



## Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge

### Key Implementation Themes in Phase 1 Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Program Grantee Annual Performance Reports

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In February 2013 the nine Phase 1 Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program grantee States submitted the first [Annual Performance Reports](#) (APRs) for the grant program. The APRs documented the progress made during the 1st year of grant implementation (January 1 – December 31, 2012). Grantees wrote about lessons learned during the 1st grant year and about the progress being made in each of the five RTT-ELC reform areas and on their corresponding performance measures.

This document summarizes the 1st year of work that grantees completed across the various RTT-ELC reform areas. This summary is by no means an exhaustive collection of the early childhood infrastructure and systems-building work being done in a particular State, but it is a compilation of the work highlighted and documented by grantees as being supported by RTT-ELC funds and as meeting the stated RTT-ELC goals. This document highlights the work implemented during the 1st year of the grant period in the following areas.

- Child care health consultants
- Child care licensing
- Child care subsidy system
- Children with special needs
- Developmental and behavioral screening
- Early childhood data systems
- Early childhood mental health
- Early learning and development standards
- Family engagement
- Head Start
- Health and nutrition training
- Health promotion activities
- Health promotion consultants
- Home visiting
- Rural initiatives
- State Advisory Councils
- Transition

#### **CHILD CARE HEALTH CONSULTANTS**

- The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) collaborates with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to hire registered nurses in the role of QRIS Health Advisors (project #2.4) to conduct health consultation visits at early education and care programs to meet the State's QRIS standard 2 (safe, healthy indoor and outdoor environments). They will review records, support programs in updating health care policies and practices, identify program issues, and assist programs to comply with health and safety

requirements. The QRIS Health Advisors will also help programs connect with local health care services and other resources for children and families. Massachusetts DPH has also subcontracted with six Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs) to hire part-time nurses, working 8–10 hours per week, to provide training on medication administration for children with complex chronic illnesses. These nurses use a curriculum, *Medication Administration in Child Care* (MACC), developed by the in partnership with DPH and EEC to help programs meet new 2010 EEC regulations on medication administration training. In one region the need for training in Spanish for family child care (FCC) providers has led to a promising partnership with Boston Healthy Homes for Family Child Care Providers to merge the asthma medication administration module with training on healthy homes to reduce asthma triggers (**Massachusetts**).

- An important aspect of Minnesota's State Plan is the reconstitution of the Child Care Health Consultant. A Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Child Care Health Consultant was hired as of July 30, 2012; attended the National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants offered by the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Public Health from September 11–14; and completed 10 weeks of additional online training. Certification as a Child Care Health Consultant was awarded December 14, 2012. In addition to being the lead Child Care Health Consultant for the State, the staff has been purposefully integrated with groups and committees leading multiple RTT-ELC activities. Request for Proposals for Child Care Health Consultants in the four Transformation Zones were posted in January 2013 (**Minnesota**).
- The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC), in partnership with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center (NCCCHSRC) is building statewide capacity and effectiveness for child care health consultation. The project will establish a regional coaching model for Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) targeting promotion of a medical home for ongoing preventive health care and promotion of health literacy. Currently, 56 CCHCs are providing training and technical assistance to child care programs in 50 counties. Two additional CCHCs will be hired to provide coaching, training, and technical assistance to centers in the Transformation Zone. During the 1st year, NCPC has discussed current CCHC needs within each of the Transformation Zone counties (**North Carolina**).

## CHILD CARE LICENSING

- We are working with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Division and Tribal Child Care Licensors to ensure that licensors have the information they need to be ambassadors for Parent Aware when in contact with new and existing licensed child care programs. We are in the early stages of linking the Parent Aware data system to the child care licensing data system (**Minnesota**).
- Ohio made a number of legislative changes as a result of the RTT-ELC State Plan. Ohio's State budget is operated on a biennium cycle, and Ohio is currently in the 2012–2013 budget biennium (July 2011 to June 2013). For the State fiscal year 2013 (began July 1, 2012), Ohio passed a mid-biennial review bill that addressed a number of the RTT-ELC state plan components. The following summarizes one legislative change that was passed:

License family child care Type B providers. Small family child care providers (Type B) are currently certified through County Departments of Job and Family Services. This legislation moves the regulatory responsibility to the State level, through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), and will create a common foundation for licensing across all program sectors. By including these programs in the licensing system, compliance data will be centrally located for the first time for all provider types. This advancement will allow the State to provide families with information about all regulated early learning and development programs that are available in their communities (Senate Bill 316) (**Ohio**).

- The creation of a new data system, which will be used by staff from both the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and ODJFS beginning in fall 2013, will include an inspection tool that will eventually allow staff to complete licensing and Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) monitoring visits at the same time. The data system will allow staff to complete the licensing inspection and SUTQ verification visit while at the program and email a copy of the compliance results to the program for posting onsite. This will provide families enrolled at the program with timely information about licensing compliance and SUTQ rating results. The ODJFS website currently includes information about Step Up To Quality and the importance of high-quality early learning and development settings. Licensing inspection findings and information about a program's star rating are searchable by multiple criteria, including a program's location and star rating level. When the new database is operational, this feature also will be used for ODE licensed programs, as well as small family child care homes (**Ohio**).
- In 2012, Rhode Island made progress in working to update child care licensing regulations and improving alignment across program quality monitoring systems, including child care licensing, BrightStars and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Approval. Rhode Island has already made progress in ensuring that all family child care providers in the State receive a licensing inspection at least once per year. Rhode Island is working to develop data systems to share licensing information, including health and safety violations with the public in an easy to understand format (**Rhode Island**).

## **CHILD CARE SUBSIDY SYSTEM**

- A project plan for the design of the Child Care Subsidy Program point-of-service (POS) system has been developed. The first task under the plan is to develop a functional requirements document that identifies essential system functions and defines the relationships between those functions. To accomplish this, joint application design sessions have been conducted. These have focused on the type of system-user interface to be used and related security issues, and the development of basic business rules for the system's child enrollment/disenrollment and voucher issuance/tracking processes. It was noted that the system will also need to interface with the Child Enrollment and Attendance Record System being developed within the Early Childhood Data Warehouse so that child enrollment/disenrollment data can be shared and validated for Subsidy Program purposes (**Maryland**).

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

- The Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC) employs coaches; consultants; and trainers with expertise in developmental disabilities, special health care needs, and behavioral

disorders. These individuals provide specialized coaching, consultation, and technical assistance to early care and education providers who have children with special needs in their care. RTT-ELC funding enhanced CICC services, especially to those programs participating in Parent Aware, as well as expand intensive services availability statewide. Work is in progress to develop a regional consultation plan with reference to children with special needs (**Minnesota**).

## DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCREENING

- The Challenge initiative to engage health care providers, especially pediatricians and family physicians, in conducting developmental screening using the Parents Evaluation of Developmental Skills (PEDS) standardized developmental screening tool is increasing the number of health providers conducting young child developmental screening. Community Health Ambassadors in high needs communities are conducting outreach to engage families with young children and linking more families to follow-up services for young children, while the Help Me Grow Call Center provides direct assistance to parents in response to their calls for information about services for children birth – 5 years, linking families to screening and/or followup services for young children (**Delaware**).
- A number of partnerships with pediatricians, family practice physicians, and mental health providers are being developed to support the use of developmental screening instruments as well as early detection and intervention in mental health (**Maryland**).
- The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and EEC have agreed to collaborate in improving the joint management of early education and care and out-of-school-time programming for homeless families. DHCD and EEC will empower homeless families to support their children's healthy growth and development through access to screening via their local Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantee and in some instances DHCD contracted programs. 2012 progress made included the following:
  - Delivery of three regional trainings in October and November 2012 on supporting the healthy development of homeless children. Over 120 staff from early education programs and DHCD's network of family shelters participated.
  - Fireman Foundation's Secure Jobs Fund initiative is a one-to-two year demonstration project spearheaded by the Fireman Foundation, with participation by EEC, DHCD, the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Services (DTA), and the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness. The Fireman Foundation will support two to three regional partnerships to secure employment, stabilize housing and address the developmental needs of children for at least 150 adults from recently-homeless families participating in DHCD's HomeBASE initiative to develop a replicable model, and to inform State and federal policy regarding homelessness, employment and child development (**Massachusetts**).
- The *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* and *Ages and Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)* (projects #3.1 and #3.5) have been selected as screening tools for parents to learn more about their child's development and to help them understand that they are their child's first teacher. Given that Massachusetts is an affiliated site of Help

Me Grow (a national program that connects parents, pediatricians, and child care providers), EEC has distributed the ASQ and ASQ-SE toolkits to community agencies that provide informal supports to families for early childhood development. These community agencies are a part of EEC's network of Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) 99 grantees that work within local organization to provide services to children and their families in various capacities (**Massachusetts**).

- The State has made progress in improving the delivery of developmental and social-emotional screening and is on target in this area based on the timelines listed in the Scope of Work. Activities during the reporting period have focused on identifying challenges and opportunities that will inform the development of the implementation, training, and evaluation plan to pilot online access to the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) screening tools. Activities where progress has been made include:
  - An Online Screening Coordinator was hired in August 2012.
  - The focus and goals of the Interagency Developmental Screening Task Force have been expanded to include an advisory function for planning/ implementation of online screening.
  - An analysis of online screening across multiple sectors within the seven-county metro area, Transformation Zones, and several other communities in greater Minnesota has been conducted, and challenges and opportunities for online screening have been identified (**Minnesota**).
- The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) began efforts to expand the Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) model, a proven, universal approach to screening young children in primary health care settings. ABCD works to increase health and developmental screening and referral rates for all young children within the medical home by integrating routine developmental screening into well-child visits using either the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) or the Parents Evaluation of Developmental Skills (PEDS). Medical professionals are also taught to use the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT) (**North Carolina**).
- Ohio continues to have nursing consultants train child care providers on the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) to promote early identification of potential delays so that appropriate supports and referrals can be made prior to school entry. Ohio has refined and expanded Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) to include program standards that address health and developmental screenings and appropriate referrals for our early learning and development programs (**Ohio**).
- The State's work in 2012 aimed at developing a comprehensive child assessment system focused on increasing developmental screening and supporting effective child assessment practices (including using Teaching Strategies Gold). Rhode Island has taken steps toward increasing the use of developmental screening instruments by primary care providers for children ages birth to 3. This included working with representatives from the State chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, providing guidance around selecting and implementing appropriate screening instruments, and improving referral

protocols. In addition, research was conducted to determine the best electronic screening instrument for increasing screening rates, communicating with electronic medical records, and communicating with the State's data system. A tool has been identified that will meet those goals, and plans are in place to incentivize all primary care providers using the system by December 2015. Additionally, the State has made progress in enhancing its existing universal screening program for children ages 3–5, Child Outreach, by developing procedures for providing more culturally and linguistically appropriate screening for young Dual Language Learners (DLL). Bilingual screeners have been trained to understand the role of screening within the comprehensive assessment process and to more reliably screen DLLs using research-based methods (**Rhode Island**).

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA SYSTEMS

- Integration of various data systems into the Early Childhood Data Warehouse (ECDW) is an integral component of the Longitudinal Data System. Non-Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) data sources include the MarylandEXCELS quality rating and improvement system for child care and public pre-K programs that is maintained for MSDE/DECD by the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education, and the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) program that is maintained for MSDE/DECD by the University of Maryland. The interfaces with the MarylandEXCELS and ECMH databases are expected to be operational by February 2013. In addition, new data sources for the ECDW are being developed in connection with other Division RTT-ELC projects, such as Breakthrough Centers and family support programs.

The Child Enrollment and Attendance Record System (EARS) application is in the final stages of development and is expected to be ready for piloting by selected child care centers by April 2013. These child care centers are participants in the MarylandEXCELS program. The EARS system will capture continuing, real-time child enrollment and attendance data and staff-child assignment data from licensed child care programs. The system is housed directly within the ECDW as a special application of the ECDW's Oracle database, and it will interface with the MSDE Division of Accountability and Assessment's computer system that generates and maintains the 10-digit unique student identifiers used for public Pre-K and K–12 programs. This interface will permit unique student identifiers to be assigned to all children identified within EARS so that their status and performance can be tracked throughout Maryland's early care system and later in K–12 (**Maryland**).

- Massachusetts is constructing an Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) to (1) create a single, high-quality source of data for reporting (ECIS data warehouse); (2) construct a reporting platform which reduces the time required to generate reports; and (3) to support outside agencies, such as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE) Longitudinal Data System (LDS) in providing better data on child outcomes, ensuring compliance with existing Federal and State privacy laws. The SLDS is being built through a phased integration of data between the agencies comprising the Executive Office of Education, including the Departments of Early Education and Care (EEC), Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), and the Department of Higher Education (DHE). To date, initial loading of EEC's enterprise data warehouse is complete, along with a demonstrated proof of concept for the new reporting platform.

ESE is engaged in both data integration and the generation of State Assigned Student IDs (SASIDs) for all its students; this will include those students with a history in subsidized care from the EEC, with a priority being placed on those students who have since entered the State university system. ESE has a vendor engaged in producing business intelligence reporting for the LDS which leverages interagency data-sharing. By the end of the State's fiscal year (FY 2013), ESE and EEC are planning to implement a data feed between the two agencies, thereby delivering a federated data system across the EOE (**Massachusetts**).

- Minnesota has all 10 essential data elements for longitudinal data systems in place, as articulated by the Data Quality Campaign. Governance structures are currently being established which will be responsible for setting operational and functional parameters around the Longitudinal Data System. Minnesota's initial plans for the Longitudinal Data System include consideration for the uniform collection and easy entry of the essential data elements by the State agencies and programs that will participate in the System as it is constructed (**Minnesota**).
- North Carolina plans to build an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) that will be interoperable with NC's Statewide Longitudinal Data System, named NC CEDARS (Common Education Data Analysis and Reporting System). In 2012 NC developed a detailed project plan and budget for the ECIDS, executed a contract with the NC Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) for application development, and began recruiting for highly-qualified staff to develop the ECIDS application and its associated governance structure. Also, ELC grant management staff and ITS staff working on the ECIDS project participated as members of NC's P-20W Council (**North Carolina**).
- Ohio has made progress in enhancing its existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System as well as enhancing a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Ohio enacted legislation during the mid-biennial review bill that requires the use of a common unique identification number for all children ages birth to five in publicly-funded programs. The unique identification number is the same number used for children from preschool through postsecondary in district settings. The analysis of the information technology infrastructure is well under way, with plans to ensure the identifier is assigned in 2013. In addition, Ohio completed the Early Childhood Data Integration Plan, funded through the Federal-State Longitudinal Data System grant, which provides a road map for ensuring the agencies funding or administering early childhood programs can link and integrate data for programs, workforce, and children. This project is embedded within Ohio's larger effort to link data through the P-20 data repository and the Integrated Eligibility and Health and Human Services Business Intelligence Project, which focuses on broader data-sharing across Health and Human Services agencies in Ohio. Finally, Ohio has completed business analysis for Ohio's new data system for SUTQ that will collect program quality and licensing data across ODJFS and ODE, as well as the Ohio and Maryland EC-CAS data system that will collect child assessment and demographic information and link to Ohio's SLDS (**Ohio**).
- Rhode Island is actively working toward building an early learning data system that will be integrated with our existing longitudinal data system. The information from both

systems will be connected by using a unique identifier for Programs, Educators, and Children. The Core Team representing resources from all of participating State agencies has identified the data sources and data elements necessary for the system to provide the information needed to address our policy questions. The data conforms to the Common Education Data Structures where ever possible. The data system core team has modified the original Scope of Work to align with our traditional systems development life cycle, creating a more efficient development process. During the beginning of 2013, requirements for the Program domain is our first focus area and will include operational improvements for programs that will facilitate collecting early learning data necessary for the system. The Core Team has begun to work with the RTT-ELC Technical Assistance provider who will assist in several areas of development, including:

- the identification of a data governance structure
- interagency MOUs
- identification of key elements for each of the three domains (program, early childhood educator, and children); analysis of the capacity within each agency; and the development of a single portal or dashboard for collection of all data for all three domains to be housed within the Rhode Island Department of Education, which also houses the State's K–12 Longitudinal Data System (**Rhode Island**).

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

- The Challenge initiative, which doubled the number of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, has made a strong contribution, providing not only child-specific and program consultation but also high-quality professional development and training for early educators enhancing the skills of early educators to interact effectively with young children to build strong relationships, manage classroom behavior, promote child mental health, and build social-emotional competencies in young children (**Delaware**).
- In order to facilitate the use of standards and assessments, Ohio is securing early childhood mental health consultants through the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Health Promotion Consultants through the Ohio Department of Health. The Ohio Department of Mental Health is working with local early childhood mental health boards to secure the early childhood mental health consultants. These consultants have been identified and hired as of December 2012 and will work with existing providers serving children with high needs and to support early childhood professionals' use of standards and assessments related to social and emotional development and approaches toward learning (**Ohio**).

## **EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

- The current alignment documents—*Working Off the Same Page* and the *Maryland and Ohio Standards Alignment*—continue to be revised to reflect ongoing updates to the Maryland curriculum standards in P–12. Prekindergarten standards have been aligned to the Maryland STEM instructional guides. The Maryland Social Studies Curricular Framework for P–12 is currently being written based on the C3 work. Work on the Maryland Science Standards P–12 will begin after the final review of the Next Generation Science Standards. The completed Maryland standards are available on line and are being shared with various constituent groups. Professional development will be

provided August 2012 for administrators in Title I school areas that will focus on improving their knowledge of early learning development and standards (**Maryland**).

- EEC commissioned a study across toddler, preschool, Kindergarten, and Head Start standards across Massachusetts to analyze vertical and horizontal alignment. The *Massachusetts Alignment Study* (project #6.2) evaluates the alignment between the State's early learning and development standards for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners, and to evaluate alignment between the State's standards and selected assessments. The researchers analyzed the alignment of the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, Kindergarten Learning Experiences, Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics (Pre-K and Kindergarten), and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The key finding from this study was that while MA has solid standards for infants, toddlers, Preschoolers, and Kindergarteners from multiple sources, they are not aligned, nor do they provide scaffolding of learning across all domains in a consistent method, and that the creation of an aligned set of standards from birth to kindergarten covering all domains where gaps now exist is needed (**Massachusetts**).
- EEC is developing *English Language Development Standards* (project #6.4) for children 2.5 to 5.5 years old. This work is designed to align with the recently adopted use of the K to 12 assessment of English Language Development by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Through an interactive process to be conducted both in-person, through webinars and conference calls, Massachusetts early education leaders will create a feedback loop on the current draft standards, specifically on the Model Performance Indicators (MPIs), resource development, and resource dissemination. As part of this work, EEC will consider recommendations on methods to train and develop educators on using the standards within their classrooms (**Massachusetts**).
- Ohio crafted comprehensive Early Learning and Development Standards for children ages birth to kindergarten entry. In October 2012, the State Board of Education adopted these standards, which serve as the foundation for the tiered quality rating and improvement system, the comprehensive assessment system and the professional development system. The standards were expanded as part of a collaborative effort of State agencies serving young children, including the Ohio Departments of Education, Job and Family Services, Health, Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and the Governor's Office of Health Transformation. Ohio engaged national, State, and local experts to develop the standards. The new Early Learning and Development Standards address all essential domains of school readiness and are organized into the following domains: Approaches Toward Learning, Social-Emotional Development, Language and Literacy Development, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, and Cognitive Development and General Knowledge (including mathematics, science, and social studies) (**Ohio**).
- The State has used the past year to revise and expand the existing Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. This has been conducted in two phases. Within each phase, the State has gathered stakeholder information to: (1) inform the development of the early learning standards; (2) inform professional development training, which supports the implementation of the standards; and (3) develop communication tools which are used

to increase public understanding of the standards and how best to implement the standards within their own program (**Rhode Island**).

- The Early Learning Guidelines have been updated and operationalized within the professional development system and Washington's TQRIS—Early Achievers (**Washington**).

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- The Maryland Family Engagement Coalition was established in 2012. Representatives of many child and family serving agencies, organizations, and programs are working together to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate Maryland specific strategies for improving the quality of family engagement based on the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Family Engagement Framework. A survey of Maryland child and family serving agencies, organizations, and programs was conducted to identify local resources and gaps in services. A draft that includes the purpose of the Framework; a definition of family engagement; the principles that will guide the drafting of the document; and a format for presenting the goals, strategies and resources has been completed and shared with the Coalition for comment. By December 2012, 8 of 12 planning meetings were held. In addition, several focus groups (called Parent Cafes) informed the Coalition. The Coalition is working on a draft framework for family engagement (**Maryland**).
- EEC's Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant (funded by CCDF) is the key mechanism for systematically incorporating family and community engagement into the State's Early Learning Plan. In 2012, EEC issued grants to CFCE grantees to provide evidence based early and family literacy (project #4.5). A total of \$400,000 was awarded to 24 CFCE grantees to serve over 8,000 children from 338 towns and cities across the State (**Massachusetts**).
- In partnership with EEC, Boston Children's Museum (BCM) engaged in a statewide strategy that will provide a shared framework and set of resources that will increase the capacity of museums and libraries to support the optimal development of all children through intentional family engagement activities and early learning opportunities. The partnership is focused on four areas in supporting family and community engagement in child development:
  1. Early literacy
  2. School readiness including preparation for Kindergarten
  3. Interest and awareness of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)
  4. Public awareness of the importance of early education and care through the State's *Brain Building in Progress* communications initiative.

In summer 2012, BCM hosted a statewide meeting of EEC's Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees to broaden grantees' thinking of ways to include museum and library visits and resources in their work. The grantees were asked to return to their home communities and conduct outreach to museums and libraries with whom they are not already connected (**Massachusetts**).

- North Carolina made progress on engaging and supporting families during 2012 with the following ELC activities:
  - The revised TQRIS is recommended to include a more robust set of family engagement standards, based in part on the Head Start Performance Standards.
  - The North Carolina Head Start State Collaboration Office successfully initiated Phase I of a statewide family engagement training/coaching initiative designed to build the capacities of early childhood educators in a range of settings (including private child care, local education agencies, religious-sponsored child care and military child care) to work with the families they serve to support their children's development. This initiative leverages the expertise of high quality Head Start programs in the State to lead the training/coaching efforts. A well-coordinated information-sharing campaign is in place to disseminate news of available family engagement activities for early childhood programs in North Carolina that includes direct mailings and press releases, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies; Participating State Agencies, and local Smart Start partnerships.
  - The North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH), with support from Triple P America, is building on its experience in seven counties currently implementing Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) to expand to include the Transformation Zone and possibly additional counties in Northeastern North Carolina. Triple P is a multilevel, evidence-based parenting and family support system designed to prevent or reduce the severity of behavioral, emotional, and developmental problems in children. The program incorporates 5 levels of intervention with increasing intensity, ranging from public campaigns to professional development for existing professionals (e.g., physicians) to individual sessions with highly trained and accredited Triple P providers. These multilevel programs are designed to create a family-friendly community environment that better supports parents in the job of raising their children, with a range of programs tailored to the differing needs of parents.
  - DPH is developing a statewide Triple P Learning Collaborative that will allow counties in the Transformation Zone to learn from and with current Triple P coordinators. DPH is also in the process of hiring a Family Strengthening Statewide Manager to support State programs targeted at improving family medical homes (including Triple P) and a Triple P Implementation Specialist who will coordinate and support implementation of Triple P in northeast North Carolina, with additional support from the National Implementation Research Network and State Implementation Specialists (**North Carolina**).
- Ohio has refined and expanded SUTQ to include a domain addressing family and community engagement. Early learning and development programs that are publicly funded must address these standards regarding how they engage families in their programs and in supporting a child's development and learning. Ohio's existing Race to the Top funding supports two other important initiatives around family engagement in the early grades which includes providing coaching to county core teams comprised of district leadership teams, family and civic engagement teams, educational service centers, State Support Teams, Ohio Family and Children First council teams and local/county agencies to create a county- region-wide comprehensive system of supports. Also there is a second initiative that directly supports parents with leadership and empowerment training (**Ohio**).

- In 2012, as part of the Head Start/ECEAP (HS/ECEAP) and Early Achievers Reciprocity Pilot Project, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) began to explore how family engagement training resources can be shared between Head Start, State preschool (ECEAP) and licensed child care. Family engagement is one of the State's RTT-ELC investment focus areas and is one of the strengths HS/ECEAP can contribute to the expanding TQRIS. The nine HS/ECEAP programs participating in the reciprocity pilot project and serving on an advisory committee examined the Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Achievers, and identified resources that their HS/ECEAP programs could share with licensed participants to support the Early Achievers standards. The resulting brainstorm of ideas and resources is being collated and will be shared with Early Achievers regional coordinators early in 2013, providing them with some concrete examples of family engagement resources that are available in HS/ECEAP. We intend that these initial ideas will lead to meaningful collaboration between regional CCA-WA agencies and HS/ECEAP programs to share family engagement strategies and practices through Training Resource Centers (beginning implementation in 2013) (**Washington**).

## **HEAD START**

- EEC established the Financial Literacy Education project, in collaboration with the Head Start-State Collaboration Office (HSSCO), to increase the capacity of early education and care providers to support families to achieve long-term economic stability. Staff from Head Start, Early Head Start, community action organizations, family child care and center based providers have participated in the financial literacy seminars (**Massachusetts**).
- In 2012, recruitment efforts were targeted primarily toward Early Learning and Development programs eligible for Minnesota's Accelerated Pathway to Rating, including accredited child care programs, Head Start programs and school-based PreK programs. School-based PreK and Head Start programs were sent an "optional" application with their annual program plans. These types of Early Learning and Development programs access information in variety of ways: through a special section for School Readiness and Head Start programs on the Parent Aware Web site, by webinar, via listserv updates, through site visits around the State and individuals advising via phone and e-mail. These efforts continue in 2013 (**Minnesota**).
- Washington decided to conduct a full-scale evaluation of the Head Start/ECEAP (HS/ECEAP) pilot to determine an accelerated pathway in Early Achievers based on data. This includes administration of the ERS and the CLASS that had originally been planned for the pilots, in addition to assessment of the quality standards. The decision to conduct a full evaluation of Head Start/ECEAP sites prioritized rating these sites before licensed child care programs. This approach also allowed time for licensed programs to work through the Level 2 requirements and receive technical assistance in preparation for the rating. The evaluation for the HS/ECEAP pilot will be complete in early spring 2013 and will provide information on how Head Start and ECEAP programs will participate statewide. The evaluation will give Washington clear data on the current levels of Head Start and ECEAP programs, and information on the best pathway and systems considerations for Head Start and ECEAP participation. This more thorough look at how to include Head Start and ECEAP in a way that reduces documentation

duplication and brings benefit to all programs involved will not only result in meeting our targets but also works toward our goal of building one comprehensive early learning system (**Washington**).

- By 2013, all Washington Head Start and ECEAP programs will be using TS GOLD, so that the State will have two data points on the same measure for a sample of the State's low-income children (**Washington**).

## **HEALTH AND NUTRITION TRAINING**

- Delaware was able to invest Challenge funds in furthering the success in the health and nutrition training for early learning development program and early educators, collaborating with expert partner Nemours Health and Prevention Services to develop an online training so that the excellent training product will be fully sustainable. In addition, Delaware is working to create specialty technical assistance for Stars programs in nutrition and health to sustain gains and to help programs advance in quality ratings (**Delaware**).

## **HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES**

- Additionally, local consortia, such as San Diego and San Joaquin, have focused plans to recruit and develop a group of business partners to support their major quality initiatives including RTT-ELC. First 5 San Joaquin also has some unique partnerships. They partnered with the local children's museum, school districts, government agencies, and community- and faith-based organizations to deliver health messages and instructional materials with the aim of educating parents and caregivers of young children. Two recent and successful local efforts include the "Get Fit" and "Rethink Your Drink" early childhood health campaigns (**California**).
- The Washington quality standards framework includes a standard area – Family Engagement and Partnership – focused specifically on meeting the unique priorities of Early Achievers participants and the specific needs of children and families in care. The cornerstone of the Family Engagement and Partnership standard is the Strengthening Families Framework. Following the Strengthening Families training, facilities can earn points for rating by completing the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment and developing a Plan of Action based on their results. Washington has also embedded an eighth strategy to the existing Strengthening Families Self-Assessment targeted specifically to Health. The University of Washington developed *Strategy 8: Enable, Empower and Enhance Parent Skills in Health Decisions* specifically to promote strategies to support positive health and nutrition practices within the home and in the child care setting (**Washington**).

## **HEALTH PROMOTION CONSULTANTS**

- The Ohio Department of Health is currently drafting an RFP that will secure 12 health promotion consultants to work throughout Ohio to support early childhood professionals' use of standards and assessments related to physical wellbeing and health. Early childhood mental health consultants and health promotion consultants will work with other regional professional development providers within their assigned regions to promote collaboration in professional development delivery to the early childhood system within their regions (**Ohio**).

## **HOME VISITING**

- Contracts were executed to provide infant/toddler trainings to California's Home Visiting Program staff (**California**).
- EEC and the Department of Public Health (DPH) have leveraged two funding sources - the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program and RTT-ELC grant -to strengthen the State's early childhood system of care and improve child outcomes through the Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative (MHVI). MHVI has prioritized 17 communities across the State given the high-needs populations that exist in these cities and towns. These communities include Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Lynn, Lawrence, Lowell, Fall River, New Bedford, Worcester, Southbridge, Springfield, Holyoke, Pittsfield and North Adams. This collaboration between EEC and DPH allows Massachusetts to offer universal home visiting to all families of newborns in the State's highest need communities (**Massachusetts**).
- The North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH) engaged in planning for contracting with the Center for Child and Family Health and the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University to support the development of capacity within the Transformation Zone counties to effectively implement and sustain Northeast Connects, a short-term, community based, universal newborn nurse home-visiting program. Key community partners in the Transformation Zone, such as hospitals, local health systems, and local departments of health, have been engaged in discussion with members of the State Leadership Team to determine a suitable and sustainable organizational home for the program. In addition, DPH is in the process of hiring a coordinator for Northeast Connects who will work with all of the Transformation Zone counties, in coordination with the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and State Implementation Specialists, to ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of the program (**North Carolina**).
- The State has also made progress toward implementing and promoting the use of the formative assessment system, Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG). All publicly funded programs currently use TSG, and policies are being put into place to incentivize private providers to begin using TSG at the State's subscription rate. Teachers and administrators receive training and ongoing technical assistance to guide them toward implementing the system reliably and using data to inform instruction to make decisions. In addition, the State has developed plans to implement a pilot of TSG with the State's IDEA Part C Early Intervention program. Early Intervention providers will be trained to implement TSG within a home-visiting model and provide the State with feedback regarding the benefits of using a performance-based assessment tool to guide their work with children and families (**Rhode Island**).

## **RURAL INITIATIVES**

- Some smaller rural districts found it difficult to shift Title I funds to early childhood because of the limited amount of funds in the district and the timing of the grant opportunity - after Title I funds had been planned for in districts. (In addition, the Minnesota legislature had shifted payment of general education funds to districts in 2013 to 2014, which made reallocation of funds more difficult for districts.) To address this challenge, Minnesota requested and received Federal approval to pursue one-time planning and preparation grants in the amounts of \$20,000 to selected districts to kick-

start this work. Expenditures under this grant are limited to teacher professional development, salaries to cover planning time, curriculum and assessment purchases, and some capital expenses. The application for these grants in the second year will be available no later than early March 2013 (**Minnesota**).

- A key accomplishment for North Carolina in 2012 was the organizational structure built for the Transformation Zone initiative involving collaboration among many agencies and participants at the State and local levels. The Transformation Zone consists of a small set of rural, poor counties in the northeastern part of North Carolina that have been selected to participate. The Early Learning Challenge plan for the Transformation Zone is to implement a series of early learning strategies to support young children and their families while also attending to issues of implementation so that capacity for implementing high-quality, evidence-based programs is strengthened locally as well as at the State level. As the first activity, the cross-agency Transformation Zone team engaged in a mutual selection process that included webinars, proposals, site visits, and discussions to identify four counties to participate in the Transformation Zone: Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, and Hyde. The team also established structures and collaborative relationships to assess and support purposeful, effective implementation of early childhood strategies. Three teams were established and continue to work together on a regular basis to support the successful installation of services and strengthen implementation capacity (**North Carolina**).
- In a project within Ohio's Early Learning Challenge grant, ODE engaged with an external provider to submit a grant application outlining plans for implementation of a demonstration project in three rural communities in Ohio using the SPARK Ohio and Ready Schools model. This includes a competitive process to identify rural communities with high needs children and communities with willingness and interest to participate in these activities. ODE awarded the demonstration project grant to the external provider in November 2012. Local districts selected to participate in the demonstration project must leverage existing Federal, State or local resources to use as a match to receive additional grants funds to implement the project. The external provider designed a competitive process to select rural, high-poverty communities to implement the SPARK Ohio and Ready Schools models. The Request for Proposals is currently active, and we anticipate awards will be made in April 2013. The external provider selected to implement this demonstration project has community presentations scheduled to engage interested school districts and community nonprofit organizations in February 2013. Significant stakeholder involvement for participating programs, early childhood educators, and families of children with high-needs begins once the rural, high-poverty communities have been identified (**Ohio**).

## **STATE ADVISORY COUNCILS**

- MSDE has been designated as the lead agency to coordinate a multi-agency approach to submitting Maryland's state plan. The current Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education, functioned as the lead team for this project, established a core working group, and worked with staff at MSDE, namely the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) and the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS), to coordinate all aspects of submitting a competitive State Plan. The Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education is

overseeing the implementation of the grant on behalf of the Maryland State Board of Education (**Maryland**).

- The senior early childhood leaders from ODE, ODJFS, Head Start Collaboration Office and the Ohio Department of Health attend the monthly Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) meetings (state advisory council) to provide regular updates on the RTT-ELC grant efforts. The ECAC has worked to modify its work plan and budget to support the efforts outlined in Ohio's RTT-ELC plan. For instance, ECAC funds will support the design and rollout of the professional development on the Early Learning and Development Standards. ECAC has reviewed the deliverables for the work, identified the vendor and discussed implementation strategies around this task, which is foundational to so many of Ohio's early childhood system reforms. The ECAC also worked with the Participating State Agencies (PSAs) to provide direction and support for six regional forums held throughout the State to provide updates to the early childhood field on the RTT-ELC efforts to date (**Ohio**).

In partnership with the Ohio Professional Development Network and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, Ohio will provide regional opportunities for higher education faculty and in-service professional development providers to receive training on the revised Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC), the new bridging document on the CKC and K-12 Educator Standards, and the analysis of the availability and progression of degrees and credentials (**Ohio**).

- The Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) carries out required State council functions in Head Start law and provides strategic guidance and feedback to DEL on RTT-ELC. It includes membership from key constituents that represent statewide and community-based interests and perspectives, including: state agencies, early learning leaders, Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive), parents, Head Start representatives and a representative for programs under 619 of Part C of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**Washington**).

## TRANSITION

- EEC has invested RTT-ELC funds (in addition to SAC funds) to help communities improve child outcomes through a comprehensive birth to 3rd grade strategy. The Birth to Grade 3 Community Implementation/Planning grants are focused on strengthening the existing birth to 3rd grade infrastructure within targeted local communities (low performing school districts, Gateway cities, and home visiting communities). Cities and towns are eligible for these grants if they had a strong foundation for enhanced coordination and measurable outcomes. In 2012, EEC awarded six the Birth to Grade 3 Community Implementation grants to 5 communities: Lowell, Boston (2), Springfield, Somerville and Pittsfield. EEC also provided State funding to assist several communities to improve their local infrastructure with planning grants; these communities include Gill-Montague, Fall River, Lynn, New Bedford, and Barnstable. EEC has partnered with a local nonprofit organization to document the State's birth to 3rd grade strategy. This nonprofit partner is analyzing the early learning partnerships between public and private organizations that support children birth to grade 3 such as public schools, private early education and care programs, and business leaders within a community who are interested in the early education agenda. They will also identify the ways that

changes in the partnerships are impacting programs, educators and children (**Massachusetts**).

- Ohio has always required transition planning for district programs through the Ohio Early Learning Program Guidelines and for those ODJFS programs participating in top levels of SUTQ. With the revision and expansion of SUTQ to include all publicly-funded programs, the crossagency SUTQ leadership team created new program standards that address transitions at all levels within SUTQ. This will ensure that all children being served in publicly-funded programs will have access to transition activities that will promote communication and collaboration between an early learning setting and an elementary school setting (**Ohio**).
- The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) has three components: (1) a family connection that welcomes families into the K–12 system as partners in their child’s education, (2) an early learning collaboration to align practices of early learning professionals and kindergarten teachers to support smooth transitions for students, and (3) a whole child assessment. Washington uses Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD as the assessment tool (**Washington**).
- The State education agencies, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and DEL, in collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Thrive by Five Washington, Educational Service Districts (ESDs), and school districts, have prioritized P–3 efforts as a part of Washington’s Early Learning Plan. This initiative has taken two forms: (1) integrating P–3 into key elements of the early learning system, and (2) supporting P–3 alignment within communities.

The goal of a P–3 approach is to align preschool and early elementary so that children receive high-quality early learning experiences that enable them to be proficient in reading and math and socially and emotionally prepared to achieve at grade level by the end of third grade and to support success in rigorous and content-based instruction in fourth grade and beyond.

As the field and research progresses, there is increasing evidence that third-grade proficiency, in concert with kindergarten readiness, is a strong predictor of long-term educational success. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided funding to support this work in Washington, in coordination with OSPI and the ESDs, with the goals of:

- *Improving instruction.* Focused on aligned professional development for early learning providers and K–3 teachers tied to early literacy and early math, including alignment to the Common Core State Standards.
- *Improving leadership.* Direct engagement of principals and early learning directors in professional development tied to an understanding of the birth through eight developmental continuum and strategies for supporting their teachers in high-quality classroom practice.
- *Building local and regional infrastructure:* ESDs and large urban school districts are developing capacity to engage their early learning partners and develop shared

ownership of students' learning, including data-sharing agreements and family engagement approaches (**Washington**).