Background:
- AIM HIGH Star Rating System for child care and Pre-K since 1999
- 5 star levels with differential reimbursement for child care subsidies
- The Children Youth & Families Department has designed the FOCUS TQRIS process for NM

RTT-ELC application:
- NM’s application included of all Early childhood programs in the TQRIS:
  - Child care
  - Pre-K
  - Head Start / Early Head Start
  - IDEA Part B – 619 Preschool Special Education
  - Home visiting
  - IDEA Part C Early Intervention
- No real thinking about what that would entail – just that ALL programs should be included!

Essential Elements of Quality:
- NM’s commitment is to have a common set of quality elements that would be assessed by each early childhood program
- Within each Essential Element of Quality the measures and the tools utilized will vary
- Current NM Essential Elements of Quality in FOCUS TQRIS:
  - Licensing Compliance
  - Health Promotion Practices
  - Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
  - Physical and Social / Emotional Environment
  - Program Administration
  - Continuous Improvement
  - Assessment & Curriculum
  - Cultural Competence
  - Staff – child ratios
  - Family involvement / Family Engagement

Part C Early Intervention – NM Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program:
What does it mean for the FIT Program Part C?
- Moving beyond compliance to focusing on quality – moving from just the Annual Performance Report and the Community Based Assessment (monitoring) to assessment of quality practices
- Self Assessment & Continuous Quality Improvement process - FIT Providers to be trained to utilize tools to assess their internal quality and make changes to improve performance
- Support through coaching – Coaching in use of tools and how to make improvements
- Verification by the FIT Program – Periodic onsite verification of fidelity of implementation of tools and process
- Assignment of Star level - based on implementation of tools in each of the quality elements with fidelity and consistency.
Incentives and support – Providers at the higher star levels may receive less frequent verification visits; providers at a lower star level will more frequent verification visits and ongoing coaching and support.

**TQRIS Quality Element - Sample:**
Measuring quality Early Intervention practices:
- Provider agency receives training and coaching in the use of an “observational tool*” to assess implementation of quality practices by staff
- Provider agency utilizes videotaping of early intervention session to assess staff’s implementation of quality practices
- Provider agency utilizes results of tool to address staff’s need for professional development (mentorship, training etc)
- FIT Program verifies provider agencies use of tool and that they addressed concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Star (sample rating)</th>
<th>4 Star (sample rating)</th>
<th>5 Star (sample rating)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency conducts observation tool with staff irregularly</td>
<td>Agency conducts observation tool with staff at least once a year</td>
<td>Agency conducts observation tool with staff at least twice a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency conducts observational tool with poor level of fidelity</td>
<td>Agency conducts observational tool with some fidelity</td>
<td>Agency conducts observational tool with a high level fidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency conducts inconsistent professional development with staff identified as needing improvement</td>
<td>Agency conducts good professional development with staff identified as needing improvement</td>
<td>Agency conducts strong professional development with staff identified as needing improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Considering using the NECTAC 7 key Principles – and the practices listed OR the DEC Recommended Practices (currently being revised), as the basis for developing the quality practices observational tool.

**What’s ahead?:**
- Determining the measures for the essential elements of quality, to align as much as possible with Home visiting and Early Head Start.
- Determining and if necessary developing tools to measure quality, including:
  - Quality practices observational tool
  - Quality IFSP tool
  - Quality Evaluation / Assessment tool
- Validation of the tools, if needed.
- Training and TA on use of video – RTT-ELC budget includes some funds for hardware.
- Training and coaching of providers in the use of the tools.
- Piloting of the tools and self-assessment.
- Validation of the FOCUS TQRIS rating process.