



## Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network Third Quarter Summary Report

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) promotes professionalism in the field of early childhood and out-of-school time (OST) programming through the provision of a statewide system of professional development. MRTQ PDN offers a variety of services, including:

- The MRTQ Registry;
- Core Knowledge, On-Demand, and Elective Training;
- Credentialing;
- Technical Assistance through:
  - On-site consultation;
  - Outreach;
  - The Warm Line;
  - Peer-to-peer networking through Communities of Practice (CoPs).

Additionally, MRTQ PDN provides support to programs of all settings regarding *Quality for ME*, Maine's quality rating and improvement system, Child Care Choices, and meeting the health and safety requirements for compliance with the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

In addition to the Quarterly Report submitted, which outlines the MRTQ PDN's progress toward our performance measures as described in the contract, the following are highlights of the work provided during the third quarter in promoting professionalism in our field, increasing quality of care, and providing a statewide system of professional development.

### Impacts of COVID-19 on MRTQ PDN Service Delivery:

- All staff are working remotely and connecting with supervisors regularly. Self-care resources are provided to all staff. Phone and email contact with programs continues as practitioners seek support. All deliverables continue to be met.
- On-demand training participation has increased. Training staff created [a flyer](#) with additional free and low-cost training options available for those programs that are seeking professional development opportunities.
- In addition to our weekly e-newsletter, *SHORTcuts*, MRTQ PDN is sending a weekly "Staying Connected" email with wellness resources.
- The Technical Assistance program has increased the number of [Communities of Practice](#) being offered. On-site consultation and cohort meetings continue via Zoom. MRTQ PDN is offering FREE weekly CoP groups focusing on health and well-being. One group meets every Wednesday and a new group (beginning in April), in collaboration with the Maine Afterschool Network, meets on Tuesday and is focused on the needs of out-of-school time practitioners.
- Most mail to the MRTQ Registry continues to be electronic, with postal deliveries being picked up once a week.
- Both the [MRTQ PDN](#) and [Child Care Choices](#) websites provide COVID-19-related resources; the CCC website includes a link to child care options for essential workers.
- The Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS), a PDN partner, has also created a [page](#) with COVID-19-related resources.

## The MRTQ Registry

The Registry is the core of Maine's professional recognition system. The Registry uses members' work, education, early childhood credentials, and training histories to assign a level on the appropriate Career Lattice. After joining the Registry, members have a convenient way of tracking ongoing training and educational accomplishments. Practitioners who join the Registry can choose the appropriate career lattice based on their work setting which includes:

- License Exempt individuals providing care for up to two unrelated children;
- Direct Care in licensed family child care and center based settings;
- Family Education and Support for home visitors and family support individuals;
- Administration Management/Coordination for child care agency administrators and directors not providing direct care to children and youth;
- Public School for public school education technicians, teachers, and administrators.

During FY 2020, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, **339 practitioners** joined the MRTQ Registry. This brings the current total of active MRTQ Registry Members 12,822.

During FY 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, **271 practitioners** joined the MRTQ Registry.

During FY 2020, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, **355 practitioners** joined the MRTQ Registry.

## Training and Credentials

MRTQ PDN's Training Plan is developed with consideration of training needed for early childhood professionals working towards credentials, attaining higher Steps with *Quality for ME*, and child care licensing. The training is scheduled in two semesters: January through June and July through December. Training registration is open for the two semesters on December 1<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> respectively, with notification through MRTQ PDN's weekly e-newsletter, *SHORTcuts*.

Training enrollment is monitored once a week and a spreadsheet is distributed to MRTQ PDN staff. The Training staff provide outreach to credential candidates who need specific training to complete a particular credential. When a training has filled to capacity and a wait list is developing, staff contact participants on the wait list to determine their training needs. Often times, staff are able to direct participants to an open training for enrollment. When a true need exists for a particular training, it is discussed among Training staff and the Director to consider offering an additional training to meet the need. The wait list participants are given priority to any additional training and then opened to the public for registration. The outreach is documented and saved for reference.

Some trainings are offered once a year, until the demand for those trainings increase. Practitioners who have indicated they are working on a credential are sent an email reminding them of the upcoming trainings they need.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, **513 participants** completed the 6-hour Health and Safety Orientation training, while **425 practitioners** participated in the 2-hour Annual Renewal Training.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, **131 participants** representing all 16 Maine counties completed Core Knowledge Training. In addition, **39 elective trainings** (including CoPs and on-demand training) were offered, reaching **509 individual participants**.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, **619 participants** completed the 6-hour Health and Safety Orientation training, while **265 practitioners** participated in the 2-hour Annual Renewal Training.

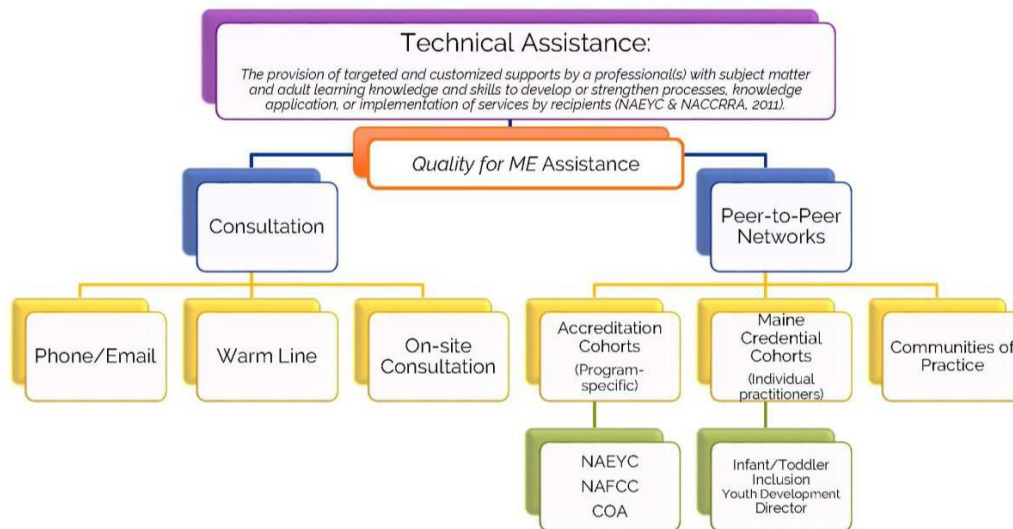
During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, **298 participants** representing 15 Maine counties completed Core Knowledge Training. In addition, **91 elective trainings** (including CoP and on-demand offerings) were offered, reaching **356 individual participants**.

MRTQ PDN developed its own Health and Safety trainings for Child Care Subsidy Program providers to meet the CCDBG health and safety training requirements, including the Health and Safety Orientation 2019 (6 hours) and an Annual Renewal of CCDF Health and Safety (2 hours).

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, **293 participants** representing all of Maine's 16 counties completed Core Knowledge Training during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. In addition, 45 elective trainings were offered reaching **225 individual participants**.

## Technical Assistance

MRTQ PDN has created a statewide system to offer technical assistance (TA) services to early childhood and out-of-school time programs working to improve program quality. The TA System supports the reflective processes that practitioners need in order to apply the theories and information learned through education and/or training to improve or sustain best practices.



Accreditation and Credential cohorts began meeting during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. In total for both types of cohorts, there were a total of **18 meetings** (28 hours) with **67 attendees**. **Nineteen programs** are enrolled in accreditation cohorts.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, **667 participants** attended **74 Community of Practice (CoP) meetings**. Additional virtual CoPs were added to accommodate changes due to COVID-19. (See box on page 1.)

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, there were **116 open on-site consultations**.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, **499 participants** attended **62 Community of Practice meetings**.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, there were **115 open on-site consultations**.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, **317 participants** attended **42 Community of Practice meetings**.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, there were **114 open on-site consultations**.

## Child Care Choices

Child Care Choices offers families:

- The ability to search for child care by location, age of child, type of program, and *Quality for ME* rating.
- Compliance history for all licensed programs and monitoring results for non-relative, license exempt individuals and programs.
- Information on the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- A description of *Quality for ME*/QRIS.
- Maine data and the consumer education statement as required by the Child Care Development Block Grant.

MRTQ PDN staff and University of Maine Psychology Department staff meet monthly to discuss potential integrations to Child Care Choices (CCC), including:

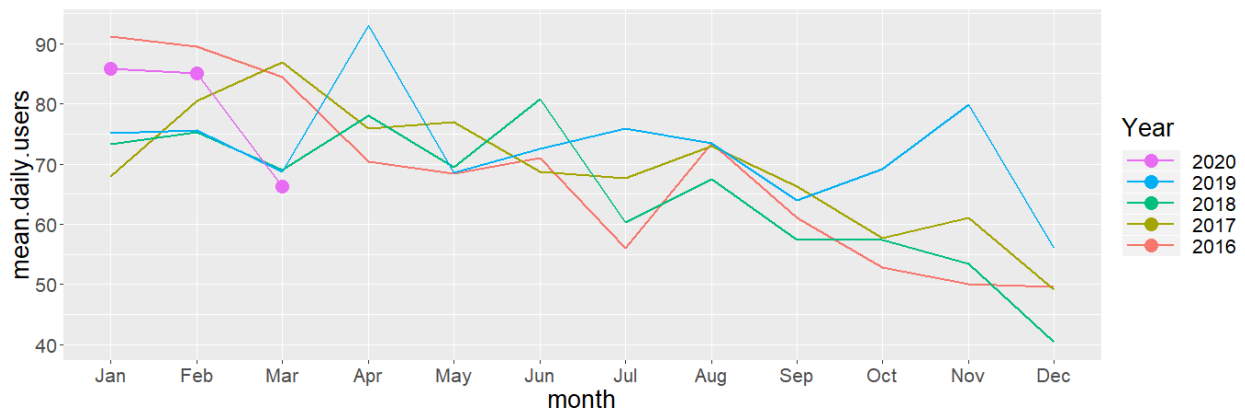
- LE Provider Monitoring;
- Child Care Choices Marketing;
- Development of a Provider Portal in CCC;
- Quality Rating and Improvement System needs and revisions.

### Traffic to Child Care Choices Website

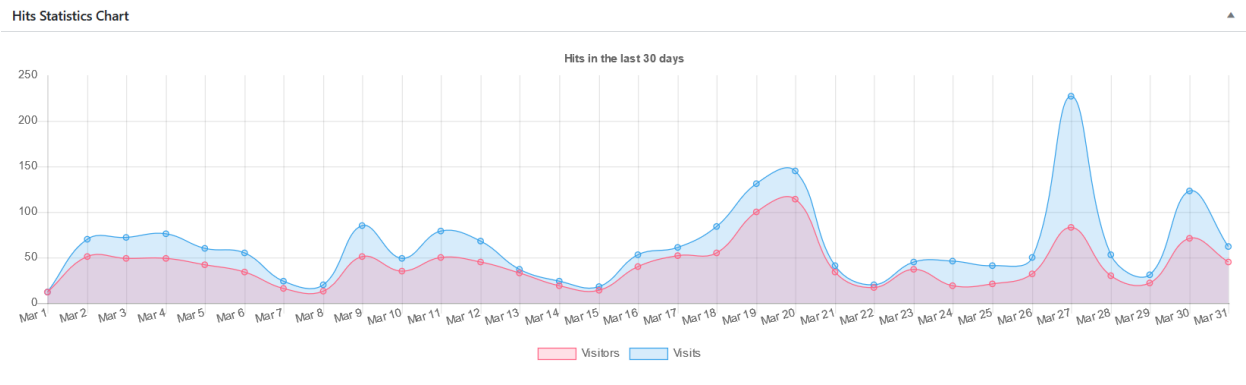
Searches on CCC from unique IP addresses, by month, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY20 were:

- January: 1,373
- February: 1,348
- March: 947

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (highlighted in figure below with a dot showing data for each of those six months), traffic was higher than in most previous years, but traffic was down in March 2020. The downtick in March traffic was probably COVID-19-related. Compared to traffic from March 2019, March 2020 traffic followed weekly patterns, but the peak traffic each week declined through March 2020 as the COVID-19 crisis developed.



Despite a drop in child care searches on the CCC website in March of 2020, the new CCC Essential Worker Open Child Care program link (explained on page 1) has experienced increased traffic during the month of March, as shown in the graph below:



## Quality for ME

At the end of FY 2020, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the enrollment of child care programs in Maine's quality rating and improvement system, *Quality for ME* consisted of the following:

Of 1693 total active programs 990 (58.5%) programs were enrolled in *Quality for ME*.

- Of 874 FCC active programs 434 (49.7%) programs were enrolled in *Quality for ME*.
  - 318 (36.38%) were at Step 1;
  - 56 (6.40%) were at Step 2;
  - 49 (5.60%) were at Step 3;
  - 11 (1.25%) were at Step 4.
- Of 819 Center or Nursery active programs 556 (67.9%) programs were enrolled in QRIS
  - 315 (38.46%) were at Step 1;
  - 67 (8.18%) were at Step 2;
  - 47 (5.73%) were at Step 3;
  - 127 (15.50%) were at Step 4.

## Quality Rating and Improvement System Revisions

Staff from MRTQ PDN, OCFS, and the Maine Department of Education (DOE) revisited the proposed revisions to the standards of *Quality for ME* during FY19. Over the past year, the cross-agency team has done a comprehensive review of the proposed standards, based on the two reports submitted to OCFS in 2015 and 2016.

During FY20, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter:

- Programs were recruited for the *Rising Stars for ME* Pilot. Enrollment by setting includes:
  - 21 for Center/Head Start
  - 13 for Family Child Care
  - 5 for Out-of-School Time
- All three groups met via Zoom during March; meetings have been set for April and May.

The cross-agency team continues to meet and has developed the following steps for implementation:

- Integrate suggestions from the pilot and create needed supports during summer and fall of 2020;
- Work with OCFS and the Legislature to update the rules and statutes regarding the quality rating and improvement system;
- Roll out the completed revisions statewide in early 2021.



During FY20, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter:

- Revised standards were finalized for center, family child care/license exempt, and out-of-school time settings to pilot in January 2020.
- Pilot Memorandum of Agreements for practitioners who want to take part in the QRIS Revision pilot was developed.
- Pilot zoom meetings and facilitators have been scheduled for FY20, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

## Maine Afterschool Network (MASN)

The Maine Afterschool Network, as a partner in the PDN, continues to provide support to out-of-school time practitioners throughout Maine.

During FY20, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter:

- MASN continues operations on a remote basis, staying connected to partners and the field both nationally and remotely.
- MASN was awarded two project grants this quarter totaling \$30,000.
  - The Million Girl Moonshot project seeks to increase quality STEM opportunities to girls through out of school time programs.
  - The National Council of State Legislators is supporting work on our ongoing out-of-school time mapping initiative, specifically as related to afterschool programs being a prevention in the opioid epidemic.
- MASN continues working with partners on initiatives that alleviate childhood hunger, and are pleased to partner with Full Plates, Full Potential which secured a \$300,000 grant to expand Afterschool Meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

## Collaborations

MRTQ PDN staff collaborate statewide with a wide variety of organizations, including:

- Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services;
- Maine Department of Education;
- MaineAEYC and the Family Child Care Association of Maine (FCCAM);
- Maine Head Start Directors;
- Maine Early Childhood Higher Education Committee;
- Educare Central Maine;
- iLookOut;
- Child Care Licensing;
- And others.

Highlights of collaborations in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY20 include:

- Continuation of the Child Care Business Lab, led by Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI). All sessions are now virtual. The nine participants in the Lab will join the MRTQ Registry, complete the 6-hour Health and Safety on-demand training, draft a professional development plan, and request virtual on-site consultation to discuss their professional development plan with an MRTQ PDN District Coordinator.
- MRTQ PDN, CEI, MaineAEYC, and the Family Child Care Association of Maine collaborated to present "Business Relief Webinar for Maine Child Care Providers." The webinar was presented live on two occasions and is now archived for [viewing online](#).

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY20, on October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> the MRTQ PDN co-sponsored the **1st Annual Statewide Early Childhood Education Conference: Connecting ECE Birth through Eight across the State**. In addition to the conference, **MRTQ PDN presented the 2019 Recognition Celebration on the night of October 4<sup>th</sup>**.

Highlights of the 2019 conference include:

- Registrations met capacity of the facility 450 participants, 125 attending the 2 days.
- **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Statewide ECE Conference will be held in Bangor for October 23 & 24 2020.**

In addition to the statewide conference, local conferences in Washington and York County were held on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

- MRTQ PDN collaborated with partners in Washington County to bring *Building Bridges through Story and Song* to **32 participants providing 6 hours of training**.
- On the same day in York County, MRTQ PDN collaborated to bring *Nurturing through Nature* to **89 participants receiving 7 hours of training**.