TARO Provider Manual Policy Updates

The purpose of this document is to highlight policy updates to the TARO Provider Manual that govern the operating policies and procedures for child care programs rating with a Temporary Alternate Rating Option.

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7-1-21 Updates

2.6d. Policy Regarding Awarding a Rating for Two Years

What Changed:

This policy update concerns the awarding of two year ratings for providers seeking to rate with either Option B or Option C. While there is no change to the policy for Option B providers who do not complete all tasks in the 4 Required Assignments, there is a change for Option C providers who do not complete all Option C components.

Why This Changed:

This change was implemented to avoid penalizing providers who originally selected Option C, and who withdrew from the LO-VE component, but **did** complete all 4 Topics in the QRVP. This change allows them to still receive a 2-year rating providing they complete all the Option B QRVP requirements. This also ensures their eligibility for the Option B TARO Rating Incentive. The previous policy was punitive and would have knocked providers down to an Option A package and 1-year rating even if they completed all tasks and assignments associated with Option B QRVP, which puts them on the same footing as a provider who originally selected Option B. The change in policy recognizes that as providers work through a cohort they may struggle with completing all 5 Topics or may have significant staffing issues preventing them from going through with the observation. If programs chose to withdraw from LO-VE, they can still be successful with Option B QRVP assignments and not be defaulted to receiving the same rating term and incentive package as those providers who only submitted a portfolio.

Previous Policy:

Only providers selecting Option B or C will 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 of their chosen option to earn their rating. For example, 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. For example, Option C providers who earn enough points to rate but do not complete all tasks in all 5 Topic Required Assignments, or who do not follow through with the LO-VE visit, will only be awarded a 1-year rating.

New Policy:

*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.*

3.4b. Policy Regarding Program Statement of Acknowledgement

What Changed:

This change concerns the last paragraph of the policy detailing how and when the Statement of Acknowledgement must be signed and returned to QR, and the consequences of not doing so.

Why This Changed:

To guarantee a smooth start to a cohort and to ensure that the director is fully involved in the process from day one, the Statement must be signed prior to the start of the cohort. Returning the document signifies to QR the program's intent to follow through with the QRVP and triggers the release of the ShareFile folders to the program after orientation occurs.

Previous Policy:

. . . If the program's Statement of Acknowledgement is not received by the QRIG upon the first Topic evidence due date for a personal consultation session, the session is forfeited by the program and no feedback forms (including scores) will be shared with the program. Additionally, the program will not be allowed to have access to additional QRVP Topics or resources until the Acknowledgment form is returned.

New Policy:

. . . 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.

3.4i. Policy Regarding Optional Assignments

What Changed:

This update is not a change to the actual policy regarding Optional Assignments, but rather adds clarification to when the documentation can be submitted and the manner in which QR is able to verify the training in a teacher's GaPDS account.

Why this Changed:

The clarification was made so that it is clear to programs that whoever takes the training for the Optional Assignments must have an Active PDS account to allow the training to be verified. Training completion certificates are not a valid form of verification.

Previous Policy:

. . . Any on-site teaching or administrative staff is eligible to take the optional assignment training in OLLI that earns the program points for the optional assignment, providing all tasks in the required assignment are also completed. However, the training will not count if it is taken by curriculum coordinators, directors, or staff who work for more than one site who want to count the same training for multiple sites. Each topic has a designated

Social-Emotional Early Development Strategies (SEEDS) training that counts as the optional assignment, and the training can be taken at any time during the cohort. Points will also be awarded if any eligible program staff have completed the associated SEEDS training prior to the start of the cohort. The provider must upload the Optional Assignment documentation form to ShareFile to submit for training verification for the points to be awarded. The QRIG will verify training completion in the individuals GaPDS account.

New Policy:

. . . 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.

Newly Added Policies

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.