“In today’s economy, when having both parents in the workforce is an economic necessity for many families, we need affordable, high-quality childcare 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, January 2015, State of the Union Address

Although the weather has been harsh in many parts of the country, it has not dampened the early childhood enthusiasm. Grantees have been busy implementing their new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants. These grants will provide high quality services for more than 32,000 children in the years ahead.

Last month, I was in Alabama for the Alabama Early Childhood Education Leadership Summit. Nearly 300 early education leaders attended including representatives from the state’s Pre-K program, home visiting, Head Start programs, child care centers and family child care homes, elementary schools and the new Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships and Pre-K expansion grants. Alabama’s Governor Robert Bentley’s remarks “…I can tell you there’s nothing more important than that development of that brain in the first four years of life,” was a highlight of the day.

His remarks amplified those of Dr. Patricia Kuhl, an early brain researcher, who shared the latest research that demonstrates the importance of a child’s brain development and how critical it is to the child’s learning and later achievement. If you are not familiar with Dr. Kuhl's work, I hope you will have the chance to do so. The Alabama Summit was an outstanding collaborative effort to ensure a sound early learning strategy statewide that is based on scientific research and builds a continuum of services for children birth to school entry. Hats off to Alabama.

You will also see in this newsletter and on our website our 2014 Early Childhood Accomplishments. It reflects the efforts of so many people dedicated to ensuring that our children and families have the services and supports they need. I would be remiss in not acknowledging the hard work of the ACF staff both here in Washington, D.C. and in our regional offices. We hope you will review this paper and share your thoughts.
Helping Native Americans Prosper
ANA grants help local community financial institutions bring financial tools and resources to underserved Native Americans.

Head Start Relies on Community Partners
Check out our video blog on strong community partnerships in Head Start.

New ACF Native Language Initiative Proposal
The Community Native Language Coordination Initiative will enable Native American communities to create a cradle to career native language education system.

President’s 2016 Budget Would Boost Work to End Family Violence, Youth Homelessness and Teen Pregnancy
Here’s a snapshot of what the President has proposed and what the new dollars would accomplish.

What Works to Reduce Teen Pregnancy?
Evaluating Personal Responsibility Education Programs in Iowa, Kentucky, New York and Texas.

How Head Start Grantees Set and Use School Readiness Goals
The report includes challenges that grantees face, along with suggestions and implications for policy, technical assistance, practice and research.

Acquiring State Administrative Data: Lessons from Home Visiting Program Evaluation
New report sheds light on the process and challenges of gaining access to state administrative data.

Immunizing Your Child is Safe and Responsible
The United States currently has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in history.

New Resource from the National Research Center on Hispanic

As we move to implementation of over 270 new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grants, we are learning along with our grantees about the challenges and ease of getting off the ground. We had nearly 2000 attendees on a recent EHS-CCP webinar, a sign of this interest in next steps.

The Office of Child Care has also held multiple listening sessions to hear from the field regarding the CCDBG Reauthorization changes and implementation. I want to thank everyone who participated in these sessions. They are valuable learning opportunities for us. Your questions and comments help us think through the guidance we will be developing for the field.

Finally, we just finished a four-part webinar series on the prevention of expulsion and suspension practices in early learning settings. All webinars and slides will soon be on the website. The series featured work on different aspects of the issue, including policy, research and data, and prevention/intervention. I am pleased to see that there is much interest in this work. We are so grateful to our key experts, especially Walter Gilliam whose research started these efforts. We thank him and so many others for all this important work.

Best,

Linda

See the ACF Early Childhood 2014 Accomplishments

This report highlights accomplishments of our efforts as we met our 2014 ACF Early Childhood goals. You can see the full report here.

An Introduction to the Tribal Home Visiting Program

Recognizing the potential of home visiting programs to support improved child and family outcomes in tribal communities, the Home Visiting Program legislation included a 3 percent set-aside to fund grants to Indian tribes, consortia of tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations. Read this Practice Brief to learn more about the Tribal Home Visiting Program and the work our grantees are doing to improve the

YEAR IN REVIEW

2014

2015
Children and Families
The Center recently released a new report in coordination with the launch of its new website.

Head Start Volunteers Make a Difference
In the 2013-14 program year, Head Start received 367,000 volunteers who were not Head Start parents.

President Obama’s Budget Highlights Importance of Child Care
Proposal would add 1.1 million children to Child Care and Development Fund by 2015.

Evaluating Home Visiting Programs
New report builds the foundation for understanding implementation and impacts.

FY 2016 Budget Emphasizes Importance of High Quality Early Learning and Supporting Young Parents
President Obama: “It’s time we stop treating child care 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.”

FY 2016 Budget Request Proposes New Investments in Learning
The Administration’s fiscal year 2016 budget request proposes a historic investment in research and evaluation across ACF programs.

See more blogs and visit The Family Room Blog.

Featured Reports
Recently posted on the OPRE Site:


Community Volunteers Make a Difference in Head Start

In the 2013-14 program year, Head Start received 367,000 volunteers who were not Head Start parents, writes Amanda Bryans, division director of Education and Comprehensive Services in the Office of Head Start. This investment demonstrates one of the tangible ways communities have embraced Head Start children. It shows that everyday people are dedicated to serving the most vulnerable children in their own communities. Read more: Volunteers in Head Start

President’s FY 2016 Budget for Head Start

By Colleen Rathgeb, Director of Policy, Office of Head Start

The President’s Fiscal Year 2016 Budget is great news for Head Start and Early Head Start programs across the country. The budget requests $10.1 billion for Head Start, which is a $1.5 billion increase over the current year. The largest share of this $1.5 billion increase is a $1.1 billion investment to ensure that every Head Start program serves children for a full school day and full school year. The budget request also includes $284 million for a cost-of-living adjustment for all programs. Finally, an additional $150 million for Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships would grow that investment to $650 million.

What does the president’s proposal to extend all Head Start programs to a full school day and year mean? Well, the good news is that a third of our programs already serve children in full-day, full-year programs. But, children in programs operating under Head Start’s current minimums receive only 448 hours of Head Start over the course of a calendar year. That is less than half of the early learning services that children in full school day, full school year programs receive. Those programs have a long way to go towards ensuring that every Head Start child receives the best opportunity for early learning.

The question of “dosage” (or the amount of time children need to spend in early learning programs) has been a long-standing debate in the early childhood field. However, there is strong and mounting evidence from research that strongly points to the importance of full-day programs. Please continue reading here.
Our first look at a program to expand availability of evidence-based home visiting services in states and territories details their efforts to reach low-income families in at-risk communities across the country. Explore the report to learn more about states' needs assessments, as well as characteristics of the families, staff, local programs, and models participating in the study.

New Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers Tool
Do child care providers respond to infants and toddlers in their care in ways that promote social-emotional, cognitive, language, and literacy development? Read our report on the new Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers tool to learn more about how it can help answer that question.

Self-Regulation and Toxic Stress: Foundations for Understanding Self-Regulation from an Applied Developmental Perspective
This is the first in a series of four interrelated reports titled Self-Regulation and Toxic Stress. The first report, Foundations for Understanding Self-Regulation from an Applied Developmental Perspective (1) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding self-regulation in context, using a theoretical model that reflects the influence of biology, caregiving, and the environment on the development of self-regulation. In this report, the authors introduce and describe a set of seven key principles that summarize our understanding of self-regulation development in context.

Family Strengthening Research: FY 2014
Turtle Mountain Community College Tribal Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program-Overview

Fifty years ago our nation made a commitment to opening 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) is leading a year-long celebration to celebrate our shared commitment to ensuring every child is given a foundation for future success, in school and in life. If you are a proud Head Start alumni, identify yourself and join us in celebrating the incredible difference Head Start is making in the lives of at-risk families across the country. (Pictured are Head Start Alumni at the Avenal Police Department.)

What You Need to Know: FAQ’s on the Measles
Childhood diseases like measles can cause children pain and discomfort. They can lead to doctor visits, hospitalization, and even death. Immunizations are the best way to protect young children from 14 serious diseases, including measles. As you are likely aware, there have been recent measles outbreaks in the U.S. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is reaching out to our partners to help prevent further cases by underscoring the importance of immunization.

Measles can be dangerous—especially for babies and young children. Measles spreads very easily, so it is important to protect against infection. To prevent measles, eligible children should be vaccinated with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. The measles vaccine has been used for years, and it is safe and effective. See resources:

- [Immunization Protects Us All](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/downloads/matte-immunization-protects.pdf)
- [Five Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/downloads/matte-immunization-protects.pdf)
New Resource
from the
National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families
The OPRE-sponsored National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families launched a new website (hispanicresearchcenter.org)

Research Connections regularly reviews its latest acquisitions and identifies reports and journal articles of high policy relevance.

How is one year versus two years of Head Start participation associated with children's school readiness?

Do the effects of early childhood interventions systematically fade?

To what extent are state regulations promoting increased physical activity and decreased sedentary behaviors in infants in child care?

How is the level of English exposure in the home and classroom associated with Spanish-speaking preschoolers' English vocabulary skills?

What is the association between children's self-regulation abilities and their preschool mathematical achievement?

Do early care and education services improve the language development of maltreated children?

How can an early literacy text messaging program for parents support literacy development of preschoolers?

(READ MORE: What You Need to Know: FAQ's on the Measles
SEE CDC information here:

Newly Updated: CCDF Data Explorer from the Child Care Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN)

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

The Office of Child Care (OCC) hosted “Implementing CCDF Reauthorization Meeting” and presentations from that meeting were recently posted and are available on the Child Care Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN) Reauthorization TA Resources page. You can also find information about CCDF Reauthorization on this OCC Web page.

My Brother's Keeper – One Year Later

"Helping more of our young people stay on track. Providing the support they need to think more broadly about their future. Building on what works, when it works, in those critical life-changing moments."

That's how President Obama explained the My Brother's Keeper initiative a year ago when it first launched. And in the 12 months since, we've seen a tremendous response from people and organizations at all levels that are answering the President's call to action.

President Obama established My Brother's Keeper, or MBK, to help close the opportunity gaps faced by too many young people across our country, and by boys and young men of color in particular. At the initiative's launch, he called for government, businesses, nonprofits, local education agencies, and individuals to step up and do their part to ensure all of our nation's youth have the tools they need to succeed.
ACF’s Work to End Homelessness Spotlighted

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

See The Family Blog on Early Childhood and HUD Working Together following the NAEH Conference (National Alliance to End Homelessness Family and Youth Conference).

Early Childhood Homelessness

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.

The cumulative effect of these risks in combination with homelessness is associated with poor early development and educational well-being - underscoring the importance of ensuring that these young children have access to known protective factors.

Connections to quality early childhood services, such as Early Head Start and Head Start, can help mediate the adverse influence of early homelessness experiences on early well-being. In recognition of the benefits associated with positive early childhood experiences, many early childhood services are prioritizing the needs of young children who are homeless. Yet, rates of access/enrollment among this population remain disproportionately low.

This survey included over 900 responses from professionals serving young children experiencing homelessness. The goal of the survey was to understand:

1. The barriers families with young children experiencing homelessness face when trying to access early childhood services
2. Successful strategies for addressing those barriers
3. The degree of collaboration among early childhood services
Governors' Top Education Issues:
The ECS Education Trends report highlights the top six education priorities for governors in 2015: Early learning, school finance, school choice, teaching quality, workforce development/career and technical education, and postsecondary funding, affordability and access.

National Center for Children in Poverty
This fact sheet is part of the National Center for Children in Poverty’s demographic fact sheet series and is updated annually.

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families released the report, "The Complex and Varied Households of Low-Income Hispanic Children" which use the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to analyze the size, structure and employment status for this population.

Foundations for Excellence: Planning in Head Start
The Office of Head Start National Centers have produced a series of papers to support programs in developing and implementing planning systems. Head Start leaders can use the papers to:
  - Ensure a shared

Read the full report here.
by Dr. Staci Perlman, Assistant Professor, University of Delaware, Human Development and Family Studies and a member of the NAEHCY Early Childhood Committee.

For information on early childhood homelessness, continue here.

Early Childhood Workforce

Professional Development Resources That Serve Military and Public Child Care and Education Workforce

By Dr. Cynthia Buettner, Associate Professor, Ohio State University

Over the next year, fifteen core courses in the Department of Defense Child Development Virtual Laboratory School (VLS) will make their online debut. A partnership effort between the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the US Department of Agriculture, this comprehensive professional development system is being developed by a team at The Ohio State University (OSU) led by Dr. Cynthia K. Buettner. When complete, the VLS will become the primary training platform and record system for the more than 30,000 caregivers serving military dependent children and youth. The partnership between DOD and USDA taps the expertise in the land grant universities and the land grant mission to make that expertise available to the public as a public version of the VLS content will also be available to child and youth serving professionals outside the military system.

The initial core courses in the VLS correspond with the 13 competency standards of the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) plus two additional courses on Child Abuse Prevention and Child Abuse Reporting. These fifteen courses 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. A track for home-based care providers will be added in 2015. These core courses are aimed at personnel new to child and youth care and education. The development team envisions additional specialized courses and features in the future.

The VLS 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 VLS 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), an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Sciences, OSU College of Education and Human Ecology.

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

Wisconsin Releases YoungStar Parent Media Campaign
understanding of program planning

- Review and discuss training plans with management teams, T/TA providers, and governing body, Tribal Council, and Policy Council members
- Set goals, write objectives and outcomes, and develop action plans
- Evaluate current goals, objectives, and action plans

Impact of North Carolina’s Early Childhood Initiatives on Special Education Placements in Third Grade

Attending state-funded prekindergarten substantially reduces the likelihood that students will end up in special education programs later on, according to a new study by researchers at Duke University. See the report here.

Strengthening the math-related teaching practices of the early care and education workforce: Insights from experts

This report explores the perspective of nationally recognized experts in math and early care and education about three main issues. Read the report here.

Minnesota Completed Workforce Report

The Office of Early Learning announced the publication of the 2013 Great Workforce Annual Report, which can be found here.

The Office of Early Learning’s 2013 Great Workforce Annual Report is the inter-agency inventory of many of Minnesota’s early childhood professional development initiatives. Here you'll find brief profiles of Great Workforce initiatives involving the Office of Early Learning and our partners who are part of Minnesota’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant along with useful information about our statewide professional development system. This inventory informs continued unified efforts to build and support Minnesota’s Great Workforce.

Methods and expectations about care and education for young children have evolved greatly in the last 20 years. These changes are reflective of changes in our family structures and economics, our increasingly diverse population and, most of all, our rapidly exploding understanding of how – and when – the human brain develops. With the advent of Parent Aware, our statewide quality rating and improvement system, our rate of change has accelerated even further. The impact on the early learning field is the need for more intentional, well planned, versatile, collaborative and outcome-oriented services than ever before. Ensuring that Minnesota’s youngest learners are in high quality environments with highly skilled adults teaching and caring for them is critical to their growth and development and to our future success as a state.

Melvin Carter, Director, Office of Early Learning, Minnesota Department of Education

What is happening in early learning in states?

Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges launched the first statewide Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) initiative (PLA) initiative in the country. Adult learners in the Pennsylvania community college system will be able to earn credit for learning through training and work experiences; standards for such credits will be established by the system.

Washington: Healthiest Next Generation Initiative. Every child deserves to grow up healthy. Unfortunately some experts believe that, for the first time, the current generation of children may have shorter lives than their parents. Recognizing that Washington’s future depends on the health of our children, Governor Jay Inslee launched the Healthiest Next Generation (HNG) Initiative to help make our next generation the healthiest ever. The goal is to help our children maintain a healthy weight, enjoy active lives and eat and drink healthfully by making changes in early
set of materials called **The Magic of Everyday Moments** that show how adult interactions shape the growth and learning of infants and toddlers. The videos are all available to view online at no cost [here](http://www.youtube.com/usgovacf).

Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC) released the new ECDC brief, *Linking Head Start Data with State Early Care and Education Coordinated Data Systems*.

A recent brief from the Institute for Child Success, *When Brain Science Meets Public Policy: Strategies for Building Executive Function Skills in the Early Years*, provides an overview of executive function and self-regulatory skills (what they are and how they develop) and the importance of reciprocal, responsive relationships in building those skills. Highlighted is the critical role of early caregivers and the "3 R's" essential to brain development: reciprocal, responsive relationships.

**Maryland**: Maryland Accreditation launched its new Online Maryland Accreditation Portal, part of the broader Maryland EXCELS system. This new web tool will allow programs that participate in both Maryland Accreditation and Maryland EXCELS to share data, files, and users, and make it easier to give reciprocal credit when appropriate. Click [HERE](http://www.youtube.com/usgovacf) for FAQs about Maryland EXCELS and Maryland Accreditation.

**Colorado**: The Colorado Office of Early Childhood and the Colorado Department of Education’s Colorado Shines teams hosted a series of kick-off training events in Greeley, Grand Junction and Pueblo for Child Care Resource & Referral organizations, quality improvement coaches, Early Childhood Councils, child care licensing specialists, and child care rating specialists. Participants learned practical strategies and tools to serve as a strong support network for child care providers. Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/usgovacf) to learn more about Colorado Shines.

**Delaware**: Delaware Stars Early Learning Programs and Developmental Screening - Developmental screening is now a Delaware Stars required "essential standard" for Star 4 and 5 quality rated programs. More than 90 programs are using the Ages and Stages tool for Developmental Screening, with more than 3,100 screens completed. The parents complete the screenings with support from early learning staff as needed. The screening results are then reviewed by staff with parents. Trainings and technical assistance are available for Stars programs using the Ages and Stages developmental screening tool.

**New Mexico**: *Early Learning New Mexico*, NM’s new website developed with the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge team. The website will be one of the core ways in which New Mexico communicates to internal and external partners on the exciting work being conducted under the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge in New Mexico. The design of the website includes information on the NM Early Learning Advisory Council and also provides information about each of the early learning programs in New Mexico that serve children birth to age 5 and how families can access those services. Once the Early Childhood Integrated Data System is completed, NM has plans to add a search engine that will enable families to search for early learning programs in their community that can include filtering by distance, star level, languages spoken, etc.

Sign up to receive the Early Childhood Development Newsletter. If you have questions or comments regarding the newsletter please contact: marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov

For more information on the Early Childhood Development Office at ACF, visit the website [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd). The Early Childhood Development newsletter contains links to other websites and news articles. These links represent just a few examples of the numerous reference materials currently available to the public. The opinions expressed in any articles or web pages do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration for Children and Families. The inclusion of resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement of any private organization or business listed herein.