



what matters.™

# Early Learning: What the Research Says and Implications for Child Care Quality

Nina Sazer O'Donnell  
Director, National Strategies  
Success By 6

October 18, 2006

# Presentation Overview



what matters.™

- What the Research Says
- Implications for Child Care Quality
- Implications for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

# What the Research Says



what matters.™

## How Young Children Learn:

- Through relationships;
- From adults who are learners about their own and children's learning;
- From adults who understand the importance of integrating social, emotional and intellectual learning; and
- Through being known and understood.

# What the Research Says:



what matters.™

- The majority of child care is poor to mediocre;
- Poor quality child care can harm children;
- More than ½ of parents with young children are in the workforce, so child care is needed and will continue to be needed;
- Children are often cared for in multiple settings and they all need to offer what children need;

# What the Research Says



what matters.™

- Parent surveys report that most U.S. parents want their children to be “safe, loved and learning.”
- Staff-child ratios and group size matter; and
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) can help improve child care quality; and
- QRIS can help parents find good quality programs.

# Implications for Child Care Quality



what matters.™

- Children need these ingredients wherever they are;
- Child care programs need teachers who can create positive relationships with children
- Teachers and parents need many opportunities to learn about how young children learn; and
- Child care programs need to have enough staff to assure that each child is known and understood.

# Implications For Quality Rating Systems



what matters.™

- Staff ratios and group sizes should insure that all children will be “known and understood;”
- These systems need to focus on the “I” as much as on the ratings;
- Communications efforts are needed to let parents know what higher “star” levels mean; and
- Rating criteria need to be revised periodically to take into account new knowledge.



what matters.™

Thank you