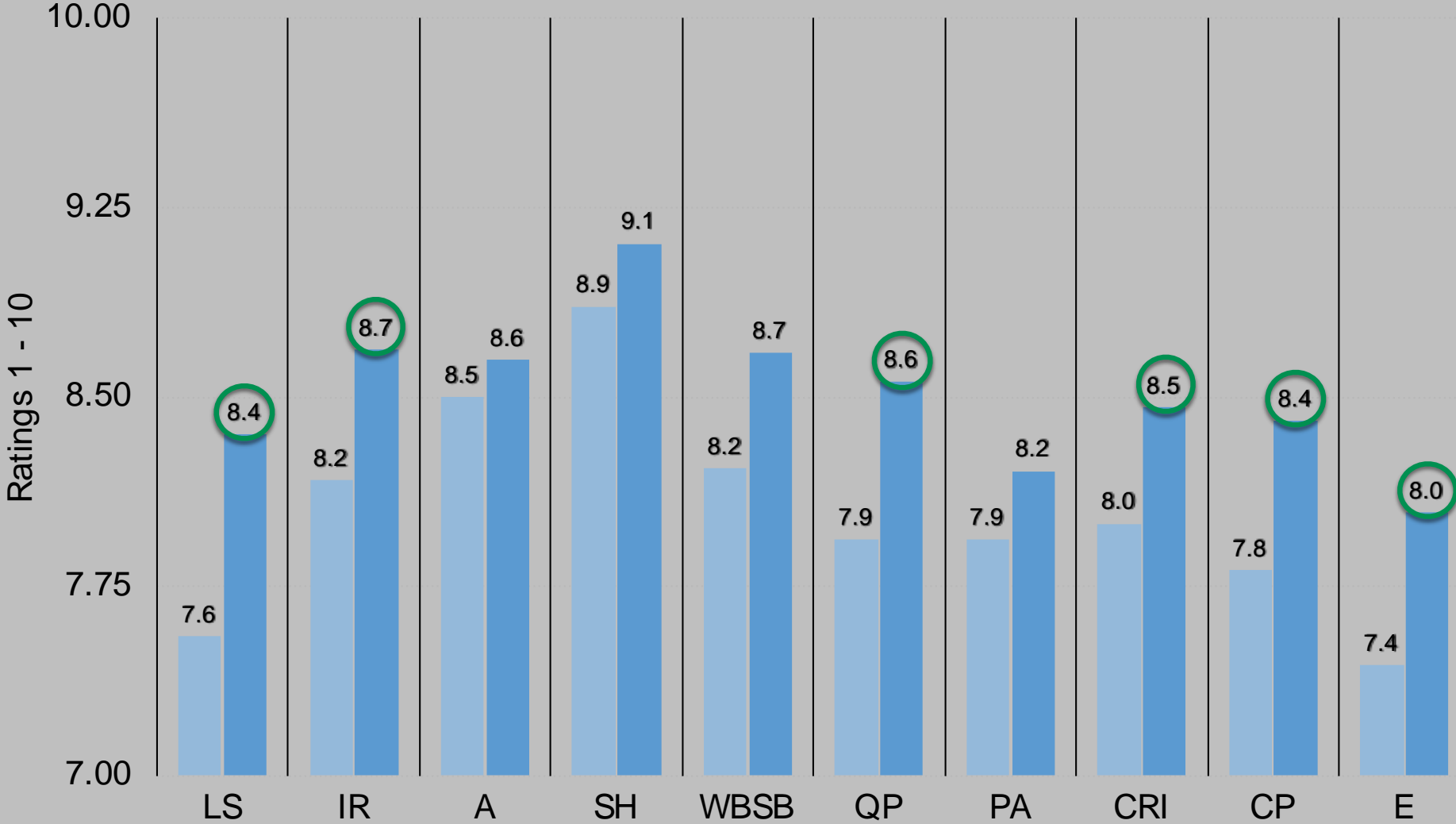


Figure 2.

# Findings

Q2  
Q3

after-school program quality questionnaire Q2 - Q3

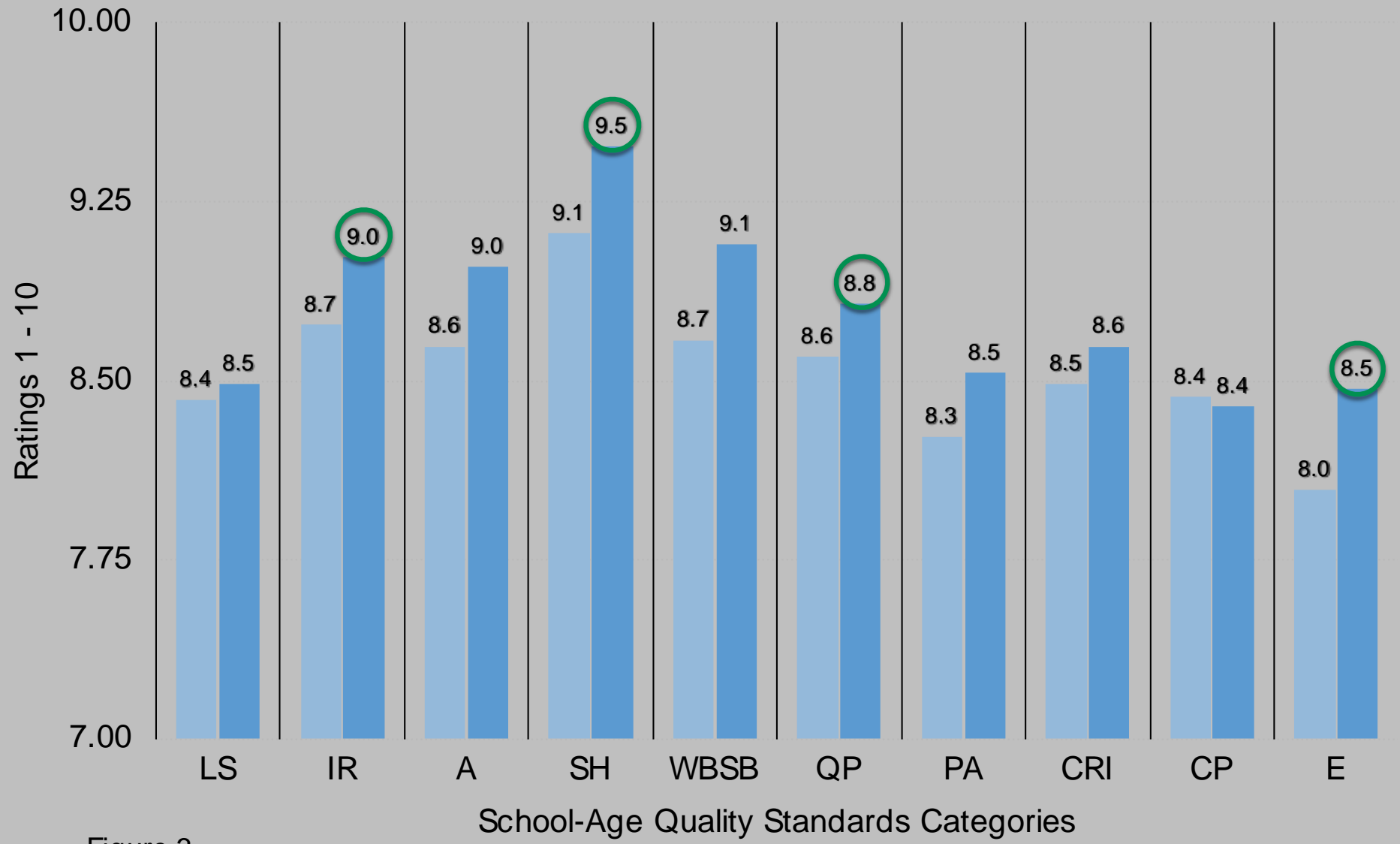


Figure 3.

**What does  
this mean?**

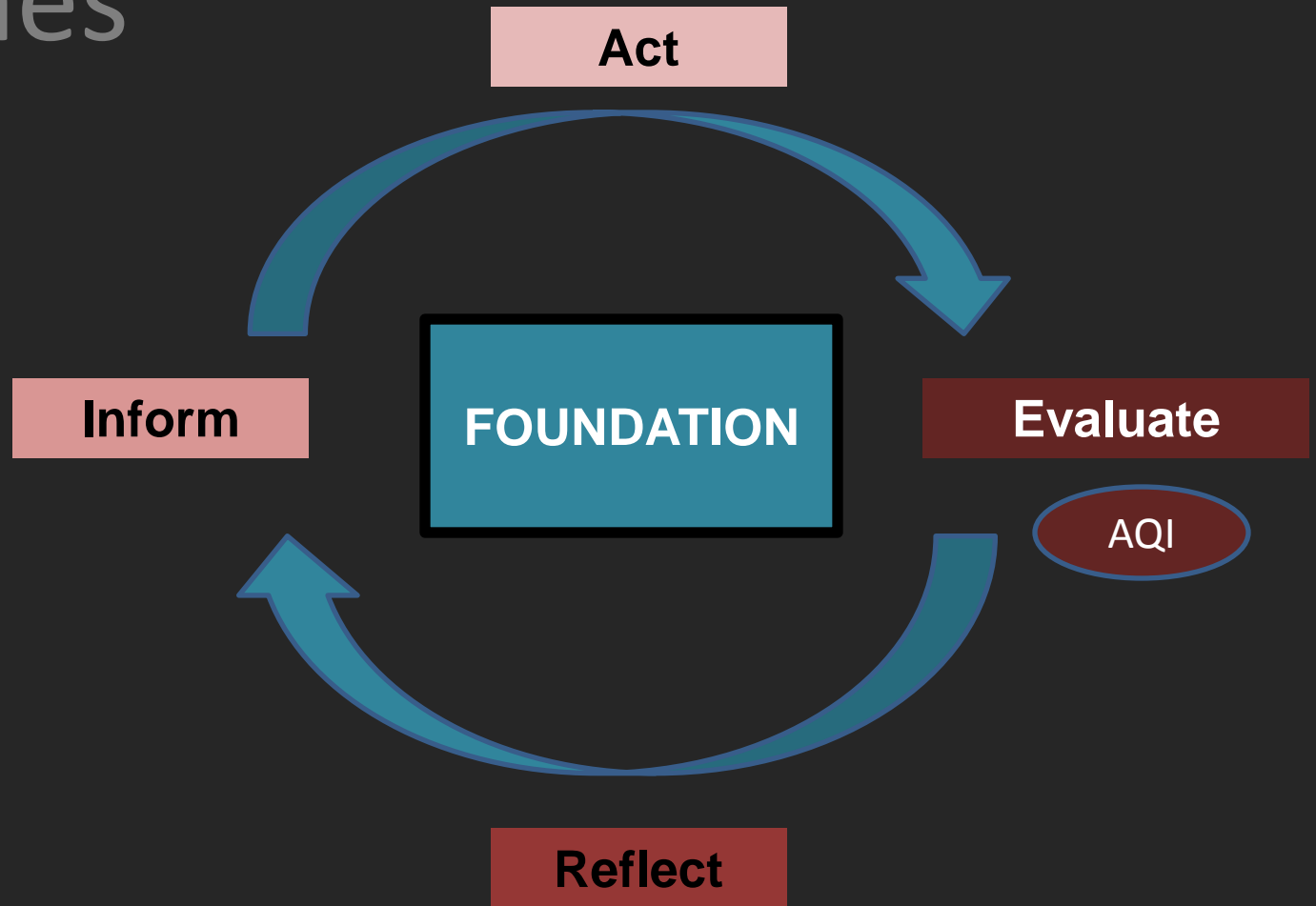




**When we provide research based-resources that support quality, this helps:**

- Enhance the quality of school-age programs
- Educators feel more confident in their own ability to plan and deliver a high quality program

# Quality as a means and an end to desired program outcomes

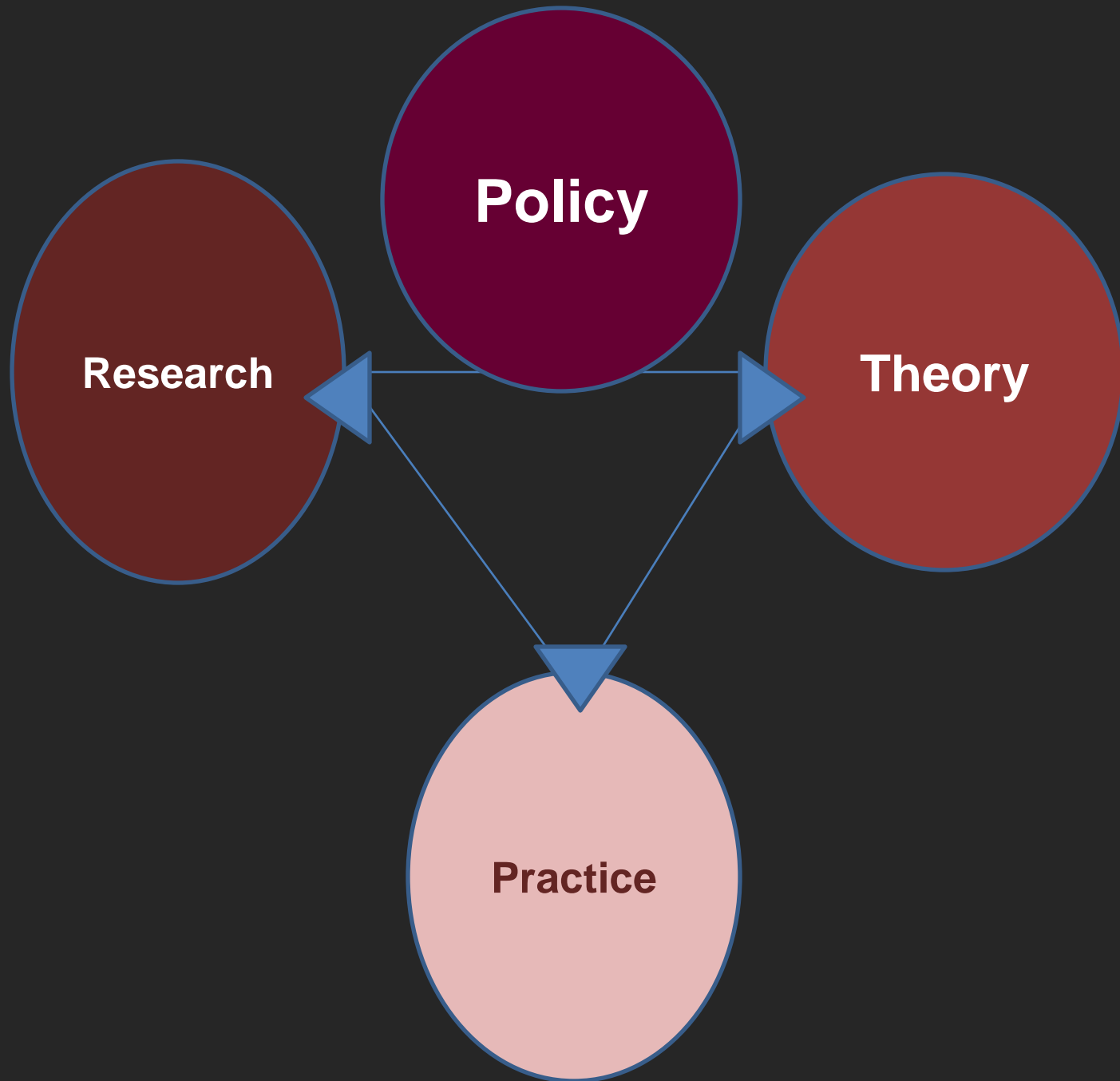


# What else do we do to support quality?



# Consultative Quality Improvement

**Promoting Quality in Early Childhood Programs**



**Policy**

**Research**

**Theory**

**Practice**

# Shift in Thinking & Practice



# Prioritizing Relationships

## Reflecting

Understanding children, the pedagogy of learning & self

## Creating a Culture of Learning & Thinking

Professional learning opportunities

Goal Setting

Self-determination

Strength based

## Embracing Transformational Change

Consider new ideas

Challenging ourselves

A means not an end

Unable to go back

## Building Competent Leadership

Co-constructor

Inspires

Live values

Authentic Relationships



**...having a  
'perspective'  
on quality**



**... 'taking a  
Quality  
Perspective'**





**Observations/ Reports**

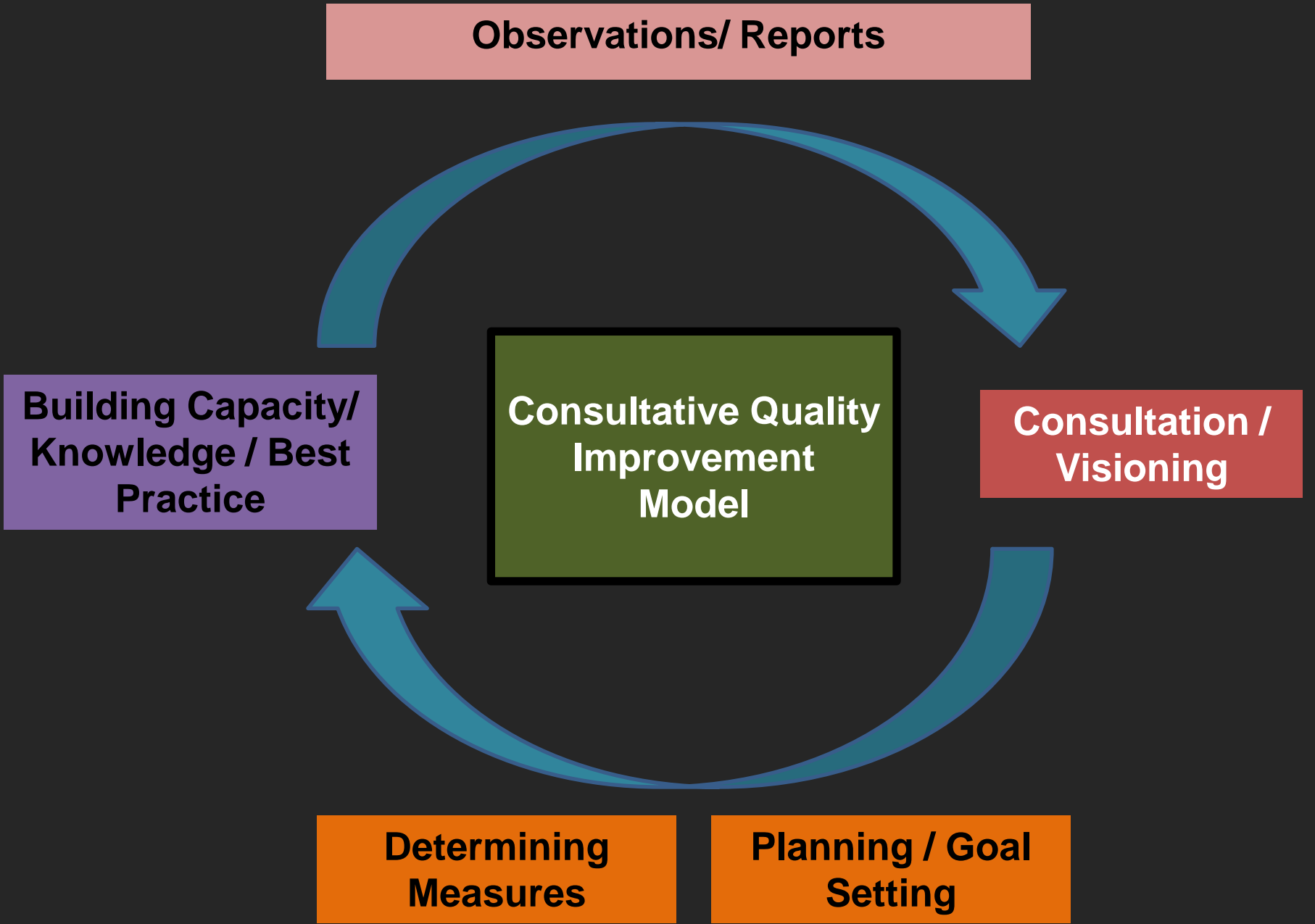
**Consultative Quality  
Improvement  
Model**

**Consultation /  
Visioning**

**Building Capacity/  
Knowledge / Best  
Practice**

**Determining  
Measures**

**Planning / Goal  
Setting**



# Building Capacity & Knowledge



**Quality requires  
engagement not  
compliance**



Frontiers of Innovation Harvard Centre on the Developing Child (2013)

# Building Adult Capacities to Improve Child Outcomes



Describes the need to focus on building the capabilities of caregivers and strengthening the communities through relationships

# Empowerment

**Quality = means and end**

**Research**

**Innovation**

**Alignment**

**Continuous professional learning**

# Questions?

# Thank you

