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Working Together for a Better Beginning

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

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

Education

Early Childhood Development

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

January 6, 2015

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

Have you been to our website recently?

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

Check out these ACF blogs

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

[Positive Gains in Indian Country: ANA and Native Communities Partnering Together for Success](#)

The Administration for Native Americans is embarking on its 40th anniversary of providing resources to Native American communities.

[What We Learned from Our Comprehensive Look at Center-Based ECE Programs](#)

A new report from the National Survey of Early Care and Education offers the first portrait of early childhood programs in more than 20 years.

[New Resource: The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#)

This tool is designed to help shelters create environments that are safe and developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

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

Recent data indicate expulsions and suspensions occur at high rates in preschool settings — even higher rates than in K12 school settings.

Happy New Year!

There is no doubt that 2015 will be another busy year for early childhood. The initiatives that began in 2014 will provide the foundation for a more robust early childhood system, but the work has just begun. Collectively, there were many “stand-out” achievements last year but the work on child care quality tops the list. The continued efforts of the early childhood advocacy and philanthropic communities both here in Washington, D.C. and around the country have positioned us for real and sustainable improvements. The work done by the states has been phenomenal, especially in light of the budget challenges of the last few years. Building quality rating and improvement systems, improving licensing, and developing professional development systems are at the heart of their work. The lessons learned from the Race-to-the-Top/Early Learning Challenge States continue to guide our policy work.



Thanks to Congress, the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) provides renewed energy for the field of early childhood and a pathway that will lead to all children in America having access to a reasonable level of safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate care. In December, the [Office of Child Care](#) hosted webinars on the CCDBG Reauthorization and there will be more information coming out soon to help states plan for these important changes. See the link to the Power Point below in this newsletter.

This year marks another milestone for Early Childhood Education - [Head Start](#) turns 50! In those 50 years, Head Start has become the nation's leader and cornerstone for early education. Over a million children are served by Head Start programs every year, including children in every state, territory, and in most American Indian and Alaskan Native communities. Since 1965, nearly 30 million low-income children and their families have received these comprehensive services to increase their school readiness. Stay tuned as the Office of Head Start shares information throughout the year.

Last year marked another turning point for early childhood as Congress provided funding for a new and potentially game-changing competitive grants program to establish partnerships between Early Head Start and child care programs to promote and expand high quality infant toddler spaces. In December, we announced preliminary grants [for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships](#). We are continuing the review process and will have more announcements this month. There is much excitement around these new grants, and we have been busy preparing for start-up of these grants. If you haven't seen our [Early Essentials, Six Part Orientation Series](#), this is a good

[Big Day for Early Childhood Education at the White House](#)

More than \$1 billion in new federal and private sector investments in early childhood education announced at White House Summit on Early Childhood Education.

[What Factors May Lead Families to Leave Head Start Programs Early?](#)

Recent brief uses data collected by Early Head Start and Head Start to explore factors that may be associated with children who leave programs before their eligibility ends.

[New Measures Developed to Assess Quality of Family and Provider/Teacher Relationships](#)

Research indicates the relationship between the early child care provider/teacher and the parent can contribute to a child's school readiness.

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

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

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

Featured Reports



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

[Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement: What the Head Start Field Can Learn from Other Disciplines. A Literature Review and Conceptual Framework](#)

[Reviewing and Clarifying Goals, Outcomes and Levels of Implementation: Toward the Next Generation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems \(QRIS\)](#)

[Early Care and Education Partnerships: A Review of the Literature](#)

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

[How are states using child care licensing standards and monitoring practices to support safe, healthy child care settings?](#)

starting place to learn about our work.

If you ask any early childhood teacher their number one concern, it is about the social-emotional development of children and how to work with challenging behaviors. In response, last month we announced a joint project between the [SAMSHA](#) and ACF. During the coming months we will be jointly working to support early childhood social emotional development and mental health consultation. Last month, this issue was highlighted by a series of blogs from the American Psychological Association by [Walter Gilliam, PhD](#), [Shantel Meek, PhD](#), and [Deborah F. Perry, PhD](#). You will continue to hear a lot more on this topic as we help states implement the newly released [policy statement](#) on expulsion and suspension practices.

There are other major initiatives that were launched last year that we will continue to expand upon. These include the [Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!](#) campaign, the [Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Homeless Providers](#), and the [Caring for Our Children Basics](#) model health standards.

Within the next few months, [the National Academy of Science Study](#) on the Early Childhood Workforce will be released. This study and its recommendations will frame our efforts to improve the early childhood workforce. As early care and education becomes increasingly important to ensuring our children are successful, the spotlight will be on the workforce and how we can provide the high quality early learning necessary for a strong foundation.

Early care and education continues as a priority of this Administration. In December, the first White House Summit on Early Education since 1996 was convened. During his remarks, President Obama reaffirmed his commitment to early learning and delivered on his promise in his [2014 State of the Union address](#) to bring together business leaders, elected officials and philanthropists to help more young children access high quality early learning. Highlights of the Summit included combined commitments of over \$1 billion dollars from the groups represented.

There is no doubt that 2015 will be another busy year! We still have so much work to do to ensure high quality early learning settings for all our children. I want to personally thank each of you for your support over the last year and we look forward to working with you on all that is ahead in 2015!

Linda

New Roles at ACF

[Shannon Rudisill](#) recently assumed the new role of Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development. In this role, she will build on ACF's vision of more integrated management across Head Start, Child Care, and related early childhood programs. ACF is pursuing an ambitious agenda to ensure that all children receive high quality, comprehensive early childhood services regardless of the setting. Shannon will work in close collaboration with [Linda K. Smith](#), Deputy Assistant Secretary to lead these efforts, with a particular focus on creating a unified, cross-sector early childhood technical assistance system. In addition, she will coordinate and align policies across Head Start, child care; Pre-K and related child care programs and



oversee a diverse portfolio of inter-Departmental initiatives.

See more about Shannon and her new role [here](#).

As Shannon took on her new responsibilities, [Rachel Schumacher](#) joined ACF as Director of the Office of Child Care.

[How do households in the United States perceive, search for, and change child care arrangements?](#)

[How can findings from an evaluation of New York City's regulations on nutrition, physical activity, and screen time in child care centers help other public health agencies prevent child obesity?](#)

[Are states supporting inclusion in their quality rating and improvement systems?](#)

[What does the research tell us about the socioemotional development of young dual language learners?](#)



[Infant, Toddler, and Early Childhood Mental Health Competencies: A Comparison of Systems](#) This report by ZERO TO THREE and the Erikson Institute examines how different state working groups have articulated the knowledge and skills that providers of mental health services (or mental health infused services) should have, and how these competencies are being used. Six systems are highlighted — California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Ohio, and Vermont.



The DaSy Center released the [DaSy Framework for IDEA Data Systems](#). The DaSy framework provides a guiding structure for TA and is a resource for states to consider and assess key aspects of their data system and plan for coordination across systems.



their brains develop, and may improve their confidence with math later on. See the ["TALK MATH" ACTIVITIES SHEET](#).



[Incorporating Early Learning Strategies in the School Improvement](#)

Most recently, Rachel has been an independent Early Childhood Policy Consultant. She is a nationally recognized and highly regarded expert on early learning and development policy at the federal, state, and community levels. She has advised and conducted policy analysis on behalf of national organizations and public agencies to identify and amplify strategies to enhance the lives of young children and their parents by strengthening early childhood systems and services. As a consultant, she supported the development and launch of Early Childhood-LINC (Learning and Innovation Network for Communities), a project cosponsored by the Center for Study of Social Policy and the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County to support families and improve results for young children in communities across the country with a focus on accelerating the development of effective, integrated, local early childhood systems.



Prior to launching her consulting business, Rachel was a Senior Fellow in Child Care and Early Education at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). While at CLASP, she led policy research and provided technical assistance to policymakers on a range of topics including: infant and toddler child care and Early Head Start policies, state early childhood systems, enhancing child care quality standards, state prekindergarten programs, and federal law and regulation for the Child Care and Development Fund and Head Start/Early Head Start. For more about Rachel and her role as Director of the Office of Child Care, see [here](#).

We are excited to work with Shannon and Rachel in their new roles.

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

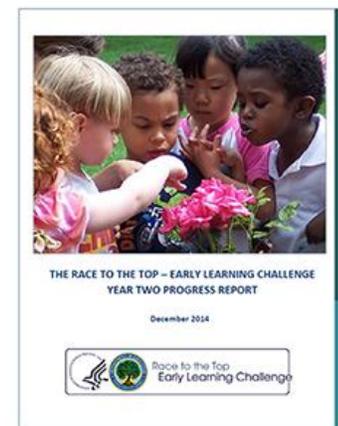


Lessons Learned from Progress Reports

Last month, the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) released a Year Two Progress Report that provided an overview of implementation from the 14 RTT-ELC states' Annual Performance Reports for 2013.

The Report provides a look at the progress RTT-ELC grantees are making toward improving the quality of early learning and development programs in their States and providing access to these high-quality programs for more children with high needs.

- RTT-ELC States have increased the number of early learning and development programs participating in their TQRIS and are implementing strategies to improve the quality of those programs. The total number of programs in the 14 States' TQRIS increased from 31,321 programs to 54,157 programs enrolled in their TQRIS, a **73 percent** increase from the time of their applications to the



[Grants \(SIG\) Program](#)

See case studies of three selected schools receiving SIG funds that have, with the support of their districts, promoted the use of early childhood programming (PK–3) as a key strategy in their schools' turnaround models.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund launched its [Achieve the Ounce OnDemand™](#) online professional development for home visitors.

This new professional development resource is available to home visitors and supervisors nationwide. Read more [here](#).



[Invest in Us](#)

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

end of 2013.

- More children with high needs gained access to high-quality early learning and development experiences in RTT-ELC States. There was a **175 percent increase** in the numbers of children with high needs enrolled in State-funded preschool programs in the top tiers of their TQRIS, a **43 percent increase** in the numbers of children with high needs enrolled in Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funded programs in the top tiers of their TQRIS, and an **83 percent increase** in the numbers of children with high needs enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start programs in the top tiers of their TQRIS.
- RTT-ELC States are working to identify what the early childhood education workforce should know and be able to teach young children. States are tying these core competencies to professional development opportunities and higher education course offerings so that early childhood educators can continue to progress in the field.

You can find the full report [here](#) and the Executive Summary [here](#).

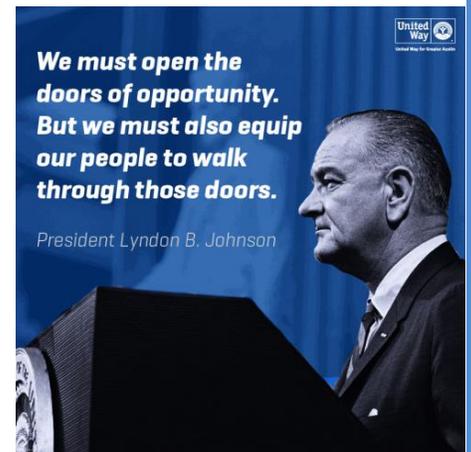
RTT-ELC states are reviewing their efforts and data from project plans to submit their 2014 Annual Performance Reports (APR) in 2015. The APR highlights progress made in 2014.

The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program aims to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for children with high needs.

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

In January 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a “War On Poverty” to eradicate the causes of poverty by creating job opportunities, increasing productivity, and enhancing the quality of life. This Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 included programs such as Job Corps, Urban/Rural Community Action, VISTA, Project Head Start and many more.

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



[Can Preschool Expulsion Be Prevented? A Growing Body of Research Says Yes!](#)

By Deborah F. Perry, PhD, Associate Professor, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development highlights the research in a [blog from the APA Public Interest Directorate](#) of the Psychology Benefits Society. An excerpt is below. Read the complete blog [here](#).



When [Dr. Walter Gilliam](#) published his [landmark study](#) documenting that preschool children were getting expelled at 3 times the rate of kids in K-12 settings, a small but important finding was included. *Rates of preschool expulsion were consistently lower when teachers had on-site access to a mental health professional for consultation.* Since then, many studies have replicated this finding: having a mental health consultant working with preschool teachers lowers the risk for expulsion for young children with challenging behavior.

The 2005 preschool expulsion study made headlines across the country. It showed troubling data about racial and gender inequities in expulsion rates:

- Boys were almost *5 times as likely* as girls to be expelled;
- African Americans were expelled at *twice the rates* of Whites.

A [2014 report](#) from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights confirmed this disparity persists:

- 48% of the preschoolers who received more than one out of school suspension were Black, even though African Americans make up only 18% of the preschool population.
- Likewise, nearly 80% of the children suspended more than once were boys.

While neither study elucidated the underlying reasons for these disparities, preschool teachers clearly need better options for dealing with the wide range of mental health issues that young kids have.

Unfortunately, the risk factors for behavior problems are prevalent: nearly one-third of all young children are affected by at least one sociodemographic stressor (e.g., low income, low maternal education) that increases risk of adverse social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes^[1].

Two types of problem behavior are common: (a) externalizing and (b) internalizing. Externalizing behaviors include hyperactivity, impulsivity, aggression, and anger. Children who exhibit internalizing behaviors are often withdrawn, anxious, or sad. The vast majority of the kids expelled from preschool are externalizers; and very young children with mental health problems can be missed by the special education system^[2].

But there is reason to be hopeful: **a decade of increasingly rigorous studies of early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) show that it can reduce the risk for expulsion.** It does this by building teachers' capacity to understand and address challenging behavior in young kids.

This approach teams a mental health professional with an early childhood provider in an ongoing problem-solving and capacity-building relationship. Mental health consultants help early childhood professionals to manage problem behavior and enhance the social skills of the children in their programs. They integrate evidence-based strategies into teachers' ongoing

practice through modeling, coaching and support. These approaches can focus on the needs of an individual child who is presenting with a specific problem behavior, and can also target the social climate for all the children in a classroom[3].

Please continue reading [here](#).

What is happening in early learning in states?

Kentucky: The [Kentucky United Way Born Learning® Academies](#) grew out of a partnership between public and private entities including: United Way Worldwide, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky University, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood, Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America and United Way of Kentucky.

"Parents and caregivers often need support and guidance on how to best teach their children and set them on the right track for learning," said Gov. Beshear. "These academies provide them with tools to prepare their young children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond." Consisting of six sessions designed to demonstrate how to turn everyday moments with children into learning



opportunities, the Academies are innovative, school-based workshops that meet a critical need in Kentucky communities – early childhood parental education.

The [United Way Born Learning®](#) concept is based on a strategy to engage entire communities in the importance of education at every stage of a child's

life. Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America was the initial supporter of expansion, committing to invest \$1 million to add more than 50 academies over five years. The commitment to add 150 academies through Kentucky's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant funds will result in more than 200 United Way Born Learning® Academies statewide at the end of 2017.

Northern Kentucky is the birth place of the United Way Born Learning® Academies, and ten school districts in that region are following the same model but without funding from either Toyota or Kentucky's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant. The academies in these school districts are made possible through smaller grant donations from various business partners across Northern Kentucky. The Governor's Office of Early Childhood, United Way, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services Family Resource Centers and Toyota are partnering to ensure fidelity across all funding models to maintain the integrity of the Born Learning® expansion.

Rhode Island: State to entice people to pursue higher education beginning at birth. Starting in January, parents can sign up for a savings account by checking a box on a medical form they already receive at the hospital when their child is born. Governor Raimondo's team coordinated a simplified enrollment process where the office of vital records in the health department sends the form to directly to the higher education assistance authority. Rhode Islanders can use the money in their accounts to attend colleges, universities, vocational or trade schools across the country. They can also apply it to expenses related to higher education, such as textbooks. If they haven't used the money by their 25th birthdays, any money they did not deposit themselves will go back into the state's educational investment fund.



San Francisco and Cuyahoga County, Ohio, also offer college savings accounts, but they wait until children enter kindergarten. [Maine](#) makes an initial

investment of \$500 per college savings account.

Delaware: Developmental Screening Webpage Launched. The Division of Public Health announced the launch of the developmental screening webpage under the [DeThrives.com](http://dethrives.com) website. The page provides information to parents and providers about the Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) screening initiative. The webpage provides information about young child developmental milestones to parents while encouraging them to track their children's growth and inform their physicians should they notice a delay. The site also prompts parents to ask their physicians about the types of developmental screening tools they use. Other features include a locator enabling parents to find physicians utilizing the PEDS tool within their zip code, in addition to links to other national sites.

To access the page visit <http://dethrives.com/help-me-grow>.

To access the *Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!* page, visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive>.

Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is now the [Pennsylvania Department of Human Services](http://www.dhs.pa.gov) (DHS), the department announced at a name change and logo unveiling ceremony in Harrisburg.

“Our new name better reflects the wide range of services we offer to Pennsylvanians as well as respect for our clients, their families and advocacy groups who have been requesting the name change,” said Secretary Bev Mackereth.

“This change is much more than simply changing a few words. Pennsylvania is telling every citizen there is no shame in seeking and receiving human services help,” said Kevin Jenkins, vice president for public policy and civic engagement for the Pittsburgh Foundation.

In addition to overseeing the state's Medicaid program, the department also helps families secure food and heat; oversees adoption and child protection services, state hospitals, juvenile justice facilities, [licensing and monitoring children's early learning centers](#) and adult long-term living facilities; and provides mental health services and supports for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities. The department, the state's largest, has more than 16,000 employees and oversees 94 county assistance offices statewide.

Preschool Development Grants

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

Development Grants (Year One)

Alabama: \$17,500,000
Arizona: \$20,000,000
Hawaii: \$2,074,059
Montana: \$10,000,000
Nevada: \$6,405,860

Expansion Grants (Year One) RTT-ELC States

Illinois: \$20,000,000
Maryland: \$15,000,000
Massachusetts: \$15,000,000
New Jersey: \$17,498,115



Rhode Island: \$2,290,840
Vermont: \$7,231,681

Non RTT-ELC States (Year One)

Arkansas: \$14,993,000
Connecticut: \$12,499,000
Louisiana: \$2,437,982
Maine: \$3,497,319
New York: \$24,991,372
Tennessee: \$17,500,000
Virginia: \$17,500,000

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

[Caring for Our Children Basics Comments](#)

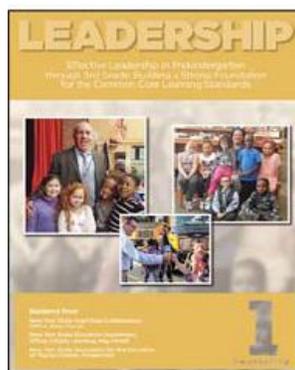
ACF is requesting public comment on a voluntary set of minimum health and safety standards for early care and education settings titled, "Caring for Our Children Basics."

High quality early care and education settings can have significant developmental benefits and other positive long term effects for children well into their adult years. At the same time, poor quality can result in unsafe environments that disregard children's basic physical and emotional needs leading to neglect, toxic stress, injury, or even death. It is not surprising that health and safety have been identified in multiple parent surveys as the most important factors to consider when evaluating child care options. Health and safety standards provide the foundation on which states and communities build a solid system of early care and education. Yet, states vary widely in the number and content of health and safety standards as well as how they monitor compliance with these standards. The proposed model standards are called "Caring for our Children Basics." They represent the minimum standards experts believe must be in place wherever children are regularly cared for in non-parental care settings. "Caring for our Children Basics" is the first attempt to reduce the conflicts and redundancy found in standards that are used to monitor early care and education settings. These are minimum standards and should not be construed to represent all standards that would need to be present to achieve the highest quality of care and early learning.

This call for public comment is to obtain information to help HHS as they further develop the voluntary set of minimum health and safety standards for early care and education settings. Because quality care cannot be achieved without consistent, basic health and safety practices in place, ACF seeks to provide a helpful reference for states and other entities as they work to improve their health and safety standards across program type. Public input will be helpful in providing HHS with practical guidance to aid in the refinement and application of "Caring for Our Children Basics."

CFOC Basics was published in the Federal Register for public comment. <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/18/2014-29649/caring-for-our-children-basics>.

Comment deadline – **February 17, 2015**



Supporting Early Childhood

Effective Leadership in Prekindergarten through 3rd Grade: Building a Strong Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards learning opportunities

New York State's ECAC released [five briefs](#) that provide research-based practical guidance to

support effective early childhood practices that help young learners gain the foundational skills necessary to reach the Common Core Learning Standards. The New York State Education Department's Office of Early Learning, New York State Association for the Education of Young Children, and the New York State Head Start Collaboration Office teamed up to highlight key features of high quality early childhood teaching for children from Prekindergarten through 3rd grade: the period of time when children acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards learning that will impact their long-term success in school and beyond. The guidance briefs aim to support administrators and teachers in making decisions that will lead to higher quality early childhood classrooms with positive outcomes for children.

With the statewide expansion of Prekindergarten, the need for more continuity in teaching practices and the current emphasis on vertical alignment of the grades make these publications timely. The first five briefs cover the following topics for Prekindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms: Leadership, Environment, Curriculum, Interactions and Instruction and the appropriate use of Assessment. The briefs are available for download on the NYS ECAC website www.nysecac.org.

Reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund

Did you miss the CCDF Reauthorization Webinar? Slides are now available on the CCDF Reauthorization resource page at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/occ_reauthorization_webinar.pdf.



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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 Children and Families. The inclusion of resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement of any private organization or business listed herein.