

# **Child Care State Research Capacity Cooperative Agreements: 2007-2008 Grantees**

## **State of Maine, Department of Health and Human Services**

### ***Project Title:***

Maine Child Care Research Capacity Project: A Study of Program Quality and Children's Progress

### ***Principal Investigator:***

Kris Michaud

### ***Project Funding Years:***

2008-2011

### ***Project Abstract:***

The purpose of this project is to conduct an evaluation of Maine's Quality Rating System (QRS), a voluntary, four-step program designed to increase awareness of the basic standards of early care and education, to recognize and support providers who are providing care above and beyond those standards, and to educate families and the community about what high quality care is and why it is important. The evaluation will focus on standards of program quality of child care in Maine and on one component of program improvement: the use of child level assessment data. The project will address three broad research questions: (1) What are the differences in program quality between programs enrolled in the QRS and programs not enrolled in QRS? (2) What is the impact of federal CCDF on improving the quality of care available to and utilized by low-income working parents?; and (3) How are programs assessing the developmental progress of infants and toddlers using that information for program improvement?

## **Maryland State Department of Education**

### ***Project Title:***

Maryland Cooperative Agreement to Merge Data Files to Research the Effect of Subsidy Program on School Readiness

### ***Principal Investigator:***

Rolf Grafwallner

### ***Project Funding Years:***

2008-2011

***Project Abstract:***

This project will allow the Maryland State Department of Education to accomplish two objectives: Gain access to, enhance and merge existing databases on pre-school children, and use those databases, along with original focus group research, to understand the effects of current daycare subsidy programs on the school readiness of pre-school children in Maryland. The first part of the project involves integrating existing state databases and relevant additional databases in order to produce one merged data file, rich in indicators of demographic, socioeconomic and care experience variables for further analyses. In the second part of the project, the data will be mined to explore the associations among child care subsidies and the availability of care, parental use of high-quality care, and children's school readiness. In addition, focus groups around the state will provide qualitative data on parental experiences and opinions about high quality care and their associated decision making, on providers' views on the provision of such care, and on resource and referral staff opinions on child care needs.

**South Carolina, Department of Social Services**

***Project Title:***

South Carolina Child Care State Research Capacity Building Project

***Principle Investigator:***

Leigh Bolick

***Project Funding Years:***

2007-2010

***Project Abstract:***

A research project with the goal of leveraging the state of South Carolina's current data system and building its research capacity to better track South Carolina's children and their families. Specifically, the project aims to: (1) create a child-based database for the Child Care Licensing Operating System to house data on children in child care; (2) develop a system of linked data sets from multiple service providers to capture key data about families and children under the age of 6; and (3) investigate the impact of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) on improving the quality of child care available to, and utilized by, low-income working parents and at-risk families.

**Virginia Department of Social Services**

***Project Title:***

Improving the Quality of Child Care Available and Used by Low-Income Working Parents and At-Risk Families through the Development of an Integrated Data Systems Model for Policy Research and Decision-Making

***Principal Investigator:***

Kathy Gillikin

***Project Funding Years:***

2008-2011

***Project Abstract:***

The goal of this project is to develop an interagency, integrated data system for the purpose of assessing accessibility and quality of early care and education programs available to and utilized by low-income working parents and at-risk families, as well as the impact of quality initiatives to support the school readiness of children in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Steps to creating the unit include: identifying current data collected at the state and local levels; assessing data quality and gaps; establishing appropriate data sharing and protection agreements; designing and incrementally building and deploying the system. The following questions will be addressed: (1) What kinds of preschools/child care are children who receive CCDF subsidies and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) attending? (2) What is the quality of that preschool/care? (3) Are there differences in type and quality of care depending on ethnicity, locality, home language or other demographic factors? (4) How are these children faring in kindergarten, and how is that related to the programs they attended prior to kindergarten? The data system produced will be a web-accessible data management system designed to provide reliable data usable by appropriate state, local, nonprofit, academic and other stakeholders, to increase support for policy-level decision-making in Virginia.