Introduction to Spark: Oregon’s Quality Rating and Improvement System

**Lecture: Understand the components, structure, and materials of Spark**

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| TRAINER INFORMATION |
| **Objective:**3.0 Participants will understand the Spark components, structure, and materials.**Activities:**3.1 Discussion of Spark components, tiers, structure, materials, domains and standards, and building block system. **Materials:** PowerPoint**Amount of Time:** 15 minutes |

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| **ACTIVITY 3.1:** Discussion of Spark components, tiers, structure, materials, domains and standards, and building block system. |

Slide #6

1. Objective title slide: We just finished talking about what a QRIS is and our Spark Partners now we are going to discuss the components, tiers, structure, materials, domains and standards, and building blocks of Spark.

Slide #7

1. Spark Components
	1. As we said before, Spark is a system with many parts.
	2. The large, blue box (Spark Components) encompasses the system.
		1. Our system is a building block system with 5 tiers. The next slides show us how that works.
		2. Our standards are broken into 5 domains (Learning & Development, Health & Safety, Personnel Qualifications, Family Partnerships and Administration & Business Practices).
		3. There are two versions of the materials, one for family-based programs and one for center-based programs. The standards are the same, but the language is different in places. This means that a 3-star center program and a 3-star family program meet the same level of quality because we know that what is good for children is good for children, no matter what the setting might be.
	3. The Quality Improvement component includes a Self-Assessment for the program, a Quality Improvement Plan that guides our work together and helps you set goals for quality improvements you want to make, supports which include help from a Quality Improvement Specialist, and access to resources and financial supports.
	4. The Quality Rating component shows the portfolio system and incentives.
		1. Spark is unique in that we use the portfolio system. As we mentioned earlier, Oregon is using a cost efficient measure of quality because of the commitment to spend more money supporting programs than rating them. Many states pay multiple observers to go on site and rate programs. Oregon asks programs to document their quality practices in a portfolio.
		2. Financial incentives are tied to the quality ratings (programs receive the incentive funds after they achieve a star rating).

Slide #8

1. Spark 5 Tier Building Block System
	1. Use this visual to explain the tiers, when supports are available, and what incentives are available. Mention that we will be explaining the supports and incentives later.
	2. Mention the 5 tiers. Explain that one cannot achieve a high tier without first achieving all of the lower tiers (building block system).
		1. Everything starts with licensing.
		2. Support funds available when you are Commitment to Quality or C2Q.
		3. Incentive funds available when as you progress through each star rating.

Slide #9

1. Spark Structure
	1. This slide illustrates the structure of how the Spark Domains, Standards, Indicators and Evidence fit together.
	2. Walk the participants through the levels on the slide. The slide summarizes the main points for the Domains, Standards, Indicators and Evidence.
		1. Domains are the overall categories of quality, there are 5 total domains.
		2. Standards, these standards are organized by domain, there are 33 total standards.
		3. There are indicators for each Star level for each standard. Usually 3 per standard; however, some standards only have 1 or 2 indicators.
		4. Evidence is only found in the portfolio. The evidence is the measurable indicators of the standards.

Slide #10

1. Spark Materials
	1. The materials listed on the slide show the materials that make up the Spark structure.
	2. Self-Assessment
		1. The Self-Assessment is designed for programs to reflect on the current quality of their program.
		2. The Self-Assessment contains the QRIS Domains, Standards and Indicators.
		3. There are supplemental materials available if you want to learn more about the Self-Assessment after this training.
	3. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
		1. The QIP is used by programs to identify what areas of their program they want to target for improvement. It also helps them to identify where they may want to spend their support funds.
		2. The QIP contains the same items as the Self-Assessment – the QRIS Domains, Standards and Indicators.
		3. There are supplemental materials available if you want to learn more about the QIP after this training.
	4. Portfolio
		1. The Spark Portfolio is what programs will submit to document program quality.
		2. You will note from the slide that the portfolio contains the same information as the Self-Assessment and the QIP. In addition, the portfolio also identifies the types of evidence that programs must submit to document the quality of their program.

Slide #11

1. Spark Domains and Standards
	1. This slide shows the 5 Spark Domains and Standards.
	2. The Domains represent the major areas of quality. These were identified based on what we know about what makes up a quality program.
	3. The Standards are a breakdown of items that together make up the content of the Domains. We have tried to identify only the essential items for each Domain.
	4. You can see from the slide that the number of Standards in the Domains ranges from 4 to 12.
	5. For some family child care providers some of the standards are not applicable.

Slide #12

1. Star Level Indicators: Building Block System
	1. Earlier, we showed you a slide that illustrated that Spark uses a building block approach.
	2. The building block approach means that in order to meet a star rating you must meet all of the criteria for the previous level(s) as well as the criteria for the level you are seeking.
	3. Thus, if you are seeking a 4-Star rating, you must meet the criteria for a 3-Star AND the criteria for a 4-Star.
	4. If you are seeking a 5-Star rating you must meet the criteria for 3-Star AND 4-Star as well as the criteria for a 5-Star.
	5. Let’s see this process visually.