A Message from Linda K. Smith

Almost a year ago the proposed Head Start Program Performance Standards were released for public comment. I am pleased to announce that the new and final Head Start Program Performance Standards were published yesterday in the Federal Register. These new Program Performance Standards have been nearly a decade in the making – stemming from the bipartisan “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007” in which Congress required that the Program Performance Standards be modified to ensure that all Head Start programs provide high quality, comprehensive services that lead to strong outcomes for children. As a result, we proposed the most extensive overhaul of the standards since they were originally developed.

The new Program Performance Standards are based on findings from scientific research, extensive consultation with experts, and comments from the public. They reflect best practices, lessons from program input and innovation, and integrate recommendations from the Secretary’s Advisory Committee Final Report on Head Start Research and Evaluation.

They reflect this Administration’s belief that every child deserves an opportunity to succeed and that all children should graduate from high school college- and career-ready.

These are just a few of the things that the new standards cover:

• **Birth to Five Approach** – The standards requires grantees to consider the needs of children birth to five in their community as they plan their programs. They focus on a continuum of services and sound child development principles that begin prenatally and continue into the school years.

• **Community Needs Assessment** – A greater emphasis will be placed on the needs assessments with special focus on the needs of homeless children, children in foster care and children with disabilities.

• **Duration** – The rule phases in over five years, the number of program hours for preschool-age center-based programs to a new minimum of 1,020 hours per year. Each grantee will have the flexibility to determine the length of the days as long as services are provided for at least 8 months to minimize summer learning loss.

• **A Focus on Outcomes** – The standards are designed to focus on the outcomes we want to see. We describe what the standard is but give grantees the flexibility to determine how to best meet that standard.

• **Greater Alignment of Head Start Standards** with child care and other programs.

Head Start is the model we hope all programs will strive to emulate. To the extent possible, we have aligned the new standards with requirements in the Child Care

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and Development Block Grant to support opportunities for coordination and alignment with other components of early care and education.

• Plain English – The standards are written and organized in a “plain English approach” that the average reader can understand. Our goal is to not only clarify the requirements for current grantees, but to help other programs use them as benchmarks to improve the quality of services nationwide.

Over the coming months there will be many opportunities to learn more about the new Program Performance Standards — The Office of Head Start will provide information, our regional offices will meet with grantees, and our new Technical Assistance Centers will be planning the best ways to support our programs. We know that as we work to fully implement the new standards there will be challenges, but there will also be more opportunities.

The new standards will ensure that the nation continues to look to Head Start not only as the leader, but also as a partner in moving early childhood forward. Head Start will continue its’ commitment to improving the lives of our poorest children through comprehensive services that build on and support the role of parents in the lives of young children, because we know a high-quality Head Start program can change the course of a child’s life, and engage the entire family.

These Program Performance Standards will help make Head Start programs a better place for children and families for decades to come, and help us build the next 50 years of Head Start!

Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development

OPRE Recently Released Reports

NEW: Including Relationship-Based Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Care: Implications for Practice and Policy
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr_inquire_may_2016_070616_b508compliant.pdf

Best Practices in Creating and Adapting Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Rating Scales – Brief & Report

Proposed Revisions to the Definitions for the Early Childhood Workforce in the Standard Occupational Classification

Adolescent Well-Being after Experiencing Family Homelessness

What Works, Under What Circumstances, and How?

Brief Series on the Early Childhood Workforce: Pathways to Progress
The Institute of Medicine’s and National Research Council’s 2015 report, Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth to Eight, offered recommendations for building a high-quality early childhood workforce with the knowledge, competencies, education, and support to promote children’s development and learning. The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning developed a series of briefs on the early childhood workforce.

These briefs summarize the findings in the report to inform early childhood programs, states, higher education entities, and other interested stakeholders about strengthening the support they offer the early childhood workforce. You can find these soon at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd.
An Exciting Day for Head Start

By Dr. Blanca Enriquez

The new year brings excitement for the new Head Start Program Performance Standards.

The new school year is beginning, and we also have a new beginning for Head Start that will be felt in programs across the country. This time of year, children’s emotions are written on their faces for all to see. We all can see their excitement as they go to Head Start – some attending for the very first time. Parents are excited (and a little nervous) for their kids. They are also excited to learn and grow themselves, through the opportunities and comprehensive services Head Start provides. Teachers, home visitors, bus drivers, directors, family service workers, custodians, and the rest of the Head Start team – everyone is excited for the new school year to begin.

In 1985, I too became excited about the value and potential of early education as I began my career in Head Start. It was in the bilingual-bicultural community of El Paso, Texas that I accepted the challenge of implementing the many, many Performance Standards that form the foundation for Head Start services to children and families.

Now in 2016, I am more excited than ever as we at the Office of Head Start unveil the most complete revision and reorganization of the Head Start Program Performance Standards since the program began in 1965. These new Standards replace those 1,400 prescriptive and fragmented requirements with a much clearer set of standards. They now focus more on the end goal of excellence, while allowing each grantee to design their own system that is customized to their community’s needs, strengths, and resources. This represents a paradigm shift for programs from being told what to do, to being given a common foundation to build upon with their own knowledge and experience. This will allow each program to approach improving child and family outcomes in a way that is best for their community.

The new Head Start Program Performance Standards also:

- Reflect best practice and latest research on what works in early education to foster healthy child development and school readiness
- Increase the length of the school day and school year to maximize child outcomes
- Raise educational standards, curriculum requirements, child assessment, and teacher professional development
- Increase the quality of comprehensive services for children and families
- Affirm the role of parents in leadership roles and strengthen parent engagement services

These new Standards continue to solidify Head Start as a leader in early childhood development and learning. Collectively, they allow for the development of innovative program models as grantees strategize to be the highest performing agencies possible.

Head Start is truly a community, from the children and parents to everyone who works for the program. To quote one Head Start director, “I don’t just serve children, I build resilient families and a stronger community…my families…and my community. I feel like the matriarch of an ever-expanding family that I am so incredibly proud of every single day!”

I sincerely hope that these new standards bring the same excitement and promise to our grantees as the programs bring to the children and families they serve. As the new school year begins, everyone in the Head Start world – children, parents, staff, and those of us at Headquarters – is looking forward to the new and exciting opportunities for learning and growth as we work together to implement these Standards.

Read more about the new Head Start Program Performance Standards: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/new-policy

Dr. Blanca Enriquez is the Director at the Office of Head Start. This blog was originally posted to the ACF family room blog.

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships Highlight
Building Capacity for Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships in Rural Texas

When the initial funding was announced for the Early Head Start – Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships in 2014, Tena Williams, the Director of Wee Care Learning Center, a child care center in rural Bastrop, Texas, knew that she wanted to be part of the partnership with Cen-Tex Family Services, Inc. Cen-Tex had been a Head Start grantee since 1992 and an EHS grantee since 2010, and they did not have any child care partnerships before this grant. Audrey

Allen Jackson, the Director of Cen-Tex, was very interested in expanding EHS slots in more places, especially in rural Texas. Cen-Tex saw the partnership approach as a way to extend the reach of the program to more areas with the greatest needs.

Tena had been working as the Director of a child care center for several years, and she knew that she really needed more resources to lower the teacher-to-child ratios in her classrooms. She also wanted to provide more support for her teachers in the classroom. Tena has been a long-term resident of Bastrop, which has a population of fewer than 10,000 residents. She shared that in the last 4 years, the community had been devastated by several wildfires, which had destroyed almost 1,700 homes and child care centers. For Tena, she felt strongly that opening the Wee Care Learning Center was something she needed to do to help the traumatized community. She also saw the need to support the child care workforce and sees the work as an investment in the people. Many Wee Care staff members were single mothers themselves and were trying to survive on a minimum wage salary. For Tena, the primary appeal of the EHS-CC Partnerships was simple; this was a chance to get more resources to help her improve the program.

Over the last year of implementation, Cen-Tex and Wee Care have learned a lot from each other and can point to the immediate benefits they have already seen in the teachers, parents, and children in their program. As a result of the partnership, Tena immediately reduced her ratios in the classroom to meet EHS requirements. She also raised salaries for teachers, and now they are the highest paid child care staff in Bastrop. Tena doubled the size of her staff in 1 month, going from 22 to 55 staff members, and also put them on a track to receive their CDAs. Teachers report more satisfaction in their work because they are getting support and coaching through Cen-Tex for their professional development. Tena has even noticed that the additional support for teachers has had positive ripple effects with their own children and her staff’s parenting behavior. Tena is committed to ensuring that all children and families receive the same benefits from the program, regardless of whether or not they are enrolled in an EHS-CC Partnership slot.

The strength of the partnership between Cen-Tex and Wee Care Learning Center resulted in concrete benefits to the center, staff, and families and children in care. Tena noticed that after 3 and 6 months, there were no more complaints about children biting in the classroom. Tena said that she had never seen such a dramatic change in all her 30 years of working in child care. Audrey reports that this partnership is particularly strong because they trust each other and are willing to work things out together. It has not all been smooth sailing, and they have had to get over some philosophical differences in their approaches. Tena described the partnership as a “covenant” between the two agencies, and they know that each organization is giving the other their best. Ultimately, they both share the same vision of improving the lives of young children and families in their care.

What are the obstacles to effective communication about implementation science, and how can advocates better navigate them? “Just Do It”: Communicating Implementation Science and Practice, a new study from the FrameWorks Institute, offers insight.

This report provides a set of key strategies for communicating about implementation science and practice. It is grounded in a detailed understanding of how implementation is understood by experts, human service professionals, and members of the American public. By mapping the ways that these different groups reason about implementation, the authors identify a set of challenges that must be addressed to allow nonexperts to access and use knowledge and perspectives from implementation science. In short, these perspectives must be reframed to communicate effectively about implementation.
The Ounce of Prevention released two new briefs.

**Reimaging Instructional Leadership and Organizational Conditions for Improvement: Applied Research Transforming Early Education** argues that we must broaden our understanding of improvement beyond the field’s sole focus on classroom-level processes to the organizational processes that create conditions essential to teaching, learning, and improvement.

**Job-Embedded Professional Learning Essential to Improving Teaching and Learning in Early Education** makes the case that the field must abandon traditional professional development and replace it with the organizational and sustained support of job-embedded professional learning (JEPL) and details our recommendations for implementation and our policy recommendations.

**New Briefs About Health and Safety Topics**

*By: Rachel Schumacher*

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 made major changes designed to protect the health and safety of children in early care and education (ECE) settings. The foundation of high-quality child care that promotes child development involves efforts to improve children’s health, safety, and well-being. When fully implemented, the changes in the CCDBG Act of 2014 will expand the availability of quality child care and will benefit the more than 1.4 million children and families receiving child care subsidies. These reforms will also enrich the lives of children who receive no direct assistance from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program but who will benefit from ECE environments that support their health, safety, and well-being.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 included several provisions related to health and safety, training, and monitoring that States, Territories, and Tribes will have to implement for all providers receiving payments from the CCDF program. Revising requirements and creating new ones can be challenging and time-consuming. To support licensing administrators and CCDF administrators as they begin to consider revisions to State standards for licensed and license-exempt providers, the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) has developed nine new briefs addressing the health and safety topics specified in the law.

We encourage States, Territories, and Tribes to take advantage of this opportunity to better safeguard children's health and safety while increasing awareness among child care providers and families.

- **Brief #1: Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases**
- **Brief #2: Administering Medications**
- **Brief #3: Prevention of and Response to Emergencies Due to Food and Allergic Reactions**
- **Brief #4: Reducing the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Using Safe Sleeping Practices**
- **Brief #5: Building and Physical Premisises Safety**
- **Brief #6: Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning**
- **Brief #7: Handling, Storing, and Disposing of Hazardous Materials and Biological Contaminants**
- **Brief #8: Transportation of Children**
- **Brief #9: Health and Safety Training**

In addition to supporting licensing administrators and CCDF administrators, the briefs can also be of value to ECE and school-age care and education providers seeking to improve health and safety within their learning environments.

The briefs can be found on the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System Web site at [https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/health-and-safety-and-licensing](https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/health-and-safety-and-licensing). For additional support, please contact the ECQA Center at QualityAssuranceCenter@ecetta.info.

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**Resources for Young Parents and Children Experiencing Homelessness**

Practitioners, policymakers, and young parents can use this database to find resources about programs, guidance, practices, and supports available to young parents experiencing homelessness as well as to their children. These resources include the following:

- The database includes almost a dozen resources related to mental health and substance use issues, ranging from evidence-based practices to factsheets on Medicaid eligibility for youths experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- There are several resources on parenting supports, including factsheets for parents and providers and a review of relevant home-visiting research.
- The database lists several webinars relevant for serving this population on such topics as engaging young fathers, integrating early childhood home-visiting and homelessness systems, and accessing health care for pregnant and parenting youths.

Medicaid Expansion Promotes Children's Development and Family Success by Treating Maternal Depression

The Georgetown University Center for Children and Families and CLASP synthesized research about child development, Medicaid expansion, and maternal depression. The report, *Medicaid Expansion Promotes Children’s Development and Family Success by Treating Maternal Depression*, distills the research to support four key conclusions.

Untreated maternal depression is a major public health problem that affects large numbers of women, especially low-income women, and their children.

Although safe and effective treatments exist, low-income and uninsured women are far less likely to get treatment.

States that used the Affordable Care Act to expand Medicaid coverage for low-income parents have new opportunities to ensure that women are enrolled and receive coverage.

Mothers without health insurance face significant financial barriers to getting the care they need to treat maternal depression.

Zika Prevention

The Office of Minority Health (OMH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), within HHS, have Zika resources pages featuring multilingual materials. In addition, Sesame Street has developed videos in English and Spanish of Elmo talking about ways to prevent the spread of Zika.


Early Childhood Health

Zika spreads to people mainly through the bite of one of two species of infected mosquitoes that live in some parts of the United States. Most people infected with Zika will not have symptoms or will have only mild symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes.

Information about Zika can be found at [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika). This site has more questions and answers about the Zika virus and many additional communication materials as well.

CDC information on insect repellent and recommendations for preventing mosquito bites can be found at [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites). Technical information about Zika is available at the following CDC Web site.

ACF has produced two Zika virus fact sheets, both of which are in English and in Spanish:

**For parents:**
- *Zika Virus Fact Sheets for Parents (English Version)*
- *Zika Virus Fact Sheets for Parents (Spanish Version)*

**For child care providers and Head Start centers:**
- *Zika Virus Fact Sheets for Providers (English Version)*
- *Zika Virus Fact Sheets for Providers (Spanish Version)*

SAMHSA has also produced a handout titled *Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks.*

The Campaign for Dental Health is pleased to share three new posters and shareable images (memes) in Spanish and English. These images are designed to help share positive messages about community water fluoridation, health equity, drinking water, and children's oral health, and they are available in two forms. Visit [http://ilikemyteeth.org/three-new-posters-shareable-images/](http://ilikemyteeth.org/three-new-posters-shareable-images/) to view and download a shareable image or PDF for use on Twitter, Facebook, your Web site, and other social media channels.
From the Office of Head Start
Child and Adult Care Food Program: National Average Payment Rates, Day Care Home Food Service Payment Rates, and Administrative Reimbursement Rates for Sponsoring Organizations of Day Care Homes From July 1, 2016, Through June 30, 2017

Category: Notice
Issuing agency: Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Action: Notice
Issue date month/year: August 2016
Citation: Federal Register, Volume 81, Number 151 (Friday, August 5, 2016), pages 51840–51842
URL: https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-05/html/2016-18646.htm

This notice announces the annual adjustments to the national average payment rates for meals and snacks served in child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers; the food service payment rates for meals and snacks served in day care homes; and the administrative reimbursement rates for sponsoring organizations of day care homes, all of which reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index. Further adjustments are made to these rates to reflect the higher costs of providing meals in the States of Alaska and Hawaii. The adjustments contained in this notice are made on an annual basis each July, as required by the laws and regulations governing the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
Action date: These rates are effective from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

Racial Inequality Starts in Preschool

A report released by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education, shows a continuation of the trends and disparities in the suspension rates of early learners. For the 2013–2014 year, the report shows that children who are black and attend public preschools were 3.6 times more likely to receive one or more suspensions compared with their counterparts who are white. Even though boys who are black represented only 20 percent of enrolled preschoolers, they represented 45 percent of male students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions. In addition, although girls who are black represented only 20 percent of enrolled female preschoolers, they accounted for more than 50 percent of female students with one or more out-of-school suspensions.

Screening Results Followup

Following up on screening results is as important as screening. As you know, screening allows us to identify children who might need further evaluation to determine the existence of a delay in development, a particular disability, or a health concern.

Early care and education directors and staff members can play an important role in working with families, health providers, and community resources to address a concern. A child might need more medical examinations; the results could show that a child needs further evaluation; or sometimes a child just needs to get medical or dental treatment to get back on track. Followup means working as a team to help each child get the services that he or she needs most.

Helpful Resources

Explore these resources to help when following up on screenings.
Get a Head Start on Enrollment helps health managers think through the health information they gather and the next steps.
Children with Special Health Care Needs shares information about individualizing to meet these children’s needs.
Early Identification: Screening, Evaluation, and Assessment defines the role that special education plays in followup.
Families as Lifelong Educators offers ways to engage families; specifically, it helps staff members think through what to do when they are dealing with their own challenges.
Creating a Welcoming Early Childhood Program for LGBT Families

The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center has recently developed a set of resources to support early childhood professionals in enhancing relationships with family members who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). Administrators, early childhood professionals, and family members can use these resources to help build strong partnerships that lead to successful family and child outcomes in early childhood settings. The four resources are described below. All resources can be found at [https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/relationship/inclusive-early-childhood.html](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/relationship/inclusive-early-childhood.html).

**Creating a Welcoming Early Childhood Program for LGBT-Headed Families: A Checklist for Programs**

One of the first steps in creating a welcoming early childhood program is to assess what you are doing well and to identify areas for growth. Providers, teachers, and administrators can use this checklist for self-assessment. You can also use it to begin conversations with staff members, family members, and guardians.

**Partnering With Parents Who Identify as LGBT**

Explore this resource to learn more about engaging parents and guardians who identify as LGBT. What you learn can help you create a welcoming and inclusive environment, build staff professionalism, and engage all families in your program.

**Resources About Diverse Family Structures**
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/lgbt-resources.pdf

Expand your knowledge with the latest information and research about partnering with parents who identify as LGBT and learn how to create inclusive early childhood settings.

**Children’s Books That Include Diverse Family Structures**

Offer children an inclusive look at all kinds of families by adding some of these great children’s books to your program’s library.

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**September Is National Preparedness Month**

September is National Preparedness Month, an annual campaign to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, schools, organizations, businesses, and communities. Now in its 9th year, National Preparedness Month is a nationwide, monthlong effort hosted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps. ACF is committed to preparing individuals, families, programs, and communities for disasters and to assisting with the recovery process. As part of this commitment, ACF proudly supports National Preparedness Month.

**Preparedness for Early Childhood Education Providers**

- **Emergency Preparedness Resources** from the Office of Head Start (OHS)
  - Check out the [Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocf/preparedness), a resource to support Head Start programs in planning for emergencies and in implementing preparedness plans
  - See [Responding to Crises and Tragic Events: Information and Handouts](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocf/preparedness), which addresses program needs when community violence and natural disasters occur

- **Child Care Resources for Disasters and Emergencies** from the ACF Office of Child Care (OCC)
- **Disaster Preparedness for Child Care Providers**, which provides resources from the American Academy of Pediatrics
- **Emergency Preparedness Resources for Schools and Childcare Centers** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **Emergency Preparedness and Response** from OCC and OHS
- **Preparing Children for Natural Disasters Reassures Their Safety** from ACF

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**The Bear Ate Your Sandwich**

**OCTOBER 27, 2016**

**Jumpstart Read for the Record**

On Thursday, October 27, 2016, children and adults will gather to learn, laugh, and read this year’s campaign book, *The Bear Ate Your Sandwich*, by Julia Sarcone-Roach, as part of the world’s largest shared reading experience. *Read for the Record* inspires adults to read with children, spurs policymakers and organizations to take action toward transformative change in early education, and puts books in the hands of more children across the country.
Early Childhood Homelessness

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Program Brings Trauma-Informed Care and Services to Homeless Infants and Toddlers in Maryland

Between 2014 and 2015, Maryland saw a 7% rise in homelessness, particularly among families. Young children whose families are experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer from negative impacts on their healthy growth and development, with long-range effects on their overall school readiness and well-being. As a result of the 2014-funded Early Head Start – Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership initiative, an increased number of infants and toddlers whose families are homeless in Baltimore, MD, now have access to high-quality, therapeutic EHS services on site in a family residential shelter.

In a center operated by PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, Sarah’s Hope, located in the Sandtown-Winchester community, now provides EHS to an additional 24 homeless infants and toddlers whose families also receive intensive and residential support from the shelter. Together, the EHS-CC Partnership Grantee, Maryland Family Network (MFN), and their delegate agency, PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, facilitate an innovative and collaborative program model that brings essential therapeutic and comprehensive services to this vulnerable population of young children and their families. MFN has successfully leveraged the child care subsidy program and EHS resources, as well as the power of parents and community collaboration, to implement the EHS-CC Partnership program in the Sarah’s Hope shelter.

Earlier this summer, Rachel Demma, Marsha Basloe, Melissa Brodowski, and ACF Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Smith traveled to Baltimore for a site visit to learn more about the EHS-CC Partnership and MFN’s efforts on behalf of young children and families. They also had the chance to visit PACT and to tour the new early childhood center at Sarah’s Hope, where they met with PACT staff and observed parent engagement.

The EHS-CC Partnership’s distribution of startup funds allowed the staff at PACT an 18-month on-ramp to ensure community coordination for the delivery of comprehensive services; staff members were trained and supported in implementing Head Start standards; and program enrollment was representative of MFN’s commitment to serving subsidy children across the state. Through relationships with community behavioral and mental health providers executed by formal agreements, MFN ensures that infants and toddlers receive the trauma-informed care that promotes positive and enriching early care and learning experiences, which research has shown can improve early social-emotional and executive function outcomes. In addition, the shelter’s early childhood program now has a new playground, and staff members have seen tiered increases in salaries based on the qualifications of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or an Associate’s degree (A.A.) and higher.

From grantee leadership to program staff, which includes parent volunteers, all the members of the MFN EHS-CC Partnership program at Sarah’s Hope point to the flexibility of the EHS-CC Partnership model as a key contributor to their progress to date. By bringing together resources and relationships that span programs and funding streams, this EHS-CC Partnership allows the youngest residents of Sarah’s Hope increased access to high-quality program supports and services that lead to a lifetime of thriving and learning, despite the adversity of homelessness.

Learn more about Sarah’s Hope, Baltimore’s largest homeless shelter for families. St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore opened the newly renovated and expanded Sarah’s Hope family shelter in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of Baltimore. The $8 million project doubled the shelter’s capacity to 150 beds to meet increased demands, making it the city’s largest homeless shelter for families. The renovations created family-style living units, expanded space for improved services, and added a new early childhood center for homeless children operated by PACT.

Maryland Family Network was formed in 2009 with the merger of two leading nonprofit organizations—Maryland Committee for Children, founded in 1945 to advocate for high-quality child care, and Friends of the Family, founded in 1986 to administer Maryland’s network of Family Support Centers.

PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, a nonprofit organization in the city of Baltimore, offers a Therapeutic Nursery for homeless children younger than age 3 and their families. Serving 24 children and their families at a time, the Therapeutic Nursery provides specialized child care services, with an emphasis on mental health interventions to enhance family stability and parent-child interactions.

(Endnotes)

The Yerington Paiute Tribe in Nevada strives to give their young children a good start in life and to prepare them to be future leaders. One of their key strategies is to revive their cultural traditions as a way to alleviate parental stress and to increase the sense of community. The Tribe’s Pudu Momo’o Home-Visiting Program is playing a leadership role in this effort by adding cultural enhancements to the services they provide to families with young children.

The Tribe’s project is supported by a grant from the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home-Visiting program, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The Yerington Paiute Tribe is one of 25 Tribal communities participating in the Federal Tribal Home-Visiting program.

“Native American Tribes in this area have struggled historically,” says Holly Ditzler, the Pudu Momo’o Program Coordinator. “Many of them have lived in generational poverty while being isolated in a rural area. For a lot of these Native people, there was a great extent of cultural trauma, with some of the elders having been put into boarding schools as children, and their language and their culture [was] taken away from them. It’s almost an identity crisis, which the cultural enhancements have really addressed, bringing people back into [the] community and gathering people to find one mind.”

Parent educator Renee Rogers talks about traditional ways of homemaking and childrearing when she visits families in their homes. “We talk about different foods and the time that they’re harvested and some ways that they can be prepared. We talk about the different types of medicine that come from the land and how they can help you feel better. I also let families be aware of different cultural activities on and off our reservation.”

Storytelling is another important part of the culture. Rogers teaches families traditional stories that they can share with their children. The Tribe has also made books of traditional stories, such as Cottontail and the Sun, that parents can read with their children and that the children can color.

Rogers’ father, who is experienced in many traditions, taught her about smudging with sage as a way to cleanse one’s body, mind, and home. “I put the sage in an abalone shell and light it,” Rogers describes. “It starts smoking, and it’s believed that any prayer that you say while you’re smudging is carried by the smoke up to the creator. I give my families the option if they want to pray. To some of them, it’s more like a relaxing energy.”

Evaluators Bill Evans and Julianna Chomos at the University of Nevada-Reno work with Rogers in designing the enhancements and in tracking their implementation and outcomes. Due to the small sample size, the evaluators are using a single-case design, in which all the families are acting as their own baseline and all are receiving the cultural enhancements. Evans and Chomos are excited by the process and hope their experience will benefit future research with small communities.

“From the beginning of this project, we realized that we really could make a difference,” says Ditzler. “We’re talking about a whole generation of children who are going to grow up, be school-ready, and become the next leaders of the Tribe. What do we want them to take with that? I think one of the most important parts is the Tribal ownership of all of its culture. We feel very blessed as a Tribe to have incorporated this into many of the teachings, and we feel that this whole cohort of children will be taking on some of these cultural enhancements to pass on to future generations.”

For more information, contact Holly Ditzler at hditzler@ypt-nsn.gov or (775) 463-3301, x370.

The Yerington Paiute Tribe is a federally recognized Tribe with nearly 1,700 acres of land located 85 miles southeast of Reno. The Tribe is constantly striving to better the lives of its members and is working to foster a sense of social responsibility, educate youths, cherish elders, and celebrate and share their rich heritage. Learn more about the Yerington Paiute Tribe.
**Early Childhood Development — Working Together for a Better Beginning**

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### Family Engagement


The Harvard Family Research Project surveyed public library leaders from around the country about their family engagement practices, convened a learning community of librarians, conducted interviews with librarians, and reviewed research to closely study family engagement practices in public libraries. This report highlights five promising ways that libraries engage families in children’s learning from early childhood through the school years.

1. **Reach Out**: Libraries reach out to families to promote the programs, collections, and services that are vital in a knowledge economy.

2. **Raise Up**: Libraries elevate family views and voices in how library programs and services are developed and carried out.

3. **Reinforce**: Libraries guide and model the specific actions that family members can take to support learning, reaffirming families’ important roles and strengthening feelings of efficacy.

4. **Relate**: Libraries offer opportunities for families to build peer-to-peer relationships, social networks, and parent-child relationships.

5. **Reimagine**: Libraries are expanding their community partnerships, combining resources and extending their range, improving children’s and families’ well-being, and linking to new learning opportunities.

The report draws attention to the assets of public libraries in building a foundation for family engagement. These resources include the people they serve as well as the expertise of librarians; the place each holds as a trusted and welcoming institution in the community; and the role they play as a platform for children and families to use library materials for discovery, innovation, and the creation of new knowledge.


The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released a Policy Statement on Family Engagement from the early years to the early grades.
In late July innovators from around the country gathered in Seattle, WA, to attend the National Head Start Association’s (NHSA) first-ever Early Childhood Innovation Summit. Head Start began as an innovative experiment 50 years ago, and in that spirit, early childhood education leaders across the country are continuing to find innovative ways to better serve their communities. The Early Childhood Innovation Summit, hosted by NHSA and the Washington Head Start Association, provided a new opportunity for change-makers to come together in the name of collaboration and innovation. For 3 days, leaders from the Head Start community and beyond engaged in conversations with peers and learned about opportunities from traditional and venture funders. World-renowned speakers and innovators engaged with participants and offered experienced advice. NHSA’s Early Childhood Innovation Summit brought together leaders to discuss effective ways of approaching the critical work of early childhood to ensure its continued impact.

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