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Working Together for a Better Beginning

“Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child’s life is high-quality early education.”

President Barack Obama in his State of the Union address, January 28, 2014

Early Childhood Development

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

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Logo of Health Insurance Marketplace, Have health insurance questions? which is linked to https://www.healthcare.gov/quick-answers/?fromLoc=MPBadge&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=120x130-en&utm_campaign=hcgov

Check out these ACF blogs

The month of January just flew by. It's hard to believe it's almost mid February! It has been an exciting time for us at ACF.

Our early childhood staff at ACF has been working at full speed the last few weeks as we develop the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. We are so grateful to all of you who have given your time to be part of our listening sessions, webinars and for asking great questions. The response has been wonderful. We had nearly 1000 on just one of the webinars. In order to hear from as many of you as possible, we offered multiple opportunities to hear the webinar. We reached thousands of people and received almost as many questions and comments. Our goal has been to build in transparency of the process and be as inclusive as possible. Your efforts truly help us develop this funding opportunity. Thank you.



I previously shared information on the 2014 budget, and I want to share that again now. It is important to keep this in mind as we look at the future.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, passed by Congress and signed by the President on January 17th, provides:

- \$1.025 billion increase to [Head Start](#) to restore the funding cut by the sequestration and provide programs with a cost-of-living increase. Of this increase, \$500 million is set aside for new [Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships](#) proposed by the Administration to grow the supply of high-quality infant and toddler care for America's youngest children. Increased funding will allow new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving low-income infants and toddlers, bringing the total [Head Start](#) funding to almost \$8.6 billion.
- \$154 million increase to the [Child Care and Development Block Grant](#) (CCDBG) which fully restores the sequestration cuts and provides a small increase,

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

[Put the Earned Income Tax Credit to Work for Your Community](#)

EITC is one of our nation's largest anti-poverty programs, annually lifting more than 6 million people out of poverty each year; half of those impacted are children.

[State of the Union Spotlights Early Childhood Education](#)

President Obama reminded us that research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education.

[Federal Role for Early Childhood Education](#)

President Obama supports expanding access to high quality early childhood education and believes it is among the smartest investments that we can make.

[Health Insurance: Because It Makes You Secure](#)

The Health Insurance Marketplace brings quality, affordable, health care coverage within reach.

[Collaborating to Evaluate Home Visiting Programs for Infants and Mothers](#)

Home visiting is one of four approaches used in the Strong Start initiative and CMS, ACF, and HRSA are joining forces to evaluate this approach.

[I Think About Those in the Cold](#)

ACF works to ensure our most vulnerable population has access to high quality early learning experiences by partnering in the

bringing the total CCDBG to \$5.25 billion.

- \$250 million in new funding through the Department of Education's Race to the Top (RTT) program in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services for grants to States to develop, enhance or expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families.

Those of you who were on the webinars heard us talk about the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships as bigger than just another program. It is a shift in federal policy as we build a continuum of **high quality services** beginning with infants and toddlers. [President Obama's Early Learning Initiative](#) does just that by beginning with our youngest children and starting with home visiting services moving to Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships for infants and toddlers and on to Pre-K services for four year olds.

During our webinars, we shared information on both Early Head Start and Child Care. I believe it's vitally important to understand each other's worlds. We had staff come together internally to do this so we could provide you this background.

We've been planning webinars, FAQs that will soon be published and technical assistance materials that will include webinars, policy papers and a website to be updated regularly to help you think deeply about this new opportunity. [Check this site regularly](#) as it will continue to have updates. If you have questions, please send them to EHS.CCPartnerships@acf.hhs.gov. That helps us ensure that our policy team has this on their radar.

Please stay tuned!

Watch for things to come by checking our [website](#) and signing up for our [newsletter](#) and updates.

Linda

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

Human Capital: Update on Delaware's Work

By Harriet Dichter, Executive Director, Delaware Office of Early Learning

Our goal in Delaware is to develop, attract and retain quality, effective teachers and leaders with the knowledge and skills to serve our children and families and foster improved outcomes; professionalize the field (leaders & teachers with college degrees with appropriate compensation); and align appropriately with K-12.

Consistent with the National Survey of Early Care and Education, Delaware's portrait of the early learning workforce forcefully demonstrates why a change strategy is necessary. A recent Delaware surveys has some good news—those surveyed were at their programs for an average of 5.6 years, and had been in the field for over 11 years. But the overall entrance requirements into the field of early learning remain low, as shown by [Table 1](#), and much work remains to raise the numbers of teachers and leaders with a college education and preparation in early childhood as shown in [Table 2](#). Delaware's portrait is on target with the recent federal study in terms of education and compensation levels.



Work Group on Ending Family Homelessness and working on early childhood development with other agencies and departments.

See 2013 ACF Early Childhood Development Accomplishments [here](#).

See more blogs on the ACF Family Blog Page.

Featured Reports

Recently posted on the [OPRE Site](#) a report titled [Cross-Site Evaluation of SAMHSA's Project LAUNCH Initiative: Key Findings in the First Year](#). This is part of the [Cross-Site Evaluation of Project LAUNCH \(Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health\)](#).

Also posted is a brief titled [Putting the Pieces Together: A Logic Model for Coaching in Head Start](#) on the [OPRE website](#) and a report titled [The Descriptive Study of Head's Start Early Learning Mentor Coach Grant Initiative: Final Report and Appendices](#). These are part of the [Early Learning Mentor Coach Study \(ELMC\)](#).

See the newly posted [INQUIRE Data Toolkit](#) on the [OPRE site](#). The Toolkit contains two components: a Linkages Guide and a Dictionary of Common Data Elements.

We took a deeper look to compare the Delaware workforce to out k-12 public education work force. This shows sharp disparity, as shown in [Table 3](#), not only for lead teachers but also with aides in the public school classrooms.

Prior to Delaware's participation in the Early Learning Challenge, the state had focused on policy as well as funding to address workforce issues. Similar to many states, Delaware had developed early childhood competencies, a career lattice, a non-credit bearing professional development system, a data system for housing qualifications information, and funded T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. In addition, Delaware also had a B-2 certification as well as a high school career path for early childhood.

Using this baseline, Delaware has conceptualized the next phase of its work to meet its goal for the early learning workforce, as shown below:



Picture of a smiling boy and Delaware's Office of Early Learning Logo

Please continue reading here to see Delaware's 10 new strategies. Find Delaware's Strategic Plan for a Comprehensive Early Childhood System [here](#).

Find additional information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge [here](#) and [here](#).

State Advisory Councils Sneak Peak

ACF is in the process of writing up a final report to describe SAC planning grant accomplishments and deliverables to be published later in 2014. See the [SAC Progress Report](#) ACF published earlier this year.

The graphic below highlights a few examples of State Advisory Councils' efforts to advance early childhood systems beyond the legislative mandates.

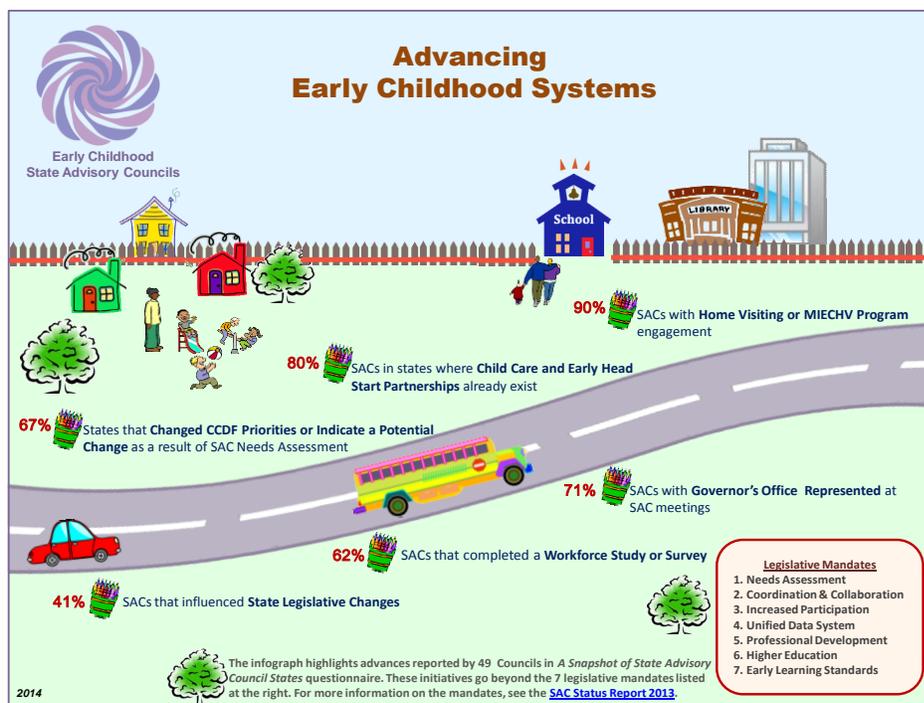
New America Foundation released [Subprime Learning: Early Education in America Since the Great Recession](#). A new report by the New America Foundation examines early education in the wake of the financial crisis and finds that too many children have been experiencing subprime learning.

[State Legislatures Magazine](#) - Brain Matters - Research into how the brain develops is shaping early childhood policies and programs

[The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) has released its much-anticipated update on [evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism](#). Scientists at UNC's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute spearheaded the project, screening 29,000 articles about autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to locate the soundest research on interventions for children from birth to age 22.

[Food Insecurity and Chronic Disease](#) - The review and framework indicate that food insecurity during critical periods of child development and pregnancy may result in the development of chronic disease by activating a stress response among individuals at crucial periods in a food – impoverished environment.

[Ounce of Prevention](#) released a toolkit designed to provide policymakers with strategies, tools, resources and options to make policy choices that facilitate the blending and braiding of



Text for Advancing Early Childhood Systems graphic

Advancing Early Childhood Systems

Produced by Early Childhood State Advisory Councils under the Administration for Children and Families.

67% SACs that changed CCDF priorities or indicate a potential change as a result of SAC Needs Assessment.

80% SACs in states where child care and Early Head Start partnerships already exist.

90% SACs with Home Visiting or MIECHV program engagement.

41% SACs that influenced state legislative changes.

62% SACs that completed a workforce study or survey.

71% SACs with governor's office represented at SAC meetings.

The graphic highlights advances reported by 49 Councils in a *Snapshot of State Advisory Council/States* questionnaire. These initiatives go beyond the 7 legislative mandates listed at the right. For more information on the mandates, see the [SAC Status Report 2013](#).

A Big Week for Tribal Early Childhood Programs!

By Moushumi Beltangady, Senior Policy Advisor

The last week in January was a big week for the tribal early childhood development programs! ACF held the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (Tribal MIECHV) grantee meeting and a meeting of the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) Home Visiting Steering Committee, and Tribal MIECHV grantees participated in Pew Charitable Trust's Fourth National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs. The Tribal Early Learning Initiative grantees had their first in-person meeting. And ACF began planning for new Tribal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships grants, a new and exciting opportunity for tribal communities to expand high-quality early learning and development opportunities for infants and toddlers!

The [Tribal Early Childhood Research Center's](#) (TRC) Home Visiting Steering Committee met on January 27th. The group, which includes representatives from seven Tribal MIECHV grantees, discussed emerging issues in home visiting practice and research, learned about the TRC's work to study tribal communities' readiness for the [Survey of Well-Being of Young Children \(SWYC\)](#), and reflected on the idea of measuring culture as part of determining the success of tribal early childhood programs.

funding streams. See the toolkit [here](#).

[Early Reading Proficiency in the United States](#) – a data snapshot from the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** – finds that 80 percent of fourth graders from low-income families and 66 percent of all fourth-graders are not reading at grade level.

Additional Resources

[Implementation Status and Tools in US States and Other Jurisdictions](#)- A national scan of the operational status of U.S. states' and jurisdictions' QRIS, as well as links to their QRIS standards and tools.

[Inclusion of Infant and Toddler Quality Standards](#)- Examples of QRIS standards that have been included in statewide QRISs and intentionally help programs promote the healthy development and learning of infants and toddlers.

Zero to Three has a [Fact Sheet](#) on Building Partnerships between Early Head Start Grantees & Child Care Providers

The Children's Defense Fund released [The State of America's Children@ 2014 Report](#), a comprehensive compilation and analysis of the most recent and reliable national and state-by-state data on population, poverty, family structure, family income, health,

On January 28th, ACF was thrilled to welcome [Tribal MIECHV](#) grantees to our own home, the Aerospace Building in Washington, DC. The meeting was the first time that all 3 cohorts of Tribal MIECHV grantees had ever been together, and was an exciting opportunity for learning, sharing, and networking. The meeting kicked off with a warm welcome and open conversation with Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Smith, then moved into breakout sessions on parent, family, and community engagement and data collection. After lunch, we heard from experts on the topic of program sustainability, followed by roundtable conversations on the topic of strategic information sharing.

The next day, the Tribal MIECHV grantees migrated to the [Fourth National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs](#). This one-and-a-half day event was attended by over 560 participants and included plenaries and breakout sessions on brain development and toxic stress, policy and financing, early childhood systems, professional development, staff recruitment and retention, fathers and home visiting, data systems, and continuous quality improvement. Tribal MIECHV grantees presented on sessions on early childhood systems integration and cultural adaptation and enhancement in tribal home visiting programs. In addition, 18 Tribal MIECHV grantees presented posters on their projects, cultural adaptations, and evaluations at a well-attended evening poster session. Tribal MIECHV grantees made a big impact at the Summit – making it clear that they are leading the home visiting field in both program quality and innovation!



L-R Brandi Smallwood, Judy McDaniel, and Barbara Moffitt with poster at National Summit

Immediately following the Summit, four Tribal MIECHV grantees gathered with their Head Start/Early Head Start and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) for the first meeting of the [Tribal Early Learning Initiative](#) (TELI) grantees. The TELI grantees reflected on their work to build stronger early childhood systems in their communities and participated in sessions on professional development, financing early childhood systems, and cross-system collaboration strategies. They also had an opportunity to consult with both Linda Smith and Administration on Native Americans Commissioner Lillian Sparks Robinson.

50th Anniversary of the War on Poverty

In his State of the Union address 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson declared an “all-out war on human poverty and unemployment”. He stated, “Our chief weapons in a more pinpointed attack will be better schools, and better health, and better homes, and

nutrition, early childhood development, education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and gun violence.

See a [new tool](#) developed by [USICH](#) to help Continuum of Care (CoC) Programs and recipients of CoC Program funding make strategic decisions regarding the use of CoC Program funds for supportive services.

[Palliative Care: Conversations Matter](#) campaign to raise awareness by [NIH](#). This website provides information and resources for pediatric patients, their families, and their health care providers.

USICH releases [Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness](#), a resource aimed at expanding an effective partnership with communities across the country to prevent and end homelessness for families.

Upcoming

[The Science of Children - Birth to Age 8: Public Session](#)

On **February 28, 2014**, the IOM/NRC study committee will hold a public information-gathering session at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC to obtain input from stakeholders interested in the developmental science, care, and education of children from birth to age 8.

[Substance Abuse and Mental](#)

better training, and better job opportunities to help more Americans.” A set of ACF offices and programs, including the [Office of Community Services](#), the [Office of Head Start](#) and the [Administration for Native Americans](#) have their roots in President Johnson’s call to action, and much of what we do involves efforts to reduce poverty and promote opportunity and mobility.

In early January, the President issued a [statement](#) on the 50th anniversary of the War on Poverty, and the President’s Council of Economic Advisors issued a [report](#), highlighting both the progress that has been made over the past 50 years and the work remaining to be done.

Over the course of the next year, ACF will make efforts better understand the experience of the War on Poverty; the current state of efforts to reduce poverty, and promote opportunity and mobility; the key research findings that help inform our efforts; and current debates, new thinking and proposals about next steps the nation could take.

Jeannie Chaffin, Director of the Office of Community Services set the stage for a January 29th learning opportunity as we recognized the 50th anniversary. Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Greenberg offered introductory remarks as ACF staff recognized the anniversary by viewing a clip from “[American Idealist: The Story of Sargent Shriver](#),” followed by discussion as it impacts our work today. See Acting Assistant Secretary Greenberg’s remarks [here](#).

HHS Releases Additional \$454 Million to Help Hard-Working Families with Children Stay Warm

In order to help many Americans who struggle to heat their homes during record cold temperatures this winter, the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is making available \$454 million in support of the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#).

In November, HHS released \$2.9 billion in LIHEAP funding while awaiting action on the final Fiscal Year 2014 appropriations. With the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 this month, HHS is now making available this additional \$454 million to states, territories, tribes and the District of Columbia to help households with their heating and home energy costs.

LIHEAP assists households across the country, including families with children and seniors, with their home energy needs such as heating in the winter, cooling their homes in the summer and insulating their homes to make them more energy efficient and reduce their energy costs.

For a complete list of funds available to states today please visit:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/liheap-dear-colleague-letter-final-fy-2014-funding-release>

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! Launching in March

We’ve highlighted the Developmental and Behavioral Screening Initiative, its partners and

[Health Services Administration \(SAMSHA\)](#) is currently accepting applications for a cohort of Project LAUNCH grantees to be funded in fiscal year (2014). [Check here](#) for application information.

NOTE: States that have previously received a Project LAUNCH grant are not eligible to apply

Stay Tuned! In the near future ACF will send out a notification inviting potential peer reviewers with expertise in child care and Early Head Start and relevant grant review experience to review grant applications for the upcoming **Early Head Start-Child Care** partnership initiative. More info to come soon.

its work in previous issues. It's almost ready to launch so look for Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!

Effective promotion of healthy child development and wellness is best achieved early in a child's life with well-coordinated, multi-sector coordination of services and communication with families. Public awareness of typical child development and risks for delay, developmental and behavioral screening, early identification of delays as well as linkages to referral and follow up services can be delivered anywhere young children and families spend time--in the home and in communities through a range of programs and services.

Next month we will launch a public awareness campaign—targeted at numerous sectors (e.g. early care and education, medical, primary health care, child welfare, mental health)—highlighting the importance of universal developmental and behavioral screening and support within the context of normative child development.

[See more about this effort](#) and the materials that will be launched as part of the public awareness campaign.

Coming in March of 2014 to commemorate Developmental Disabilities Month!

From the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL)

The Office of Head Start's [National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning](#) (NCQTL) has developed a variety of 15-minute in-service suites training resource materials that are posted on the [ECLKC here](#).

These 15-minute in-service suites are designed as a resource for professional development in busy, active early childhood centers and programs. The in-service suites are organized around one topic or big idea and address effective teaching, engaging interactions and environments, and assessment practices.

A trainer version of each in-service is available for use by Early Childhood Education Specialists and other training and technical assistance providers. This version includes a PowerPoint presentation, learning activities and other training materials.

The in-service suites can be used in a variety of ways to meet the needs of varied audiences. The trainer versions can be used as part of a workshop presented alone, or combined with other in-services or as a part of practice based coaching.

A Crosswalk of NCQTL In-service Suites with the CLASS™ connects teaching practices and learning activities found in these in-service suites with the domains and dimensions of the [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\)™](#). Head Start grantees and early childhood programs may find this tool useful in planning professional development. See the [new tool here](#).

Innovations in Early Childhood

New Penn State Better Kid Care On Demand Lesson Available

By Barbara P. Delaney, U.S. Department of Defense



Resilient caregivers: 'Bouncing back' from stress

Are you feeling stressed? This online lesson helps caregivers learn how to deal with and bounce back from stress. Bouncing back is sometimes called resiliency. Everyone needs to find ways to bounce back after experiencing stress. Handling stress in positive ways is especially important considering the demanding job of caring for children every day. Learn about stress and resiliency and identify your own strengths and ability to avoid or deal with stress.

- 1.) Access this lesson at: <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare>
<http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare>
- 2.) Click on: "On Demand Web Lessons" button on the left menu bar
- 3.) Create an account and sign in
- 4.) Select the title of the lesson: Resilient caregivers: 'Bouncing back' from stress.

CEUs are available and the lesson is approved for CDA.

Note: All of [Better Kid Care's On Demand](#) lessons are available at no cost to the participant. To complete the lesson assessment, receive professional development credit and be issued a certificate of completion there is usually a small fee; however, Better Kid Care is collaborating with the Department of Defense, USDA, and the University of Nebraska to provide this online professional development lesson at no cost to child care professionals.

Better Kid Care also has many research-to-practice resources and more than 150 online modules for early care and education and school-age professionals in the areas of child growth and development, curriculum, family engagement and communication, nutrition, health and safety and professionalism. All resources can be accessed from the [Better Kid Care website](#) above.

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

The Early Childhood Development newsletter contains links to other websites and news articles. These links represent just a few examples of the numerous reference materials currently available to the public. The opinions expressed in any articles or web pages do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration for

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