

An Opinion on Rules/Regulations, Standards, and Guidelines in Early Care and Education

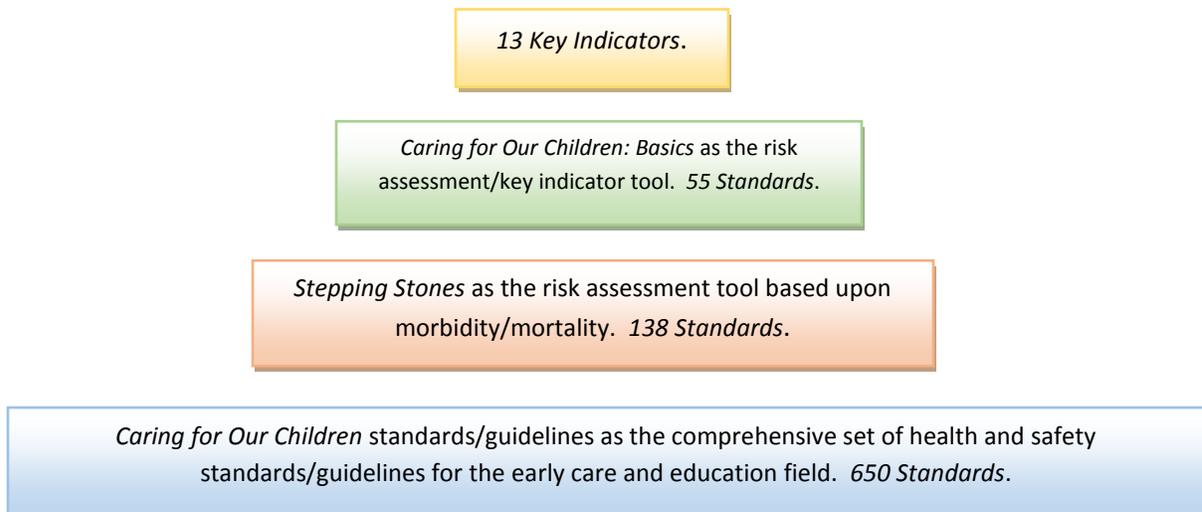
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Over the past two years there has been a great deal of activity and interest in the Early Care and Education (ECE) field related to rules/regulations, standards and guidelines. This interest comes at an opportune time as the ECE field develops a balance between licensing (program compliance), program quality improvement via QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement Systems) & Pre-K programs, and structural and process quality.

Several publications have been put forth that represent these various activities which I would like to delineate and show how these various approaches fit together into a unified whole. The third edition of *Caring for Our Children* is the comprehensive set of standards/guidelines related to health and safety in the child care field. Its companion document called *Stepping Stones* is a risk assessment publication which focuses on those standards/guidelines that place children at greatest risk of mortality/morbidity. *Thirteen Indicators of Quality Child Care: Research Update* are the key indicators based upon *Stepping Stones* and *Caring for Our Children*. A relatively new approach *Caring for Our Children: Basics* is a combination of *Stepping Stones* and *Thirteen Indicators of Quality Child Care*.

I would like to propose the following model in how the above rules/regulations, standards and guidelines relate to each other and how one builds upon the other:



This is a particularly exciting time in which we have several different tools that can be used to help improve early care and education programs via the above model for health and safety and then utilizing QRIS and Pre-K programs standards to build upon this solid licensing foundation.

For those interested in continuing this discussion, please contact me at the following website:

<http://DrFiene.wordpress.com/home> or go to <http://RIKInstitute.wikispaces.com/home> for additional information about quality ECE key indicator research. I can also be reached at DrFiene@gmail.com