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Working Together for a Better Beginning

"I want to focus on the next five years, ten years, and beyond. I want to focus on our future.

The bipartisan reform of No Child Left Behind was an important start, and together, we've increased early childhood education.. In the coming years, we should build on that progress..."

-- President Obama, January 2016, State of the Union Address

Early Childhood Development

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development
Mary E. Switzer Building, 330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

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VOLUME 4, NUMBER 8

Have you been to our website recently?

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

Check out these ACF blogs

The ACF blog — The Family Room — provides new initiatives at the agency, success stories and policy announcements. See selected July posts.

[Ensuring Secure Futures for Millions of Americans](#)

Celebrating some of the accomplishments of ACF programs for our 25th anniversary year.

[A Rising Tide of Attention to the Early Childhood Workforce: Releasing the Early Childhood Career Pathway Statement](#)

Attracting, supporting, and retaining high quality early childhood educators and program directors requires intentional policies and practices

First let me start by saying that as adults we have both a vocation (mine is obvious) and an avocation - something one does in addition to their vocation, but of significant interest to that person. Parent education has been my avocation and throughout the years my volunteer work as a parent educator has helped keep my vocational work "real".

Decades of research have demonstrated that the parent-child relationship and the family environment are at the foundation of child well-being, including social-emotional and cognitive functioning, school success, and mental and physical health. Child well-being, in turn, is determinative of our future generation's physical and behavioral health and competitiveness in an evolving world economy. But ensuring that children experience healthy and successful lives does not happen in a vacuum. Parents need reliable and "trusted" sources of information on basic child development, appropriate discipline and parenting.

Two weeks ago, a new study on supporting the parents of young children was released by the National Academies of Science. The study, "[Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8](#)", was in response to a request from the Administration for Children and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Education and several philanthropic organizations, to study the research on parenting and how to best support the parents of young children.

The report identified a core set of parenting knowledge and practices that are associated with improved child health, development, and learning outcomes. The list started with a knowledge of child development and included: a knowledge of services available to them; a knowledge of parenting practices; understanding of contingent responsiveness (serve and return); showing warmth and sensitivity; the value of schedules and reduced



[A 100-day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness in Three Cities](#)

The 100-Day Challenge will help catalyze community action to establish bold, creative, and innovative ways to help homeless youth find stable housing.

[Communities Across U.S. Celebrate National Summer Learning Day](#)

National awareness campaign promotes the importance of summer learning

[Supporting Families to End Homelessness](#)

Stable housing is a crucial contributor to family economic success and to healthy child development

[The People Behind Our Programs](#)

Support offices help the nation's leading human services agency accomplish its mission

[ACF Informate](#)

The July Issue is here
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/informate-july-2016>

See more blogs and visit [The Family Room Blog](#).

Featured Reports



Recently posted on the [OPRE Site](#):



Improving the Development & Refinement of Early Care & Education Rating Scales

How can using the principles of scale development support Quality Rating and Improvement Systems ratings? [Explore these resources](#), which illustrate how using principles of scale development can be useful in the development and refinement of QRIS rating scales.

household chaos; reading and talking to children; the use of appropriate discipline; and finally, understanding practices that promote children's health and safety.

Although none of these are particularly earth shattering, (starting with a knowledge of child development) – information on them is not routinely provided to new parents and if information is provided it is not necessarily in ways that parents want or need it. I have learned two lessons from my work as a parent educator. First, *parents do not innately understand child development*, yet this knowledge is foundational to parenting, and second, *parents learn best from each other* through social networks and support systems that go far beyond what can be learned from a book or a class.

I frequently hear that new parents rely on either their parents or their friends for information. Why --because they trust them. We also know that parents **trust us**, their early care and education providers. They trust us each and every day to care for their children. We ARE (or can be) their “trusted source” for parenting information and support. Head Start has understood this for decades. Now is the time for the rest of the early care and education community to get on board. It's time to make parenting a core component of all ECE programs and to use the trust between parents and their ECE providers to provide solid information on child development and to foster parenting networks and support systems.

So now, in light of the NAS study, I find myself thinking about how to marry early education policy with parenting. Can early care and education programs support parents (and parenting) in a more intentional and supportive manner? This answer is a resounding, YES. We in early education already value parents. We know they are children's first, most important, and longest lasting teachers. By providing more support and the tools they need, we can make a lasting impact in their lives and the lives of their children.

Last year, we issued a “[Compendium of Parenting Interventions](#)” designed to help early care and education staff select evidence-based parenting interventions. We also published the “[Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five](#)” which is an excellent guide to understanding the timing and sequence of child development and learning. Finally, we published the “[Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework](#)” which provides strategies to engage parents as lifelong educators of their children. These are only a few of the tools available to help our ECE providers engage parents in meaningful ways. More information is available on our web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd>.

By better supporting parents and families *now*, the youngest children of today and tomorrow have better odds of achieving their full potential. It takes a supportive community and a willing nation to partner with families. It is time to simultaneously recognize parents' strengths and help meet their unique needs. Although the findings in the NAS study are neither revolutionary nor headliners, the study shrinks and sharpens the message. And it's our job to now disseminate the practices described in the report far and wide. From the macro level- through broad communication and public education efforts, to the micro level in the work providers do every day helping support families, we can make a difference.

Linda

[Best Practices in Creating and Adapting Quality Rating and Improvement System \(QRIS\) Rating Scales - Brief & Report](#)

[Proposed Revisions to the Definitions for the Early Childhood Workforce in the Standard Occupational Classification](#)

[Adolescent Well-Being after Experiencing Family Homelessness](#)

[What Works, Under What Circumstances, and How?](#)

[Risk Factors for College Success: Insights from Adults in Nine Career Pathways Programs](#)

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

Promoting high-quality research and informing policy

[Research Connections](#) regularly reviews its latest acquisitions and identifies reports and journal articles of high policy relevance.

Research Findings

[How do contextual factors influence teachers' traditional and student-centered tablet computer practices?](#)

[Is the shared-book reading approach effective in improving low-income preschoolers' word knowledge, conceptual development, and content knowledge?](#)

[Are obesity prevention initiatives effective in child care facilities?](#)

[What is the extent of center-based early care and education \(ECE\) participation among children receiving child welfare services?](#)

[What is consistency in nutrition practices at child care centers serving low-income children before and after South Carolina implemented mandatory nutrition standards?](#)



Colleen Rathgeb Receives the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service

Secretary Sylvia Burwell hosted the annual HHS Departmental Award's Ceremony in the Humphrey Building's Great Hall on July 20, 2016. These awards recognize exemplary employees across all of HHS and are highly competitive. This year, Colleen Rathgeb from the Office of Head Start (OHS) was recognized for the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service.

In her role as Director of Policy and Planning at OHS Colleen Rathgeb has led the effort to update the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) for the first time since 1975. This multi-year project required the revision and reorganization of the nearly 1,500 requirements that govern the provision of early education and comprehensive services to approximately one million children and their families each year. Colleen and her team incorporated two decades of research, evidence and insights about the most effective program practices, extensive consultations, and thoughtful analysis of more than 1,000 public comments into this revision. OHS is set to publish the final rule this summer, and we believe that the revised Head Start Program Performance Standards will make Head Start more effective in achieving strong child outcomes and less focused on burdensome, unnecessary administrative processes. Colleen's leadership, management, and vision have been central to this effort. **Congratulations, Colleen!**

Early Head Start –Child Care Partnership

Highlighting Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership State Grantees

There are currently 275 Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership Grantees serving approximately 32,000 infants and toddlers. Among them are seven Partnership State & Territory Grantees, which together serve roughly 1,600 children from birth through age three. The models and strategies EHS-CC Partnership State Grantees are implementing offer a valuable perspective on intersections between state policies, systems and the success of the Partnerships. There is an opportunity to learn from and leverage this investment in States' and Territory innovation.



At the same time, the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) represents an opportunity for states to enact new policies that bridge EHS and CC and support the Partnerships' goals of improving capacity and quality across programs that serve low-income toddlers and their families in order to enhance child well-being and school readiness outcomes. Many Partnership State Grantees also strategically layer funding sources. They effectively demonstrate how state leadership can shape policies and partnerships that support EHSCCP Partnerships as an integral component of comprehensive early childhood system development. We are now gathering helpful insights about how Partnership State Grantees are engaged in the following critical activities.

Using Community Assessment to Advance Cultural Competence and Racially Equitable Outcomes for Young Children and Their Families

A [webinar](#) produced by the **National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance** and **Build Initiative** discusses ways in which State, Territory, and Tribal leaders and program directors can use community assessment data to promote equity in early care and education programs and services. A [PowerPoint presentation](#) accompanies the webinar highlighting case studies on transportation and workforce to demonstrate how Head Start's Five Steps to Community Assessment framework can be used in various situations to identify new or underserved populations, and ultimately develop data-based strategic plans toward equitable care and education of young children.

Additional Resources

[Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships \(EHS-CC\) Funding Opportunity Announcements Posted!](#)

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced approximately \$135 million in funding available to expand access to high-quality, comprehensive services for low-income infants and toddlers and their families. This funding will support the creation of Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships and the expansion of Early Head Start (EHS) services to children and families. ACF solicits applications from public entities, including states, or private non-profit organizations, including community-based or faith-based organizations, or for-profit agencies that meet eligibility for applying as stated in section 645A of the Head Start Act.

Find the Funding Opportunity Announcements

The EHS Expansion and EHS-CC

Designing Effective Partnership State Grantee Models



- **Alabama's** statewide hub model centers around a university, which supports a family child care provider network by ensuring delivery of comprehensive services and building provider capacity, particularly through opportunities to advance professional qualifications and competencies.
- **California's** regional hub model supports partners through a range of services, including facility modifications, supplies, training to support partners in meeting the EHS standards.
- **Georgia's** shared services Partnership hub model operates via contracts with an existing EHS grantee as a hub for child care centers, and a child care resource and referral agency (CCRR) as a hub for family child care homes. The hubs facilitate the child care partners' access to comprehensive services, professional development, and technical assistance.
- The **District of Columbia's** Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is leveraging the Partnership opportunity to develop a neighborhood-based Quality Improvement Network (QIN) to improve and expand the quality of infant and toddler care in DC. The city contracts with two existing EHS grantees as the QIN hubs, which provide a range of supports to providers including job embedded instructional coaching for infant/toddler teachers, assistance with Pre-K transitions, and salary bonuses for teachers who are in programs that support degree attainment.

Facilitating Partnerships through State Subsidy Policies

- **Georgia** has enhanced their subsidy program software in order to align eligibility determination for subsidy and EHS. All families of eligible infants and toddlers enrolled in the child care partners are offered an EHS slot.
- **Delaware, Pennsylvania** and **District of Columbia** are among the seven states that align subsidy eligibility with EHS program eligibility.



Layering Funding to Support Partnerships

- **Alabama** leverages resources through a public-private funding collaboration with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to support professional development for infant and toddler teachers, including coaching and mentoring, as well as an annual practitioners' academy.
- In **Pennsylvania**, children of families receiving TANF are guaranteed Partnership participation based on the state's reserve fund of \$400,000 to cover payment to providers in the event that a child loses subsidy funding.

Partnerships funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) were posted June 23, 2016:

Early Head Start Expansion and EHS-Child Care Partnership Grants:
<http://bit.ly/291elcC>

American Indian and Alaska Native EHS Expansion and EHS-Child Care Partnerships: <http://bit.ly/29e8jkl>

Migrant and Seasonal EHS-Child Care and EHS Expansion Partnerships:
<http://bit.ly/29k84X7>

Application Due Date: 08/24/2016

In Spring 2016, the National Center on Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (NCEHS-CCP) hosted 12 Regional Training and Process Consultation Sessions. The intent of the sessions was to extend the learning that occurred during the 2015 EHS-CCP Orientations. These events were for partnership teams and by invitation only. Information and resources related to the training and process consultation sessions can be found [here](#) at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehs-ccp/regional-training>.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Tribal Annual Report

The Office of Child Care (OCC) is pleased to [announce the Federal Register publication](#) of the Second Notice seeking public comment on proposed revisions to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Tribal Annual Report (ACF-700). Both the [Federal Register Notice](#) and the revised ACF-700 are available on the [OCC Web site](#). The deadline for the receipt of comments is 12 midnight on Saturday, August 13, 2016.

Summary: The CCDF Tribal Annual Report (ACF-700) requests annual Tribal aggregate information on services provided through the CCDF program, which is required by CCDF regulations ([45 CFR parts 98](#) and 99). Tribal lead agencies (TLAs) are required to submit annual aggregate data appropriate to Tribal programs for children and families receiving CCDF program-funded child care services.

Aligning Partnerships with State Systems

- **Delaware** has directed Partnership funds to develop a new state-level department that will house the Partnership's statewide model. Partnership programs also benefit from the tiered reimbursement framework of [Delaware Stars](#), which can provide rate reimbursements up to 102% of the market rate at the Star 5 level.
- Based on the strong relationship the **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands'** Partnership enjoys with the public school system, transition planning is incorporated into family plans for all children participating in the Partnership.

Learn more about the EHS-CC Partnerships and the current Funding Opportunity Announcement by visiting [here](#). Key resources on Partnership development and implementation include [Top Ten Ways CCDF Can Support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships](#), the [Year 1 Partnership Report](#), and [A Fiscal Management Checklist for Partnerships](#).

See State EHS-CCP [Profiles here](#).

Early Childhood Workforce

Career Pathways Policy Statement Released

ACF was pleased to release a new [Policy Statement on Early Childhood Career Pathways](#) as part of our focus on elevating the early childhood workforce in policy and practice. This policy paper focuses on lead teachers, with state and local recommendations for creating a sequence of stackable, portable credentials that reflect the sophisticated science of working with young children, combined with the supports educators need to advance their individual career advancement on that pathway.



See "[A Rising Tide of Attention to the Early Childhood Workforce: Releasing the Early Childhood Career Pathway Statement](#)" by Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development on The Family Room

Blog.

Read the [Policy Statement on Early Childhood Career Pathways](#) and see additional resources [here](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-childhood-career-pathways) (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-childhood-career-pathways>).

Every #EC educator deserves a high-functioning, well-financed #Career Pathway <http://bit.ly/29W0bJ2>

The revised ACF-700 report consists of two parts: (1) Administrative Data and (2) Tribal Narrative. The content and format of the narrative section have been revised to make the form easier to complete with new checkbox formatting. These revisions will allow OCC to more easily generate and quantify data in the report. These changes will help us better understand Tribal activities as they relate to compliance, the quality of child care, the use of funds, and technical assistance needs. Information from the ACF-700 will be included in the Secretary's Report to Congress, as appropriate, and will be shared with all TLAs to inform them of CCDF program-funded activities in other Tribal programs. OCC received comments in response to the First Notice and has incorporated recommendations, as appropriate. OCC also added a statement on the form and in the instructions to make it clear that Tribes that receive their funds under Public Law 102-477 are not required to submit the ACF-700.

We encourage Tribes and interested parties to review the revised ACF-700 and to provide your specific comments within 30 days of its publication. Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent to the following—Attn: ACF Reports Clearance Officer at infocollection@acf.hhs.gov. Thank you for your partnership and for all that you do for Tribal families.

Additional information: Copies of the proposed collection can be obtained by writing to the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, 330 C Street S.W., Washington, DC 20201. Attn: ACF Reports Clearance Officer. All requests should be identified by the title of the information collection. E-mail: infocollection@acf.hhs.gov.

Distinguish Teaching Award announced at EarlyEDU

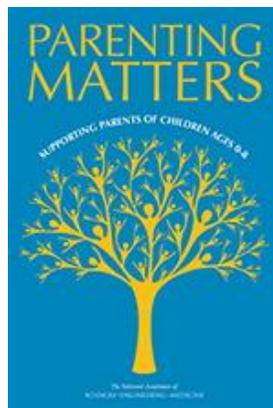


During the First Annual EarlyEdU Alliance Institute on June 21, 2016, the EarlyEdU Alliance presented its first distinguished teaching award to Nanci Waterhouse, a faculty member at Salish Kootenai College, a tribal college in Montana.

Professor Nanci Waterhouse was selected to receive Distinguish Teaching Award at Institute for her energetic involvement (teaching 3 courses and developing innovative approaches to helping students work with Coaching Companion). The purpose of this award is to bring attention to the importance of early childhood teaching in higher education as well as to

recognize those who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in course delivery. Recipients of this award have gone above in their commitment to work with students and see them grow and succeed in early childhood classrooms. *(Photo of: Gail Joseph, Katie Emerson-Hoss and Nanci Waterhouse.)*

Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8



Last month, the National Academies of Medicine released a new consensus study: [Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8](#). The study, conducted by an ad hoc committee of experts, was funded by a cadre of public and private sector partners. Among those were several divisions within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including the Administration for Children and Families, the Health Resources Services Administration, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the U.S. Department of Education; and philanthropic partners including the Bezos Family Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, the Heising-Simons Foundation, and the Packard Foundation.

The committee was tasked with examining the state of the research on parenting and family engagement – including parental knowledge, attitudes, and practices that support healthy child development- and with providing a robust set of policy recommendations and future research directions to help move this work forward.

We are analyzing the report, together with our partners, and will use its findings to inform policy and ultimately better support the families and young children that we serve. You can download the Report [here](http://www.nap.edu/catalog/21868/parenting-matters-supporting-parents-of-children-ages-0-8) (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/21868/parenting-matters-supporting-parents-of-children-ages-0-8>) and the [Report in Brief](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/dbassesite/documents/webpage/dbasse_173455.pdf) (http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/dbassesite/documents/webpage/dbasse_173455.pdf).



Invest in Us

Quality early childhood education programs help children grow. See how investments in quality programs pay. Learn more [here](#).

Let's Talk About Math Video Series

Too Small to Fail partnered with ZERO TO THREE on a series of videos (in English and Spanish) highlighting the foundation of early math skills in the first five years of life, and fun, everyday activities parents and caregivers can use to support this learning. Each video focuses on a specific math concept.

Everyday Fun With Addition and Subtraction

An early understanding of addition and subtraction can be seen when children experiment with:

- Counting the number of items in a group of objects
- Adding objects to a group
- Removing objects from a group
- Comparing groups of objects to figure out which has more or if they have the same amount.

[Watch the video](#) or [download the handout](#) with fun activities designed to support young children's growing knowledge of addition and subtraction from birth to 5.

The Learning Policy Institute's [report](#) describes how Michigan, North Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia have built high-quality early education systems at scale and identifies key lessons for policymakers looking to expand and deepen access to high-quality preschool.

[Download Report](#)

[Download Brief](#)



NATIONAL CENTER ON Parent, Family and Community Engagement

New resources available from the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement



Professional Development: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement – Approach

Explore systemic approaches to family engagement and learn techniques to build parent and staff involvement.

Professional Development: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement – Building Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships

Use this guide to help your program staff learn strategies for developing and strengthening relationships between staff and families.

Professional Development: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement – Leadership

and Program Practices

Learn how program foundations (i.e., program leadership, professional development, and continuous program improvement) contribute to positive outcomes for children and families.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Professional Development Guide-Digital Version

Prefer to do your learning online? Explore the different PFCE content areas in this digital format.

ACF's Evaluation Policy

"ACF's evaluation policy is important because it demonstrates our commitment to being a learning organization and conveys the principles that guide that commitment."

Mark Greenberg

Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families

ACF's mission is to foster health and well-being by providing federal leadership, partnership, and resources for the compassionate and effective delivery of human services. Our vision is children, youth, families, individuals and communities who are resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure. The importance of these goals demands that we continually innovate, learn, and improve to make our services as effective as possible. If our services are not effective, we cannot get closer



From the Office of Child Care:

The Child Care State Capacity Building Center has published a new, expanded version of the [Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide](#). This online tool is designed to support Child Care and Development Fund leaders and their partners in their pursuit of state systems building initiatives.

The ultimate goal of early childhood systems building is to create an efficient, coordinated, and comprehensive system of programs and services for young children and families. Systems building efforts are complex and require work across multiple sectors.

Systems building efforts can take many forms, but they share similar core approaches and strategies. The guide provides information focused on important core aspects of the systems building process. The new, expanded version includes the following:

- An overview of state systems building;
- State highlights and examples;
- A searchable resource database organized by topic; and
- Eight systems building guides that support key components of the process, including new guides on program design and implementation, financing, and evaluation and improvement.

Save the Date for the 2016 State and Territories Administrators Meeting (STAM).



The banner for STAM 2016 features a navigation menu with links for Home, Hotel, Agenda, Resources, Travel Info, Contact Us, Dining Options, and Attractions. Below the menu, it displays the event title 'The Westin Alexandria Hotel September 27 - 29, 2016' and a 'Click here to register' button with a right-pointing arrow. The background includes images of children and a hotel building.

Registration will be limited as priority will be given to State Child Care

to our vision, even with good intentions.

In 2012, ACF adopted an [evaluation policy](#) that confirms our commitment to building and using knowledge.



Impact Project Launches with Nine States and Territories

As part of the new Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System, the Child Care State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) launched the Impact Project for States and Territories in March 2016. The Impact Project is designed to support States and Territories in developing their capacity to implement their early childhood (EC) projects and priorities. ***Nine States and Territories have been selected to participate in this opportunity!***

These States and Territories were selected through a competitive application process. They have diverse contexts, geographies, and entry points for advancing quality and are united by their commitment to building stronger EC systems to support significant change for young children from low-income families.

- *Colorado* will take an innovative approach to supporting its workforce through the development of a qualified substitute pool for center and family child care.
- The *Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands* will focus on comprehensive strategies to develop its workforce and to increase the supply of infant and toddler (I/T) care.
- *Florida* will foster a comprehensive early learning system by integrating current quality initiatives and by enhancing the Early Learning Performance Funding Project.
- *Georgia* will take a multipronged approach to strengthening its I/T care system by increasing professional development (PD) opportunities and by providing financial supports connected to its child care assistance program.
- *Indiana* will develop key quality systems, including a training registry, a trainer and training approval system, a revised quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), and an enhanced coaching network.
- *New Hampshire* will enhance its workforce by developing new incentives for teacher retention, expanding workforce diversity, providing alternative PD opportunities to meet teacher qualifications, and addressing compensation.
- *North Dakota* will develop a strategic plan and an implementation plan to improve I/T care and education.
- *Oregon* will examine its QRIS and monitoring, licensing, and training systems and will implement new approaches, such as integrated monitoring and nonexpiring licenses.
- *South Carolina* will focus on infant, EC, and family mental health by establishing provider competencies and a network of mental health and wellness coordinators across the State.

Administrators. Stay tuned!

From the Office of Head Start:

See updates to the “EHS-CCP: 2016 Regional Training” page in the EHS-CCP portal - <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/ehs-ccp/regional-training/>

Posted the “Report to Congress on American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Facilities, FY 2015” PDF in the Data and Reports portal - <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/rc/aian-head-start-facilities-report.pdf>

Watch the “Designing Your New Self-Assessment Process” video in the Learning for New Leaders: Self-Assessment page: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/operations/learning/self-assessment.html>

[Assessment of Families Experiencing Homelessness: A Guide for Practitioners and Policymakers, March 2015](#)

Homes for Families, Inc. developed this guide to help service providers, policymakers, community leaders, state agencies, and other stakeholders conduct comprehensive assessments of homeless families. The guide defines assessment, describes the importance of a two-generation model, and presents implications for policy and practice.

The Impact Project will support these projects with intensive consultation and assistance from SCBC’s experts, working closely with these nine States and Territories over an 18- to 48-month period.



Promoting Safe Sleep to Prevent Infant Deaths

Wyoming’s Wind River Indian Reservation has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the state, a fact that greatly concerns Dr. Vonda Wells,

Administrator of the Northern Arapaho Tribe. In addition to raising four children of her own, Dr. Wells has championed the well-being of the tribe’s youngest children in her previous positions with Head Start; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and an early childhood home visiting program.

“The Wind River Indian Reservation used to have a project called Cribs for Kids to discourage cohabitating sleeping,” says Dr. Wells. “A family could come into the WIC office and ask for one of these beds for free, and the worker would fill out a small application and do a mini-training on cohabitating sleeping and give them the crib.”



“Cohabitating sleeping” refers to infants and children sleeping in their parents’ beds, which increases the risk of injury and suffocation. “The last year we gave out the Cribs for Kids was 2014, and that year there was no infant mortality,” says Dr. Wells. “When that money ran out, I started looking for other options for our babies.”

Dr. Wells was able to tap part of the grant the tribe received from the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (Tribal Home Visiting), administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The Northern Arapaho Tribe was one of 25 tribal organizations participating in this federal program.

“I looked online and found an article by the BBC called ‘Why Finnish Babies Sleep in Cardboard Boxes,’” says Dr. Wells. “In Finland in the 1930s, they had a high infant mortality rate. They started giving low-income mothers cardboard boxes filled with baby items, with the box to be used as a bed. Later, the government of Finland decided that every baby, regardless of income, deserved a box and what they said was a head start in life. And I thought, wow, that would be so awesome for us to do here.”



She found a company in California that produced “baby boxes” similar to the ones that the Finnish government continues to provide families today. She purchased some of the boxes for \$99 each, and the Tribal Home Visiting Program hosted a kick-off event for new and expecting parents in December 2015.

Each box is made of sturdy cardboard and decorated with owls or teddy bears. There is a lid in which to set the box and a firm, thin mattress the baby can lie on.

“When the parents looked inside the boxes, it was like Christmas for them,” says Dr. Wells. “The box we selected has all-natural materials, and they like the baby shampoo, the little hygiene bag with a comb and fingernail clip, the t-shirts, hat, and mittens. The box also has a muslin receiving blanket they can use to swaddle their babies. It has everything that you would need initially when you have a baby.”

The gift is accompanied by mini-trainings from program staff on timely topics for new parents, such as emotional attachment, injury prevention, and health care for both babies and mothers.

The baby boxes also send a message of welcome. “I would like for us to find funding to purchase these boxes for every baby that’s born to the tribe,” says Dr. Wells. “That would show how important our babies are for us as a tribe and for our future and that they deserve the best start that they can have.”

The Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming is one of four groups of Arapaho who originally occupied the headwaters of the Arkansas and Platte Rivers. The Northern Arapaho of Wyoming and Eastern Shoshone jointly own the Wind River Indian Reservation, which encompasses 2.2 million acres between the Wind River Range and Owl Creek Mountains and includes the city of Riverton. To learn more, visit <http://www.northernarapaho.com>.

Early Childhood Health

The current epidemic of Zika virus spreading throughout the Americas has led to nearly 800 pregnant women in the United States (including the U.S. territories) with laboratory evidence of possible Zika virus infection. Zika virus infection is a recognized cause of microcephaly and other serious brain anomalies; however, the clinical spectrum of the effects of Zika virus infection during pregnancy is not fully understood. As more infants are identified with congenital Zika virus infection, interim guidance is needed to help health care providers to determine appropriate evaluation and management of the medical and developmental needs of these infants.

Last week, in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control brought together a variety of pediatric specialists, professional organizations, federal partners and family advocates to establish guidelines on how to evaluate and care for infants whose mothers were infected with the virus during pregnancy. Dr. Katherine Beckmann, Senior Policy Advisory for Early Childhood Health, attended on behalf of the Administration for Children and Families to provide guidance on implications for child development, needed family supports, and intersections with early childhood policy and programming.

For the latest information on Zika, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

Early Childhood Homelessness

Trauma-Informed Environments to Promote Healing Through Play and Build Capacity for Change

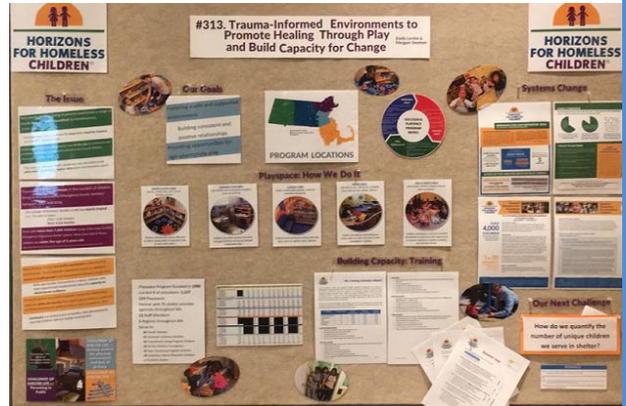
To mitigate the impacts of homelessness on healthy child development, Horizons for Homeless Children created its [Playspace Program](#), which establishes partnerships with family shelters across the state of Massachusetts to create safe, supportive environments that make healthy play possible for over 2,000 homeless children each

week. Each of the more than 120 [Horizons Playspaces](#) is intentionally designed using research-based evidence that facilitates trauma-informed care and promotes resiliency among young homeless children throughout the state.

A dedicated team of Horizons staff is responsible for building and stewarding relationships with shelter staff, managing the operations of these shelter-based spaces, and recruiting, training, and coaching more than **1,200 volunteers** who provide consistent opportunity for play for the children residing in the shelters.

In each [Horizons Playspace](#), kid-friendly playrooms are created to include five defined areas of play, which are based on best practices for early education and childcare settings:

- 1) Literacy: books, comfortable seating, music for activities and games.
- 2) Dramatic Play: play kitchen and accessories, puppets, costumes, and dolls/doll bed.
- 3) Manipulatives: blocks, sorting toys, cars, trucks, animals, and puzzles.
- 4) Arts & Crafts: play dough, markers, crayons, paper, paint, and pom-poms.
- 5) Infant: soft mat or rug, soft blocks, climbing area, pop-up toys, rattles, and mirrors.



Through these intentional partnerships, family shelter programs in Massachusetts are better equipped to provide significantly enhanced intervention and trauma-sensitive services to have a localizing impact on over 2,000 children each week.

Access to Early Childhood Development Services for Homeless Families with Young Children: An Exploratory Project

ACCESS TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES FOR
HOMELESS FAMILIES
WITH YOUNG
CHILDREN: AN
EXPLORATORY
PROJECT

July 2016

ACF released a new brief "[Access to Early Childhood Development Services for Homeless Families with Young Children: An Exploratory Project.](#)"

This brief examines the challenges of families with young children and how they manage daily life and child development when they experience episodes of homelessness, including times when they temporarily live doubled-up or in a hotel or motel due to a loss of housing or economic hardship.

Find this brief [here](#) at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/eecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children>

Remembering an Early Childhood Leader

It was with great sadness and much appreciation that the early childhood community said good bye this summer to Dr. Deborah J. Cassidy of Greensboro, NC



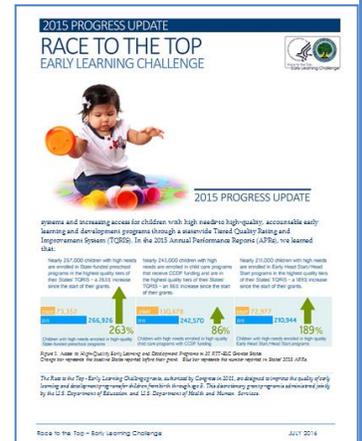
Deb Cassidy recently retired from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) where she spent 26 years as an early childhood professor and researcher and served as the Project Director for the NC Rated License Assessment Project. Hundreds of students benefitted from her passionate commitment to young children and those that teach them.

Additionally, she led the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education in the Department of Health and Human Services, focusing efforts on access to quality, and working closely with the [Office of Child Care](#) at ACF. Deb Cassidy was a remarkable early childhood educator and administrator driven by a passion to expand high quality opportunities for young children that also led to her national work supporting states and communities. She was elected President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2016.



Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) and Preschool Development (PDG) Highlights

The Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grants, authorized by Congress in 2011, are designed to improve the quality of early learning and development programs for children from birth through age 5. This discretionary grant program is administered jointly by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

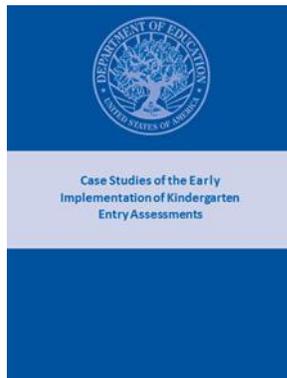


The 20 Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) States reported progress towards expanding and improving the quality of early learning and development programs.

See the 2015 Progress Update here at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecl/early-learning/race-to-the-top>.

All 2015 RTT-ELC State Reports are now [posted here](#).

[Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments](#)



This descriptive study released Monday, August 1st examines the development and early implementation of KEAs in 12 districts and 23 schools within four RTT-ELC states (Maryland, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington) during the 2014–15 school year. The study is intended to help states learn from the experiences of other states as they work to develop and implement their own KEAs and to use KEAs to improve instruction and learning.



Communicating with Families to Prevent Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades

Learn about the results of a study commissioned by DC's public schools and find out how family partnerships can make a difference, especially before school starts. Mark your calendars for **Thursday, August 18 at 3:00 pm ET** to participate in this Community of Practice webinar, **Communicating with Families to Prevent Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades** with presenter Michael Katz from the Urban Institute. [Register Here.](#)



National Head Start Association, Yasmina Vinci, Executive Director

[The National Head Start Association \(NHSA\)](#) recently released a Research Blast, [One Nudge at a Time](#), looking at the effect of “nudges” on decision making. A nudge is something that can influence someone’s decision, and small nudges can make big changes. Based in the field of behavioral science which studies and analyzes human behavior, nudges could enhance the transformative work Head Start programs do in shaping habits that last a lifetime. Simplifying enrollment form language makes people more likely to enroll, text message reminders reinforce parent-child interactions, and prompting parents to write down the time and date of vaccines makes them more likely to show up. Nudges like these can be significant in amplifying permanent, long-term outcomes for Head Start children and families.



August is National Immunization Awareness Month

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages. NIAM was established to encourage people of all ages to make sure they are up to date on the vaccines recommended for them. Communities have continued to use the month each year to raise awareness about the important role vaccines play in preventing serious, sometimes deadly, diseases.



See tools for communications for infants and babies at <https://www.nphic.org/niam>.



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



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

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