

**The California RTT-ELC Quality Improvement and Professional Development (QIPD)
Pathways Tool**

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Background

In September 2012, the California RTT-ELC Consortia chose a hybrid rating system for its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), and developed and approved the RTT-ELC Quality Continuum Framework Consortia Hybrid Matrix (Hybrid Matrix). In doing so, the Consortia chose to prioritize research-based tools with a focus on improved child outcomes in its Hybrid Matrix and identified seven rated elements for center-based sites and five rated elements for family child care. These rated elements are referred to the “few and powerful.” In the streamlining process, some indicators of quality and tools highlighted in the federal application that did not fit the prioritization criteria were moved into a newly created Quality Improvement and Professional Development Pathways (“Pathways”) document, detailed in this document. By moving these elements into the Pathways document they then become part of the participating program’s quality improvement plan and the Consortia’s continuous program improvement process. This lets California narrow the TQRIS focus on the “R” in the rating and still have resources to dedicate to the corresponding “I” for improvement.

Pathways were developed by county consortia representatives through a series of face-to-face and virtual meetings. The Pathways Workgroup began with a 5-tier numerically-based format that mirrored the hybrid matrix. The format contained in this document is the result of a series of conversations informed by subject-matter experts, county consortia leaders, and other stakeholders.

About This Tool

The Quality Continuum Framework – Quality Improvement and Professional Development Pathways (“Pathways”) document includes 8 distinct pathways. The Pathway definitions and definition of each step on the pathway are found on pages 5 – 10. County consortia may use the definitions as is or add clarifying or more rigorous language, however, it is important to maintain the basic intent of the definitions. Pages 11 – 26 give more detail for each pathway in three sections:

- Section i, “Pathway Overview,” shows the corresponding CORE and hybrid element(s), ECE competency area(s), required RTT-ELC tools, and recommended trainings and resources.
- Section ii, “State and National Training and Activity Options;” include State and National resources which are examples of what counties may choose as options for their local consortia’s implementation of the professional development pathways. This section is shaded and italicized to indicate the optional nature of this section.
- Section iii. “Local Training and Activities,” offers county consortia a place to add local training and activities to meet each step on the pathway.

CORE-framed and Goal-based. Each Pathway is defined by the outcome that the Pathway aims to support. Because the Pathway is under the “CORE” header, the goal relates to the corresponding focus on child, teacher, or program. Pathways include:

CORE I: Child Development and School Readiness

- A. School Readiness: Children receive individualized instruction and support for optimal learning and development (includes instruction and support for English Learners and children with special needs)
- B. Social-Emotional Development: Children receive support to develop healthy social and emotional concepts, skill, and strategies
- C. Physical Development: Children receive support for optimal physical development, including health, nutrition and physical activity.

CORE II: Teachers and Teaching

- D. Effective Interactions: Teachers are prepared to support the learning and development needs of all children.
- E. Use of Data to Guide Instruction: Teachers use child observation and assessment data plan for individualized instruction.
- F. Professional Development: Teachers are life-long learners.

CORE III: Program and Administration

- G. Environment: The classroom environment supports children’s learning and development
- H. Program Administration: The program effectively supports children, families and teachers.

Links rated elements and required tools. Some Pathways support the rated elements directly, by promoting increased knowledge and integration of the rated element’s required tool into daily practices. Other Pathways support the rated elements by providing training, experience and opportunities to integrate *concepts and practices* that complement the tool used in one or more rated elements, by building upon tools required by the RTT-ELC but are not used in the hybrid matrix. The relationship between the Pathway and the rated elements is identified in each Pathway.

Highlights connection to Early Childhood Educator Competencies and other state-wide and national resources. The Pathways document supports the goals of the Early Childhood Educator Competencies by clarifying the steps an individual educator might take to reach higher levels of competency using both required tools and a variety of other resources for training and demonstration of competency.

A continuum of quality improvement and professional growth. Each Pathway is designed as a four-step continuum. Each level is to be completed in sequence. The information builds on the knowledge learned in the previous level. The four levels in the continuum progress from **exploring** to **developing** to **building**, then to **fully integrating** knowledge and skills toward reaching the Pathway goal.

- **Exploring** means to learn about a concept, instrument, or tool; exploring may be accomplished through exposure through online or in-person training or guided exploration of the instrument or tool.
- **Developing** implies a deeper level of understanding than exploring or “learning about”, which may be accomplished through additional training, hands on experiences, or both.
- **Building** is the next level of competency. Understanding of concepts and skills becomes evident with attempts to integrate into daily practices.
- **Fully integrating** is the highest level of competency evident through ongoing reflection, broader implementation (beyond the individual teacher), allocation of resources (such as time), or other intentional practices.

Use by sites, classrooms, early childhood educators, and/or administrators. The wording of each Pathway can be interpreted to apply to an individual (classroom level or administrative), classroom, or a program. For example, at the exploring level, an individual early childhood educator may attend a 2 hour overview to learn about a new concept in one of the Pathways. A program may be at the exploring level when the administrator attends that same training or a county may determine that a percentage of early childhood educators must attend that training to meet the “exploring” threshold. At the individual level, the activities listed would be included in the individual’s professional growth plan; at the Program level, the activities would be included in the program’s TQRIS quality improvement plan. Ultimately, county consortia may develop their own guidelines for how sites and individuals could use the Pathways tool.

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