Sec. 4. **[124D.142] QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.**

(a) There is established a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) framework to ensure that Minnesota's children have access to high-quality early learning and care programs in a range of settings so that they are fully ready for kindergarten by 2020.

Creation of a standards-based voluntary quality rating and improvement system includes:

(1) quality opportunities in order to improve the educational outcomes of children so that they are ready for school. The framework shall be based on the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool and a common set of child outcome and program standards and informed by evaluation results;

(2) a tool to increase the number of publicly funded and regulated early learning and care services in both public and private market programs that are high quality. If a program or provider chooses to participate, the program or provider will be rated and may receive public funding associated with the rating. The state shall develop a plan to link future early learning and care state funding to the framework in a manner that complies with federal requirements; and

(3) tracking progress toward statewide access to high-quality early learning and care programs, progress toward the number of low-income children whose parents can access quality programs, and progress toward increasing the number of children who are fully prepared to enter kindergarten.

(b) In planning a statewide quality rating and improvement system framework in paragraph (a), the state shall use evaluation results of the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool in use in fiscal year 2008 to recommend:

(1) a framework of a common set of child outcome and program standards for a voluntary statewide quality rating and improvement system;

(2) a plan to link future funding to the framework described in paragraph (a), clause (2); and

(3) a plan for how the state will realign existing state and federal administrative resources to implement the voluntary quality rating and improvement system framework.

The state shall provide the recommendation in this paragraph to the early childhood education finance committees of the legislature by March 15, 2011.

(c) Prior to the creation of a statewide quality rating and improvement system in paragraph (a), the state shall employ the Minnesota quality rating system rating tool in use in fiscal year 2008 in the original Minnesota Early Learning Foundation pilot areas and additional pilot areas supported by private or public funds with its modification as a result of the evaluation results of the pilot project.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective July 1, 2009.