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## Working Together for a Better Beginning

"What makes America exceptional isn't just the size of our economy or our influence around the globe. [It's] the promise we make to our children; the idea that no matter who they are, what they look like, where they start, how much their parents earn, they can make it if they try. It's the essential promise of America -- that where you start should not and will not determine how far you can go."

-- President Obama, December 10, 2014 White House Summit on Early Childhood Education

## Early Childhood Development

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

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### Have you been to our website recently?

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

### Check out these ACF blogs

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

#### [New Health Coverage Options for American Indians and Alaska Natives](#)

Members of federally recognized tribes can enroll in the Marketplace at any time.

#### [A Message of Thanksgiving](#)

The Office of Refugee Resettlement and its partners provided humanitarian services to more than 175,000 people this past year.

#### [Recognizing American Indian and Alaska](#)

A year ago, I wrote there was no doubt that 2014 would be a busy and exciting new year! As we close the year, I see that I was not wrong.

Last month, we all celebrated as Congress reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). By establishing a floor under child care, we will begin to align our early learning programs so that wherever children are in care outside of the home, they will all have access to high quality services. The Office of Child Care has already held multiple webinars to explain the changes and plan for the future.

Last week, we announced preliminary grants for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. These are tentative announcements, and there are more to come. All \$500 Million of grants will be rolled out by the end of March 2015. There is much excitement around these new grants, excitement that started a year ago when we initiated many webinars for communities to share our thoughts and goals.

The White House Summit on Early Childhood Education was the highlight of much work by so many people during this Administration. To be able to announce \$500 M for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, \$250 M for Preschool Development grants and over \$330 M in new actions from **corporate and philanthropic leaders** to expand the reach and enhance the quality of early education for thousands of additional children was an important step in President Obama's Early Learning Initiative. He remains committed to young children and the goals of high quality early learning across the continuum.

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



### [Native Heritage Month](#)

OPRE's work in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities.

### [Performance Partnership Pilot: New Program Launches to Improve the Lives of Disconnected Youth](#)

Pilot program blends funds from five departments to test cost-effective, outcome-focused strategies to benefit youth in need.

### [HHS Region VI Welcomes FEMA to Talk Emergency Preparedness, Health and Human Services](#)

Regional HHS Office and FEMA Corps held its first-ever joint event to promote emergency preparedness.

### [The New Face of Homelessness](#)

November is National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month.

### [National Survey Explores the Perceptions of Search Process for Child Care](#)

National Survey of Early Care and Education Household Survey suggests parents' perceptions and search process for non-parental care vary by household income, child's age and household race/ethnicity.

### [Reviewing Home Visiting: A Look at Models for At-Risk Pregnant Women, Mothers, and Children across the Country and in Tribal Communities](#)

Recent review of the home visiting program found that three new models met the HHS criteria for evidence of effectiveness.

### [The Marketplace is Open!](#)

Open enrollment in the Marketplace runs through Feb. 15, 2015.

### [Building Children's Protective Factors:](#)

for videos, a Fact Sheet and other information.

As we close 2014, we know it has been a busy year. I can assure you that 2015 will be too!

- Head Start turns 50 in 2015! We will share information on the efforts and development of Head Start throughout the year.
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships will begin in 2015!
- The Science of Children - Birth to Age 8: Study will be completed by the National Academy of Science in 2015! This report will provide research and policy recommendations on preparing a workforce to seamlessly support children's health, development, learning, and school success from birth through age 8.
- Early childhood social-emotional development and mental health consultation will be a major focus in 2015:

Secretaries Burwell and Duncan released a [policy statement](#) on expulsion and suspension practices. Exclusionary discipline practices occur at high rates in early learning settings and at even higher rates for young boys of color. Part of President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative encourages states, early childhood programs and families to partner in preventing, reducing and eventually eliminating the expulsion and suspension of young children from early learning programs. As part of this commitment, Sec. Burwell announced that HHS will dedicate \$4 million toward early childhood mental health consultation services to help prevent this troubling practice and to help all children thrive in early learning settings. This will be a major focus in 2015. [See the Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings](#)

With Congress passing the budget this week, we know that funding is allocated to continue this important work.

- A \$75 million increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), totaling to \$2.4 billion
- Funding for Head Start including the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Grants remained constant, at \$8.6 billion
- Funding for the Preschool Development Grants also remained constant, at \$250 million

2014 was a big year for young children, and I thank you for your efforts. BUT we still have so much work to do to ensure high quality early learning settings for all our children so I thank you for what you will continue to do.

*Linda*

### [The Extra Effect of Language Programs](#)

Positive cultural identity and confidence go hand in hand with language gains.

### [The Kerin Family](#)

Brothers Joe, Cody and Brandon tell people that being adopted is one of the best things that ever happened to them.

### [Two Anniversaries, One Goal: Celebrating the Runaway & Homeless Youth and Family Violence Prevention & Services Acts](#)

Associate Commissioner highlights goals of Runaway & Homeless Youth and Family Violence Prevention & Services Acts on historic anniversaries.

### [Infórmate E-Newsletter for Latino Stakeholders](#)

Infórmate is the Administration for Children and Families' update for and about the Latino community. Leaders of the community receive monthly updates about the agency's programs and initiatives designed to help people start a path to economic self-sufficiency and to help build successful communities and families.

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

## Featured Reports



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

### **New Insights from Our Comprehensive look at Center-Based Early Care & Education Programs**

Over 70% of center-based early care and education programs in the U.S. report at least some government funding, and public funding makes up one of the top two sources of revenue for more than a third of programs. These findings represent just two of the new insights explored in this first nationally

## White House Summit on Early Learning

ACF announced preliminary winners for the [Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership](#) grants to improve the quality of existing child care programs and expand access to high-quality care for infants and toddlers in conjunction with the [White House Summit on Early Education](#).

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

For the list of preliminary grantees, please [visit the ACF web site](#). For additional information from the White House Summit, [see here](#).



## What Could Make Less Sense than Expelling a Preschooler?

By Walter S. Gilliam, PhD

*Exclusionary discipline practices occur at high rates in early learning settings. Walter S. Gilliam, PhD, Director of [The Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy](#) at Yale University highlights the research in a [blog from the APA Public Interest Directorate](#) of the Psychology Benefits Society. An excerpt is below. Read the complete blog [here](#).*



There are some children who do not benefit from early care and education programs – the ones not allowed to attend because they were kicked out.

In fact, preschool expulsions occur at a rate more than three times that of grades K through 12.

Decades of [research](#) tell us that high quality early care and education programs

representative, [in-depth portrait of center-based early care and education programs in over 20 years.](#)



OPRE posted the [Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures: User's Manual](#),

which was produced as

part of the [Development of a Measure of Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\)](#) project.

The associated measures were also posted on the project page, under the "Instruments" tab.

Approximately 60 percent of children 5 years of age and under regularly participate in non-parental childcare arrangements in early care and education settings. Research indicates that the relationship between the early child care provider/teacher and the parent can contribute to a child's school readiness as well as improve parent-child relationships and parental self-efficacy, writes OPRE Senior Social Science Research Analyst Laura Hoard. [Learn about the five self-administered measures of the quality of these relationships.](#)

Also released is a brief titled [Children in Early Head Start and Head Start: A Profile of Early Leavers](#). This is part of the [Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study \(Baby FACES\)](#) project.



**Videos From WREC 2014 Are Now Available**

Did you miss this year's WREC or want to revisit some sessions? [Watch videos](#) of all plenary sessions and several breakout sessions from the 17th Annual WREC.

**OPRE's Contribution to Evidence-**

impact children in meaningful and lasting ways, especially for those most at-risk for educational challenges. The primary goal of early care and education is to promote overall school readiness, especially for those needing the most assistance. **Clearly, expelling or suspending preschoolers counters the overall objective of early education programs – to promote school readiness in order to improve later educational success.**

According to a March 2014 U.S. Department of Education [report](#), expulsions and suspensions in our early care and education programs are **greatly disproportionate to boys and African American children.**

- Specifically, "black children represent 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension."
- Similarly, boys represent 54% of the preschool enrollment, but 79% of children suspended once and 82% of children suspended multiple times.

Although many may have been surprised by the findings in this report, national data on this problem have been known for about a decade.

The first national [study](#) and [policy brief](#) of the rates of expulsion and suspension were released in May 2005. It was a nationally representative study of nearly 4,000 randomly selected state-funded prekindergarten classrooms.

- Ten percent of all teachers reported having permanently expelled at least one child in the past year because of challenging behaviors. The rate of expulsions in these prekindergarten programs, serving children 3- to 4-years old, was found to be *2 times higher* than for students in grades K through 12.
- For preschool-age [child care programs](#) outside state prekindergarten systems, the rates were far higher. Thirty-nine percent of child care providers reported at least one expulsion in the past year, creating an expulsion rate more than *13 times higher* than K through 12.

Preschool expulsions and suspensions are not child behaviors; they are adult decisions.

Please continue reading [here](#).

## **[Equity and Excellence in the Earliest Years: Action on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Settings](#)**

By Shantel Meek, PhD, Policy Advisor for Early Childhood Development

Psychologists, neuroscientists and economists alike agree: The beginning years of any child's life are critical for building the early foundation of health and wellness needed for success in school and later in life. As a community, we hold the responsibility of ensuring that children's earliest experiences always foster- and never harm- their development, particularly during this highly sensitive and formative period.

But what happens when 3- and 4- year olds go through the negative and stressful experience of being expelled from preschool? Recent data indicate that expulsions and suspensions occur at high rates in preschool settings, by some estimates, at even higher rates than in K12 school settings, an alarming statistic given that school expulsion and suspension are associated with negative educational and life outcomes, according to a well-established body of research. In addition, stark racial

## Based Policy-Making Highlighted in New Book

In their new book on evidence-based policy-making, *Show Me the Evidence*, Ron Haskins and Greg Margolis, note, "OPRE was well suited for the evaluation role because of its long history of rigorous evaluation, including work on welfare reform, early childhood education, and child welfare." They also mention Director, Naomi Goldstein, as one of a handful of executive agency officials who provided critical leadership. Explore the work on [teen pregnancy prevention](#) and [home visiting](#) to learn more about OPRE's role in two of the initiatives discussed in the book.

**Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS**  
*Promoting high-quality research and informing policy*

## New Data: National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE), 2010-2014: Center-based Provider Quick Tabulation File

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) is a set of four integrated, nationally representative surveys conducted in 2012. These were surveys of (1) households with children under 13, (2) home-based providers, (3) center-based providers, and (4) the center-based provider workforce.

**Public and restricted-use data files will be made available on a rolling release schedule beginning in Fall 2014. This release offers for download the Center-based Provider Quick Tabulation File.**

[Download these data](#)

[How is participation in full-day vs part-day preschool associated with school readiness, attendance, and parent involvement?](#)

[What child, family, and program-level factors may be associated with children leaving Early Head Start or Head Start](#)

and gender disparities exist in these practices, with young boys of color being suspended and expelled much more frequently than other children. These troubling trends warrant immediate attention and partnership between researchers, clinicians, teachers, families, and policy makers at all levels.

Last week, the President and his Administration hosted the [White House Summit on Early Education](#), which brought together federal, state, and local policymakers, mayors, school superintendents, corporate and community leaders, and advocates to highlight efforts across the country to expand access to high-quality early learning programs for our youngest learners. The Summit signaled collective action across sectors, and across America, in a variety of areas in early childhood education.

The day included a robust breakout session on equity and excellence in the earliest years, which discussed issues of expulsion and suspension policies, racial disparities, culturally and linguistically responsive practices, social-emotional and behavioral health, and enhancing preparation and development of the early childhood workforce. 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.

Please continue reading [here](#).

This article is cross posted in the APA Public Interest Directorate of the [Psychology Benefits Society](#). Read the complete blog [here](#)

## In Brief: 50 Years of Family Engagement in Head Start

By Kiersten Beigel, Program Specialist for the Office of Head Start.

*Head Start and Early Head Start have an amazing legacy of family engagement. As we prepare to celebrate Head Start's 50th anniversary in 2015, Kiersten Beigel, Program Specialist for the Office of Head Start, shared her thoughts with Harvard Family Research Project's [Family Involvement Network of Educators \(FINE\) Newsletter](#). An excerpt is below:*

Since 1965, programs have supported parents as their child's first teacher by involving them in the learning process at home and school. They have honored parents' interest in the nurturing of their children and fueled their passion and hope for their children's success in life.

The Head Start vision for family engagement has evolved alongside the changing interests and needs of families and communities. This vision has incorporated new evidence from fields such as early childhood development, health, behavioral economics, and mental health. In 2011, the Office of Head Start (OHS) launched the [Parent, Family, and Community Engagement \(PFCE\) Framework](#). The framework serves as a road map for integrating PFCE strategies across systems and services.

One goal of OHS is to continue to broaden the conversation around family engagement. Our focus is on prioritizing strategies that are systemic, integrated, and comprehensive. In other words, our goal is to move the field beyond seeing family engagement as simply getting enough parents to participate in an isolated event or training. Instead, we seek to help build staff-parent relationships that invite families to learn and grow. Through these relationships, families are supported as parents, teachers, and learners based on their own goals. We also expect programs to track families' progress in achieving their goals. This must be done with a similar rigor and intent that is used to understand and promote children's progress.

[early?](#)

[What can we learn from the Illinois hard to reach families project about effective recruitment strategies for enrolling children from "hard to reach" families in quality early care and education programs?](#)

[What has been the extent of change in center-based teachers' wages, education, and rates of turnover over the last 25 years?](#)

[How do state child care assistance eligibility policies vary for parents participating in education and training?](#)

[Can a nutrition education program in child care centers improve preschoolers' at-home diet?](#)

## Additional Resources



Child Care Aware of America's 2014 report, *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care*, summarizes the cost of child care across the country, examines the

importance of child care as a workforce support and as an early learning program, and explores the effect of high costs on families' child care options. Download the report and other child care resources at <http://bit.ly/carecost>



**The unique relations between early homelessness and educational well-being: An empirical test of the Continuum of Risk Hypothesis.**

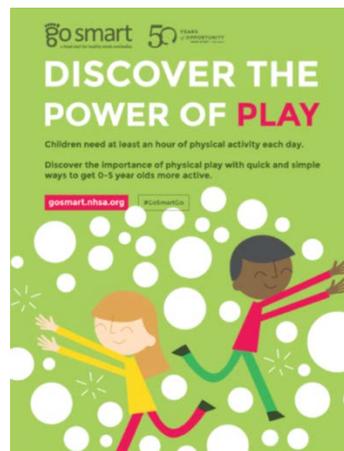
This study examined the Continuum of Risk Hypothesis by assessing the unique relations between early homelessness

To bring this vision to life, OHS is working to develop partnerships with parents, programs, agencies, and organizations that promote family engagement. We must increase the collaboration across federal agencies that recognize the critical role of family engagement in children's long-term school success. A theory of change is only as good as the tools that are available to help put it into action. Our challenge is to identify the common principles of the current family engagement frameworks across educational settings. We also need to clarify how to do the work that makes the greatest difference for children and families.

Finally, we must continue our focus on relationship-based practice. Building positive, goal-orientated relationships is a skill that can be learned. They allow us to tackle the concrete barriers of family involvement, such as transportation, child care, and time and availability. Through trusting relationships, we also begin to address the psychological barriers associated with engagement. These can include mistrust or misunderstandings, rigid ideas about gender roles, or different cultural beliefs about parent and teacher roles with regard to children's education. Effective relationships between parents and staff will always be a critical part of children's educational success. OHS is committed to this work.

Read the full article in the [Family Involvement Network of Educators \(FINE\) Newsletter](#).

## [Head Start is turning 50](#), and the National Head Start Association has planned a year-long celebration.



The National Head Start Association teamed up with Nike in creating [Go Smart](#) – an important component of Nike's international Designed to Move™ initiative – in order to champion physical activity for the youngest children.

As Head Start's 50th year progresses, NHSA will engage a number of partner organizations in the broader early childhood community to help create positive early experiences for all children by integrating physical activity into everyday life.

For more information on [Go Smart](#), see [here](#).

For more information on celebrating 50 years, see [here!](#)

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



## The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Year Two Progress Report and 2013 Annual Performance Reports

and educational outcomes while controlling for co-occurring risks. An integrated data system was used to account for multiple co-occurring early risk factors for an entire cohort of first grade students in a large urban school district and municipality

Diversity and Inclusion in Early Care and Education, a



Council white paper was released at the NAEYC Conference in Dallas



The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) released "[State Strategies and Initiatives to Improve Developmental and Autism Screening, and Early Identification Systems.](#)"

Also released is a companion fact sheet on current [Title V State Performance Measures related to developmental screening and early identification.](#)



A new checklist summarizes the requirements for written agreements under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that also apply to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is an adaptation of a 2012 "Data Sharing Agreement Checklist" that was intended for K-12 audiences. This adaptation of the original document is intended for IDEA Part C early intervention and Part B 619 preschool special education audiences. Access the document through the [DaSy Products Page](#).



In 2014, the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Phase 1 and Phase 2 States (which were awarded grants in 2011 and 2012) submitted Annual Performance Reports (APRs). Additionally, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have released a report that highlights some of the work undertaken by these Phase 1 and Phase 2 States during 2013, as reported in their APRs. You can download this report, "Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Year Two Progress Report [here](#).

**ELC TA Peer to Peer Learning Exchange on Strategic Communications**

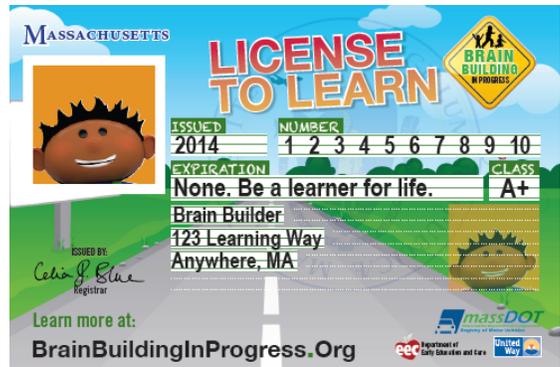


The ELC TA State Support Team sponsored a Peer Learning Exchange opportunity to help RTT-ELC grantees strengthen early learning strategic communications efforts in their states. The exchange provided opportunities for grantees to learn from peers with significant experience (see the picture of GA presenting), work in small groups with peers who have similar strategic communications interests and goals, and access and contribute to a virtual strategic communications resource library. Miriam Lund from ED and Marsha Basloe from HHS

attended to support states and the ELC TA Support Team.

**What is happening in early learning in states?**

**Massachusetts:** The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care will work with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles to bring the state's "[Brain Building in Progress](#)" campaign to all of the RMV branches across the state, where parents with young children will be offered a free "[License to Learn](#)" that provides tips on having engaging conversations with their children, around topics including transportation safety.



**Missouri:** Now for Later: Investing in Early Learning. High-quality, parenting education and voluntary early childhood education are top priorities for our state. In order to create the best start possible start for Missouri's youngest learners, we must work together





The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: Smart Investments Build Strong Systems for Young Children See Policy Brief [here](#).



[The Academic Achievement of English Language Learners: Data for the U.S. and Each of the States](#)

Nearly one in three U.S. children lives in a home where a language other than English is spoken. Bilingualism has potential cognitive, social, and emotional benefits that can go unrealized if these students' particular needs are not met. This brief compares state-level trends in math and reading achievement for English language learners and their peers.

the **Ounce**

The Ounce of Prevention Fund has announced its upcoming launch of its Achieve OnDemand™ online professional development for home visitors. This new professional development resource will be available to home visitors and supervisors nationwide Jan. 5, 2015. Read more [here](#).



CEELO released a [FastFact](#) on which states accommodate children with special needs in their Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

now for later. The Now for Later initiative promotes the importance of creating opportunities for high quality early childhood education for all Missouri children. One of the Department's Top 10 by 20 goals is that all children will enter Kindergarten ready for success. High quality early childhood education helps prepare students for success in school.

Learn more by watching our new early learning video or visit [nowforlater.org](http://nowforlater.org).

**Louisiana Progress:** Expanding Child Care Eligibility By Dylan Waguespack  
This past June, the Louisiana State Legislature expanded eligibility for child care subsidies offered through the Child Care and Development Fund. Louisiana Act 787, authored by State Representative Edward J. Price, was passed unanimously and signed by Governor Bobby Jindal on June 19, 2014. The new law recognizes the unique challenges homeless families face in accessing child care and empowers Louisiana's Child Care Assistance Program to meet those challenges head-on.

For many homeless families, seeking employment can be difficult or even impossible without reliable child care. Shelters often allow care workers to supervise the young children of their clients, but they can only do that while the parents are in the building, making it almost impossible for homeless parents without reliable child care to take necessary steps toward financial stability and housing. Without child care, they cannot go to work or take job interviews, participate in job training programs, or make progress toward their GED, high school diploma, or college degree. Additionally, homeless families often do not have immediate access to documents needed for child care placements, such as birth certificates and immunization records.



Previously, all parents seeking child care subsidies, including homeless parents, were required to work or attend school for at least 30 hours each week. Act 787 waives this requirement for homeless parents and establishes a grace period for submission of birth certificates and immunization records for homeless parents. Act 787 also requires Louisiana's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in addition to coordinating with local child care programs, to coordinate with McKinney-Vento school district liaisons and other entities providing services to homeless families in order to increase their access to information about child care and transportation to child care placements. Moving forward, the state must also collect data that indicates whether parents who receive child care assistance are homeless.

The law was drafted with recent ACF guidelines on access to early childhood education in mind and is an example of how states and programs can better support families experiencing homelessness. We're hopeful that homeless families will have greater access to child care and ultimately, that this access will help reduce the length of homelessness for families and improve health and education outcomes among homeless children. We're looking forward to continuing our partnership with DCFS to assist in effective implementation of Act 787.

**18 States Awarded New Preschool Development Grants**



[Univision](#) and [Vroom](#) announced a special collaboration with [Too Small to Fail](#) to improve early math, literacy and brain development among Hispanic kids from birth. For more information, [click here](#).



## Applying for Affordable Health Insurance is Easy and Confidential

Your child or teen may qualify for free or low-cost health insurance coverage through [Medicaid](#) and the [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#). Many parents may be eligible for Medicaid too. **Take 90 seconds to check out this [short video](#) and learn more about year-round enrollment in Medicaid and CHIP.**

If you or someone in your family needs health coverage, you should apply. Enrollment is open year-round. To learn more about Medicaid and CHIP and how to enroll, visit your [state's Medicaid agency](#) or call **1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669)**. To learn more about affordable health coverage for your whole family through the Health Insurance Marketplace, visit [HealthCare.gov](#).

Medicaid and CHIP typically cover a range of benefits including: Doctor Visits, Prescription Drugs, Emergency Care, Vision, Hospital Care, Hearing, Immunizations, Dental



U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell announced that 18 states have been awarded grants, totaling more than \$226 million, under the [Preschool Development Grant](#) program.

From the 36 applications the departments received, five states will be awarded development grants: Alabama, Arizona, Hawaii, Montana and

Nevada. Thirteen will receive expansion grants: Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia.

See all awards information including applications, [here](#).

## Tribal Home Visiting Grantees Submit Benchmarks Data for the First Time!



Tribal Home Visiting grantees have worked tirelessly over the last few years to serve families and collect data to demonstrate that their programs are making a difference in the lives of the children and families they serve. The legislation that created the Tribal Home Visiting program requires grantees to establish "quantifiable, measureable 3- and 5-year benchmarks for demonstrating that the program results in improvements for the eligible families participating in the program" in six benchmark areas, including maternal and child health, children's school readiness, family economic self-sufficiency, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and coordination of community

resources to support families.

There are 36 different "constructs" on which Tribal Home Visiting grantees must develop performance measures, collect data, and report progress to ACF. Grantee performance measures include things like "average number of weeks of breastfeeding among mothers enrolled in the home visiting program", "average number of yearly visits to emergency care among children enrolled in the program", "percent of mothers screened for depression", "percentage of children who are screened on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 at the recommended time points", and "percent of families enrolled in the program with adequate health insurance".

This fall, 13 Cohort 1 Tribal Home Visiting grantees are submitting benchmarks data to ACF for the first time. Through the benchmark data, we have an opportunity to learn more about the progress of our grantees in implementing high quality home visiting programs in their communities. We are excited to review grantees' submissions and learn more about how they are quantifying their successes!

## Invest in Us

Quality early childhood education programs help children grow. See how investments in quality programs pay off for a lifetime.



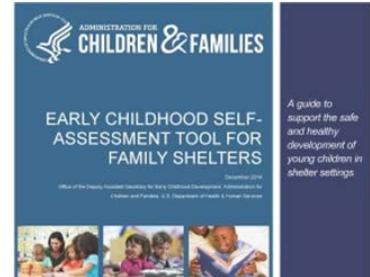
[The Challenge to Invest in US](#)

Summit Commitments [here](#).

## New Resource Promotes Collaboration Between Housing Providers and Early Learning Programs

ACF released a new resource as part of its early childhood work on the Interagency Workgroup to End Family Homelessness. [The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#) is designed to help shelter staff create shelter environments that are safe and developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The tool provides specific recommendations and information on how shelter environments, programming, policies, and staff can support early childhood safety and child development.

We hope that shelters and early learning programs will use this tool to work together to create the most appropriate and supportive environment possible for these vulnerable young children and strengthen collaboration efforts at the local level to best use community resources.



Visit [here](#) for more information or to download *The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters*. See additional materials [here](#).

## Supporting Early Childhood

### Virtual Lab School Begins National Launch with Child Abuse Prevention and Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Courses

[The Department of Defense Child Development Virtual Laboratory School](#) begins its national launch with two courses that address prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse. The *Child Abuse Prevention* course is designed to give those working with infants and toddlers, preschoolers, as well as those working in afterschool care settings the knowledge and skills to help prevent child abuse. Lessons include: understanding children's behavior from a developmental view, promoting protective factors in children such as social and emotional competence, positive methods for dealing with challenging behavior, and how to prevent abuse in center settings.

The *Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting* Course covers recognizing the warning signs of abuse and neglect, how to report abuse and neglect, dealing with the trauma of witnessing and acting on abuse cases, how to support children and families if abuse has occurred, and the role of center based policies and procedures in protecting children. Both courses use a "Learn, Explore, Apply, and Demonstrate, or LEAD," framework to organize information, activities, and resources and are supported by high quality video segments and supplemental materials.

These two courses are the first of a total of 15 that are being created through a partnership effort between the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The lab school is a comprehensive professional development system being developed by a team at [The Ohio State University](#) led by Dr. Cynthia K. Buettner. When the remaining 13 courses are brought online in 2015 (six in January and the remaining seven in July), the lab school will become

the primary training platform and record system for the more than 30,000 caregivers serving military dependent children and youth. A public version of the lab school content will also be available to child and youth serving professionals outside the military system.

The Virtual Laboratory School courses, including those on child abuse, are aligned across three functional tracks – Direct Care, Training/Coaching, and Management, with the Direct Care Courses specialized by developmental grouping – Infant/Toddler, Preschool, and School Age. An additional track for home-based care providers will be added late in 2015. These core courses are aimed at personnel new to child and youth care and education.

The Virtual Laboratory School system is supported by high-quality video clips, “real world” learning materials, job-embedded activities, and built-in support for coaching and administration. The goal of the lab school system is to provide anytime, anywhere access to expert-created content and resources that are anchored in research and designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of child and youth educators and to improve the quality of children’s experiences.

Additional information is available from Dr. Buettner ([Buettner.16@osu.edu](mailto:Buettner.16@osu.edu)), an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Sciences, [OSU College of Education and Human Ecology](#).

**Have a Happy**

**Holiday Season!**



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