



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (eagle) logo, Administration for Children and Families logo and Early Childhood Development logo. Below logos are 9 photos of children

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Early Childhood Development (ECD) 2014 Accomplishments

ACF's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development is the focal point within HHS for early childhood health and development at the Federal level. The Office provides oversight to two of the largest federal programs – Head Start and Child Care including the new Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships. The Office also links with both health and education by co-administering the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) with Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) including important Tribal efforts and co-administering the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge and Preschool Development Grants with the U.S. Department of Education.

A major highlight of 2014 was the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which had not been reauthorized in 18 years. We will remember 2014 as the year that we, as a nation, began building a foundation under the nation's largest early learning program - child care. With this foundation, we can align our early learning programs so that whether children are in Head Start, child care centers or family child care homes, or State Pre-K settings, they will all have equal access to high quality services.

As we reviewed accomplishments in 2014, we have also been reflecting on our work and the power of collaboration that has set the stage for all children to have the skills to succeed in school and life.

We deepened collaboration within and across different offices, and between other Federal agencies to ensure that there are multiple voices represented in our

Early Childhood Goals

Within all of our programs and projects, we strive to achieve the following goals:

- ❖ Build successful Early Learning and Development Systems across Head Start, child care, and pre-K.
- ❖ Promote high quality and accountable early learning and development programs for all children.
- ❖ Improve the health and safety of early learning and development programs.
- ❖ Ensure an effective early childhood workforce.
- ❖ Promote family support and engagement in a child's development.

decision-making, policies, and programs.

One example of this collaboration was our work on the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships. Staff from Head Start/Early Head Start, Child Care, Early Childhood Development and Regional Offices worked together at the Federal level on this large-scale initiative. Peer reviewers from around the country with both Head Start/Early Head Start and Child Care backgrounds provided technical expertise in reviewing grant applications. Reviewers learned about effective programs that have been successful and who were now seeking to expand their services and build new partnerships between Early Head Start and Child Care. You will read more about this effort later in this document.

This ECD Office promotes coordination within the states through the State Advisory Councils and partnerships with the Regional Offices. The Office has launched many interagency efforts across the federal government including *Birth to 5: Watch Us Thrive!*, early childhood homelessness materials, and a new Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension and partnered on multiple White House Summits.



This report highlights accomplishments of our efforts as we met our 2014 ACF Early Childhood goals.

Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood

See 2014 Highlights on:

President's Early Learning Plan

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships

Office of Child Care

Office of Head Start

Tribal Early Childhood Programs

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

Preschool Development Grant

Hurricane Sandy

State Advisory Councils

Early Childhood Health

Early Childhood Homelessness



Early Childhood Workforce

White House Summits

Social-Emotional Development and Suspension & Expulsion Policy

Communications and Outreach

President's Early Learning Plan



In his 2014 State of the Union address, President Obama called on Congress to expand access to high-quality preschool to every child in America.

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

President Barack Obama, January 28, 2014

The Obama administration proposed investments to establish a continuum of high-quality early learning for children beginning at birth and continuing to age five, including:

- Providing access to high-quality infant and toddler care through Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships;
- Expanding voluntary evidence-based home visiting to support our country's most vulnerable families; and
- Developing a new partnership with states to provide voluntary, high-quality, full-day preschool for all 4-year-olds from families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

The Office of Child Care, the Office of Head Start, and the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary supported this plan in many ways.

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships



President Obama first mentioned the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program in his 2013 State of the Union address, when he proposed a comprehensive plan to support high-quality early education for all children from birth to age five.

The President's Early Learning Plan called for an expansion of high quality early learning opportunities for young infants and toddlers in poverty. In January 2014, Congress appropriated \$500,000,000 to expand the number and quality of early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers through Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) grants or Early Head Start (EHS) expansion grants.

In June 2014, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced the availability of funding to be competitively awarded for the purpose of expanding access to high-quality, comprehensive services for low-income infants and toddlers and their families. The competition was open to public entities, including states, or private non-profit organizations, including community-based or faith-based organizations, or for-profit agencies.

In awarding these funds, ACF prioritized organizations that proposed a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum through alignment of federal, state, and locally funded early care and education programs.

ACF published three funding opportunity announcements, in accordance with the federal appropriation to ensure American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs were served:

- Early Head Start Expansion and EHS-Child Care Partnership Grants
- American Indian/Alaska Native EHS Expansion and EHS-Child Care Partnerships
- EHS Expansion and Migrant and Seasonal EHS-Child Care Partnerships



New or existing EHS grantees could apply to use funding to partner with local child care providers to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to eligible infants and toddlers through EHS-CC Partnerships. Through these Partnerships, grantees will partner with local child care centers and/or family child care programs and will be required to leverage current investments through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) or other sources to improve the quality of infant-toddler child care. All infants and toddlers in a Partnership site will benefit from facilities and homes that are licensed and meet Early Head Start requirements. Children in classrooms with EHS-CC Partnership enrolled children will benefit from low ratios and class size, higher qualifications of their teachers including their ongoing supervision and coaching, curriculum, and broad-scale parent engagement activities. While only enrolled EHS-CC Partnership children will be eligible for direct family specific benefits such as home visits, health tracking, and family partnership agreements, programs must operationalize services to ensure there is no segregation or stigmatization

of EHS-CC Partnership children due to the additional requirements or services.

In addition, some applicants applied to expand the number of center-based slots in traditional Early Head Start programs through expansion. EHS Expansion grantees will provide early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services that will enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Response to the Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership funding opportunity announcement was tremendous. ACF received more than 600 grant applications from communities in every state, as well as two territories.

It is clear that in preparing their applications, many agencies engaged in community-wide conversations about the needs of children and families. The innovative models proposed by many of the applicants combined the strengths of EHS comprehensive services with the flexibility, and reach of child care.

In late September, ACF began a rigorous panel review of the eligible applications with the assistance of teams of non-federal peer reviewers from around the country who had expertise in early childhood education, child care and Early Head Start.

The White House hosted a Summit on Early Education in December 2014. At that summit, President Obama announced the preliminary winners for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships grants. Since then, ACF has awarded approximately \$500 million to 270 Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grantees in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands. These grantees will ensure infants and toddlers have access to high-quality Early Head Start services in their communities. These proposed grants will also support more than 30,000 additional children having access Early Head Start, about a 25 percent increase in the size of this program. Funding these EHS-CC Partnerships represents a new milestone in our history. Early Head Start and Child Care, working together, will improve our collaborative approach to caring for the most vulnerable children in America.

Technical Assistance

Successful Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership applicants will receive intensive onsite technical assistance to assure program implementation, but will not be subject to the formal monitoring process or the Designation Renewal System (DRS) prior to 18 months after the date of the award.

In June 2014, ACF announced the availability of funds for a National Center for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (National Center). Approximately \$3 million was awarded through a cooperative agreement to support all newly awarded Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships grantees. The goal of the National Center is to provide training, resources, and materials to federal staff, training and technical assistance (T/TA) providers, State Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Administrators, as well as to orientations and state cluster trainings that support and promote implementation of quality services and practices across EHS-CC partnership settings.



The National Center will ensure that all newly awarded EHS-CC Partnership grantees have access to the same level of high-quality information and T/TA in order to afford the best possible outcomes for high-risk children living in high poverty communities. T/TA will support the highest quality, comprehensive early care and education services for the youngest and most vulnerable, high-risk children and their families across the country. The Center will work collaboratively with OHS National Centers and the OCC Technical Assistance Network to *develop and present a series of orientation sessions* around the country for the new EHS-CC Partnership grantees. This Center will also *recruit and train a team of implementation planners and fiscal consultants* who will be able to provide T/TA at the grantee level.

The [Office of Child Care \(OCC\)](#) supports low-income families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. OCC also promotes children’s learning by improving the quality of early care and education and afterschool programs. OCC administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and works with state, territory and tribal governments to provide support for children and their families juggling work schedules and struggling to find child care programs that will fit their needs and that will prepare children to succeed in school.

Here are highlights of our work in 2014:

Let’s Move Child Care (LMCC)

LMCC White House Strategic Plan

- The Office of Child Care (OCC) partnered with CDC to develop the LMCC 2014 White House Strategic Plan to increase the number of children cared for by early care and education providers who meet obesity prevention best practices in 5 goal areas. LMCC participation data, cumulative as of December 31, 2014:
 - 15,963 providers registered
 - 111,007 children served in participating programs

111,007 children served in participating LMCC programs

Public Private Partnership

- OCC staff partnered with the National Indian Child Care Association to develop and conduct sessions at the ACF Tribal Grantee Conference in June 2014.
- OCC staff partnered with the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) to host a nationwide competition to recognize family child care providers for exceptional work in the areas of physical activity and nutrition. Five family child care providers were recognized at the NAFCC 2014 Annual Conference.



First Reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act since 1996!

On November 19, 2014, President Obama signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 into law. This reauthorizes the child care program for the first time since 1996 and represents an historic re-envisioning of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. The new law makes significant advancements by defining health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlining family-friendly eligibility policies, and ensuring parents and the general public

have transparent information about the child care choices available to them.



The law makes important statutory changes focused on better balancing the dual purposes of CCDF – to promote families’ economic self-sufficiency by making child care more affordable, and fostering healthy child development and school success by improving the overall quality of early learning and afterschool programs. It also makes significant advancements by defining health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlining family-friendly eligibility policies, and ensuring parents and the general public have

transparent information about the child care choices available to them.

See the [CCDF Reauthorization page](#) that will be updated regularly by the Office of Child Care with guidance related to CCDBG Reauthorization and its implementation.

CCDF Plan Preprint

The law includes new requirements, including health and safety, continuity of care, and increased access to quality for low-income working families. Staff from across the country worked under tight timelines to draft the new Plan Preprint. States will use the Preprint to submit their three-year plans for approval in July 2015 in order to receive funding for FY 2016.

Strengthening Program Integrity

In response to the Improper Payments Elimination and Reduction Act (July 2010) the Office of Child Care instituted a Program Integrity plan which offers technical assistance and support to states to increase program accountability and reduce improper payments, fraud, waste and abuse.

OCC works with CCDF grantees to ensure that all program funds are used to the benefit of eligible children and families. Our efforts to strengthen program integrity focus on reducing administrative errors and preventing, detecting, and eliminating fraud. Recent highlights include:

- States report on targeted actions to reduce errors in the revised Biennial CCDF Plan. The CCDF Error Rate was reduced to 5.7% in 2014, down from 13.3% in 2010.
- OCC implemented the *Grantee Internal Control Self-Assessment* instrument designed to help States better analyze risk and strengthen internal controls to prevent improper payments. There have been 23 on-site visits to 19 States since 2011. Eleven of nineteen States reduced error rates by >50%.
- ACF conducts regular program integrity conference calls where states share best practices and tools to prevent waste, fraud and abuse and improve program integrity in the CCDF program.



Child Care Health and Safety and Monitoring

OCC Regional and Federal staff conducted onsite visits to 29 CCDF State, Territorial and Tribal grantees to determine their compliance with proposed health and safety requirements and other requirements. As part of the visits, OCC piloted a monitoring protocol to initiate a move towards more standardization of site visits across ACF regional child care offices.

OCC convened the “*Health and Safety, Monitoring and Licensing Meeting*” with States and Territories to focus on strategies and best practices related to health and safety, licensing, and effective monitoring of providers. The purpose of the meeting was to support States in their efforts to comply with the CCDF proposed health and safety requirements.

ACA Outreach to Early Care and Education Programs

To support enrollment of low-income families in health insurance programs, the OCC developed the [“Ten Ways State Child Care Administrators Can Promote Health Insurance Opportunities”](#) to identify ways child care administrators can contribute to outreach efforts to enroll eligible families. OCC also partnered with several national organizations, including the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP), the National Association for Family Child Care, and Child Care Aware who disseminated information on the ACA to their constituents and program affiliates networks.

Technical Assistance

National Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership TA Center (see EHS-CCP Section).

Early Educator Central: The Pathway to Credentials and Degrees for Infant-Toddler Educators



Early Educator Central is an on-line initiative that focuses on the careers of infant-toddler educators, seeking to advance their education and improve their competencies. Infant-toddler educators include center and home-based/family child care providers. During the 2014-15 start-up period for Early Educator Central, the priority is bringing together coursework that has been developed through federal investment. Besides leveraging these courses, and making them readily available, Early Educator Central is responsive to other professionals in the system, and is providing a number of exciting and helpful tools to meet a variety of needs. The Early Educator Central website is scheduled to launch with access to coursework and essential tools by Fall 2015.

Quality Improvement

- **Program Standards Crosswalk Tool Launched.** OCC announced the availability of a new resource—the *National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool*. The Crosswalk Tool was developed through a public-private partnership to help States and Territories that are developing and aligning early childhood (EC) program

standards across early childhood sectors. There has been tremendous progress at the Federal, State, and local levels to bring EC programs together under a common vision. The tool allows users to search and compare the content of national EC program standards across 10 topic and multiple subtopic areas. The tool is available at the following site: <https://occqrisguide.icfwebsiteservices.com/index.cfm?do=crosswalk>.

- **Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC).** The Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC) is an easy-to-use, dynamic web-based tool that helps state policymakers understand the costs associated with high-quality early care and education. The tool can demonstrate the financial implications for a provider to produce a given level of quality, including expenses and revenue sources. Knowing the size of the gap between revenue and expenses at different quality levels, and for various provider types, can inform the design of financial supports. Two Issue Briefs demonstrate how the PCQC can be used to determine the impact of 1) increased quality and 2) program characteristics on the revenue and expenses of a center or family child care home. The Issue Briefs are available on the CCTAN web site at: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/increasing-quality-early-care-and-education-programs-effects-expenses-and-revenues> and <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/early-care-and-education-program-characteristics-effects-expenses-and-revenues>.



- **Licensing Report Series.** In November 2014, the OCC announced the availability of a new resource—a series of eight reports (noted below) on *Contemporary Issues in Child Care Licensing*. The reports were developed with the support of nationally recognized consultants and are based on in-depth interviews with representatives from nine State licensing agencies: Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Washington. OCC believes the examples of innovative and diverse State practices will help State licensing agencies in seeking to strengthen their programs, support new CCDF Reauthorization requirements, and better protect children in out-of-home care.
 - *Child Care Licensing Inspection Policies*
 - *Enforcement Strategies With Licensed Child Care Providers*
 - *Monitoring Strategies for Determining Compliance: Differential Monitoring, Risk Assessment, and Key Indicators*
 - *Enforcement and Approaches to Illegally Operating Providers*
 - *Reporting, Tracking, and Responding to Serious Injuries and Fatalities in Child Care*
 - *Building and Physical Premises Safety in Child Care*
 - *Quality Assurance in Child Care Licensing*
 - *Elements of a Licensing Statute*

The reports, developed for OCC by the National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement (NCCCQI), and other resources about health and safety and licensing are available on the Child Care Technical Assistance Network Web site at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/health-and-safety-and-licensing>.

CCTAN Web Site Tool

- **CCDF Data Explorer Update.** In December 2014, the Office of Child Care (OCC) announced an updated and expanded *CCDF Data Explorer* on the Child Care Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN) Web site (<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov>). The CCDF Data Explorer, which allows users to browse and visualize information from numerous sources, has increased usability features and opportunities for more complex statistical analysis. The CCDF Data Explorer is now divided into two main areas: “Custom Search” and “Early Care and Education State/Territory Profiles.” Custom Search allows users to create reports using a wealth of data points on a variety of early care and education topics. Reports can contain demographic information, program participation and funding, subsidy innovation and program integrity statistics, program quality improvement activities, and professional development and workforce initiatives data. The Early Care and Education State/Territory Profiles include commonly requested information about various aspects of child care programs. The data for these profiles include a selection of the most relevant data available via Custom Search.



Collaborations that Support High Quality Care

- **OCC & Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Joint Information Memorandum.** In March 2014, OCC and ORR issued a joint Information Memorandum (IM) to create linkages between CCDF Lead Agencies and ORR funded programs such as refugee resettlement networks. As a starting point for collaboration and partnership between child care agencies and the refugee resettlement network, the IM referenced policies that support high quality, continuous care for refugee children and recommended five specific recommended subsidy policy changes. In support of the OCC-ORR collaboration, OCC, ORR and Child Care Aware of America hosted a webinar to share information with approximately 250 participants from CCDF Lead Agencies, refugee resettlement networks and other interested stakeholders.



HHS Secretary Burwell Visits Head Start

Sylvia Mathews Burwell was sworn in as the 22nd Secretary of Health & Human Services on June 9, 2014.

Secretary Burwell is committed to the mission of ensuring that every American has access to the building blocks of healthy and productive lives.

One of Secretary Burwell's first stops in June 2014 was a visit to The Campagna Center, a family services center in Alexandria, VA that offers a variety of early childhood development, after school and family programs. Campagna is an HHS Early Head Start grantee and provides center-based, home visiting, and family child care services. It also provides Head Start services through its delegate partnership with The City of Alexandria, a Head Start grantee.



During the visit, Secretary Burwell toured an Early Head Start and a Head Start-Pre-K combination classroom and met the program's President, teachers, home visitors, and parents. This visit provided a firsthand look at the comprehensive work of early learning programs that advance the goals of the President's Early Learning Initiative.



OFFICE OF HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Office of Head Start

Head Start promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. Over a million children are served by Head Start programs every year, including children in every U.S. state and territory and in American Indian and Alaskan Native communities. Since 1965, more than 30 million low-income children and their families have received these comprehensive services to increase their school readiness. Head Start programs offer a variety of service models, depending on the needs of the local community. Here are highlights of our work in 2014.

Policy

Head Start staff worked with a cross-program team to implement the President's Early Childhood Initiative. OHS led the policy development work on the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships, a key part of the President's Early Learning Plan. Please see the section on the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships earlier in this document.



Notice of Proposed Rule-Making

The federal regulatory development process is designed to receive input from those whose work or lives will be affected by pending regulation. In the first step of the process, the agency that administers the program prepares a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). Regulations are published in the Federal Register, and the public is given the opportunity to comment on them. The Head Start team worked on the revision of the body of Head Start regulations for a Notice of Proposed Rule Making on the Head Start Program Standards (HSPPS) as well as completing the Final Rule on Head Start Eligibility.

Program Integrity and Operations

The Office of Head Start continued to support the Department's Program Integrity Initiative. This work focused on strengthening federal fiscal oversight of grantees and developing training, tools and data systems to ensure proper tracking and use of funds and timely recovery of misspent funds.

- Internal to ACF was the OHS initiative to inform grantees and support implementation of new audit circular, cost principles and fiscal regulations effective December of 2014.
- Analyzed and presented potential disallowances identified during monitoring activities to the Monitoring Disallowance Review Board (MDRB) created in 2013.
- Supported the development and testing of the Property Tracking and Management System (PTMS) to identify and protect federal funds awarded to grantees for covered facilities activities, currently undergoing user acceptance testing with implementation set for July of 2015.

Other highlights to ensure that all work and key initiatives contribute to the success of OHS, effectively achieving result-oriented goals with transparency include:

- Supported the continued development, quality, content and utility of the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) and assured compliance of OHS technical systems with government requirements.
- Completed materials related to the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC), HHS Intradepartmental Council on Native American Affairs (ICNAA), and ACF Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Participated in joint OPRE/CC/OHS and tribal research committees on Design Options for Assessing Tribal Early Education Learning Communities.
- Presented at multiple conferences including the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association Conference; the National Head Start Association Conference; the National Head Start Association Conference; the Region IV Head Start Association Conference and at the White House Symposium, Transforming Family Engagement.



Monitoring

In 2014, the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) developed a newly aligned monitoring system to address the OHS's grant cycle shift from an indefinite to a five-year project period. Additionally, OHS has increased its focus on quality in addition to compliance and is prioritizing having more frequent interaction with grantees to provide information to support their continuous improvement in core performance areas. The aligned monitoring system is also designed to complement and enhance federal oversight of grantees in a five-year project period. OHS has identified core performance areas as:

- Environmental Health and Safety,
- Management Systems and Program Governance,
- Fiscal Integrity and Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA),
- Comprehensive Services and School Readiness, and
- Teacher-Child Interactions (as addressed through the CLASS™ observation instrument).

In 2015, all five-year grants will be monitored using the Aligned Monitoring System which will provide the OHS with comprehensive performance data needed by Year 4 of the 5-year grant.

In 2014, QAD designed the Aligned Monitoring System to provide different review processes based on the grantee's history: the Comprehensive Monitoring Process and the Differential Monitoring Process.

QAD also developed the Monitoring EXPO to train grantees, Regional Staff and reviewers. The expo is a virtual platform which includes videos, quizzes, live chat sessions, and training events. QAD stretched the use of technology and grantees responded with overwhelming positivity about the new innovation.

In 2014, Office of Head Start (OHS) conducted 1,119 monitoring reviews through mid - December 2014 which included:

- 492 Triennial reviews (1/1 – 10/20/14)
- 268 Monitoring events (11/1 – 12/19/14)
- 10 First Year reviews
- 57 Other reviews
- 292 Follow-up reviews

Summary of Key Changes in Program Monitoring Effective in 2014

OHS implemented several updates to the Protocol in FY 2014. Specific changes included:

- Refining established Standardized Methodology to ensure consistency, objectivity, and accuracy within the review process and to provide a set of high standards to which the reviewers are held accountable;



- Enhancing the Management Systems analysis process to support review team discussions around trends and inconsistencies system-wide, while summarizing management systems in each content area;
- Enhancing Targeted Questions in Child Development and Education (CDE) focusing on School Readiness to identify examples of goals in each of the 5 essential domains as part of the OHS School Readiness and Early Learning Framework.
- Streamlining compliance measures in Family and Community engagement (FCE) to ensure efficient and effective evidence for that specific content area;
- Streamlining interview guides to ensure efficient and effective evidence collection for all content areas; and
- Developing an AIAN Re-Evaluation Tool specific to American Indian and Alaska Native grantees to address performance issues unique to these grantees and to respond to the requirements of the Designation Renewal System.

Designation Renewal System (DRS) Implementation (Re-competition of Head Start Grants)

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 requires HHS to establish a system for determining which Head Start and Early Head Start Programs may be designated for renewal without having to compete with other entities in their community. Only those Head Start and Early Head Start agencies that are found under this system to be delivering high-quality and comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start programs that meet the educational, health, nutritional, and social needs of the children and families they serve, and meet applicable program and financial management requirements and standards, may be designated for renewal and receive continued funding automatically, without having to compete. All other grantees must compete with other entities for renewed funding.

- The Designation Renewal System (DRS) specifies seven conditions that HHS will consider when determining whether a grantee is delivering a high-quality and comprehensive program and, thus, whether the grantee may be renewed without having to compete for continued funding. If a grantee is found to meet any of those seven conditions, then that grantee will be required to compete for continued funding.



- In 2011, as part of the first DRS cohort, 125 Head Start grantees were required to compete for continued federal funding. In this first round of competition, all competitors had to submit proposals detailing how they would achieve Head Start’s goal of delivering high-quality early childhood services to infants, toddlers and preschoolers. These proposals were subjected to an extensive evaluation process, including review by a panel of independent early childhood professionals and assessment by Certified Public Accountants to determine a potential grantee’s ability to

implement Head Start’s mission and standards in their community. As a result more than 150 agencies received grants to provide Head Start or Early Head Start services in their communities for the next five years. In January 2013, a second DRS group of 124 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees was notified that the grants for their service areas would also be open to competition. As a result, 120 agencies were awarded Head Start and/or Early Head Start grants.

- A third DRS group of 105 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees was notified in February 2014 that the grants for their service areas would also be open to competition. Applications received in response to these competitions are in the review process by panels of non-federal reviewers. ACF anticipates making five-year grant awards in late spring 2015.
- In February 2013, the Office of Head Start (OHS) launched a Birth to Five pilot funding opportunity in five communities with the goal of providing a continuum of care in a birth to five Head Start program, including services for expectant families.

For the first time in Head Start’s history, this “birth to five” funding opportunity gave applicants new flexibility to create a seamless birth to five approach, incorporating both Head Start and Early Head Start funding. Through this pilot project OHS encouraged applicants to design a birth to five program according to their community’s needs and their organizational capacity. The funding announcement also allowed applicants to apply as only a Head Start or an Early Head Start grantee. As a result, fifteen organizations were awarded for innovative, birth-to-five service delivery in **Detroit, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Jersey City, and Sunflower County, Mississippi.**

- A fourth DRS group of 88 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees (not including Tribal) was notified in December 2014 that the grants for their service areas would be open to competition.

In addition, as part of the DRS process for American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN) programs, a total of 48 Tribal grantees have engaged in tribal consultations, plans to improve quality, a re-evaluation of their grant resulting in a subsequent grant award.



Data and Information Systems

The Office of Head Start successfully managed a large number of complicated grant awards by leveraging Head Start data systems to support the federal staff working on these grants. The usefulness of the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) to Head Start programs continued to increase by making available news feeds, monitoring reports, award information, and mapping features of Census data on poverty.

- Improved PIR page and coordinated request for comments on PIR changes to the ECE community.

- Helped members of the Head Start and early childhood community find, understand, and share Head Start resources. The ECLKC saw 1.5 million people making 2.7 million visits in 2014.
- Oversaw the development of the Head Start Resources Mobile Application (App) on Apple and Android and continued to refine usability and usefulness. The app has been downloaded 3,600 times.
- Improved Facebook and Twitter strategy to help teachers and parents see new and relevant resources on the ECLKC and OHS events.
- The Head Start Locator helped 300,000 people locate a center near them in 2014. In 2014, we refined the usability of the Locator, and developed Grantee Profile pages, which combined the previous “Program Service Reports” with other useful grantee information.
- Developed resources to help applicant entities for Head Start Funding Opportunity Announcements; created toolkit for EHS-CC Partnership and EHS-Expansion applicants, garnering 23,827 visitors who made 51,554 visits to the site.

Comprehensive Services and Training and Technical Assistance

- OHS continued to lead the field in improving the quality of early childhood education; including supports to Head Start teachers through monthly Teacher Time webinars and follow up emails. Each webinar is hosted by early childhood education experts on topics unique to the joys and challenges that teachers face every day, such as challenging behaviors, daily transitions, adding S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math), and successful strategies for transitioning to kindergarten, etc. Each webinar includes evidence-based presentations, strategies and interventions, as well as resources and a teacher wellness and resiliency sections. These live webinars have an average of 700 teachers participating.



- A Curriculum Consumer Report was developed in conjunction with the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning to help Head Start center-based programs choose high-quality, research-based comprehensive preschool curricula. The report reviewed 14 curricula and describes in detail how well each one addressed these 13 components of an effective, comprehensive curriculum: grounded in child development principles, evidence-based, shows effects on child outcomes, comprehensive across

learning domains, shows depth in each covered learning domain, specific learning goals, well-designed learning activities, responsive teaching, supports for individualized instruction, culturally and linguistically responsive, ongoing assessment, professional development opportunities, and family involvement materials. Most importantly, the Consumer Guide can be used by programs as they analyze child assessment and other data and identify areas of needed improvement.

- The Office of Head Start developed and promoted implementation of resources designed to increase children’s school readiness through improved teacher child interactions, relationships and instructional

strategies. The **CLASS** instrument continues to be used to assess preschool Head Start classrooms nationwide. The average scores in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains are approaching “6”, the high range on a 7 point scale. While the Instructional Support domain continues to lag, an impressive array of tools designed to improve the use of evidence based practices has been developed and we are looking forward to continued improvement (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/engage>). Additionally, virtually all Head Start and Early Head Start programs have established school readiness goals and regularly collect and analyze data used to individualize services and make informed, ongoing, program improvements.

- OHS collaborated with the Office of Planning Research and Evaluation to increase and interpret the evidence base and answer specific questions. An instrument for the observation and rating of infant-toddler teachers or caregivers interaction (Q-CCITT) was completed and promises to contribute to our ability to make specific program improvements that support the development and eventual school readiness of the youngest children. Additionally, a measure of family-provider/teacher relationship quality (FPTRQ) was developed and will be finalized in 2015. The instrument includes measures that assess the quality of the relationship between families and providers/teachers of early care and education settings for children birth to 5 years of age, applicable for all early care and education programs, including home care, center-based care, pre-k, and Head Start programs, and can be used by researchers, state and local administrators, program directors, and practitioners. These new measures are intended to be culturally appropriate for diverse populations, including lower-income and higher-income families, ethnically/racially diverse providers and families, and non-English speaking families and providers. Lastly, a revised FACES study has commenced and OHS is supporting the recruitment of program participants and looking forward to a range of timely and relevant data to inform policy, training and technical assistance.
- OHS continued to lead the field in supports to EHS programs nationwide through response TA via webinars, face to face and through telephone consultation. Additionally, OHS continued to provide one of the few evidence based home visiting models (Early Head Start) Home Based Program Option) in the Maternal, infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program MIECHV and is organizing a continuum of grantees participating in the MIHOPE study of home visiting efficacy.
- Jointly with the Office of Child Care, OHS has co-funded and is jointly administering a T/TA Center that is specifically designed to support the Early Head Start -Child Care Partnership grants. See earlier Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships.
- Increased T/TA was provided to support implementation of the shift from an indefinite project period to a five year grant cycle. Specific efforts entailed work with the regional offices, TA providers and directly with grantees on programs in developing and implementing their [planning systems](#). A series of papers were developed to help programs develop plans for tracking their progress over the course of five years in a meaningful way. Suite of materials designed to support programs in measuring family progress toward PFCE Framework Outcomes have been particularly well received.
- OHS increased access to T/TA via the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. The T/TA portal on the ECLKC accounted for one third of the ECLKC visits in 2014- 640,282 visitors, over the course of

1,050,581 visits. The most popular pages within T/TA were the EHS portal (78,729 page views), the Quality Teaching and Learning Portal (70,780 page views), and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement portal (49,923 page views). Working across OHS National Centers School Readiness Portal was created. The school readiness portal garnered 41,328 visits from 22,099 visitors since it launched in the beginning of June. The OHS School Readiness Spotlight Series ran for 15 weeks and included banners, eblasts, and social media. It generated strong engagement with the School Readiness materials with a broad range of audiences ranging from classroom teachers, to health managers to fiscal managers.

- OHS worked with its National Center on Health and the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) to expand The [Well Visit Planner](#) through age 6 years. The Well Visit Planner is an internet-based tool (www.wellvisitplanner.org) developed to improve well child care for children 4 months to 6 years old. The information in this tool is based on recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics' *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 3rd Edition*. The tool helps parents and caregivers to customize the well child visit to their family's needs by helping them identify and prioritize their health risks and concerns before their well child appointment. This means that parents and providers are better able to communicate and address the family's needs during the well child visit.

Tribal Early Childhood Programs

Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)

Since 2010, ACF has been working closely with the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to implement the Tribal Home Visiting program, which is part of the larger Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program. There are 25 Tribal Home Visiting grantees in three “cohorts” in 14 states across the country. For more information about Tribal Home Visiting, visit our website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/home-visiting/tribal-home-visiting>.

- In 2014, the Tribal Home Visiting program successfully supported the 13 Cohort 1 grantees to report benchmarks performance measurement data for the first time. This involved a great deal of effort on the part of grantees to collect and analyze data about the outcomes of the children and families they serve, as well as the improvements their programs have made over the last four years. We look forward to sharing the results of the grantees’ reports in the coming months.
- With the full integration of the six Cohort 3 grantees into the program in 2014, all Tribal Home Visiting grantees are now implementing high quality, culturally relevant, evidence-based home visiting programs to meet the needs of children and families in their communities.



- Tribal Home Visiting placed an emphasis on continuous quality improvement in 2014, developing and implementing trainings for grantees on using data effectively to support program improvement through the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle.



- The program implemented dissemination efforts including creation of a toolkit to support grantee dissemination of information about their programs and successes to multiple audiences; and federal dissemination of information about the program and grantees' accomplishments to interested stakeholders including presentations about the program at the 4th National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs, the ACF Tribal Grantee Meeting, the Tribal TANF Leadership Symposium, the Native Children's Research Exchange, the American Evaluator's Association meeting, and the National Indian Child Welfare Association meeting.

Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs, the ACF Tribal Grantee Meeting, the Tribal TANF Leadership Symposium, the Native Children's Research Exchange, the American Evaluator's Association meeting, and the National Indian Child Welfare Association meeting.

- ACF launched the new Programmatic Assistance to Tribal Home Visiting (PATH) center through Zero to Three. The PATH provides technical assistance to grantees on implementation of their programs. The PATH joined the existing Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute (TEI), which provides TA to grantees on data, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement activities. Together, PATH and TEI provide excellent support and guidance to grantees to achieve success in all aspects of their programs.

Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI)

The Tribal Early Learning Initiative is a partnership between ACF and four American Indian tribes: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (MT), Pueblo of San Felipe (NM), and White Earth Band of Chippewa (MN). The goal of the TELI is to support stronger early childhood systems and higher quality services to children and families by fostering intentional partnerships across Tribal Home Visiting, Head Start/Early Head Start, and Child Care and Development Fund programs. For more information on the TELI, visit

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/tribal-early-learning-initiative>.

- 2014 began with a meeting of the Tribal Early Learning Initiative grantees. During this meeting, grantees had an opportunity to share information about their efforts in their communities and hear from presenters on the topic of professional development, financing, and family



engagement. Since the start of the TELL, grantees have made major strides in improving early childhood systems and services in their communities. Grantee activities have included:

- Reviewing and agreeing upon common assessment tools to be used by tribal early learning and development programs;
- Creating a single tribal early learning program enrollment form to be used by all programs;
- Investing in a data system to allow for better coordination and sharing of relevant data across early learning and development programs;
- Holding joint professional development opportunities and trainings for staff across the three early learning and development programs;
- Jointly creating a community-based resource directory; and
- Sharing and maintaining program facilities and transportation.

Tribal Early Childhood Research Center

The [Tribal Early Childhood Research Center \(TRC\)](#), awarded by ACF’s Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation with Tribal MIECHV, Head Start, and CCDF funds, seeks to address gaps in early childhood research with American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIANs) through partnerships with tribal Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, and home visiting programs. The goals of the TRC are to engage in a participatory research process and build capacity for researchers to work effectively with early childhood programs in AIAN communities.



- In 2014, the TRC completed a feasibility study entitled “The Survey of Well-Being for Young Children (SWYC): Study of Community Readiness for Implementation in Tribal Early Childhood Programs.” The SWYC is an instrument designed to screen for social- emotional and developmental delays among children aged 0- 5 years. ACF and the TRC were interested in exploring the utility of this screener for use in tribal communities, including interest, cultural appropriateness, and administrative feasibility. Input was sought from early childhood stakeholders in tribal communities, including Head Start, Home Visiting, and Child Care program staff: pediatricians, nurses, mental health providers, parents, and community elders. The TRC worked with several tribal communities across the country, in both reservation and urban settings. Results of this study, to come in 2015, will inform potential adaptations to the SWYC for use in

tribal settings and will guide recommendations for a potential subsequent study to validate the SWYC for use with American Indian and Alaska Native children.

- TRC staff participated in “[The Way Forward: ACF Research with American Indians and Alaska Natives](#)” meeting. The meeting, held on April 17-18, 2014 at the Smithsonian’s National Museum on the American Indian, was sponsored and led by ACF’s Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) and highlighted research, performance measurement and evaluation activities in American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities.

- The TRC continued research and measurement activities within the context of Communities of Learning (CoL). CoL are forums for tribal home visiting, Head Start, child care, and early childhood program leaders, researchers and others with diverse perspectives and backgrounds to gather through conference calls, email, and in-person to explore shared interests related to early childhood development in tribal communities and to accomplish tasks related to defining research priorities and to assisting in the interpretation and dissemination of research findings. In 2014, a new CoL emerged around the topic of Needs Assessment, and the TRC supported a CoL meeting to advise ACF on the development of a set of “design options” for conducting an assessment of the unmet need for early childhood development services in tribal communities.
- In 2014, the TRC brought together Tribal Home Visiting grantees and researchers to begin planning for a Special Issue of the Journal of Infant Mental Health focused on Tribal Home Visiting.



On Wednesday, February 26, 2014, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Linda K. Smith, testified at a hearing of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee titled, “Early Childhood Development and Education in Indian Country: Building a Foundation for Academic Success”.

Educare Winnebago

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood, Linda Smith, visited the Winnebago Reservation in 2014 for the grand opening of its Educare Winnebago center. Educare Winnebago is the first Educare School to serve Native

American children and families. The school combines Educare's best practices with activities that honor local culture and traditions. Children are taught in the native Ho-Chunk language in addition to English. A cultural resource room houses events, community college classes and after-school tutoring programs for K-3rd grade students from Winnebago Public Schools. Educare Winnebago is located on the Winnebago Indian Reservation in northeast Nebraska. The Winnebago Reservation lies along the Missouri about 80 miles north of Omaha in northern Thurston County and includes the village of Winnebago.

The Winnebago Tribal Council and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund each raised 50 percent of the cost of the 30,000-square-foot facility, which will serve 191 children from birth to age 5. It will follow Educare’s research-based model for early childhood education. Operating costs will be paid by Winnebago Head Start, Little Hill Child Development Center, the Winnebago Public Schools and the Winnebago Tribal Council.



Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge

Since 2011 ACF's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Office has been working closely with the Department of Education's (ED) Office of Early Learning (OEL) to develop, award and administer the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program.

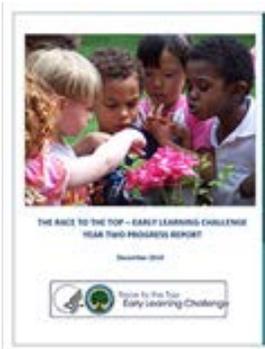


The purpose of the RTT-ELC is to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. RTT-ELC grants focus on improving early learning and development programs for young children by supporting each State's efforts to increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children in each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs, while designing and implementing an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services.

In phase one, ACF's ECD staff partnered with ED's OEL staff to project-manage the nine states awarded RTT-ELC funds: California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Washington.

In phase two, five additional states were awarded RTT-ELC funds: Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon and Wisconsin.

2013 brought a new competition for the RTT-ELC (phase 3). ACF's ECD Office worked with the ED's OEL to develop and implement all aspects of this new competition including policy development and outreach, peer review recruitment, the panel review process, and selection of six additional states: Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.



The Departments released a Summary Report on the 14 States' progress in December, 2014 and posted it on-line together with individual state reports.

Highlights from the Summary Report:

- More children with high needs gained access to high-quality early learning and development opportunities in RTT-ELC states.
- States reported a 73 percent (73%) increase in the number of programs enrolled in Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (TQRIS), which assess, improve, and communicate the levels of quality in early learning and development programs.
- Ten states are building local capacity to serve children who most need early learning and development programs in specific high-need communities or "zones."
- States are working to identify what the early childhood education workforce should know and be able to teach young children, and aligning those core competencies to professional development opportunities and higher education course offerings.

The annual RTT-ELC Grantee Meeting was held in April 2014 for all 20 grantees. It was also an opportunity to thank Secretary Sebelius for her early childhood efforts throughout this Administration. The room was filled with grateful appreciation as it stood to thank her. Pictures were taken with the states, a favorite of the yearly grantee meeting. This, along with several in-person peer learning exchanges, online communities of practice, and personalized TA, has provided meaningful support to all RTT-ELC states. An RTT-ELC grantee meeting is planned for October 2015 and will be coordinated with the 1st Preschool Development Grants meeting.



Interagency Policy Board

The jointly administered ED and HHS Interagency Policy Board (IPB) has met quarterly since 2011 to improve the quality of early learning and development programs and outcomes for young children by increasing the coordination of early learning and development efforts across the two departments. Made up of senior staff from ED/HHS/DPC/OMB, the IPB has focused on reducing duplication and maximizing resources, especially for children with high needs.

In 2014, HHS and ED reached out to other federal partners, asking them to present their early learning work and to propose ways the various departments could coordinate more effectively. Recent attendees included the Bureau of Indian Education/Early Childhood Programs and the Department of Defense/Office of Family Policy/Children and Youth. Future meetings will be attended by representatives from HUD, USDA, DOL, and OPM/GSA.

Preschool Development Grants



The purpose of the Preschool Development Grants program, jointly administered by ACF's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Office and ED's Office of Early Learning (OEL), is to support State and local efforts to build, develop, and expand High-Quality Preschool Programs so that more children from low- and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.



Preschool Development Grants--Development Grants will support 5 States with either small or no State Preschool Programs. These grants were awarded to AL, AZ, MT, HI and NV who will provide sub-grants to Early Learning Providers in their states to implement voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children in one or more High-Need Communities.

Preschool Development Grants--Expansion Grants will support 13 States that have robust state preschool programs or that have been awarded a

Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant. These preschool development grants were awarded to IL, MD, MA, NJ, RI, VT, AR, CT, LA, ME, NY, TN, and VA to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs through sub-grants to early learning providers in their states to serve additional eligible children in two or more high-need communities.

These grantees are funded to create new high-quality State Preschool Program slots, while focusing on aligning high-quality Preschool Programs supported by this grant with programs and systems that serve children from birth through third grade to, among other things, improve transitions for children across this continuum.

In December 2014, OEL successfully awarded the 18 States with a Preschool Development Grant to create new and improved high-quality preschool program opportunities. These states are projected to serve over 33,000 additional children.

In December 2014, an Interagency Agreement was signed between ED and HHS to develop a web-based Preschool Parent Toolkit portal targeted towards families with four year olds to provide information regarding program quality, access, and developmentally appropriate practice when choosing a preschool setting.

Hurricane Sandy

Oversight of ACF SANDY Supplemental Funded Activities

Hurricane Sandy made landfall on October 29, 2013 and caused unprecedented devastation across much of the Middle Atlantic region of the United States. ACF received \$577 million through the Disaster Relief Act for three grant programs: Head Start, Social Services Block Grants, and Family Violence and Prevention Services. While much work remains to be done, two years later, we can say that ACF has been responsive to the needs of communities. For more information on ACF programs that received Hurricane Sandy supplemental funding, please see:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/superstorm-sandy>.

ACF is responsible for ensuring that these supplemental grant funds are used for their intended purposes. Over the past year, ACF programs have been actively engaged in activities to provide program oversight and accountability of the Hurricane Sandy grant funds. Programs have examined potential improper and erroneous payments by grantees – an activity required by federal law (the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 and amended by the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010). In addition, ACF has also implemented internal controls and oversight of the Sandy grant funds, as required by the Disaster Relief Act. These important activities such as identifying improper payments and taking corrective action help to maintain the integrity of government programs by preventing waste, fraud and abuse of these disaster recovery funds.

The Office of Head Start developed and implemented a rigorous system to ensure disaster relief funds are used for their intended purpose. Onsite technical assistance, tracking, oversight and documentation of these efforts have assured that the Sandy funds are being used efficiently and fully benefit the devastated communities.



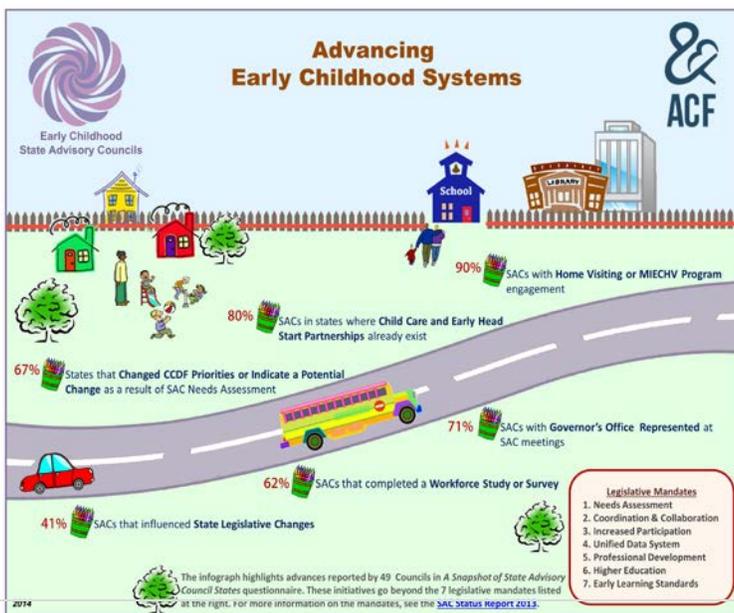
One example of Head Start rebuilding is illustrated by the Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC) of Nassau County. Flood waters completely destroyed the Long Beach, NY Head Start center, rendering it uninhabitable. Long Beach was one of the worst-hit communities where 20 percent of its homes are unfit today to live in as a result of the storm. In August 2014, EOC conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for its new Long Beach Head Start Facility, projected to cost \$8.9 million. It will be an environmentally-sustainable and energy-efficient building with four classrooms with centralized bathrooms for 60 children on the second and third floors. The building will have administrative and staff offices, parent meeting areas, a commercial kitchen on the fourth floor, and a state-of-the-art rooftop playground.



State Advisory Councils

Since 2009, ACF worked with 44 states and 5 territories (referred to as “states”) to implement their early childhood State Advisory Council (SACs) grants. The SAC grants enabled the 49 states to develop and improve high-quality, comprehensive early childhood systems so that children arrive at school ready to learn and prepared to excel. During the grant, states spent \$97 million in SAC federal funds improving their early childhood systems and programs. States provided a 70% match on top of the federal startup money.

With the SAC grant closing out at the end of 2013, ACF examined each of the 49 states’ accomplishments made during the life of the SAC grant and identified state trends found across the SAC legislative requirements. ACF wrote up all states’ individual accomplishments as well as their status reports on the fulfillment of the SAC legislative requirements were written up in a final report in 2014.



Highlights of the report include information on the needs assessments that states conducted on the quality and availability of care. States examined the availability of slots in child care, publicly funded pre-kindergarten, and Head Start; 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; and the needs of dual language learners.

The report also features information on ways states’ committed to coordinating and

collaborating among state early childhood agencies with a central focus on child and family needs so that children and families can easily access streamlined services they need. The document is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2015.

Early Childhood Health

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!

The Administration for Children and Families, Administration for Community Living, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education partnered to launch [*Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!*](#), a coordinated effort to encourage developmental and behavioral screening and support for children, families, and the providers who care for them.

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

1. A compendium of research-based screening tools;
2. “User’s Guides” for multiple audiences; and
3. An electronic package of resources for follow-up and support.



Caring for Our Children Basics: National Health and Safety Standards for Early Care and Education Settings

Early Childhood Development, in partnership with OHS and OCC as well as outside experts, worked on the creation of consistent, baseline health and safety standards for use across child care programs, Head Start, and pre-K across the country. Because true quality care cannot be achieved without consistent, basic health and safety assurances in place, we are working towards setting a foundation across ECE from which programs would aspire/move to higher quality and upon which parents can rely. The proposed model standards are called “Caring for our Children Basics.” They represent the minimum standards experts believe must be in place wherever children are regularly cared for in non-parental care settings. “Caring for our Children Basics”

is the first attempt to reduce the conflicts and redundancy found in standards that are used to monitor early care and education settings. These are minimum standards and should not be construed to represent all standards that would need to be present to achieve the highest quality of care and early learning.

ACF called for public comment to obtain information to help HHS as we further develop the voluntary set of minimum health and safety standards for early care and education settings. Because quality care cannot be achieved without consistent, basic health and safety practices in place, ACF seeks to provide a helpful reference for states and other entities as they work to improve their



health and safety standards across program type. CFOC Basics was published in the Federal Register for public comment. <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/18/2014-29649/caring-for-our-children-basics>

Expanding Early Care and Education for Homeless Children

Ensuring the well-being of our youngest children is essential to the work of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and is especially urgent when considering the vulnerability of young children experiencing homelessness.

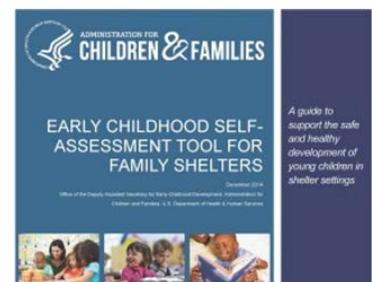
ACF is a participating member of the Workgroup to End Family Homelessness. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) provided clarity in its Amendment to *Opening Doors* on what needs to be done specifically for youth and children if we are to reach the goal of ending homelessness among families, children and youth by 2020, and early childhood members from multiple agencies and departments focused on outreach and awareness materials to work toward these goals.



In the spring and summer of 2014, ACF hosted a fellow as part of the [Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship](#) program. Brock Grosso worked on early childhood homelessness with the ACF Early Childhood Office, attended the Workgroup to End Family Homelessness, participated in the efforts of the Early Childhood Workgroup, and helped to develop technical support materials for the early childhood field and homeless shelter providers.

ACF released these materials:

- [Promising Practices for Children Experiencing Homelessness: A Look at Two States](#), a resource paper providing a fresh look at the effects of homelessness on young children, and efforts in Massachusetts and Oregon to implement innovative policies to improve early childhood outcomes for young children experiencing homelessness;
- [Building Partnerships to Address Family Homelessness](#), a resource paper highlighting efforts by local Head Start and Early Head Start programs to connect with public housing associations, emergency shelter providers, local education agencies, and other community service providers; and
- [The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#), designed to help shelter staff create shelter environments that are safe and developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The tool provides specific recommendations and information on how shelter environments, programming, policies, and staff can support early childhood safety and child development.



See additional materials [here](#).

Early Childhood Workforce

The Department of Health and Human Services led efforts to fund a study with the National Academies of Science Institute of Medicine (IOM). The Office of the Deputy Assistant of Early Childhood worked with the Department of Education and key players in the philanthropic community to fund a study titled “The Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success”. [The study](#), executed via the National Academies of Science, will result in a consensus report on how the science of children’s health, learning and development from birth to age 8 can inform how we prepare a workforce to seamlessly support children’s development and education, including standards and expectations, instructional practices, preparation and professional development, and family engagement across diverse contexts (e.g. rural/urban) and populations (e.g. immigrant children, dual language learners, children at risk for developmental delays and disabilities).

IOM/NRC Committee on The Science of Children - Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success help multiple meetings in 2014.

- [Local Public Information-Gathering Session: Seattle, WA](#) - May 29, 2014
- [Local Public Information-Gathering Session: Tulsa, OK](#) - May 7, 2014
- [The Science of Children - Birth to Age 8: Public Session #2](#) - April 29, 2014
- [Local Public Information-Gathering Session: Chicago, IL](#) - April 22, 2014
- [The Science of Children - Birth to Age 8: Public Session](#) - February 28, 2014

National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)



At the end of 2013, we had the opportunity to present the first publication from the [National Survey of Early Care and Education](#). Discussion continued through 2014 of the study carried out by NORC at the University of Chicago with partners at Chapin Hall and Child Trends. The study provides the first comprehensive picture of the availability and use of early care and education in the United States in over 20 years.

Among the key findings:

- The ECE workforce directly responsible for children birth to school entry in 2012 was large, consisting of about one million center-based providers, 830,000 paid home-based providers, and about 2.3 million unpaid home-based providers. The number of ECE providers equated to 63% of the K-12 teacher workforce in 2012.
- Among those working in center-based programs, 60% work in centers without public funding (i.e. Head Start, public Pre-K, local education agency); 7% work in school-sponsored settings; and 33% work in settings that receive Head Start or public Pre-K funds.
- Educational attainment, experience, and wages varied considerably by the age of children served and program setting and sponsorship.

- About 53% of center-based teachers and caregivers reported having a college degree (i.e. A.A. or higher) and almost a third reported having a B.A. or higher. For home-based providers, about 30% reported having a college degree. These findings suggest higher educational attainment than previously identified.
- For center-based staff, the median number of years in the field was 13 years. This suggests a lower rate of occupational turnover than previously identified.
- The median annual wage of center-based ECE providers in 2012 was \$22,000.
- Wages were closely associated with educational attainment, though college-educated ECE providers earned much lower wages than comparably educated workers in the overall economy. While college educated ECE providers made about \$17.30 an hour on average, other occupations that require comparable education levels made about \$27 an hour.
- Many ECE providers lack basic benefits. About 24% of the ECE workforce reported having no health insurance.



Findings from the National Survey provide valuable information about the current state of the ECE workforce. We now know that the workforce is more educated and has more experience than previously identified, though their wages remain well below their peers’ in other professions. These findings may suggest that public investments in the workforce over the past several years, via Head Start, public Pre-K, child care quality funds, and other initiatives, have moved the needle on teacher qualifications, as defined by a more highly educated and experienced early childhood workforce.

See [additional materials](#) from the National Survey released by OPRE in 2014.

ACF hosted a webinar with the authors of [Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years After the National Child Care Staffing Study](#).

The National Child Care Staffing Study, released in 1989, brought national attention for the first time to poverty-level wages and high turnover among early childhood teaching staff and to the adverse consequences for children. In the succeeding 25 years, combined developments in science, practice, and policy have dramatically shifted the context for discussions about the status of early childhood teaching jobs and the importance of attracting and retaining a well-prepared workforce that is capable of promoting young children’s learning, health, and development. A new report by the National Child Care Staffing Study’s authors examined the current status of the early childhood teaching workforce and provided a rethinking for how our Nation is preparing, supporting, and rewarding these teachers.

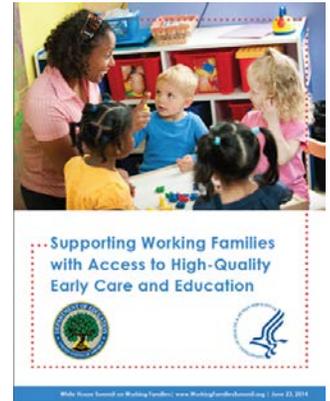


ACF looks forward to reviewing the recommendations from the National Academy of Science as we continue to work on these areas.



Early Childhood Participated in Four White House Summits in 2014

The **White House** held a **Summit on Working Families** for a national conversation about how we can create workplace policies that give modern American families the best chance to succeed at work and home. The summit focused on ***Fighting for Working Families: Strengthening Our Economy***. To support the White House Summit on Working Families in June 2014, OCC program operations and ECD worked with the White House, the Department of Education and ACF to draft the report released for the event. OCC staff provided key data on strides made by States to increase accessibility to high quality child care through CCDF, including information on efforts to promote continuity of care, ensuring health and safety of children in child care, investing in the early care and education workforce, and identifying high quality programs.



The **White House Symposium on Transformative Family Engagement** in August 2014 focused on a solutions-oriented discussion on how to achieve educational equity for children — particularly those from low-income families — through transformative family engagement.



Bridging the Word Gap: In October 2014, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Department of Health and Human Services teamed up with **Too Small to Fail** and the **Urban InSTITUTE** to host an event designed to increase public understanding of the importance of talking to young children and focusing on solutions encouraging parent talk. See ACF's blog [A Big Day at the White House for Infants, Toddlers, and Brain Development](#).

White House Summit on Early Learning: President Obama convened the [White House Summit on Early Education](#), bringing together a number of policymakers, school superintendents, corporate and community leaders, and others to talk about the importance of quality early childhood education.

In addition to announcing a collective investment of more than \$1 billion in the education and development of our young children, the summit also highlighted the launch of [Invest in US](#) -- a new initiative created by the nonprofit First Five Years Fund, in partnership with private philanthropic leaders.



ACF announced preliminary winners for the [Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership](#) grants to improve the quality of existing child care programs and expand access to high-quality care for infants and toddlers in conjunction with the [White House Summit on Early Education](#) and a [Playbook](#) was released to offer strategies for local leaders to develop and expand early learning in their communities.



New Expulsion and Suspension Policy

At the White House Summit on Early Learning, Secretaries Burwell and Duncan announced the release of a [policy statement on expulsion and suspension practices](#) in early learning settings. Exclusionary discipline practices occur at high rates in early learning settings, and at even higher rates for young boys of color. The effort, part of President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative, encourages states, early childhood programs, and families to partner in preventing, reducing, and eventually eliminating the expulsion and suspension of young children from early learning programs. As part of this commitment, Secretary Burwell announced that HHS will dedicate \$4 million toward early

childhood mental health consultation services to prevent this troubling practice and to help all children thrive in early learning settings.

Read the new [Expulsion and Suspension Policy](#). See the ACF blog [Equity and Excellence in the Earliest Years: Action on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Settings here](#).

Communications and Outreach

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary supports early childhood communications and outreach efforts.

Highlights included:

- An updated website with new pages,
- Early childhood [blogs](#), listserv for ongoing communications,
- [ECD Newsletter](#), social media,
- Webinars; presentations at conferences and state and national events,
- Meetings and webinars with stakeholders and philanthropy,
- EHS.CCP Outreach with OCC & OHS - Public Outreach, Outreach to Potential Applicants, Outreach for Peer Review and Competition, Outreach and Communications Plan for Awards, and



- Collaborative campaigns including a webinar series for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and materials for Look Before You Lock and September Attendance Month.

ACF joined NHTSA on “Look Before You Lock” Campaign

Heatstroke is the number one killer of children, outside of car crashes. That’s why the Administration for Children and Families joined with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to raise public awareness to reduce these deaths by reminding parents and caregivers about the dangers of heatstroke and leaving children in hot cars.

“As outside temperatures rise, the risks of children dying from being left alone inside a hot vehicle also rises,” said Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Early Childhood. “One child dies from heatstroke nearly every 10 days from being left in a hot vehicle, but what is most tragic is that the majority of these deaths could have been prevented.”

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