



# Illinois MIECHV Special Edition: Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

## What Is CQI and Why Is It Important?

For the Illinois MIECHV program, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is the complete process of identifying, describing and analyzing strengths and problems, and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. CQI will be an essential component of MIECHV, providing a way of generating meaningful commitments from all levels of the program. The Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois is leading the MIECHV CQI effort in Illinois.

Our goal is to provide the best possible services to the children and families that we serve, and our CQI plan is intended to improve program implementation and participant outcomes. CQI philosophy is that most things can be improved. Meaningful CQI efforts recognize that one learns as much from challenges and failures as from successes. Through data review and analysis, benchmark data will offer new knowledge about potential challenges with program implementation and inform programs about training and technical assistance needs.

*“Quality is never an accident:  
it is always the result of  
intelligent effort.”*

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## A Culture of Quality in Illinois

A culture of quality is present when data are valued, when programs continually strive for improvement, and optimizing outcomes is the shared vision of all program partners at the local and state levels. Central to this commitment is creating an environment in which all of us strive to meet common goals, understand the targets that we are being measured against, critically assess and reflect on our own performance, share what we have learned, and have accountability to the whole team.

## Introducing the Quality Koala

In order to help establish and reinforce a culture of quality within MIECHV, we have developed our CQI **mascot**, the Quality Koala. CQI is about improving systems and environments in which home visiting takes place, not about focusing on specific individuals, and we hope that this cheeky character will help to dispel any negativity associated with past QA challenges.

## Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) vs. Quality Assurance (QA) - What's the Difference?



**Quality assurance (QA)** measures compliance with certain necessary standards. **Quality improvement** is a continuous improvement process. QA normally focuses on individual mistakes, while QI is a proactive approach to improve processes and systems. Standards and measures developed for quality assurance, however, can inform the quality improvement process. The chart below details and categorizes the distinctions between QA and QI.

	<b>QA</b>	<b>QI</b>
<b>Motivation</b>	Measuring compliance with standards	Continuously improving processes to meet standards
<b>Means</b>	Inspection	Prevention, monitor over time
<b>Attitude</b>	Required, defensive	Chosen, proactive
<b>Focus</b>	Outliers or "bad apples", individuals	Processes, systems, majority
<b>Players</b>	Selected departments	Organization wide, benchmarking
<b>Disciplines</b>	Within profession	Multidisciplinary approach
<b>Scope</b>	Medical profession focused	Patient care focused
<b>Responsibility</b>	Few	All

### Illinois MIECHV's First CQI Meeting

MIECHV's first in-person CQI meetings took place on April 19th in Champaign and on April 22nd in Chicago, with at least one MIECHV CQI representative present from each MIECHV provider agency. During the meetings, we discussed:

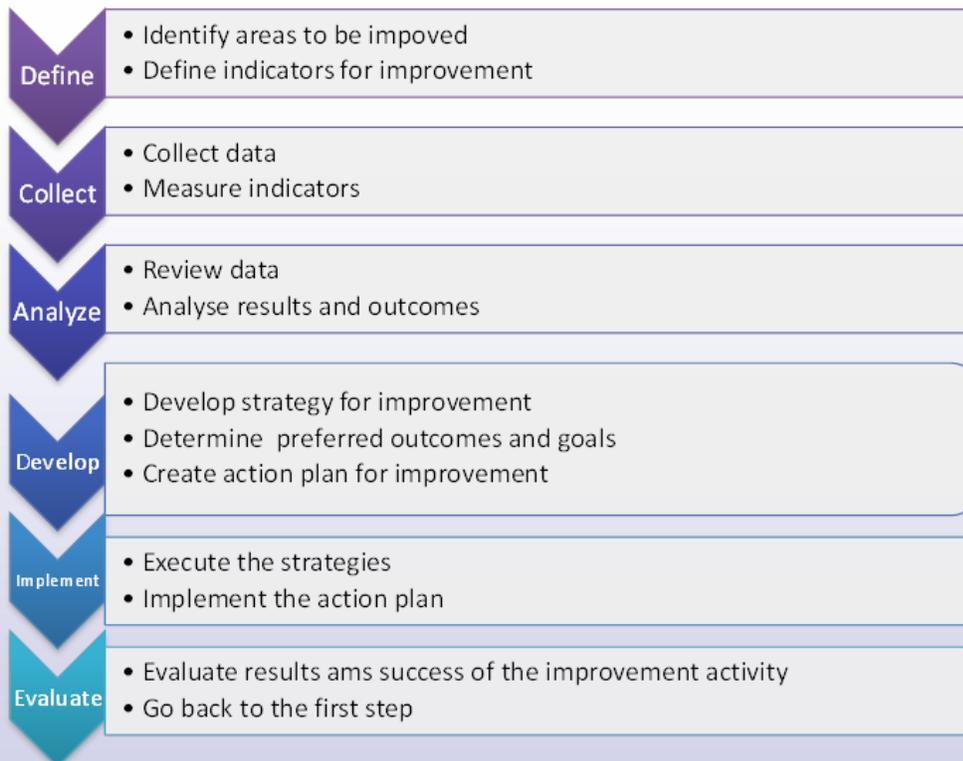
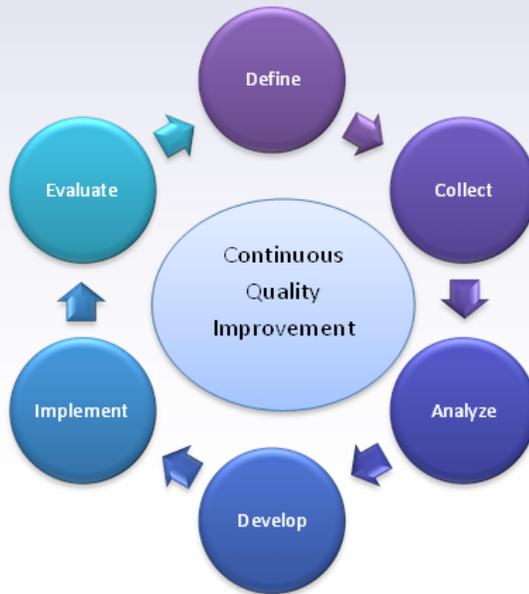
- Differences between CQI and QA;
- Ideas on how to establish a culture of quality in Illinois home visiting; and
- Roles and responsibilities of all the players.

There are some tasks for all CQI Representatives to complete before our phone conference in July:

- Confirm your agency's designated MIECHV CQI representative (at least one per agency);
- Take the sample CQI Memorandum of Understanding between MIECHV agencies and CPRD back to your agencies for discussion. Please come back to the next meeting with any suggestions for improvement, and a plan to have an MOU signed.

# Illinois Home Visiting Improvement Model (iHVIM)

## Illinois MIECHV CQI Model



The CQI process is a cycle that promotes excellence and continuous improvement.

CQI allows home visiting programs to look at their activities and performance, determine whether services meet predetermined outcomes and expectations of quality, and work to correct any observed deficiencies identified through the CQI process.

CQI is different from traditional quality assurance in that it is self-directed and self-determined rather than imposed by an external entity.

## MIECHV CQI Team Chart

### State level team

- Early Learning Council
- Home Visiting Task Force Executive Committee
- Home Visiting Task Force
- MIECHV State Funders (ISBE, IDHS, OECD)
- MIECHV CQI Steering Committee (CPRD, ISBE, DHS, OECD, Governor's Office, sites' representatives)

### Local level team

- One CQI representative from each site
- MIECHV sites ( 6 communities)
- Home Visitors and Supervisors

### Program level team

- Early Head Start
- Health Families America
- Nurse- family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers

## Acknowledgments



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The Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) is one of four research centers affiliated with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA) at the University of Illinois, with offices in Urbana and Chicago. CPRD integrates IGPA's mission of connecting evidence-based research to program and policy at the national, state and local level.

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