



# TARO

# Provider Manual

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TEMPORARY ALTERNATE RATING OPTIONS  
POLICIES, PROTOCOLS, AND PROCEDURES

**Georgia Department of  
Early Care and Learning**

[www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov](http://www.qualityrated.decal.ga.gov) | 1-855-800-QRIS (7747)

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# 1. What is TARO?

**TARO** is DECAL’s response to the COVID-19 Pandemic that allows for child care programs in Georgia to continue on their pathway to raise and maintain quality. Ensuring that the young children who are only this age once have access to high quality child care is of paramount importance, and perhaps even more so during these continued uncertain times.

The letters in T-A-R-O stand for **Temporary Alternate Rating Options**.

Over the course of 2020, an entirely new model for rating programs safely has been developed. Three new options have been created for child care programs to achieve a Quality Rated Star Rating while the traditional method of portfolio plus on-site classroom observations with the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) have been suspended.

TARO represents an opportunity for providers to participate in a safe initiative that supports them in raising and maintaining program quality. It also represents an opportunity for providers supporting families who receive Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Scholarships to increase their CAPS tier reimbursement, at a time when additional resources and income to programs may be vital to their survival. TARO also gives DECAL an opportunity to gauge the potential expansion of Quality Rated, and its success will feed into the state’s planned research and subsequent revisions of the Quality Rated system.

This manual provides guidance on the policies, protocols, and procedures that have been developed under the TARO initiative. It is designed to help ensure a positive experience for every program that participates in Quality Rated under the new TARO model.



## 1.1 Benefits of TARO

Operating an entire year with TARO gives everyone time to plan while adjusting to whatever the new normal will look like for them, and it provides a sense of security in knowing what to expect.

Provides a safe pathway to meet the CAPS/QR 2021 deadline on program's own terms with increased supports.

Creates certainty and consistency to the system; allows providers, QR staff, and TAs to know what to expect and how to best plan for the year.

Equitable for all programs; everyone that is rated this year will do so with TARO.

Allows DECAL to support providers where they are; they choose the best option (A, B, or C) for them based on their program needs.

Allows DECAL to add additional slots this year to accommodate CAPS providers not yet in a 2021 cohort.

Programs can show how they are providing quality practices daily despite the pandemic.

Pilot results show that TARO allows programs to be successful, even during these trying times; those choosing QRVP feel that they benefited from the process.

## 2. About TARO

### 2.1 Who is Eligible for TARO?

Any program in the following groups can seek a 2021 TARO rating:

- CAPS and non-CAPS providers who signed up for 2020 Cohort to earn their initial star rating and were switched to a 2021 Cohort due to the pandemic.
- CAPS and non-CAPS providers who signed up for or will sign up for a 2021 Cohort to earn their initial star rating.
- Providers previously rated in 2017 that had their expiration date extended in 2020 and are required to be rerated in 2021.
- Providers who were rated in 2020 under TARO Option A whose rating was valid for 1 year and need to be rerated in 2021.
- CAPS providers who are not yet participating in Quality Rated or signed up for a 2021 Cohort but need to get rated in 2021 to meet the new CAPS Milestones and the CAPS/QR Deadline to be rated by December 31, 2021 to remain a CAPS provider.

While all these diverse types of providers are eligible to seek a TARO rating in 2021, not all providers are eligible for all three rating options that TARO offers.

### 2.2 Three Rating Options Available with TARO

There are three different options available to providers seeking a 2021-star rating. Providers can select the best option to meet their program needs for their current and projected circumstances during 2021.

Each of the three options was designed to help providers maximize their success and allow a pathway for all providers to rate in 2021, regardless of the situation they face. Once a decision has been reached and providers select their option they are expected to follow through with their choice. Changes to the option selected can only be made in the most serious of emergency situations. Providers must take the time to learn about the three options and ask questions if they are uncertain as to the best choice for them.

Providers should pay close attention to the eligibility requirements for each option to determine if their program qualifies for that option and to make sure they can complete the required components during the 2021 Cohort they have selected. All cohort windows must be adhered to if a program wants to be eligible to earn a star rating.

The three options to choose from are:

- Option A – Portfolio Only
  - Maximum of 1-Star potential
  - 1 year rating only
- Option B – Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP)
  - Maximum of 2-Stars potential
  - Up to 2 years rating
  - Additional TARO Rating Incentive eligible
- Option C – Live Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE)
  - Maximum of 3-Stars potential
  - Up to 2 years rating
  - Additional TARO Rating Incentive eligible

## Option A

### Portfolio Only

**Any provider wishing to seek a TARO rating in 2021 is eligible to select Option A.** This option was successfully piloted in Summer 2020 and requires submission of the portfolio only.

- 15 Structural Quality Points must be earned on the portfolio to earn the Option A rating.
- Providers who are currently closed or do not have children physically in attendance in their facility due to COVID restrictions can complete this rating option.
- Providers selecting this option can achieve a **1-Star Rating only**.
- The 1-Star Rating awarded will be valid for **1 year only**.
- Any provider rating under a 2021 Cohort, whether or not they were originally signed up for a 2020 Cohort and eligible for the 2020 CAPS/QR Rating Incentives Bonus, will be eligible for the new TARO Rating Incentive that includes staff awards and is based on rating with Option A .

## Option B

### Portfolio



### QRVP

**Any provider wishing to seek a TARO rating in 2021 is eligible to select Option B.** This option was successfully piloted in Fall 2020 and requires submission of the portfolio plus completion of the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP) which is used in lieu of an on-site observation. This option affords the broadest opportunity to receive a star rating as it follows the traditional 2-part process of using points earned for both Structural Quality (those foundational policies and procedures demonstrated in the portfolio) and Process Quality (the practices experienced by the children typically demonstrated during an observation), allowing providers to maximize their opportunity for success.

- To be eligible for this option, programs must have children physically in attendance at their facility to capture and submit evidence of daily classroom practices using video and photographic equipment.
- Providers submit a portfolio during their cohort portfolio submission window and complete **4 Topics** in the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP) during the 12-week QRVP window.
- The QRVP replaces the ERS observation, allowing providers to earn process quality points.
- The QRVP requires completion of continuous quality improvement activities organized into **4 Topics**. Evidence of activity completion and quality of practice is evaluated through newly created scoring rubrics.
- All topic assignments are based on best practices and align with critical components found within the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Components and concepts within the topics selected, along with the specific assignments created support over 90% of the ERS items/indicators scored during an on-site observation. In this way it is hoped that participation in the QRVP will also help providers feel more prepared for their next ERS observation.

- The QRVP is designed as a collaborative process with a CCR&R TA and a Quality Rated Improvement Guide (QRIG). During the 12-week process the assigned QRIG will help facilitate and guide providers through the new process and the CCR&R TA will be on hand to support providers as they make quality improvements and submit the required evidence for scoring.
- **1-Star and 2-Star Ratings** are available based on accumulation of points earned on both the portfolio and the QRVP.
- The rating awarded will be valid for **2 years** for providers who fully complete all the assignments within each component to earn their rating.
- Programs that earn enough points to rate but do not complete all tasks in all 4 Required Topic Assignments will earn a 1-year rating, regardless of the number of stars earned.
- CAPS providers who were originally signed up for a 2020 Cohort and eligible for the 2020 CAPS/QR Rating Incentives Bonus will be eligible for a new TARO Rating Incentive with increased workforce bonus amounts if they select Option B.
- Providers who are renewing their 2017 rating and rate under a 2021 Cohort, whether a CAPS provider or not, will be eligible for a new TARO Rating Incentive that includes staff awards if they select Option B.
- Any provider enrolled and rated under a 2021 Cohort whether or not they were originally part of a 2020 Cohort, or are a CAPS provider, will be eligible for a new TARO Rating Incentive that includes staff awards.

### Option C



**Only programs that were previously rated with an observation and are seeking a renewed rating are eligible for Option C.** This option is being successfully piloted in Cohort 1 2021. Option C requires submission of the portfolio, plus completion of the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP), plus participation in the Live Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE) virtual visit. This option allows programs previously rated with an observation that need to renew their rating in 2021 a pathway to earn or maintain 3 Stars. Because the ERS live observation remains the bedrock of the rating system and is the foundation for determining global process quality, only those programs that have already established their quality through an onsite observation can be eligible to be awarded the highest star rating with the TARO Model.

- To be eligible for this option, programs must have children physically in attendance at their facility to capture and submit evidence of daily classroom practices using video, photographic equipment, and live streaming capabilities.
- Providers submit a portfolio during their cohort portfolio submission window, complete **5 Topics** in the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP) during the 12-week QRVP window, and submit to a Live Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE) virtual visit during the month following completion of the QRVP.
- QRVP and LO-VE replaces the ERS observation, allowing providers to earn process quality points.
- The QRVP for Option C requires completion of continuous quality improvement activities organized into **5 Topics**. Evidence of activity completion and quality of practice is evaluated through newly created scoring rubrics.

- All topic assignments are based on best practices and align with critical components found within the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Components and concepts within the topics selected along with the specific assignments created support over 90% of the ERS items/indicators scored during an on-site observation. In this way it is hoped that participation in the QRVP will also help providers feel more prepared for their next ERS observation.
- The QRVP is designed as a collaborative process with a CCR&R TA and a Quality Rated Improvement Guide (QRIG). During the 12-week process the assigned QRIG will help ease and guide providers through the new process and the CCR&R TA will be on hand to support providers as they make quality improvements and submit the required evidence for scoring.
- Upon completion of all 5 topics in the QRVP the LO-VE virtual visit will be scheduled for the required number of classroom visits. In childcare centers a virtual visit will occur for at least 1 infant/toddler and 1 preschool classroom if all age groups are currently enrolled at the time of the virtual visit.
- The live virtual visit allows QR staff the opportunity to score components of the QRVP in action in a classroom setting via a remote link. A remote viewing scoring instrument has been created that will be shared with providers prior to the LO-VE virtual visit.
- **1-Star, 2-Star, and 3-Star Ratings** are available based on accumulation of points earned on all three components.
- The rating awarded will be valid for **2 years** for providers who fully complete all the assignments/tasks within each component to earn their rating.
- Programs that earn enough points to rate but do not complete all tasks in all 5 Topic Required Assignments will not be eligible to receive the remote observation, and thus will not be able to earn 3-Stars. The rating may still be valid for **2 years** providing the program completes all tasks in the first 4 QRVP Required Assignments.
- Program staff will be eligible for a new 2021 TARO Rating Incentive.

### 2.3 How TARO Ratings are Determined

Just as with the traditional model of rating programs, TARO ratings are determined by combining Structural Quality Points, Process Quality Points and Accreditation Bonus Points. The Portfolio score is converted to the Structural Quality Points, and the points received by completion of the QRVP topics and LO-VE virtual visits, where applicable, are converted to Process Quality Points. These points along with any points given for accreditation bonus points, such as NAEYC or Advanced Ed/SACS accreditation will determine the total points and corresponding star level. Programs will be notified of their star rating after completion of the TARO process.

The charts on the following pages show the rating rubrics for child care learning centers and family child care learning homes with additional staff members. Rubrics for providers with no additional staff members will be available in program's ShareFile accounts, as well as on the Quality Rated website [Georgia's Quality Rated System \(ga.gov\)](https://www.ga.gov/quality-rated).

2.3a. TARO Rating Rubric Option A

**Points for Child Care Learning Centers and Family Child Care Learning Homes with Staff Members**

<b>Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)</b> <i>Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care</i>			
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Total Score Achieved for Each Standard</b>	<b>Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion</b>	
		<b>Portfolio Score</b>	<b>Structural Quality Points</b>
1. Director & Teacher Qualifications (Parts A & B)			
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity			
3. Family Engagement			
4. Intentional Teaching Practices			
5. Teacher: Student Ratios			
<b>Total Standards (Portfolio) Score</b>			

<b>Accreditation Bonus Points**</b>	
<b>Accreditation Type</b>	<b>Points for Each Accreditation</b>
NAEYC, NAFC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

\*\*A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

<b>TQRIS Components</b>	<b>Points Awarded</b>
Structural Quality	
Accreditation Bonus Points	
<b>Total Points</b>	



<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Star Level</b>
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★

2.3b. TARO Rating Rubric Option B

Points for Child Care Learning Centers and Family Child Care Learning Homes with Staff Members

<b>Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)</b>			
<i>Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care</i>			
Standards	Total Score Achieved for Each Standard	Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion	
		Portfolio Score	Structural Quality Points
1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Parts A & B)		0-14 15-44 45-74 75-104	0 5 10 15
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity			
3. Family Engagement			
4. Intentional Teaching Practices			
5. Teacher: Student Ratios			
<b>Total Standards (Portfolio) Score</b>			

<b>Process Quality – Option B (QRVP)</b>			
<i>Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be observed and measured in a virtual way</i>			
QRVP - Option B (virtual process – QRVP Topic completion)	Total Score for each Topic	QRVP Score to Process Quality Points Conversion	
		QRVP Score	Process Quality - QRVP Points
1. Schedules/Transitions (25 pts)		0-49 50-69 70-84 85-100+	0 5 10 15
2. Nurturing Relationships (25 pts)			
3. Impactful Interactions (25 pts)			
4. Intentional Teaching (25 pts)			
Number of Topics 1-4 Optional Assignments Completed ___ X 4 pts each			
<b>Total Topics (QRVP) Score</b>			

<b>Accreditation Bonus Points**</b>	
Accreditation Type	Points for Each Accreditation
NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

\*\*A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

TQRIS Components	Points Awarded
Structural Quality	
Process Quality - QRVP	
Accreditation Bonus Points	
<b>Total Points</b>	



Total Points	Star Level
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★
25-35	★★

2.3c. TARO Rating Rubric Option C

Points for Child Care Learning Centers and Family Child Care Learning Homes with Staff Members

<b>Structural Quality (Portfolio Documentation)</b> <i>Items or practices in a program that create a framework or foundation that potentially allows for children to experience high quality of care</i>			
Standards	Total Score Achieved for Each Standard	Portfolio Score to Structural Quality Points Conversion	
		Portfolio Score	Structural Quality Points
1. Director and Teacher Qualifications (Parts A & B)			
2. Child Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity			
3. Family Engagement		0-14	0
4. Intentional Teaching Practices		15-44	5
5. Teacher: Student Ratios		45-74	10
		75-104	15
<b>Total Standards (Portfolio) Score</b>			

<b>Process Quality – Option B (QRVP)</b> <i>Practices, interactions, and environment directly experienced by children that can be observed and measured in a virtual way</i>			
QRVP - Option B (virtual process – QRVP Topic completion)	Total Score for each Topic	QRVP Score to Process Quality Points Conversion	
		QRVP Score	Process Quality - QRVP Points
1. Schedules/Transitions (25 pts)			
2. Nurturing Relationships (25 pts)			
3. Impactful Interactions (25 pts)		0-49	0
4. Intentional Teaching (25 pts)		50-69	5
Number of Topics 1-4 Optional Assignments Completed ___ X 4 pts each		70-84	10
		85-100+	15
<b>Total Topics (QRVP) Score</b>			

<b>Process Quality – Option C (LO-VE)</b> <i>Option C (Live Observation-Virtual Experience) is only available to programs seeking to renew their traditional 3-year rating and includes a virtual visit to assess the practices demonstrated in the QRVP.</i>			
LO-VE - Option C (virtual process – QRVP Topic completion and virtual assessment visit)	Total Score for each Component	LO-VE Score to Process Quality Points Conversion	
		LO-VE Score	Process Quality - LO-VE Points
1. Literacy in the Environment (25 pts)		0-49	0
2. Live Virtual Observation Experience (75 pts)		50-69	5
3. Topic 5 Optional Assignment (4 pts)		70-84	10
<b>Total Option C (LO-VE) Score</b>		85-100+	15

<b>Accreditation Bonus Points**</b>	
Accreditation Type	Points for Each Accreditation
NAEYC, NAFCC, AMI, AMS, COA	2
NECPA, AdvancED/SACS, NAC, National Lutheran School Accreditation, Association of Christian Schools International	1

\*\*A program can earn a maximum of 4 bonus points. For verification of bonus points, upload your accreditation certificate to the "National Accreditation" section in Section 1 of the online portfolio.

TQRIS Components	Points Awarded
Structural Quality	
Process Quality - QRVP	
Process Quality – LO-VE	
Accreditation Bonus Points	
<b>Total Points</b>	



Total Points	Star Level
0-14	No Stars
15-24	★
25-35	★★
36 – 45+	★★★

## 2.4 TARO for All in 2021

All child care providers and programs seeking a Quality Rated Star Rating in 2021 will do so with a TARO Option. No traditional rating options with a live, high stakes on-site observation will be available in 2021. Transferring all 2021 Cohorts to TARO was not an easy decision, but it was made in the best interests of children, providers, and staff. Utilizing TARO to rate all providers in 2021 enables DECAL to help ensure all eligible providers meet the CAPS/QR 2021 deadline with a method we know works, regardless of where programs may find themselves this year.

Even after all COVID restrictions are lifted and programs can return to a more normalized mode of operation, DECAL recognizes that there will be a period of time that many providers are simply not ready for an on-site high stakes' observation. Providers and their staff will need time to readjust and recover; rating programs with TARO allows for that time to occur while maintaining momentum for quality and supports all programs.

## 2.5 2021 TARO Cohorts

Quality Rated utilizes a cohort structure to rate child care programs. This approach allows programs to plan strategically for each step in the quality improvement process. There are typically four (4) Cohorts to choose from in a given year. Around October, DECAL announces the number of program slots in each cohort being made available to programs the following year. Programs wanting to complete the rating process during the upcoming year are invited to select a program slot from the cohort of their choice. These program slots provide programs with the timeframe to submit their portfolio, determine the window when the on-site observation will be scheduled, and when to expect the rating announcement. In 2021 the windows for on-site observations will be replaced with the QRVP.

Programs seeking a rating must be signed up to a 2021 Cohort regardless of the TARO option they seek to use. Programs that selected Cohort 1 or 2 in 2021 have already selected the TARO option that most suited their need. Programs in Cohorts 3 or 4, or those unrated CAPS providers still needing to select a Cohort will need to select their TARO option in their Quality Rated Account online.

The table below shows the important dates and can help in the decision for Cohort Option selection.

	Options Available	Portfolio Submission Window	QRVP Window	Rating Announcement
<b>Cohort 1</b>	TARO Options A-C	Jan 4 – 29, 2021	Feb 1 – Apr 30, 2021 (Option C also includes May)	Option A: Mar 2021 Option B: May 2021 Option C: Jun 2021
<b>Cohort 2</b>	TARO Options A-C	Mar 1 – Apr 15, 2021	Apr 1 – Jun 30, 2021 (Option C also includes Jul)	Option A: May 2021 Option B: Jul 2021 Option C: Aug 2021
<b>Cohort 3</b>	TARO Options A-C	Jun 1 – 30, 2021	Jul 1 – Sep 30, 2021 (Option C also includes Oct)	Option A: Sep 2021 Option B: Oct 2021 Option C: Nov 2021
<b>Cohort 4</b>	TARO Options A-C	Sep 1 – 30, 2021	Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2021 (Option C also includes Jan)	Option A: Dec 2021 Option B: Jan 2022 Option C: Feb 2022

## 2.6 TARO Operational Policies

The previous section outlined the structure, protocols, and procedures that providers will experience when completing a TARO rating. This next section contains important policies that will be adhered to during TARO to ensure a consistent and equitable process for all providers participating in a TARO Option to achieve their star rating. Quality Rated reserves the right to update and amend these policies as needed based on lessons learned with this new system.

### 2.6a. Policy Regarding Switching TARO Options

Just as with all cohort selections, all TARO Option selections are final. Understanding the requirements of each option and talking through the best option will ensure providers choose the option that best fits their needs. Only in the most extreme of emergency circumstances can TARO options be changed, and this can only occur prior to the start of the cohort for which the provider is signed up. If a program is granted the ability to formally switch to a different option, the request to switch must be made by the program director via email to the Quality Rated Helpdesk, prior to their cohort start date.

### 2.6b. Policy Regarding Voluntary Withdrawal from the QRVP

Providers enrolled in Option B or C who decide they no longer wish to continue with the QRVP component after the start of the cohort can formally request to be withdrawn from the QRVP. The program director must notify their QRIG via email that they intend to withdraw from the QRVP and the QRIG will then email the director the formal QRVP Withdrawal Request form to be completed and returned. Upon receipt of the QRVP Withdrawal Request form, the program will be officially withdrawn from the QRVP; Option C providers will also be withdrawn from LO-VE consideration. Any subsequent rating will be based on the portfolio score and any completed topic assignments to date and will be valid for 1 year only. Only providers completing all tasks and assignments from every applicable topic are eligible for a 2-year rating. In addition, provider's withdrawing from the QRVP will cease to have access to their program's Citrix ShareFile account. QRVP withdrawal decisions are final, and providers may not request to resume working on the QRVP later in the cohort or within another cohort during the same rating year.

### 2.6c. Policy Regarding Disenrollment from QRVP Due to Provider Non-Response

The QRVP was designed as a collaborative process and requires ongoing communication and engagement from providers, QRIGs, and TAs. Providers enrolled in Option B or C who do not respond to communication attempts from their QRIG or TA and/or make no attempts to log into their ShareFile account to make progress with the topic assignments will be disenrolled from the QRVP. Providers who have not responded to communication attempts by the end of the third week after the start of the QRVP will be considered "No Shows" and will be sent official notice that they will be dropped from the QRVP if they fail to respond to the official notice within three (3) business days. After three business days, Quality Rated will inform the provider of their disenrollment from the QRVP. Any subsequent rating will be based on the portfolio score alone; will be valid for 1 year only; and the provider will cease to have access to their program's Citrix ShareFile account.

### 2.6d. Policy Regarding Awarding a Rating for Two Years

Only providers selecting Option B or Option C have the ability to earn a star rating for two years. The rating awarded will be valid for **2 years** only to providers who fully complete all the assignments/tasks within each component to earn their rating, regardless of star level actually earned.

- Option B providers who earn enough points to rate but **do not** complete all tasks in all 4 Topic Required Assignments, will only be awarded a 1-year rating.
- Option C providers who earn enough points to rate but **do not** follow through with the LO-VE visit, or do not complete all tasks in all 5 Topic Required Assignments, may be eligible to still receive a 2-year rating providing they completed at least all tasks for the first 4 Topic Required Assignments – effectively defaulting them to Option B status for rating purposes.

### 2.6e. Policy Regarding Achieving a 2- or 3-Star Rating

Providers selecting Option B have the ability to earn a 2-Star Rating based on accumulation of portfolio and QRVP points per the relevant rating rubric. Only providers selecting Option C have the ability to earn up to a 3-Star Rating based on accumulation of portfolio points, QRVP points, and LO-VE points per the relevant rating rubric. All scores for each component are considered final and are not contestable. Providers can seek additional clarification of any score that they require additional assistance understanding. After receiving their rating, the Star Rating Clarification process remains in place and can be utilized by any provider.

### 2.6f. Policy Regarding School-Age Only Programs Enrolled in Option B or C

School-Age Only (SAO) programs signed up to Option B or C for Cohorts 4 will submit their portfolio according to the posted schedule in the table on page 12. A special School-Age Only QRVP cohort has been developed for these programs to participate in the QRVP component rather than being a member of the traditional cohort QRVP window listed in the table. The SAO QRVP window will operate from September 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>. Programs will be assigned to their QRIG prior to the start of the SAO QRVP window and will register to attend the separate SAO orientation session and complete Topic Assignments unique to SAO settings.

### 3. Navigating the Quality Rated Virtual Process (QRVP)

#### 3.1 What is the QRVP?

The Quality Rated Virtual Process or QRVP is 12-weeks of collaborative, guided continuous improvement activities that cover 4 topics for Option B and 5 topics for Option C. The topics were developed in a sequential order with each topic providing the foundational knowledge that is built upon by the next topic in order.

◆ **Topics Included for Center-based Childcare and Family Child Care Homes:**

- Topic 1 – Schedules and Transitions
- Topic 2 – Nurturing Relationships
- Topic 3 – Impactful Interactions
- Topic 4 – Intentional Teaching
- Topic 5 – Literacy in the Environment (*Option C only*)

◆ **Topics Included for School-Age Only Programs:**

- Topic 1 – Schedules
- Topic 2 – Activity Planning
- Topic 3 – Environments
- Topic 4 – Nurturing Relationships
- Topic 5 – STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) (*Option C only*)

Activities specifically designed for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children are included in each topic. Progression through the QRVP was created to be self-paced, with guidance from the Quality Rated Improvement Guide (QRIG) and supported by the provider’s TA. This self-paced design permits providers to work at their own speed while allowing enough time to complete each topic during the QRVP window of the entire selected cohort.

Points are earned by completing 4 tasks that make up the Required Assignment for each topic. Providers will find sequential Prerequisite Assignments and a large number of additional resources and samples that are designed to help them successfully complete the tasks in the Required Assignments.

#### Flow of Topic Assignments

<b>Prerequisite Assignment</b>	<b>TA Process – Builds Required Knowledge</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic Required Webinar Viewing and Readings</li><li>• Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Guided Discussion with TA</li></ul>	
<b>Required Assignment</b>	<b>Points Awarded – Task Completion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task 1. CQI Guided Discussion Summary Report – form fillable</li><li>• Task 2. Topic Webinar Quiz</li><li>• Task 3. Demonstrated Quality Practices – video clip or photographic evidence</li><li>• Task 4. What We Do Activity – in-depth quality improvement evidence of practice</li></ul>	
<b>Optional Assignment</b>	<b>Additional Points Awarded – Training Certification</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Credit bearing training found on OLLI through GaPDS</li><li>• Can be completed by any on-site teaching or admin staff</li></ul>	

## 3.2 Structure and Steps of Topic Assignments

The QRVP has been designed for easy navigation through the steps to maximize success in completing the Required Assignment for each topic. All resources, materials, samples, and instructions needed to complete the QRVP are accessible to providers 24/7 during the Cohort QRVP window via a secure portal called Citrix ShareFile. Providers will be given login access to their ShareFile account after attending the QRVP Orientation Session at the beginning of their selected Cohort.

### Steps in QRVP Topics

- A. **Prerequisite Assignments** are the first step in each topic. They have been carefully designed to provide the necessary background knowledge to support a provider's successful completion of the tasks in the Required Assignments. Each topic has specific prerequisite assignments that include a recorded topic webinar viewable on YouTube that is accessible from a link in the ShareFile account and corresponding handouts specific to the Topic.
- B. **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Guided Discussions** are the next step. Using the supplied CQI Guided Discussion questions, providers have the opportunity to engage in an in-depth discussion of the Topic content with their TA to plan for their own program's growth and improvement in that topic area.
- C. **Required Assignments** are the last step in each topic. The Required Assignments for each topic are made up of 4 individual tasks that must be completed to earn the 25 points available. Every topic has the same order and type of tasks, with the specifics of each activity being geared to the topic's content area.
  - i. **Task 1 – CQI Guided Discussion Summary Report:** provider completes the supplied form fillable report based on what they learned from the webinar, required reading handouts, and the CQI Guided Discussion with their TA.
  - ii. **Task 2 – Topic Webinar Quiz:** a link to each topic's quiz is located in the ShareFile account and can be taken on any computer, tablet, or mobile device. Each quiz contains 10 questions that are based on the information in the webinar and required reading handouts. The quiz **must** be completed by the program director.
  - iii. **Task 3 – Demonstrated Quality Practices:** each topic has a required number of video clips and/or photographic evidence to be submitted that allows providers to demonstrate their daily quality practices in their classrooms or family child care home. The video clips have specific requirements that must be met to earn the points associated with them. Providers should read the instructions and rubrics carefully to ensure understanding of the requirements based on age groups enrolled and the specific activity required to be captured with children.
  - iv. **Task 4 – What We Do Activity:** each topic has a specially designed activity that allows providers to explore an in-depth aspect of the topic. Detailed instructions are accessible in the ShareFile account and scoring requirements are available on the topic rubric.
- D. **Optional Assignments** are made available through DECAL's Online Library Learning Initiative (OLLI) accessible through the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS). There are optional assignments linked to each topic available for additional points that can be applied to the final QRVP score; they are not required. Any member of the on-site teaching or administrative staff can take the online trainings at any time to earn these points. There is one optional assignment training opportunity available for each topic and all carry free State Approved Training Credit in addition to the QRVP points. The points count in a provider's total QRVP score **only if the provider has also completed all the tasks in the Required Assignment from the topic associated with the optional assignment**. Optional assignments cannot be used in lieu of a topic's required assignment tasks. DECAL will verify the training

has been completed in the staff members' GaPDS accounts before the points can be awarded. Should you have questions about your PDS status, please contact the GA PDS Support Team at 404-267-2760. If a staff member does not have a GA PDS profile, instructions for set up can be viewed on the Georgia Professional Development System (GA PDS) website: Help Sections (ga.gov). Please allow up to 30 days for the initial profile set up and approval process to be completed; these processes are defined by PDS and not within the control of Quality Rated.

- E. Upload Evidence Folders** are provided for each topic in the provider's ShareFile account. Once a piece of evidence is uploaded into the correct task folder, it will be considered finalized. At that point, the task evidence folder is locked for scoring, and no new evidence can be added or edited.

### 3.3 Supports During the QRVP

While the QRVP is a self-paced process that allows providers to move through the required topic assignments at their own rate, they are not in the process alone. The QRVP is a highly collaborative process designed to introduce providers to the importance of continuous quality improvement using the Environment Rating Scales as the basis for the concepts discussed. The process was conceived with support in mind to make sure providers gain confidence in exploring how they can improve the quality of their program in a way that is safe and meaningful.

Foundational to a provider's success during the 12-week QRVP window is the support offered by DECAL staff (QRIGs) and the Technical Assistance (TA) from the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R). Communication is key throughout the QRVP process. The assigned QRIG will contact providers at the beginning of the process to make sure they and the TA have the correct email address and telephone number.

#### 3.3a. Quality Rated Improvement Guides (QRIGs)

The Quality Rated Improvement Guides (QRIGs) are Quality Rated ERS Assessors who have been trained to be process experts in the structure, flow, and content of the QRVP. The QRIGs carry out several specialized roles within the QRVP.

##### **QRIGs:**

- Serve as a procedural facilitator offering technical guidance, leading child care providers and TAs throughout the steps of the QRVP.
- Host QRVP Orientation sessions, support TAs and providers in solving any problems or general challenges they may experience.
- Offer encouragement and oversee the workflow to ensure providers are progressing through the topics.
- Meet with providers & TAs when process or content clarification is needed, research solutions and offer helpful responses to questions from TA & providers.
- Review evidence and score assignments utilizing topic rubrics, write and upload strengths-based feedback forms, and conduct personalized feedback consultation sessions when applicable.

#### 3.3b. Technical Assistance (TA)

Technical Assistance (TA) is provided by staff from one of the six independent regional CCR&R Agencies that serve as coaching experts. The TA may be the same person who assisted the provider with portfolio preparation, or it may be an additional person assigned to provide TA specifically during the QRVP. Each CCR&R has determined their own assignment system for TA during the QRVP component, and while they work closely with DECAL staff from Quality Rated, the TA are not DECAL employees or members of the Quality Rated unit.

While TA is not mandatory, providers who opt not to receive TA, may find it difficult to complete some of the prerequisite steps that have been designed to help prepare them for completing the required assignments. Providers considering Option B or Option C who are not currently receiving TA should immediately contact their local CCR&R for assistance. Contact information for each of the six regional CCR&R can be found at the following link: [Child Care Resource & Referral System \(ga.gov\)](#). TA is instrumental to provider's success in the QRVP, and they carry out several specialized roles within the QRVP.

**TAs:**

- Coach and mentor the provider through the content of each topic assignment to promote maximum learning.
- Plan QRVP progression with the provider to maximize success by scheduling the prerequisite learning prior to providers beginning the required assignments.
- Encourage provider use of Working Folders that are offered in the ShareFile account. Working Folders allow the TA to review evidence and offer advice and suggestions for improvement, provide guidance based on topic instructions and rubrics, seek clarification if needed, and endorse movement of the evidence to the Evidence Upload Folder for scoring.
- Liaise with QRIGs as needed when questions about topic content arise to better assist providers in submitting evidence that maximizes assignment potential.
- Assist providers in applying scoring feedback from previous topics to encourage ongoing program improvement.

### 3.3c. Ongoing Feedback

Feedback is an integral part of the QRVP, it is offered informally by the QRIG throughout the process during meetings and encouraging phone calls, texts, and emails. Although the QRVP process is self-paced, providers are encouraged to pace themselves throughout the time allotted during the QRVP window to ensure there is time to thoughtfully consider each topic and for providers and their TAs to review assignments before they are uploaded for scoring.

More formalized and structured feedback is also built into the process, this occurs after evidence has been submitted and scored. This type of feedback is designed to assist the provider in their ongoing continuous quality improvement. While scores are not contestable, strengths-based feedback and helpful suggestions are presented. Clarification of scores and the feedback, if needed, is an important part of the improvement process.

- Feedback forms are uploaded to provider's ShareFile account after each topic is scored. They are used to document the points earned and give strengths-based feedback for each assignment completed. Suggestions for next steps and a list of additional resources are included.
- A formal Personalized Consultation Feedback Session will be available to providers if all topic task assignments are uploaded by predetermined deadlines for each topic. Finalized Topic Feedback forms that have been scored and reviewed by a Quality Rated Anchor should be made available to providers approximately two-three weeks after a topic is completed. After the provider and TA have had a chance to review the feedback, the provider can submit a form requesting a Personalized Consultation Feedback Session, if they met qualifying evidence submission dates, to receive additional assistance understanding their scores and feedback. The request form allows for the inclusion of targeted information permitting the QRIG to focus the session on the applicable items that can best help the provider move forward. The Personalized Consultation Feedback Session is not a score refutation or appeals process. It is an opportunity for the provider and TA to further understand the scoring

requirements and learn how to make program improvements that could impact subsequent topic assignments.

### 3.3d. Evidence Submitted in Languages Other than English

DECAL is fully committed to providing equity in all our programs and services, and while the TARO process is a new system, we are working hard to ensure that all providers who wish to participate can do so to the best of their ability, regardless of location or home language spoken. Many of the resources and supporting documents have been translated into Spanish and are available to those providers requiring them. It is important to note however, that the online QR portfolio account and the online ShareFile account are only available in English. However, programs may submit evidence to both in their home language if their English capability is limited.

Providers should notify their TA and QRIG at the beginning of the cohort if any translation services will be required. For programs that submit written and/or video evidence that is recorded in a language other than English, please note that due to the limited capacity of the translation services currently available to Quality Rated, delays may be experienced in receiving Topic scores and Finalized Feedback Forms. While every attempt is made to adhere to our timelines for scoring and feedback, DECAL contracts with a third-party partner to provide these translation services. Depending on the level of translation required, programs may not receive scores and feedback until the end of their Cohort.

### 3.3e. Citrix ShareFile

Citrix ShareFile is a tool for sending, receiving, and organizing business files online. It is a password-protected space for sharing information between DECAL and our partners. ShareFile presents an easy way to store and send files securely that are too large or sensitive to email. Each provider's unique free account is established after attending the QRVP Orientation Session at the beginning of the QRVP window of their chosen cohort.

The program director will receive an email from ShareFile Support ([mail@sf-notifications.com](mailto:mail@sf-notifications.com)) with a link to activate their ShareFile account. Providers must click on the Activate Account link in the email to activate their free ShareFile account and get access to the application, folders, and resources that will be used to complete the QRVP.

In addition to the ShareFile account that can be accessed online using a desktop computer, laptop, or tablet, Citrix also offers a free mobile application called Citrix Files that can be downloaded to a smart phone. This mobile app is particularly useful for recording videos and photos that will be automatically uploaded to the providers ShareFile account. This makes the job of submitting the Demonstrated Quality Practices task more simplified, preventing less submission errors that could possibly result in lower scores.



#### ShareFile Navigation

All topic instructions, scoring rubrics, materials, resources, samples, links, and information needed to complete the QRVP are located in the Citrix ShareFile application. Once providers have activated their account, they will see their program folders on the home screen. From this view they can locate all the folders and documents that will be used throughout the process.

It is suggested that providers click on the PDF document called **WATCH FIRST** which gives a link to a YouTube How-To Video that provides an overview to using the ShareFile account and all the resources within it.

- A. General Information:** read the information in the General Information folder first before beginning any work on the topics. The documents in this folder are extremely useful and will help providers get started with the QRVP. A PDF of the Orientation Session webinar is located here along with a handbook explaining how the rubrics work so scoring can be understood (this is crucial reading to maximize success and providers may want to print this resource and keep it at hand).
- B. Topic Introduction Webinars:** this folder is the starting place for working on each topic. The folder contains links to YouTube How-To Videos of short introduction webinars for each topic. Each webinar is about 10-12 minutes long and provides a good overview of what to expect in the topic, allowing providers to prepare for the topic assignments.
- C. Topic Assignment Folders:** this folder contains all the individual topic folders and materials needed to complete the assignments for each topic.
- The individual Topic Folders contain the topic assignment instructions, scoring rubrics, FAQs, resources, and blank form-fillable evidence forms. Required reading handouts, samples, tips and reminders, and video libraries are also available to providers. To maximize success, it is suggested that providers print out the topic instructions and rubrics as they work through each topic.
  - Topic TA-Provider Working Folders are housed here too. Providers are encouraged to first place their evidence in these folders so their TA can review it and offer guidance and suggestions before the evidence is submitted for scoring.
  - Topic Upload Evidence Folders are also housed in the Topic Assignment Folders and once all evidence has been uploaded, the folder will be locked so the QRIG can begin scoring the evidence and writing the Finalized Topic Feedback Form.
- D. QRVP Optional Assignments:** this folder contains the instructions and resources for completing the optional assignments if providers choose to complete them. In addition, the Upload Optional Assignments folders are housed here so providers can upload the required evidence for proof of training completion to earn the optional assignment points.
- E. Technology Guides and Useful Links:** this folder contains multiple helpful documents to provide support and guidance to all the technology aspects associated with the QRVP. The QRVP Cohort 2021 Technology Guide Handbook is particularly helpful, and providers might want to print a copy and keep it nearby. In addition, there are several How-To Guides and Tip Sheets on filming videos.
- F. Finalized Topic Feedback Forms:** this folder will be empty at the start of the QRVP. As providers complete and submit their evidence for topics the QRIG will lock the Upload Evidence Folders and begin scoring the appropriate Topic Feedback Form. Once the Feedback Form has been completed and reviewed by a Quality Rated Anchor it will be finalized and placed in the Finalized Topic Feedback Forms folder for the provider to access.

### 3.4 QRVP Operational Policies

The previous section outlined the structure, protocols, and procedures that providers will experience when completing the QRVP component for either Option B or Option C. This next section contains important policies that will be adhered to during the QRVP to ensure a consistent and equitable process for all providers participating in the QRVP. Quality Rated reserves the right to update and amend these policies as needed based on lessons learned with this new system.

#### 3.4a. Policy Regarding QRVP Orientation Participation

Without exception, all program directors or administrators participating in the QRVP component must attend or have a program representative attend the QRVP orientation for their cohort. Orientation sessions hosted by the

QRIGs are scheduled to occur at the beginning of each cohort and have been specifically designed to prepare providers for the expectations and requirements during the QRVP. No provider can begin the QRVP without having completed an orientation session. Providers registered for an orientation session that experience a genuine emergency need to contact their QRIG as soon as possible to discuss options.

#### 3.4b. Policy Regarding Program Statement of Acknowledgement

Each program director must read, sign, date, and return the Statement of Acknowledgement to participate in the QRVP. This statement is the director's acknowledgement that they understand the expectations for completing and submitting their own unique and independent evidence for each topic assignment. The statement signals that all evidence should relate to and be customized for the individual program completing it. If two or more programs appear to submit identical work or near identical work, neither program will receive points for the submitted assignment.

In addition, programs agree to collect and keep photo and video release forms on file for any child that appears in video or photographic evidence submitted to Quality Rated. It is understood that the program has all necessary photo/video release forms on file prior to submission of any evidence. The signed statement will remain in the provider's ShareFile Account in the General Information Folder. While other individuals in the program may be delegated some of the day-to-day work for the QRVP, the Statement of Acknowledgement must be signed and dated by the program director. The director is ultimately responsible for everything that happens in the program and their name must be on this form.

The Statement of Acknowledgement will be emailed to programs approximately 10 days prior to the beginning of the cohort. Program directors must sign and return the form prior to attending the cohort orientation session. ShareFile accounts will not be made available to programs until the Statement of Acknowledgement form has been returned.

#### 3.4c. Policy Regarding CQI Guided Discussion Summary Report if TA is not Received

While seeking CCR&R TA assistance during the QRVP is not a requirement, it is strongly recommended. The QRVP component was designed to be a collaborative effort between the provider, TA, and QRIG. Both the TA and QRIG have specific roles that were crafted to help providers achieve maximum success completing the topic assignments. If TA coaching is declined it could make completion of the topic assignments more difficult. The TA helps guide the prerequisite assignment by leading the CQI Guided Discussion to ensure the provider has the foundational knowledge necessary to complete the required assignments. Without this element, providers risk submitting evidence that may not score as well as hoped.

Submission of the CQI Guided Discussion Summary Report typically occurs directly after the TA has engaged the provider in discussion of how the program can implement improvements. Programs that decline CCR&R TA still have to complete this step of the QRVP; however, it is acceptable for the provider to substitute their own TA for that offered free of charge from the CCR&R. Acceptable substitutes for CCR&R TA could include TA offered by a corporate entity regional office staff member; other recognized national or state TA institutes or organizations; private consultants serving in a training and TA capacity; or another administrative staff member from the participating program such as assistant director, curriculum specialist, trainer etc. The entire CQI Guided Discussion Summary Report must still be completed in full. Where the form indicates TA, the provider must enter the name of the individual providing the TA support in place of the CCR&R TA and include the agency or organization the substitute TA represents, if applicable.

#### 3.4d. Policy Regarding Topic Webinar Quiz

While work on the topic assignments can be completed as group tasks with certain items being delegated to program staff as needed, **each topic webinar quiz must be completed by the program director** to earn the applicable points. Each topic quiz may be taken any time while the provider is working on the topic, and the quiz is not timed. Although the topic quiz will allow multiple attempts, only the score from the first attempt is used

for QRVP scoring. The quiz will not time out, answers will not be automatically selected, and the scores will not be automatically sent to the QRIG until the director clicks the submit button at the end of the quiz. Even if providers experience unexpected computer shutdowns, power outages, or internet disruptions, nothing will be transmitted until the submit button is clicked – do not click submit until ready to have the responses scored and recorded.

#### 3.4e. Policy Regarding Submission of Video Clips

All requirements for video clip submission are outlined in each Topic Assignment Instructions and Scoring Rubric. The length or timing of video clips noted in the scoring rubric is strictly adhered to, and each video clip must be of continuous action. Clips that have been edited or otherwise cut and spliced together to meet the required length of time for a clip or to manipulate the action, are not acceptable as they circumvent the intent of being able to view a continuous action or interaction such as would be observed during an on-site observation. Editing video clips is considered evidence tampering or falsifying evidence and will result in a score of 0 for the video clip submission component.

#### 3.4f. Policy Regarding Submission of Written Documentation

All requirements for written documentation are outlined in each Topic Assignment Instructions and Scoring Rubric. The acceptable formats for submitting documentation are strictly adhered to, and each document must be easily viewable. The use of less common applications, such as, but not limited to, Pages or Documents by Readle, will not be accepted as each document must be uploaded in a format that is compatible with Windows applications.

#### 3.4g. Policy Regarding Use of QRVP Resources and Samples

It is important to note that the many resources and samples that serve as examples of good practice should not be used as proof of how assignments will be scored. The topic instructions and scoring rubrics for a given cohort are the only two official documents to be used for guidance on what should be submitted for evidence. The samples and resources are included to offer an idea of what best practices may look like, but in many cases, they do not encompass all the scoring elements that may be included on the rubric. Providers should contact their QRIG if they have questions regarding any differences seen in the samples and the assignment instructions and scoring rubric. It is important to focus on the intent of the instructions and scoring elements in the rubric, rather than trying to replicate what is seen in the examples.

#### 3.4h. Policy Regarding Personalized Consultation Feedback Sessions

Consultation sessions are for information purposes only, they are not a scoring refutation process and will not result in assignment scoring changes. Only providers that meet the predetermined topic evidence submission deadline dates are eligible for a formal personalized consultation feedback session with their QRIG. Topic evidence submission deadline dates are preset for an entire cohort and are applicable to each topic for both TARO options B and C. It is possible to meet a deadline date and be eligible for this service for one or more topic, but not others. The self-paced nature of the QRVP allows providers to determine if they want to be eligible for a personalized consultation feedback session. There are no penalties for not meeting a submission deadline. Providers not eligible for a personalized consultation feedback session can still email general questions about their scores and feedback if they need more clarification than the feedback form presented.

#### 3.4i. Policy Regarding Optional Assignments

Optional Assignments are available to supplement scores received on required assignments for each Topic. However, each optional assignment will only be given credit if the following conditions are met:

- The training must be submitted using the Optional Assignment Documentation form found in your ShareFile account. Certificates are not permitted.
- The corresponding Required Topic Assignments must be fully completed. For example, to receive credit for the optional assignment for Topic 1, you must have completed all required assignments for Topic 1.

- Optional assignments can be completed and submitted at any time during the Cohort but should be received no later than the last day of the Cohort window to be considered for scoring.
- The training must be completed by a person who works on-site solely at the program submitting the evidence and cannot represent more than one program.
- The training must be verifiable in the person's GA PDS training history account with the person's account having an ACTIVE status. *Inactive, pending, expired, and/or incomplete statuses cannot be verified by Quality Rated; therefore, the training will not be given credit.* See the chart below for further information.

**Incomplete:** This is the first status you receive. It will change after you have submitted your GaPDS Profile for review.

**Pending:** Your registration has been submitted and is awaiting review by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC).

**Active:** Your registration and review are complete. You can now start updating your GaPDS Profile and registering for DECAL trainings.

**Expired:** You need to renew your registration. You have 90 days after expiration to renew.

**Inactive:** You have been asked to be removed from GaPDS or you waited more than 90 days to renew your registration.

## 4. Navigating the Live Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE)

Only programs that were previously rated with an on-site ERS observation are eligible to participate in Option C. The Live-Observation-Virtual Experience (LO-VE) has been designed as a mechanism for these programs to demonstrate their ongoing adherence to ERS standards by participating in the live virtual experience that serves as a culmination of the QRVP assignments.

### 4.1 Structure and Steps in the LO-VE Component

For providers selecting Option C, the Live Observation-Virtual Experience virtual visit will occur after the 12-week QRVP component has been completed.

LO-VE virtual visits will take place during an indoor free play period and will consist of 30-to-45-minute live observations in infant/toddler and preschool classrooms or family child care learning homes, they are conducted remotely with exciting new cutting-edge robotic technology called Swivl. DECAL staff, in accordance with safe distancing practices will provide and set up all required components prior to the observations. The director or another member of the program will be required to remain in the classroom during the live observation if possible to assist with the remote viewing capabilities. After the virtual visit, Quality Rated staff will remove the technology from the provider's facility. The technology comes with its own broadband internet connection, so providers should not have to access their own internet service to participate in the virtual visit. In the event that there is no cellular service in the classrooms to be observed the Swivl set-up may be required to operate from a programs Wi-Fi service.

#### Flow of the LO-VE Phase

##### **A. Establishment of LO-VE Process**

- Provider completes all 5 topics in the QRVP during the 12-week QRVP window and submits for scoring and feedback.
- QRIG verifies completion of the 5 topics, the provider's intent to move to LO-VE phase, and their eligibility to continue to the LO-VE component.
- QRIG contacts the LO-VE Coordinator to notify the program's intent to advance from the QRVP to the LO-VE phase.

##### **B. LO-VE Coordination**

- LO-VE Coordinator contacts program director to meet remotely and verify program's participation in LO-VE. During the meeting the following items will be discussed:
  - i. Review the steps, procedures, and policies that govern the LO-VE virtual visit.
  - ii. Explain how the Swivl technology works, including the process for setting up and removing the equipment. Make Swivl training resources available to provider as needed.
  - iii. Review the LO-VE Scoring Instrument that will be used during the remote live visit.
  - iv. Verify and establish the number of classrooms to be observed based on current enrollment.
  - v. Schedule dates for LO-VE virtual visits.
  - vi. Assign to LO-VE Auditor to complete the required number of virtual visits.

##### **C. Completion of LO-VE Virtual Visits**

- QR staff arrives at the program at the designated date and time when children are not present in the classroom (if possible) to set up the Swivl equipment and provide training to the director. QR staff remain in the vicinity of the program to troubleshoot any issues during the live remote observations.
- LO-VE Auditor remotely conducts the LO-VE virtual visit in each assigned classroom utilizing the LO-VE Scoring Instrument.

- QR staff returns to program to retrieve the Swivl equipment following the last classroom observation.
- LO-VE Auditor completes the Option C LO-VE Scoring Instrument and uploads to program's ShareFile account.
- Program rating will commence with the calculation of portfolio points, QRVP points, and LO-VE points. Program will receive email notification of their star rating.

## 4.2 LO-VE Operational Policies

The previous section outlined the structure, protocols, and procedures that providers will experience when completing the Live Observation-Virtual Experience component for Option C. This next section contains important policies that will be adhered to during LO-VE to ensure a consistent and equitable process for all providers participating in LO-VE. Quality Rated reserves the right to update and amend these policies as needed based on lessons learned with this new system.

### 4.2a. Policy Regarding Completion of 5 QRVP Topics to be Eligible for LO-VE Virtual Visit

To be eligible for the LO-VE virtual visit, Option C providers must first complete all 5 Topics in the QRVP component during the 12 week QRVP Cohort window. All tasks within each topic must be attempted and submitted in order for the QRVP to be considered complete. Failure to complete all task assignments for each of the 5 topics will result in forfeiture of the observation component and an inability to earn a potential 3-Star Rating.

### 4.2b. Policy Regarding use of Swivl Technology to Conduct LO-VE Virtual Visits

To ensure equity and consistency in the rating process, all LO-VE virtual visits will be conducted with Swivl. In the eventuality that there is no cell service available at the program and the provider has no working Wi-Fi that can be used for live streaming, alternate application of the technology may be utilized to ensure the observation can continue.

### 4.2c. Policy Regarding Presence of Responsible Adult in the Classroom During the LO-VE Virtual Visits

While the robot device and iPad are not large, young children will likely be fascinated by the presence of the Swivl robot and may be drawn to the device. To ensure their safety during the observation a staff member not responsible for teaching duties must be present in the classroom to prevent children from trying to engage with the technology. Exceptions will be made for family child care providers who do not have an additional adult who can be present during the scheduled virtual observation.

### 4.2d. Policy Regarding Scheduling of LO-VE Virtual Visits

All LO-VE observations will be scheduled to occur between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 12:00 P.M. (noon). In high quality programs it is expected that children should have ample indoor free play time during the morning hours, this is reflected in the Topic 1 What We Do required assignment to make improvements to the daily schedule. One 30 minute observation will occur in a preschool room (if applicable) and one 30 minute observation will occur in an infant/toddler room (if applicable). Classroom schedules that are submitted prior to the virtual visit should include ample indoor free play time during the morning to allow for both classrooms to be scheduled on the same day so the Swivl set-up person can move the robot between the classrooms to capture 30 minutes in each room. Just as with Environment Rating Scale (ERS) observations, programs who do not conduct indoor free play for the entire 30 minute observation segment may experience lower overall scores on the LO-VE Scoring Instrument as it has been designed to capture interactions and child engagement during indoor free play only.

#### 4.2d. Policy Regarding Recording of LO-VE Virtual Visits and Parental/Family Notification

LO-VE observations are conducted via live streaming and video/audio recording. The recordings are used only for Quality Rated purposes, are reviewed only by DECAL staff who are part of the Quality Rated system, and are deleted as soon as DECAL's record retention policy allows. If programs used the QR sample video/photo release form provided in ShareFile with the QRVP assignments, then no additional parental/family notification or release forms have to be completed in the classrooms scheduled to receive LO-VE observations. Programs that used their own video/release form that did not mention DECAL's use of recordings will need to notify the families that they have the right to refuse video and audio recording of their child. If they do not want their child to be recorded as part of the Quality Rated LO-VE process they must sign the provided *Quality Rated Scoring of Child Care Providers via Virtual Observation* form and the child must be removed from the classroom during the LO-VE observation.