The IDEALS Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Education is a collective of experts, practitioners, and innovators seeking to improve the lives of children, families, and vulnerable adults. We have extensive experience working in early childhood to promote positive developmental outcomes.

Our ultimate vision

To ensure ALL children have access to high-quality child care that leads to quality life, we designed the Improving Quality System (IQS) as a comprehensive approach to identifying, improving, and sharing high-quality practices for early childhood and school-age care programs. IQS enables governmental agencies to recognize which programs are successful, targets resources to improve or diminish low-performing programs, and ultimately allows consumers to make the right choices.

As the opioid crisis and addiction at large has severely impacted the lives of children, our team has researched and developed solutions to mitigate these effects and ensure families are given valuable information about rehabilitation facilities. It became clear that the challenges facing the identification of quality programs in child care are similar to those for finding quality drug treatment facilities.

We believe our IQS model can improve the quality of drug treatment facilities and provide greater access for patients to quality programs, which can produce lasting, effective treatment for everyone. We are seeking support to develop and pilot this model, similar to how the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services improved the quality of early learning programs.

Here’s how the IQS model has worked in early learning

- **Valid & Scalable**
  - Two-tiered, independent rating process maintains 99% agreement on accuracy of rated quality evidence submitted by programs while use of a digital portfolio for quality evidence reduces rating time.

- **Data-System Coordination**
  - Integrated public and private data systems create seamless and accurate data transfer improving efficiency and coordination.

- **Sustainable**
  - Online evidence portfolios, integrated data systems, and virtual coaching methods produce significant cost savings while maintain validity – coming 85% below federal cost projections.

- **Prioritizing Continuous Quality Improvement**
  - Maryland saw 6,000% increase in availability of quality childcare using IQS – with more than 40% of programs moving from the lowest to highest tiers of quality within two years.

- **Improving Lives**
  - Children who attend higher-quality care have better long-term outcomes in school, health, and social functioning – and IQS helps over 300K children annually find and attend high-quality care.
The components of IQS that translate from child care to addiction care

The IQS Model is a portfolio-based approach to quality rating and program improvement and designed around a model of continuous quality improvement. It consists of:

- An online and mobile technology system to upload artifacts and receive feedback from a team of expert evaluators so that care providers can demonstrate their quality anytime, anywhere.
- A guided review process utilizing a two-tiered, independent review model as well as protocols for ensuring fidelity to quality rubrics.
- Built-in quality improvement resources, including experts trained to coach programs to improve and not simply be rated, along with integrated roles for resource and referral technical assistance and state-level supports.
- In-line workforce development, from multimedia to interactive procedural facilitators. Care providers have access to an array of tools designed to help improve their professional competencies and subsequently improve the quality of their programs.
- Targeted resources, tools, and supports for meeting the individualized needs of patients as well as tools for tracking patient progress.
- Secure data management with built-in data reporting or the ability to create customizable reports, and HIPPA compliant integration with established data systems like EHRs, state licensing systems, etc.
- Direct consumer awareness tools like the Maryland EXCELS Quality Finder mobile app and Find A Program page, which allow users to find key information on quality programs, along with media, modules, and print materials to inform the public about the importance of quality programming to aid users.
- 24/7 technology support through phone and online help desks.
- A commitment to continuous improvement of the system through an ongoing formative evaluation process, as well as surveys to gather consumer and provider satisfaction, by experts at Johns Hopkins University.