



ANNUAL REPORT | FY 2023

MAINE **ROADS**
TO QUALITY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

www.mrtq.org
1-888-900-0055

Letter from the Director

On behalf of MRTQ PDN, I am pleased to release our State Fiscal Year (SFY) 23 (7/1/22-6/30/23) Annual Report. Based on the feedback we received in our 2022 professional development needs assessment and ongoing information gathering we completed from professionals in the field; from national, state and local partners in addition to our dedicated and talented staff; SFY 2023 was a time of strategic change. Over the last two and a half years, the MRTQ PDN has embarked on creating the road map for our future priorities and strategic vision. Using informed feedback loops, the MRTQ PDN has created a comprehensive strategic plan. The pillars of this plan focus on updated and embrative mission and visions. In addition, through this iterative process, we have created four guiding principles, 4 key goals, and 18 core strategies. The details of this strategic plan are displayed in the following presentation:

MRTQ PDN STRATEGIC PLAN

letter continued on next page....



Letter from the Director

Complimentary to our strategic plan and supported by its work, we have also expanded our footprint to structure our organization in building capacity, continuing to innovate and bring on some of the strongest and most talented professionals in the field of Early Childhood Education and Youth Development in addition to highly organized, passionate, and creative administrative and creative content experts to help us fulfill our mission, vision, and guiding principles. With this, we are fortunate and excited to welcome the following individuals to our team:

- **Gina Forbes**, *Statewide Technical Assistance Assistant Manager*
- **Shilo Goodhue**, *Statewide Inclusion Consultant*
- **Sarah Loudon**, *Administrative Specialist*
- **Cecilia Cobo-Lewis**, *Programmer and Data Liaison*
- **Kellie Davis**, *District Coordinator, Penobscot and Hancock Counties*
- **Danielle Gismond**, *Statewide Training Coordinator*
- **Abbie Carter**, *Statewide Higher Education Coordinator*
- **Natasha McCrum**, *Statewide Child Care Health Coordinator*

Moreover, it is clear this report represents the strength of our professional community, growth of the field, and dedication of professionals building their craft to best support the children, families, and colleagues in the State of Maine.

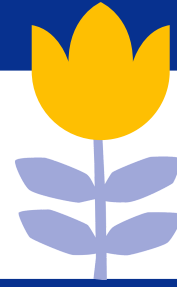
Kris Michaud, M.Ed.

MRTQ PDN Director



A handwritten signature of Kris Michaud in black ink, written over a horizontal orange line.

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MRTQ PDN STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the last two and a half years, the MRTQ PDN has embarked on creating the road map for our future priorities and strategic vision. Using informed feedback loops, the MRTQ PDN has created a comprehensive strategic plan. The pillars of this plan focus on updated and embrative mission and visions. In addition, through this iterative process, we have created four guiding principles, 4 key goals and 18 core strategies. The details of this strategic plan are displayed in the following presentation:

VIEW
STRATEGIC
PLAN

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network Updated Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision:

All early childhood and out-of-school time professionals in Maine provide high-quality care that meets the unique needs of each child they serve.

Mission:

MRTQ PDN supports early childhood and out-of-school-time professionals in developing the skills and expertise to provide high quality, inclusive, and culturally responsive care to Maine's children.

MAINE ROADS TO QUALITY REGISTRY

Over **20,000** Active
Registry Members

This year, **3,058 practitioners** joined the Registry with *complete applications* (including education documentation). This increase brings our total active members in the **MRTQ PDN Registry to: 20,657**

In October 2022, the MRTQ PDN Registry began outreach to Program Administrators, Directors, and Family Child Care Owners, in preparation for the transition to *Rising Stars for ME*, Maine's revised Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

We encouraged programs to apply for Director of Record/Director of Record Assistant (DoR/DoRA) access to prepare for the launch of RSM. Since that time, **a total of 440 practitioners were granted DoR/DoRA Access, including 196 DoR/DoRA's granted during the last quarter.**

DOR/DORA data is shared weekly with Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child and Family Services OCFS

MAINE ROADS TO QUALITY REGISTRY

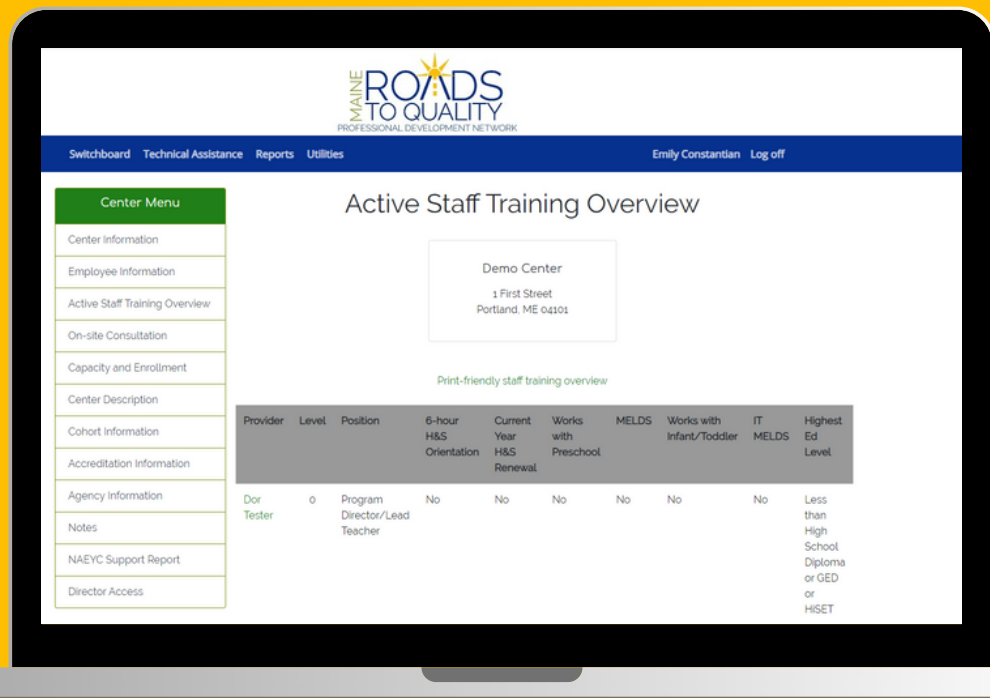
44 Students enrolled in Early Childhood Education at Maine's Career and Technical High Schools were awarded the Certified Early Childhood Assistant (CECA) Credential during Q4

Attainment of the **CECA Credential** allows students to **begin at Level 3** on the Direct Care Career Lattice as they enter employment in the field of early care and education

In Q4, we launched the **DOR/DORA Online Application** alongside a **Quality Initiative** encouraging program directors/administrators to establish DOR/DORA access prior to and continuing through the transition to ***Rising Stars for ME (RSM)***

The **DOR/DORA Application** was available **online** for easier access and turn-around time for the applicant.

MAINE ROADS TO QUALITY



Active Staff Training feature added

A new feature was added to the MRTQ Registry which allows for **easy access to see staff's current training** in Health and Safety (H & S), H & S Annual Renewal, Ages the staff are listed as working with, and if they have completed the IT MELDS and MELDS requirements for RSM.

Level 1 attainment change for practitioners working in all direct care settings to 6 hours of training and 1 month of experience.

This career lattice change allowed an additional **456 employed practitioners** who met the new requirements to move from a Level 0 or Novice to a Level 1 **as of March 2023**.

Health & Safety Orientation 6 Hour Training

During the past year, **1,488 CCSP providers completed** the 6 hour on-demand Health and Safety Orientation training within 90 days of hire. **345 completed** during the 4th quarter.

The **MRTQ PDN data team** continues to share **weekly reports** to OCFS regarding Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) Health and Safety Training Compliance Data.

MAINE ROADS TO QUALITY REGISTRY



MRTQ PDN Registry became the first Registry nationally to obtain Child Development Associate® (CDA) **Transcript and Training Recognition** through the National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA) and the Council for Professional Recognition.

The MRTQ PDN Registry Transcript is approved by the Council for Professional Recognition and NWRA to be content approved, so that our transcripts are automatically accepted for CDA Applicants without additional review for our transcript and our training content.

MRTQ PDN Registry Data **Partner in Employment Reporting** (PER) Renewal was achieved

The MRTQ PDN Registry has again received **PER Recognition with the National Workforce Registry Alliance.**

The PER Renewal allows Maine, as one of 17 states, to share data and contribute to a biennial National Dataset and Report

TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

In the 4th quarter, **485 practitioners accessed 24 facilitated training offerings**. Those offerings totaled **9,545 hours of completed training**.

3,010 On-demand training sessions were accessed totaling **11,906 training hours completed cumulatively**.

of Participants:

*Annual Renewal of Child
Care Development Fund
(CCDF) Health & Safety -*

937

*CCDF Health & Safety
Orientation -* **923**

TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS) & Infant Toddler MELDS (IT MELDS)

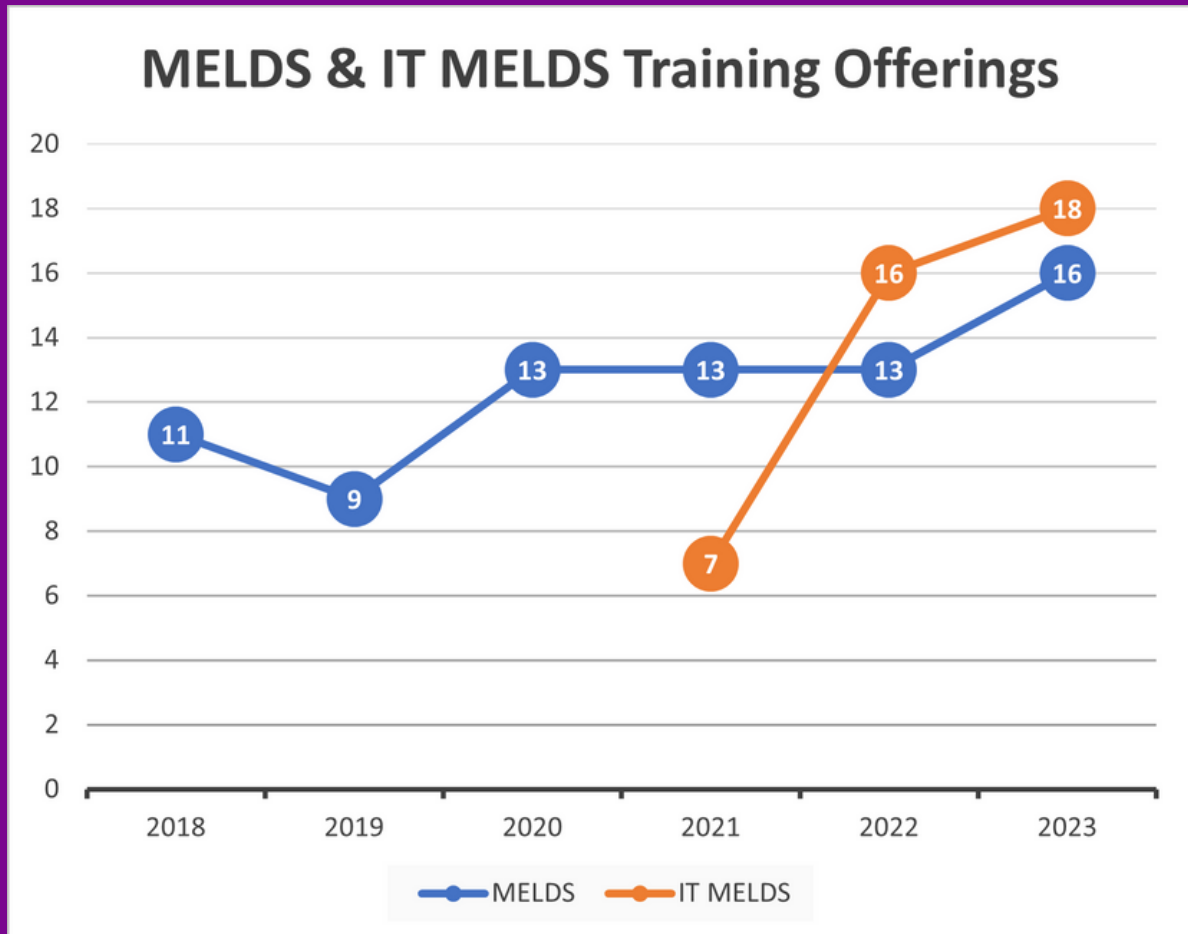


Table prepared by Emily Constantian

Rationale: By monitoring the needs of the participants and providers, we increased our capacity to offer these trainings so that more providers could access them, and meet the requirements of Rising Stars for ME.

From 2018-2023, we have increased our MELDS offerings by 45%

From 2022-2023, we have increased our MELDS offerings by 23%

From 2021- 2023, we have increased our IT MELDS offerings by 157%

From 2022-2023, we have increased our IT MELDS offerings by 12.5%

TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP



Facilitated Training

From 7/1/2022-6/30/2023 we **offered 95 total facilitated training deliveries**. Of those deliveries, there were a possible **40,014** training hours of which **1,603 participants** cumulatively **completed 32,077.5 hours**.

"MRTQ is offering great ongoing continuing education courses that are both free and easy to access. I personally appreciate the online option so I can work at my own pace and am able to balance my busy home life."



On-Demand Training

From 7/1/2022-6/30/2023 **12,568 On-Demand Trainings sessions were accessed**. With the potential for **25,296** hours of training, **25,048 hours of training were completed**.

The MRTQ PDN contracts with Subject Matter Experts in the ECE field to update and write curricula using the most current research and resources available. **This year we have updated 4 trainings, developed 5 trainings, and are currently in the process of developing or updating 5 trainings.**

TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Curriculum

Updated


1. CCDF Health & Safety Orientation
2. Health & Safety Annual Renewal
3. Foundations of Health and Safety
4. Inclusive Child Care

Developed

1. Creating Quality Outdoor Spaces
2. Creating Inclusive Child Care
3. Family Engagement (On Demand)
4. Getting Started in Family Child Care (On Demand)
5. Supporting Inclusion: Laws and Practices

In Development

1. What the Tech!?
2. Preschool MELDS
3. Family Child Care Quality Improvement Toolkit
4. Center Based Child Care Quality Improvement Toolkit
5. Mixed Ages in Family Child Care



What is MRTQ PDN doing well to support you as a professional in the field of Early Childhood Education/Out of school time (ECE/OST)?

"The trainings are helpful and relatable to our everyday work. The CoP meetings are a great way to gain knowledge in our field as well as keep on top of changing guidelines and goals for family child care providers. I think without MRTQ PDN a lot of us would feel lost (especially family child care providers) and disconnected from others in our field. Anytime I have contacted MRTQ PDN I have had a friendly, helpful experience."

"I really did learn a lot throughout this training and the instructor was very helpful, caring, and respectful of everyone's work and thoughts."



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One of the strategic goals for the Technical Assistance (TA) team is to engage more programs & practitioners through a variety of offerings and opportunities related to standards within *Rising Stars for ME (RSM)*.

1) The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Communities of Practice (CoPs) (one for family child care, one for centers/OST) began in January as an opportunity for providers to come together to discuss and learn more about the RSM requirements. These CoPs provide opportunities to reflect on what programs are doing well and where program policies and practices can improve. Each month, the CoP focuses on a RSM-related topic, reviews resources already in place, and supports programs with assessment and goals to meet RSM requirements.

2) The Quality Improvement Toolkits (QITs) have been updated with revised language and resources for early childhood and out of school time programs in specific topic areas to guide planning and implementation of strategies that will increase program quality. Four topic areas are addressed: Program Evaluation, Professional Development, Curriculum, and Child Assessments. In addition practitioners utilizing the QITs are now able to earn training hours.

ANNUAL SUMMARY

Unique users who accessed QITs
March 2022 - May 2023

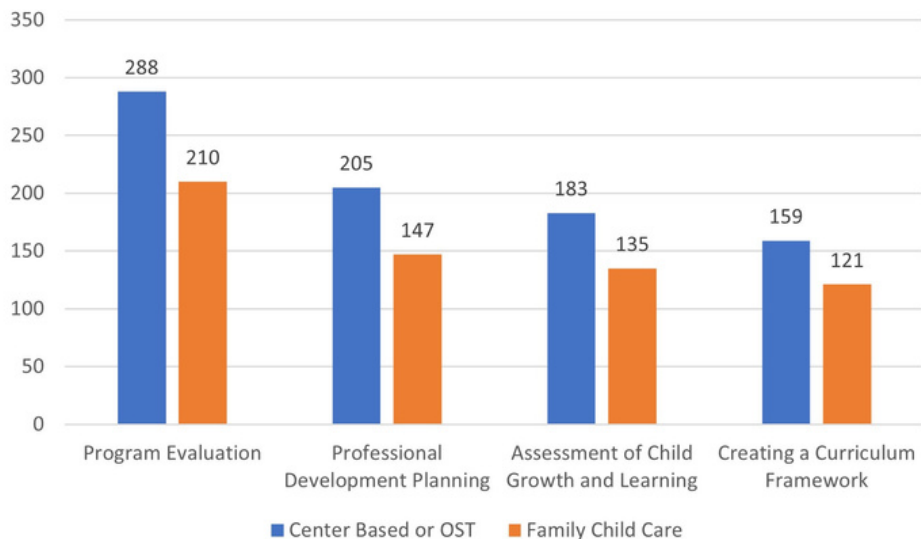


Table prepared by Emily Constantian

Comment from a participant:

"The children are being presented with more learning opportunities and I have started portfolios for all of them. I am communicating more with parents about their child. I have also started using NAPSACC and am learning a lot about my program's strengths and weaknesses."

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ANNUAL SUMMARY

4) Communities of Practice continue to provide opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement and learning on topics that are relevant to specific ECE and OST practitioners, both regionally and statewide.

3) Strategies to support programs reaching and maintaining RSM Star 5 include:

- Cohorts designed for programs new to accreditation, and as needed for programs maintaining their accredited status.
- Proposed updates of MRTQ PDN website to further inspire interest and inform programs about the accreditation process.
- Continued involvement and relationship building with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), and Council of Accreditation (COA) to ensure accrediting bodies understand the unique needs of Maine programs.
- Funding support like the Quality Initiative mini grants and covering costs of accreditation fees.

Benefits of attending a CoP shared by participants:

"...training hours and opportunity to gain valuable information about services in our area".

"The collaboration, support, ideas, problem solving together, the community."

Phone/Email Technical Assistance related to QRIS

164% increase from Q3 FY22 to Q3 FY23

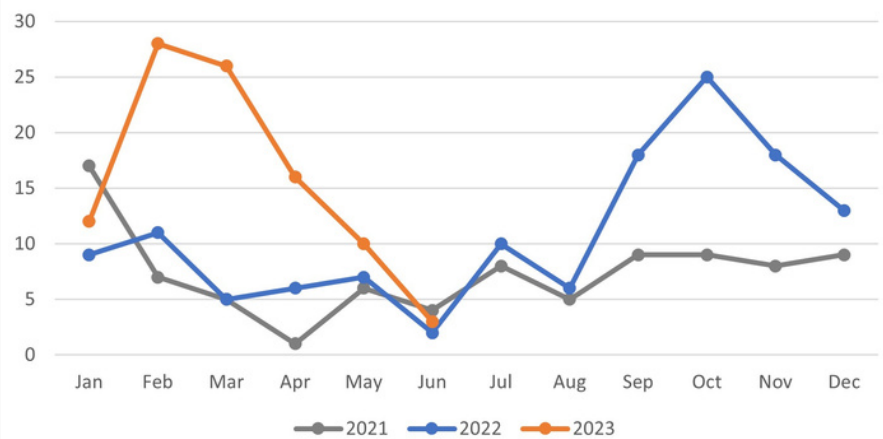


Table prepared by Emily Constantian

"Rearranging my space to make sure I'm able to actively supervise the kids"

"I'm working on adding the information I learned into my handbook."

"I will bring back the knowledge I learned from this active supervision course to make my co-teacher and myself a more diligent, and alert team, when it comes to not only the children but ourselves."

"By being more present and involved. Being actively engaged in the play/craft instead of being over worried about 'what's next'."

Comments specific to Keeping Children Safe Through Active Supervision



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

During the period July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, the Technical Assistance Team added the following new staff:

- Jill Downs, who was hired as the first **MRTQ PDN TA Manager** in 2015 retired in September. **Lee Lingelbach**, who had served as a quality improvement coordinator and District Coordinator since 2013, moved into the manager position.
- **Heather Jones** replaced Lee Lingelbach as **District Coordinator** for District 4, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc counties.
- In January, **Gina Forbes** was hired as the **Technical Assistance Assistant Manager**.
- **Kellie Davis** was hired to fill the **District Coordinator** vacancy in Hancock and Penobscot Counties and started in April.
- **Natasha McCrum** was hired as the Early Childhood Health Coordinator in early June.

Accreditation Cohort Meetings

COA: **3**
NAEYC: **2**
NAFCC: **5**

Virtual and Onsite Consultations (includes TA provided by CCIDS staff)

Requests: **16**
Open Consultations: **46**
Deliveries: **128**
Phone/Email: **293**

Rising Stars for ME

of contacts related
specifically to Rising
Stars for ME: **50**

Credential Cohort Meetings

Director: **3** mtgs **12** participants
Director group Two: **3** mtgs **2** participants
Infant/Toddler: **3** mtgs **13** participants
Technical Assistance: **3** mtgs **12** participants

Peer to Peer Networks

Active CoPs: **18**
of meetings: **56**
Total participants: **512**
Active PLC's: **6**
of meetings: **15**
Total participants: **65**

Q4
DATA

TOTAL
CONTACTS
FY 23

- Phone/Emails (**1559** - 15 of which were Warm Line)
- Cohorts (**265** attendees over 73 meetings)
- CoP (**1811** attendees over 197 meetings)
- Consultation delivery (**648** recipients)
- PLC (**1086** attendees over 84 meetings)

ANNUAL
DATA

CREDENTIALS

CREDENTIAL AWARDS

Director: **5**
Infant Toddler: **9**
Technical Assistance: **4**
Family Child Care: **1**

CREDENTIAL RENEWALS

Director: **3**
Infant Toddler I: **5**
Infant Toddler II: **2**

Policy change: Beginning in November 2022, we now include MRTQ Core Knowledge Training for a credential that was taken within 10 years of their credential application instead of 5 years. This resulted in additional interest in the credentials.

The **Family Child Care Credential** was introduced in October 2022.

This was the result of the significant work of **Tammy Dwyer**, one of MRTQ PDN's District Coordinators, in collaboration with **Linda Labas** at **CCIDS**.

CREDENTIALS

Quotes from Credential Awardee Panelists at 2022 Statewide Conference:

*"I can say without a doubt
that getting the TA
Credential has made me a
better coach."*

**Jami Pollis, Technical
Assistance Credential**

*"I've made new
connections. I have been
able to step outside my
comfort zone."*

**Stacy Gallant, Infant
Toddler Credential**

*"I got the Director Credential to
prove to myself that I knew what
I was talking about and to prove
to my families that I took them
and their children and the weight
of my job seriously...."*

**Kathryn Myers,
Director Credential**

*"I feel like I have a lot more
confidence and a lot more
skills. I have more to offer the
families and the teachers that I
work with."*

**Beth Gagnon, Director
Credential and Inclusion
Credential**

APPRENTICESHIP

MRTQ PDN was approved as an Intermediary Sponsor for the Maine ECE Registered Apprenticeship Program by the Maine Department of Labor in June 2022. The "industry-related credential" for our Early Childhood Education Specialist 1 occupation is a choice of either a Maine Infant Toddler Credential, a Maine Youth Development Credential or a Preschool CDA. We started with 9 apprentices, 5 mentors and 4 sponsoring employers for this pilot program, partnering with KVCAP/Educare. All apprentices are pursuing their Maine Infant Toddler Credential. In July, 2023, two apprentices transferred employers.

Apprentices



4th Quarter Data

- 8 out of 9 Registered Apprentices still enrolled
- 5 Mentors
- 5 Sponsoring Employers

To support our apprentices, we created an Apprenticeship & Training Committee

Crystal Arbour

Child Care Services Manager, DHHS OCFS

Emily Constantian

Statewide Data & Evaluation Manager, MRTQ PDN

Katie Doherty

President & CEO, Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce

Jenny France

ECE Teacher, Somerset Career & Technical Center

Morgan Hart Tolin

Co-Executive Director, Maine AEYC/T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood

Lee Lingelbach

Technical Assistance Manager, MRTQ PDN

Kris Michaud

Director, MRTQ PDN

Lori Moses

Coordinator of Apprenticeship & Credential Programs, MRTQ PDN

Cynthia Murphy

Senior Program Director Workforce Solutions, Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

Hibo Omer

Executive Director, New Mainers Public Health Initiative

Erica Palmer

Education Manager, KVCAP/Educare Central Maine, Sponsoring Employer

Janet Washburn

Teacher, KVCAP/Skowhegan Early Head Start, Registered Apprentice

APPRENTICESHIP

"The trainings have given me a new perspective of children, their development and behaviors."

"I've learned how to communicate better with parents about goals"

I was surprised at "how I have really benefitted from the trainings and learned a lot".

Mentors

Evidence of positive growth in Apprentices noted by Mentors:

- Communication, relationship building
- Organization and knowledge gain
- Utilizing skills learned from the trainings in the classrooms
- Understanding the importance of gaining education in the field, help support her in her role as a lead teacher



**TESTIMONIALS
BY PARTICIPANTS**

CHILD CARE CHOICES

Traffic Report

In **2023**, Child Care Choices traffic (mean daily visits—left panel below) ran above pre-pandemic levels (2016-19), representing 28 months running of higher elevated visits (see *Figure 1*).

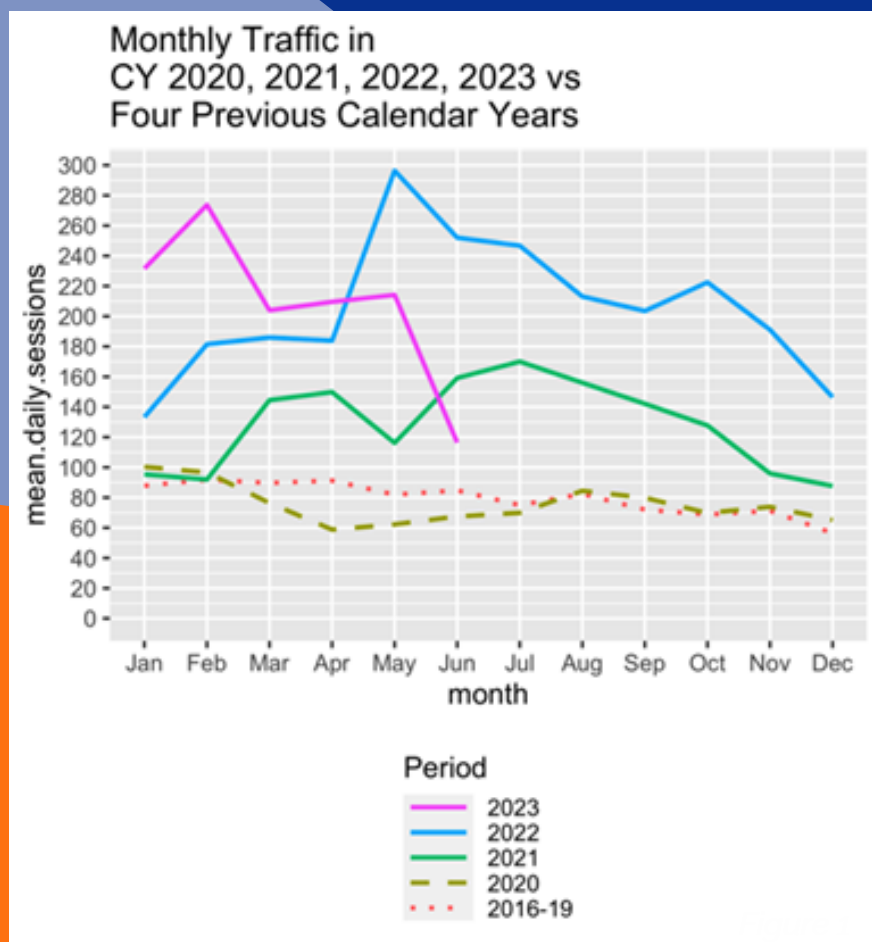


Figure 1

CHILD CARE CHOICES

Traffic Report for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023

In SFY 2023 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023), same-month traffic gradually declined from about 3 times the pre-pandemic levels in July to about 2.5 times pre-pandemic levels in May before dropping to about 1.5 times the pre-pandemic levels in June (see Figure 2). It remains to be seen in SFY 2024 whether the June data represents a more rapid return to pre-pandemic levels than would be expected based on the July through May data.

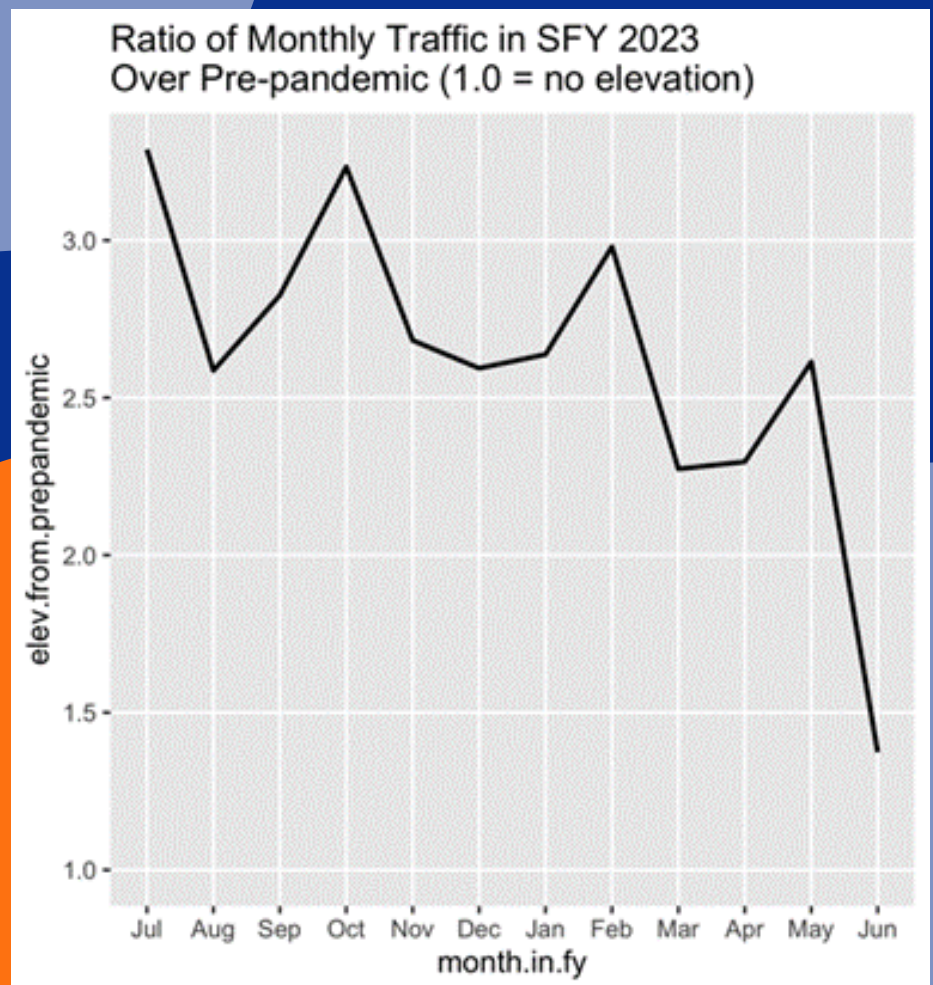


Figure 2

RISING STARS FOR ME



Annual Report 2023 Programs and Stars

In March of 2023, MRTQ PDN and OCFS implemented Maine's new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), called *Rising Stars for ME*. *Rising Stars for ME* replaces *Quality for ME*, Maine's first QRIS rolled out in 2008.

Preparation for the launch of *Rising Stars for ME* included:

- A *Rising Stars for ME* table provided information and answered questions at the Statewide Early Childhood Conference in Bangor in October of 2022.
- A group of volunteer programs completed a pilot of the new *Rising Stars for ME* online application and E-Portfolio in the winter of 2023. Feedback from the pilot informed both application revisions and clarification of messaging regarding the new system.

During the first three months of *Rising Stars for ME* implementation (quarter 4 of FY23), MRTQ PDN continued to support the field and OCFS by:

- Developing guidance on frequently asked questions, such as:
 - Staffing and professional development requirements
 - IT MELDS and MELDS training requirements for leadership and staff
- Fielding questions from programs and applying timely fixes to application bugs.
- Collaborating with OCFS to develop and refine protocols for handling various types of program applications.
- Creating and distributing resources and marketing materials.

At the end of the grace period for *Rising Stars for ME* (September 2023) MRTQ PDN will resume reporting on RSM enrollment and Star movement.

QUALITY INITIATIVES



Launch Pad: An Approach to Curriculum |

MRTQ PDN offered a contemporary approach to professional development created and facilitated by MRTQ PDN Technical Assistance District Coordinators in the spring of 2023. This innovative Professional Learning Community (PLC) helped participants become confident as emergent curriculum designers while also utilizing the MELDS effectively in lesson planning.



PLC participants utilized a Launch Pad guide to co-create curriculum with the children in their programs as well as a "Captain's Log" documentation guide for providers. This peer-to-peer opportunity encouraged collaboration and included a three-pronged approach to curriculum development: child-based, place-based, and play-based. The Launch Pads created included concepts from child observation and embraced the unique diversity within local community culture. To support the implementation of the newly developed curriculum, Quality Initiative funding was provided to PLC participants for the purchase of related materials.

Statewide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Peer Learning Community (PLC) |

Maine Afterschool Network's STEM PLC is designed to support out-of-school time providers in navigating national and Maine-specific STEM resources. Participants have the opportunity to examine what it means to bring STEM learning into the out-of-school time space and how that can lead to further learning and potential career opportunities for Maine youth, especially girls.



As part of the Million Girl Moonshot national initiative, the STEM PLC aims to deliver innovative, inclusive content and professional development focused on developing an engineering mindset and creating career pathways. Participants who attended all PLC sessions received Quality Initiative funds to support the implementation or strengthen STEM learning in their out-of-school time programs.

QUALITY INITIATIVES

Somali Bantu Association Cohort |



Responding to a need identified by the field and district coordinators, MRTQ PDN collaborated with the Somali Bantu Association to offer a CoP to a cohort of Association members. This CoP is focused on supporting cohort members' understanding of the logistics of opening a child care, including business practices, licensing, RSM, paperwork, etc. In addition, the CoP provided cohort members with the opportunity to meet with Licensing staff. This allowed cohort members ask questions, express challenges, and establish a relationship with Licensing staff, which would be beneficial moving forward.



Finally, the CoP offered an opportunity for cohort members to discuss child engagement, play, and developmentally appropriate materials and their impact with program quality and positive child outcomes.

Participants in the Somali Bantu Association Cohort CoP received Quality Initiative funding for the purchase of developmentally appropriate materials for use in their child care.

Creating Quality Outdoor Spaces

To support providers' efforts to create quality outdoor spaces for children, practitioners who completed MRTQ PDN's Creating Quality Outdoor Spaces training received Quality Initiative Funding to create or enhance their outdoor spaces and offerings. Identification of materials to be purchased was a collaborative process and in alignment with the concepts introduced in the training.



QUALITY INITIATIVES



Director of Record Access (DoRA)

- Complete the application and e-Portfolio for RSM
- Review and update staffing information in the MRTQ Registry
- Review staff training history
- Review and update program information through the Child Care Choices portal

Recognizing that the implementation of RSM would require providers to have DoR/DoRA access in the MRTQ Registry, Quality Initiative funding was designated to incentivize program directors (or designees) to apply for and receive approval for DoR/DoRA access. This access allows the director or designee to:

QUALITY INITIATIVES

Credentials

Quality Improvement Awards

MRTQ PDN's Maine Credentials were designed to increase practitioner expertise and impact program quality. To earn a Maine Credential, commitment and an significant investment of time and other resources on the part of the practitioner is required. In recognition of the importance of Maine Credentials and the efforts of practitioners, Quality Initiative funding was provided to those individuals who were awarded a Maine Credential. In addition, reimbursement of enrollment fees for Maine Credential-related training was provided to Credential awardees.

TYPE	AWARDS PROVIDED IN SFY 2023	ON TRACK TO RECEIVE AN AWARD IN JULY OR AUGUST OF 2023
Infant Toddler	6	5
Technical Assistance	2	4
Youth Development	0	0
Inclusion	0	1
Director	5	6
Family Child Care	1	0
Total	14	16




QUALITY INITIATIVES

GO NAPSACC



Go NAPSACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care) is a free online tool and valuable resource for programs seeking to improve their physical activity and nutrition practices. Go NAPSACC includes a program self-assessment, guidance for creating an action plan, and information on resources and professional development to support action plan implementation. Programs can navigate Go NAPSACC independently or with the support of a trained Go NAPSACC consultant.

In Partnership with the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures project, MRTQ PDN funded a Go NAPSACC Consultant to promote Go NAPSACC and assist programs in using the tool. In addition, the Go NAPSACC Consultant assisted in the creation of a promotional video that was shared via MRTQ PDN's website, social media, and weekly newsletter, and to present at a Community of Practice (CoP). The above outreach efforts were successful in achieving a significant increase in Go NAPSACC usage among providers. The Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures/MRTQ PDN partnership has also provided funding to incentivize additional programs to use the Go NAPSACC tool.

	<i>SFY 22</i>	<i>SFY 23</i>
# of New Registered Programs	19	53
# of Programs That Completed Self-Assessments	19	101
		Most Popular Modules: <i>Child Nutrition, Farm to ECE, Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding</i>
# of Goals Opened	12	81
		Most Popular Modules: <i>Child Nutrition, Farm to ECE, Outdoor Play and Learning</i>
# of Providers Who Watched at Least One Training Video	50	63
		Most Popular Modules: <i>Child Nutrition, Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding, Oral Health</i>

QUALITY INITIATIVES



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AWARDS (QIA)

For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 23, Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) awarded 113 Quality Improvement Awards to licensed child care programs for moving up *Quality for ME* step levels. The step level movement encompassed:

- Programs moving from Step 1 to Step 2 are eligible for a one-time award of \$300
- Programs moving from Step 2 to Step 3 are eligible for a one-time award of \$400
- Programs moving from Step 1 to Step 3 may be eligible for both awards (\$700 in total)
- Key Takeaways
 - 25% of the awards were issued to child care programs in Cumberland, 14% in York, 13% in Androscoggin, and 12% in Kennebec Counties, all increases from SFY 22
 - QIA's were issued slightly more to Family Child Care programs (58) than Center Based programs (53)
 - Of the 113 awards issued
 - 73 were provided to programs moving from a Step 1 to a Step 2
 - 40 were provided to programs moving from a Step 2 to a Step 3
 - 23 programs moved from a Step 1 to a Step 2, each receiving 2 awards

Although the QIAs for *Quality for ME* were discontinued in March 2023, not all programs have claimed their awards or have completed paperwork to receive their funds. MRTQ PDN staff are working on connecting with programs and helping them through this process.

Of the **46** open consultations within the TA branch **22** of those included or are led by **Center for Community, Inclusion, and Disability Studies (CCIDS)** staff (with **54** deliveries) focusing on:

- *Supporting and enhancing quality inclusive programming - environmental, teaching practice, policy and procedure, staff development*
- *Maintaining child care placements and preventing expulsion*

- *Improving classroom environments and teaching practices to prevent and respond to challenging behavior*
- *Supporting new Mainer communities to open a childcare business which includes: addressing language and contextual barriers to navigating systems and procedures, as well as maintaining a culturally responsive approach to blend the goals and intended outcomes of the practitioners with licensing and best practice standards.*
- *Supporting ECE and OST professionals to have developmentally appropriate, high quality business practices.*

ANNUAL DATA

- 40 consultations led by and/or included CCIDS staff, focusing on: disability, inclusion, challenging behavior, expulsion prevention, policy, procedure, professional development and business practices through both a universal design and equity lens.
- Revised and piloted 18 Hour Inclusive Child Care training with attached Quality Initiative funding to support access to materials and equipment for increasing high quality inclusive environments. The Rising Stars Inclusive Practices Checklist was embedded in the training and directly correlated to the portfolio activities needed for the Maine Inclusion Credential. Additionally, the training was offered during the initial roll out phase of Rising Stars.

Connecting Systems

As a partner in MRTQ PDN, CCIDS continued to support the work of identifying gaps in the systems for people who experience access issues. During this year CCIDS bridged connections and supported access between OCFS and specific groups of New Mainers in the following areas:

1. *Connection to the wage supplement program.*
2. *Connection to the child care subsidy program.*
3. *Dissemination of messaging for Opening a Child Care Business website to all child care licensing staff.*
4. *State of Maine Vendor Code (child care subsidy, wage supplement, grants).*
5. *Completion of required training for specific groups of New Mainers to maintain child care license.*
6. *These connections led to a culminating creation of the Opening a Childcare Business website to create clearer access for childcare professionals to the systems required for creating and maintaining childcare businesses.*

Individualized Supports Policy

Supported development and implementation of Individualized support (IS) policy and procedures. As part of this process, CCIDS provided individualized assessments and responded 19 times to assist practitioners in accessing and completing MRTQ PDN offerings.

TESTIMONIALS

"I found it so helpful to have the [Rising Stars Inclusive Practices] checklist in the training. I feel more comfortable to use it in my classroom and understand it better."

RISING STARS
INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

*"This website is a one-stop, I know where to start and where to end on opening a child care business."
(Community Partner)*

CONNECTING SYSTEMS

"I am an open family child care, I use this website to go back to and use the resources to stay open. It helps me to quickly get things done" (Family Child Care owner)

OPENING A CHILD CARE
BUSINESS WEBSITE

"With the help I have now I can do this on my own. I can show how smart I am."

INDIVIDUALIZED
SUPPORTS POLICY

*In collaboration with system partners, CCIDS created and delivered **three** presentations that involved Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIJB).*

- **State ECE conference:** *Adaptation for ALL Children: What, When, How*
- **National AUCD (Association of University Centers on Disability) conference** on a joint project with MRTQ, *Co-Creating Equity: Culturally Responsive Angolan New Mainer Pod Model Childcare for an Inclusive Healthy Community*
- **Joint presentation with MRTQ at Child Care Aware of America conference:** *Technical Assistance Innovation: Maine's First Pod Model Childcare*



MAINE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

MASN presented Maine's Out of School Time (OST) work at 3 national events: Mott Grantee Meeting, Girls Build Solutions, IEL Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference.

SFY 23 HIGHLIGHTS

- 1.** Expanded School Day STEM programs to OST: Expanded STEM resources, training and funding traditionally offered only during the school day to also include OST programs. The BioSciences Association, Educate Maine, and Girls Who Code expanded supports beyond the classroom to include OST programs. MASN also worked with the Maine Math and Science Alliance to promote their ACRES training with stipends for participating OST programs. Two of the PLC participants are now working with Educate Maine and getting free TA and support to implement Girls Who Code funded by Project Login.
- 2.** Elevated 2 OST providers to National Leadership Opportunities Dawn Fickett of MSAD 58 named Afterschool Alliance Afterschool Ambassador and Aimee Moody with 21st CCLC awarded a White Riley Peterson Fellowship.
- 3.** Leveraged \$152,500 in funding for improving quality of OST programs and implementing community partnerships through the Million Girls Moonshot grant and the Diversion to Assets grant. Awarded a grant from Collaborative Communications to elevate Maine programs to national OST landscape.