

MONTESSORI
ASSOCIATION



NORTH
CAROLINA

Montessori and The Quality Rating Improvement Scale (QRIS) in North Carolina:

The Montessori Association of North Carolina (MANC) wants to help Montessori schools in NC be recognized for high-quality education!

Why?

- To promote Montessori education in North Carolina
- To demonstrate the high-quality of Montessori education
- To enable Montessori programs to be elevated to a higher recognition level in the QRIS star system
- To allow you to help Montessori education in NC - even if you don't think your program needs more stars for continued success and enrollment, participation is for the good of all NC Montessori programs

How can this be done?

- Collaborate with NC QRIS ([star rating system and QRIS explained below](#))
- MANC has an established relationship with NC QRIS and wants to help you navigate the process to receive the highest rating possible
- Participate in the informal pilot QRIS assessment to learn how your program could attain a higher star rating ([see announcement from Lia Rucker, State Anchor for NC QRIS, below](#))
- Be supported by MANC while going through an informal pilot assessment process to demystify the process. (Contact: kateri.carver@uwrf.edu)

Who can participate?

- NC licensed Montessori programs

What does it cost?

- No fee for pilot assessment

The NC Star Rating system:

- Every NC licensed facility has a star rating ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high)
- Every Montessori program that has credentialed teacher from a MACTE accredited training program will automatically be eligible for at least two stars
- For 3-5 Stars, the school will have to go through a formal QRIS evaluation

What is QRIS?

The **Quality Rating and Improvement System** (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. The assessment is conducted by assessors for the NC Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP

<https://www.ncrlap.org>) and serves as the standard bearer to the public for high quality programs in the state. The particular assessment tool currently used in NC is called the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R):

Participation is voluntary but may prove beneficial for licensed Montessori early childhood programs who wish to demonstrate that they provide the highest quality of care for the children and parents they serve.

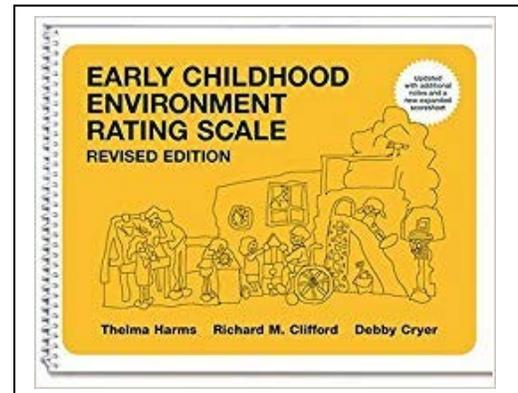
This NC Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLA) is overseen by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) for the NC Department of Health and Human Services - they are the rule makers and license grantors. The work of the NCRLA is monitored by the DCDEE, which is under the authority of the NC Child Care Commission, and they are the implementers of the rules made by the DCDEE.

Montessori programs in North Carolina that choose to participate in the star rated QRIS assessment process will benefit from ground work that has been done in the past few years: In 2016, MANC members contacted Lia Rucker (the State Anchor for the NC Rated License Assessment Project for QRIS) to see if there might be a way to help assessors better understand what they were observing in a Montessori program when conducting an assessment, with the goal of demonstrating high quality and thus improving the ratings given.

By the fall of 2016, MANC collaborated with Lia Rucker to develop and refine supplemental information which assessors could use and reference when observing a Montessori program. MANC presented a hands-on Montessori workshop for the North Carolina QRIS assessors which was held in a Montessori classroom in Charlotte. It provided an ideal opportunity for them to observe, participate, have lessons and ask questions to better understand how a Montessori program can meet the QRIS requirements for a highly rated quality childcare program. The event was a huge success!

Now, thanks to the release of the excellent supplemental documents by the Southeast Montessori Collective (SEMC), MANC is very glad to share these with all Montessori programs in North Carolina who may wish to go through the QRIS process and use these for reference.

You can find them here: [Click for background information and resources](#)



ANNOUNCEMENT: Lia Rucker, NC State Anchor for QRIS, Announces Pilot Program:

If you have a Montessori program in NC that is interested in participating in a "practice" QRIS assessment process, please send an email to: Lia Rucker at lmrucker@uncg.edu She is the State Anchor for the NC Rated License Assessment Project out of UNC-G, Human Development and Family Studies, Greensboro, NC www.ncrlap.org

Lia Rucker is offering a "low-stakes" approach to QRIS assessment that will provide Montessori programs and also her staff with more information about the perceptions, priorities, and needs of various programs.

Before participating, and before contacting Lia Rucker, your Montessori program needs to be a currently NC licensed program.

Time Frame: Right now it is likely that some observation/assessments could be done towards the end of February 2019 and in March. (Usually in April and May the pending list is high, so her assessors probably would not do this type of observation after early April.) But then these observation/assessments are likely to pick back up afterwards - possibly turning into an ongoing option over time.

When you write to Lia, she won't be the person who actually speaks with you, but she will assign an assessor to contact you. Here is the basic process:

1. An assessor will reach out to you by phone and then schedule a 30-45 minute time to visit your Montessori program to speak with the administrator in order to share some introductory information about the QRIS assessment process and address questions, figure out how many assessments are needed, etc.

2. Then the practice assessment(s) will be scheduled (using the same process that occurs with "real" assessments).

3. After assessments are completed, the assessment reports will be sent to your Montessori program.

4. Shortly after the assessment reports are received, an assessor will set a time to have a phone conversation with the administrator to discuss the reports and reactions, address questions, etc. We know that classroom coverage is always a challenge, but prior to the call they would encourage the administrator to gather questions from the teacher(s) as well.

The only difference in this process, as compared to that which would occur during a real QRIS assessment process, is that these are unofficial and the program's licensing consultant is not included in the communication, does not receive results, etc., and the assessors don't do the introductory visits or follow-up calls for Rated License visits. The assessors will also ask a few research questions along the way about barriers to participating in the assessment process, likelihood of future participation, reactions to the process, and suggestions. **So, if you are interested, please send an email soon to Lia Rucker at lmrucker@uncg.edu and let her know. Also, if a Montessori program is just curious it is fine to write to Lia with questions, simply to explore without any pressure to participate.**