



Montana's Treasures Frequently Asked Questions #2:

WHAT SHOULD PROVIDERS DO IF THEY HAVE ALREADY RENEWED THEIR LICENSE BEFORE QRS LAUNCHES?

Providers who have already renewed their license before the QRS launch on October 1 will need to wait until their next renewal cycle to apply. The system cannot link QRS applications outside the required renewal window. Providers currently in the Redesign and QRS Bridge system will be recognized at either a Montana's Treasures 2A or 3 until their next renewal.

WHEN CAN PROVIDERS APPLY FOR QRS IF THEIR RENEWAL WINDOW OCCURS BEFORE OR ON OCTOBER 1?

Providers whose license expiration date is October 1 may apply only if their renewal application is submitted exactly 60 calendar days prior. The 60-day requirement is strict; 60 days qualifies, but 59 days does not. Providers who submitted their renewal earlier in the year (e.g., within the 90–60 day renewal window) will need to wait until their next renewal cycle to apply for QRS.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PROVIDER IS NOT PARTICIPATING IN STARS OR THE BRIDGE PROGRAM WHEN QRS LAUNCHES?

Providers who are not participating in STARS or Bridge when QRS launches on October 1 must wait until their next license renewal window to apply. Only providers whose renewal aligns with the launch timeframe—and meets the 60-day rule—may apply immediately.

HOW DOES CUTTING CLOSE TO THE 60-DAY RENEWAL DEADLINE IMPACT A PROVIDER'S ABILITY TO APPLY FOR QRS?

Eligibility depends entirely on calendar days. If a provider submits a renewal application exactly 60 days before the license expiration date, they may apply for QRS at the same time. If the application is even one day late—59 days—the provider will not qualify and will need to wait until the next renewal period.

WILL THERE BE CLASSROOM AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS UNDER QRS/MTT?

Yes, if you choose to apply for MTT Stage 2C meeting the ERS option. Assessments must have been completed within the last 12 months of applying for this stage. Assessments must be requested a minimum of 3-6 months prior to submitting for a 2C, as the State of Montana has 2 Early Childhood Assessors covering the state of Montana. Assessments must be requested via the quality initiatives email until enhancement features occur in MAQCS. Visit the Assessments page on the MTT website for more information.

Let's Talk Quality! Is a 2-hour ERS Introductory training available for free on ChildCareTraining.org



WHAT ASSESSMENT TOOLS WILL BE USED FOR CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS?

The same assessment tools used previously will continue to be used: ECERS-3, ITTERS-3, and FDCERS-3. Providers who need an ERS assessment for 2C recognition may request one through the Quality Initiatives email until a formal request process is added to MAQCS. Assessments must be requested a minimum of 3-6 months prior to submitting for a 2C, as the State of Montana has 2 Early Childhood Assessors covering the state of Montana.

WILL A PAS ASSESSMENT BE REQUIRED FOR STAGE 2?

No. Program Administration Scale (PAS) and Business Administration Scale (BAS) assessments are not currently included in MTT and are not a required quality indicator for Stage 2C.

HOW DOES RENEWING EARLY OR PARTICIPATING IN STIPENDS AFFECT QRS ELIGIBILITY?

Providers who renewed early, including those who submitted during the standard 90–60 day renewal window, must wait until their next renewal to apply. Providers currently receiving the \$73 Best Beginnings stipend will continue to receive it until their renewal, even if that renewal occurs after the October 1 launch.

*WHAT FINANCIAL BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE, AND DO THEY APPLY TO ALL ENROLLED CHILDREN (INCLUDING PRIVATE PAY AND BEST BEGINNINGS SCHOLARSHIP)? **

Financial add-ons are provided only for **authorized subsidy children**—children receiving the Best Beginnings Scholarship (BBS). Private-pay children are not eligible for subsidy add-ons. Previous quarterly incentives for all children ended when funding was discontinued, and this new structure applies only to subsidy-eligible children.

*HOW SHOULD PROGRAMS COUNT DROP-IN STUDENTS WHO ATTEND BUT ARE NOT FULL-TIME? **

Subsidy eligibility is based on enrollment. Drop-in children are counted the same as full-time children as long as enrollment paperwork is completed. Providers receive subsidy payments and the quality subsidy add-on for all authorized, enrolled children each month, regardless of whether they attend full-time, part-time, or on a drop-in basis.

*WHY ARE THE QUALITY INCENTIVES TIED ONLY TO BEST BEGINNINGS CHILDREN? **

The state's longstanding philosophy is that children receiving subsidy should have access to high-quality programs. Incentives encourage providers to serve families receiving BBS and help ensure that high-quality care remains accessible to low-income households. Previous quality incentive funds ended, but the commitment to supporting subsidy children in quality settings remains.



*WHAT DOES “PER AUTHORIZED CHILD” MEAN? **

“Authorized child” refers specifically to a child approved to receive Best Beginnings Scholarship subsidy funding. Programs receive financial add-ons **per authorized subsidy child**, not per private pay child. Maintaining good standing with required documentation ensures continued receipt of authorized payments.

*WHAT IF A PROGRAM HAS NO BEST BEGINNINGS CHILDREN CURRENTLY? **

If a program currently has no Best Beginnings children, it will not receive quality subsidy add-ons. Programs with only private-pay families do not receive these financial incentives. MTT is primarily a recognition system designed to highlight program quality through staff achievements, badges, experience, curriculum strengths, and other indicators. While MTT recognition does not provide direct financial incentives, other state initiatives—such as education supports, apprenticeships, priority coursework, and contractor-supported technical assistance—offer financial support for quality. Programs can begin receiving the quality subsidy add-on at any time for enrolled, authorized children once they are awarded a current MTT Stage 2 or 3.

*WHAT REQUIREMENTS MUST PROGRAMS MEET TO CONTINUE RECEIVING QUALITY SUBSIDY ADD-ONS WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE QRS BRIDGE? **

If currently in the QRS bridge, quality subsidy add-ons will continue as long as programs maintain a current MTT Stage 2 or 3 by submitting an MTT application after their license renewal application, at least 60 days prior to expiration but no more than 90 days.

Where can I go for further information:

For further information on MTT, visit:

- Montana’s Treasures (MTT): [QRS](#)
- Contact the ECSB Quality Unit Team at HHSECFSDQualityInitiatives@mt.gov

For further information on Child Care Licensing, visit:

- [Child Care Licensing](#)
- Contact Child Care Licensing Team at childcarelicensing@mt.gov

***For further information on Best Beginnings, visit:**

- Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program: [Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program](#)
- TA Support: Child Care Agencies and Regions: [Child Care Agencies](#)