



MODIFIED FIELD TEST – YEAR ONE EVALUATION

June 2010

STUDY DESIGN

- The Seeds to Success Modified Field Test in East Yakima and White Center was studied during the period of June through December 2009.
- Mathematica Policy Research conducted the study using an evaluation method called a randomized controlled trial. In this type of study, participants are randomly selected to either receive services or not receive services. At the end of the study, researchers can confidently say that any change in the group that received services can be said to have happened because of those services. In our program, both groups had access to professional development opportunities. However, one of the groups also had access to intensive coaching and quality improvement grants. *Note: Washington state conducted the country's first randomized controlled trial of a quality rating improvement system.*

KEY FINDINGS

- Through the study, we learned that when child care providers get one-on-one coaching and a modest amount of money to make changes to their program, the quality of their program starts to go up – and pretty quickly.
- Through the study, we also saw that more providers in the group that received Seeds coaching and quality improvement grants pursued professional development opportunities than those in the group without access to these supports.
- As expected, possibly due to the short time period and because education attainment is a long-term process, we did not see any significant impact of Seeds on the professional development and training area of the Seeds to Success quality standards.
- As demonstration communities, East Yakima and White Center were successful in helping the state learn about what works in Seeds to Success. We have used the recommendations and findings from the study to make improvements to the Seeds model.

NEXT STEPS

- We learned a lot in Year One. We discovered that the Quality Standards – the four major areas that make up a provider's quality rating – needed adjustments. As a result, we changed the Quality Standards so that every standard is measurable, evidence-based, simple to understand and administer, and links to positive outcomes for children and families.
- We also wanted more consistency among the communities participating in the field test. In Year Two of the field test, all participants in the five communities – East Yakima and White Center as well as Spokane, Clark and Kitsap counties – are receiving consistent levels of coaching, training and other professional development opportunities.