



MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY

I am pleased to present the FY 2014 President's Budget request for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF programs strive to promote the economic and social well-being of children, individuals, families, and communities.

During this period of limited federal resources, the FY 2014 ACF Budget targets funding to high-quality early childhood education, strategies to strengthen services to at-risk families and communities, and financial support for our most vulnerable children and families. In conjunction with the President's proposals to improve quality and expand access to preschool, ACF is proposing a series of targeted investments that build upon existing Early Head Start and child care programs to establish a continuum of high-quality early learning for a child – from infants and toddlers to three year olds. The beginning years of a child's life are critical for building this early foundation needed for life-long success.

The Budget also seeks to ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of America's most vulnerable families by: (1) proposing a package of child support enforcement investments that support family self-sufficiency and responsible fatherhood, and that recognize the essential role of both parents in providing financial and emotional support for children; (2) providing a range of strategic, targeted investments to improve services for vulnerable children and families; and (3) including targeted legislative reauthorizations aimed at improving accountability and program outcomes.

Finally, the Budget responds to the President's call for a government that is accountable and transparent. In this vein, we will employ rigorous program integrity mechanisms and judiciously target staff resources to safeguard the investments sought in this Budget, and we will set tough performance standards and closely monitor their achievement.

/George H. Sheldon/
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families