

# Initial Validation of the ABC Observation Assessment for the 0-2 Age Group

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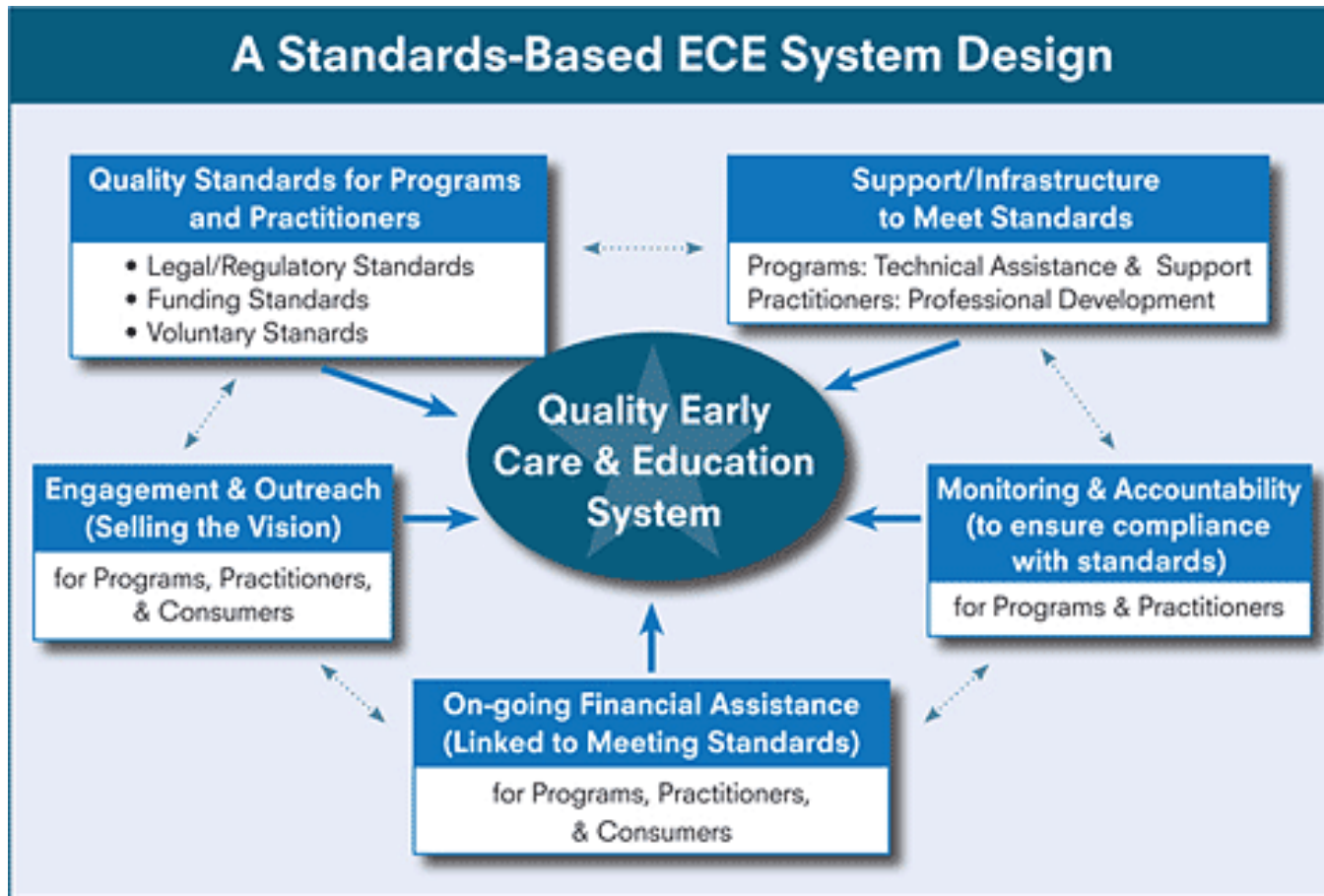
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# Outline

- Overview of national QRIS
- Overview of SC ABC Quality
- Purpose of the Study
- Methods
- Results
- Summary and future work



# Quality Rating & Improvement Systems (QRIS)



*Alliance for Child Care Financing. (2007). Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: A Powerful Policy for Improving and Unifying Early Care and Education*

SC

# Standards-Based ECE System Design

**Quality Standards for Programs and Practitioners**

**Support/Infrastructure to Meet Standards**

SC child care licensing regulations, Head Start, CDEP/First Steps 4K, ABC Quality, IDEA Part B and C, SC Early Learning Standards, SC Core Comp.

Child Care Res and Ref, PITC, SC Inclusion Coll., First Steps Cnty Partnerships, local trainings and conferences, colleges and universities



**Engagement & Outreach (Selling the Vision)**  
for Programs, Practitioners, & Consumers

**Monitoring & Accountability (to ensure compliance with standards)**

Licensing specialists, Head Start site visits, CDEP/First Steps 4K consultants, ABCQ assessors

**On-going Financial Assistance (Linked to Meeting Standards)**

ABCQ subsidy payments, grants/bonus, scholarships  
FS grants  
TEACH scholarship



ABC Quality helps providers, who volunteer to participate, achieve higher standards of quality in caring for the children they serve. ABC Quality is SC's voluntary quality rating and improvement system for early care and education.

- Child Development Block Grant Funding
- Began as tiered reimbursement system in 1992
- Created the first quality standards for B-5 sector
- Child Care subsidy system (SC Voucher)

# A B C Quality

- Tiered reimbursement flipped to QRIS in 2008
- 5 quality levels: A+, A, B+, B, C
- Annual assessment: Mandatory and Observed
- TA and Training supports
- Scholarships - TEACH
- Grants/Bonuses



# Challenges & Concerns

- Dated standards
- Defining quality
- Focus on interactions
- Maintain assessment for all classrooms
- Assessments differ for quality levels



# Purpose of Study

- Desire to move to one assessment
- ABC Quality instrument takes less time to administer than ERS, thus is cost-effective
- Investigated concurrent validity evidence of the ABC Quality instrument by comparing results from an established instrument





# Methods

- Concurrent observations by trained raters on two instruments:
  - ABC Quality Assessment Tool for 0-2 age group
    - State-developed observation instrument
    - Used to assess centers applying for B rating
  - Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)
    - Commonly used assessment with established validity
    - Used to assess centers applying for A rating



# Assessment Subscales (# of items)

## ITERS Subscales

- Space and Furnishings (5)
- Personal Care Routines (6)
- Listening and Talking (3)
- Activities (10)
- Interaction (4)
- Program Structure (4)
- Parents and Staff (7)

## ABC Quality Standards

- Responsive and Sensitive Care (9)
- Language and Communication (10)
- Guidance (8)
- Program Structure (12)
- Early Learning (12)
- Environment (13)



# Sample Selection

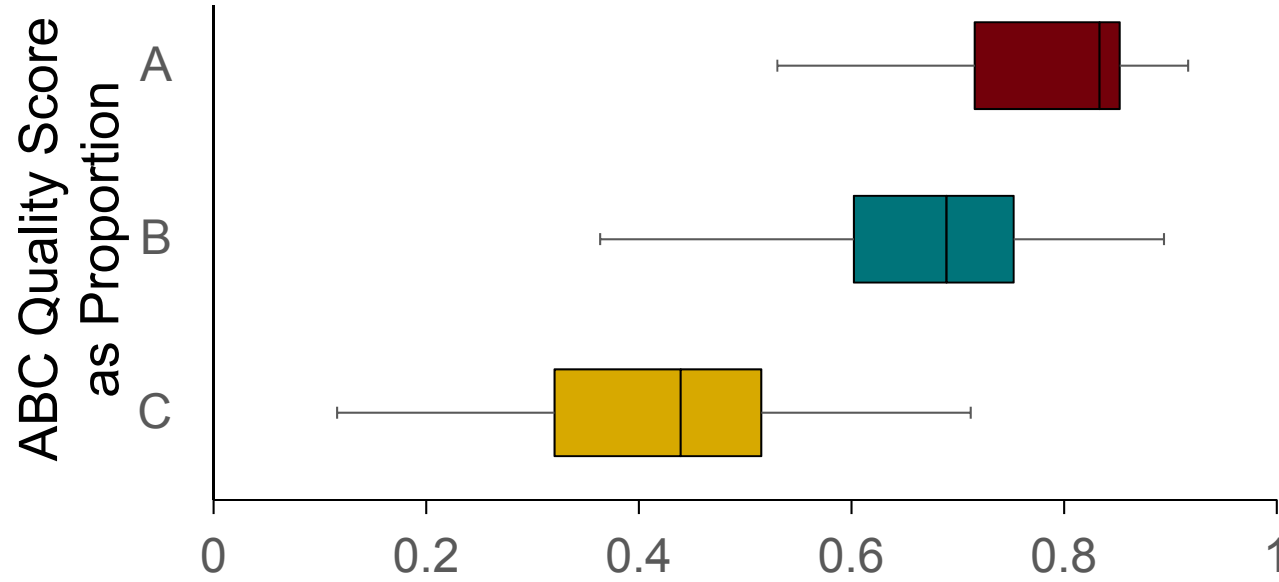
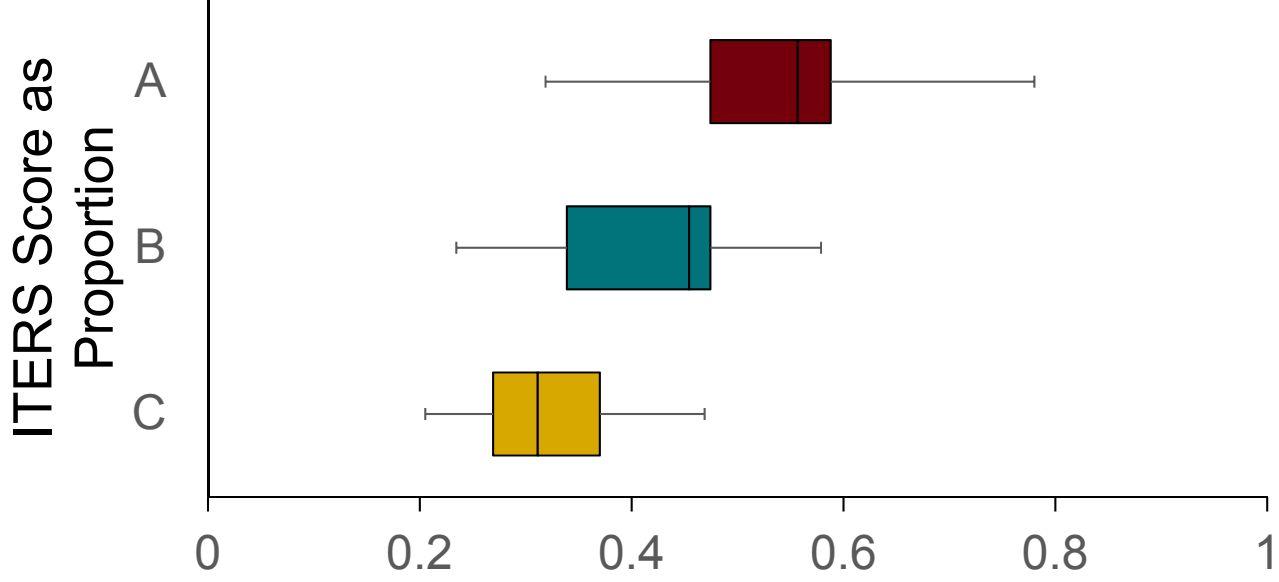
- Stratified sample by center rating (A, B, C)
- 45 centers selected, 15 at each rating level
- Structure of 0-2 classrooms
  - Most infant (0-11 mo.), toddler (12-23 mo.), two-year-olds (24-35 mo.)
  - A few centers had on multi-age 0-2 class
  - Systematically pre-selected classes for observation

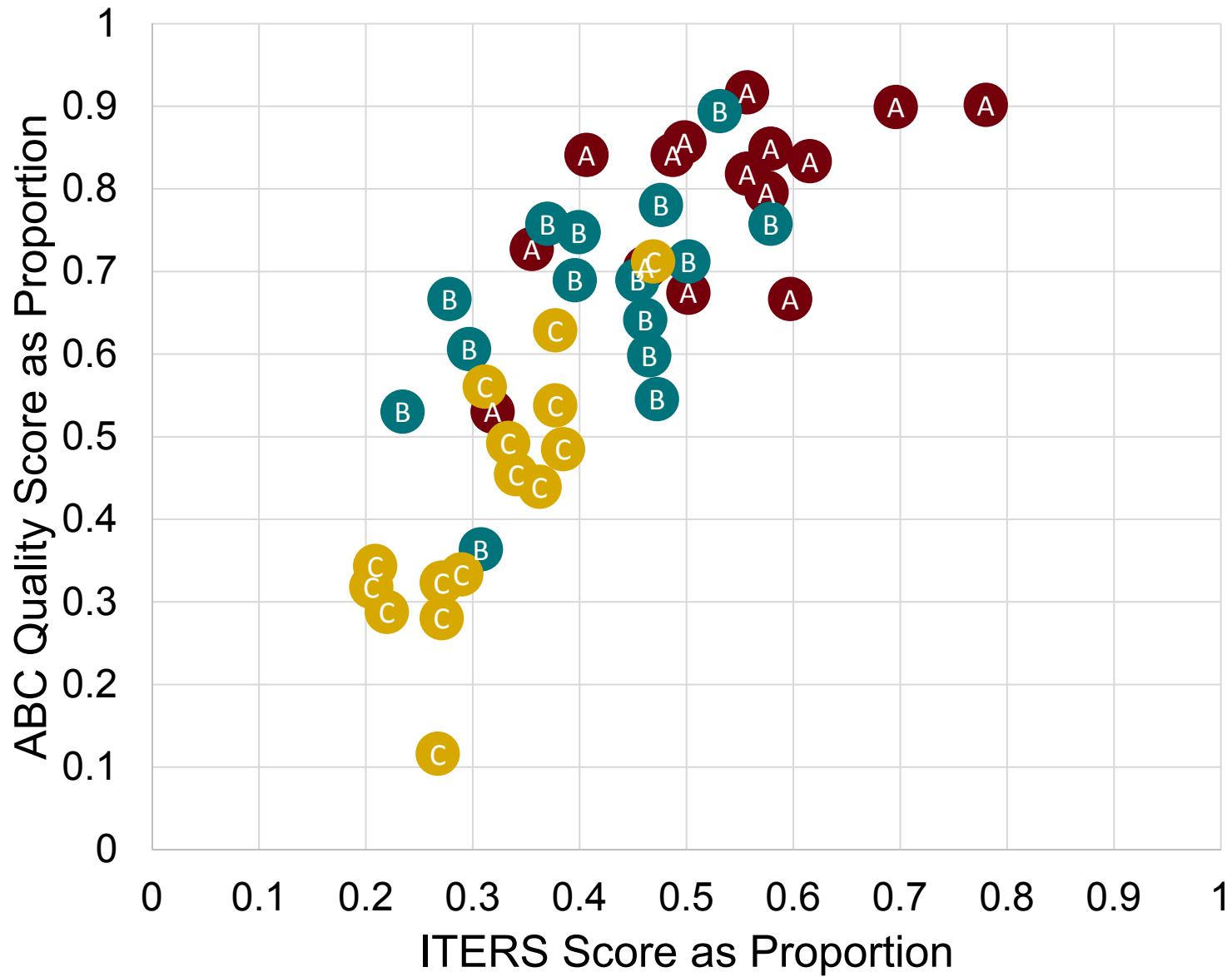


# Data Analyses

- Created a crosswalk of items from both instruments measuring similar constructs
- Descriptive statistics and ANOVA
  - By rating level (A, B, C)
  - Follow-up comparisons of pairwise differences
- Correlations between observation scores
  - Overall and by subscales for each instrument







# Results

- Strong positive association between overall scores on ABC Quality assessment and ITERS
- Average ABC scores > ITERS scores
- Scores tend to be higher for higher rated centers (C → B → A) on both instruments
- Difference in mean scores between levels were statistically significant with large effects



# Correlations between ITERS and ABC Tool for common items across subscales

ITERS Subscales	$\rho$	ABC Quality Standards	$\rho$
Space and Furnishings	.54*	Responsive & Sensitive Care	.59*
Personal Care Routines	.33	Language & Communication	.65*
Listening & Talking	.65*	Guidance	.47*
Activities	.77*	Program Structure	.36
Interactions	.60*	Early Learning	.82*
Program Structure	.63*	Environment	.81*
Parents & Staff	.52*		

\*Indicates statically significant correlation.



# Summary

- Evidence that the ABC Quality instrument for 0-2 and ITERS measure similar qualities
- Both instruments tend to differentiate scores by centers' current ABC rating level
- Given reduced administration time and cost savings, the state is moving to the ABC Quality assessment for 0-2



# Future Work

- ABC Quality is operationalizing the 0-2 assessment in all child care centers
  - Factor analysis will be used to determine if quality standard factors hold
- Refinement of observation instruments for 3-5 and school age
  - Conduct similar studies for validity evidence



# Questions or Comments

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