Stepping Stones (3rd Edition) Key Indicators

Richard Fiene, Ph.D.

April 2013

This short paper will present the Key Indicators as they appear in *Stepping Stones* (3rd edition). It provides the statistically predictive standards (Key Indicators) that could determine overall compliance with *Stepping Stones* (AAP, APHA, NRC, 2013) and *Caring for Our Children* (AAP, APHA, NRC, 2011) based upon the statistical methodology (Fiene & Nixon, 1985). But before delineating the Key Indicators a few definitions need to be provided to put these key indicators in perspective.

Definitions:

Risk Assessment (RA) - a differential monitoring approach that employs using only those rules, standards, or regulations that place children at greatest risk of mortality or morbidity if violations/citations occur with the specific rule, standard, or regulation. *Stepping Stones* (3rd edition) is an example of a risk assessment approach.

Key Indicators (KI) - a differential monitoring approach that employs using only those rules, standards, or regulations that statistically predict overall compliance with all the rules, standards, or regulations. In other words, if a program is 100% in compliance with the Key Indicators the program will also be in substantial to full compliance with all rules, standards, or regulations. The reverse is also true in that if a program is not 100% in compliance with the Key Indicators the program will also have other areas of non-compliance with all the rules, standards, or regulations.   The key indicators put forth in this paper are an example of the approach.

Differential Monitoring (DM) - this is a relatively new approach to determining the number of visits made to programs and what rules, standards, or regulations are reviewed during these visits. There are two measurement tools that drive differential monitoring, one is Weighted Risk Assessment tools and the other is Key Indicator checklists. Weighted Risk Assessments determine how often a program will be visited while Key Indicator checklists determine what rules, standards, or regulations will be reviewed in the program. Differential monitoring is a very powerful approach when Risk Assessment is combined with Key Indicators because a program is reviewed by the most critical rules, standards, or regulations and the most predictive rules, standards, or regulations. See Fiene's Logic Model & Algorithm for Differential Monitoring *(DMLMA©)*(Fiene, 2013).

Early Childhood Program Quality Indicator Model (ECPQIM)(Fiene, 2013; Fiene & Kroh, 2000; Griffin & Fiene, 1995; Fiene & Nixon, 1985) – this definition is provided to place the results of this paper into the larger program monitoring systems perspective. ECPQIM are models that employ a key indicator or dashboard approach to program monitoring.   Major program monitoring systems in early care and education are integrated conceptually so that the overall early care and education system can be assessed and validated. With these models, it is possible to compare results obtained from licensing systems, quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS), risk assessment systems, key indicator systems, technical assistance, and child development/early learning outcome systems. The various approaches to validation (Zellman & Fiene, 2012) are interposed within this model and the specific

expected correlational thresholds that should be observed amongst the key elements of the model are suggested. **Key Elements** of the model are the following: **CI** = Comprehensive Instrument - state or federal standards, usually rules or regulations that measure health and safety - *Caring for Our Children or Head Start Performance* Standards will be applicable here. Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) standards at the state level; *ERS (ECERS, ITERS, FDCRS), CLASS, or CDPES* (Fiene & Nixon, 1985). **RA** = Risk assessment tools/systems in which only the most critical rules/standards are measured. *Stepping Stones* is an example of this approach. **KI** = Key indicators in which only predictor rules/standards are measured. The *Thirteen Indicators of Quality Child Care (Fiene, 2003)* is an example of this approach. **DM** = Differential monitoring decision making in which it is determined if a program is in compliance or not and the number of visits/the number of rules/standards are ascertained from a scoring protocol. **T**echnical assistance/training and/or professional development system which provides targeted assistance to the program based upon the Differential Monitoring results. And finally, child outcomes which assesses how well the children are developing which is the ultimate goal of the system.

The Key Indicators from *Stepping Stones* (3rd Edition)[1]

1.1.1.2 - Ratios for Large Family Child Care Homes and Centers

1.3.1.1 - General Qualifications of Directors

1.3.2.2 - Qualifications of Lead Teachers and Teachers

1.4.3.1 - First Aid and CPR Training for Staff

1.4.5.2 - Child Abuse and Neglect Education

2.2.0.1 - Methods of Supervision of Children

3.2.1.4 - Diaper Changing Procedure

3.2.2.2 - Handwashing Procedure

3.4.3.1 - Emergency Procedures

3.4.4.1 - Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

3.6.3.1 - Medication Administration

5.2.7.6 - Storage and Disposal of Infectious and Toxic Wastes

6.2.3.1 - Prohibited Surfaces for Placing Climbing Equipment

7.2.0.2 - Unimmunized Children

9.2.4.5 - Emergency and Evacuation Drills/Exercises Policy

Relationship of Key Indicators (KI), Stepping Stones (RA), and Caring for Our Children (CFOC)(CI)

KI — Key Indicators (13)

RA — Stepping Stones (120)

CI — CFOC (500+)
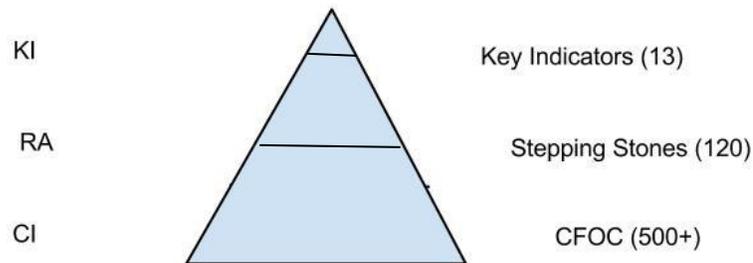
The above diagram depicts the relationship amongst KI, RA, and CI in which the full set of rules is represented by CFOC - Caring for Our Children, followed by RA which are the most critical rules represented by Stepping Stones, and finally the predictive rules represented by the 13 Key Quality Indicators.

Just as there has been three editions of *Caring for Our Children* and *Stepping Stones*, this paper and the resulting Key Indicators represents the third edition of Key Indicators for early care and education. The first two editions are represented in the publications by Fiene & Nixon (1985) and Fiene (2003) respectively (see the reference list below).

References[2]

AAP, APHA, NRC (2011). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd Edition*. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.

AAP, APHA, NRC (2013). *Stepping stones to caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd Edition*. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.

Fiene (2013). *Differential monitoring logic model & algorithm*, Research Institute for Key Indicators, Middletown, Pennsylvania.

Fiene (2003). Licensing related indicators of quality child care, *Child Care Bulletin*, Winter 2002-2003, pps 12-13.

Fiene (1985). Measuring the effectiveness of regulations, *New England Journal of Human Services, 5*(2), 38-39.

Fiene (1981). A new tool for day care monitoring introduced by children's consortium, *Evaluation Practice, 1*(2), 10-11.

Fiene & Kroh (2000). Licensing Measurement and Systems, *NARA Licensing Curriculum*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for Regulatory Administration.

Fiene & Nixon (1985). Instrument based program monitoring and the indicator checklist for child care, *Child Care Quarterly, 14*(3), 198-214.

Griffin & Fiene (1995). *A systematic approach to policy planning and quality improvement for child care: A technical manual for state administrators*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Clinical Infant Programs-Zero to Three.

Zellman & Fiene (2012). *Validation of quality rating and improvement systems for early care and education and School-age care*, Washington, D.C.: OPRE and Child Trends.

Notes:

1   Please see Stepping *Stones (3rd edition)* and *Caring for Our Children (3rd edition)* for the details of each Key Indicator.

2   For the reader who is interested in learning more about the DMLMA/ECPQIM model, please refer to these publications which are available through the following website:

http://RIKInstitute.wikispaces.com

For additional information, please contact:
Richard Fiene, Ph.D., Director
Research Institute for Key Indicators
41 Grandview Drive
Middletown, PA. 17057
DrFiene@gmail.com
RIKI.Institute@gmail.com
717-944-5868 Phone and Fax
http://RIKInstitute.wikispaces.com
http://pennstate.academia.edu/RickFiene