



# SENATE BILL 291: Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) - Star Rating System Reform.

2023-2024 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	December 5, 2023
<b>Introduced by:</b>		<b>Prepared by:</b>	Debbie Griffiths Staff Attorney
<b>Analysis of:</b>	S.L. 2023-40		

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**OVERVIEW:** Section 1.(a) of S.L. 2023-40 extends the expiration date of Section 2 of S.L. 2021-127 from June 30, 2023, until June 30, 2026. This section pertains to awarding QRIS "education points" to a licensed child care facility toward its star rating. The change extends lowering the criteria from 75% to 50% of lead teachers in the program required to meet the "rated licensed education points".

Section 1.(b) of S.L. 2023-40 extends the expiration date of Section 1 of S.L. 2021-127 from six months after the expiration of Executive Order 116 (February 15, 2023) until June 30, 2024. This section pertains to the Division of Child Development and Early Education, Department of Health and Human Services, resuming Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) assessments that would cause a child care facility to lose a star rating due to a facility's loss and inability to replace similarly qualified educators.

Section 2 of S.L. 2023-40 requires the North Carolina Child Care Commission to complete recommendations for QRIS/Star Rating reform by March 31, 2024, and submit those recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services before the 2024 legislative session begins. Those recommendations must include accreditation from a national early childhood education accreditation organization as an alternative path to earning a star rating equivalent to the accreditation requirements.

*This act became effective June 12, 2023.*

## CURRENT LAW:

Section 1 of S.L. 2021-127 directs the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to not require a licensed childcare facility to undergo an Environment Rating Scales (ERS) assessment if the assessment would result in the facility losing a star rating because of the facility's loss of educators and inability to replace those educators with comparably educated individuals. This section expired on February 15, 2023, which was six months after the date Executive Order No. 116 was rescinded.

Section 2 of S.L. 2021-127 requires the DCDEE to lower from 75% to 50% the threshold for the percentage of lead teachers in the program required to meet the "rated licensed education requirements" criteria to earn QRIS/Star Rating "education points" when the ERS assessments resume. This section expired June 30, 2023.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Sections 1.(a) and (b) of S.L. 2023-40 require that ERS assessments continue to not be required if the assessment would result in the licensed childcare facility losing a star rating because the facility lost educators and was unable to replace those educators with comparably educated individuals until June 30, 2024. When ERS assessments resume, the DCDEE is required to maintain the reduced threshold percentage of lead teachers in the program required to meet the "rated licensed education

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requirements" criteria to earn QRIS/Star Rating education points at 50%. This reduction expires on June 30, 2026, and beginning July 1, 2026, the threshold percentage rate for lead teachers returns to 75%.

Section 2 of S.L. 2023-40 requires the North Carolina Child Care Commission (Commission) to complete recommendations for QRIS/Star Rating reform by March 31, 2024, and submit those recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services before the 2024 legislative session begins. Those recommendations must include accreditation from a national early childhood education (ECE) accreditation organization as an alternative path to earning a Star Rating equivalent to the accreditation requirements. Acceptable ECE accreditation organizations include:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation.
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC).
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).
- American Montessori Society (AMS).
- International Montessori Council (IMC).
- Cognia (formerly AdvanceED).

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act became effective June 12, 2023.

\*Jessica Boney, Staff Attorney in the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.