

**Office of the
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Early Childhood Development**

**2015
Accomplishments**

**INVESTMENTS
+
SMART POLICY
in Early Childhood
=
A Strong Future**



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development
2015 Accomplishments

“In today’s economy, when having both parents in the workforce is an economic necessity for many families, we need affordable, high-quality child care more than ever. It’s not a nice-to-have -- it’s a must-have. So it’s time we stop treating childcare as a side issue, or as a women’s issue, and treat it like the national economic priority that it is for all of us.”

– President Obama, State of the Union Address, January 20, 2015

Early Childhood Development Goals

- Promote high quality, accountable early learning programs for all children;
- Build successful early learning and development systems;
- Improve the health and safety of early learning and development programs;
- Support an effective early childhood workforce; and
- Promote family support and engagement in a child’s development.

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the focal point within HHS for early childhood development. ECD provides oversight to two of the largest early childhood federal programs – Head Start and Child Care including the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships. The office also co-administers the Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) with the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) and co-administers the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge and Preschool Development Grants with the U.S. Department of Education.

Equal Access to High Quality Services

In 2015 our focus continued on equal access to high quality services in early childhood. Some of the highlights from the year include developing and implementing a new, cross-sector Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) system; implementation of Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships; policy guidance on suspension and expulsion, inclusion, and family engagement; implementation of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) that was authorized at the end of 2014; Head Start’s 50th Anniversary; and our release of the Head Start Performance Framework. ECD provided guidance to states, communities and programs alike to align early learning programs so children in Head Start, child care centers, family child care homes, or state pre-K settings all have equal access to high quality services.

**Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary
for
Early Childhood Development**



Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary



Shannon Rudisill
Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary

2015

- Providing Guidance for Practices in Early Learning
- Family Engagement
- Early Childhood Health
- Early Childhood Homelessness
- Early Childhood Workforce
- Investing in an Early Childhood
- Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships
- State Advisory Councils
- Office of Child Care
- Office of Head Start
- Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
- Preschool Development Grant
- Tribal Early Childhood
- Hurricane Sandy

Sign up for the ECD newsletter.

Providing Guidance for Practices in Early Learning

Policy Statement on Suspension and Expulsion & Webinar Series

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education announced the release of a [joint policy statement on expulsion and suspension practices in early learning settings](#), complete with a set of recommendations that if implemented, may help make headway on the issue.

The recommendations include:

- Developing and clearly communicating preventive guidance and discipline practices;
- Developing and clearly communicating expulsion and suspension policies and implementing those policies uniformly and without bias;
- Investing and continuously growing the skills of the early childhood workforce focusing on children's social-emotional and behavioral health, strengthening partnerships with families, employing strategies to prevent and correct implicit or explicit biases, and conducting universal developmental and behavioral screening and appropriate follow-up;
- Setting goals and analyzing trends in data to assess progress in reducing expulsion and suspensions; and
- Making use of free resources to enhance staff training and strengthen family partnerships.



ECD hosted a webinar series on suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings. The series featured key experts from across the country who have done work on different aspects of the issue, including policy, research and data, and prevention/intervention.

The Expulsion and Suspension Prevention Webinar Series included:

- [Expulsion Webinar 1 - Basic Research](#)
- [Expulsion Webinar 2 - Policies](#)
- [Expulsion Webinar 3 - Program Quality and Professional Development](#)
- [Expulsion Webinar 4 - Using Data Systems](#)

See additional resources [here](#).

Suspension and expulsion issues are linked to social-emotional and behavioral health. The CCDBG Act of 2014 mandated information for parents and the public that is clearer and more accessible, including information about the social-emotional and behavioral health of young children. The Office of Child Care issued a [Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health Information Memorandum](#) to discuss some options that states have in addressing these topics. Those options include:

- Using CCDF quality funds to build workforce capacity and train providers on social-emotional development and effective behavior management strategies;
- Establishing statewide consultation or coaching models;
- Establishing expulsion and suspension policies that align with research and best practices around social-emotional and behavioral health;
- Promoting continuity of care, which allows for stability that will help foster healthy child development; and
- Implementing developmental and behavioral screenings, which can better allow for early intervention.

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

The [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#), released jointly by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education on September 14, 2015, states that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations.

The policy statement sets a vision for states, local educational agencies, schools, and public and private early childhood programs to strengthen and increase the number of inclusive high-quality early childhood programs nationwide. As the country continues to move forward on the critical task of expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs for all young children, it is imperative that children with disabilities be included in these efforts.

- Read the [policy statement](#).
- Read the [executive summary](#).
- Read the [Joint letter by Secretaries Burwell and Duncan](#)



Family Engagement

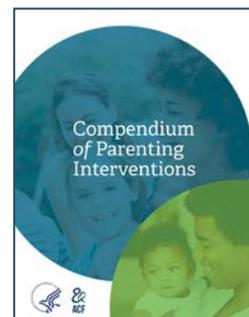


Early childhood programs have an important role in partnering with parents and families to provide capacity-building opportunities on promoting children’s learning and development. They also have the responsibility to do so in way that is scientifically sound and responsive to families’ strengths, needs, and wants.

ACF launched a package of new resources for states, schools, and early childhood programs that make it easier to find and implement parenting interventions that have a research base and are responsive to families’ and communities’ needs.

The package includes:

- [Compendium of Parenting Interventions](#): The compendium profiles parenting interventions for families of children birth to age five that are research-based. It includes information on the cost, training requirements, duration, and intended outcomes of each intervention. The document also reviews the research base for each intervention.
- [Implementing Parenting Interventions in Early Care and Education Settings: A Guidebook for Implementation](#): The guidebook outlines the steps to successfully implement a parenting intervention in an early childhood program, including how to assess an organization’s readiness, assess families’ needs, choose the appropriate intervention, carry out an intervention, and evaluate progress.



These resources are a continuation of ECD’s focus on supporting early childhood programs, so they can better partner with families. Additional resources are available at [Parent, Family and Community Engagement](#). The

site includes the [Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures](#), which help programs assess relationships with families, and many professional development resources on the [Professional-Development-to-go](#) page. In December, a [federal policy statement on family engagement](#) was published for comment in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education.

Early Childhood Health

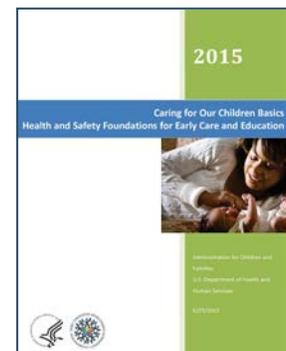


In partnership with OHS, OCC, and outside experts, ECD created a consistent, baseline health and safety standards for use across child care programs, Head Start, and pre-K across the country. Because true quality care cannot be achieved without consistent, basic health and safety assurances in place, ECD is working towards setting a foundation across early care and education from which programs aspire and move toward higher quality, and upon which parents can rely on.

The proposed model standards, [Caring for Our Children Basics: National Health and Safety Standards for Early Care and Education Settings](#), 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 but can serve as a helpful reference for states and other entities.

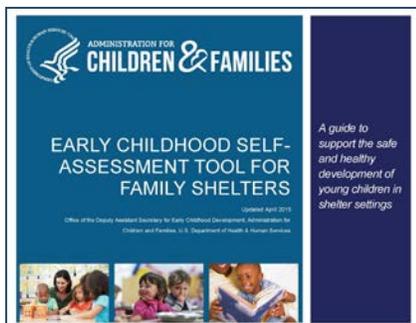
ACF called for public comment to obtain information to help further develop the voluntary set of minimum health and safety standards. [CFOC Basics was published in the Federal Register for public comment.](#)



Expanding Early Care and Education for Homeless Children

Approximately half of the children living in federally-funded emergency and transitional housing programs are age five or younger. In addition to homelessness, these young children are disproportionately more likely than their stably-housed peers to experience an array of risk factors – including child maltreatment, lead toxicity, chronic health conditions, and food insecurity. Therefore, ECD focused on outreach at two national conferences

– the [NAEH](#) Conference (National Alliance to End Homelessness Family and Youth Conference) and the [NAEHCY](#) Conference (National Association for the Education of Children and Youth). The McKinney Vento State Coordinators’ Annual Meeting and other national and local opportunities were also used to share information on early childhood homelessness. In addition, ECD updated [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. See additional materials [here](#).



Ensuring the well-being of our youngest children is essential to the work of the Administration for Children and Families and its Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, especially 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, to reach the goal of ending homelessness among families, children, and youth by 2020. Early childhood members from multiple agencies and departments focused on outreach and awareness materials.

Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Greenberg went to Capitol Hill to speak at the *Congressional Briefing on Child and Family Homelessness*. During the briefing, Acting Assistant Secretary Greenberg highlighted ACF's work on child and family homelessness, including its priorities for 2015. He also described collaborative work that ACF is doing with the Interagency Council on Homelessness, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies in support of the goal to end family homelessness by 2020.

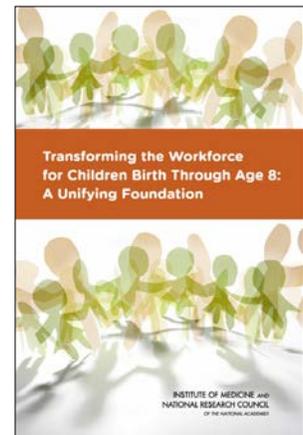


Early Childhood Workforce

ECD, the U.S. Department of Education, and key players worked 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 [Institute of Medicine](#) (IOM) and the National Research Council (NRC) released [Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation](#) in April – one of the most important studies of the workforce in our nation’s history. It looks at Essential Features of Child Development, Principles to Support Quality Practice, and provided A Blueprint for Action.

The report acknowledges the neuroscience supporting children are already learning at birth. It makes clear the complexity of working with children. Health, development, and learning in the early years are rapid and cumulative and are the foundation for all learning. The report also stresses the need to professionalize the



workforce and develop a cohesive plan that puts all segments of the workforce (from family child care providers to pre-K teachers) on the pathway to higher education. It stresses the need for a unified foundation based on sound child development and early learning principles.



The report calls for a commitment to the pathways that will lead to the systems and policies needed to be successful. To quote the committee, “that it is not fast, easy or cheap.” It will require a

strategic progressive trajectory of change to transform the professional landscape, accompanied by significant commitment, mobilization of resources, and innovations in financing. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

Look for more information on the early childhood workforce in 2016.

Investing in an Early Childhood

Training and Technical Assistance System

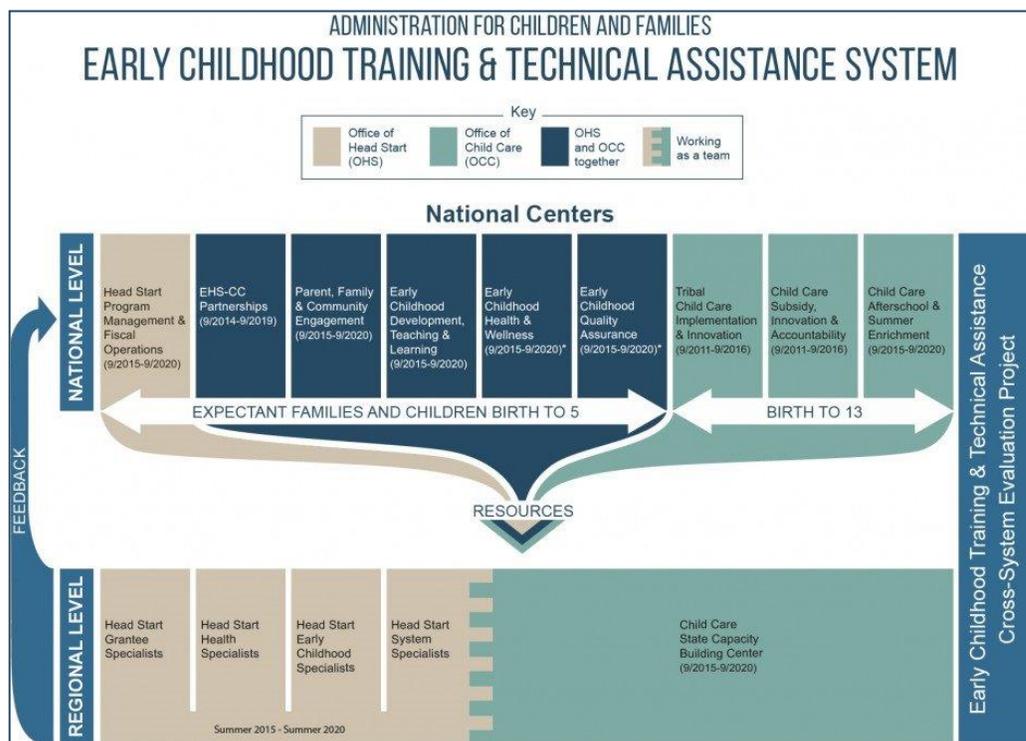
In the fall, the Administration for Children & Families announced the launch of a new, cross-sector Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) system. The new T/TA system is designed to bring together resources from Head Start, child care, and health partners.

The announcement included six new national centers to promote excellence through high quality, practical resources and approaches that build early childhood program capacity and promote consistent practices across communities, states, tribes, and territories. These centers include:

- National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning;
- National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness;
- National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance;
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement;
- National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations; and
- National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment.

The newly awarded centers will join the previously awarded National Center on Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships; National Center on Tribal Child Care Implementation and Innovation; and National Center on Child Care Subsidy Innovation and Accountability. The national centers will work together to ensure a consistently high level of practice in cross-cutting areas such as culturally and linguistically responsive services; data use and continuous improvement; social, emotional, and behavioral health; and supports for children with disabilities and their families. To support social, emotional, and behavioral health, the new national centers partnered with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on the National Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation.

In addition to the T/TA system launch, an Early Childhood T/TA Cross-System Evaluation Project was funded and is supporting ACF in continuous quality improvement of T/TA services, and the system as a whole.



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



[Early Educator Central](#) is a project jointly administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF, Offices of Child Care and Head Start. With the new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, a major focus of Early Educator Central (EEC) is the infant-toddler workforce and their need to meet Head Start teacher standards within 18 months of the grant award. In addition, reauthorization of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) puts into place requirements for basic health and safety training.



EEC links users to coursework and resources that have been financed through the federal government, are available for no or low cost, and lead to credentials or degrees. The site targets a millennial entry level infant toddler workforce, as well as those who support them. These include administrators of early childhood programs; trainers and coaches; higher education professionals and coursework developers; and professional development (PD) systems leaders. Marketing of the site included a “[Spread the Word](#)” page with links to social media and a [YouTube video](#) in English and Spanish that was viewed more than 165,000 times in the final two month period of performance.



Investing in Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships

In 2015, ECD announced 275 new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) and Expansion grantees to expand the quality and number of early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers. Grantees are partnering with more than 1,100 local child care centers and 600 family child care programs, with additional partners coming online each month. When the grantees reach full enrollment over the next few months, they will be serving 32,000 infants and toddlers. In addition, we estimate that more than 5,300 other children in the same classroom with EHS-CCP children will benefit from low teacher to child ratios and class sizes, qualified teachers receiving ongoing supervision and coaching, and broad scale parent engagement activities.



- With at least one grant in every state, the average was five grants per state.
- There were 14 Tribal programs and 7 Migrant and Seasonal programs awarded.
- Approximately 86% of the grants were awarded to existing Early Head Start or Head Start grantees and about 14% were new grantees to the programs.

To ensure that grantees started with a solid foundation, ACF convened Orientation Sessions for all the grantees and their partners.

- A Virtual Pre-Orientation platform was available and included a number of resources to help grantees with initial implementation planning.
- Nearly 2,000 participants attended the six regional in-person Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Orientation Sessions held between April and May.

During the summer, the National Center on Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships facilitated online training events covering 15 different implementation topics through the Virtual Post Orientation platform. The National Center also launched online *Communities of Practice* over the summer for several different grantee groups:

- Implementation and Fiscal Consultants;
- Grantees New to Early Head Start; and
- State Grantees.

The Office of Child Care has a lead role in supporting the *Communities of Practice* for the several State and Territory public agency grants that were awarded in partnership with the Office of Head Start. The seven state grants (Alabama, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and the Northern Marinas Islands) offer an opportunity to support large scale efforts to increase the availability of high quality infant and toddler care within state systems. Each grant reflects the unique needs of the individual states and the efforts and activities of the child care and Head Start partnerships to increase access of infants and toddlers in high quality settings.



Monthly conference calls were convened to facilitate discussions between states. In the spirit of full partnership, state level representation from both OCC programs and OHS programs participated. While the goal of the calls was to allow these unique grantees an opportunity to share ideas and thoughts, they also afforded an opportunity to learn about the state practices that

are important to supporting a high quality early childhood system.

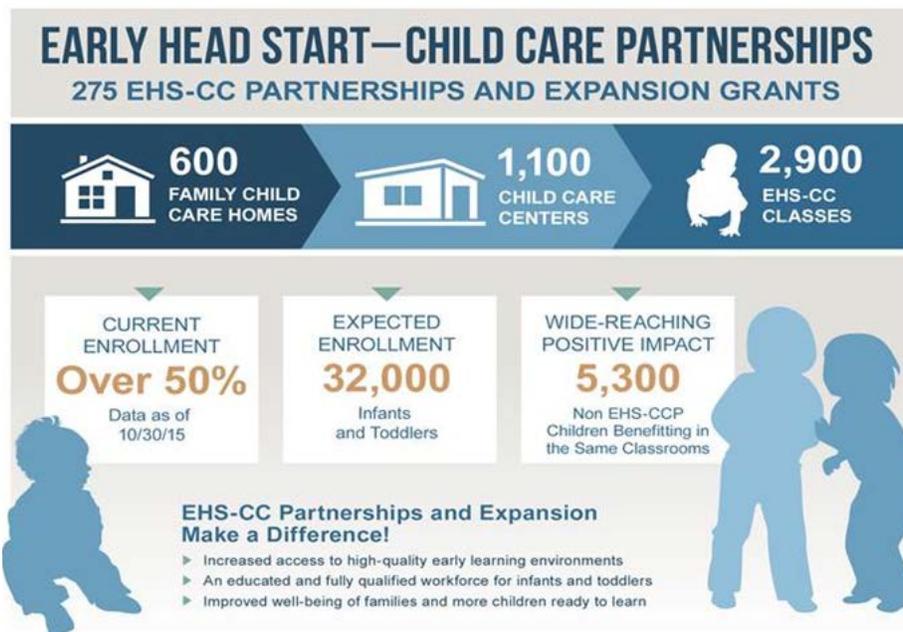
An Information Memorandum (IM) was released in August to provide program and policy guidance for grantees and partners on the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships. The IM specifically addressed various issues and questions raised by grantees during the orientation sessions and start-up phase of the grants. The IM provided policy and program guidance on the following topics: Seamless and Comprehensive Full-Day, Full-Year Services; Partnership Agreements; Layered Funding; Child Care Subsidies; Citizenship and Immigration Status; Child Care Center Ratios and Group Sizes; Staffing and Planning Shifts for Staff; Staff Qualifications and Credential Requirements; and Federal Oversight and Monitoring.

Beginning in July, ACF conducted 236 baseline onsite visits to the grantees and existing partnership sites, gathering information from the following areas: environmental health and safety, fiscal management systems, and eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance. ACF used baseline assessment information to identify technical assistance needs and other support needs to ensure grantees and partners were on track to meet EHS requirements at 18 months. The Quality Assurance Division (QAD) completed 238 fiscal/eligibility baselines and 218 EnvHS baselines. QAD will begin monitoring these grants in FY2017.



The Offices of Head Start (OHS) and Child Care (OCC) regional staff worked closely across offices to support the grantees' early implementation efforts. Staff conducted initial site visits over the summer to provide

additional support and engaged a variety of stakeholders at the state and local level to respond to grantees' needs. These stakeholders included the Head Start Collaboration Offices, CCDF Administrators, state licensing offices, technical assistance staff and other organizations.



To maximize learning opportunities from these grants, ACF funded a national study of the Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships, managed by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE). Final evaluation design plans were completed this summer. The study will include surveys of grantee directors, a sample of the child care center or family child care partners, and in-depth case studies of a small number of grantees.

In November, ECD hosted a national webinar to share the

lessons learned and early successes from the first year of implementation. The webinar included presentations from ECD leadership and grantees from Georgia and Ohio that shared information about their implementation efforts. The webinar kicked off a broader external communications strategy to share grantee and program office highlights with key stakeholders.

Hurricane Sandy: Three Years Later - Repairing & Rebuilding Head Start Centers

Super Storm Sandy struck the East Coast of the United States on October 29, 2012 and caused extensive damage from Florida to Maine, with New Jersey and New York sustaining the most damage. Sandy was the second costliest storm in U.S. history, causing \$68 billion worth of damage, draining state funds and stretching limited resources.

OHS received nearly \$95 million in supplemental funding for recovery activities ranging from minor repairs to complete rebuilding of facilities substantially destroyed by the storm. September 30, 2015 marked the end of the availability of supplemental funding for Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief activities. Funded recovery activities included emergency response immediately following the storm to understand the extent and impact of damage to programs and locate impacted children and families. Mental health services were an important aspect of the recovery efforts as children and families struggled to cope with the extensive loss of property and dislocation caused by the storm. Head Start and Early Head Start services were quickly resumed in new or temporary locations and, in some cases, by providing home based services while damaged centers were evaluated and repaired.



Over the past three years, a significant amount of effort has been devoted to repairing and rebuilding damaged centers in several seriously-impacted communities, including Hoboken and Atlantic City, NJ as well as Coney Island, Long Beach, Rockaway Beach and Brighton Beach, NY. One of the first Head Start centers to be rebuilt is the Long Beach facility, which is expected to begin serving children in the spring of 2016.



In the fiscal year 2014 and 2015, \$25.4 million was spent on repairing Head Start centers and for the initial design process to rebuild several Head Start Centers. The lengthy design process involves obtaining city permits, environmental studies, development of architectural and engineering plans, real estate purchases of land, and many other critical activities. In the fiscal years 2016 and 2017, nearly \$70 million will be spent on construction costs.

During 2015, there were three ground-breaking ceremonies to celebrate the hard work of rebuilding Head Start centers that will revitalize areas that were devastated by the storm. In May, Gateway Community Action



Partnership held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new facility in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The \$22.6 million center received Hurricane Sandy supplemental funds. The storm severely damaged four of the five Head Start centers in Atlantic City, displacing 197 children, and reduced the number of Head Start centers from five to two. Construction will be completed by December of 2016. The three-story facility will include 20 classrooms serving 300 students in Head Start preschool programs for children ages three to five, and Early Head Start programs for infants and toddlers. The new center will be a haven for Atlantic City's child education, family resources and a hub of community activities. It is ideally situated in close

proximity to AtlantiCare, a public library, county and city government offices, churches, a supermarket, and the county community college.

The HOPES Community Action Partnership, Inc. (HOPES), in Hoboken, New Jersey received over \$12.1 million in Hurricane Sandy supplemental funds to rebuild the Head Start center after it suffered extensive water damage to classroom facilities and administrative offices from floodwaters made up of rain, river water, and sewage that engulfed much of Hoboken. Federal, state, and community leaders in New Jersey, as well as parents and Head Start staff, attended a ground breaking ceremony in August for the new building, which is expected to be completed by September of 2016. It will allow HOPES to return center-based Head Start services back to the level offered before Hurricane Sandy hit ground. The building will have a rooftop playground, socialization areas, and office space for staff.

In December, a ground-breaking ceremony by Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens marked the start of construction for the future Catholic Charities Charles F. Murphy Early Childhood Development Center in Coney Island. The new center replaces the Catholic Charities Madeleine Jones Head Start Center, which was badly damaged and closed soon after the storm hit ground. It is expected that construction of the new center will be completed by the spring of 2017. The new facility received



\$15 million in Hurricane Sandy supplemental funds and will feature a three-story steel-reinforced building with a defensible ground level to protect against future flooding. The ground level will contain a kitchen, a multi-purpose room, and various administrative and utility spaces. The second and third floors will feature five classrooms and miscellaneous office areas. There will be a rooftop playground, with direct access from classrooms.

State Advisory Councils

Since 2009, ECD worked with 44 states and 5 territories (referred to as “states”) to implement their early childhood State Advisory Council (SAC) 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.

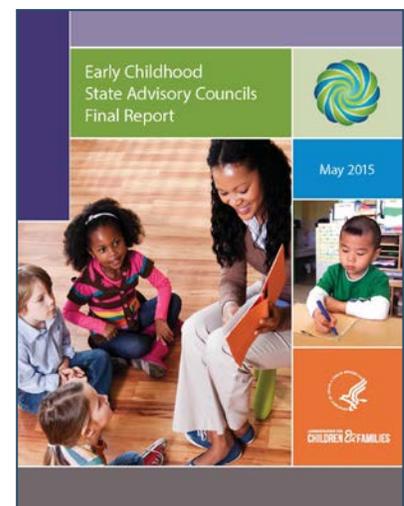
ECD published a final report on the State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care grant in May 2015. The [final report](#) provides information on states’ individual grant allocation amounts and expenditures, council membership, trends and states’ achievements related to the seven required grant activities, future work of the councils, and individual state and territory profiles. All states completed the seven legislative grant requirements.

Major takeaways from the final report include:

- All 49 states completed a statewide needs assessment on the quality and availability of high quality early childhood services and programs: 38 states or 78% conducted a comprehensive needs assessments while 11 states or 22% conducted targeted-focused needs assessments to address specific concerns.
- To advance the infrastructure of the early childhood workforce, 29 states or 59% developed core knowledge competencies, 18 states or 37% developed a professional development registry, and 22 states or 45% developed a career ladder or lattice. States also used SAC funds to align early childhood curricula in higher education and establish articulation agreements for the early childhood workforce.
- 62% of states completed a workforce study or survey.
- States used SAC funds to create or improve early learning standards for children birth to age five, align program standards, provide valuable information to parents on how to support the multiple needs of young children, improve health and mental health services, enhance comprehensive assessment systems, develop Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, and advance the development of integrated early childhood data collection systems.

States had to coordinate early childhood programs, services, and policies while also eliminating barriers to collaboration and avoiding duplication of services. This provided a better understanding of their early childhood populations and positioned them to pool resources and leverage knowledge. Unprecedented early childhood coordination and collaborations at the state level took place under this grant:

- Seventy one percent (71%) of SACs included representation from the Governor’s office at SAC meetings; 45% of SACs included participation from state legislators.



- Although states could choose one of the two programs to participate on their councils, as many as 48 states (98%) included an official from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C Early Intervention program to enhance services offered to children with developmental delays from birth to age 3; and as many as 45 states (92%) included an official from the Section 619, Part B of IDEA to increase services to 3-5 year olds with special needs.
- In addition to the legislatively required SAC membership, some states also included representatives from business, philanthropy, local government, abuse and neglect prevention and migrant and tribal groups to participate on their councils.
- In 46 states (94%), home visiting officials participated in SAC activities.
- In 34 states (69%), SACs reported that their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) priorities changed as a result of data findings that came out of the SAC needs assessment which has resulted in better use of CCDF funds.

Investing in Child Care

The [Office of Child Care \(OCC\)](#) supports low-income families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. It 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 fit their needs and will prepare their children to succeed in school. Here are a few highlights from 2015.



Rachel Schumacher
Director
Office of Child Care

The CCDBG Act of 2014

OCC entered 2015 with a new and exciting charge. In November of 2014, with broad bipartisan support, Congress passed the [Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014](#) (CCDBG). Reauthorizing the CCDF program, and making changes to it, will help more children access high quality child care and better support parents working toward financial self-sufficiency. The CCDBG Act represents a significant shift in the American child care landscape, and 2015 was dominated by the effort to work with our grantees and partners to begin implementation of the new law.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 has wide-ranging impacts on a variety of child care issues, including coordination with partners, consumer education, training and professional development, health and safety regulations, monitoring and inspection, criminal background checks, quality improvement, and eligibility determination. The changes are exciting and complex, and OCC has been working closely with states, tribes, and territories as we move toward full implementation of the law.

CCDF Rule Readiness

Implementing the new law is a significant undertaking for all grantees, but some states, tribes, and territories have current policies that more closely align with those new CCDF requirements than others. OCC made



it a 2015 priority to get a clearer picture of each CCDF grantee’s “readiness” to implement the new law to identify the best way to support their efforts.

To that end, OCC regional and technical assistance staff conducted approximately 55 onsite visits across the country to 36 states and 18 tribes to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation of the new law. During those visits, OCC met with each CCDF Lead Agency as well as other state governmental agencies, nongovernmental agencies, and partners that the grantee works with to administer its CCDF program and comply with the new requirements. We also facilitated conversations to guide grantees through an assessment of existing policies and practices in order to identify areas of compliance and potential gaps. In addition to informing OCC of state, tribe, and territory readiness, these visits helped strengthen the grantees’ foundational knowledge of the law as they continue to work towards compliance.

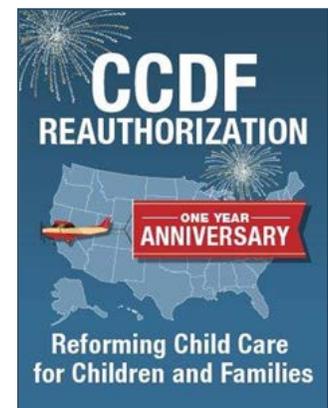
CCDF 2016-2018 Plans

OCC depends on CCDF plans from states, tribes, and territories to inform on grantee activity and compliance, as well as new and interesting practices states are developing. The new law required a new Preprint for the Plan that reflects the changes in the law and the oversight they require. Following the passage of the new law, grantees and other stakeholders raised concern that a July 1, 2015 due date for new CCDF Plans would not allow for comprehensive planning for the next three years. New requirements in the law and Plan also require new and different information from state, tribes, and territories, as well as information and data from additional partners. As a result, OCC extended the deadline to March 1, 2016. This allows states and territories an opportunity to engage partner agencies and stakeholders, brief legislatures on needed statutory changes, and develop meaningful implementation plans. In addition, OCC offered multiple opportunities over the course of 2015 for CCDF Administrators, national partners, and the general public to provide input and public comment on the CCDF Plans and what kinds of information would be collected. States and territories will submit their Plans by March 1, 2016.

New Policy Guidance

Like any new law, the CCDBG Act of 2014 requires clarifying guidance around many of its requirements. In late 2015, OCC published a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) related to the new law, and the process of publishing new program regulations will continue into 2016. In the interim, OCC produced additional policy resources to support grantee efforts around the law:

- [Supply Building Information Memorandum](#): When reauthorizing the CCDBG Act, Congress included provisions to build the supply of high-quality care in underserved areas and for particular populations, including infants and toddlers and children who receive care during nontraditional hours. CCDF grantees have the flexibility to determine the best way to build supply in their state, as different strategies will work better in different places. The IM discusses possible options, including:
 - Provider payment rates that support quality;
 - Financial incentives, including startup funds or higher payment rates for providers meeting supply;
 - Using direct contracts and grants to serve under-supplied populations;
 - Expanding high-quality family child care;

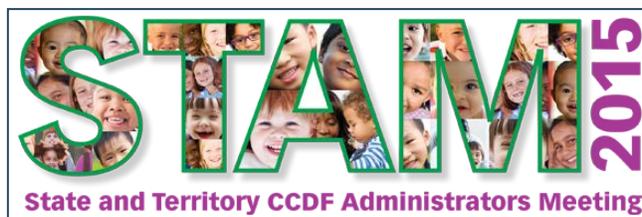


- Expanding the supply of high-quality teachers and caregivers through scholarships and ongoing TA; and
 - Supporting Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships.
- **Changes in data collection:** As OCC moves past implementation of the new law in the coming years, focus will need to shift toward monitoring the progress being made. Good information will be essential to this effort, and OCC has already begun rethinking the data needed to be collected to paint the clearest picture of the child care system. In 2015, OCC asked for comment on proposed changes to some of the reporting requirements. These changes include data elements explicitly required by the newly-reauthorized child care law (homeless status, number of child fatalities), as well as other changes that will help OCC and states implement reauthorization (including data on children with disabilities, provider quality, date of most recent health and safety inspection, etc.). In 2016, OCC hopes to finalize a set of changes that will, in the coming years, show what is and is not working in child care systems across the country.

Child Care Technical Assistance Network

Throughout 2015, the Child Care Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN) worked with and on behalf of OCC to build grantee capacity around the systems and topics prioritized in the new law. The CCTAN combined universal approaches with more intensive technical assistance targeted at specific grantees or groups of grantees depending on specific need.

The largest example of universal TA was the 2015 State and Territory Administrators Meeting (STAM). Nearly 400 in-person attendees and over 100 remote attendees participated in STAM.



Attendees included a cross-section of state early childhood leaders, including CCDF administrators, Head Start Collaboration directors, those involved in Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grants, and State Early Childhood Advisory Councils. Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell addressed the group to highlight the importance of early care and education among the President’s priorities. The theme of the conference was “Strategies and Partnerships for a New Era in Child Care”, and plenaries and workshops were designed to encourage innovative thinking to address challenges in the child care field.

In addition to STAM, universal TA centered on resources and tools related to the new program requirements. Those resources include:

- [Videos on the importance of continuity of child care and the benefits of monitoring child care settings](#);
- Issue briefs on [license-exempt care](#) and [consumer education](#); and
- A resource on [Family-Friendly Policies To Improve Program Integrity](#), to help CCDF administrators think through the balance between new eligibility policies and program error rates.

CCTAN teams also worked on targeted and intense TA with all CCDF grantees. As a result, we’ve seen movement and improved policies across the country in areas such as 12-month eligibility, licensing and monitoring, health and safety training, homelessness, and emergency preparedness. OCC and our TA partners continued technical assistance to states to support their efforts to increase child care program integrity and ensure that funds are used to benefit eligible children and families. The CCDF error rate of 5.7 percent in FY 2015 remained below the 10 percent compliance threshold established by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Let's Move! Child Care

OCC partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop the [Let's Move! Child Care](#) (LMCC) 2015 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. Participation in LMCC continues to be very high. At the end of 2015, 17,638 providers registered and 1,008,353 children were served in participating programs.



As part of the LMCC public/private partnerships, OCC continued collaborating with partners to increase the number of providers who meet the LMCC goals.

OCC partners included:

- The National Indian Child Care Association, to highlight traditional foods in Indian Country at the ACF Tribal Conference;
- CDC on the Celebration of LMCC 4th Anniversary to reach out to child care providers and provide toolkits to selected providers completing LMCC Action Plans; and
- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), to recognize achievements of centers, family child care providers, and CACFP sponsoring agencies at the 2015 National CACFP Sponsors Association Conference.

Family Child Care

Family child care is a critical and undervalued part of the child care community. The CCDBG Act emphasizes building the supply and stability of high quality family child care providers, providing us with a new opportunity to highlight the importance of family child care (FCC) and the ways it can fit need the needs of families. Any effort to build child care supply and meet the needs of all families must include family child care, but providers who serve families on this small scale need additional federal and state support to meet CCDF requirements.

In order to learn more about the most pressing issues, OCC focused on talking with and listening to the FCC community – providers, stakeholders, and leaders of CCDF systems that can support family child care networks.

Highlights included:

- **A listening session with 21 current and former FCC providers:** participants suggested several strategies for making sure FCC is recognized as states implement new requirements. Some strategies identified include making sure states consider the unique needs of FCC as they allocate quality funds; help states understand different models of how to include FCC in quality improvement efforts; build a supply of qualified trainers who understand FCC and use experienced FCC providers to facilitate peer-to-peer trainings; have a FCC liaison in state offices that understand FCC issues, needs and can speak to those as initiatives are developed and rolled out; and have tools, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring to support FCC providers through quality improvement.



- **A listening session with FCC stakeholders** who work with FCC providers to learn about issues from the systems perspective (subsidy, quality improvement, professional development, and monitoring) about needs of FCC.
- **A session at the annual State/Territory Administrator’s Meeting (STAM)** focused on FCC and the role it plays in supporting infants and toddlers.
- **Additional calls with FCC providers and FCC networks** to continue to learn about the issues faced by FCC providers and the resources and supports they need.

The first result of the outreach and listening activities [is a new resource](#) highlighting the importance of family child care in meeting the needs of families, particularly for infants and toddlers. The document incorporates issues raised during these listening sessions and will serve as a framework for continued efforts to build supports for FCC as States implement efforts to build the supply of high quality child care.



Investing in Head Start for 50 Years



OFFICE OF HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families



Blanca Enriquez, PhD
Director
Office of Head Start

In 2015, Head Start celebrated 50 years of promoting the school readiness of children from low-income families. The program provides comprehensive services including education, health, mental health, oral health, and nutrition and parent engagement to enhance children’s cognitive, social and emotional development. Over one 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 32 million low-income children and their families have benefited from enrollment in Head Start center based, home based, family child care or combination options, depending on the needs of the local community. Here are a few highlights from 2015.

- **Development and publication of [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five](#):** The Office of Head Start released the newly revised *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five*, that is designed to represent the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. This Framework replaces the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework for 3–5 Year Olds, issued in 2010. This new framework is grounded in a comprehensive body of research regarding what young children should know and be able to do during these formative years.

See [Getting Started with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five](#) and the full [Framework here](#).

CENTRAL DOMAINS	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

- **Early Childhood Curricula Consumer Reports**: In addition to playing a major role in the new Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning added Mathematics, Language and Literacy, and Social Emotional curricula reviews to its suite of Early Childhood Curricula consumer reports. These reports are used by programs in selecting, implementing and aligning both comprehensive and domain specific curricula. They also assist programs in analyzing the contributing factors to child progress data.
- **Planned Language Approach**: Among other resources, the [Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness](#) published the Planned Language Approach - a comprehensive, systemic, research based approach to supporting optimal language and literacy development for children who speak English and for those who are dual language learners. The center also produced [Making It Work](#), a guide connecting culture and experiences in many American Indian Alaska Native Head Start classrooms and communities with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.
- **Early Educator Central**: Partnering with the Office of Child Care, Early Educator Central – a repository of professional development resources and opportunities to promote the professional development and credentials of infant and toddler teachers was launched. All of the resources were developed through the public domain. **See collaborative efforts on page 19 for more information.**
- Reinvigorated services to Early Head Start and Head Start children with disabilities and attention to advocacy and inclusion in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & Department of Education policy paper on [Inclusion](#).
 - Initiated series of webinars delivered through the [Head Start Center on Quality Teaching and Learning](#) (QTL) directed at Head Start disabilities services coordinators and featured experts on inclusion and early childhood special education and related services;
 - Presented at the Inclusion Institute on Head Start services to children with disabilities; and
 - Developed papers describing Head Start exemplars of high quality inclusive practices.

Block Party Celebrates Head Start’s 50th Birthday

In commemoration of Head Start’s 50th anniversary and Head Start Awareness Month, the Office of Head Start, National Head Start Association and Head Start centers nationwide celebrated with a [National 50th Birthday Party](#) on October



14, 2015. Head Start block parties were hosted in neighborhoods, bringing out Head Start children, families, and community leaders. Central office employees got to participate in the National Anniversary Celebration at the Campagna Center Head Start and Early Head Start program in Alexandria, Virginia.



The event was webcasted throughout the nation. We also had [Elmo](#) with us!

Fifty years ago, our nation committed to open windows of opportunity for at risk children. Since the summer of 1965, more than 32 million children have benefitted from Head Start’s comprehensive services – they have become business women and men, professors, teachers, lawyers, elected officials, foundation Presidents, Grammy-winning

musicians, poets, and parents.

To honor Head Start’s 50th anniversary, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) led a year-long celebration to commemorate the shared commitment to ensure every child is given a foundation for future success, in school and in life.

Program Integrity and Operations



The Office of Head Start’s 12 regional offices currently manage over 2,000 grants. Each

Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership grant requires ongoing oversight by federal program and fiscal staff to assure they provide the level and quality of services intended. They also assure appropriate expenditures of federal funds. This oversight involves a variety of activities, including the review of grant applications; the issuing funding actions appropriate to the budget and project periods of the grant; meeting grantee training and technical assistance needs through direct management of the region’s T&TA contracts; and providing follow up reviews for issues of noncompliance and deficiency identified through the aligned monitoring

system. Additionally, program staff have regular monthly communication with each grantee and conduct site visits to have a full understanding of the grantee’s community and program model. Program staff act as panelists for competitive grant competitions, and negotiate for final awards. When the grantee in a community changes, staff work to assure the best transitions possible for those communities. Regional staff also administer the Head Start Collaboration grants. Finally, the Office of Head Start staff present at national, state and regional conferences and meetings.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) supports the department’s Program Integrity Initiative. This work focuses 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. OHS supports the implementation of



“I’m a Head Start kid...Thanks to an excellent teacher, Mrs. Pack, I did get a head start. I learned to love learning, and that love has stayed with me my whole life. In fact, when my mom called my Head Start teacher, she said every day I came bounding in the door with the same question: ‘What are we going to learn today?’”

– Secretary Burwell at the NHSA Celebration

the new audit circular, cost principles, and fiscal regulations effective in December of 2014. OHS anticipates further guidance on these regulations will be forthcoming from the department in 2016.

Head Start State Collaboration Offices

Revised priorities were set for the Head Start Collaboration Offices that align more fully with the goals of this administration. For the first time, ACF developed and piloted consistent annual reporting, submitted to OMB for approval, and published it in the Federal Register in June of 2015. This allows for a more complete and consistent reporting of collaboration activities across the country.

Data and Information Systems

The Office of Head Start worked closely with the Office of Administration through the change of funding award issuance systems. Grantees continue to submit their grant applications to OHS through the Head Start Enterprise



System through this innovative approach which now links directly to GrantSolutions, the award management system currently used by eight other federal departments. This integration provides OHS with a high level of data quality and integrity in managing its large grant portfolio, and takes OHS solidly into the future as data needs and systems continue to evolve and grow. Additionally, the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) was updated to provide OHS with a better picture of Head Start’s work with families. Programs will report this new data in 2016 as part of the PIR annual report.

Head Start’s mass communications helped members of the Head Start and early childhood community find, understand, and share resources at the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC):

- The ECLKC saw 1.7 million people make 3.2 million visits in 2015; a 12 percent increase in all time visitors to the site and a 20 percent increase in visits over the previous year. The more engaging information also led users to visit more pages once at the site. The number of pages viewed per session increased by 7 percent, and the average session duration increased by 8 percent. The number of repeat ECLKC users increased by 6 percent.
- The ECLKC website posted over 400 new pages and assets, including resources from the National Training and Technical Assistance Centers, 50th anniversary materials, and information on the [Head Start Program Performance Standards Notice of Proposed Rule Making](#).
- OHS reached more people through emails using improved strategies, emphasis on plain language, more newsletters, and targeted subscription lists. More than 300,000 visits to the ECLKC were generated by an OHS email; an increase of 46 percent over the previous year.
- The ECLKC website engaged more Spanish language users, doubling the number of visitors from the previous year, through website refinements, new social media and email strategies. The ECLKC’s Spanish language materials were viewed 118,000 times by 81,000 unique visitors in 2015.
- The ECLKC website was moved to the cloud environment, resulting in the decommissioning of two physical hosting locations. This transition reduced response time for the ECLKC by 25 percent, and resulted in a cost savings of over \$30,000 annually.
- Nearly 30% of ECLKC sessions occurred on mobile or tablet devices, reflecting a return on our 2014 investment of moving the website to a responsive design.

Designation Renewal System 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.

The Designation Renewal System (DRS) specifies seven conditions (educational, health, nutritional, social needs of the children and families they serve, meet applicable program requirements, and financial management requirements and standards) that HHS will consider when determining whether a grantee is delivering a high-quality and comprehensive program and, therefore, may be renewed without having to compete for continued funding. If a grantee is found not meeting all seven conditions, then they will be required to compete for continued funding.



- Of the first DRS cohort, 125 Head Start grantees were required to compete for continued federal funding. All competitors 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.
- The second DRS cohort, 124 Head Start and Early Head start grantees, were notified that the grants for their service area would be open to competition. As a result, 120 agencies were awarded Head Start and/or Early Head Start grants.
- The third DRS cohort, 105 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, was notified in February of 2014 that the grants for their service area would be open to competition. As a result, 105 agencies were awarded Head Start and/or Early Head Start grants.
- The fourth DRS cohort, 90 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees (not including Tribal), was notified in December of 2014 that the grants for their service area would 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 of 2016.

In addition, as part of the DRS process for American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN) programs, a total of 79 tribal grantees have engaged in tribal consultations, plans to improve quality, and a re-evaluation of their grant resulting in a subsequent grant award.

Monitoring

The Quality Assurance Division (QAD) introduced two new tools as part of the Aligned Monitoring System. These monitoring tools covered Comprehensive Services and School Readiness (CSSR), and Leadership Governance and Management Systems (LGMS). These tools were designed to assess compliance of each grantee while measuring the quality of the services they provide to participating children and families. OHS has increased its focus on quality 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 has given OHS the ability to look at a grantee's performance each year and provide each of them a

comprehensive summary report. With the addition of the two new tools to the system, the core performance areas are:

- **Environmental Health and Safety** (with new compliance measure groupings to enhance reporting for grantees and regional offices as well as reorganized targeted questions to reflect broader subgroups and provide more effective data);
- **Leadership, Governance, and Management Systems;**
- **Fiscal Integrity** (enhancements to the protocol included updates based on the Uniform Guidance provided by OHS);
- **Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance** (updated targeted questions to reflect new eligibility and documentation requirements);
- **Comprehensive Services and School Readiness;** and
- **Teacher-Child Interactions** (as addressed through the CLASS™ observation instrument).



QAD also designed the Aligned Monitoring System (AMS) to provide different review processes based on the grantee’s history: the Comprehensive Monitoring Process and the Differential Monitoring Process. Sixty-two grantees were eligible for differential monitoring, while 610 received comprehensive monitoring.

All five-year grants were monitored using the AMS, which continues into FY 2016. This year, 29 grantees were in Year 4 of their 5-year grant cycle. OHS also implemented a new methodology to review all centers and classrooms during the Environmental Health and Safety review event.

QAD developed the Aligned Monitoring Virtual Expo as a primary source of information to educate and train grantees and regional staff on the AMS. The Aligned Monitoring Virtual Expo was designed to provide its 5,193 registered users with a virtual forum space to learn about the new AMS and

interact with OHS monitoring experts. Features of the virtual expo include videos, interactive training modules, electronic Library with downloadable documents (protocols, FAQs, etc.), live “Question & Answer” sessions, and office hours to chat with monitoring experts. The virtual expo was expanded in 2015 to include a dedicated space and tools for regional offices, training and technical assistance providers, and information and training modules on the two newest AMS protocols. The total number of registered users increased to 6,727.

The office of Head Start conducted 1,310 monitoring review events in the 2015 calendar year:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • 535 EnvHS Reviews | • 15 LGMS Reviews |
| • 299 Fiscal/ERSEA Reviews | • 3 Other reviews |
| • 267 CLASS Reviews | • 9 Follow-up reviews |
| • 120 CSSR Reviews | • 62 HSKI-C reviews |

Investing in Tribal Early Childhood Programs

Tribal Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program



Since 2010, ACF has worked in close partnership with the Health Resources Services Administration to implement the Tribal Home Visiting program. This program, which is part of the larger Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, has 25 grantees in three

“cohorts” in 14 states across the country. For more information about Tribal Home Visiting, visit the website [here](#).

Highlights of 2015:

- The MIECHV program, including Tribal Home Visiting, was reauthorized through the Fiscal Year 2017 as part of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015. ACF announced two new forecasted funding opportunities under the Tribal Home Visiting program for the Fiscal Year 2016: the [Tribal MIECHV Development and Implementation Grants](#) and the [Tribal MIECHV Implementation and Expansion Grants](#).
- A series of stakeholder listening sessions were held to redesign the performance measurement requirements for MIECHV grantees. Tribal grantee-specific listening sessions were also held and a Tribal Home Visiting performance measurement system is being finalized. This will improve ACF’s ongoing understanding of individual and collective grantee performance. It will also assist with targeting technical assistance efforts; generate data that will be useful for grantees’ own implementation and continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts and understanding of the effects of their programs; build grantee capacity and ownership around data collection and use; and improve both ACF’s and grantees’ abilities to tell a story about the Tribal Home Visiting program.
- In partnership with technical assistance providers, Programmatic Assistance to Tribal Home Visiting (PATH) and [Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute](#) (TEI), ACF began a series of structured on-site visits to Tribal Home Visiting grantees in the final year of their projects.
- The Tribal Home Visiting Program supports grantee data collection by providing individualized and universal technical assistance. Grantees received support in the analysis and submission of performance measurement data, 3-day in-person workshops on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), and through CQI communities of learning. The program also supported grantees’ local evaluation efforts by providing individualized technical assistance and universal technical assistance through evaluation communities of learning around rigorous evaluation methods.



The Tribal Home Visiting Program and grantees were featured at two Hill briefings, one sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Committee on Native American Child Health on March 3rd, and one sponsored by the Congressional Baby Caucus on November 5th. Grantees’ work was also highlighted at ACF’s November meeting, “The Way Forward II: Measurement for Human Service Programs in AIAN Communities.”



- In collaboration with PATH, the Tribal Home Visiting dissemination strategic plan was executed. This included improvements to the Tribal Home Visiting program page on the ACF website, creating a Tribal Home Visiting Newsletter, publishing an issue brief: [Empowering Families Through Tribal Home Visiting](#), and finalizing the [Tribal Home Visiting](#)

[Dissemination Toolkit](#) – a set of tools and resources to support grantee dissemination efforts and increase awareness of Tribal Home Visiting to multiple audiences.

- PATH has also led a series of communities of learning that feature sections of the Tribal Home Visiting Dissemination Toolkit. These communities of learning are grantee-driven, and designed to be a forum to share products, including success stories, digital stories, and brochures and postcards. Grantees have also shared strategies to utilize resources for recruiting families, local branding of their programs, and presenting to tribal council.
- Grantees received targeted and universal technical assistance from PATH including recruitment and retention of families, developing program policies and procedures, and cultural adaptations of home visiting models and dissemination.



Tribal Early Learning Initiative

In August, while visiting the Flathead Reservation in Montana, Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell announced [six new awards](#) under the [Tribal Early Learning Initiative](#), a partnership between ACF and American Indian tribes with Head Start/Early Head Start, Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), and Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (Tribal MIECHV) programs. The awardees include the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Montana, Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Oregon, the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Wisconsin. These grants enable more tribal communities to do the innovative work necessary to coordinate their early learning and development programs and boost the quality of services offered to children and families from pregnancy-to-kindergarten entry.

The TELI began as a pilot in 2012, working with 4 tribal communities. In response to the success of the pilot, ECD provided a new opportunity for expansion of TELI in 2015. Eligible entities who applied were Tribal MIECHV grantees that also have a Region XI Head Start and/or Early Head Start program and a Tribal CCDF program in at least one of the communities they serve.



The purposes of the TELI are to:

- Support tribes to coordinate tribal early learning and development programs;
- Create and support seamless, high-quality early-childhood systems;
- Raise the quality of services to children and families across the pregnancy-to-kindergarten entry continuum; and
- Identify and break down barriers to collaboration and systems improvement.

Healthy and Strong Tribal Communities by Sylvia Mathews Burwell, HHS Secretary was posted on [HHS.Gov](#) on August 20, 2015.

A blog by Linda Smith was featured on the [White House Rural Council website](#).

In addition, [Tribal Early Learning Initiative: A Collaboration for Success](#), was released, highlighting the innovative work of the first group of TELI grantees: the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Pueblo of San Felipe, and the White Earth Nation. Over the past three years, these TELI tribes have made major strides in improving their early childhood services and ensuring more children and their families are receiving the high-quality early experiences they need to thrive. Examples of grantees' work include:

- Creating a single tribal early learning program enrollment form to facilitate the enrollment process for families;
- Selecting common assessment tools to more easily compare data across programs;
- Holding joint professional development trainings for early childhood teachers; and
- Investing in data systems to allow for better coordination and sharing of relevant child and family data across programs

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center

The [Tribal Early Childhood Research Center \(TRC\)](#) is dedicated to partnering with Tribal Head Start, Tribal Home Visiting, Tribal Child Care, and other tribal early childhood leaders to advance the field of tribal early childhood research through culturally- and scientifically-grounded research and training. TRC activities are designed to equip both researchers and tribal early childhood program partners to harness the power of research to support healthy early development in tribal communities. For more information, see www.tribalearlychildhood.org.



Highlights of 2015:

- Results from the Survey of Well-Being of Young Children (SWYC) Tribal Feasibility Study: The Survey of Well-Being of Young Children (SWYC) is an available screener for social- emotional and developmental delays among children 0-5 years old. The TRC SWYC Community of Learning designed and carried out a qualitative analysis of the SWYC's potential for use in diverse tribal early childhood contexts, including stakeholder interest, cultural appropriateness, and administrative feasibility. Results of this study were published in the *Infant Mental Health Journal* (volume 36(5), 483-505) and offer both process and content considerations for using the SWYC in tribal settings. The TRC is currently contributing knowledge gained from the tribal feasibility study to the set of SWYC Guidelines for Use being developed by Drs. Chris Sheldrick and Ellen Perrin. Once completed, the SWYC Guidelines for Use will be available at www.theswyc.org.
- [American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey](#) (AIAN FACES): TRC faculty and members of the TRC Head Start Steering Committee have been working intensively with the Office of Head Start, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, and Mathematica Policy Research to design and implement the first national study of Region XI AIAN Head Start programs. Twenty-one randomly selected AIAN Head Start programs are participating in this study that will provide a nationally representative data on the children and families served by Region XI Head Start.



- TRC sponsored the 2015 annual meeting of the [Native Children’s Research Exchange](#). The Native Children’s Research Exchange mission is to bring together tribal child development research, program, and community partners to share in an open exchange of information and ideas, build collaborative relationships, mentor new scholars, and disseminate knowledge relevant to Native child and adolescent development.
- TRC sponsored its third Summer Institute at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, in close collaboration with TRC partners at the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health. Over the year, the TRC-designed “Early Childhood Research with Tribal Communities” course was delivered to over 40 students from tribal communities across the country.

Tribal Child Care

Reauthorization of the CCDBG Act of 2014 provides opportunities to offer flexibility to tribes in certain areas where there are unique needs. Most significantly, through reauthorization, tribal CCDF grantees will now receive *not less than* 2 percent of discretionary CCDF funding. Previously, tribes could only receive *up to* 2 percent of both discretionary and mandatory CCDF funds.

In addition, while many of the new provisions of the CCDBG Reauthorization clearly apply to states and territories, the majority of provisions do not explicitly apply to tribes. To best identify how the law applies to tribes, OCC conducted a series of tribal consultations to solicit tribal input before writing the NPRM. OCC held five sessions, between February and June of 2015, to solicit tribal input on the new law. Tribal leaders and their designees were welcome to attend any and all sessions and were encouraged to submit written testimony and questions throughout the process. OCC also accepted written testimony and other comments for a period of 45 days following the final consultation session on May 20, 2015. We compiled all feedback and input into a publically available [Tribal Consultations Report](#).



The OCC policy team considered input from the consultation along with policy analysis as they drafted the NPRM. The proposed regulations address the extent to which provisions should apply to Tribal CCDF grantees. Specifically, they address topics such as monitoring, training, and background checks. The NPRM also proposes a tiered system that would allow for fewer reporting requirements for tribes with smaller funding allocations. The proposed rules are intended to increase tribal flexibility, while supporting the CCDF dual goals of promoting families’ financial stability and fostering healthy child development.

The second cohort of the Peer Learning and Leadership Network Tribal CCDF Fellows program (PLLN) also began in 2015. The PLLN was created to further develop leadership in tribal child care communities through training and peer-to-peer discussion and education. The new cohort has 11 fellows who represent 10 different tribes, and members from the first cohort are serving as mentors to the new group. The program provides an intensive 2-year experience focusing on emerging leaders. Its main goal is to help participants become active tribal child care leaders by the end of the fellowship. Fellows work on a variety of projects, including:

- Developing a tribal infant-toddler assessment tool;
- Performing language revitalization; and
- Providing startup funds for new child care centers.

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

Since 2011, ECD works closely with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Early Learning to develop, award and administer the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program.



The Annual Performance Reports were released and showed:

- Over 72,000 early learning and development programs are now included in their states’ Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) – an 87% increase since the states applied for their grants.
- Nearly 14,000 programs are in the highest quality tiers of their states’ TQRIS – a 63% increase since the states applied for their grants.
- Over 200,000 children with high needs are enrolled in state-funded preschool programs in the highest quality tiers of their states’ TQRIS.



- Nearly 230,000 children with high needs are enrolled in child care programs that receive federal child care subsidy funds and are in the highest quality tiers of their states’ TQRIS.
- More than 150,000 children with high needs are enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start programs in the highest quality tiers of their states’ TQRIS.

Read the [released report](#) to see how the [Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge](#) states are improving the quality of early learning programs while enrolling more children, especially from low and moderate income families, in the highest-quality programs.

Preschool Development Grants

ECD works closely with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Early Learning to develop, award and administer the Preschool Development Grants.



Preschool Development Grants (PDG) support states to (1) build or enhance their infrastructure to provide high-quality preschool programs through PDG Development Grants, and (2) expand high-quality preschool programs in high-need communities through PDG Expansion Grants. These states serve as models for expanding preschool to all 4-year-olds from low and moderate income families.

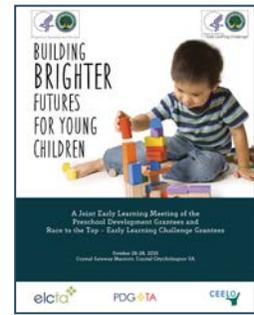
PDG Development Grants support five states with either small or no state preschool programs. Alabama, Arizona, Montana, Hawaii, and Nevada received PDG Development Grants and started their planning and implementation in 2015.

PDG Expansion Grants support thirteen states that have existing, robust state preschool programs or have been awarded a RTT-ELC grant. The states below received PDG Expansion Grants to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs through sub-grants for early learning providers in their states to serve additional eligible children in two or more high-need communities:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| • Arkansas | • Maryland | • Tennessee |
| • Connecticut | • Massachusetts | • Vermont |
| • Illinois | • New Jersey | • Virginia |
| • Louisiana | • New York | |
| • Maine | • Rhode Island | |

Annual Grantee Meeting for RTT-ELC and PDG Grantees

On October 26 through 28, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education sponsored a three-day meeting to bring together state teams of PDG and RTT-ELC grantees, as well as non-grantee participants. The Annual Grantee Meeting provided an opportunity to share information and discuss current issues related to early learning. The meeting allowed states to learn from each other by sharing their RTT-ELC and PDG stories, including strategies, innovations, challenges, and lessons learned.



Early Learning Interagency Policy Board

The Early Learning Interagency Policy Board (IPB), jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Service (HHS) and Education (ED), has met regularly 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 HHS, ED, the White House’s Domestic Policy Council and the Office of Management and Budget, the IPB focused on reducing duplication and maximizing resources; especially for children with high needs.

Areas of focus in 2015 were:

- Early Childhood Homelessness, Data-Research Efforts, Early Childhood Disability Update (January)
- Family Engagement (July)
- Health & Wellness Promotion in Early Childhood Settings (November)



Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day

Children begin learning from the moment they are born. By seeing, hearing, and exploring the world around them, particularly through close loving relationships with their families and caregivers, babies’ brains rapidly develop. The more enriching experiences they have with those who love and care for them, the more they grow – especially when words are involved. Research found that providing infants, toddlers, and young

children with consistent, language-rich experiences like talking, reading, and singing, greatly benefit their brain development and school readiness.



As the result of a commitment made at the [White House Summit on Early Education](#), which focused on increasing the quantity and quality of words that children learn, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education partnered with [Too Small to Fail](#) and created "[Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day](#)" tip sheets and a free suite of resources that help enrich children’s early language experiences.

The resources include:

- Tip sheets for families, preschool teachers, infant/toddler teachers, and other caregivers;
- A developmental milestone chart to track a child’s development from birth through age 5; and
- A fact sheet that highlights the evidence behind the benefits of being bilingual and embracing a child’s home language.

No matter what language is spoken, talking matters and the more words the better. To make these resources as accessible and inclusive as possible, all tip sheets are available in English and Spanish, and can be downloaded for free [here](#).

Stay in contact with us.

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development supports early childhood communications and outreach efforts and works with the Office of Head Start, the Office of Child Care, the Office of Public Affairs and other partners and stakeholders. The ECD Newsletter listserv continues to grow.



Sign up for the ECD newsletter!



We moved in 2015!

You can find us at our new address:

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ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

**Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Early Childhood Development**

2015 Accomplishments

Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Shannon Rudisill, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary



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