



Child Care Helps America Work and Learn



Administration for Children & Families

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Recovery Act Targets Inclusive Child Care in Region VI

I am pleased to share the Child Care Bureau's second issue of the *Child Care Helps America Work and Learn* series. This issue showcases some of the innovative ways that Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region VI States are using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) dollars to expand accessibility and improve the quality of care for children with special needs. As the examples in this issue illustrate, inclusion is a high priority for Region VI States as they allocate Recovery Act dollars. New funds are supporting a rapid expansion in both the accessibility and quality of inclusive child care. States are partnering with higher education to revise curricula, and develop competencies and career pathways to ensure high-quality resources and activities for infants and toddlers with special needs. At a regional level, organizations are promoting competency-based professional endorsements for child care inclusion specialists. Others are funding new positions, purchasing new developmentally appropriate equipment and materials, and conducting important research to inform the field about high-priority issues. ACF is very proud to partner with Region VI States as they enhance resources for serving children with special needs and their families in inclusive settings.

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Region VI States Use Recovery Act for Direct Services to Low-income Families

- 16,170 children have been served with Recovery Act funds in **Louisiana** over the last 6 months.
- 3,160 additional children in **New Mexico** have been served with Recovery Act funds.
- 95 children in **Comanche Nation** in **Oklahoma** were able to continue receiving child care subsidies because of Recovery Act funds.

Arkansas 'Quest' for Success

Arkansas is using Recovery Act funds to strengthen inclusion efforts using the SpecialQuest model.

The State is using the SpecialQuest train-the-trainer model to support the youngest children—those with special needs from birth to age 3.

Recognizing the special needs of foster care children, the State is supporting an important pilot study on the issue. The pilot will explore promising practices to improve outcomes for such children who receive subsidized child care.



Local Innovation Drives Texas Effort

In Texas, local workforce development boards are leading the way to use Recovery Act dollars to train child care providers on inclusion. With their responsibility for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Recovery Act dollars, the boards are training providers using resources such as the SpecialQuest Birth-Five Preschool Program.

While boards have different strategies, all still support the bottom line: more training. Boards are finding a variety of ways to use Recovery Act funds to train providers.

- One board is expanding the use of assessment tools, training, and onsite technical assistance for centers.
- Another is funding child development specialists to create inclusion plans and monitoring activities. Specialists also can provide onsite training, resources, and adaptive equipment.
- One board recently purchased a resource room library with developmentally appropriate equipment and teacher materials.

In addition, some boards also have chosen to develop their capacity to serve children with special needs.

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Inclusion the Key to New Mexico's Efforts

From small classrooms to the highest levels of State government, New Mexico is changing the dynamics of inclusive child care thanks to the Recovery Act.

Using Recovery Act funds, the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability is updating its Quality Child Care for All inclusion course focused on infants and toddlers. As part of this effort, experts are revising course syllabi and competencies across early childhood degree pathways, and two faculty institutes will provide training on the new syllabi.

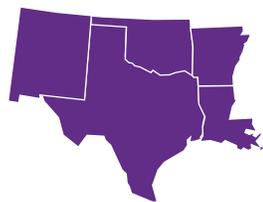
Up at the regional level, cutting-edge education also is an essential goal. Child care inclusion specialists are pursuing competency-based professional endorsement from the New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health.

The State also expects to play a significant coordinating role in this effort. A State summit on New Mexico's principles of inclusion has a goal to expand current definitions to include cultural, linguistic, religious, and lifestyle differences among children.



CCDF Highlights in Region VI Recovery Act Investments Enhance Child Care

- Thanks to the Recovery Act, **Louisiana** is restructuring its child care licensing program with an eye toward promising practices. A strategic planning process is underway with goals of greater consistency in inspections and stronger policies and procedures on caseloads and other issues. The State also has a new advisory group of parents, providers, and child development professionals to provide input. The process is expected to be complete with new child care licensing standards in place by fall 2010.
- Provider stability and development are key themes for the **Cherokee Nation**, the largest Tribe in **Oklahoma**. The Nation is offering startup grants to providers along with workshops on developing business plans. Directors and master teachers from centers and family child care homes can participate in a 40-hour training institute that offers stipends for participants. Recognizing the role played by relative providers, Cherokee Nation also is providing \$250 stipends to relative caregivers who complete basic child care training.



Region VI States (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) and Tribes have been allocated a total of \$327,974,685 in Recovery Act funds.

ABOUT THE RECOVERY ACT

The **Recovery Act** (Public Law 111-5) provided \$2 billion in supplemental funding to CCDF for grants to States, Territories, and Tribes for child care assistance to low-income families and investments for improving the quality and availability of child care. **Section 1512 of the Recovery Act** requires recipients of Recovery Act funds to submit quarterly reports detailing the use and impact of the funds, including jobs created and retained. The reports are available to the public at www.recovery.gov.

About the Child Care Bureau

The **Child Care Bureau** administers the **CCDF** program, a multibillion-dollar Federal and State partnership to support access to high-quality child care for working families. The Child Care Bureau helps States, Territories, and Tribes administer their CCDF programs through program support, policy guidance, technical assistance, and research.