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## Working Together for a Better Beginning

**“Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child’s life is high-quality early education.”**

President Barack Obama in his State of the Union address, January 28, 2014

## Early Childhood Development

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20447

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### Have you been to our website recently?

Learn more about the Office of Early Childhood Development and click [here](#).

### Check out these ACF blogs

The ACF blog — The Family Room — talks about new initiatives at the agency, success stories and policy announcements.

#### [April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#)

This year, we celebrate the theme "Making Meaningful Connections" to help protect children and youth and strengthen families.

#### [Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!](#)

A Developmental and Behavioral Screening Initiative

#### [Rhode Island Partners with Institutions of Higher Education](#)

## Congratulations to our Early Childhood Leader!

Linda K. Smith, Deputy Secretary for Early Childhood Development was presented the Sandra J. Skolnik Public Policy Leadership Award at Child Care Aware® of America's Symposium in Washington, D.C., April 2, 2014. Smith was given the award in recognition of her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children, families and communities across the country.

"We are honored to recognize Linda with this award," said Lynette M. Fraga, Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America. "Her leadership and dedication supporting children is respected by all of her colleagues and peers at Child Care Aware® of America and beyond."



As Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Linda provides overall policy coordination for the Head Start and Early Head Start Program and the Child Care and Development Fund, as well as serving as the liaison with the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies. Her office serves as a focal point for early childhood policy at the federal level.

Linda previously served as the executive director for the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), where she represented more than 650 community-based agencies concerned with the care of children in their earliest years. Linda Smith led the organization through significant growth and transformation - she was

By providing opportunities for higher education for its educators, the state ensures its children's developmental and educational needs will be met.

#### [Improving Head Start Teachers' Ability to Promote Children's Social-emotional Development](#)

In one year, teachers in 104 Head Start centers and 307 classrooms across the country increased their use of evidence-based practices in support of children's social-emotional development.

#### [Planning an Effective Response for the Next Epidemic — with Children in Mind](#)

ACF's Dallas Regional Office focuses on children and the early childhood development community during emergency planning conference.

#### [A Big Week for Tribal Early Childhood Programs](#)

New and exciting opportunities for tribal communities to expand high-quality early learning and development launched this year.

See more blogs on the [ACF Family Room Blog Page](#).

April is National Child Abuse Prevention month, a time to remember that we all can play a part in preventing child maltreatment. Learn how you can make meaningful connections with children, families, and communities to raise awareness this April and all year long:

Visit the [National Child Abuse Prevention Month website](#) to find useful resources.

Download the [2014 Prevention](#)

the driving force behind NACCRRA's national policy agenda and strategic plan to improve the quality of child care nationwide. NACCRRA was renamed Child Care Aware® of America in 2012.

The Sandra J. Skolnik Public Policy Leadership Award was established in 2008 to honor the life and work of Sandra J. Skolnik, a passionate visionary and a dedicated advocate for quality child care and education for young children. It is awarded annually to one outstanding individual who embodies the passion and commitment of Skolnik and contributes to realizing NACCRRA's vision of a nation that supports the development and learning of all children by leading efforts to improve public policy.

#### **April 7, 2014 White House Photo: I've Got Your Finger Mr. President**



*President Barack Obama holds the hand of Lincoln Rose Pierce Smith, the daughter of former Deputy Press Secretary Jamie Smith, in the Oval Office, April 4, 2014. Watching from the other side of the Resolute Desk are Sage and Elsa Smith. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)*

#### ***Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!***

##### ***New Resource for Housing and Shelter Providers Now on Webpage***

Making sure our youngest children are screened and given support *early* is a priority. Early identification of developmental delays and behavioral challenges is a critical step in providing children and families with the services and support they need to thrive. As a community, we have the responsibility to care for our youngest children and help them reach their full potential. [Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!](#) launched a few weeks ago. It brings the entire early childhood world together around core common missions: Getting all children screened on a schedule, celebrating milestones, and identifying delays when they occur so that supports could be incorporated as early as possible.

That is why multiple agencies teamed up on a coordinated effort to encourage developmental and behavioral screening and follow-up with support for children, families, and the providers who care for them.

See Secretary Sebelius launch this initiative [here!](#) Look at the materials including a

[Resource Guide: Making Meaningful Connections.](#)

## Featured Reports



Recently posted on the [OPRE Site](#) is [A First Look at the Head Start CARES Demonstration Large-Scale Implementation of Programs to Improve Children's Social-Emotional Competence.](#)

Two new briefs highlight efforts to expand the base of knowledge on Hispanic populations affected by ACF programs.

See [Enhancing Cultural Competence in Social Service Agencies: A Promising Approach to Serving Diverse Children and Families](#), a research brief that summarizes the state of the field on cultural competence in social services and [Survey Data Elements to Unpack Diversity of Hispanic Populations](#).

Both briefs are a result of the efforts of OPRE's [Hispanic Research Work Group](#) and contribute to the current work of the [National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families](#) and the [Human Services Research Partnership in Puerto Rico](#).

## Additional Resources

The final report and synopsis of the [Supporting Evidence-based Home Visiting](#) initiative national cross-site evaluation conducted by

compendium of research-based screening tools; "User's Guides" for multiple audiences, from early learning teachers to doctors, social workers, and families; and a toolkit of informational resources, tip sheets, and guidance on finding help at the local level.

See the newest posted resource- [A Housing and Shelter Provider's Guide to Developmental and Behavioral Screening](#). The early childhood homelessness workgroup will share this new resource with early childhood programs and HUD housing and shelter grantees as it continues to share this message.

Every child should receive a developmental and behavioral screening on a regular schedule, in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, just as the majority of children get vision and hearing screenings. By making sure every child is screened and has appropriate follow-up, we can make sure every child has all of the support they need to thrive.

This work is part of the interagency workgroup focused on ending family homelessness. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released [Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness](#), which outlines a multi-pronged approach to ending family homelessness.

## Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Highlight

### Maryland's Early Care & Education Developmental Screening Initiative

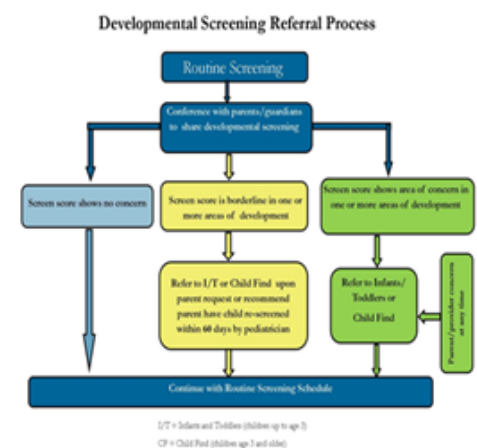


Maryland's RTT-ELC convened a team of geographically and professionally diverse stakeholders to establish guidelines, prioritize and recommend developmental screening tools for statewide use among child care providers. In addition, a number of partnerships with pediatricians, family practice physicians, and mental health providers were developed to support the use of developmental screening instruments as well as early detection and intervention in mental health. This work resulted in a new recommendation that introduces the use of state-recommended developmental screening instruments for use by child care providers serving children 6 weeks of age to kindergarten entry.

By the end of 2016, a regulation will go into effect requiring all licensed/registered center-based and family/home early care and education programs serving children ages 6 weeks through kindergarten (excluding Drop-In Centers) to conduct developmental screenings on all children.

Screening frequency is determined by the age of the child and takes place as follows:

- All children, Birth – Kindergarten entry, within 90 days of enrollment
- Children Birth – 36 months by June 30th and December 31st of each year; twice in a 12 month calendar





Mathematica and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is now available. This national evaluation examined the strategies used by 17 organizations in 15 states.



See the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) report a [Data Snapshot: Early Childhood Education](#).



[A New Lens: Early Childhood Data from the Office of Civil Rights](#)

CLASP released two new resources for state leaders:

[State Child Care Subsidy Policies That Support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships: A Tool for States](#) provides a menu of state child care assistance policies that states could consider to improve continuity and stability for children and families in the subsidy system and to support child care providers receiving child care subsidy payments.

[What State Leaders Should Know About Early Head Start](#) provides a guide for state leaders less familiar with the program. It explains 11 key areas of EHS and suggests ways for state policymakers to align key areas of child care and early education with the program.

[Opportunities for Progress on Infant and Toddler Care: New and Proposed Federal Initiatives](#)  
The National Women's Law Center has released a new fact sheet detailing new and proposed federal policies and initiatives that can support and improve early care and education for infants and toddlers.

[Using Early Childhood Education](#)

- Children 37 months – Kindergarten entry by December 31st of each year; Once in a 12 month calendar

A Developmental Screening Training Workgroup is being formed and will begin this month to develop content on the developmental screening initiative, regulation, tool selection, communication with families and referrals. This training will be offered online in a self-paced format free of charge to Maryland providers.

Find additional information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge [here](#) and [here](#).

## Lessons Learned from the State Advisory Councils' Needs Assessments

As one of the required SAC activities, States conducted statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of care throughout the State. As expected, states approached the tasks differently, examining gaps and opportunities on a variety of measures. Examples of these measures include:

- the availability of slots in licensed child care, quality rated programs, and publicly funded pre-k, including those funded by the state, Title I, and Head Start;
- the cost of child care;
- state, federal, and private investments in early learning and development programs;
- demographics and population trends of children from birth to five, including family living arrangements;
- economic conditions for children birth to age five, including parents' employment status, median family income and the poverty rate for children birth to five;
- family risk factors, including homelessness, food insecurity, teen parents with low education attainment, child abuse and neglect;
- children in families with multiple risk factors, including identifying "priority" or poverty zones;
- the needs of dual language learners;
- health and special needs factors, including the number of children without health care and the percent of infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans; and
- the education and training needs of the early childhood workforce, including number of credentialed early childhood providers at each credential level.

Despite their different approaches to measuring the gaps and opportunities in the State, over half of all Councils consistently reported top priority areas they hope to focus on as next steps if resources are available.

One priority area is increasing access to high quality care opportunities for children and increasing the amount of slots and/or programs for children, including hard to reach populations (e.g. rural), or children with special needs.

Another area is expanding early childhood data collection systems or integrating early childhood data into already established statewide data systems, such as the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

Councils prioritized providing effective consumer education to families and the general public about the importance of high quality care, how to find it, and overall awareness of early childhood development information.

Finally, Councils raised strengthening the early childhood workforce by providing professional development opportunities and developing professional development

### [to Bridge the Digital Divide](#)

A new brief from the RAND Corporation explores the role of early childhood education in bridging the digital divide.



### **New RTT-ELC TA Website**

The Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance (ELC TA) Program has launched a new [website](#) that is available for both grantee and non-grantee states. ELC TA provides and facilitates responsive, timely, and high-quality TA that supports each Race to the Top — Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grantee's successful implementation of its RTT-ELC projects.



CDC's announced its first ever Public Health Grand Rounds on autism spectrum disorder. Please mark your calendars for April 22, 2014, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., EST for CDC's Public Health Grand Rounds "[Autism Spectrum Disorder: From Numbers to Know-How.](#)" This event features presentations on autism etiology, surveillance, early identification and screening, and evidence-based intervention. Please share this information widely.

Visit [here](#) to register.

Planning for the next flu season is already underway. The vaccine viruses recommended by the World Health Organization and the US Food and Drug Administration Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee for

systems as a high priority area.

ACF is developing a final report on the accomplishments of the Councils and looks forward to sharing more in depth information on the impact of the Councils on state early childhood systems this summer.

## **Philanthropy Supports Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Development**

ACF is busy preparing for the launch of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CC Partnerships). Materials to support communities in thinking about the EHS-CC Partnerships have been shared through listservs and webpages including the [EHS-CC Partnerships Toolkit](#), and last month we hosted a number of webinars to ensure potential applicants have what they need to be successful. If you missed those webinars, you can find them and additional support materials [here](#).

We are fortunate in early childhood to have advocates and philanthropic partners who support ACF's goal to increase high quality early learning experiences for young children across the country. The BUILD Initiative with partners including the Alliance for Early Success, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, and Zero to Three recently hosted a meeting in Chicago to help communities think innovatively about this new opportunity. The opportunity to bring people together outside of government for the EHS-CC Partnerships initiative was supported by the [Buffett Early Childhood Fund](#), the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#), the [Alliance for Early Success](#), the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [The Harris Foundation](#), the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#), and the [David and Lucile Packard Foundation](#). Many of our ACF resources were shared and discussed.

These BUILD Initiative resources are available to the public to help everyone think and plan for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership opportunity and can be found [here](#).

We are grateful for the enthusiasm shown by attending those webinars, sending in questions and planning with partners in your community. New information will soon be posted on our ACF webpages. Please continue [to check these](#) often!

## **ACF Offices Partner to Increase Refugee Families' Access to High Quality Child Care & Early Childhood Resources**

The [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) (ORR) and the [Office of Child Care](#) (OCC) recently released a [joint Information Memorandum \(IM\)](#) to lead agencies administering child care programs under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act; national, regional, state and local refugee resettlement networks; and other interested parties. The purpose of this memorandum, the first of its kind in ACF, is to create linkages between the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies and the Refugee Resettlement Networks. It offers strong encouragement to



the 2014-15 influenza season are the same as those for the 2013-14 [influenza season](#). Everyone will still need their flu vaccine again next flu season, but some children, who normally would need two doses, will only need one dose because the strains will be unchanged from this season.

### **EHS.CCP Reviewer Deadline Extended to April 25!**

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start (OHS) and Office of Child Care (OCC) are seeking expert reviewers for the 2014 Early Head Start–Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grant panels. Want to be a reviewer? [Click here](#).

partner at the state, regional and local levels to increase refugee families' access to high-quality child care; guidance about how this collaboration can occur; and specific action items to take into consideration. Stability of child care is critical for the positive developmental growth of all children. Continuity of care is essential for refugee children and their families to gain the knowledge and establish the trusting relationships needed to thrive in the U.S. CCDF Administrators can prioritize child care subsidy eligibility for refugee families in high quality early childhood settings so children get the supports they need to succeed in school while their parents work and become economically self-sufficient.

As part of the ORR-OCC partnership, Shannon Rudisill (OCC Director) and Ken Tota (ORR Deputy Director) visited a family child care home funded through the ORR Home-Based Child Care (HBCC) grant program. They had the opportunity to meet Emebet, an asylee from Ethiopia who came to the U.S. in October 2012 with her family. In Ethiopia, Emebet had a business degree and had worked supporting children's welfare. For this reason, Emebet wanted to continue to work with children and make a difference in their young lives once she arrived in the U.S.



Through the ORR grantee, ECDC Enterprise Development Group in the greater Washington, DC area, Emebet received business, health and safety training, assistance connecting with the USDA Food Program, and a \$3000 start-up grant. Emebet became a licensed provider and now provides care for three other families in addition to her two children. "I like to have children with me always, first, because I

am a mother, second, because I worked with children for both a local and International NGO in Ethiopia. I love being with kids, because they are so innocent. I have a big dream. I have started taking evening classes and the more I care for the children, I see myself having a big center one day with lots of children running and playing." As Emebet's business starts to expand, she serves as a positive role model and mentor for refugees and asylees who want to make a lasting impact for children and families.

Refugee resettlement is intended to occur in close cooperation and consultation with federal, state and local entities and requires a community-wide engagement across this nation—particularly for programs and agencies responding to the health and human service needs of low-income and underserved populations. For further partnership information, see the following joint webinar and resource list on [Linking Early Childhood and Refugee Resettlement Networks](#).

## **The Science of Children - Birth to Age 8: Second Public Session**

The Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and key players in the philanthropic community including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the McCormick Foundation are sponsoring a study titled "[The Science of Children Birth to Age 8](#):"

### [Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success](#)".

The IOM/NRC Committee on the Science of Children Birth to 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success is pleased to announce a [second public information-gathering session](#) to be held on **April 29, 2014** at the Beckman Conference Center of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering in Irvine, CA. The committee is tasked with conducting a study and preparing a consensus report on how the science of children's health, learning and development can inform the requirements for preparing a workforce to seamlessly support children from birth through age 8. The purpose of this public session is for the committee to hear from experts in the field to inform their deliberations.

This event is open to the public, however registration is limited based on space availability. For those unable to attend in person, live webcasting will be available. [Registration is now open to attend the workshop in person or to participate in the live webcast.](#)

A detailed agenda with more information about session topics and panelists will be available on the project website, [www.iom.edu/BirthtoEight](http://www.iom.edu/BirthtoEight), in the near future.

## **The Way Forward: ACF Research with American Indians and Alaska Natives**

On April 17 and 18, Linda Smith, along with other ACF leaders, will participate in an ACF-hosted meeting called "The Way Forward: ACF Research with American Indians and Alaska Natives". The meeting, which will highlight research, performance measurement, and evaluation activities in American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities, will be held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

The day will begin with an overview of research relevant to ACF programs serving AIAN children, families, and communities. This will be followed by a presentation about the development of the Children's Bureau's Strategic Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation to Improve Child Welfare Programs. Then, ACF-funded technical assistance providers, including the Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute, will discuss TA efforts to support capacity-building for research and evaluation in AIAN communities, including the role of tribal colleges and universities.

Other presentations at the meeting will cover topics such as community-engaged measurement development for looking at questions about culture; the challenges of selecting, adapting, and using measures that have not been tested with Native populations; and designing and scaling up interventions within and across diverse AIAN cultures. Meeting participants include U.S. researchers who collaborate with communities throughout Indian Country, representatives from the National Indian Child Care Association, the National Indian Head Start Directors Association, the National Indian Health Board, the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center, and various tribal colleges and universities.





# Innovations in Early Childhood

## Child Care and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project

### Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Child Care Providers serving Military Families

**By: Kathleen Lodl and Tonia Durden University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
& Claudia Mincemoyer, Penn State University**

Did you know that military families face unique challenges and have a growing need to access quality community-based childcare? In 2010, the Department of Defense Office of Military Community and Family Policy launched an initiative to expand the capacity for Active, Guard and Reserve families who are geographically dispersed or unable to access childcare programs on military installation. This initiative is designed to improve the awareness and availability of quality childcare by utilizing existing local, state and federal resources. The Childcare and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project ([CYTTAP](#)) is being conducted by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension with Penn State Extension in collaboration with the **U. S. Department of Defense**.

This project is designed to develop and deliver training for early childhood and youth professionals and currently operational in 16 states (Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington) and focuses its efforts on providing professional development for individuals who care for children ages 0-12 from off-installation military families, particularly Guard and Reserve families.

Utilizing local-level partnerships with Extension systems in participating states allows the CYTTAP to identify target audiences and provide long-term sustainability in each state. It also ensures that each state has a custom designed training package that reflects the unique needs of the state. One state partner reflects *“One of the main strengths of this whole initiative is that it’s tailored to your state. You can talk with your stakeholders in your state and see what will work in your state. It doesn’t have to be what works for another state works here.”*

As a result of this project, it is expected that the skills of more than 28,000 child and youth development professionals will be strengthened, increasing the quality of services provided to nearly 300,000 military children. Wow!

The [CYTTAP](#) accomplishes its goals using four main strategies:

1. Train the trainer workshops are being offered in select counties in each of the 16 states.
2. Face to face training is being offered to child care providers in select counties in each state by highly trained and qualified instructors.
3. The CYTTAP recruits and trains new family child care providers.
4. Online education and mentoring is being provided through Penn State's [Better Kid Care](#) online professional development system.

The following training options are available to states through [CYTTAP](#):



	Rock Solid Foundations-Social/Emotional
	Better Kid Care On Demand
	Better Kid Care Instructor Modules
	Getting Started in Family Child Care
	I am Moving I am Learning
	Tools of the Trade II
	Click2Science

The hours providers earn are accepted for Child Development Associate (CDA) formal education hours. In addition, most of the participating states credit the trainings towards state--approved professional development hours required to maintain licensing/certification or quality improvement ratings. CYTTAP also recruits and trains new home-based child care providers. The primary goal of this project is to therefore increase the quantity and quality of child care services for off installation military children and families.

By building upon the existing resources and early care initiatives in each state, the goal of this project is to increase the number of military children ready for school and demonstrate improved educational competencies, resulting in the long-term outcome of military-ready soldiers who are confident that their children have access to high quality, stable child care.

Click on the link below to see how **YOUR** state is engaged in the Child Care and Youth Training and Technical Assistance Project: <http://child.unl.edu/cyttap>. If your state is not one of the participating partners, you can still explore the online training modules from Better Kid Care. Check it out: <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare>.

If you have an Innovation in Early Childhood that is available for public use, let us know.



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[marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov)

For more information on the Early Childhood Development Office at ACF, visit the website <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd>.

*The Early Childhood Development newsletter contains links to other websites and news articles. These links represent just a few examples of the numerous reference materials currently available to the public. The opinions expressed in any articles or web pages do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration for Children and Families. The inclusion of resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement of any private organization or business listed herein.*