

Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Final Report



May 2015



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



CONTENTS

2 OVERVIEW

4 BACKGROUND

7 STATUS REPORT ON REQUIRED GRANT ACTIVITIES

7 SAC Legislative Requirement 1

9 SAC Legislative Requirement 2

10 SAC Legislative Requirement 3

11 SAC Legislative Requirement 4

12 SAC Legislative Requirement 5

13 SAC Legislative Requirement 6

15 SAC Legislative Requirement 7

16 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

19 STATE AND TERRITORY PROFILES

20	Alabama	110	Louisiana	198	Oklahoma
24	American Samoa	117	Maine	203	Oregon
28	Arizona	122	Maryland	210	Pennsylvania
35	Arkansas	128	Massachusetts	215	Puerto Rico
39	California	134	Michigan	219	Rhode Island
46	Colorado	138	Minnesota	225	Tennessee
51	Connecticut	143	Mississippi	230	Texas
57	Delaware	147	Missouri	237	U.S. Virgin Islands
61	District of Columbia	153	Montana	244	Utah
67	Florida	158	Nebraska	249	Vermont
72	Georgia	162	Nevada	253	Virginia
77	Guam	167	New Hampshire	258	Washington
83	Hawaii	172	New Jersey	262	West Virginia
88	Illinois	176	New Mexico	266	Wisconsin
96	Iowa	181	New York	271	Wyoming
100	Kansas	189	North Carolina		
106	Kentucky	193	Ohio		

275 APPENDIX A

275 State Advisory Council Membership AL–WY

276 State Advisory Council Membership AL–WY (continued)



OVERVIEW

Every day, more Americans recognize the value of high-quality early childhood education and its contribution to the ability of American children to succeed in the classroom, thrive in the workforce, and compete globally. Research studies provide evidence that children who attend high-quality early childhood programs that promote optimal brain development are better prepared for school and success than children who do not attend such programs.

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care (SACs) grant. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), P.L. 111-5, funded the grant. The SAC grant provided funds to states and territories¹ to develop high-quality early childhood education systems.

Many states had already begun to develop early childhood education systems prior to receiving the grant. They used state, local, private, and federal funds to spur state innovations. Federal grant sources included the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS), and Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health).

The SAC grant propelled further improvements in the quality of early childhood programs, better coordination among existing early childhood programs, and streamlined service delivery. The grant also provided a strategic focus on early childhood, leveraged previous early childhood systems-building investments, and informed the President's 2013 early learning plan.

The State Advisory Council's work provided the foundation we needed to develop and begin implementing a statewide early childhood plan for young children. Our coordination and collaboration allowed us to implement our early childhood plan and prepared us to compete successfully for the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant.

– Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



¹States, the District of Columbia, and the territories are referred to as states hereinafter in this report.

State leadership had substantial involvement in the Councils:

- State leadership, through the governors' offices, authorized Councils to use state funds to meet the required federal match. All 49 Councils met the required 70 percent match of state funds.
- Governors in 44 states (88 percent) requested and received supplemental SAC funds.
- Although gubernatorial membership on the SAC was not legislatively required, 35 states (71 percent) reported that a representative from the governor's office participated.
- Twenty states (41 percent) had a representative from the state legislature on their Councils; 25 states (51 percent) had a representative from local government.
- Twenty states (41 percent) reported that the state legislature passed laws to support or sustain SAC activities and initiatives.

This final report on SAC grants highlights general themes across the states and presents each state's accomplishments in meeting the grant requirements. It also suggests implications for future Council work. ■



Organization of the Report

This final report on the SAC grants covers the grant awards period, December 2009 through September 2013.

It contains four sections and an appendix:

- I. **Background.**
Describes the Councils, the grant allocation amounts and final expenditures, and updates to Council membership.
- II. **Final Report on Required Grant Activities.**
Reports trends and states' achievements related to the seven required grant activities. An infographic highlights data collected in 2013 on the work of the Councils.
- III. **Implications for the Future.**
Discusses future work of the Councils.
- IV. **Individual State and Territory Profiles.**
Highlights the work of each state's Councils.

Appendix

- A. **State Advisory Council Membership.** Displays representation across all states and territories.

“My [early childhood] program has contributed to a better future for my children. Because of the program, I feel confident that my boys are getting the best education to be ready for school.”

– Angie, mother of three children, Phoenix, Arizona



BACKGROUND

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care (SACs) grant. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), P.L. 111-5, funded the grant for \$100 million for a three-year grant period. During this time, states used SAC funds to assess the status of their early childhood education systems and develop recommendations to improve the quality of and access to early care and education systems.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories were eligible to receive the SAC grant. However, not all applied for the grant nor requested the maximum amount available.² As a result, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services awarded \$92 million to 45 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Because \$7.2 million remained after the initial funding period, ACF made additional funding available to the first-round applicants. These states submitted an addendum to their original grant application and provided a state match to the federal funds.

Of the 45 states and territories that received SAC awards, all except Arkansas, Nebraska, Puerto Rico, Utah, and Wyoming successfully applied for supplemental grants and matched the \$7.2 million funding amount.³ Table 1 lists SAC award amounts and the percent of allocated funds spent by states. ■

²Alaska, Idaho, Indiana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Palau, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands either did not apply for funding or were unable to meet all the application requirements to receive a grant award. South Carolina applied for and received a SAC grant in 2010, but returned the funds in 2011.

³More information on SAC allocation and funding can be found in the *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013*, pages 3–5. Website: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.



“I’m worried about everything,” said a parent concerned about her 9-month-old daughter’s development. This family received services to support their child through Utah’s statewide expansion of the Help Me Grow (HMG) program. This program links families to community resources on child development and parenting.

– Utah State Advisory Council

Table 1: SAC Awards

STATE OR TERRITORY	APPLICANT NAME	AMOUNT APPROVED	SUPPLEMENT AMOUNT	TOTAL ALLOCATION	APPLICATION TYPE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	PERCENTAGE SPENT OF TOTAL ALLOCATION
Alabama	Alabama Department of Children's Affairs	\$1,797,985	\$164,277	\$1,962,262	Original + Supplement	\$1,962,262	100.00%
American Samoa	American Samoa Government	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$508,883	76.61%
Arizona	Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board	\$2,325,469	\$164,277	\$2,489,746	Original + Supplement	\$2,489,746	100.00%
Arkansas	Arkansas Department of Human Services	\$1,174,518	N/A	\$1,174,518	Original	\$1,174,518	100.00%
California	California Department of Education	\$10,653,958	\$164,277	\$10,818,235	Original + Supplement	\$10,818,235	100.00%
Colorado	State of Colorado	\$1,329,635	\$164,277	\$1,493,912	Original + Supplement	\$1,440,942	96.45%
Connecticut	Connecticut State Department of Education	\$582,974	\$164,277	\$747,251	Original + Supplement	\$747,251	100.00%
Delaware	State of Delaware	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$661,204	99.54%
District of Columbia	DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$596,545	89.80%
Florida	Agency for Workforce Innovation	\$4,818,802	\$164,277	\$4,983,079	Original + Supplement	\$4,983,079	100.00%
Georgia	Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning	\$3,476,312	\$164,277	\$3,640,589	Original + Supplement	\$3,640,589	100.00%
Guam	University of Guam	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$664,184	99.99%
Hawaii	State of Hawaii	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$664,277	100.00%
Illinois	State of Illinois	\$3,584,080	\$164,277	\$3,748,357	Original + Supplement	\$3,723,503	99.34%
Iowa	Iowa Department of Management	\$705,525	\$164,277	\$869,802	Original + Supplement	\$857,586	98.60%
Kansas	Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services	\$811,043	\$164,277	\$975,320	Original + Supplement	\$975,320	100.00%
Kentucky	Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet	\$1,565,631	\$164,277	\$1,729,908	Original + Supplement	\$1,729,908	100.00%
Louisiana	Louisiana State Department of Children and Family Services	\$2,000,023	\$164,277	\$2,164,300	Original + Supplement	\$1,950,670	90.13%
Maine	Maine State Department of Health and Human Services	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$663,543	99.89%
Maryland	Maryland State Department of Education	\$895,886	\$164,277	\$1,060,163	Original + Supplement	\$1,060,163	100.00%
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care	\$1,137,560	\$164,277	\$1,301,837	Original + Supplement	\$1,301,837	100.00%
Michigan	The Michigan Early Childhood Investment Corporation	\$2,893,552	\$164,277	\$3,057,829	Original + Supplement	\$3,057,829	100.00%
Minnesota	Minnesota Department of Education	\$1,046,290	\$164,277	\$1,210,567	Original + Supplement	\$1,174,526	97.02%
Mississippi	Mississippi Department of Human Services	\$1,521,067	\$164,277	\$1,685,344	Original + Supplement	\$1,685,332	100.00%
Missouri	Coordinating Board for Early Childhood	\$778,834	\$109,690	\$888,524	Original + Supplement	\$876,438	98.64%
Montana	Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$664,277	100.00%
Nebraska	Nebraska Department of Education	\$500,000	N/A	\$500,000	Original	\$500,000	100.00%

Table 1: SAC Awards Continued

STATE OR TERRITORY	APPLICANT NAME	AMOUNT APPROVED	SUPPLEMENT AMOUNT	TOTAL ALLOCATION	APPLICATION TYPE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	PERCENTAGE SPENT OF TOTAL ALLOCATION
Nevada	Nevada State Department of Health and Human Services	\$623,467	\$164,277	\$787,744	Original + Supplement	\$768,071	97.50%
New Hampshire	New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$664,277	100.00%
New Jersey	State of New Jersey Department of Education	\$1,594,234	\$164,277	\$1,758,511	Original + Supplement	\$1,579,794	89.84%
New Mexico	New Mexico Early Systems	\$857,642	\$164,277	\$1,021,919	Original + Supplement	\$1,021,918	100.00%
New York	Children and Family Services, New York State Office	\$5,424,273	\$164,277	\$5,588,550	Original + Supplement	\$5,577,400	99.80%
North Carolina	North Carolina Office of the Governor	\$3,053,061	\$164,277	\$3,217,338	Original + Supplement	\$3,205,101	99.62%
Ohio	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	\$3,511,771	\$164,277	\$3,676,048	Original + Supplement	\$3,554,896	96.70%
Oklahoma	Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation	\$1,506,605	\$164,277	\$1,670,882	Original + Supplement	\$1,649,507	98.72%
Oregon	Oregon Department of Human Services	\$1,000,761	\$164,277	\$1,165,038	Original + Supplement	\$1,165,038	100.00%
Pennsylvania	Comm. of Pennsylvania, Office of Child Development and Early Learning	\$3,020,281	\$164,277	\$3,184,558	Original + Supplement	\$3,184,558	100.00%
Puerto Rico	ACUDEN Administration for Integral Child Care and Development	\$2,273,137	N/A	\$2,273,137	Original	\$2,186,713	96.20%
Rhode Island	Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$663,349	99.86%
South Carolina ¹	South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness	\$1,628,299	\$164,277	\$1,792,576	Original + Supplement	\$0	0%
Tennessee	State of Tennessee	\$2,254,123	\$164,277	\$2,418,400	Original + Supplement	\$2,418,400	100%
Texas	University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston	\$11,274,474	N/A	\$11,274,474	Original	\$11,189,666	99.25%
Utah	State of Utah, Early Childhood Education and Care	\$695,884	N/A	\$695,884	Original	\$694,488	99.80%
Vermont	State of Vermont	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$664,275	100.00%
Virgin Islands	Early Childhood Advisory Committee	\$500,000	\$164,277	\$664,277	Original + Supplement	\$663,485	99.88%
Virginia	Virginia Department of Social Services	\$1,052,613	\$164,277	\$1,216,890	Original + Supplement	\$1,193,262	98.06%
Washington	Washington State Department of Early Learning	\$1,542,064	\$164,277	\$1,706,341	Original + Supplement	\$1,706,341	100.00%
West Virginia	West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts	\$642,214	\$164,277	\$806,491	Original + Supplement	\$806,491	100.00%
Wisconsin	State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families	\$1,272,323	\$164,277	\$1,436,600	Original + Supplement	\$1,436,600	100.00%
Wyoming	Wyoming Department of Family Services	\$500,000	N/A	\$500,000	Original	\$500,000	100.00%
TOTALS		\$92,826,370	\$7,173,601	\$99,999,971		\$97,066,278	97% (AVERAGE)

¹South Carolina applied for and received a State Advisory Council grant in 2010, but returned the funds in 2011.



STATUS REPORT ON REQUIRED GRANT ACTIVITIES

A summary of the strategies devised by states to address the seven legislative SAC grant requirements follows.

SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 1

Conduct periodic statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of high-quality early childhood care.

States took two different approaches to needs assessments (see Figure 1 on page 8). Thirty-eight states, or 78 percent⁴, conducted comprehensive needs assessments. Another 11 states, or 22 percent, completed targeted-focused needs assessments to address specific concerns. Councils used needs-assessment data to identify, prioritize, allocate resources based on need, and identify gaps.

ACF asked Councils to recommend next steps based on their needs assessments. They proposed various action steps:

- Obtain funding to increase the number of slots and programs for children, including hard-to-reach populations (e.g., rural populations) or children with special needs. Lack of funding has made quality care inaccessible to these vulnerable populations.
- Further develop early childhood data collection systems and integrate data into established systems, such as the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). When data systems are streamlined, processes are more efficient for determining program quality and the availability of early care and

State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care

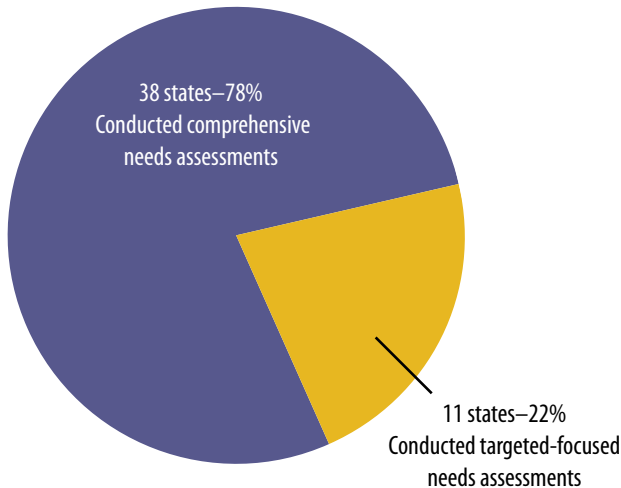
Activities Required by Legislation

1. Conduct periodic statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of high-quality early childhood care.
2. Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded early childhood programs and services.
3. Increase participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.
4. Establish recommendations for developing a unified data collection system.
5. Establish recommendations for creating or enhancing a statewide professional development system and career ladder.
6. Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education to support the career development of early childhood educators.
7. Make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality and comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

⁴Percentages in this report may represent rounded numbers.

Figure 1. States' approaches to completing needs assessments

49 states—100% completed a needs assessment



education programs. States are better able to understand early care and education program characteristics. Also, streamlined data systems can help states identify and close achievement gaps, ultimately improving early learning outcomes (e.g., Florida, Michigan, and New Hampshire).

- Raise awareness of the importance and availability of high-quality early childhood services by improving family and general public education. Some needs assessments examined how parents located quality care for their children. Parents wanted information on how to make informed choices about selecting quality care (e.g., Kansas, New Jersey, and West Virginia).
- Provide professional development opportunities and systems. The quality and status of the early childhood workforce have a direct effect on the quality and availability of care. When conducting their needs assessments, some states examined the status of their early childhood workforce and found gaps in professional development opportunities (e.g., American Samoa, Kentucky, and New York). States developed a variety of needs assessment products (see Figure 2 on page 9). Slightly more than half the states produced informal documents, such as briefing papers for senior state officials or private stakeholders. Others developed a strategic plan, report, or mapping tool to organize the data and findings.



SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 2**Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded early childhood programs and services.**

States had the task of coordinating early childhood programs, services, and policies while also eliminating barriers to collaboration and avoiding duplication of services. States' work on this effort brought together leaders from various federal, state, local, and privately funded early childhood programs who historically had not worked together. These partners learned about each other's programs, funding, program standards, monitoring, eligibility requirements, service populations, and desired outcomes. They also shared concerns.

Their collaborative efforts helped them understand each other's child populations and program goals, positioned them to pool resources and leverage knowledge, and streamlined the early childhood infrastructure to make it more accessible to children and families.

States also explored the conditions that fostered strong collaborations and examined continuous improvement strategies that maintained effective collaborations.

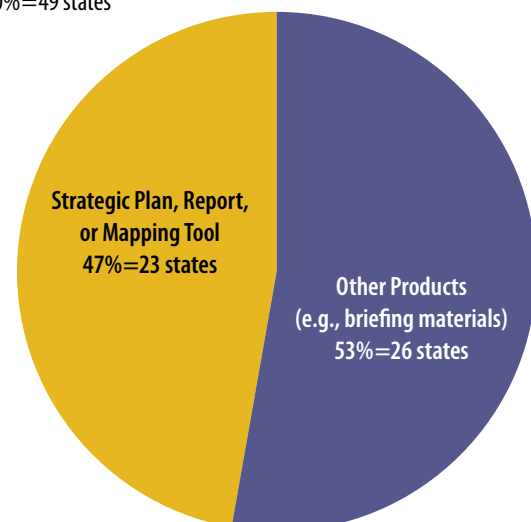
Nearly three-quarters of states reported extensive collaborations across a variety of stakeholders. The vast majority (more than 90 percent) indicated successful collaborations around services to children with disabilities and with home-visiting programs. State descriptions of early childhood coordination and collaboration follow. Many states implemented multiple strategies:

- In 34 states (69 percent), Councils reported that their state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) priorities changed, or had the potential to change, as a result of the needs assessments completed by the Councils.
- In 39 states (80 percent), Councils indicated that partnerships existed between child care and Early Head Start.
- Thirty-four states (74 percent) reported that their Councils collaborated on Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants by providing expertise, resources, planning, and application preparation.⁵
- Forty-eight states (98 percent) worked with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C program to enhance services offered to children with special needs from birth to age 3.
- Forty-five states (92 percent) worked with Section 619, Part B of IDEA to increase services to 3- to 5-year-olds with developmental delays.

⁵ This percent was calculated based on the 46 SAC grantees that were eligible for RTT-ELC grants (Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa were ineligible for the RTT-ELC grant and are excluded from this calculation).

Figure 2. Needs assessment products created by states

100%=49 states



SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 3**Increase participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.**

States sought to increase early care and education opportunities for all children by improving infrastructures, leveraging resources, and reaching out to underserved and special populations.

Building Infrastructure

To ensure that more children attend high-quality early childhood programs, Councils worked on improving state infrastructures. Some states adopted family-friendly policies to increase the enrollment of eligible low-income families in child care programs. For instance, Rhode Island adopted a 12-month subsidy recertification policy to ensure participants could re-enroll for a full year when recertified. Montana expanded its child care subsidy eligibility policies to support continuity of care.

Some states passed legislation that funded more early care and education slots for infants, toddlers, and pre-kindergarteners. Colorado and Hawaii created a new office for early childhood dedicated to increasing the participation of children in early care and education programs.

Other states used data to inform their work. Kentucky used its Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) results to inform instruction in kindergarten classrooms. Alabama used its needs assessment results to identify underserved counties that did not apply for the state pre-kindergarten program and worked with local leaders to encourage future applicants. North Carolina developed transformation zones to build comprehensive early childhood services for children and families in high-poverty localities.

Leveraging Resources

Many states found ways to leverage their existing resources to obtain funding for early childhood projects.

Washington used state general revenue funds to expand its Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, a state-funded preschool program. Arizona leveraged state tobacco funds to provide scholarships to children from birth to age 5 from low-income families who receive child care and education in their Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) settings. Nebraska increased Sixpence, an early childhood endowment for infant and toddler services in the state. Wisconsin worked with child welfare agencies to enroll children involved in child welfare in Head Start. New York developed a shared-services initiative with a web-based platform for the state. As a result, early care and education settings can reduce costs for purchasing, accessing early learning information, and sharing resources. Templates and early learning standards also can be shared this way through a centralized location.

“The federal funding of our Early Childhood Advisory Council provided the impetus to create New York Works for Children, an early childhood professional development system that uses a competency-based Core Body of Knowledge, Early Learning Guidelines, and program standards designed for QUALITYstarsNY as the framework. It includes a career ladder, a workforce registry, a trainer’s credential, and other components that serve to institutionalize best practices.”

– Sherry M. Cleary
Executive Director

New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute
The City University of New York and Co-Chair
Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council

Reaching Out to Special Populations and Underrepresented Groups

To ensure that all children have access to early learning and development opportunities, states undertook outreach activities.

California worked on meeting the needs of dual language learners by improving outreach plans to serve and engage families. Maryland developed Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment through Stories (VIOLETS). This effort promotes the development of pre-reading skills, oral language proficiency, and age-appropriate content knowledge by using children's literature in licensed preschools, Head Start programs, and nursery schools.

SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 4

Establish recommendations for developing a unified data collection system.

Councils were mandated to make recommendations for developing a unified early childhood data collection system. At the initiation of the grant, some states had already begun work in this area. For example, Virginia had made advances to merge early childhood data across state agencies using a federated platform system. With the SAC grant, states identified the data sets needed to develop a unified system. In many states, the data needed were already being collected (e.g., child health immunization data). In other states, data gaps existed, and SAC funds were used to explore closing the gaps. For example, some states worked on bringing QRIS data into a broader early childhood data system collection. Other states used SAC funds to explore data privacy protection needs.

Councils initiated relationships among state agency partners that housed early childhood data. They discussed how to work together to remove barriers to sharing data. For instance, states uncovered myths that Head Start

prohibited sharing data and participating in state data collection efforts. Through discussions with the Office of Head Start and the Head Start State Collaboration Offices, states learned that Head Start grantees were encouraged to share data with state agencies. Since then, several states have successfully engaged local Head Start programs in statewide data collection efforts.

States had varying needs affecting data system design and used multiple approaches to collection. Nevertheless, they presented similar recommendations as next steps for unified data systems:

- Develop an integrated and accessible system to use as a central warehouse or platform. Then cross-agency data can be collected, stored, and transferred; or existing data systems can be linked, such as a state's SLDS, KEA, and QRIS (e.g., Colorado, Delaware, and Texas).



- Establish data governance to ensure agreement on the proper policies, guidelines, and elements for data collection and data sharing. For example, some states (e.g., Michigan, Wisconsin, and Guam) considered instituting data-sharing agreements and other memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to ensure common understanding and to establish a framework for sharing data.
- Establish and maintain security of information and privacy protections (e.g., Florida, Missouri, and Utah).
- Fund infrastructure to maintain, upgrade, and sustain data systems (e.g., American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico).
- Provide funding for pilots or implementation of data systems (e.g., New Jersey, Vermont, and West Virginia).
- Create unique identifiers to track children's individual progress over time (e.g., Alabama, New Hampshire, and New York).

SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 5
Establish recommendations for creating or enhancing a statewide professional development system and career ladder.

Prior to the SAC grant, states relied on their limited Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) investments to improve the skills of the early childhood workforce and to create an organized structure for career advancement. The SAC grant further supported this work and enabled states to build essential infrastructures in their professional development systems and career ladders.

All twenty states that received Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funds (41 percent of states with SAC grants) unanimously reported that additional funding from RTT-ELC positioned them to take this work a step beyond the SAC grant. These states are developing a workforce knowledge and competency

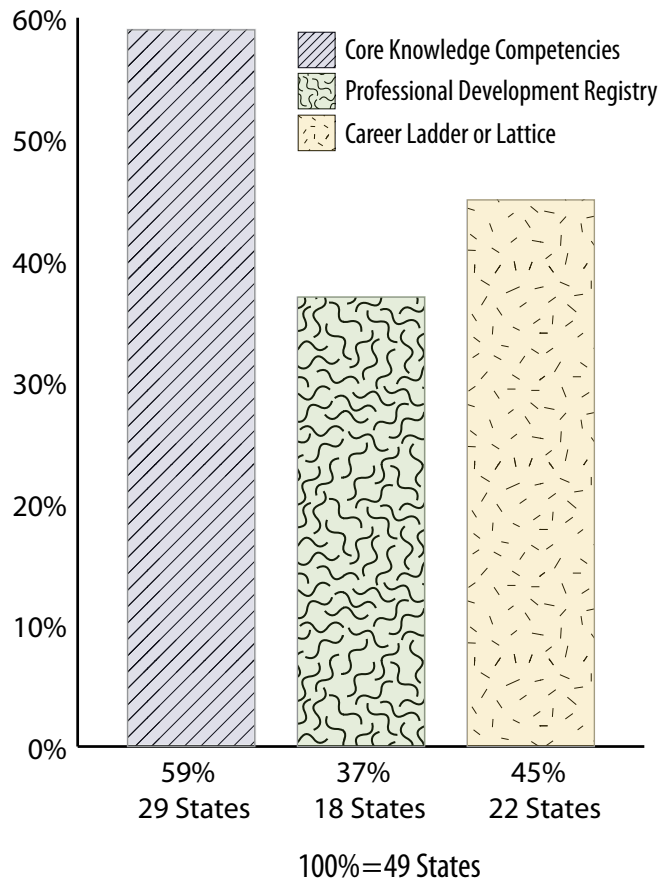
framework, a progression of credentials, and supports for improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of early childhood educators.

The data below summarizes how states used their SAC funds to improve the early childhood workforce:

- Twenty-eight states (57 percent) reported that they used SAC funds to complete a workforce study. An additional four states (8 percent) completed a workforce study prior to receiving SAC funds but leveraged SAC funds to further professional development activities.
- Twenty-nine states (59 percent) used SAC funds to create or enhance the Core Knowledge and Competencies framework in their state.
- Eighteen states (37 percent) used SAC funds to develop or enhance their workforce registries.



Figure 3. Advancing the early childhood workforce through professional development infrastructure



- Twenty-two states (45 percent) used SAC funds to improve their career ladders or lattices.
- Thirty-eight states (78 percent) have developments in all three workforce areas from prior work, the SAC grant, or a combination of both.
- Twelve states (25 percent) reported developments in all three workforce areas: Core Knowledge Competencies, workforce registries, and career ladder utilizing SAC funds.
- Nine states (18 percent) reported using SAC funds to enhance two out of the three workforce areas.

A summary of how states used SAC funds to improve the early childhood workforce is

presented (see Figure 3). Some states are represented in more than one area.

SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 6

Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education to support the career development of early childhood educators.

- Under the SAC grants, states and institutions of higher education improved their systems for governing the career development of the early childhood workforce (see Figure 4 on page 14). Most of their efforts involved curricula alignment and establishing articulation agreements for higher education institutions.

Some states used multiple approaches and, therefore, are represented in both columns in Figure 4.

- Twenty-two states (45 percent) used their SAC funds to align higher education coursework and competencies to the state’s early learning standards or guidelines. Prior to the SAC grant, only two states had pre-existing funds for this purpose. Using RTT-ELC funds, three states continued with alignment work after the SAC grant ended. Taken together, slightly more than half the states (55 percent) aligned coursework with state early learning systems.

Prior to the SAC grant, a group of seven states (14 percent) had MOUs, or articulation agreements, with higher education institutions. Through the SAC grant, another seven states (14 percent) used funding to establish agreements and MOUs. Their efforts doubled the percent of states (28 percent) that have established agreements.

New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Rhode Island worked with the University of California Berkeley to conduct higher education inventories. They assessed early childhood course offerings in their respective states’ higher education institutions, specifically examining elements like variations in program content and faculty characteristics.

Figure 4. Leveraging higher education to support the career development of the early childhood workforce

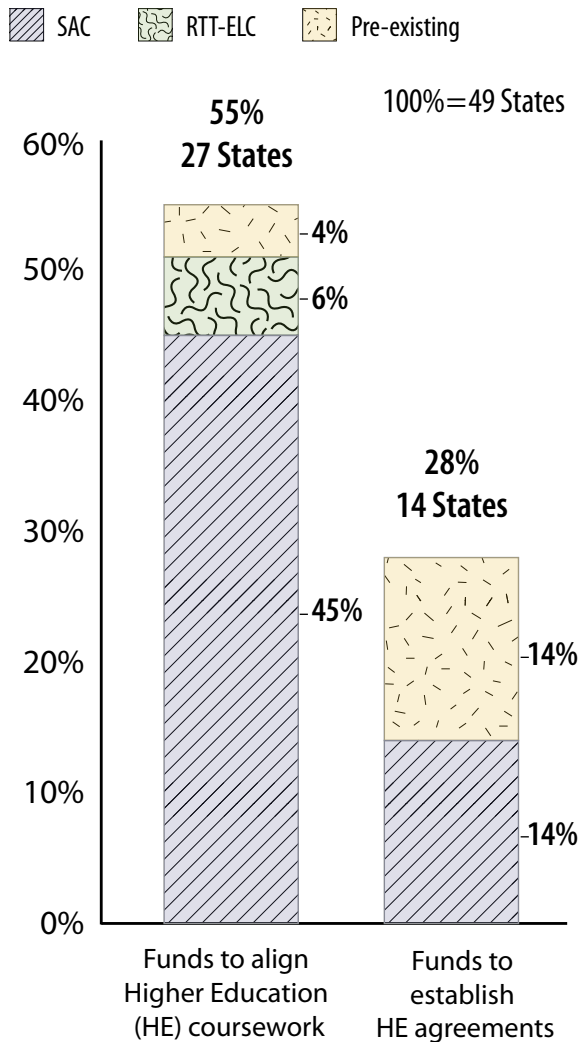
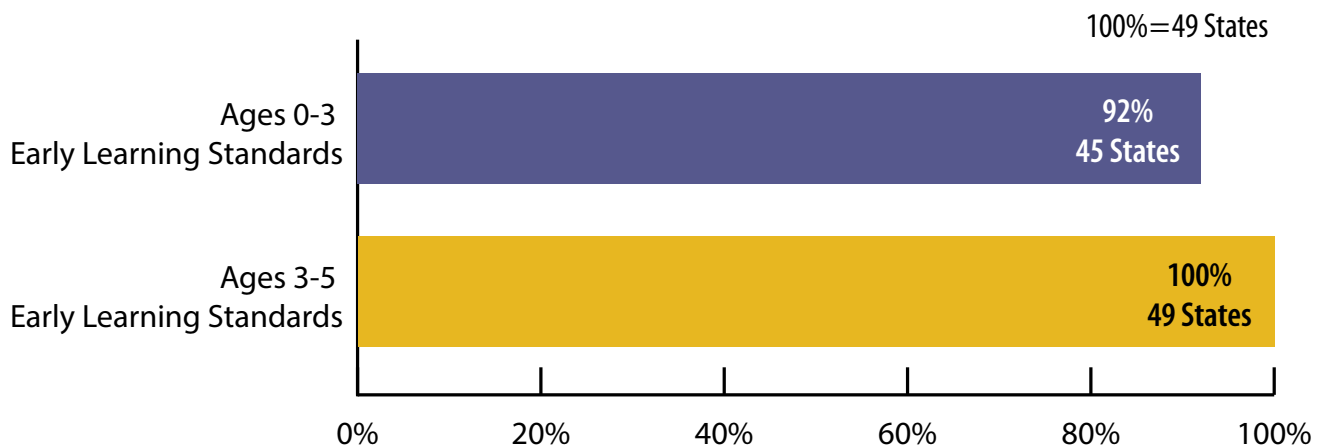


Figure 5. SAC funding used to improve existing or create new early learning standards



SAC LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT 7

Make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality and comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

Prior to the SAC grant, all states had developed and published early learning standards for 3- to 5-year-olds, but many had not established infant and toddler early learning standards. To meet this grant requirement, states were mandated to make recommendations to improve their standards across the birth-to-5 age span.

All states exceeded this requirement (see Figure 5). In addition to making recommendations, 45 states (92 percent) further revised and strengthened their existing standards for infants and toddlers or created new ones. All states enhanced their standards for preschoolers. ■



A SNAPSHOT OF STATE ADVISORY COUNCILS

90%

of SACs are engaged in the Home Visiting MIECHV program

71%

of SACs had Governor's office representation at SAC meetings

80%

of SACs are in states where child care and Early Head Start partnerships already exist

67%

of SACs changed CCDF priorities or indicated a potential change as a result of SAC Needs Assessment

62%

of SACs completed a workforce study or survey

41%

of SACs influenced state legislative change

LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

100% of State Advisory Councils (SACs) met these mandates:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Coordination & Collaboration
3. Increased Participation
4. Unified Data System
5. Professional Development
6. Higher Education
7. Early Learning Standards



This infographic highlights advances reported by 49 Councils in *A Snapshot of State Advisory Councils* questionnaire. These advances go beyond the 7 legislative mandates listed above. For more information on the mandates, see the SAC Status Report 2013.





IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

In summary, the SAC grant supported states' efforts to build an early childhood system and provide a strong foundation for the nation's youngest children. Millions of children and families benefited from:

- Increased access to high-quality early care and education programs;
- Aligned and improved early childhood program standards;
- Comprehensive early learning and development standards covering all domains of development;
- Valuable information for parents on how to support the multiple needs of young children;
- Improved health and mental health services;
- Increased higher education opportunities for the early childhood workforce;
- Streamlined professional development systems;
- Comprehensive assessment systems (including Kindergarten Entry Assessments);
- Developments in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS); and
- Advancements in the development of integrated early childhood data collection systems.

Through the Councils' work, states developed an unprecedented level of cooperation among agencies and programs and successfully built efficiencies into program service delivery for children and families. At the same time, valuable insights from states' needs assessments tell us that while progress has been made, gaps still exist. A current task for states is to decide on the

best strategies to sustain their investments and advancements for children now that the federal funding has drawn to a close. Some states are doing this through their current RTT-ELC and Preschool Development Grants (PDG) work.

Successful RTT-ELC Grant Applications

States that applied to and were successful in receiving Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants attributed their successful grant applications to the progress and advancements cited in their SAC grant portfolio. They indicated that the scope and substance of Council work positioned them to address the core areas required by the RTT-ELC grant program. Councils often assumed a leadership role in setting the direction, vision, and content of their states' RTT-ELC applications and took the lead in setting performance targets and goals. Some Councils also convened community meetings to raise awareness about their state's RTT-ELC application and assembled stakeholders to gather input for SAC grant proposals.

Many states reported that their Councils have played an integral role in the implementation of their RTT-ELC grants. For example, some Councils review final RTT-ELC products and policies and advise the state about RTT-ELC project implementation. In some states, this work includes developing budget guidance and setting priority areas for the RTT-ELC grant funds awarded in 2013.

Councils also are involved in providing accountability for the RTT-ELC grant's progress and for tracking implementation of the state's professional development system and QRIS rollout supported by this grant.

Some Councils also directly implement aspects of the state's RTT-ELC grant. For example, the Council may develop regional early childhood councils to advance systems development at the local level. Even in cases when a RTT-ELC grant application was unsuccessful, Council efforts propelled states forward on early learning initiatives.

Future Initiatives

ACF expects that the support the SAC grant provided for state infrastructures will empower states to continue working on early learning initiatives. While the Head Start Act of 2007 remains in effect, states will be required to sustain Councils to conform to Act mandates. ACF will continue to work with states to sustain their efforts and also will develop program guidance for states with information on how to continue Council work post-ARRA funding.

The Councils have indicated to ACF that they will need to expand or build new relationships with

partners in order to inform, support, and sustain their work. New partners may include representatives from private business, philanthropy, schools, child welfare agencies, pediatrics, child nutrition programs (e.g., the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), tribes, and local government officials, including mayors or police chiefs.

Councils agreed that enhancing their communication strategy for both the general public and stakeholders is a critical next step to promoting and sustaining their work. Many are working to explain their accomplishments to the public in simple, clear messages. Communication plans at the state level support this effort.

States also may engage their leaders to direct the effort to communicate about the importance of sustaining the Council. This may entail reengaging the governors. Their guidance and leadership will be invaluable as states make plans for continuing their Councils.



Some states have involved members of their legislatures in discussions about Councils during early childhood budget hearings. Others have offered Council seats to legislators to engage them more fully in sustaining Council work.

Planning and National Direction

At the end of the 3-year grant period, Councils made plans to move ahead with fewer resources and staff and to apply the lessons learned. They acknowledge that there is a need for strong governance and have considered how to adapt to state government transitions and changes in state administration.

Councils are aware of the need for strategic planning and new goals. All Councils agree that development of state early childhood systems must continue. This work will entail forming an appropriate new vision, adjusting plans, and identifying a budget for continuing Council work.

Councils also are following the national direction set by Congress and the Administration. Congressional legislative activities illustrate that Councils are expected to play a significant future role in the development of the array of early care and education policy and programming.

The reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in November 2014 requires states to certify that their CCDF state plan was developed in consultation with their Council. The new law states that the Councils must play a role in the development of specific content areas of the CCDF state plan. For example, they are to be involved in state professional development and training plans to support the capacity of the child care workforce to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children. Councils also must be involved in developing and implementing the states' early learning and development standards. Finally, the law requires Councils to be involved in developing the statewide child care disaster plans.

As noted, the Head Start Act of 2007 remains in effect and requires states to maintain Council operations. Furthermore, the RTT-ELC and Preschool Development grants require states to maintain an active, fully functioning Council that meets federal requirements.

Congress continues to place an emphasis on the work of Councils. The Strong Start for America's Children Act was introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Representative George Miller (D-CA), and Representative Richard Hanna (R-NY) in 2013. The bill required states to ensure that Councils have an active and significant role in governing the development and implementation of both high-quality preschool for low- and moderate-income families and infant and toddler care in center-based and family child care settings. It also required Councils to help support quality improvements in the CCDBG and to continue to support the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program.

ACF Support

Councils have made significant early childhood advances due to the federal government's investment. States interested in avoiding a loss of momentum on their early childhood agenda will pursue strategies to continue substantive Council work. During the post-grant period, ACF continues to support state communication efforts by sharing information on early childhood initiatives. ■



STATE AND TERRITORY PROFILES

After publication of the 2013 mid-term report, the Councils worked to finish the projects funded by State Advisory Council grants. The next section of this report features state profiles highlighting each grantee’s accomplishments. Some grantees specified next steps for state stakeholders to move Council projects forward after federal grant support.



ALABAMA

Council Name: Alabama Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Children's Affairs

Council Website: <http://www.children.Alabama.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs (DCA) formed a statewide advisory council on early childhood in 2008. In February 2010, Governor Bob Riley formally designated DCA as the lead agency for the Early Childhood State Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council. The Council's purpose is to advance strategic investments and build early childhood systems.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Alabama met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

ALABAMA

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council conducted a statewide needs assessment that measured the quality and availability of early childhood education and development services. They adopted three top recommendations as next steps:

- Develop a standard kindergarten readiness assessment
- Increase access to high-quality early learning programs
- Align early childhood and K–12 program standards

The Council furthered data collection efforts by performing subsequent, targeted needs assessments. They also planned future targeted needs assessments to obtain up-to-date statistics and further refine early childhood priorities. Near the end of the grant period, two targeted assessments aligned with these needs were in progress. These assessments studied workforce availability for early childhood professionals and identified the number of preschool students attending public schools through a partnership with the State Department of Education (SDE).

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among federal and state-funded early childhood programs and services.

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:** MIECHV and state pre-kindergarten programs are managed through the same state department. This allows coordination of community screenings and other events. See state-level collaboration below.
- **Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) Grant:** The Alabama Council identified and adopted a statewide assessment for pre-kindergarten children. In partnership the HSSCO, the Council funded the training of teachers and implemented the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment for children in all Head Start and state pre-kindergarten classrooms across Alabama.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The Alabama Council's needs assessment is based on the framework developed by ECCS.

ALABAMA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Part B, Section 619 of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children resulted from the collaboration between the DCA pre-kindergarten program and the SDE office implementing Part B, Section 619 of IDEA.

State Level

- **State Pre-Kindergarten, First Class:** The Council is invested in Alabama's pre-kindergarten program, which offers a diverse delivery system and provides financial support to a variety of classroom settings. These settings include Head Start, public school, public and private child care, faith-based programs, and military child care. The Council developed and is implementing a 10-year plan to fully fund statewide pre-kindergarten programs.
 - **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY):** HIPPY programs are funded through both state dollars as well as through MIECHV. Because of the Council work and the partnership which developed between the State Department of Education (SDE), which managed HIPPY state funds, and DCA, which managed MIECHV funds, the SDE turned over management of HIPPY to DCA.
-

Participation of Children

The Alabama Council made three recommendations to increase participation of children in early care and education programs:

- **Target Underserved Areas:** Prioritize counties where state pre-kindergarten access is less than 10 percent of the early childhood population.
 - **Boost Grant Funding:** Advise and collaborate with community partners in underserved counties that did not apply for state pre-kindergarten funding in the 2013 grant cycle to promote and encourage the counties to apply for pre-kindergarten grants.
 - **Incentivize Quality:** Offer startup funding grants to establish high-quality early learning environments in underserved areas.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council partnered with SDE to advance data sharing. The Council and SDE developed and implemented a data sharing agreement that allows the Council to add early childhood data to the state's system. This system generates data that will inform future system improvements.

The Council made substantial progress coordinating and collaborating on data systems and also identified its highest priority needs for the future development and growth of a unified early learning data system. The Council recommended the following:

- Assigning a unique student identifier at pre-kindergarten entry for all children
- Identifying the pre-kindergarten programs of children entering kindergarten

ALABAMA

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- Working with SDE to implement a data collection technique to inform future improvements to a unified data system
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council invested in the early childhood workforce by purchasing and using the professional tracking system originally dedicated to the K–12 workforce. Use of this system allows the state to gain a picture of the community-based early childhood workforce and the status of workforce professional development. When further developed, the tracking system will allow colleges and other higher education institutions to update or change listings of their early childhood curricula course offerings. State system leaders will use the system data to analyze course participation rates and to inform the development of early childhood curricula. The Council's vision is to establish a statewide, all-inclusive, vibrant learning community for early childhood professionals

Early Learning Standards

The Council collaborated with SDE and state-funded pre-kindergarten programs to align the 3- to 5-year-old guidelines across pre-kindergarten programs. Work is continuing on developing the *Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children*.

The Alabama Department of Human Resources established birth-to-3 early learning guidelines. The Council identified gaps in the guidelines and will continue to enhance them and align them with the developmental standards for preschool children.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Kindergarten Entry Assessment:** The Council selected three school systems to pilot Teaching Strategies GOLD. Additionally, it funded professional development for educators that enabled them to properly administer this assessment and evaluate results for all kindergarten students in the three school systems.
 - **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** Council funds supported an Alabama pilot of QRIS that included 42 child care providers and Head Start centers. The Council conducted four trainings for assessors on the following scales: Program Administration Scale, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), and the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS).
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,797,985
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,962,262
- Amount Expended: \$1,962,262
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

AMERICAN SAMOA

Council Name: American Samoa Children's Cabinet

Designated State Agency: Office of the Governor

Council Website: N/A

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 7

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

American Samoa's Early Childhood Advisory Council was created by Governor Togiola Tulafono in 2010. In January 2011, Governor Tulafono relocated the Council to the Children's Cabinet through Executive Order 01-2011. Governor Lolo Matalasi Moliga succeeded Governor Tulafono in 2012. In January 2014, he began providing oversight to the Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

American Samoa met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

AMERICAN SAMOA

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Children's Cabinet Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, completed a needs assessment to measure the availability and accessibility of quality early childhood care to American Samoa families. The assessment evaluated the level of need and the demand for care. It also examined the number of applications received for child care assistance. In 2013, a follow-up needs assessment was conducted to update current statistics and inform Child Care Development Fund priorities and needs.

Recommendations based on the needs assessments follow:

- Improve and strengthen the accuracy of data collection and management systems. Ensure that the information generated can be used to rapidly assess the impacts of early learning programs and make informed adjustments.
 - Clearly define and establish metrics for measuring quality care.
 - Develop a comprehensive and consistent professional development system that provides capacity-building opportunities for educators seeking continuing education units and pursuing a certificate or degree.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

Because programs and services for the early childhood population were administered through various departments and agencies, the Council identified coordination of services and advancement of a more unified early childhood system as key challenges. To address these challenges, the Council formed partnerships with the Office of the Governor and programs within the American Samoa Departments of Public Health and Human and Social Services. These partnerships strengthened coordination and collaboration by service staff.

AMERICAN SAMOA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

When the Council partnered with the Home Visiting program and Program Planning Council, partners shared best practices and leveraged program resources. Behavioral health, child care, child protective services, child welfare, family assistance, Head Start, immunizations, Part C Early Intervention, and federally funded community-based substance abuse prevention programs benefited. All of these programs serve families with young children and focus on low-income families.

Participation of Children

The Council increased the participation of children in early care and educational programs by pooling resources and implementing an outreach campaign to American Samoan families. This social marketing campaign, called I CARE, explained the importance of early care and education for young children's development and addressed common misconceptions. The campaign raised the visibility of the importance of health, safety, and high-quality child care across programs throughout the territory. Campaign information was distributed at school career fairs, community coalition youth rallies, and an annual island-wide health fair.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council developed a proposal for a unified data system that would include data from child care programs, health service programs, social services, juvenile and family services, education programs, and comprehensive services programs such as Head Start. To implement the proposal, the Council formed a data and information technology committee that partnered with the Departments of Education and Human and Social Services to work with community college technology staff to map out current capabilities, available systems, current data collected, reporting requirements, data gaps, the extent of those needs, and the feasibility of fulfilling those needs. The committee discussed strategies to align requirements and integrate data systems for uniform collection on child demographics, family socioeconomic status, eligibility requirements, health, behavioral health, and academic assessments.

Using the information collected in the data system assessment, the committee developed recommendations to identify the elements required to implement a unified data system. The recommendations included the following:

- **Funding:** Provide funds for system upgrades and maintenance. Instill safeguards to protect the information in a cross-stream data-sharing environment, and ensure the technology infrastructure is robust and has the capability to meet federal reporting requirements.
- **Technical Expertise:** Provide system training and technical assistance for the Council and front-line users.

AMERICAN SAMOA

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- **Data System Staffing:** Hire staff to upgrade and maintain unified data systems. A dedicated information technology team will be required to manage, troubleshoot, and maintain system infrastructure. System integration and streamlining processes and systems will require cross-agency coordination and collaboration with a high level of system infrastructure knowledge. A data staffing component was not established within the Council or partnering agencies and would require significant funding and strategic placement to ensure that the team has visibility, access, and the ability to enter and manipulate systems controlled by several different programs.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council spearheaded the establishment of the Core Knowledge and Competencies and a credentialing program for early childhood education. Both are accessible to individuals working in early childhood education classrooms as aides and caregivers in child care facilities. This credentialing program was formalized through a memorandum of agreement between the Council and the American Samoa Community College. This is significant because the American Samoa Community College is the only institution of higher learning in the territory and the competencies will ensure that all early childhood professionals who become students have access to a consistent, comprehensive, and standardized curriculum. The Early Childhood Certificate Program was developed to meet the needs of working aides and caregivers. Courses are available as evening classes, and credits can be applied towards an associate's degree in early childhood education.

Early Learning Standards

American Samoa developed infant and toddler and 3- to 5-year-old guidelines. The Council identified areas for improvement and is updating both sets of guidelines to include the latest evidence-based practices for working with and caring for young children. New infant and toddler guidelines are being developed to incorporate the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$508,883
- Percent of Funds Expended: 76.61%

ARIZONA

Council Name: First Things First

Designated State Agency: Early Childhood Development and Health Board

Council Website: <http://www.azftf.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In November 2006, citizens' initiative Proposition 203 (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Initiative) passed and established the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, known as First Things First. In 2008, Arizona's Governor designated the First Things First Board to serve as the State Advisory Council. This is hereinafter referred to as the Council. As part of the Council's governance structure, 28 regional partnership councils exist across the state, with over 300 volunteer Council members.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Arizona met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services

ARIZONA

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council conducted two statewide needs assessments during the SAC grant cycle and published the *Building Bright Futures* report. Findings from the report included information in several areas:

- **Demographic Data:** Data on the population of children from 0 to 5 years old, ethnicity, and family living arrangements.
 - **Economic Conditions:** Poverty rate for children from birth to 5 years old, employment status of parents with young children, the median family income, cost of child care, unemployment rate, and number of children receiving food assistance.
 - **Education Indicators:** The percentage of children with Individual Family Service Plans (educational and developmental services for young children with developmental delays), the capacity of child care programs, and the percentage of third graders passing reading and math assessments.
 - **Health Factors:** The number of children enrolled in the State Child Health Insurance Program, called KidsCare in Arizona, the number of children without health care coverage, birth-related health conditions and maternal health status, and figures reporting food insecurity.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers to the collaboration and coordination of early childhood programs and supported these efforts with federal, state, and local partnerships.

ARIZONA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:** The Council partnered with the Arizona Department of Health Services on the MIECHV grant application. This partnership includes developing a statewide referral and integrated data system, a requirement for the federal MIECHV program.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** Representatives from the CCDF program and the Council collaborated to align the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System, known as Quality First, with child care professional development, quality improvement strategies, and the Child Care Resource and Referral program. The partners designed the Quality First website and communicated quality rating information to clients.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** At the suggestion of the Council's Professional Development Workgroup, the state leveraged funding from the ECCS grant to improve Arizona's early childhood professional development system infrastructure. The three suggestions for improving the infrastructure included developing criteria for a professional registry and a website to showcase development opportunities and career pathways, creating an associate of arts in early childhood education degree that seamlessly transfers to 4-year Arizona universities, and developing knowledge and competencies for the early childhood workforce.
- **Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):** This grant program of the federal government seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. A collaboration between the Council and Project LAUNCH representatives spurred efforts to conduct an environmental scan of the South Phoenix community and resources needed by high-risk populations in the area. The partners found that targeted resources were needed for the following: resource and referral services; early detection and referral services for children with developmental and physical delays; coordination of service delivery for families; and family and parent education, counseling, and mental health services.
- **Part C and Part B, Section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:** The Council aligned and supported a statewide technical assistance phone line to provide early care and education providers with technical assistance for screening and identifying children needing special services. Through the phone line, providers can access information about inclusive practices and about providing care to children with special needs. The Council also developed a local governance model which funded onsite technical assistance to support early care and education programs in implementing program practices to ensure inclusion of children with special needs. This technical assistance also provided support related to identifying and referring children for further evaluation. A common data collection system is required by the Council to collect and track the number of screenings, referrals, and follow-ups with parents.

ARIZONA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- Empower Tobacco Education Funds:** Quality First, funded through tobacco funds administered by the Council at the state, local, and regional levels, requires all enrolled early care and education programs to participate in the Department of Health Services Empower Program. Empower standards address physical activity, limited screen time, improved child nutrition, tobacco cessation education for parents, smoke-free campuses, and participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program. Arizona was recognized in 2011 as one of only three states utilizing high-impact obesity prevention regulations in child care licensing (Source: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, 2011).

State and Local Level

- BUILD Arizona:** BUILD Arizona and the Council collaborated to support the professional development workgroup and focused on key strategies to improve children's health and available family support for parents with young children. BUILD Arizona is a coalition of key stakeholders including business representatives who work to enhance opportunities and prepare children to meet the state's educational standards, learn how to stay healthy, and become productive workforce members.
- Governance Model—Regional Partnership Councils:** Arizona's Regional Partnership Councils together make up a comprehensive, widespread network of local councils across the state. They include several hundred volunteers who share the same vision of improving early childhood systems. The Council routinely funds statewide, local, and regional initiatives as resources become available. Some highlighted projects supported by state tobacco tax funds are displayed in the table below:

Investments in Systems Building Using State Tobacco Tax Funding FY2013: \$132.4 Million Dollars	
Quality and Access: \$64.2 million	Supports enhancements and progress on efforts such as: QRIS, Child Care Scholarships, Family Friend and Neighbor Support, and inclusion of Children with Special Needs as well as Technical Assistance.
Family Support: \$35.5 million	To enhance and expand home visiting, family resource centers, Tribal language preservation, and the Reach Out and Read program.
Health: \$19.3 million	To provide oral health screenings and varnishes, mental health consultation, and child care health consultation and health system care coordination.
Professional Development: \$6.7 million	Supporting initiatives that assist with college tuition for early care and education professionals and director mentoring.
Community Awareness: \$3.6 million	For public awareness and outreach through investing in websites, publications, and media campaigns.
Evaluation: \$2.0 million	For ongoing efforts to study strategy effectiveness, the needs and asset reports, and strategy data reporting.
Coordination: \$1.1 million	To build capacity and communities of practice.

ARIZONA

Participation of Children

The Council supported activities that provided more opportunities for children, especially those in underrepresented and special populations, to participate in early care and education programs.

- **Quality First Scholarships:** Funds for low-income and at-risk families were administered to support children's access to high-quality early care and education. In 2013, approximately 14,000 children received Quality First scholarships. The scholarships not only supported families with incomes close to poverty, but also supported tribal families, children with special needs, and children of teen parents. The Regional Partnership Councils funded scholarships using state tobacco tax funds.
- **Child Care Website:** The Council launched a website dedicated to helping families find information on and assess quality early care and education programs across the state. The site includes a searchable database of programs participating in the Quality Rating and Improvement System, including their quality rating and how many are on the wait list. The Spanish translation of the website will be available in the near future. Website development, implementation, and maintenance were funded through the Council at the state level with state tobacco tax funds.
- **Targeted Care Expansion:** An expansion strategy targeted specific ZIP codes with no or minimal access to early care and education programs for children. The expansion strategy also supported the development of early care and education programs by providing classroom furniture and materials, supporting providers in the process of obtaining state licensure, offering salary enhancements for classroom teachers, and providing scholarships for children to attend programs. Expansion funding was provided through the Regional Partnership Councils with state tobacco tax funds.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council completed a plan to unify early childhood data systems and identified funding resources for implementation. The state convened a national advisory panel in 2012 and created a governing body to guide future development.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council funded professional development efforts to support more than 300 volunteers from the local and Regional Partnership Councils at the Council's annual Early Childhood Summit. At the Summit, volunteers attended sessions about the early childhood systems work of the Council. Topics included children's health, data-driven decision-making, early learning, family support, leadership and development, systems building, and tribal education issues.

ARIZONA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

The Council's Professional Development Workgroup leveraged funding from the ECCS grant and partnered with Build Arizona to support the following efforts:

- **Workforce Knowledge and Competencies:** A comprehensive framework includes a career lattice and competencies for early care and education staff and early care and education trainers. The framework was publicized and vetted in October 2013, and implementation began in January 2014.
 - **Registry and Website:** Because no early childhood professional development registry was in place, the Council purchased a registry software system. The Council's Professional Development Workgroup is planning implementation of the registry. A professional development website became available in November 2013.
-

Early Learning Standards

The Council collaborated with the Arizona Department of Education to develop state *Infant-Toddler Developmental Guidelines*, which incorporate guidance on the development of children from birth to 2 years old. The Council finalized, approved, and implemented the guidance. The *Infant-Toddler Developmental Guidelines* have been integrated into Quality First. Starting in fiscal year 2016, quality ratings will include the assessment of a program's use of these guidelines. This yearlong delay allows providers to receive professional development training about the standards and information on how to incorporate them into their program practices before a quality rating. The *Infant-Toddler Developmental Guidelines* will continue to be disseminated with training before the implementation of quality ratings.

The *Early Learning Standards* offer guidance on the education of children ages 3 to 5 years. The Council supported the revision of these standards to align to the *Common Core*. Early care and education professionals working in programs that participate in Quality First will receive updated training as part of the quality rating calculation. The Council also funded 21 professional development trainings throughout the state for professionals to implement the *Early Learning Guidelines*. Quality First coaches are using the guidelines in their work with providers to ensure the standards are reflected in both curricula and program practices.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

Arizona's Quality First

- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** Almost 900 regulated early care and education programs participate in Quality First. Since full implementation of the Quality First rating scale in July, 2011, a substantial increase has been observed in quality ratings. The percent of providers in the quality tier levels increased from 7 percent in 2011 to 24 percent in August 2013. Approximately 25 percent of all regulated early care and education programs have access to Quality First participation.

ARIZONA

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Scholarships and Access:** Quality First provided scholarships for approximately 14,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to early care and education programs participating in Quality First.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$2,325,469
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award : \$2,489,746
- Amount Expended : \$2,489,746
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

ARKANSAS

Council Name: Early Childhood Commission

Designated State Agency: Department of Human Services

Council Website: <http://humanservices.Arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/default.aspx>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 25

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Governor Mike Beebe designated the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission to serve as the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council in 2008. The following year, the state General Assembly expanded the Council to meet the requirements of the Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Arkansas met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

ARKANSAS

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council performed a targeted needs assessment to focus on how best to create a unified data system for early childhood education. Data were collected for all Arkansas programs to identify gaps and to plan the technical approach for a web-based data system.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers to collaboration and coordination among federal and state-funded early childhood programs and services and supported these efforts with federal, state, and local partnerships.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council identified high-priority areas that informed the development of their RTT-ELC grant application to support the proposal.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: In collaboration with CCDF, the Council aligned licensing standards and supported Better Beginnings, Arkansas's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Grant***: The Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) and the Council partnered to develop requirements and a consistent assessment across all early childhood programs.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: ECCS partnered with the Council to support QRIS efforts, enhance professional development, and engage families within the community.

ARKANSAS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- ***The Arkansas Early Childhood Asset Map (AECAM)***: AECAM provides mapping services, a resource guide, and data from the *Getting Ready for School* publication. The Council supported the AECAM project, which offers these services to the families of young children.
-

Participation of Children

To increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, the Council recommended and supported the following activities:

- Improve the overall quality of care in infant and toddler programs.
 - Engage families in the child's education through research-based programs that enhance child outcomes.
 - Develop state policies that create an integrated system of professional development uniting early childhood programs, public schools, Early Intervention, and special education services.
 - Support the restructuring, expansion, and growth of Better Beginnings, the state's QRIS.
 - Strengthen and expand local and state partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected opportunities.
 - Create awareness of health and nutrition programs and educate parents, children, and child care providers on living a healthy lifestyle.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council supported efforts to identify barriers and gaps in developing and implementing an early childhood unified data system. As part of this work, they identified the following requirements to implement a successful unified system:

- **Identify technical requirements**: Convene key stakeholders to identify the technical requirements needed to build a web-based unified data system.
- **Build the system**: Develop and test the web-based system.
- **Launch**: Launch the system and train the early childhood community simultaneously. The Council recommended educating the public about the importance of quality early childhood education at the time of the website launch.

ARKANSAS

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Traveling Arkansas Professional Pathways (TAPP) is the Arkansas professional development registry. The registry plays a key role in promoting available professional development opportunities for the early education workforce and is the tracking component of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System. The TAPP registry is used throughout the early education community and includes Head Start, state-funded pre-kindergarten called Arkansas Better Chance, and private providers. The Council supported enhancing the registry to provide a more streamlined technology-based approach to verification and credentialing.

Early Learning Standards

The Council supported efforts to establish infant-toddler and 3- to 5-year-old early learning standards.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,174,518
- Supplemental: \$0
- Total Award: \$1,174,518
- Amount Expended: \$1,174,518
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

CALIFORNIA

Council Name: State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care

Designated State Agency: Department of Education

Council Website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

On November 9, 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger established the California Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) through an executive order. In 2011, Governor Brown replaced the ELAC with the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care and appointed the Council to spearhead the SAC and Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant efforts to strengthen California early childhood systems.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

California met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

CALIFORNIA

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed a needs assessment that examined the access and availability of services for children from birth to age 5 using data from 81 other California-based studies. Data revealed that access to quality early learning and care is uneven and varies based on family characteristics such as income and mother's education level. To address these findings, the Council developed a statewide plan for bolstering outcomes and increasing access to high-quality care.

The *California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan* (CCELP) was published in 2013 and provides a touchstone for the state to develop a high-quality birth-to-5 system. It is being used to make California's early learning system more research-driven, strategic and effective. The CCELP is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/compearlylearningplan2013.pdf>.

The plan identified four interrelated system drivers that could lead to successful long-term improvement for children, families, and California's early childhood learning system. The table on the next page lists the key drivers and provides objectives to support each driver.

CALIFORNIA

California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan: Key Drivers

<p>Access to Quality Early Learning and Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase access to provide more early learning to meet more children’s and families’ needs. ▪ Improve the level of quality offered in programs and services. ▪ Prioritize and prioritize low-income families. ▪ Offer a variety of programs from diverse settings and structures to meet the quality, affordability, and logistical needs of participants. ▪ Improve outreach to the community and families to provide awareness of early learning opportunities. ▪ Commit more funding to enhance quality and access. ▪ Implement Early Learning Standards as part of the state’s continuous quality improvement process. ▪ Incorporate early learning facility quality and design aspects into statewide school facilities bonds. ▪ Consider facility design and environmental health criteria in systemic quality improvement strategies.
<p>Program-Level Continuous Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify federal, state, or local funded programs to participate in the continuous improvement process that incorporates benchmarking, quality ratings, action plans, and resources tied to improvement. ▪ Use a data-driven process to measure quality improvement progress and child outcomes. ▪ Establish a provider feedback mechanism to allow input into setting standards and communicate accountability.
<p>A Great Early Childhood Workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform periodic updates to the Early Childhood Educator Competencies to include best practices and progress on early learning standards. ▪ Align career pathways with Competencies and higher-education curriculum. ▪ Align credentials and qualifications with the Competencies. ▪ Provide early childhood workforce with adequate resources and competitive salaries. ▪ Support higher education systems to prepare an adequate-sized workforce. ▪ Support early childhood professionals to strive for high-quality education and training that is reflective of the state’s cultural and linguistic diversity.
<p>Family Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solicit family input, enhance involvement, and increase partnerships on policy and needs important to them. ▪ Provide culturally sensitive, easily accessible early childhood opportunities to families. ▪ Increase training to the early childhood workforce on best practices for authentic family partnership.

CALIFORNIA

Coordination and Collaboration

Partnerships created by the Council leveraged resources and expanded opportunities for collaboration and coordination among federal and state-funded early childhood programs and services.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council acts as a liaison between the Office of the Governor, State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, and the RTT-ELC Integrated Action Team. The Council and RTT-ELC integrated their work products to reflect shared goals and priorities, and the RTT-ELC team includes members of the Council. They work in this dual capacity to streamline services, to enhance state and local systems, and to improve both of these groups.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The RTT-ELC team integrates MIECHV into the work of the Council by providing funds for training home visitors and program staff and by supporting staff participation in the home visiting workgroup as part of the larger State Interagency Team.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Director of the Early Education and Support Division at the California Department of Education (CDE) is both the CCDF State Administrator and a Council co-chair. The CDE has been at the forefront of all of the Council's work projects.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: ECCS staff partner with the Council on project integration; these efforts are supported by RTT-ELC.
- ***Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health)***: Project LAUNCH, a grant program of the federal government, seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. RTT-ELC integrates Project LAUNCH into the work of the Council.
- ***Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***: The Part C administrator, the Department of Developmental Services' Deputy Director of Community Operations Division, is a member of the Council. Part C and the Council have collaborated, and the Governor has provided RTT-ELC funding to the Department of Developmental Services.
- ***Part B, Section 619 of IDEA***: RTT-ELC also integrates Part B into Council work. The California Department of Education, Special Education Division, is a participating state agency in RTT-ELC.

State and Local Level

- ***Help Me Grow (HMG)***: The state's HMG program refers families to developmental and behavioral services for children from birth to 5 years of age. Through RTT-ELC, the Council is building the strengths of its integrated comprehensive screening projects.

Participation of Children

Several activities have been implemented to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs. The activities include outreach to underrepresented and special populations.

CALIFORNIA

Participation of Children (continued)

The Council produced the CCELP. Plan development involved over 3,000 people representing a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives from across the state. The first key driver of the CCELP, as illustrated in the table on page 41, is Access to Quality Early Learning and Care. The plan specifies strategies to increase access to quality programs using a diverse delivery system and prioritizes at-risk families most in need.

The CCELP identified as a top priority supporting dual language learners and providing services that are culturally sensitive to families and address the cognitive and developmental strengths of children. To meet this need, the CCELP recommended special training for early childhood providers.

A project funded by the Council examined how families using license-exempt care face both opportunities and barriers to services. The findings demonstrated that using license-exempt care can provide more access and increase participation in quality preschool programs. The Council provided the following recommendations:

- Increase funding (restore budget cuts) to providers.
 - Offer more training opportunities to providers.
 - Reach out to families and communities to provide information on school readiness opportunities.
 - Improve data collection methods and tracking mechanisms for license-exempt care.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

To develop and implement a unified early childhood data collection system the CCELP made the following recommendations:

- Identify Data Elements and Map Data: Identify the goal of collecting data to determine essential data. After identifying the data, map it to include key requirements and ensure seamless integration.
 - Train System Users: Train the workforce to properly add data to systems.
 - Community Outreach: Initiate a public awareness campaign to provide clear explanations to communities and families about data collection and how it will be used.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

California's Core Knowledge and Competencies are called Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Competencies. ECE Competencies describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators need in order to provide high-quality care to young children. The Council funded enhancements to the competencies by incorporating research-based material and aligning the ECE Competencies with both the Infant-Toddler Learning and Development Foundations and the Preschool Learning Foundations.

CALIFORNIA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

The Council also funded the development of two tools to enhance professional development.

- **Competencies Integration and Mapping Tool:** The tool is an interactive, self-directed, user-friendly, web-based tool that allows higher education faculty and trainers to map and align coursework and training to the ECE Competencies.
 - **Competencies Self-Assessment Toolkit (CompSAT):** The CompSAT is a self-assessment tool early childhood educators use to assess their knowledge of the competencies. It is a companion to the ECE Competencies that includes tools and videos to support professional growth.
-

Early Learning Standards

California developed the Infant-Toddler Foundations and the Preschool Foundations early learning standards prior to receiving Council funding. The Council funds were used to create a website that presents the Foundations for all ages in a parent-friendly format. The All About Young Children website (<http://allaboutyoungchildren.org>) includes web-based video clips of children by ages across the developmental continuum, print materials, and quick tips. All material is available in eight languages. The website is intended to assist families in gaining access to knowledge in order to make informed decisions and to provide guidance about available community resources such as child care or referral services.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Kindergarten Entry Assessments:** The Council invested funds in the development of an online training module for California's Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The Council also supported the development of the *Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Guide*, which describes best practices for a recently established Transitional Kindergarten that includes children whose fifth birthday falls between September 2 and December 2.
- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** Prior to receipt of the RTT-ELC grant, the Council funded a descriptive study of the QRIS and quality improvement efforts in all counties. This led to the Council's involvement in improving the QRIS infrastructure, which is currently being implemented by 17 regional systems.
- **Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners:** Under the direction of the Council, early education and health experts collaborated to produce California's *Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners*. The report consists of a series of six research overviews that span neuroscience, cognitive science, developmental psychology, assessment, educational research, family engagement, and special needs. The overviews informed the creation of the forthcoming *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, a publication that addresses how to provide high-quality, developmentally and individually appropriate preschool services for young children.

CALIFORNIA

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$10,653,958
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$10,818,235
- Amount Expended: \$10,818,235
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

COLORADO

Council Name: Colorado Early Childhood Leadership Commission

Designated State Agency: Established in: Office of the Governor; Currently in: Colorado Department of Human Services

Council Website: <http://earlychildhoodcolorado.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Colorado's Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) was established in 2010 to lead State Advisory Council efforts. The ECLC was scheduled to be rescinded after June 2013. However, when House Bill 13-1117, Alignment of Child Development Programs, was signed into law on May 7, 2013, the Council was authorized to continue under the auspices of this law.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Colorado met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

COLORADO

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In 2012, Colorado's Council, with assistance of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, completed a needs assessment to assess the quality and availability of early childhood programs. The goal of the Colorado Early Childhood Needs Assessment was to inform state and local early childhood professionals, policymakers, and service providers of the issues affecting families and children from birth through 8 years of age. Based on the assessment, communities identified gaps and opportunities; made data-driven decisions to prioritize areas; and developed recommendations to improve or sustain supports, services, and policies.

The Council developed a county ratings system using the needs assessment data. Each of Colorado's 64 counties was rated based on 13 childhood-based indicators to assess the level of risk and to target resources to specific community needs.

COLORADO NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	
Number of Counties	Risk Levels
15	High Risk
27	Moderate Risk
22	Low Risk

As a result of the needs assessment, the Council pursued developing the Early Childhood Investment Model to assess assets and resources in communities (<http://www.coearlyinvestmentmodel.org>). This free, publicly available tool aided in identifying communities of high risk and areas where

COLORADO

Needs Assessment (continued)

investments could potentially make the greatest impact. This tool also helped determine program enrollment and provided cost data. It allowed users to manipulate the data by changing the access and quality of programs to better understand the connections between enrollment, cost, quality, and return on investment. Colorado explored innovative financing solutions using the investment model combined with analytic expertise such as Pay-For-Success Social Impact Bonds. In that model, private investors pay for preventive or interventional social services in advance. If these services deliver their intended results, governments reimburse the investors with a return on their investment. They also save money, because they spend more than they would have without the model.

Coordination and Collaboration

Colorado's Council increased coordination and collaboration among its federal and state-funded early childhood programs through alignment and partnerships.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: Colorado's Council participated on advisory and steering committees to assist with the development of the RTT-ELC grant application. In 2012, Colorado was awarded \$45 million in RTT-ELC grant dollars and is using the funds to serve at-risk children, one of the Council's priorities.

State and Local Level

- ***Colorado Nurse Home Visitor Program and the Colorado Children's Trust Fund***: The Council, in partnership with the executive directors of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), the Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, supported successful legislation to transfer and align programs with other early childhood programs in the CDHS Office of Early Childhood. The aligned standards and service delivery supported a more streamlined and aligned early childhood system and better outcomes for children and families.
- **Early Childhood Councils**: Per legislative mandate, the Council was responsible for approving any requests for waivers concerning state grants and programs that were made by the 31 local early childhood councils. A local council may request a waiver of any rule that would prevent implementation of local council projects. The state's Council also regularly considered how efforts might impact local councils' system-building efforts.

COLORADO

Participation of Children

Colorado passed several pieces of legislation to promote and increase the participation of children in early care and education programs included in the box below.

SB 12-260

Raises the capacity of Colorado's Preschool Program by 3,200 openings.

HB 13-1291

Provides \$3.0m to increase the number of high-quality infant spaces.

HB 13-1117

Reauthorized the Council and relocated it to the Department of Human Services under an Alignment of Child Development Programs to form the Office of Early Childhood.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Colorado Council invested substantial time, effort, and other resources in developing and improving data collection and data systems. The Council developed several partnerships with administrators overseeing the Statewide Longitudinal Data System; Quality Rating and Improvement System; RTT-ELC; and the state kindergarten entry assessment program, Results Matter, to set goals for unifying data collection across these systems. The Council identified next steps to support the development and implementation of a unified early childhood data system. Steps entail developing the Early Childhood Learning Management System and Registry and the Early Childhood Universal Application tool. Both of these approaches will be priorities carried out and funded through Colorado's RTT-ELC grant dollars.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Colorado Council supported a P-3 Professional Development Advisory Group to advance professional development goals for the early childhood workforce serving newborns to 8-year-olds. The Council and the Advisory Group had a substantial influence on endorsing Colorado's Early Learning Professional Development System Plan and promoting actions that reversed a Colorado Commission on Higher Education ruling prohibiting bachelor's degree programs in early childhood. The Council also funded, supported, and unanimously endorsed the state's new *Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators*.

COLORADO

Early Learning Standards

The Colorado Council fully funded and spearheaded the development and adoption of the new *Early Learning and Development Guidelines* for children from birth to age 8. These guidelines are aligned with and complement the *Colorado Academic Standards* for preschool through third grade and are aligned with the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. Continued efforts are under way to adapt these guidelines for use in a wide variety of settings including child care and other early learning programs, pediatric settings, higher education communities, and families.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Colorado Reads, The Early Literacy Initiative:** This initiative was developed as the result of a recommendation to Colorado's Governor highlighting the unevenness of children's reading proficiency by third grade. Governor Hickenlooper and Lt. Governor Garcia unveiled the initiative during 2013 Literacy Week events to engage participation and to focus on the importance of early literacy and the impact of early childhood education.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,329,635
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,493,912
- Amount Expended: \$1,440,942
- Percent of Funds Expended: 96.45%

CONNECTICUT

Council Name: Early Childhood Education Cabinet, Office of Early Childhood

Designated State Agency: Department of Education

Council Website: <http://www.ctearlychildhood.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In January 2010, Governor Jodi Rell designated the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet as the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council, in accordance with the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. Under Governor Dannel Malloy, the Early Education State Advisory Council convened a broad range of stakeholders to deliberate and implement strategies to address gaps in the state's early childhood care and education system. Council meetings provided a venue for state agencies, legislators, and the public to offer input and voice concerns. On June 24, 2013, the Governor signed Executive Order 35 to establish the Office of Early Childhood, which streamlined governance and oversight of state early childhood programs. In a 2014 legislative session, the Council was renamed the Early Childhood Cabinet in order, according to its website, "to reflect the cabinet's renewed interest in all areas that impact young children and their families" (<http://www.ctearlychildhood.org>).

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Connecticut met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Institutions of higher education in the state

CONNECTICUT

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed periodic statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of early childhood development programs in the state and measured significant risk factors experienced by Connecticut's children and families. The latest needs assessment performed in August 2013 elevated three recommendations:

- Improve systems of monitoring and improve the quality of early care settings, with special attention to child care settings that are currently unregulated.
 - Increase school readiness by addressing the comprehensive needs of children and reducing risk factors.
 - Improve data systems to more accurately identify high-needs children that are not being reached by existing systems.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among early childhood programs. One highlight is Connecticut's realignment of early childhood governance in the state. This realignment involves co-locating the child care subsidy, child care licensing, and Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) programs.

CONNECTICUT

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):*** The Council expanded its workgroup areas to mirror the key areas of the RTT-ELC framework. Expansion of focus areas included development of statewide early learning standards for children from birth to 5 years of age, a workforce knowledge and competencies framework, early childhood data systems, QRIS, and early childhood health promotion.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):*** The Council created a Family Involvement and Home Visitation Workgroup that advanced integration of the MIECHV home visiting models into the state's overall early childhood system. The workgroup's recommendations informed state legislation (Public Act 13-178) that ensured that MIECHV home visiting programs are implemented in collaboration with other community programs.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The goals outlined in the CCDF Plan were completed in cooperation with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Council. The Council also worked closely with DSS to develop the state's child care training and technical assistance plan. Through this partnership, the child care technical assistance specialists were available to the Council's workgroups and supported the development of QRIS recommendations and the Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) framework for the early childhood workforce.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) Grant:*** The HSSCO Director served as the chair for the health promotion workgroup of the Council and was an active participant in the family involvement and home visitation workgroup. The grant supported the workgroup's integration of the Parent Leadership Training Institute Curriculum and the Strengthening Families Framework by Connecticut Head Start programs.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):*** Connecticut's ECCS grant focused on infant-toddler screening processes statewide. The Council's health promotion workgroup in partnership with the Connecticut Health and Development Institute conducted an inventory of existing screening processes to inform ECCS work.
- ***Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):*** Project LAUNCH, a grant program of the federal government, seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. A Project LAUNCH representative served on the Council's health promotion workgroup.
- ***Part B, Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:*** The Coordinator of Connecticut's Part B, Section 619 served on the professional development and workforce workgroup of the Council to inform the development of the CKCs Framework for early care and education teachers and other workforce development-related activities of the workgroup.

CONNECTICUT

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- **Results-Based Accountability (RBA):** The Council continues to be an active participant in the implementation of the RBA methodology to assess the impact of state systems and programs on Connecticut's goal of having children Ready by Five and Fine by Nine. In February 2013, the Council presented information to the legislature on risk factors faced by young children, kindergarten entrance inventory results, and the status of early childhood developmental screenings.
 - **The Early Childhood Community Planning Discovery Initiative:** The Council established a public-private partnership workgroup to strengthen existing relationships among entities that fund the planning and implementation of early childhood initiatives. The workgroup expanded the scope of public and private partnerships by inviting businesses and municipalities to participate.
-

Participation of Children

The Council developed recommendations for increasing the participation of children in high-quality programs:

- **Include Family Child Care in the QRIS:** The Council recommended including family child care in the QRIS, which maintains licensing as a baseline and accreditation as an indicator of the highest level of quality. This is intended to increase the number of family friend and neighbor care providers seeking licensing and should encourage licensed family child care providers interested in accreditation to attain that level of recognized quality.
 - **Require Licensing:** To promote increased participation in high-quality early learning programs, the Council recommended that all child care programs be licensed, including currently exempt programs.
 - **Commit Resources Beyond Urban Need:** The 2011 Early Childhood Cabinet Needs Assessment recommended that state resources be committed to early childhood initiatives in both large cities and rural and suburban areas with pockets of high-needs families.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the following focal areas to advance the implementation of a unified early childhood data system:

- **Unique Identifier:** Implement the use of state file numbers, such as a child's birth certificate number, as a unique identifier to use from birth across the statewide early childhood system. This will allow easier transition of records and services throughout the system.
- **Data Governance:** Designate a data governance entity to plan and coordinate activities, maintain policies and procedures, and provide guidance to users and families on how data will be accessed and used.

CONNECTICUT

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- **Integrated Systems:** Integrate data systems across state agencies and all other programs and services that create and collect early childhood data to ensure the safety and security of the data with proper safeguards.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council made advances as it worked with the early childhood workforce and higher education institutions and professionals to build workforce competencies.

The professional development workgroup assisted in drafting the state's early childhood teacher CKCs framework. Prior to the SAC grant, Connecticut had not had developed CKCs. The CKCs have been used to increase alignment of coursework across institutions of higher education. There are continuing efforts to build on the early childhood teacher framework for CKCs by including staff roles such as early childhood administrator.

There were enhancements to the existing professional development registry, called the Early Childhood Registry, through the Council's professional development workgroup. The workgroup collaborated with the registry administrators on Charts-a-Course. Their intent is to develop and implement plans that expand the capacity of the data system in order to more effectively track degree attainment of early childhood professionals and teachers. Upon completion, this upgrade will allow for accurate reporting of compliance with the state's legislative mandate that requires that all teachers have an associate's degree by 2015 and a baccalaureate degree by 2020.

A consultant funded by the Council built relationships across Connecticut's 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education to support alignment of higher education coursework and competencies to the state's early learning system. The consultant supported strengthening existing articulation agreements, inventorying course offerings across the institutions, and exploring strategies to share course offerings.

Early Learning Standards

The Council funded the development of new Birth to 5 Early Learning and Development Standards, inclusive of standards for infants, toddlers, and children ages 3 to 5. These development standards were informed by the preexisting *Infant and Toddlers Early Learning Guidelines* and the *Preschool Curriculum Framework*. In addition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children conducted a content validation study to determine if the skills, knowledge, and dispositions in Connecticut's new early learning and development standards reflect critical, comprehensive goals and a continuum of growth and development. The completed *Early Learning and Development Standards* allow early childhood programs to have one resource that contains a comprehensive set of standards for children from birth to 5 years of age that is aligned to the school-age standards. This supports transitions into the K–12 system.

CONNECTICUT

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Home Visiting:** The Council supported an assessment to examine father-friendly practices of the MIECHV programs and identify areas for improvement.
 - **QRIS:** The QRIS workgroup was established by the Council in the spring of 2012. The workgroup published recommendations that include guiding principles that served as a foundation for the QRIS. Recommendations covered the areas of governance, structure, standards, licensing, accreditation and approval, rating and monitoring, subsidies, incentives, and phase-in. With guidance and facilitation by a national consulting group, the QRIS workgroup also completed the development of standards, criteria, and indicators for the QRIS system.
 - **Parent, Family and Community Engagement:** The family involvement and home visiting workgroup integrated parent leadership and parent civic engagement into the Strengthening Families Framework curriculum.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$582,974
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$747,251
- Amount Expended: \$747,251
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

DELAWARE

Council Name: State Advisory Council on Early Childhood

Designated State Agency: Department of Education

Council Website: <http://decc.delaware.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2001, Governor Ruth Minner established the Delaware Early Care and Education Council by executive order. In 2007, the legislature took action and codified the Council as the Delaware Early Childhood Council. In June 2010, the legislature renamed the Council the Delaware State Advisory Council on Early Childhood and required it to meet the specifications of the Head Start Act of 2007. In 2011, Delaware applied for and was awarded a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, which supported early childhood system development.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Delaware met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

DELAWARE

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

Delaware conducted its first needs assessment since 2005 to map the demand for early childhood education services throughout Delaware. This included the supply of early childhood service providers; their level of quality; access to high-quality providers for at-risk populations; and the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in resources and accessibility in the early childhood system.

The Council used the results of the needs assessment to recommend next steps:

- Target priority zones and areas with multiple indicators of problems.
 - Encourage family child care providers to participate in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Stars, which has a low rate of participation.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers to collaboration and coordination. It supported efforts through federal and state early childhood partnerships, as well as through partnerships with local organizations and other public and private early childhood groups.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council gathered support letters from agencies to submit with the RTT-ELC grant application. In 2011, Delaware applied for and was awarded the grant. Once awarded, the Council used its guiding principles and the RTT-ELC application to ensure consistency. With the implementation of the RTT-ELC, the Council realigned its committees to ensure consistency between the RTT-ELC and the work of the Council.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The Council provided a letter of support for the MIECHV grant and encouraged public health presentations for the purpose of obtaining feedback to include in the application submission.

DELAWARE

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The draft CCDF federal regulations were presented to the Council. The Council provided a letter of support for the CCDF plan.

State and Local Level

- ***Delaware Stars:*** The Council leveraged federal RTT-ELC and state general funds to increase quality through Delaware Stars, the state's QRIS. Delaware Stars is a cross-sector QRIS encompassing child care, Head Start, and schools, including charter schools.
 - ***Military-Drill Weekend Child Care in Cooperation with Military Liaison:*** The Council worked on alignment of systems through this locally funded project. It provided weekend child care for military families through a partnership with a local child care facility.
-

Participation of Children

The Council supported several activities intended to increase the participation in early care and education programs and reach underrepresented and special populations. There are specific areas of interest including the following:

- Providing a healthy start for all children
 - Ensuring early childhood programs and professionals are high quality
 - Sustaining system improvement
 - Providing an effective early learning system that is aligned across all levels
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council developed recommendations to implement a unified data system and identified the following top needs for implementation:

- Fund an integration of the data system.
 - Finish the development of the data dictionary.
 - Improve child outcomes data by gaining access to additional data sources.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council performed a workforce study on early childhood teachers, administrators, and providers. The statewide study provided data on the estimated number of providers throughout the state, the average number of years employed in field, the providers' pay ranges, and providers' education. The results of the study led to better compensation for providers in early childhood professions. The Council supported RTT-ELC efforts to align higher education coursework and competencies with the state's early learning system.

DELAWARE

Early Learning Standards

- **Infants and Toddlers:** The Council enhanced the current *Early Learning Standards* by developing a supplemental family activity book that reflected the standards.
 - **Children from 3 to 5 Years of Age:** The Council funded the printing of additional copies of the current standards for statewide distribution.
-

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Delaware Stars QRIS:** The Council supported achieving higher quality and program improvement through QRIS.
 - **Health:** The Council advocated for high-quality developmental screening and follow-up services for all children.
 - **Mental Health:** Early childhood mental health services were expanded based on support by the Council. This led to doubling the number of licensed behavioral health professionals providing early childhood mental health consultation services.
 - **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:** A Kindergarten Readiness Assessment pilot was conducted and implemented statewide with RTT-ELC support.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$661,204
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.54%

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Council Name: State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council

Designated State Agency: Established in: Executive Office of the Mayor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

Council Website: N/A

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Mayor Fenty established the District of Columbia's Early Childhood Advisory Council in May 2010. In March 2011, after the election of Mayor Gray, legislation passed that authorized the Council as the District of Columbia State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council. The law required the Council to improve collaboration and coordination among entities carrying out federally funded and District-funded pre-kindergarten and other early childhood programs for the purpose of improving school readiness. The Council also supports the planning and development of a comprehensive early childhood education system that serves children from birth to 8 years of age.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

The District of Columbia met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In 2012, the Council worked with partners on three assessments, which evaluated the quality and accessibility of early child care and identified gaps in services.

- **Head Start State Collaborative Needs Assessment:** This assessment is completed every 3 years and provides demographic information on racial and ethnic composition, languages, education level, maternal health, employment status, income data, participation in Head Start and Early Head Start, and additional data and information about the needs of families served by Head Start and Early Head Start.
- **Early Childhood Risk and Reach Assessment:** The reach of programs serving young children and their families is the topic of this assessment. Updated annually, the assessment report provides the total number of children and families served by early learning programs throughout the District. The 2012 assessment also collected data on 13 family risk indicators that have the potential to affect child outcomes. The 2012 report examined the following services and locations: child development centers and homes, licensed child development centers by ward, licensed child development homes by ward, Going for the Gold Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Head Start and Early Head Start, pre-kindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, home visiting programs, and early intervention services (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Needs Assessment (continued)

- **Pre-Kindergarten Enhancement and Expansion Assessment:** This annual report provided data on the current capacity of existing pre-kindergarten programs. The 2012 assessment found that the District had the capacity to serve 15,314 3- and 4-year-old children, with a capacity of over 16,000 slots in the District's public schools, public charter schools, and community-based organizations. On the basis of the most current assessments, the Council recommended prioritizing tasks to reach the District's early childhood goals in the following areas:
 - » **Effectively Target High-Risk Areas:** Implement the Early Development Instrument, a population-based measure of kindergarten readiness, to allow for more robust targeting within wards at the neighborhood and ZIP code level.
 - » **Increase the Infant-Toddler Workforce:** Research the feasibility of a teacher certification program specializing in the educational and developmental needs of infants and toddlers. This associate's degree certification program would strengthen the early childhood education career ladder. This also could prompt institutions of higher education to develop an appropriate curriculum aligned to an early childhood bachelor's degree competency framework.
 - » **Continuum of Services:** Expand and link home visiting programs to a larger continuum of services across programs that serve children from birth to 5 years old. The interagency partnerships and coordination that result from a continuum provide efficient, effective, and accessible services to families.

Coordination and Collaboration

When identifying opportunities and barriers to collaboration and coordination among federal, state, and locally funded early childhood programs and services, the Council made important strides.

Federal Level

- **Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:** The Council provided significant advisory support to develop the vision for the 2011 and 2013 RTT-ELC grant applications. The Council also convened community meetings to rally support and raise awareness about the District's vision and the application process. (Although the District did not receive an award, the efforts to develop the vision were foundational to future work.)
- **Part C and Part B, Section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The Council funded developmental screenings for both programs and recommended that the Part C program adopt lower eligibility thresholds.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The Council funded a nutrition assessment survey of center- and home-based early childhood providers to collect data on the extent of community expertise in wellness and nutrition. The Council and a QRIS working group developed an understanding of what priorities to set to improve nutrition.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Head Start State Collaboration Grant:** The Council examined the District's best practices for providing Head Start and Early Head Start services in schools. This work helped local organizations respond to the notice of availability of Head Start funding in the District.

State and Local Level

- ***Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Early Literacy Campaign:*** In the summer of 2013, the District launched a Sing, Talk and Read (STAR) campaign, partnering with the District public libraries to implement the effort. The campaign promoted the importance of early literacy by encouraging parents and caregivers to sing, talk, and read to children to help prepare them for school. STAR also promotes the importance of healthy child development. The Council planned and implemented the campaign with District and library partners and provided financial support.
- ***LearnDC.org Web Portal:*** To promote public awareness about available resources and services for young children and their families, the Council funded the production of a web portal through the <http://www.learnDC.org> website. The web portal provides information about services and includes a resource library organized by the age of the child. The website helps parents, families, caregivers, and early childhood educators better understand the needs of young children, learn about available programs, and understand how to connect with programs and services.
- ***Health and Mental Health:*** The Council provided funds for health promotion services through the use of community provider mobile vans. The mobile units conduct health outreach and educational activities for families with children from birth to 8 years of age, including developmental screenings, hearing and vision screenings, some eligibility assessments, and HIV and pregnancy testing. In addition, the Council funded two professional development training sessions on child development conducted by the Department of Mental Health. The sessions ensured that providers were prepared to detect atypical development and prepared to link families to available resources.

Participation of Children

Council partnerships and collaborations among early childhood programs and agencies aligned services, brought resources to high-risk targeted areas, and reduced barriers to early childhood benefits and services for families. Using evidence collected from the needs assessments, the Council took the following steps to increase the participation of children in early childhood programs:

- Commissioned a needs assessment addressing infants and toddlers and their families.
- Analyzed barriers to participation in the QRIS by center-based and home-based programs in order to support the programs in reaching high-quality enhanced services for special populations emphasizing early intervention and dual language learner services.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The District of Columbia has several data system investments. The Council played an active role in collaborating and partnering across departments and agencies to support data sharing. The Council identified its top priorities to accomplish a unified data system:

- **Ensure Data Governance:** Establish a data governing body to support the development of a comprehensive early childhood data system. The governing body would identify data collection goals for an integrated data system; develop common data definitions, standards, and privacy policies; and enlist stakeholders to facilitate consistent data sharing.
 - **Integrate Child and Family Data:** Coordinate with existing data integration projects and workgroups to develop a mechanism for sharing and integrating human services and health data with education data.
 - **Integrate Workforce Data:** Integrate the professional development registry data and the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The SLDS contains the workforce data for pre-kindergarten. Integrating the data about professional development of early childhood providers serving subsidy programs will simplify collecting and analyzing data and provide a robust system for reporting.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Prior to receiving the SAC grant, the District developed an early childhood Core Knowledge and Competency Framework registry and career ladder. An Early Childhood Education Compensation Commission collaborating with the Council recommended that compensation of early childhood professionals be aligned to the educators' qualifications and competencies.

Early Learning Standards

The District Council completed the comprehensive *Early Learning Standards* for infants, toddlers, and children from birth to 5 years old. These standards cross a variety of domains and provide indicators for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and pre-kindergarteners aligned with the Common Core for K–12 Standards.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Week and Month of the Young Child:** In 2012, the Council supported the Week of the Young Child and celebrated young learners. In 2013, the District celebrated the Month of the Young Child with events featuring early learning and development. The Council sponsored a kickoff event for the celebration that highlighted high-quality early learning centers where children, parents, and teachers could observe and participate in activities that support young children's healthy growth and development. Free developmental screenings, workshops, resources, and information were offered to families and early childhood education professionals.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Infants and Toddlers Investment:** Needs assessments funded by the Council highlighted the importance of more and improved infant and toddler services. As a result, in the 2014 budget, the District invested an additional \$11 million to support better quality and more access for infants and toddlers.
 - **Home Visiting:** The Council provided funds to train the staff of the Strong Start and Early Stages Programs for home visitation and to serve as a resource for families.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$596,545
- Percent of Funds Expended: 89.80%

FLORIDA

Council Name: State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care

Designated State Agency: Office of Early Learning

Council Website: <http://flchildrenscouncil.org/event/state-advisory-council-on-early-education-care>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2010, Governor Charlie Crist established the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care. The Council coordinated the existing Florida Children and Youth Cabinet established in 2007. The Cabinet represents all state agencies that serve children and youth from birth to 18 years, including the State Advisory Council members, and numerous local organizations and universities.

The scope of activities and services for the Council adhere to the strategic plan outlined in the Framework for the Future of Florida's Children. The Framework includes broad goals that ensure Florida's children are healthy and prepared to be successful:

- Stable and nurturing families
 - Healthy children
 - Quality early learning experiences
-

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Florida met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency

FLORIDA

Council Representation (continued)

- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In partnership with the University of Florida's Lastinger Center for Learning, the Council completed a statewide needs assessment. The assessment measured the demand, supply, and quality of early care and education throughout the state. It included a gap analysis that pinpointed early care and education services at multiple geographic levels, and included ZIP codes, counties, early learning coalitions (ELCs), and statewide data. Demographic characteristics and risk factors for children from birth to age 5 years also were captured. One finding was that families with limited resources lacked available quality care programs or access to existing programs.

The Council analyzed the needs assessment and other information and developed a multi-pronged approach to enhancing early learning systems and improving quality care services:

- Improve data sharing among early childhood agencies to promote needs assessment and service delivery to children.
- Improve systems level coordination and collaboration between Head Start and Early Head Start grantees and ELCs.
- Strengthen partnerships among ELCs and Part B and Part C program providers.

FLORIDA

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers to collaboration and coordination. It supported federal and state early childhood partnerships, as well as partnerships with local organizations and other public and private early childhood groups.

Federal Level

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Council's system-building efforts aligned to two of CCDF's efforts in the state plan. The Council performed a workforce study that supported and aligned to CCDF's workforce training and professional development needs. The Council's investment in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™), which is now used to assess the quality of early childhood classrooms, was aligned to CCDF efforts in the state plan.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)***: The Council agreed with the HSSCO's goal to support the development of a comprehensive system of professional development using the CLASS tool. The Council collaborated with the Head Start Region IV OHS Office and the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance staff to implement the Practice-Based Coaching model for practitioners implementing CLASS. Technical assistance providers and coaches used this information to support voluntary, individualized program improvement. ELCs and Head Start/Early Head Start grantees documented quality investments in programs, measured their impact, and increased the efficiency and effectiveness of these investments.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: The Council worked in partnership with ECCS and the Children and Youth Cabinet members to participate in adaptive leadership training for building effective early childhood systems and services. The Parent Leadership Ambassador Training (PLAT) initiative certified teams to train parents and community members to create a vision for their communities that values parents as leaders. PLAT staff were partners of the HSSCO and worked to meet the ECCS goal of supporting parents and caregivers in meeting their children's basic needs. PLAT supports the statewide model for family engagement and offers tools for families to help them provide a nurturing environment for children's development and growth.

State and Local Level

- ***Palm Beach State College***: The Council and a local ELC funded the Palm Beach State College to develop a local professional development system pilot for the early care and education workforce. This pilot helped the Council design standardized training modules, career pathways, and an outcomes-driven training design. This strategy moves participants from classroom participation to the workplace using previewing, activation, content, exercises, and summary formats called PACES for each intended learning outcome.
- ***Website and Database***: Collaboration also resulted in the development by the University of Florida of an interactive database that obtains early childhood population-level data.

FLORIDA

Participation of Children

The Council participated in and developed several strategies that increased the participation of children in early care and education programs, including children in underrepresented and special populations:

- **Family Engagement:** The Council funded the PLAT train-the-trainer initiative to support a statewide model for family engagement to enhance and complement existing family support services. The PLAT curriculum mirrored goals from the Governor's Office of Adoption and Prevention, incorporated goals from the *Adoption and Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan*, and included protective factors to prevent child maltreatment. PLAT-certified parent-practitioner ambassador teams provided local trainings throughout the state. The teams included representatives from Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), Head Start, ELCs, and other community partners. These teams trained parents, agency practitioners, and community members to create a vision for their communities that values parents as leaders.
 - **School Readiness Program:** The state's school readiness program increased the participation of low-income families by providing them access to financial assistance. The purpose of the readiness program was to help these families become financially self-sufficient as they prepared children for success in school.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council created a unified data system that included data sharing and was supported by interagency agreements, dedicated funding, and data security safeguards to protect and maintain the integrity of the data.

The Early Learning Information System (ELIS) is the state's unified data collection system. Currently the ELIS contains information from over 300,000 children attending pre-kindergarten, school readiness programs, ELCs, and several state agencies. Funds have been used to enhance data interfaces and to ensure that data are accessible to state agencies.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council supported the development of workforce competencies and participated in completing a comprehensive workforce study that established a baseline of measures describing the characteristics of the workforce.

Early Learning Standards

In 2007, the Florida Office of Early Learning (OEL) created a Steering Committee to support the development of a comprehensive set of standards to provide a developmentally appropriate educational path for Florida's children from birth through age 4.

In 2011, the OEL and the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning worked collaboratively to develop one set of standards for Florida's 4-year-olds participating in either the School Readiness

FLORIDA

Early Learning Standards (continued)

or the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Education Program. The revised standards for 4-year-olds, adopted by the State Board of Education and promulgated as regulations by OEL, provide guidance for early learning programs. The completed *Early Learning and Developmental Standards* now encompass children from birth to 5 years old. The standards also are aligned with *Head Start Program Performance Standards* and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. In 2012, the Council partnered with the University of Florida's Lastinger Center to develop online early learning standards modules for novice, career, and director-level staff in center-based and family child care. The modules are available in both English and Spanish.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

The Early Education and Care Pre- and Post-Assessment Inventory Report: The Council partnered with the American Institutes for Research to conduct an early education and care pre- and post-assessment study.

The project had the following objectives:

- Provide a statewide inventory of early care and education child pre- and post-assessment instruments currently in use by the ELCs, RCMA, and 45 Head Start grantees in Florida.
- Determine how the ELCs, RCMA, and Head Start grantees are using each pre- and post-assessment tool.
- Determine if assessment instruments currently in use produce data that OEL can use for future student academic planning.

The next steps of the project were to determine if the assessment instruments aligned with early learning standards and to assess children's learning gains in school readiness programs using an independent body.

The early education and care pre- and post-assessment inventory reported extensive and reliable data and analysis of Florida's early care and education pre- and post-assessment instruments used in early care and education settings. Currently, the state's ELCs and Head Start grantees have selected and are administering pre- and post-assessments to measure the impact of school readiness services. A Florida statute requires establishing a unified approach toward school readiness enhancement.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$4,818,802
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$4,983,079
- Amount Expended: \$4,983,079
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

GEORGIA

Council Name: Georgia's Children's Cabinet (originally the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care)

Designated State Agency: Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Council Website: <http://dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/GAStateAdvisoryCouncil.aspx>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/e.cd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 31–40

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In September 2009, the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care was created by executive order in response to the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. The Act required every state to create a Council to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness.

In April 2011, Governor Nathan Deal issued a second executive order to continue the Council, reappointed most of the previous Council members, and named new members. In fall 2012, the Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care merged with the First Lady's Children's Cabinet to become Georgia's Children's Cabinet.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Georgia met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services

GEORGIA

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council contracted with the Carl Vision Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment study with the following components:

- A demographic analysis of population trends, as well current economic and early education data in the state.
- Focus groups and rigorous telephone surveys to assess parental needs.
- In-depth focus groups to assess early care and education teachers' perceptions.
- A survey and needs analysis of early care and education providers' perceptions.
- A survey of state agencies' perceptions and needs.

The Council also conducted early studies of quality and found that quality ranged from low to medium across a variety of settings. Additionally, a longitudinal pre-kindergarten study conducted in 2011 and 2012 found a need for increased dual language learner services among the birth-to 4-year-old population.

In response to the needs assessment, the Council made the following recommendations to state officials:

- **Demographic Tracking:** Continue to track and implement formal, scheduled mechanisms to monitor key demographic trends. Expected changes in geographic and demographic diversity and household composition will affect Georgia's early education system.

GEORGIA

Needs Assessment (continued)

- **Increased Availability:** Make early care and education opportunities available to better meet families' needs. Parents reported a lack of available child care at night, on weekends, and during after-school hours, as well as a shortage of licensed and regulated care.
 - **Professional Perception:** Explore options to ensure that early education teachers are recognized as educational professionals. Teachers reported while in focus groups that they perceive themselves as professionals but that the general public does not share that perception.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The leaders of the agencies in Georgia responsible for administering federal and state grants are members of the Council and were involved in approving Council projects. The projects were aligned with the goals of enhancing services to Georgia's children and their families. The Council worked with agencies at the state and local levels to examine the current state of early childhood care and quality, to improve organization and management, and to disseminate information to families.

Federal Level

- **Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):** Georgia was one of six states to receive funding in 2013 under the RTT-ELC grant program. The Council's work formed the foundation for these efforts.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The Council's projects related to the Statewide Professional Development System and Career Ladder aligned closely with several initiatives funded by the CCDF.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Grant:** The Council's stakeholders involved with the ECCS grant were instrumental in arranging health screenings and in a follow-up project conducted by the Georgia Department of Public Health.

State and Local Level

- **Health Screening Study:** The Council coordinated with the Georgia Department of Public Health to conduct a study of Georgia's current health screening and follow-up system for children to determine if the system properly addresses the needs of children with developmental delays.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** In order to fund the focus group portion of the needs assessment, the Council worked with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to successfully apply for the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation Grant.
- **Public Awareness Campaign:** The campaign addressed the importance of quality child care and education and Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Council worked with the Cox Foundation, Cox Media Group, and Turner Media to secure donations of creative expertise, media time, and space for the Council's campaign.

GEORGIA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Program Realignment:** The Georgia State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care was merged with the First Lady's Children's Cabinet to form the Georgia's Children's Cabinet. The Cabinet is co-chaired by Georgia's First Lady, Sandra Deal, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Office for Children and Families.
-

Participation of Children

After completing the needs assessment, the Council recommended the following actions to increase the participation of children in available services:

- **Responsiveness:** Continue to track key demographic trends and make decisions about services based on trends, paying special attention to underrepresented and special populations.
 - **Health:** Expand medical provider resources utilizing technology, such as telemedicine and telehealth.
 - **Awareness:** Continue using social and traditional media to increase public awareness of the importance of quality early care and education and of the services available.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified several primary needs to fulfill in order to make progress on a unified data system: senior-level support from the state government, dedicated personnel at the agency level, and funding.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

In June 2013, Georgia implemented revised early learning standards, the *Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards* (GELDS). Council funding was essential to finalizing, rolling out, and developing training. The state professional development competencies were revised based on GELDS. The Council also funded a study by Kennesaw State University, Pipeline and Professional Development for Early Care Providers in Georgia, titled *Gap Analysis, Findings, and Recommendations*. This study highlighted a number of areas for future focus. Half of all study participants identified low wages, the lack of benefits, and job limitations as significant barriers to enrollment in early care and education degree programs. In addition, participants noted that the public did not perceive early care providers as professionals. They advocated for efforts to shift the public perception of the work of providers from babysitting to early care and education.

Early Learning Standards

The state developed GELDS to replace the standards for children ages birth to 3 years and the *Pre-K Content Standards*, creating one set of research-based, aligned standards for children ages birth to 5 years. GELDS cover all domains of children's learning and development, including physical

GEORGIA

Early Learning Standards (continued)

development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to play and learning, communication, language and literacy, math, science, social studies, creative development, and cognitive processes. Council funding allowed DECAL to disseminate information about GELDS in a variety of ways, including the creation of a new website, videotaped teaching models, webinars, a 2-day workshop, and training modules for teachers.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$3,476,312
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$3,640,589
- Amount Expended: \$3,640,589
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

GUAM

Council Name: Guam Early Learning Council

Designated State Agency: University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research, and Service

Council Website: <http://www.guamelc.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 23

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In April 2008, Governor Felix Camacho signed an executive order establishing the Guam Early Learning Council (GELC). The University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research, and Service (CEDDERS) was appointed the lead agency to coordinate the State Advisory Council based on CEDDERS's 5-year history of facilitating the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan. In May 2011, Governor Eddie Baza Calvo signed Public Law 31-62 to establish the GELC to oversee Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems efforts.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Guam met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services

GUAM

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, Department of Labor, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

Guam's Council collaborated with partners to complete three needs assessments over the course of the grant:

- **The Child Care Centers Assessment** counted the number of licensed child care centers, enrollment capacity, and the number of children expelled due to behavioral problems.
- **The Early Childhood Workforce Assessment** collected data on the education and training of early childhood professionals. It assessed completion of pre-service and in-service training and captured professional development needs and priorities.
- **The School Readiness Assessment** provided data about children's kindergarten readiness. The findings supported the development of the *Guam School Readiness Plan* published in July 2013.

Guam's Council developed recommended priorities as a result of the needs assessments:

- **Grandfather Provision:** Although there is a need to increase the education requirements of child care providers, the Council recommended maintaining the supply of child care by adopting a grandfather provision that temporarily waived general education requirements. This would allow professionals a 3-year grace period to fulfill training and professional development requirements.
- **Certification Requirements:** The Council decided that further analysis is needed to determine the appropriate coursework to meet the basic certification requirements.
- **Unified School Entry System:** In order to assess children for kindergarten entry in both public and private schools, the Council recommended facilitating the development of a unified system.

GUAM

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council collaborated and coordinated with federal, state, and local early childhood programs and services. These efforts promoted establishing and sharing best practices within the early childhood professional community and increased public awareness about early childhood issues and concerns.

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)—Project Bisita I Familia:** Guam's Council developed and funded courses to support staff earning the basic competency certificate for early childhood providers. The MIECHV administrator participated in early childhood initiatives including the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS), Early Childhood State Plan Work Group, Guam Early Hearing and Detection Intervention Advisory Council, and Child Death Review Planning Committee. The MIECHV administrator provided quarterly reports to the GELC and the home visiting program data coordinator and facilitated the GELC's data workgroup on early childhood integrated data. In 2012, MIECHV staff participated in Strengthening Families training and Parent Café host activities.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** In 2011, Guam established a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Work Group to plan and develop Guam's QRIS. Guam's Council contributed to completing the draft QRIS presented to the public for comment in August 2013.
- **Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO):** The Head Start State Collaboration Director provided quarterly reports to the Council and consistently participated in Guam's early learning activities, including ECCS, the School Readiness workgroup, and Early Childhood State Plan workgroup. The director and staff also participated in Strengthening Families training in 2012 and hosted three Parent Cafés. Additionally, the Guam Council supported Head Start's annual Fitness Fair for parent engagement, where parents obtained support and resources.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)—Project Tinituhon:** Guam's ECCS serves as the umbrella for all early childhood work throughout Guam. Project Tinituhon staff work closely with Guam's Council staff in addressing the five focus areas in the 2013 Guam Early Childhood State Plan: health, mental health and social emotional development, early care and education, parent education and family support, and sustainability. The ECCS and Guam Council collaborated to facilitate early childhood initiatives, activities, and workgroups.

State and Local Level

- **Early Childhood System of Care—Project Kariñu:** The Project Kariñu director provided quarterly reports to the Council and participated in the Social Marketing and Universal Referral Form workgroups. The project funded and participated with the Council in Strengthening Families Guam, Healthy Families America, and Parents As Teachers Training workshops.

GUAM

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (Guam EHD) Project:** Guam EHD's goal is to ensure all newborns receive hearing screening. Infants that fail the initial screening receive a diagnostic audiology evaluation, and, if appropriate, are referred to the Guam Early Intervention System to receive early intervention services by or before 6 months of age. Guam EHD staff participated in early childhood outreach and also supported the Guam Reach Out and Read Program. The Guam EHD data coordinator played a key role in facilitating the Council's GELC Data Workgroup.
- **Guam Plan for Professional Development (GPPD):** GPPD provides a plan for early childhood assistants and teachers in all child care, Head Start, and related early childhood settings to advance through education and training experiences. Additionally, GPPD includes an aligned monitoring framework across early childhood programs to support certified early childhood personnel. GPPD staff continue efforts to include early childhood program staff in the development, piloting, implementation, and evaluation of Guam's QRIS.
- **School Readiness Plan—Kindergarten Entry Assessment:** In July 2013, Guam launched the School Readiness Plan for the 2013–2014 school year. In collaboration with Guam's Department of Education and private schools, training was provided to kindergarten teachers on how to use the primary assessment tool.
- **Rigalu Foundation:** The Rigalu Foundation, founded by First Lady Christine Calvo, provided funding for GELC Strategic Planning Meetings held in April 2012 and the Early Childhood Conference held in October 2012. The foundation continues to fund early childhood initiatives and leads efforts to obtain additional resources from private companies and nonprofit organizations to support the Reach Out and Read Program for Guam.

Guam's Key Legislation Advancements

Public Law 31-62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Established the Guam Early Learning Council (GELC) for Guam's Early Childhood Comprehensive System. Signed into law May 2011, this established the GELC, provided the Council's organizational framework, mandated quarterly meetings, and required updating the legislature and the Guam governor.
Public Law 31-73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Established the Administrative Rules and Regulations of the Department of Public Health and Social Services Relative to Child Care Facilities and Group Child Care Homes. Signed into law June 2011, the law revised the 35 year old Child Care and Group Child Care Homes regulations. The law also includes Guam's Plan for Professional Development for Early Childhood Professionals.
Public Law 32-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Established the Guam Council on Child Death Review and Prevention (CCDRP). GELC facilitated and endorsed efforts to prepare draft legislation on this issue. The Council, including the First Lady of Guam as Co-Chair of GELC, provided testimony on the bill in March 2013. The bill became law on May 10, 2013.

GUAM

Participation of Children

The Council developed and implemented several initiatives that increased the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations:

- **Parent Outreach:** The Council provided parent outreach training in communities of lower socioeconomic status in collaboration with other agencies and programs serving young children.
 - **Early Childhood State Plan:** Recommendations to increase the participation of children in services were included in the draft Early Childhood State Plan. The recommendations address health, mental health, early childhood care and education (Guam School Readiness Plan), parent education and family supports, and system sustainability.
 - **Social Marketing Plan:** The Council supported the development of products that promoted early learning in developmentally appropriate ways for parents and caregivers of young children. Some products included parent activity tips, a coloring book, respect and love books, and the annual Nene Directory that provided contact information on Guam service providers for young children and families. To increase the participation of new families, in January 2013, the Council piloted the launch of “Nene Bags” containing these materials for distribution to the sole civilian hospital in Guam.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council established a data workgroup to advance the early childhood integrated data system. In August 2012, an initial meeting was held to offer technical assistance by the Privacy Technical Assistance Center for State Longitudinal Data Systems. This center is providing ongoing technical assistance to complete Guam’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System Self-Assessment.

The Guam Council identified next steps for implementing a unified early childhood data system:

- Complete Guam’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System Self-Assessment.
 - Finalize the Master Memorandum of Understanding.
 - Collaborate to secure cross-agency funding and support for implementation and sustainability.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council made several developments and enhancements to the early childhood workforce by taking the following steps: advancing professional development core knowledge and competencies, developing a registry, building a career ladder and lattice, and providing opportunities for training to raise the standards of quality and professionalism across all programs.

In June 2013, Guam’s plan for professional development became effective. The early childhood professional development subcommittee convened in August 2013 to begin verifying and endorsing early childhood professionals to be certified to work in child care centers licensed by the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS).

GUAM

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

DPHSS, the Guam Children's Cabinet, and the University of Guam collaborated to create the early childhood education certificate program, which meets updated licensure requirements. The new requirements include entry-level pre-service requirements for early childhood assistant providers and higher level in-service requirements for early childhood lead providers, early childhood master providers, early childhood assistant directors, early childhood directors, basic preschool teachers, initial educators, professional educators, and master educators.

Early Learning Standards

In 2013, the *Modified Early Learning Guidelines for Families* were published and disseminated as a parent-friendly version of the *Guam Early Learning Guidelines* (GELGs) for 3- to 5-year-olds. The guidelines were developed in collaboration with all early childhood partners and are aligned with Guam's Plan for Professional Development. In addition, Guam developed the *GELGs for Young Children Birth–Five Trainer's Guide*. The *Hugando Parent Playbook* was translated into Chuukese and Tagalog.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** Cross-agency collaboration enabled Guam to maximize resources in planning and funding efforts to support the following training workshops:
 - » **Be Strong Families:** Living the Protective Factors, Wake up to Your Potential, and Assisting Families in Living the Protective Factors
 - » **Cultural and Linguistic Competence:** Wellness Coaching and Language Assistance Services Trainings
 - **Mental Health:** The Guam Council supported a 2-day strategic planning activity entitled *Strengthening Our Links: Building Guam's Early Childhood System of Care*, and a follow-up 1-day presentation on the early childhood system of care featuring a nationally recognized consultant.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$664,184
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.99%

HAWAII

Council Name: Hawaii Early Learning Advisory Board, Executive Office on Early Learning

Designated State Agency: Office of the Governor

Council Website: <http://earlylearning.hawaii.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 19

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

The Early Learning Council (ELC) was created by statute in a 2008 special session of the state legislature as a 14-member body with representatives from the public and private sectors. In April 2010, former Governor Linda Lingle designated the Hawaii Inter-departmental Council (IDC) as the statewide Early Childhood Advisory Council, to meet the requirements of the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. In April 2011, Governor Neil Abercrombie issued an executive order that rescinded the IDC and replaced it with the Hawaii ELC. In June 2012, the Governor established the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) and replaced the ELC with the Hawaii Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB), including an additional five members. The ELAB, hereinafter referred to as the Council, provides guidance to the EOEL, which is administratively attached to the Office of the Governor until July 2015, when it will be reassigned to the Department of Education.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Hawaii met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies

HAWAII

Council Representation (continued)

- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed several needs assessments to examine the following topics:

- The funds invested in early childhood learning and development from federal, state, nonprofit, and private sources
- The capacity of quality programs for 4-year-olds
- The ability of higher education institutions to prepare a qualified early childhood workforce
- The response data from Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) pilot program participants

The Council used the data gathered through needs assessments to identify and prioritize child care and programs for 4-year-olds. Because only 40 percent of 4-year-olds participating in child care and education programs are served in a high-quality center, the Council recommended that Hawaii increase its financial contribution and capacity to serve 4-year-olds. The Hawaii Council also noted the importance of increasing the alignment between state agencies and departments that serve children from birth through kindergarten entry.

A targeted needs assessment, which concluded in December 2013, measured the existing capacity of early learning programs for 4-year-olds at the school district level. It also examined the capability, cost, and additional resources needed to expand capacity of high-quality programs for this population of preschoolers.

HAWAII

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers to coordination and collaboration among Hawaii state agencies and departments. The Council identified alignment as an ongoing priority and leveraged partnerships with several early childhood programs to meet the needs of the community, coordinate policies and procedures, and leverage limited resources. These partnerships included health and child care service programs such as the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV); the Child Care and Development Fund; the Head Start State Collaboration Grant; Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems; and Parts B, Section 619, and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Federal Level

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The CCDF Administrator and EOEL Director worked collaboratively on system-building initiatives.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: Home Visiting holds a seat on the ELAB and is one of the four recognized program options for families in the state. All early childhood education policy discussions must include references to home visiting when making decisions about future directions.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)***: The Head Start State Collaboration Director is housed in the EOEL for collaborative efforts.

State and Local Level

- ***Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL)***: The EOEL was established by Act 170 in 2012 as a result of the Council's work. The creation of EOEL provided Cabinet-level authority to guide the development of a comprehensive and integrated statewide early childhood development and learning system. The mission of EOEL is to coordinate efforts to help ensure a solid foundation for Hawaii's young children, prenatally to age 5. They accomplish this goal by working with partners, families, and communities, and by aligning policies and programs related to health, safety, school readiness, and child success.
- ***Hawaii P-3***: The Council funded the development of materials and provided support to identify the top priorities for early childhood care and development for this initiative.
- ***National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy***: The Council supported efforts and progress toward improving early education that led to two NGA grant awards: Health and Welcome Starts and Formative Assessments. These grants supported additional targeted needs assessments and also addressed early childhood education gaps for the purpose of improving outcomes in early care programs through third grade.

HAWAII

Participation of Children

The needs assessments identified the importance of investing in state-funded pre-kindergarten. In 2013, Governor Abercrombie signed the Preschool Open Doors (POD) school readiness bill, which granted \$6 million to expand preschool subsidies in the 2014–2015 school year, as well as \$0.5 million for administrative costs to fund the expansion. The POD program increased participation of 4-year-old children by prioritizing and providing subsidies for pre-kindergarten to low- and moderate-income families.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Hawaii early childhood community has an established employment registry that is aligned with program licensing requirements, and the Council supported efforts to identify and integrate data systems. The Council's highest needs for implementing a unified data system included the following:

- **Data Mapping:** Document and map all early childhood providers throughout the state and identify the key data elements to collect.
 - **Key Indicators:** Identify key indicators linked to the Council's early childhood focus areas in order to plan tracking, monitoring, and making timely adjustments and informed decisions.
 - **Data Advisory Board:** Establish a data advisory board to serve as a governing body over planning, development, implementation, and ongoing efforts of interagency collaboration and cooperation. This board also would collect information in the form of issue reports about meaningful data.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Hawaii Council supported professional development efforts and endorsed Career Access and Navigation of Early Childhood Systems (CANOES), Hawaii's comprehensive workforce and professional development system. The Council also supported higher education and workforce development by investing resources in completing a higher education study, which enhanced the Core Knowledge and Competencies framework.

Early Learning Standards

The *Hawaii Early Learning and Development Standards* (HELDS) were completed and endorsed by the Council in 2012. These research-based standards identify the expectations of knowledge and behavior for children from birth through kindergarten entry. HELDS were designed with supports to be used across all program settings, such as Home Visiting, Family Child Interaction Learning Programs, Family Child Care Programs, and center based care. In addition, HELDS have been aligned with Hawaii's kindergarten standards, including *Common Core*, and cross-walked with Head Start and Montessori standards, Creative Curriculum, and the *Hawaii Preschool Content Standards*.

HAWAII

Early Learning Standards (continued)

The Council also created supplemental materials for HELDS including web-based resources, curriculum guides, developmentally appropriate activities, communication tools, a training framework and guides, and visual displays to promote and explain the standards to educators and families. The Council is partnering with the Hawaiian Medium Education leaders to develop a language acquisition strand for HELDS.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** In March 2010, the Quality Care Program, which is funded by Hawaii's Department of Human Services (DHS) and administered by the University of Hawaii Center on the Family, was assigned the task of designing a QRIS for licensed child care programs in Hawaii. The QRIS design was piloted in 2012. In 2013, the Council gathered feedback from pilot participants, including DHS coaches and the QRIS planning team.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$664,277
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

ILLINOIS

Council Name: Early Learning Council

Designated State Agency: Office of the Governor

Council Website: <http://www.earlychildhood.illinois.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: More than 51

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2003, the Illinois General Assembly founded the Early Learning Council (ELC) to guide the development of a statewide early childhood education and care system. In 2009, Governor Pat Quinn designated the ELC to carry out the requirements of the State Advisory Council grant and created the Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) to provide leadership and guidance to the Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Illinois met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

ILLINOIS

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council, OECD, and a data workgroup formed a partnership to identify the targets of the needs assessment. The needs assessment responded to the following questions:

- What are the demographics of children and their families in Illinois?
- What services are children receiving?
- What do we know about the quality and effectiveness of programs?

The Council used the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) that allowed early childhood data to be geospatially mapped to inform decisions. The Council partnered with the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Center for Children to use, collect, and analyze the early childhood risk data and to begin answering questions. The IECAM tool proved to be useful. It allowed the Council to perform analysis and provide data to a multitude of projects and initiatives beyond the expectations of the initial needs assessment. The versatility of the IECAM allowed the Council to review risk factor data over time and to analyze broad and targeted trends that identify data by geographical region and allow data to be viewed using demographic factors. The risk data are updated annually, and additional factors can be integrated into the IECAM as needed.

Coordination and Collaboration

In 2011 and 2012 the Council completed a strategic planning process. This resulted in a restructuring and the creation of new committees and subcommittees to better connect the projects and policies with expert members. The restructuring process allowed the Council to enhance strategic alignment and maximize resources across state, federal, and local early childhood programs and services.

The OECD and Executive Committee also took steps to ensure alignment and reduce duplication. The OECD, the Council's parent office, created the Interagency Team (IAT) to increase alignment of

ILLINOIS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

the early childhood system across the state. The IAT is a collaborative group of senior leadership across the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: When the Council participated in the application process, it reviewed and approved the targets and goals of RTT-ELC. The Council provides ongoing support to RTT-ELC, sets priorities, and collaborates with partners on ways to deepen alignment and integrate state and local systems.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: In May 2011, the Council participated in a multidisciplinary review panel that evaluated proposals by nine high-risk communities competing for a MIECHV award. Three communities were awarded funds initially, and an additional three communities were selected for funding later in the year.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: The Council partnered with ECCS staff to develop and execute the implementation of the community systems work and the MIECHV grant.
- ***Part B, Section 619 of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***: The Council partnered with IDEA staff on systems-building work, a high-priority Council project. The Council's Special Populations Committee worked with IDEA staff to develop the 14-day memo deliverable, which clarifies regulations and requirements regarding initial evaluations for special education services for children between the ages of 3 and 5. The memo was finalized, posted on the ISBE's website, and distributed to school districts for use in March 2012. In 2013, the OECD hired a contractor experienced in special education to make a parent-friendly version of the 14-day memo in both English and Spanish. The Council's committees and parent groups provided comments prior to its release in April 2013.

State and Local Level

- ***Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG)***: The Council supported efforts to pass the \$45 million ECCG initiative by Governor Quinn and the Illinois General Assembly. It also supported and participated in the negotiation to lessen the burden on facilities by reducing the matching funds requirement for awardees from 100 percent to 10 percent. The ECCG's purpose was to minimize the barrier of access to high-quality early childhood slots by increasing capacity in high-needs areas. Council committees were instrumental in developing the framework and administrative rules for the grant, building the program application, finalizing funding levels, and developing a methodology for application review that included using IECAM to prioritize high-need communities. This innovative grant was the first of its kind in the country and received an enormous initial response by 227 Illinois applicants. They requested over \$539 million for early childhood facility construction, renovation, and improvement. In December 2012, Governor Quinn announced the winners of ECCG awards and projected the grants would enable 1,200 more children to access high-quality preschool services in 14 communities.

ILLINOIS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Home Visiting (HV) Coach Quality Technical Assistance Project (HV Quality):** HV Quality supported projects of key program model developers and public funders that upgraded existing tools to measure adherence to quality standards and strengthen the impact of home visiting programs. The Council supported HV Quality by sharing findings from the statewide needs assessment to target the areas of highest risk. These areas were categorized by communities into clusters across the state into three tiers, or levels of need. In April 2013, HV Quality hosted two Illinois Home Visiting Summits, Innovations in Quality. The summits brought together participants to collaborate with experts on quality implementation. The Council's efforts were critical to pilot program selection and to HV Quality program outcomes and helped meet the goal of providing quality early childhood programs and services to the hard-to-reach populations.
 - **Quality Counts Child Care (QCCC) Grants:** The Council funded QCCC grants to provide funds for early childhood system investments in materials, equipment, and facilities. Resources were prioritized and sent to communities using IECAM rankings of community need. In 2013, three sets of QCCC grants were distributed to child care resource and referral agencies for providers based on the percentage of high-need children in high-need areas.
-

Participation of Children

The Council developed and implemented several projects throughout the state to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations. The listing below is a sample of these programs:

- **Increased Infrastructure:** The Council funded the ECCG program to increase the space dedicated to early childhood services in the areas of highest need.
- **Innovative Transportation:** The Council funded the Hard-to-Reach pilot to increase reliable transportation to and from early learning programs. The goal of the pilot was to minimize transportation barriers that led to lower attendance rates for many high-need families. Pilot recommendations follow:
 - » Require half-day programs, such as Preschool for All, to include the need for transportation funds in the application for funding; increase collaboration with other programs to defray transportation costs.
 - » Extend full-day programs by removing the midday break because the break disrupts family routines and schedules.
- **Funding Identification:** Quality programs are not accessible to serve the most at-risk children. To increase participation of these children, it is important to identify and map funding sources to yield options to serve low-income, underserved families.

ILLINOIS

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

Through the needs assessment, the Council identified the need to unify data systems as a high priority. A data workgroup researched information about the extent of fragmented data systems to inform the development of a data system request for proposals. The Council selected and funded JSI Research and Training Institute, a service provider, to review the state's 20-plus early childhood database systems to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers to designing the Unified Early Childhood Data System. The Council determined what is needed to implement a comprehensive, unified data system:

- **Program-Level Data:** Develop an automated, ongoing process to provide updated, location-specific information about children, providers, and centers to the Data Tracking Program of the Quality Rating and Improvement System.
 - **Workforce Data:** Develop a process to capture and update credentials of licensed and certified educators; annually update employment status in the Gateways to Opportunity Professional Development Registry.
 - **Child-Level Data:** Develop a process to link child-level data across programs and systems to develop an unduplicated count of children for the purpose of increasing data quality and identifying conflicting information.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

In 2009, the Professional Development Advisory Council launched the Illinois workforce registry system, the Gateways to Opportunity Registry. The system included cross-sector input to track the characteristics and ongoing professional development of the workforce. The registry recognizes individual practitioner attainments and provides a system for quality assurance of trainings and trainers. The Council funded an upgrade to the software for the registry and websites. The Council also used the upgrade to introduce an online application for both the Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers) Program, which provides supplemental income to attract and retain good teachers, and the Gateways Scholarship Program, which provides scholarship money to increase the capacity of early childhood professionals. Online applications for both programs are available through the registry's members' portal. In addition to making the application process easier, the Council worked on efforts to expand scholarship opportunities. The Council's Program Standards and Quality Committees partnered with the IDHS and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to expand Gateways Scholarship eligibility requirements. Scholarships were offered to providers working in 9-month Head Start programs. The income requirements for a cohort in Chicago pursuing English as a second language bilingual coursework were eased in order to attract more candidates.

The Gateways Registry also provides a Basic Transcript Review (BTR) service at no charge to registry members. When the Council expanded the service, approximately 8,000 more BTRs were completed. The service allowed members to submit official transcripts from colleges and

ILLINOIS

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

universities for review to determine the total number of college credit hours obtained, and to classify credit hours into four categories: early childhood education and development, early childhood education-related, school-age and youth development, and business administration.

The Council funded alignment of higher education coursework and competencies to the state's early learning system. It offered a series of programs for higher education faculty to support their enrichment of coursework related to pedagogical knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity. This took place beginning in 2010 and concluded in 2013. In addition, the Council worked with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to fund the Gateways to Opportunity Higher Education Forum held in 2012 and 2013.

Illinois completed a 3-year technical assistance grant with the University of North Carolina's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute's National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI). NPDCI worked with Illinois to inform early childhood teachers about the care and education of children with disabilities and cultural and linguistic diversity. The collaboration with the NPDCI and access to national experts on cultural and linguistic diversity fostered the Intensive Faculty Institutes. These Institutes were provided to faculty of 2- and 4-year higher education institutions throughout the state to share current research and best practices for working with young English language learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Early Learning Standards

In 2012, the Council published the *Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three*. This major accomplishment also included collaboration with consultants and trainers to create a framework for a unified training module for both the *Early Learning Guidelines* (for children from birth to age 3 years) and the revised *Early Learning Standards* (for children ages 3 to 5).

In 2012, the Council also funded work to draft benchmarks for the *Early Learning Standards* and to make them more user friendly and universally understandable. The Council expanded upon the revisions by the RTT-ELC that were adopted by ISBE as an administrative rule for the *Early Learning Standards and Guidelines*. The *Early Learning Standards* were aligned with the *Early Learning Guidelines* and the *Common Core*.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** The Council committed resources to QRIS implementation. As part of the strategic planning process, implementation of the new QRIS is now the top priority for both the Child Care Bureau in IDHS and the Early Childhood Division in ISBE. The Council's Program Standards and Quality Committee created an ad hoc committee to focus efforts on developing the QRIS quality level. A Council member was on the ad hoc group. The group was led by the OECD Director and was closely connected to the IAT leadership team.

ILLINOIS

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Health:** In July 2012, the Council created a health subcommittee to bring awareness to and introduce health-related priorities to other health and early childhood stakeholders. In December 2012, the Health Subcommittee convened the Obesity Prevention Work Group in response to interest from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) in adding new standards to child care licensing (Rule 407) related to obesity prevention. The obesity prevention group created recommendations, and Council participants and other local and national health stakeholders played an important role in this process. IDCFS staff accepted the Health Subcommittee's obesity prevention recommendations for Rule 407 and its accompanying procedures. The work received national attention from groups such as the Food Research and Action Center and the American Academy of Pediatrics for recommendations that reflected best practices.
- **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement—Hard-to-Reach Pilot:** The Council funded a Hard-to-Reach Pilot Program in 2012. The pilot developed effective and innovative strategies to recruit young children from families considered hard to reach and enroll them in quality early care and education programs.
- **Bridging the Gap: Interim Services:** Pilot programs successfully bridged the gaps between identification, recruitment, and enrollment. For example, the first program established a weekly 1-hour session at 12 sites to identify families with multiple risk factors and connect them to available early childhood services.
- **Parent Training:** The OECD used Council and MIECHV funding to hold trainings for the Hard-to-Reach Pilot and MIECHV on family engagement techniques. The trainings focused on reaching the children and families with the highest levels of need and empowering parents to speak to their peers.
- **In-Home Enrollment:** To overcome barriers created by limited transportation, the most successful Hard-to-Reach Pilot Programs shifted outreach efforts by taking services to the hard-to-reach families. These programs recognized the complexity of the enrollment process, which required multiple meetings, appointments, and forms. In many cases, additional time and effort were invested to establish trust and form a relationship with the families and to help them complete the necessary forms. Outreach pilot programs collaborated with medical and dental service providers to ensure priority access for families considered hard to reach. One program provided transportation to and from appointments.
- **Communications and Dissemination Activities:**
 - » **Webinar Series:** In the fall of 2012, the OECD started an early childhood webinar series based on the Council's recommendations. The series included 10 topics that focused on partnerships, program-specific operations, and childhood services.

ILLINOIS

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- » ***Integrated Website:*** In 2011, a comprehensive website was developed to serve parents, providers, educators, policymakers, and Council members. The new website contains eight categories with information and resources on OECD, the Early Learning Council, parents' information, early learning programs, home visiting, community systems building, and quality improvement. The website provides a destination for all essential early learning system materials and resources and is a central hub for early learning reports, data, studies, and state-funded grant opportunities in Illinois.
 - » ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):*** OECD created a page dedicated to facilitating public input into the first RTT-ELC application. The webpage asked parents and providers to provide input on a child care quality rating system, family engagement, funding, professional development, and access to early learning programs.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$3,584,080
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$3,748,357
- Amount Expended: \$3,723,503
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.34%

IOWA

Council Name: Early Childhood Iowa Stakeholders Alliance

Designated State Agency: Department of Management

Council Website: <http://www.earlychildhoodiowa.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 26

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2001, Iowa leaders founded the Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Stakeholders, an alliance of stakeholders focused on building a coordinated statewide early childhood system. In 2010, the Iowa General Assembly passed the Early Childhood Iowa Initiative. This merged early childhood programs with the ECI Stakeholders as one coordinated, state and local system-building effort identified as ECI Stakeholders Alliance, the state's Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Iowa met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

IOWA

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed a needs assessment in July 2013 to measure population, services, and gaps. The findings of the needs assessment follow:

- Iowa is becoming more diverse, especially the population of children.
- Due to poverty and low maternal educational levels, children at the highest risk of not meeting their potential are located in metropolitan high-poverty ZIP codes and regional centers.
- Access to quality early childhood services and availability of these services are unequal across the state.

The Council used these data and information from other sources to develop state priorities that emphasize delivering services to at-risk and high-needs children. The information contributed to a new strategic plan, which outlined the need to provide program development and funding for efforts such as an assessment of at-risk and high-needs children.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Iowa Council coordinated and collaborated with partners from federally funded early childhood programs. They aligned work efforts with the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV); the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF); the Head Start State Collaboration Grant; and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS).

State and Local Level

- **Home Visitation Credential:** The Council's Quality Services and Programs Component Workgroup provided input to and supported the development and implementation of the Iowa Home Visitation Credential process. This effort included collecting data across credentialed and non-credentialed programs.

IOWA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®:** The Council and other state education, human services, and management offices funded and provided support to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® program, which gives scholarships to child care workers to complete coursework in early childhood education and to increase their compensation.
 - **Child Care WAGES®:** The Council provided funds for the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children, an affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young children, to develop recommendations and an implementation plan for starting a WAGES® program in the state. WAGES® offers salary supplements (also referred to as stipends) to the early care and education workforce based on the individual's level of formal education and commitment to his or her program. The Council's Professional Development Component work group made plans to secure a license and begin urban and rural pilots in 2013 and 2014.
-

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations. The needs assessment revealed that ongoing efforts needed to be focused on underrepresented and special populations to increase access of these children to services and early childhood learning opportunities. The Council recommended next steps to increase participation of children in a strategic plan finalized in 2013:

- **Focus on At-Risk and High-Needs Children:** Focus on this population in all planning and implementation efforts.
 - **Pursue Funding Opportunities:** Seek out partnerships and grant opportunities, such as the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, to obtain funding for building early childhood systems.
 - **Support Cultural Diversity:** Create a cultural diversity guidance document for child care facilities.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the following needs for developing and implementing a unified data system:

- **Data Identification:** Refine essential data variables as a baseline for future expansion.
 - **Data Sharing:** Establish data sharing agreements as part of the data system plan.
 - **Proof of Concept:** Develop a proof of concept feasibility study to develop support and add momentum to prioritizing the project.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council enhanced the state's competencies and developed a Core Knowledge and Competencies framework. Although teaching role competencies were developed in 2009, they were not adopted widely. The Council also developed supporting materials for staff using these

IOWA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

competencies, including self-assessments and professional development plans, and added consultant competencies to the Child Care Resource and Referral system. Additionally, the Council reviewed and developed competencies for program administrators, adult educators, family support workers, and family support supervisors. Work is continuing on competencies for mental health workers.

Another project of the Council was the development of articulation agreements with institutions of higher education. Iowa participated in an Articulation Summit in April 2013 to build partnerships with these institutions. The Council plans to continue building relationships to support and finalize articulation agreements.

Early Learning Standards

The first *Iowa Early Learning Standards* (IELS) were developed in 2006. The Council worked with other key early childhood stakeholders to enhance those standards by using research to revise and update each standard. In addition to the original six content areas, a seventh area, social studies, was added to describe the role of families, communities, and culture in children's lives. Other highlighted revisions included aligning IELS and the kindergarten to 12th grade Iowa Core and adding the role of home language to the standards.

The Council and partners formally adopted the revised IELS in January 2013. Since approval of the standards, organizations representing early learning, family support, health and mental health, and nutrition have been referring to the standards when developing policies and services. Iowa's professional development system created an implementation plan for the standards. IELS also are aligned with the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, the *Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards*, and the *Iowa Common Core* with the concurrence of the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$705,525
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$869,802
- Amount Expended: \$857,586
- Percent of Funds Expended: 98.60%

KANSAS

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Council Website: <http://www.kschildrenscabinet.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Since 2005, the Early Learning Coordinating Council (ELCC) has provided leadership and guidance for the Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (KECCS) Plan. In 2010, Governor Mark Parkinson designated the ELCC as the lead on the early childhood State Advisory Council and renamed it The Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). ECAC is housed in the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund office.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Kansas met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

KANSAS

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council performed a targeted early education study in 2010 to assess the affordability, quality, and availability of care. Study findings are summarized below:

- Families need help finding high-quality child care.
- Families and communities must be educated about quality child care.
- The early childhood workforce needs additional professional development.

The Council also analyzed 8 years of survey data representing 23 agencies to assess early childhood collaboration activities. This analysis allowed the Council to begin the first steps to align early childhood program outcomes and common measures. As a result, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs have selected common measures across all home visiting programs.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers to coordination and collaboration among federal and state early childhood programs. The Council collaborated with state staff and leaders and contributed to the KECCS Plan, the state's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan, the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) efforts, and the Kansas Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) initiative. The Council also supported initiative development, local systems planning, and policy recommendations on early childhood systems.

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):** The Council actively participated in state-level coordination meetings for MIECHV programming on the topics of professional development, direct services, and community resources targeted to high needs.

KANSAS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The Council provided continuing support to local systems planning and policy recommendations. The Council is the lead for the Kansas ECCS Plan.
- **Project LAUNCH:** Project LAUNCH, a grant program of the federal government, seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. ECAC is also the state council for the Kansas Project LAUNCH initiative. The lead Project LAUNCH agency is a member of both the ECAC and the State Agency Early Childhood Team.

State and Local Level

- **Children's Initiative Fund (CIF):** In 1999, the Kansas Legislature created the CIF to support programs promoting the health and welfare of Kansas children. Historically, the CIF, which is funded by tobacco settlement dollars, supported programs and services with a focus on early childhood, health, mental health, and child welfare. The Council advised the Governor and legislature regarding dedicating CIF dollars to the following programs: 6 by 6: Ready to Read literacy program; Child Care Assistance; Early Childhood Block Grant programs; Early Head Start program; Healthy Start Home Visitor Services; Newborn Screening services; Parents as Teachers; the state's pre-kindergarten program; Early Steps to School Success; Child Care Quality Initiatives; the Children's Mental Health Initiative; the Family Preservation Initiative; smoking prevention; autism services; KIDS Network Grant program; and the Newborn Hearing Aid Loaner Program.
- **Kansas Early Childhood Forums:** The Council supported early childhood stakeholders by hosting stakeholder meetings, workgroups, partnerships, and communications among state and local early childhood leaders and program staff. In 2010, early childhood leaders consolidated two early childhood meetings, the KECCS stakeholder meeting and the Child Care Advisory Quarterly Meeting, to form the Kansas Early Childhood Forum. Coordination and collaboration of the state's early childhood partners reduced meeting costs and maximized resources to support children and families across the following areas: health, mental health, early care and education, parent education, and family referral services.

Participation of Children

The Council supported the development and implementation of several projects that increased the participation of children in early care and education programs.

- **Public Awareness Campaign:** The Council supported the Text4Baby campaign to promote maternal and child health. Participants received free text messages each week, timed to due dates of the child's birth, with information on topics such as immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, smoking and alcohol, oral health, and safe sleep. The Council provided technical assistance to counties implementing Text4Baby and the number of new subscribers per month more than doubled. Kansas was the leader in the weekly enrollment contest held for medium-sized states five times, was recognized for the highest number of new partnerships for 4 weeks, and ranked ninth in the nation for total number of subscribers in 2013.

KANSAS

Participation of Children (continued)

- **High-Risk Families:** The Council supported stakeholder meetings to discuss concerns about infants, toddlers, and their families enrolled in the child welfare system. Focused efforts to meet early care and education needs of high-risk families combined with improvements to local systems increased the participation of Kansas children in high-quality early care and education services.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

In 2011, the Council partnered with early childhood stakeholders throughout the state to form the School Readiness Data Task Force. The group reviewed and updated the state's school readiness framework, goals, and indicators to reflect research and lessons learned during the previous 10 years. The Task Force identified and mapped measureable data elements to assess the status of family, school, community, and child readiness. Early childhood data also was mapped against national common data elements.

The Council supported the development of web-based applications to allow inclusion of early childhood program data in the K–20 longitudinal data system. The web-based applications collect data on child skill levels, classroom and home visiting practices, and home practices.

The Council identified the greatest needs for completing a unified data system:

- **Data Governance and Collaboration:** Integrating data systems across agencies and programs requires a governing structure and agency support with tools such as memoranda of understanding and data sharing agreements.
 - **Common Data Elements:** The Council's efforts to create a school readiness framework for measuring child outcomes created a foundation for integrating data across systems. Common data elements and coordination are important to data integration.
 - **Resources:** Integrating data systems requires extensive technical knowledge and the capacity to navigate data governance requirements. Increased personnel, time, and resources are necessary to accomplish data integration goals and to support coordination and technical requirements. This is particularly true for programs outside of the state agency system such as nonprofit home visiting programs and child care centers.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council prioritized key areas needed to advance early childhood professional development and higher education. The group identified the following priorities:

- Design a clear set of outcomes for the early childhood workforce.
- Ensure a career lattice that allows students to enter the system at different levels.

KANSAS

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

- Work with the Board of Regents to make content classes transferable. Ensure that community college courses transfer and classes are aligned to the state's early learning standards. This entails developing transferable competency-based courses.
 - Ensure early childhood programs are aware of the training opportunities available in the state.
 - Discuss articulation agreements with universities and community colleges.
 - Hold local-level meetings with universities and community colleges to facilitate relationship building.
 - Develop assessments to determine if students have the required competencies. Provide data to demonstrate that students have competencies based on assessments.
-

Early Learning Standards

The Council supported the 2013 revision of the *Kansas Early Learning Guidelines and Standards*. These research-based standards provide structure across early childhood settings.

The Council also supported the development of the Kansas Early Learning Inventory (KELI) to ensure validity and reliability testing of the kindergarten readiness inventory. The Council worked with the State Department of Education and assessment experts from the Achievement and Assessment Institute at the University of Kansas to create a comprehensive set of standards. This project aligned KELI with the revised *Early Learning Standards* and *Common Core Standards* for kindergarteners.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

The Council took the following steps:

- **Home Visiting:** Funded increased capacity and delivery of home visiting services across the state, particularly in high-need, high-risk communities. The Council also sponsored training, professional development, and efforts to measure child outcomes.
- **Health:** Worked with public health and the medical community to encourage the use of developmental screenings and implemented maternal depression screening training. The Council also initiated the statewide developmental screening initiative funded through the Kansas ECCS.
- **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** Sponsored the Kansas Parent Leadership Conference to address strengthening families, fatherhood, advocacy, special needs, and early childhood education.
- **Tribal:** Worked with the Potawatomie Indian Reservation to review culturally sensitive early childhood mental health evidence-based practices applicable to the tribal population.

KANSAS

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$811,043
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$975,320
- Amount Expended: \$975,320
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

KENTUCKY

Council Name: Kentucky Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Office of the Governor

Council Website: <http://kidsnow.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2010, Governor Steve Beshear signed an executive order to reorganize the existing Early Childhood Development Authority (ECDA) to meet the requirements of P.L. 110-134, the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. ECDA was renamed the Kentucky Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Council continued ECDA's role of administering state tobacco settlement funds for early childhood programs. This initiative is called KIDS (Kentucky Invests in Developing Success) NOW.

ECDA was housed in the Kentucky Department of Education. The Council is located in the Office of the Governor and has authority to work across Kentucky state agencies to promote the state's early childhood policy agenda.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Kentucky met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state

KENTUCKY

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council examined a number of early childhood factors during a needs assessment. In addition to examining demographic and income data, Kentucky looked at the quality and availability of slots for child care, Head Start, and public preschool. The state also examined the number of children in home visiting programs and the number of credentialed early childhood providers.

The Council learned a great deal about the more than quarter million young children in the state. Of those children, 9.5 percent lived in poverty. Of those living in poverty, 52.7 percent were 200 percent below the poverty line. Approximately 91 percent of the children were receiving benefits from the Child Care Assistance Program, and the majority of those received care from licensed centers.

In licensed centers, the needs assessment determined that 54 percent were enrolled in programs with Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) STAR ratings. These ratings indicate the quality of the early childhood personnel, curriculum, child-to-caregiver ratio, and other quality characteristics of the facility. The Council determined that there is a dire need for higher-quality childhood care.

The needs assessment spurred the Council to take action to strengthen the state's QRIS. Kentucky subsequently developed an improvement plan to make participation in QRIS STARS mandatory for all publicly funded child care programs. This effort to improve quality and strengthen the STARS rating system supported Kentucky's successful Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant application.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council fostered significant collaboration among early childhood systems. Due to Council efforts, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood was established by statute. The Council collaborated with the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF); the Maternal, Infant, and Early

KENTUCKY

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV); the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO); Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems; Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health); the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Parts B and C, Section 619; and programs at the state and local level.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: Kentucky was one of six states funded in 2013 by the RTT-ELC grant. The Council observed that work completed with SAC grant funds was critical to building the foundation for the state's RTT-ELC grant application. Because the Council's work using SAC funds aligned closely with the goals of the RTT-ELC, the Council was able to use the RTT-ELC grant to propose a solid plan to improve the quality of Kentucky's early childhood system.

State and Local Level

- ***Local Advisory Councils***: Kentucky increased engagement and collaboration at the community level through the use of Community Early Childhood Councils (local councils). These councils coordinate early childhood efforts on the local level, increase the capacity of these efforts, and effectively engage parents and families. The state Council provided direct funding to the local councils resulting in a significant increase in local council engagement. Only 69 out of 120 counties had Council involvement in 2012. The number jumped to 109 counties in 2013, or about 91 percent of counties in the state.
- ***Strengthening Families Framework***: Kentucky adopted the Strengthening Families Framework, a family engagement strategy originally developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The Framework is intended to eliminate abuse and neglect experienced by children. To implement the Framework, the Council provided support and services to parents, fostered childhood development, and raised the visibility of maltreatment's early warning signs. The Council encouraged all of the state's major early childhood programs to adopt and institute the Framework.
- ***United Way's Success by Six***: Local nonprofits supported the Council's efforts to increase community and stakeholder engagement. The Council joined Success by Six, a United Way program, which builds coalitions and increases access, awareness, and advocacy for the early childhood arena. This cooperation led to better educator training, improved resources for parents, and use of the Coaching to Mentoring Program.
- ***Toyota bornlearning® Academy***: The business community increased collaboration and coordination in Kentucky. The Council collaborated with Toyota to make the Toyota bornlearning® Academy available to parents. The program allowed Kentucky parents to attend workshops about school readiness.

KENTUCKY

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council made significant strides in developing a unified data system as a result of SAC grant funding and planned further improvements using funds from the RTT-ELC.

- **Early Childhood Data Profiles:** The Council expanded the scope beyond the required needs assessment and collected data by income, demography, number and quality rating of child care spaces, and providers' professional development in every county in the state. These data, disseminated widely, allowed stakeholders in the child care field, parents, and families to better understand each county's needs.
 - **Unified Data System Development:** The Council provided funds for the development of the P-20 Data Collaborative, a system designed to track children from early childhood to college and beyond. The Council also identified the need for stable funding, as well as the need to integrate more data points, specifically from home visiting and other areas of the early childhood system. Kentucky also identified the need to integrate preschool data into the early childhood professional development registry.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Statewide Professional Development and Career Ladder: The Council discovered that it was important to address serious system gaps in the existing early childhood professional development system. The Council supported the improvement of the state's Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework and required workforce registry enrollment for all child care providers.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:** In 2012, the Council assisted the state in piloting a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) in 109 volunteer school districts. The assessment is aligned with both Kentucky's School Readiness Definition and *Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards*, which cover children from birth to 5. It screens for readiness in five areas of development: academic and cognitive, language, physical, self-help, and social and emotional. By 2013, Kentucky had adopted KEA universally. Kentucky intends to use the assessment data for planning.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,565,631
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,729,908
- Amount Expended: \$1,729,908
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

LOUISIANA

Council Name: BrightStart Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Children and Family Services

Council Website: <http://www.brightstartla.org>

State Advisory Council 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Since 2004, BrightStart has carried out the state's early childhood comprehensive systems planning effort, supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Maternal and Child Health Bureau. A 2008 legislative concurrent resolution required all Louisiana state agencies serving young children to participate in BrightStart. In 2010, Governor Bobby Jindal designated BrightStart as Louisiana's early childhood State Advisory Council to meet the requirements of P.L. 110-134, the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. This expanded the existing BrightStart steering committee, and it was renamed the BrightStart Advisory Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Louisiana met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services

LOUISIANA

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In January 2013, the Council supported the early childhood risk and reach needs assessment. The *Risk and Reach Report* included two components:

- **Risk:** The assessment collected data on economic, health, and education risks. Within those categories, there were 11 unique indicators for measuring early childhood (birth to 5) high risk factors. For example, there were indicators for the percent of children in poverty, the infant mortality rate, uninsured children, children with low pre-literacy skills measured at kindergarten entry, and children participating in care and education programs.
- **Reach:** The assessment measured 12 publicly funded early childhood programs to determine the slots available by parish (county) and to evaluate the percentage of eligible children using services.

The *Risk and Reach Report* facilitated a better understanding of the location and extent of need and currently available services and programs. The findings were included on maps that displayed the status of early childhood risk factors and the programmatic supports available to offset the risks. The Council prepared additional data-mapped areas using the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a population-based measurement that tracks outcomes at the community and neighborhood level. EDI identifies the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable in the following categories: physical and emotional health, social competence, language and cognitive development, and communication and knowledge. EDI compares this information across communities by school, neighborhood, city, county, and ZIP code, and uses census data.

LOUISIANA

Coordination and Collaboration

To align work efforts, the Council coordinated and collaborated with several partners supporting federal, state, and locally funded early childhood programs.

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):** The Council collaborated with MIECHV staff to inform the development of projects on child assessments, longitudinal data systems, and workforce development. It developed a structure to ensure MIECHV develops within the context of the broader early childhood system and not as a standalone program. This resulted in the development of a plan to align reporting and investigation processes on child maltreatment. The Council also shared information on child fatality reviews and efforts to prevent sudden unexpected infant death and injury.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The Council collaborated with CCDF on a significant number of jointly aligned goals, such as professional development, a Quality Rating and Improvement System, data collection, and system development.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** When the Council received the SAC grant, it was serving as the ECCS Council. The Council continued to promote ECCS priorities on social and emotional well-being and to focus on health issues. Several evidence-based infant mental health training classes were offered to clinicians to increase capacity and service access.
- **Part C and Part B, Section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** An Inclusion Workgroup advises and supports leadership teams to ensure that children with disabilities are offered service access, support, and participation. A two-part Coaching for Inclusion series of professional development workshops offered in Baton Rouge and Lafayette, Louisiana, were filled and had waiting lists.

State and Local Level

- **Early Childhood Education (Act 3):** In 2012, Act 3, known as the Early Childhood Education Act, was signed into law. The statute required establishing a statewide, integrated early-childhood care and education network. The network was required to establish uniform standards of readiness for kindergarten and to align all early childhood program standards for quality early childhood education. The Council took the first steps toward alignment beginning with pre-kindergarten classes in pilot programs.
- **Community Network Pilot (CNP):** The Early Childhood Education Act mandated the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to create the network referenced above. To begin the implementation, 13 communities became early childhood education CNPs.

LOUISIANA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Diverse Delivery of Pre-Kindergarten:** For 3 years, the BrightStart Diverse Delivery project of the Council piloted high-quality pre-kindergarten classrooms that modeled funding and programmatic collaborations between early childhood centers and schools using multiple funding streams. The Diverse Delivery model provided more high-quality early childhood choices, avoided costly building and renovations, and promoted quality and accountability across early childhood settings.
-

Participation of Children

The Council developed and implemented several programs and projects to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs. This included outreach to underrepresented and special populations. For example, the CNPs established partnerships with school districts, early learning centers, and early childhood programs to provide children with quality early childhood services. The CNPs have successfully increased participation during the pilot period, which continues through fall 2015. They will continue this work through community outreach, identifying capacity and gaps, and using data to enhance coordination.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council prioritized data system building as an essential part of several projects. Both the *Risk and Reach Report* and EDI are examples of the Council's efforts to identify critical early childhood statistics and map them to a long-term response strategy. These models provided decision makers with evidence-based data to create local approaches for improving and building quality early childhood systems.

The Council also developed a data governance plan to unify data systems among early childhood programs and service providers and to improve interagency data sharing. The plan prioritized integrating specific data systems and common elements into a redesigned comprehensive early childhood system. A data manager was funded to create a cross-departmental team to research issues, review legal considerations, document existing systems, and begin implementation of the system.

The Council identified the current needs to continue implementation efforts:

- **Build a Central System:** The initial project plan called for the Department of Children and Family Services CCDF to be the central point of integration. When CCDF was assigned to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), additional analysis was required to determine if and how to use the current system.

LOUISIANA

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- **Ensure Core Alignment:** The transition of CCDF to LDOE requires significant data system alignment that was not part of the original design. Continued focus on the development of birth-to-12 state longitudinal data systems can proceed while completing this alignment and incorporating the state's core systems.
 - **Obtain Funding:** Funding must be identified to complete the full implementation of the planned unified data system.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council supported professional development efforts:

- **Professional Development Alignment:** The Council partnered with LDOE and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to fulfill the mandated interagency coordination requirements of the 2012 Louisiana Early Childhood Education Act and to enhance the state's professional development system. The Council's Professional Development Committee created a 14-member Early Childhood Professional Learning and Matriculation Task Force in 2012. The task force developed a document, *Overview of Path Chart of Early Childhood Education Professionals (Birth through Kindergarten)*, that identified paths for early childhood professionals to expand knowledge, skills, and credentials.

The task force also developed the *Overview of Program Alignment Process for Early Childhood (Birth through Kindergarten) Professional Development, Certificate, and Degrees* document. This resource identified a process for private trainers, 2-year colleges, universities, and private providers to create educational opportunities for early childhood educators to build knowledge and skills while pursuing higher-level certificates and degrees.

The two documents were submitted to the LDOE and Louisiana BESE and incorporated into state plans to address the 2012 Louisiana Early Childhood Education Act. To respond to the recommendations, a 52-member BrightStart Birth to Kindergarten Pathway Workgroup was formed. The group included representatives from 2-year colleges, 4-year colleges, districts, independent trainers, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, Head Start and Early Head Start, and early childhood state agencies, as well as advocates. The workgroup focused on establishing career paths for early childhood professionals that were aligned with state and national early childhood education standards for children and educators. The resulting report, *Birth to Kindergarten Pathways*, completed in August 2013, included detailed recommendations on course content and a crosswalk aligned to *Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* (WKC) and other standards. The report suggested timelines and next steps for course adoption and project implementation.

LOUISIANA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

- **Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework:** In August of 2013, the Council completed the development of the WKC. This project aligned higher education coursework and competencies to *Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning & Development Standards*. A subcommittee used the draft of the WKC to outline a new certification for birth-to-5 educators, which is articulated across a large number of state institutions of higher education offering 2- and 4-year certifications. The same courses are offered at all institutions, so an articulation agreement was unnecessary. The certification is part of the professional development registry, Louisiana Pathways, and used by trainers when developing workshops.
 - **Compensation Parity:** The Council's Professional Development Committee engaged the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance to create the *Early Care & Education Compensation and Policy Options for Louisiana*. In Louisiana, the median turnover rate for lead teachers is about 33 percent; it is 50 percent for assistant teachers. The report reviewed wages, the effect of the School Readiness Tax Credits, and employee benefits. Based on the draft recommendations for compensation parity, the Professional Development Committee engaged a national expert. That expert reviewed the role of revenues and cost recovery in compensation strategy in Louisiana and other states and found that addressing compensation parity depends on helping market-based early childhood education programs increase revenue and taking steps to ensure that revenues are used to increase the wages and benefits of qualified staff.
 - **Technical Assistance Professionals Policy:** The Council led the development of the *Technical Assistance Professionals Report* prepared by representatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The report focused on policy development for technical assistance providers (TAPs) in the Louisiana early childhood professional development system. It outlined pathways for TAPs and apprentice TAPs, suggested trainings and resources for technical assistance systems, and outlined a pathway for addressing TAP policies.
-

Early Learning Standards

The Council participated in the development of the infant and toddler sections of the new *Early Learning Standards* completed by the Louisiana Department of Education in the spring of 2013. The standards are presented in one document and cover birth through 5 years. They are aligned with Louisiana's kindergarten standards, *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. The Council workgroup completed a draft of the *Early Learning Standards Implementation Guide* to direct the integration of the standards into practice.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** The Council funded a position to develop and select a child assessment tool to be used in the QRIS and supported an open forum for discussing revisions to the current QRIS.

LOUISIANA

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** The Louisiana Parenting Education Network (LAPEN) project is intended to increase the number of practitioners trained to use evidence-based curricula. LAPEN will use the information to create a registry, including a directory of prepared educators, and will provide data on teaching methods in use statewide. In 2011, the State legislature requested that the Council study the merits of Triple P—Positive Parenting and possible plans for expansion. Triple P gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them confidently manage their children’s behavior; prevent problems; and build strong, healthy relationships. In January 2012, the Council completed a report recommending expansion and detailing costs and challenges. LAPEN created a customized Triple P database making Louisiana’s data available nationally and internationally, allowing access to the data statewide, and featuring additional assessment and implementation information.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$2,000,023
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$2,164,300
- Amount Expended: \$1,950,670
- Percent of Funds Expended: 90.13%

MAINE

Council Name: Children’s Growth Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Health and Human Services

Council Website: <http://www.maineecgc.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 31–40

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

The Maine Children’s Growth Council was created by statute in 2008 and is the successor to the Maine Task Force on Early Childhood. In 2010, Governor John Baldacci designated the Children’s Growth Council as the Statewide Advisory Council to meet the requirements of the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. The Council also carries out the federally funded Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) planning efforts and implements the state’s Invest Early in Maine plan.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Maine met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

MAINE

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council's latest needs assessment was modeled after the 2011 assessment report. It updates the information in the 2011 report on readiness factors in families, communities, schools, and early care and education. The *2012 School Readiness Report* found the progress of children is affected by growing poverty rates. The Council developed the following recommendations:

- Require training in brain development and toxic stress for all child protective workers.
 - Revise tax and economic policies to enable families to have sufficient income to support their children.
 - Encourage businesses to support family and medical leave by offering tax credits for small businesses that provide at least 3 days of paid leave.
 - Support and expand initiatives that enable families to invest in themselves and their children's development.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities and barriers that exist in coordinating and collaborating among state agencies and departments.

Federal Level

- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The Children's Growth Council coordinates the efforts of the State Advisory Council and ECCS and ensures that early childhood efforts are collaborative. The State Advisory Council was instrumental in developing and submitting the most recent ECCS grant proposal. The Council secured funding to move forward to build an early childhood system.

MAINE

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- **Maine Early Learning Investment Group (MELIG):** Council funding supported the Communications Committee for the education of business leaders about brain architecture, early childhood investment, and public policy. Leadership from a former Maine attorney general and the Council’s communications consultant resulted in recruiting 10 business leaders and corporate presidents as MELIG members. MELIG made a commitment to raise \$10 million in private funds for the Elevate Maine initiative to improve quality and expand access for early care and education for targeted low-income children from birth to 3 years old. The initiative modeled and evaluated a comprehensive, coordinated system at the local level for infants and toddlers and their parents. It was spearheaded by Educare Maine in collaboration with Maine Families Home Visiting and other state and local support services. Family engagement is a significant component of the initiative.
 - **Early Childhood Funders Group (ECFG):** The ECFG represents the majority of Maine’s local private and corporate foundations who provide a coordinated private funding network organized by Council efforts. The members included leaders of two Maine-focused foundations, the Bingham Program and the Sam L. Cohen Foundation. The leaders of these two foundations joined the Council’s United Way leaders to form the ECFG. The ECFG meets regularly to coordinate their funding of programs for infants and toddlers. In the past 3 years, ECFG raised \$3.5 million.
-

Participation of Children

The Council supported the development and implementation of several projects to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including children who are in low-income families or are part of special populations. The areas of support that helped to increase participation included the following:

- **Public and Private Partnerships**
 - » Working with partner organizations that foster business leader support and engaging nontraditional voices for early childhood investment.
 - » Coordinating, planning, advocacy, and communications involving the MELIG, the Maine Development Foundation, Educate Maine, America’s Edge, Mission: Readiness, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids in Maine, the Maine Children’s Alliance, and the Maine ECFG.
- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** Lending support to improving the QRIS, increasing parent awareness, and improving provider access to training and technical assistance to increase quality levels.

MAINE

Participation of Children (continued)

- **Early Learning Guidelines:** Supporting the work of agency partners in the revision of the *Maine Early Learning Guidelines* so stakeholders from all sectors of early childhood understand, support, and implement the guidelines. The guidelines promote greater collaboration and consistency across systems by aligning practices in all early childhood settings including public pre-kindergarten programs.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council reviewed previous early childhood systems, including Maine's professional development registry, to identify opportunities and barriers to integration efforts. The Council identified two primary needs for developing an integrated data system: funding and establishing common algorithms to query multiple data systems.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Although the Council supported professional development efforts, due to competing priorities in other early childhood areas, it did not fund this area.

Early Learning Standards

Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers were adopted by the Maine Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Work is continuing on developing standards based on the guidelines as a next step.

The Three to Five Early Learning Guidelines were revised and completed in 2005. The Council supported aligning these guidelines across all early childhood programs.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

Home Visiting: The ECFG and Maine's John T. Gorman Foundation, both Council partners, awarded the United Way of Mid Coast Maine a \$300,000 expansion grant for home visiting.

Infants and Toddlers:

- The Council's Health Accountability team spearheaded coordination and communication activities about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that gained national recognition and resulted in the formation of the Maine Resilience Building Network. This successful statewide network continues educational activities about ACEs, supports community groups focused on resilience, and shares resources. It utilizes a Collective Impact approach to make a difference. Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. The group also builds on the strengths of individual projects to generate interest and increase understanding.

MAINE

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

The Council also supported Infant-Toddler Awareness Day at the state capital and presented two 30 second videos it had produced: *You See/We See* and *Building Brain Architecture*, to increase policymakers' understanding of brain development. The MELIG, one of the Council's partners, presented *Paradigm Shift—Supporting Maine's Future Workforce Today*.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$663,543
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.89%

MARYLAND

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: State Department of Education

Council Website: http://www.msde.maryland.gov/MSDE/divisions/child_care/planning.html

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 36

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2005, the Maryland State Department of Education established the Division of Early Childhood Development to administer all publicly funded early childhood programs, including child care. In 2008, Governor Martin O'Malley formed the Maryland Early Childhood Advisory Council by executive order to replace prior planning bodies. The Council met the requirements of the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. In 2011, the Council supported the development of Maryland's successful Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Maryland met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

MARYLAND

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council conducted two early childhood needs assessments during the course of the SAC grant. It also used findings from the 2010 Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) needs assessment and the 2012–2013 Maryland Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) needs assessment report to evaluate the state of early childhood. The MIECHV assessment focused on 15 indicators that put children and families at higher risk, such as infant mortality, premature birth, unemployment, poverty, and crime rates. Data points were used to determine the communities of highest risk and to guide decisions about the allocation of resources. The HSSCO's needs assessment focused on the levels of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration that existed in 11 key activity areas in Head Start, including health services, services for the homeless, welfare, child care, and services for children with disabilities.

The MIECHV needs assessment resulted in expanding access to evidence-based home visiting programs in jurisdictions determined to be most at risk and in greatest need of services. The proposal also incorporated a plan to integrate home visiting services into a sustainable system of early care and education at both the state and local level.

The HSSCO needs assessment identified 21 improvement objectives that were incorporated into the state Head Start strategic plan. The top recommendations related closely to the availability of high-quality care:

- Promote improved opportunities for working parents to have access to child care services that meet their needs, including full-day early care and education.
- Encourage Head Start and child care programs to share information regarding roles, resources, and children, including child-specific data.

MARYLAND

Coordination and Collaboration

Maryland developed a robust, aligned early childhood system after passage of early childhood legislation in 2005. The Maryland Division of Early Childhood Development within the State Department of Education supports child care licensing, subsidies, and contracts for resource and referral and family support centers. The Council continued alignment efforts by joining the Governor's Maryland Forward Forum on Early Childhood Development and Education started in 2011.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: Maryland was one of the first nine states awarded an RTT-ELC grant. The Council's work created a strong foundation for the RTT-ELC proposal and helped the state win the grant.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The needs assessment conducted as part of the MIECHV informed the work of the Council. This work led the Council to coordinate with the Home Visiting Consortium to align the home visiting models within local jurisdictions with other family and early childhood services statewide and to strengthen and coordinate services.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Council established a task force to identify improved case management practices and strategies for changing eligibility requirements for Maryland's child care subsidy program. The task force produced a set of final recommendations for the Governor's consideration. The Council also worked with the Maryland Office of Child Care within the State Department of Education to promote CCDF College Scholarships for the early care and education professional community.
- ***Part B, Section 619, and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act***: The Division of Early Childhood Development and the Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services facilitated and increased coordination with mental health consultants. They participated in a library system partnership to provide Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports training to early care and education providers serving children identified with a developmental disability. The Council supported efforts to pilot a mentoring project on inclusion and to develop and implement an online system of training modules, data collection methods, and analyses for training in SEFEL that interfaced with Maryland's State Longitudinal Data System and Early Childhood Data Warehouse. The Maryland Early Childhood Gateway web portal was designed as a one-stop shop on resources and services for providers and families with children with disabilities from birth through age 5.

State and Local Level

- ***Maryland's Children's Health Program (MCHP)***: A task force to improve access to services for children and families on MCHP made recommendations to increase the number of medical providers and dentists who accept this insurance.
- ***Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECACs)***: The Council provided planning grants for 24 LECACs in Maryland counties and Baltimore City. The local councils served as a platform and

MARYLAND

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

means for delivering statewide early childhood reform. They were designed to utilize local resources to meet the unique demographic needs for each community. The Council also provided technical assistance to LECACs to identify high-risk populations and strategies to improve school readiness in local communities. In February 2012, the Annie E. Casey Foundation joined the partnership to coordinate implementation and provide leadership training to facilitate the LECACs' understanding of results-based accountability and results-based facilitation.

- **Maryland Family Engagement Initiative:** The Council created the Family Engagement Coalition to develop Maryland-specific strategies based on the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. The Maryland Family Engagement Framework was widely distributed to many service providers and LECACs. The Council also established Community Cafés to encourage family engagement and advocacy for children's learning and collected information about the Family Engagement Initiative to inform further work.
- **Judy Centers:** The Council worked with local early childhood programs, called Judy Centers, which are linked to public elementary schools. The centers offer support and direct families to quality programs in services in early care and education, health, adult education, and family support and intervention. Judy Centers also provided support to families and children transitioning from early care and education programs into school-based programs. They sponsor family night events, back to school events, and summer school readiness camps, and they provide information packets for families. Several Head Start programs now have formal agreements with local school systems and Judy Centers to ensure joint planning and professional development, transition services, curriculum coordination, and family engagement.

Participation of Children

The Council developed and implemented several strategies to increase the participation of children in high-quality care and education programs, including children at risk and in underrepresented communities:

- **Provide Inclusion Support:** The Council and partner agencies provided training and technical assistance to early childhood educators in instructional practices, appropriate environments, and family engagement. This assistance supported enrolling and maintaining the participation of children with behavioral and mental health needs.
- **Expand Voucher Eligibility:** To increase the number of children participating in quality care centers and programs, the Council worked on lifting the freeze on vouchers for families eligible for subsidized child care.
- **Incorporate Literacy Tools:** The Council supported the Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment through Stories (VIOLETS) Project initiative. The VIOLETS initiative encourages development of early reading and language skills and supports the linguistic needs of English language learners. The Council provided train-the-trainer instruction to coaches in the

MARYLAND

Participation of Children (continued)

VIOLETS curriculum for expanded implementation in 30 classrooms. The Council also supported outreach activities such as learning parties and hands-on interactive parent and child events to promote VIOLETS and school readiness.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council developed recommendations to implement a unified data system:

- **Staffing:** Develop fiscal and technical staff resources to maintain and support the early childhood data warehouse beyond the RTT-ELC grant period.
 - **System Integration:** Complete a full integration of the early childhood data warehouse within the P–12 system to facilitate longitudinal data collection and analysis.
 - **Automated Data Sharing:** Establish an automated data-exchange process or system to interface with the early childhood data warehouse and other child-serving departments. This will enable routine sharing of child-level data for policy and research.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council established a partnership between the early childhood community and higher education to develop a for-credit SEFEL college course. This work supported RTT-ELC efforts to enhance the Maryland Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

In 2013, the Council completed a revision to the Maryland Model for School Readiness training to ensure alignment with the *Common Core* curriculum. Additional work in this area is underway as part of the state's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

Early Learning Standards

Maryland has several early learning standards for children from birth through 5 years of age. To align standards, the state created *Working Off the Same Page: Aligning Maryland's Early Learning Standards to Promote a Common Set of Expectations for Children Across All Early Childhood Programs*. Maryland's *Infant-Toddler Early Learning Guidelines* were vertically aligned with the *Maryland Model for School Readiness* standards, the Pre-K Common Core Standards for early language arts and mathematics, and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*.

The project connected each set of standards to inform the others and provided comprehensive details not contained in any one set. The document allows practitioners to better understand overlapping standards and learning and development in children from birth through 5 years.

The *Maryland Model for School Readiness* (MMSR) standards for English language arts and mathematics were replaced with a new set of standards, the *Maryland Prekindergarten Common Core State Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Mathematics*. The remaining MMSR standards were aligned with Healthy Beginnings (3-year-old standards) and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning*

MARYLAND

Early Learning Standards (continued)

Framework. The Council helped distribute the Healthy Beginnings standards throughout the state. Through the RTT-ELC grant, *Ready 4 Kindergarten* will replace MMSR. Standards will be changed to include Social Foundations, which provides an approach to the social foundations of learning that includes social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and executive function.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Home Visiting:** The Council helped create a home visiting infrastructure to serve Maryland children from birth to 3 years. It supported the Joint Chairman’s Report on Home Visiting in Maryland, which recommended a number of coordination areas for the state’s Home Visiting programs including training, grant writing, reporting, and data collection.
- **Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:** The Council is overseeing implementation of RTT-ELC strategies and supports Maryland EXCELS, a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System for early care and education programs. One way the Council has done this is through its work with the RTT-ELC grant, which enabled the state to implement Breakthrough Centers to support early childhood programs that participated in EXCELS. As part of the Breakthrough Center project, child care programs are improving their quality and developing linkages with public schools, particularly in the area of transitioning preschoolers to kindergarten.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$895,886
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,060,163
- Amount Expended: \$1,060,163
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

MARYLAND SUCCESS STORY

Over the course of a year, a Healthy Families Support Worker (FSW) made weekly visits to a homeless mother and her newborn to assist the mother in bonding with her child and reading the baby’s cues. Due in part to the FSW’s consistent support, the mother fully attached to her baby. The mother now places a high value on cognitive development. She diligently reads to her child and wants her baby to be smart and develop on target. Since December 2012, the mother has maintained stable housing and has attended monthly parenting groups. She adheres to the pediatric well-baby visit schedule and has started to consider the future. Now she is on the waiting list for Head Start. She hopes to find employment and enroll in a local community college’s dental hygienist program.

MASSACHUSETTS

Council Name: State Advisory Council Board on Early Education and Care

Designated State Agency: Department of Early Education and Care

Council Website: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In March 2010, Governor Deval Patrick designated the Board of Early Education and Care as the State Advisory Council. The Council guides and supervises the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), a state agency established in 2005 to oversee all early education and care programs in the state.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Massachusetts met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

MASSACHUSETTS

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council conducted two surveys to determine the quality and availability of early childhood care and education and to assess and prioritize gaps and needs:

- **The Family Survey:** This 2012 survey provided information that helped the Council gain a better understanding of the existing needs of children and families statewide. It reviewed traditional early childhood care and education programs and nontraditional outside programs and services.
- **The Educator Survey:** This workforce study assessed the stability of the workforce, the perception of quality, the level of education attained, and the degree of preparation of the workforce to provide effective education for all children.

The Council made the following recommendations to address key survey findings:

- **Family Engagement:** Expand outreach and engagement to educate families and communities about high-quality care and how it relates to child development and school achievement.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Modify early education and care policies to engage families that do not use formal early care and education programs. Revise materials to reflect the current population, and ensure that families have access to the translated materials that explain available early education programs, literacy initiatives, and other programs and services for early learners.
- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in the Workforce:** Expand initiatives to assist educators in understanding the importance of the state's QRIS standards.

MASSACHUSETTS

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council promoted coordination and collaboration within federal, state, and local programs and agencies.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: SAC funding in Massachusetts was invested in several RTT-ELC projects: the post-master's certificate in early education research, policy, and leadership; the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS); higher education for English language learners; partnership with the Department of Higher Education; birth-to-3 partnerships; and the Regional Readiness Center's work with the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: Funds supported the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees' efforts to locate hard-to-reach children and provide them with learning opportunities. In 2012, four CFCE programs located in Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative communities were funded. Those awardees partnered with the Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative in situations when the CFCE grant area included one of the 17 home visiting communities.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Council's system-building work aligned with the EEC, the CCDF lead agency in Massachusetts. The work is overseen by an 11-member board appointed by the Governor. The EEC Board also serves as the State Advisory Council and meets monthly to decide high-level policy issues and discuss issues affecting CCDF-funded programs and services. The broad membership and regular meeting schedule support ongoing consultation and coordination with EEC's stakeholders and partner agencies. Quarterly meetings focus on early childhood alignment.
- ***Part B, Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part B)***: One strategic planning effort for system building was a Part B grant to develop and deliver enhanced support for family and community engagement and consumer resources and information. Grant funds assisted communities in implementing Child-Find activities and promoting preschool screenings. Strategic planning efforts also examined transitions between early intervention programs, public preschools, and other early education and care settings for the purpose of improving collaboration and communication. When developed, the ECIS data warehouse will integrate data with the Early Warning Indicator System-Edwin Analytics, to facilitate longitudinal analysis of special education from birth through college.

State and Local Level

- ***Taunton Early Education Childhood Forum (TEC-Forum)***: The Council funded the development of the TEC-Forum to support open communication between providers and educators in the community. The TEC-Forum sustains and continues work initiated through SAC funds.

MASSACHUSETTS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Resource Guides:** The Council funded Barnstable Public Schools to support the development of a community-based resource guide for use in child care centers that include the preschool and kindergarten Common Core Standards-based report card.
-

Participation of Children

Council priority areas supported EEC's goal to build statewide high-quality early education and care systems. SAC funding strengthened the development and implementation of systems to ensure that all children received quality early education in the Commonwealth as reported in this profile.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

In 2012, the Council completed the ECIS project and launched a data visualization website for public access. This website includes static images that represent early childhood programming, child statistics, and available resources across Massachusetts. The Council collected data to identify state resources, core indicators, and child development progress. The Council's top priority concerns for advancing the ECIS system and integrating data systems follow:

- **System Linkage:** Ensure and enhance solid linkages with K–12, higher education, and other state and local agency data systems serving young children.
 - **Data Collection:** Improve the data collection process to capture and integrate data related to children, program delivery, and the workforce.
 - **Data Efficiency:** Analyze and evaluate data efficiency throughout early education and care for the purpose of promoting positive child outcomes.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Early Education and Care program at Bridgewater State University (BSU) and the Early Education and Care in Inclusive Settings program at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB) are baccalaureate programs in Massachusetts public institutions that have established a delivery structure for early childhood professional education. The programs provide access to nontraditional students; offer a culture that increases communication between faculty and transfer and admissions administrators; and provide a responsive curriculum that aligns with EEC Core Competencies, QRIS standards, and the needs of the early education workforce in the private nonprofit sector serving Massachusetts children between birth and 8 years old. BSU is enrolled at capacity; the program has grown to twice the size of the public school early educator track. The institutional leadership at UMB and BSU supported the growth of the programs and provided additional tenure track faculty.

The Council enhanced the early childhood professional development career ladder by partnering on the RTT-ELC grant work. They reviewed outcomes and lessons learned from previous professional development efforts in order to craft a UMB post-master's certificate program in early

MASSACHUSETTS

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

education. In June 2013, UMB provided EEC with an evaluation of the first year of the program, including data on student outcomes and program evaluations, successes, challenges, and recommendations for improvement. The evaluation included a work plan for the second phase of program implementation.

The Council also mapped the current network of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education that offer a certificate or degree in early childhood education, elementary education, or a related field. A profile for each institution was included in a searchable database to provide useful information on courses, certificates, and degrees for early childhood education.

Early Learning Standards

The Massachusetts Early Learning Standards for preschool children and infants and toddlers were developed before the Council was established. The preschool standards, the *Early Childhood Program Standards for Three- and Four-Year-Olds*, were completed in 2003, and the infant and toddler standards, the *Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*, were completed in 2010.

The Council aligned Massachusetts early learning standards across the state's early childhood programs. It also initiated efforts to support the RTT-ELC objective to conduct an in-depth analysis of the alignment of infant, toddler, preschool, and kindergarten standards across multiple domains of early learning and development in Massachusetts. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, and the University of North Carolina worked as partners with the Council on this project. The results of the analysis are summarized in a final report, the *Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Alignment Study*.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- Home Visiting and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** The Council funded community support grants for selected CFCE grantees to assist them in performing activities that strengthened collaboration and established strategic planning for integrating and coordinating the delivery of community services. In partnership with MIECHV, the Council supported five grantees that were part of the Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative and required partnerships and collaboration. These awardees hired a consultant to collect key stakeholder information to create an action plan with measureable goals and a 3-year strategic plan, created and distributed hard copies of the comprehensive *CFCE Guide* throughout the community, hosted a community-wide meeting to introduce and instruct the participants on using the guide, worked with a consultant to create a new strategic plan, and provided training and family engagement activities for pre-kindergarten through third grade programs.

MASSACHUSETTS

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** In May 2013, the Council funded statewide EEC QRIS Environmental Ratings Scale (ERS) training. The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute provided training to EEC QRIS program specialists on four ERSs required in the QRIS. These trainings included the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS), Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale, and the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale. The trainings provided the QRIS Program Management Quality Systems team with a solid foundation on the ERS measures to better serve and coach providers in the QRIS. In June 2013, the Donahue Institute conducted a series of regional training opportunities on the FCCERS tool for family child care home monitors, home coordinators, and family child care support staff. The trainings provided staff with an understanding of the FCCERS tool and guidance on scoring and interpreting.
 - **Aligned Monitoring:** The EEC implemented aligned monitoring across early childhood programs. One of EEC's major responsibilities was to monitor the activities of the sub-recipients to ensure that federal awards were used for the authorized purpose and in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and the contracts or grant agreements.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,137,560
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,301,837
- Amount Expended: \$1,301,837
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

MICHIGAN

Council Name: Great Start Early Learning Advisory Council

Council Website: <http://ecic4kids.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2005, Governor Jennifer Granholm created the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), a public, nonprofit corporation, to lead the Great Start Initiative, Michigan's comprehensive early childhood system. In 2009, Governor Granholm established the Great Start Early Learning Advisory Council, led by ECIC, to meet the requirements of the Head Start Act of 2007, cited above. In 2011, Governor Snyder established the Office of Great Start, an early learning and development office, to connect the early learning and development programs in Michigan's Departments of Human Services and Education.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Michigan met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

MICHIGAN

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council conducted a needs assessment in five key areas: accessible, high-quality early care and education, the collaboration and coordination among federal and state-funded programs for early learning, the state's early learning standards, the early childhood professional development system, and the early childhood data system. Monthly reviews of programs involved in Great Start to Quality, the state's tiered quality rating and improvement system, supplemented the analysis. The reviews included all licensed early learning and development programs, as well as unlicensed subsidized family, friend, and neighbor providers.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council's work included efforts on the federal, state, and local level to increase the funding for early child care and education systems and expand access of Michigan's children to programs.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council realigned its activities to support the RTT-ELC application priorities. Michigan received slightly more than \$51.7 million in the third round of RTT-ELC funding to improve the quality and accessibility of its early learning and development programs.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The projects implemented by the Great Start Early Learning Advisory Council supported the CCDF state plan.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Grant***: The Council coordinated funding with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) to support 11 local recruitment grants for Head Start and a full-day workshop on increasing recruitment for and collaboration with the Great Start Readiness Program, Michigan's state-funded pre-kindergarten program.
- ***Part C and Part B, Section 619, of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act***: The Council's Early Childhood Special Education Expanding Opportunities Workgroup shaped the design and focus of an early childhood special education policy paper.

MICHIGAN

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- **Quality Program Expansion:** Because the initial standards set in Great Start to Quality did not include rigorous accountability measures for all programs, the Council created an alternate plan for these programs. They include state-funded pre-kindergarten, Head Start programs, and National Association for the Education of Young Children-accredited programs. The goal is to attain the highest quality levels in Great Start to Quality.
 - **Early Learning Communities (ELC):** The Council continued to support the ELC scholarship program, leveraging funding from the CCDF to increase community and private funding for eight ELCs established originally with ARRA funds. The Council further provided technical assistance for these Great Start Collaboratives and supported their efforts to build partnerships and develop resources.
 - **Child Care Coordinated Grants:** The Council established Child Care Coordinated Grants in the Office of Great Start, awarding \$74,000 to support nine early childhood programs and two consortia. The Council also coordinated with the Office of Great Start on efforts to recruit and enroll children to increase the number of families with access to high-quality learning opportunities.
-

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase the quality and availability of early child care programs, including the launch of Great Start to Quality 2.0. Families looking for early child care options can find licensed programs and their star ratings online, as well as records of professional development training completed by program staff.

The Council suggested the following areas for work to increase participation:

- **Infrastructure:** Continue support for scholarships for children in order to reduce the barriers to participation for low-income children and families. Also, strengthen Great Start to Quality, the state's tiered quality and rating improvement system, so that children enter higher quality programs.
 - **Capacity:** Increase the capacity of early learning and development programs to serve high-needs children from birth to 3 years of age to increase participation in programs for this population.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council suggested meeting the following needs to support creating and implementing a successful unified data system:

- **Policy Questions:** Determine the focus of the coordinated data system and the policy questions to answer.

MICHIGAN

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve data stakeholders in creating this system, determining the state's early childhood policy priorities, and developing an implementation plan for data governance aligned with existing P-20 data efforts.
 - **Data Governance Structure:** Implement a data governance structure with low to moderate centralization and develop a systematic method of sharing data across agencies.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council updated *Michigan's Core Knowledge and Competencies* first developed in 2003, to clarify expectations for effective early childhood professionals. The 2013 package included a revised *Competency Framework* and the *Reflections and Professional Development Planning Tool*, as well as a career ladder aligned with the new framework. The Council's update also aligned the standards with the *Michigan Early Learning Standards*, the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, the *National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Standards*, and *Michigan's Great Start to Quality*.

Early Learning Standards

The Council updated and revised the *Michigan Early Childhood Standards*. The updates for infant and toddler programs primarily reflected new health standards. The standards for children ages 3 to 5 included major updates to technology and math standards and a new addendum on program standards for home and family centers. The standards include a section for dual language learners.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

Michigan has worked to improve the health of children in the state. The Council collaborated with the state's Department of Community Health to apply for funding through the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care grant. This grant provides self-assessments, action planning tools, and best practices for use by child care programs interested in improving the health and nutrition of children.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$2,893,552
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$3,057,829
- Amount Expended: \$3,057,829
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

MINNESOTA

Council Name: Early Learning Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Education

Council Website: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/EarlyLearnCoun/index.html>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2008, Minnesota's Early Childhood Advisory Council was created by Governor Tim Pawlenty in response to the Head Start Act 2007, cited above. This group articulated guiding principles and developed a preliminary strategic plan. In March 2011, Governor Mark Dayton issued an executive order expanding Early Learning Council membership to 30 participants, including early care and education services for children from birth through third grade and emphasizing school readiness. Later that year, the state created the Office of Early Learning based on the Council's recommendation to establish a freestanding office to lead school readiness efforts and to coordinate early childhood services and programs for the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Minnesota met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state

MINNESOTA

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

An inventory of state programs was completed in 2010. In 2013, the Council performed a survey to identify affinity and advocacy groups throughout the state working to improve systems, services, and programs for special populations. Based on the findings, the Council took steps to improve relationships and coordination with early childhood partners. The Council developed the following recommendations for next steps:

- Develop a set of questions focused on rural and special populations to be considered by Council committees, departments, and partners.
 - Examine ways to use evidence-based best practices from across the state.
 - Draw attention to projects underway and determine an evaluation methodology.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council engaged in efforts to identify and promote coordination and collaboration among federal, state, and local programs and agencies. The survey assessment findings supported prioritizing and supporting coordination and collaboration efforts.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council prepared the successful Minnesota RTT-ELC grant application and developed a plan to assist in tracking progress toward the successful completion of RTT-ELC performance measures.

MINNESOTA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** Staff from the Departments of Human Services and Education collaborated to develop, outline, and market the Training of Trainers on the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, *Minnesota Early Learning Standards*.
- **Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO):** HSSCO participates on the Council, to ensure Head Start representation and sharing of resources across sectors.

State Level

- **Preschool-Early Learning Scholarships:** The Council supported efforts by Governor Dayton, the Children's Cabinet, and other private and public partners to include \$4 million in the Governor's 2013 budget dedicated to early learning scholarships. This funding, passed by the legislature, has enabled an additional 10,000 children from low-income households to access high-quality early learning programs.
- **Child Care Assistance Program:** This program increased access to high-quality child care by reimbursing providers who achieve a three-star Parent Aware Rating with reimbursements up to 15 percent higher than they previously received. Providers who achieve a four-star rating receive reimbursements up to 20 percent higher than the standard. The Council held and sponsored learning sessions on these improvements and is interested in the progress made and lessons learned.
- **Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ):** The NAZ received a \$28 million federal Promise Neighborhood grant disbursed over 5 years (2012–2016). A collaboration of over 50 organizations and schools, NAZ works with children and families in a zone in North Minneapolis to build a culture of achievement. The intended outcome is larger numbers of youth graduating from high school and ready for college.
- **Child-Parent Centers:** The Human Capital Research Collaborative at the University of Minnesota received a 5-year (2012–2016), \$15 million federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant. The project will enroll nearly 2,500 4-year-olds from low-income families in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs at 26 sites across Minnesota and Illinois and will follow them through the third grade.
- **Learn Together Minnesota:** This innovative website tracks how Minnesota's three early childhood grants are ensuring student success inside and outside the classroom. The grants include RTT-ELC, NAZ, and Child-Parent Centers.

Participation of Children

The Council participated in the development and implementation of strategies to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs. Examples include the following:

- **Early Childhood Scholarships:** The Council recommended that the Governor include in his fiscal year 2013–2014 budget dedicated funds to provide additional early childhood funding for scholarships to allow low-income children to attend high-quality early care and education programs.

MINNESOTA

Participation of Children (continued)

- **Capacity Building Grants:** Four communities differing in size, geography, and demographics received incentive grants to combine early childhood funding from a variety of community-based partners to increase capacity and access to high-quality care and education programs for low-income children. The Council analyzed lessons learned from the pilot communities regarding blending, braiding, and pooling of funds; consolidated the findings; and issued a report for statewide circulation.
 - **Quality Incentives:** The Council supported the Department of Human Services' successful legislative initiative to implement a rate differential for high-quality programs serving children who are receiving Child Care Assistance Program subsidies. This motivated providers to deliver high-quality child care. They receive reimbursements of up to 15 percent higher than their standard for a three-star Parent Aware Rating and reimbursements of up to 20 percent higher when achieving a four-star Parent Aware Rating.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the following needs for implementing a unified early childhood data collection system through RTT-ELC:

- **Governance:** Designate a governing body to be responsible for approving data collection and establish research priorities.
 - **Data Workgroup:** Create a research and data group to provide continued monitoring and review and to assure meaningful data are being collected that answer pressing questions.
 - **Data Sharing Agreements:** Integrate data from agencies and programs using data sharing agreements that provide the framework for collaboration and coordination.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council supported efforts to gather public comment and feedback on the core competencies. The RTT-ELC grant allowed Minnesota to move forward on revising the core competency document.

One of Minnesota's ARRA-funded activities was to conduct a statewide assessment of early childhood preparation programs to define effectiveness and identify gaps for further study. Nearly half of the Minnesota institutions of higher education that offered early childhood programs had articulation agreements. Progress is being made on efforts to increase the number of agreements.

The Council also analyzed existing data sources to determine the supply of and demand for qualified individuals for positions in early care and education programs. The exercise provided some useful information and indicated where vacancies exist.

Minnesota leveraged its RTT-ELC funds to engage the state's higher education institutions in aligning professional development opportunities with the newly integrated Board of Teaching standards and core competencies.

MINNESOTA

Early Learning Standards

In 2007, *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress* were developed as Minnesota's early learning guidelines for children from birth to 3 years of age. In 2005, the state revised the *Early Childhood Indicators of Success*, Minnesota's early learning standards for children ages 3–5 years. The Council focused on promoting and teaching proper use of the revised standards. It supported Child Care Aware (formerly Child Care Resource and Referral agencies) and Centers for Excellence (professional development hubs) to provide Training of Trainers and Mentoring projects on the standards to professional audiences. Early learning standards are aligned across early childhood programs. To support family engagement, the Council developed and shared a parent guide on standards. The guide offers families explanations of the standards and resources on early childhood programs. The parent guide is available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Minnesota Mentoring and Coaching Activity:** Through the Training of Trainers and Mentoring projects, trainers provided statewide training. Master trainers and coaches received training on implementing the early learning standards and reflective supervision. They mentored practitioners, and both groups used online resources to exchange ideas and share information.
 - **Pre-K–Third Grade Framework:** Minnesota approved recommendations for a Common Pre-K–Third Grade Framework. This series of research-based recommendations describes the conditions critical to aligning early educational experiences from pre-kindergarten to third grade (for children from birth to 8 years old). The framework also explains how to move the pre-kindergarten-through-third-grade agenda forward.
 - **Assessment of Rural Needs:** The Council's partners throughout the state explore the needs of rural communities and special populations. Work continues on surveys of stakeholders to determine gaps in service and opportunities for advocating for children and children's issues.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,046,290
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,210,567
- Amount Expended: \$1,174,526
- Percent of Funds Expended: 97.02%

MISSISSIPPI

Council Name: State Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Office of the Governor

Council Website: [http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/early-childhood-care-development/child-care-resources/state-early-childhood-advisory-council-\(secac\)/](http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/early-childhood-care-development/child-care-resources/state-early-childhood-advisory-council-(secac)/)

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2008, Governor Barbour established the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) by executive order. The Council was charged with developing a strategic plan to coordinate efforts, programs, and resources supporting children from birth to age 5 and to identify opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among programs and agencies. SECAC is located in the Office of the Governor to ensure access to the Governor and other key policymakers.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Mississippi met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

MISSISSIPPI

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council supported efforts to complete two needs assessments during the grant period. The first was a home visiting needs assessment that measured factors such as infant mortality, premature births, low birth weight, poverty, and child maltreatment. The second assessment was a market rate study that was completed annually and collected updated data specific to child care centers in the state. The data included capacity, ages served, special needs, staff education and experience, and current assessments.

Through the home visiting assessment, the Council found gaps in child and women's health services. The market rate survey identified that there were inadequate child care services for children with special needs and that staff in child care centers need further professional development opportunities.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council played a role in identifying opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among federal, state, and locally funded early childhood programs and services.

Federal Level

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Council partnered with CCDF to enhance and extend development of the workforce career ladder and to provide training and technical assistance to family child care providers.

MISSISSIPPI

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- ***The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013: Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Bill:*** The state legislature approved \$3 million to support the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013, which established a voluntary pre-kindergarten program on a phased-in basis beginning in the 2013–2014 school year. The Council worked with the State Department of Education (SDE) on collaboration efforts among Head Start; licensed child care facilities; and licensed public, parochial, and private school pre-kindergarten programs. The Act mandated that the Council assist the SDE with implementation, ensure coordination among agencies and programs serving preschool children, and maximize resources to promote high standards for all programs serving preschool children and their families.
 - ***Public-Private Partnership:*** The State Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development received a grant from the Kellogg Foundation as the match component to the Council grant. This further funded the early childhood data portion of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and created a Teacher Education program called (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® and a Child Care WAGE\$® program, which provides financial support to enhance the development of quality early childhood professionals.
-

Participation of Children

The Council worked alongside the SDE and other childhood programs and service providers to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs. This included outreach to underrepresented and special populations. The Council's collaboration with SDE on the voluntary pre-kindergarten expansion efforts is the result of this partnership.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council worked on entering early childhood data into the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), called Lifetracks. The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development at the Department of Health contracted with the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Center at Mississippi State University to expand SLDS by including more early childhood data related to education programs, providers, and children. The Council recommended that the SLDS site ensure early childhood data are entered into the SLDS and that training is made available for state staff using the system to become familiar with system capabilities.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Poorly educated teachers, low compensation, and high turnover rates are serious problems in the state's early childhood education system. To enhance professional development and create a sustainable, higher quality workforce, the Council partnered with the State Department of Human Services to design projects to address the following recommendations:

MISSISSIPPI

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

- Develop a voluntary registry of state in-home child care providers so services are easy to locate.
 - Design an early childhood career ladder and define a method to provide compensation for career advancement.
 - Develop a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for in-home providers.
-

Early Learning Standards

In 2004, the *Early Learning Guidelines* for 3- and 4-year-olds were established. They were revised and aligned to the *Common Core Standards* in 2006. In 2010, Mississippi developed the *Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines*.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,521,067
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,685,344
- Amount Expended: \$1,685,332
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

MISSOURI

Council Name: Coordinating Board for Early Childhood

Designated State Agency: Department of Social Services

Council Website: <http://dss.mo.gov/cbec>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2004, the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (CBEC) was established by statute as a public-private entity responsible for coordinating a state system of early childhood programs and services. The CBEC is located within the Missouri Children's Service Commission by statute. Agency heads and legislators are the Council members. In 2009, Governor Jay Nixon appointed the CBEC as the State Advisory Council to implement the requirements of the SAC grant.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Missouri met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

MISSOURI

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council performed several needs assessments during the State Advisory Council grant period:

- **Economic Analysis:** The Council commissioned an early childhood economic impact report and released the findings to the state legislature and public.
 - **Fiscal Resource Analysis:** The Council completed a comprehensive early childhood fiscal resource analysis, to identify funding streams that affect the early childhood system throughout the state. Recommendations from the report suggested strategies to maximize fiscal resources. These include the following: maximizing Medicaid claims, increasing collaboration among local Head Start programs and other early childhood programs, expanding preschool program operations, increasing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds for child care assistance, and expanding preventive and Early Intervention services for at-risk children.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council partnered and collaborated with federal, state, and local early childhood community entities to increase alignment and advance the early childhood system.

Federal Level

- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The CCDF administrator linked the Council to child care policy expertise.
- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):** The Council coordinated with MIECHV and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) through the Department of Health and Senior Services to apply for the MIECHV grant.

MISSOURI

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The Council leveraged the ECCS grant to complete a strategic plan for a statewide early childhood system. The plan addressed how the state should handle the following early childhood topics: governance and leadership, financial resources, quality assurance and accountability, public engagement, family support, parenting education, early childhood programs, and health and mental health. The strategic plan served as a roadmap to guide the Council and workgroup activities.

State and Local Level

- **State-Funded Home Visiting (HV):** The Council partnered with the state's HV steering committee to create a comprehensive matrix of statewide HV programs using evidence-based models and experienced good outcomes. These efforts led to creation of a map that plots the location and type of each HV program throughout the state. The Council commissioned a comprehensive analysis of the HV system after reviewing the map. As a result, the Council coordinated with the state HV staff to identify opportunities for alignment of services. The HV analysis revealed several priorities and needs: cultivate public and political support for consistent state-level financial support for HV programs; promote a statewide public education campaign to raise awareness of HV services and benefits; facilitate creation of common outcomes and indicators for HV programs; establish an electronic HV resource center; promote professional development and technical assistance opportunities for HV professionals; and explore using centralized systems for intake, assessment, and referral within regions of the state.
- **Head Start Data Pilot:** The Council partnered with the University of Missouri in an Opportunities Professional Education Network (OPEN) initiative involving the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Child Care Aware, Head Start, and the Department of Health and Senior Services. The project piloted processes for aligning child-level data. The Council used the Missouri Student Information System (MOSIS) to enter and align child-level data. Thirteen Head Start grantees piloted the batch entry processes and matched, analyzed, and entered child-level data. Over 25,000 records containing data on children between 2006 and 2012 were collected. The DESE matched approximately 85 percent of the records with the MOSIS data and identified 4,000 records that required assignment of an identification number. At a stakeholder meeting, the findings of the 3-year pilot project were summarized, and strengths and weaknesses of the process were identified.

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations. The Council proposed the following policies to increase the active participation of children:

- **Parents as Teachers:** In 2012, the Council advocated to maintain the current funding level of \$13 million for the Parents as Teachers program and recommended restoring funding to the 2009 funding level of \$34 million when fiscal conditions improve.

MISSOURI

Participation of Children (continued)

- **Child Care Assistance:** The Council advocated for 2012 child care assistance funding at the level necessary to sustain participant eligibility at 127 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

Missouri's long-term goal is to streamline educational systems across the P-20 Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The Council increased collaboration and information sharing across programs and developed a rating system for early childhood centers. The Council coordinated with several early childhood programs to link Head Start child-level data to MOSIS and to align five data systems with the Missouri Professional Development Registry (MOPD) data collection system. The Council identified the need to take the following steps to continue to implement and enhance a unified data system:

- **Fluid Exchange of Data:** Typical data gathering efforts can produce duplicative records. Adopting a fluid exchange of data will enable better evaluation of the program or agency suited to collect specific data elements and avoid duplication of records.
 - **Centralized Resources and Systems:** Creating centralized resources will streamline collection efforts and increase user participation. This is important because data collection is voluntary.
 - **Governance and Policies:** Firm governance is needed to require programs to share data and provide authority for data use. Significant progress toward a unified data system requires establishing governance and data sharing policies.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council made recommendations for and advanced streamlining of the statewide professional development system by aligning and consolidating information across data systems in the MOPD. It also created a professional development portal to provide access to a central hub for trainings, trainer registration, and professional recognition.

The Early Care and Education Programs workgroup suggested and the Council adopted the following steps: commissioning review papers with information on trends and status of national early childhood workforce compensation, creating early childhood career lattices, and improving parent perceptions of quality early learning.

In 2012, a targeted training survey was conducted to assess clock-hour training completed by a sample of directors from licensed early childhood centers. The survey findings provided insight about the level of directors' achievement. The Council compiled available training data to create a map of statewide director-focused training courses.

MISSOURI

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

The Council made suggestions in the following areas:

- **Compensation:** A white paper on early childhood compensation reviewed mechanisms and models used in other states and nationally. Methods included increasing compensation for the early childhood workforce by raising wages directly or by launching campaigns that affect wages by more indirect means, such as unionizing or organizing the early childhood workforce.
 - **Career Lattices:** Thirty-seven states have career lattices describing training, education, and skills used in a career advancement system for early childhood professionals. The common features were identified and reported in a white paper along with successful implementation models and comparisons.
-

Early Learning Standards

In 2009, the *Early Learning Goals* for children from age 3 to kindergarten were adopted by the State Board. In July 2013, the *Infants and Toddlers Early Learning Goals* were approved. In 2013, the Council contracted with the University of Missouri to create early learning guidelines for children from birth to 5 years of age.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Mental Health:** The Council's Mental Health workgroup focused on building competencies for professionals in early childhood mental and social and emotional health. The workgroup recommended revisions to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment tool; created social and emotional training for mental health professionals; proposed a comprehensive early childhood fiscal resource analysis; and provided recommendations for a public awareness campaign on the importance of social and emotional development. The Council was one of five states selected to participate in the nationally sponsored Early Childhood Mental Health project. Participation included attending meetings designed to share information and brainstorm ideas and resources.
- **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** The Council supported and participated in the annual Family Leadership Summit in partnership with the ECCS grant. The Summit brought together family leaders and early childhood professionals to share information on supporting parents and families with resources and tools on child development.
- **Literature Review:** The Council's Early Care and Education Programs workgroup performed a literature review on parent perceptions about quality in early childhood programs. The review found that a significant number of parents lacked an understanding of both child care quality and early childhood care and education programs. The workgroup compiled these findings and has been using the data to inform recent consumer education and to raise public awareness about early childhood education.

MISSOURI

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$778,834
- Supplemental: \$109,690
- Total Award: \$888,524
- Amount Expended: \$876,438
- Percent of Funds Expended: 98.64%

MONTANA

Council Name: Best Beginnings State Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Public Health and Human Services

Council Website: <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/BestBeginningsAdvisoryCouncil.aspx>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 31–40

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 1996, the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council was established primarily to advise the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS), Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Head Start State Collaboration grants. The Governor's commitment to strengthen early childhood services through improving collaboration and coordination led to restructuring in 2011. The Council's name was changed during restructuring to the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The Council's name reflects that children deserve the "best beginning," the overarching concept and mission of the Council. The Best Beginnings Advisory Council is within the Early Childhood Services Bureau of the Department of Public Health and Human Services. It serves as the comprehensive advisory council entity within the early childhood system.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Montana met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state

MONTANA

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In December 2012, the Council completed a needs assessment that measured the quality and availability of child care programs, workforce supply and professional development, and child care affordability. In addition to the statewide needs assessment, the Council supported local community councils and coalitions in conducting further targeted regional needs assessments. By promoting community-driven assessments, the Council enhanced collaboration between state and local communities and empowered communities to become more involved and active in early childhood initiatives. The Council provided advice and guidance materials to direct communities' assessments.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council coordinated and collaborated with several federal, state, and local partners.

Federal Level

- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The Council partnered with the Early Childhood Services Bureau and the Family and Community Health Bureau to provide funding opportunities to seven school readiness teams and coalitions for early childhood systems-building at the local level. The Family and Community Health Bureau partnered with the Council to provide additional funding opportunities to 17 communities without prior councils or coalitions that were interested in developing a local system based on the Best Beginnings concept. A portion of the 24 local councils funded are tribal communities, including Rocky Boys, Northern Cheyenne, Crow Nation, Fort Peck, and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

MONTANA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Council provided policy recommendations for the CCDF child care assistance subsidy program.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Grant:*** The Council collaborated with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) to help bring the Council’s Best Beginnings concept to Head Start centers throughout the state.

State and Local Level

- ***Local Community Councils and Coalitions:*** Through partnership with ECCS and MIECHV, the Council formalized local community coalitions. A portion of Council funding was used to provide technical assistance and guidance to the community coalitions to create a sustainable, comprehensive, coordinated early care and education system and build capacity for evidence-based home visiting. These community coalitions are now a central avenue for the State of Montana to provide additional funding opportunities to target specific needs, locations, and initiatives at the level at which children and families are being served. The community coalitions enabled greater collaboration and coordination while building a sustainable platform within communities for future initiatives and funding opportunities.
- ***Child and Family Services Division—Family Forums:*** The Council funded local community coalitions to conduct outreach events to neighborhood parents and early childhood stakeholders and funded activities to provide children with meals and assistance to serve at-risk and hard-to-reach populations.

Participation of Children

The Council developed and implemented various strategies to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations, such as the following:

- ***Streamlining and Coordination:*** The Council streamlined its Best Beginnings grant application process and coordinated policies with other support programs, which increased participation of children.
- ***Flexible Eligibility:*** The Council recommended implementing a more flexible child care eligibility policy to support increased access and participation of children, while providing better continuity of care for children and stability for families who are currently receiving services.
- ***Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Expansion:*** The Council proposed increasing the visibility of the Best Beginnings STARS QRIS so that high-quality care centers and programs were better identified, early care and education programs were motivated to increase their quality ratings, and families were knowledgeable about high-quality care options.

MONTANA

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the most pressing needs for implementing a unified data system, including the following:

- **Funding:** Additional funding is needed to develop and implement an early childhood data collection system.
 - **Collaboration:** Collaboration and coordination among early childhood partners will be an essential step to integrate data systems.
 - **Data Elements:** Determining the vital data to be collected and tracked within the unified data system will help early childhood partners know which data to collect.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council and several of its committees dedicated resources to professional development efforts, including the revision of the Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) and several training opportunities and course offerings for professionals from around the state.

The Council's Professional Development Committee led the final review and distribution of the 2013 revisions of the CKCs. The Council's Family Support Committee funded a 2-day conference and networking opportunity for providers within family support systems such as Head Start and Early Head Start, Home Visiting, teen parenting contractors, city and county health departments, local community coalitions, and tribal programs, to discuss developing a statewide family support network. During the conference, objectives for the Family Support Provider Network were created, along with an action plan for implementation. The Council continues to sponsor yearly family support system conferences to build this momentum.

The Health Committee created a training opportunity for health professionals to become child care health consultants. The Health Committee also funded the development of a module within the Pyramid Model to provide a framework for supporting social and emotional development. The committee engaged subject matter experts in developing a new module and training videos. The videos were designed to teach early childhood professionals how to form a behavior support team, perform a functional behavioral assessment, and develop individual behavior support plans for young children who need intensive interventions and positive support.

Early Learning Standards

In 2014, the Council partnered with the Early Learning Task Force to revise and create the *Montana Early Learning Standards*, a comprehensive set of learning standards for infants and children from birth through age 5. The revisions included updates to the infant and toddler standards as well as the 3- to 5-year-old guidelines and aligned both documents. This resulted in a blended, single set of standards, establishing a continuum of developmental milestones for all children from birth to age 5.

MONTANA

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Mental Health:** Montana was selected by the federal Office of Child Care to receive technical assistance around cross-systems work using the Pyramid Model to support children's social and emotional development. The Council's Social Emotional and Mental Health Committee facilitated a meeting with the Montana Pyramid Partnership to strategically plan the vision, mission statement, and logic model of the partnership. The Committee also purchased resource books such as the Coaching Handbook for several providers in child care and for Child Care Resource and Referral Trainers and Montana's STARS to Quality providers who completed Strength-based Coaching and Pyramid Model 3 training.
- **Health:** The Council's Health Committee funded an assessment to collect survey and interview data from key stakeholders on state guidelines. Data findings related to nutrition and physical activity led to the development of the Montana Physical Activity and Nutrition Guidelines for Early Childhood Programs.
- **STARS to Quality QRIS:** Montana established phase one of a voluntary QRIS in 2012. In 2013, phase II of Montana's QRIS was launched. The Council's Professional Development Committee sponsored an event with experts from the Francis Institute for QRIS coaches to solidify a coaching framework. The Council's High-Quality Early Care and Education Committee hosted a successful 2-day QRIS event for providers enrolled in QRIS to discuss their ratings progress and experiences related to the QRIS field test.
- **Online Applications:** The Council's Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships supported families with young children by providing assistance with child care expenses. Online applications were created to provide another avenue for parents to access the program. Now parents can access a webpage, complete an application, and submit the application electronically to any one of the 11 Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in the state.
- **Tribal Collaboration:** The Council's Health Committee partnered with the Hopa Mountain group that invests in rural and tribal citizen leaders, adults, and youth who are working to improve education, ecological health, and economic development. Hopa Mountain provided guidance and assistance for physical activities during a summer program with the Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Cheyenne Nation.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$664,277
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

NEBRASKA

Council Name: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Education, Head Start State Collaboration Office

Council Website: <http://www.education.ne.gov/ecicc>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2000, the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) was established through statute to address the policy and program needs of all young children. ECICC is jointly managed by Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education, in consultation with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO). In 2010, Governor Dave Heineman designated ECICC to serve as the State Advisory Council and designated the HSSCO as both Council funds manager and the primary point of contact for the Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Nebraska met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

NEBRASKA

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In 2012, the Council completed a needs assessment and partnered with stakeholders from the Part C Early Intervention program and the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant to develop an early childhood strategic report to the Governor on the status of early childhood care and services throughout the state. Nebraska found gaps in children's access to a medical and dental home; early childhood social, emotional, and behavioral health services; and high-quality, developmentally appropriate care settings for all children. Subsequently, the Council and partnering organizations developed a strategic plan including detailed strategies to address the gaps.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council promoted coordination and collaboration across major early childhood programs.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council advanced project proposals in the RTT-ELC application, such as the development of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Although the state did not receive an RTT-ELC grant, in 2013, Legislative Bill (LB) 507 passed, providing funding to support a July 2014 QRIS launch.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The Council served as the advisory entity to the MIECHV, and MIECHV representatives participated in the Council's work.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: The Council served as the advisory head to ECCS. Similarly, ECCS led the development of the strategic plan used by the Council to develop the 2012 strategic report.

NEBRASKA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Part C and Part B, Section 619, of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The Council also served and continues to serve as the coordinating council for all children from birth to age 5 in the IDEA Part B and Part C system.

State and Local Level

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE): Through NCFE, the Council received additional funds and made grants to local communities for comprehensive planning of early care and education at the local level.

Participation of Children

In 2006, LB 1256, Create the Nebraska Early Childhood Endowment and Authorize a Board of Trustees, was enacted. This led to the creation of Sixpence, a public-private partnership where every dollar of private contribution is matched by \$2 from the public sector, and the \$3 investment is matched by a local community grant recipient. This yields a \$6 investment. Sixpence allows Nebraska to fund a range of services for families, including home visitation. The Council recommended expanding Sixpence as a strategy to increase the number of children served in high-quality early care and education settings, with priority for children in poverty, children who were low birth weight babies, dual language learners, and children of teen parents.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council obtained support for aligning the various early childhood data systems with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Five state senators and other early childhood stakeholders agreed with this strategy. The Council funded two data summits in 2011 and 2013 and proposed the following next steps to advance this work:

- **Data Governance:** Establish or appoint an early childhood data governance body.
 - **Unique Identifier:** Create a unique state identifier for the following categories of individuals: each child from birth to kindergarten, parents or caregivers of young children, each early childhood center or program, and each early childhood professional in the workforce.
 - **Reporting Requirement:** Require all publicly funded early childhood care and education programs to participate in the unified early childhood data system by collecting data elements determined by the governance body. Allow and encourage privately funded programs to participate in the data system.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council worked with the agency responsible for the Child Care and Development Fund program to advance the development of the QRIS. It also supported the state's efforts in conducting Early Learning Guidelines, Back to Sleep, and Management training for center directors required under revised child care licensing regulations signed by the Governor in 2013.

NEBRASKA

Early Learning Standards

In 2005, Nebraska developed and completed *Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3* and has continued to use the standards in Early Head Start, Part C Early Intervention, and infant and toddler programs. In 2013, the Council funded the development of the *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5*. The revisions to the guidelines for 3- to 5-year-olds have been used in required child care licensing training and Head Start grantees' school readiness training. The guidelines were aligned to the kindergarten standards and widely distributed and used by public schools, Head Start, child care providers, and early childhood degree programs at institutions of higher education.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Mental Health:** The Council provided funding for the Early Childhood Teaching Pyramid Implementation Academy. The academy shared evidence-based practices for promoting young children's social and emotional competence and preventing and addressing challenging behavior. Twelve school districts with Head Start centers and other early childhood partners, such as Part C Early Intervention and Part B Special Education, participated in the academy and committed to 3 years of engagement to advance training, implement the model, and complete an evaluation.
 - **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** The Council maintained dialogue with parents, families, and the community through the life of the SAC grant and distributed various products and tools to increase awareness and promote understanding of early childhood priorities throughout the state. Some of these products included *Come as You Are* and *Ready for Success*, which eventually replaced *Come as You Are*. This resource was translated and distributed in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Somali. Other distributed resources included a kindergarten position statement, which included a summary of research, early childhood science, and best practices for young children entering kindergarten.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$0
- Total Award: \$500,000
- Amount Expended: \$500,000
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

NEVADA

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Established in the Department of Health and Human Services and moving to the Department of Education

Council Website: <http://nvecac.com>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Governor Jim Gibbons signed a September 2009 executive order to establish the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings for early childhood programs. Governor Brian Sandoval continued this authorization through an executive order signed in July 2011. The executive orders empower the Director's Office of the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and maintain the ECAC. The Council adopted the following vision shortly after its inception: "Nevada's children will be safe, healthy, and thriving during the first 8 years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential."

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Nevada met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies

NEVADA

Council Representation (continued)

- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Nevada Council completed a comprehensive needs assessment in 2012 that evaluated the quality and availability of early childhood centers and programs. The assessment measured the quality of child care programs using the Environmental Rating Scales, including both the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R).

The Council used the needs assessment data to inform and prioritize quality improvement throughout the early childhood system. Nevada identified the following priority areas:

- **Convene Project Partners:** The Council identified a need to work with stakeholders to develop a shared definition of quality and metrics to quantify progress and success. The definition and metrics would be applied to settings including rural areas, underserved communities (including children with disabilities), and tribal regions.
- **Incentivize Quality Centers:** The Council identified the need for increased access to professional development and self-improvement tools for the early childhood workforce.
- **Create Demand for Quality:** The Council intends to develop a public awareness campaign to help families understand the importance of high-quality care and early learning on development.

NEVADA

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council identified opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among federal and state-funded early childhood programs and services. One notable achievement was the alignment of various early childhood programs within the new Division of Early Learning in the Nevada Department of Education. The Council and several other early childhood programs and offices were aligned and consolidated. These programs and offices included the Child Care and Development Fund; Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems; Part B, Section 619 of IDEA; the Head Start and Early Childhood Systems Office; the Nevada Home Visiting Program; and state pre-kindergarten.

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV or HV):** The Council partnered with the MIECHV to develop benchmarks to be tracked by both the HV program and the Council.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** Previous ECCS work supported the development of seven local and one statewide tribal councils. The Council funded the development of the Comprehensive Early Childhood Systems Plan. The plan was completed in December 2013 and includes cost estimates for comprehensive services for children in frontier, rural, and urban areas of Nevada. Services would meet health, mental health, parent education, family support, and early care and education needs.

State and Local Level

- **Senate Bill 486:** The Council developed and endorsed policy recommendations to the state legislature to increase early childhood readiness. As a direct result of the Council's work, Senate Bill 486 passed and \$1.5 million was allocated to conduct a 2-year school readiness pilot between 2013 and 2015. This funding also supported local districts' use of the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool, a feasibility study to link current early childhood data systems, and an evaluation of the school readiness pilot.

Participation of Children

The Council developed recommendations to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs. Examples of these recommendations include the following:

- Encourage early childhood programs to share resources by braiding funding streams.
- Develop a plan focused on increasing high-quality care settings for children with special needs, as well as those living in rural areas, underserved communities, and tribes.
- Provide families of young children with information about what quality care means for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children.

NEVADA

Participation of Children (continued)

- Develop ways for families to assess quality at various centers; use programs enrolled in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to help educate the public about quality (e.g., the difference between licensing standards and quality).
 - Assist early childhood programs with information on meaningfully engaging parents and families.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council performed a study to determine the feasibility of a statewide early childhood data collection system. After the feasibility study, the Council developed a plan to align existing early childhood education and care data in a system that links to Nevada's K–12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System. To complete this transition and align data systems the Council identified the following next steps:

- **Data Hub:** The Council noted the need for an early childhood education data hub to enable data sharing among early childhood programs. Examples of data elements to be shared are provider demographics (e.g., workforce qualifications and retention), QRIS data, a record of technical assistance requests and subsequent services, classroom quality assessment scores, child demographics, child enrollment, and child outcomes information.
 - **Incorporation of Publicly Funded Programs:** The Council suggested creating a comprehensive early learning database with information from publicly funded early childhood programs, including subsidized child care, Head Start, state pre-kindergarten, Early Intervention, preschool special education, and home visiting.
 - **Business Intelligence Capabilities:** The vision of the unified system would include all early childhood data from birth to age 5 and include workforce data, child care center information, and other data elements. The Council recommended that the data portal provide user-friendly, web-based dashboards and reports tailored to educators, administrators, and parents.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Nevada Council supported professional development efforts. A birth to third grade policy proposal agenda was developed, including recommendations to improve coursework and teacher preparation programs (e.g., integration of developmentally appropriate teaching and practices in coursework). The agenda also included a funding request to update the Core Knowledge and Competencies framework. The Council endorsed Assembly Bill 109, which increased training requirements for staff working directly with children in licensed child care centers to fulfill 24 training hours over a 3-year period (by July 1, 2016).

NEVADA

Early Learning Standards

The Nevada 3- to 5-year-old Early Learning Standards were developed and approved by the State Board of Education in 2010. The Council took part in aligning these standards into one comprehensive set of Early Learning Standards for all early childhood programs.

The Council submitted a draft of the *Nevada Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines* to the State Board of Education. The draft was approved in 2014.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Mental Health:** The Council leveraged MIECHV and ECCS funds to support a survey of pediatric health care providers examining the extent to which the social and emotional health of young children is assessed during well-child visits. As a result of the findings, Nevada allocated funding (through tobacco settlement funds) to increase services to children and families in southern Nevada, an area that showed lower rates of assessment.
 - **Tribal Engagement:** Through the Council's support, the Tribal Early Childhood Advisory Council, a committee of the Nevada Indian Commission, was established to inform tribal councils about the importance of early childhood education and care.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$623,467
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$787,744
- Amount Expended: \$768,071
- Percent of Funds Expended: 97.50%

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Council Name: Spark New Hampshire Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Early Learning New Hampshire on behalf of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Council Website: <http://sparknh.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 23

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Spark New Hampshire Early Childhood Advisory Council began as a steering committee appointed by the New Hampshire Governor in January 2010. In September 2011, Governor John Lynch officially created New Hampshire's Early Childhood Advisory Council by executive order. The Council focuses on expectant parents, and on children from birth through third grade and their families. The Council's activities are based on several years of early childhood systems-building work, starting with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems planning process, the statewide Child Care Advisory Council 5-year plan, and Early Learning New Hampshire's cross-agency meetings.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

New Hampshire met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The 11 indicator areas outlined by the Spark New Hampshire Early Childhood Data System Committee guided the Council's needs assessment. The assessment examined each indicator to determine the scope and significance of each issue, and the current capacity of the state to address it and develop recommendations for improvement. In addition to identifying the quality and availability of early childhood programs, the assessment illuminated the need for greater awareness of early childhood behavioral screening and assessment and the need for greater dissemination of early childhood information to families, providers, and policymakers. The recommendations created from the needs assessment led to the creation of the *New Hampshire Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Early Childhood*, which was rolled out at a statewide early childhood summit in November 2013.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council collaborated with early childhood stakeholders across the public and private sectors to increase coordination among the different systems.

Federal Level

- **Federal Grants:** The Council helped convene stakeholders to advise the development of proposals for several federal grants, including the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) and Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) grants. Project LAUNCH is a grant program of the federal government that seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. Also, the Council created a task force to develop a plan for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), and Council members served on the steering committee.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Council collaborated with the New Hampshire Child Development Bureau to develop a new Quality Rating and Improvement System and created a universal definition for quality in early childhood programs across service sectors.

State and Local Level

- ***Integrated Early Childhood Data System:*** Kindergarten has been mandatory in the state since 2011, and there is no state-supported public preschool program. In order to develop a system for the variety of early childhood programs in the state, the Council worked with the state's Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education to develop recommendations for an integrated early childhood data system.
 - ***Public School Participation:*** The Council worked with representatives from the New Hampshire Association of School Principals and public schools to develop the *New Hampshire Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Early Childhood*.
 - ***New Hampshire Endowment for Health:*** In order to increase public awareness in the area of early childhood education, the Council applied for and received a grant from the New Hampshire Endowment for Health. These funds, along with those from Project LAUNCH, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, and the CCDF, were leveraged together to implement the *New Hampshire Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Early Childhood*.
-

Participation of Children

The Council undertook a number of efforts to understand why current levels of participation are low in early childhood programs and how to increase participation. The Council reached out to survey parents, providers, and other community constituents. They also implemented community café forums to gain a better understanding of the barriers preventing parents from accessing quality early childhood programs and services and heard suggestions on what could be done at the state and local levels to improve access. This feedback was incorporated into the state's *Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Early Childhood*.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

A major part of the Council's strategic early childhood education plan was to establish a unified system to house and manage data from all agencies responsible for early child education and care programming. The Council identified major needs and next steps:

- ***Unique Identifiers:*** New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services does not have a unique identifier for children participating in early childhood programs. In fact, some children receive multiple identifiers when they are enrolled in several programs. This increases the difficulty of successfully tracking children and collecting data. The Council identified this as a top need for a unified data system.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- **Linkages Between Early Childhood and Public Education:** Children enrolled in early childhood programs under the auspices of the state's Department of Health and Human Services were mandated by law in 2010 to receive the state assigned student identification (SASID). Although the Council designed a pilot program to implement the assignment of the SASIDs, no funding was provided to implement the mandate. Additional funds are needed to continue this work and to link this information to the Department of Education.
 - **Funding for Data Integration:** The Council estimated that \$8 million would be necessary to create an integrated early childhood data system for New Hampshire.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council convened stakeholders to improve the professional development system for early childhood providers in the state.

- **Higher Education Inventory:** The Council worked with the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of New Hampshire to complete a higher education inventory on early learning, health, and family support. These reports assessed how effectively the state's degree programs were preparing the early education workforce, examining factors like the teaching experience of the faculty and how students in each program are assessed. Notably, this research focused not just on degree programs directly involved with early education, but also on those that involve an early childhood component, such as programs in social work, family support, and public health. Members of the Council are now using these inventories when working with institutions of higher education in the state to determine how to align desired competencies for the early childhood workforce and school's coursework.
 - **PORTAL:** The Council developed and launched Professional Opportunities, Resources, Trainings, and Links (PORTAL) on its website. This database of professional development and employment opportunities provides early childhood workers, including those involved with education, health, and family support, with comprehensive and easy-to-access learning opportunities to improve their skills and serve more children.
 - **Workforce Framework:** In an effort to improve New Hampshire's system, the Council borrowed and implemented the National Association for the Education of Young Children's State Policy Blueprint framework for determining the current status of the state's workforce development programs.
-

Early Learning Standards

New Hampshire first developed early learning guidelines in 2005. The Council's focus on these standards was the first attempt to revise and improve them. For this task, members of the Council commissioned education experts to review the current standards and recommend how they could be improved. As a result, the state's early learning standards were aligned with *New Hampshire's*

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Early Learning Standards (continued)

Kindergarten Readiness Indicators, the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and the New Hampshire College and Career Ready Standards. The new standards were expanded to include more age groups and featured more developmental indicators.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Public Awareness Campaign:** The Council developed and implemented a statewide, research-based public awareness campaign to inform state leaders, policymakers, and the public about the importance of the early childhood years and quality early childhood programs.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$664,277
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

NEW JERSEY

Council Name: New Jersey Council for Young Children

Council Website: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/njcyc>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2003, the Council began early childhood systems work through the BUILD Initiative, a national effort to support comprehensive state early childhood services. In 2010, the New Jersey Council for Young Children was created by executive order to serve as the Governor's State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care as authorized under the Head Start Act.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

New Jersey met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

NEW JERSEY

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In its needs assessment, the Council examined the different data collection systems in the state, conducted surveys of higher education to determine the coursework and faculty capacity of early childhood education departments, and assessed parents' preferences for receiving early care and education. They also assessed infant and toddler care in the State of New Jersey. From their needs assessment, they developed the following recommendations:

- **Dissemination:** Create an easy-to-read white paper for providers that will outline findings from the infant and toddler care part of the needs assessment and identify what providers can do to improve quality.
 - **Marketing:** Create a marketing strategy for parents around New Jersey's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Grow NJ Kids.
 - **Workforce:** Strategize ways to include courses offered by 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education in the workforce registry.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked on the federal, state, and local levels to do the following: increase funding for early childhood systems; increase the quality of care available to children; align early childhood home-based programs with QRIS; and align the need for workforce training with appropriate higher education coursework.

Federal Level

- **Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):** The Council played a role in developing the goals of New Jersey's successful RTT-ELC grant application in 2013.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** Members from the CCDF program participated in Council committee work and led the piloting of the state's QRIS, Grow NJ Kids.

NEW JERSEY

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- **Implementation Plans:** New Jersey created a plan to move early childhood policy recommendations from the Council to implementation. An Inter-Department Planning Group consisting of state administrators from programs serving early childhood was convened to review Council recommendations and consider the feasibility of implementation. An early learning commission, consisting of commissioners from the state Departments of Education, Health, Children and Families, and Human Services also was created to consider and approve the implementation plans of the Inter-Department Planning Group.
- **Home Visiting:** The Council facilitated the alignment of the state home visiting programs with the state's QRIS and played a role in the revision of the state's early childhood Core Competencies to include home visiting staff.
- **Grow NJ Kids Test Drive:** The Council was instrumental in the Grow NJ Kids redesign and test drive, which was conducted in four counties. The Council required programs involved to be enrolled in New Jersey's Workforce Registry. The Council also worked with ShapingNJ, a federally supported program to combat obesity in young children through partnership.
- **Mental Health:** The Council's mental health workgroup worked with a national representative to partner with the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning to provide the state with resources to build the social and emotional competence of infants and children in New Jersey. The Infant Mental Health Endorsement was significant and would not have been achieved within the timeframe without the Council's involvement. Mental Health Endorsement is a process that supports and recognizes the development of professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families.
- **Community College Infant and Toddler Degree:** In partnership with the Head Start State Collaboration Office and the University of Cincinnati, the Council met with a community college association to discuss the possibility of an infant and toddler degree and reasonable next steps.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

After examining the current state of the data systems during their needs assessment, the Council decided to take three actions. They recommended the following: determination of how many state systems are being used; identification of overlaps in state systems; and creation of a pilot system to aggregate data across systems.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council conducted a preliminary examination of the current data in the Workforce Registry and identified gaps. The state found the sample too small to make any generalizations and strategized ways to increase the number of early care and education teachers and providers in the registry, including college-level faculty. The Council's Early Care and Education Workforce Committee

NEW JERSEY

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

partnered with Professional Impact NJ and drafted a white paper for philanthropists and legislators on the importance of having a workforce registry. The Council mapped higher education institutions and identified the coursework across 2- and 4-year colleges and universities. The Council worked to align this coursework with the state's birth-to-3 standards, preschool and kindergarten standards, and Core Knowledge and Competencies. The Council completed an initial geo-mapping of infant mental health providers through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Montclair State University. Through another MOU with Rutgers University, the Council evaluated center-based sites serving infants and toddlers. The insights from these efforts were incorporated into the Grow NJ Kids redesign.

Early Learning Standards

The Council contributed to development and dissemination of the *New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards 2013*. The standards were aligned to New Jersey's preschool and kindergarten standards and translated into Spanish. The Council also supported the revision of New Jersey's *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards for 3- to 5-year-olds*.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

The Council made further advancements beyond the requirements of the grant. These included efforts in mental health and kindergarten readiness.

- **Mental Health:** The Council mapped mental health providers in the state and developed a mental health curriculum framework.
 - **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:** The Kindergarten Entry Assessment was piloted in 2012 and was broadened to include a larger number of schools. The Council discussed plans to include the assessment results within the Grow NJ Kids QRIS.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,594,234
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,758,511
- Amount Expended: \$1,579,794
- Percent of Funds Expended: 89.84%

NEW MEXICO

Council Name: Early Learning Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Child Development Board: Children, Youth and Families Department

Council Website: <https://www.newmexicokids.org/content/elac>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 15

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In July 2009, Governor Bill Richardson designated the New Mexico Child Development Board to serve as the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Council was tasked with developing a state plan for an early learning system based on a 2003 Early Childhood Alignment Task Force report. In 2011, the Early Childhood Care and Education Act, passed by the New Mexico legislature, was signed into law by Governor Susana Martinez. The law established the membership and the roles and responsibilities of the Early Learning Advisory Council and relieved the New Mexico Child Development Board of Council responsibilities.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

New Mexico met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state

NEW MEXICO

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council performed a needs assessment to measure the quality and availability of early childhood care across the state. The resulting assessment enabled the Council to identify high-need communities to target as Investment Zones. These communities were found to have higher rates of socio-ecological, educational, and quality concerns. Mapping services and needs allowed the Council to define priorities for strategic planning efforts. The Council identified next steps:

- **Alignment:** Increase alignment across all early childhood programs to provide access to quality programs while eliminating gaps and limiting the duplication of services.
 - **Engagement:** Provide an increased awareness of early childhood programs and systems to allow policymakers and key stakeholders to better understand the extent of needs. Policymakers can elevate early childhood priorities through policy and funding opportunities and resources.
 - **Research:** Compile past research findings and identify best practices and procedures to enable evidence-based data to inform decisions and build higher-quality early childhood programs.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

Throughout the grant life cycle, the Council played a role in identifying opportunities and barriers to collaboration and coordination among federal and state-funded early childhood programs and services. Additionally, it increased coordination and collaboration through alignment and partnerships with other essential early childhood programs and services.

NEW MEXICO

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):*** The Council supported identification of priorities and assisted with the community assessment portion of the successful New Mexico RTT-ELC application in 2013. The Council is involved as part of the team engaged in oversight and reporting of project development and progress.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:*** The Council helped to identify priorities and assisted with the community assessment process. The Council is involved in the oversight of a project related to Early Childhood Investment Zones and accountability reporting.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Grant:*** The Council partnered with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) to identify overlapping priorities and ensured priority goals were specified in the application for funding.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):*** The Council supported the development and implementation of a program grant through committee work and collaboration to ensure Council goals were aligned with the ECCS goals.
- ***Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):*** This grant program of the federal government seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. The Council's multi-agency Pyramid Committee for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health has membership and participation that is part of the Project LAUNCH grant awarded in Santa Fe. The Pyramid Committee developed the following goals aligned to Council efforts: provide access to services; develop the workforce; promote practices that support the social and emotional development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; and develop a process for gathering data.

State and Local Level

- ***Home Visiting:*** The Council led efforts to assess the state-funded Home Visiting program. It advised the legislative group on community challenges and access to services under the Home Visiting Accountability Act. The Council's efforts directly contributed to the allocation of additional funding for Home Visiting programs by the New Mexico legislature, doubling the number of families served. This funding was prioritized to target Investment Zone communities, which account for approximately half of the families being served.
- ***State-Funded Pre-Kindergarten:*** The Council led efforts to assess current pre-kindergarten programs and needs of communities. The Council advised the legislative group on the pre-kindergarten procurement process, which allowed programs to apply for funding using a process similar to the one used by the Public Education Department. The Council's efforts led to obtaining additional funding for pre-kindergarten programs allocated by the state legislature.

NEW MEXICO

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- ***FOCUS, a Quality Rating and Improvement System:*** The Council committees and subcommittees made ongoing recommendations to the Council to improve the quality of early childhood programs, review standards, and promote practices to improve child outcomes.
 - ***Infant Mental Health Teams:*** The Council served in an advisory role to the Children, Youth and Families Department on community needs and led in identifying priorities for the state. As a result, two additional infant teams were created for high-needs judicial districts. The infant teams work with children placed under the care of the state and their caregiver.
-

Participation of Children

Following the needs assessment, the Council developed and implemented a strategic plan anticipated to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs. This plan identified Investment Zones; used mapping to track services and funding priorities; and planned additional funding for Home Visiting, pre-kindergarten, and Child Care Assistance programs.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

In 2013, the Council reported the establishment of an early childhood data warehouse using data received from New Mexico's Department of Health; Public Education Department; and Children, Youth and Families Department. The early childhood data warehouse has geo-mapping capabilities. This capability was used to generate community-level data and to determine New Mexico's Investment Zones that map social, educational, and health risk factors. Three top needs were identified for implementing the data system:

- Use data for accountability and policy development.
 - Ensure that New Mexico has the infrastructure and capacity to make needed changes.
 - Measure change over time.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council supported professional development efforts by enhancing the current Core Knowledge and Competencies framework. The Council's Committee on Workforce Development continued efforts to create a workforce development plan. The committee assessed various program requirements, available educational opportunities, and scholarship and incentive programs. It successfully developed four opportunities, including developing competencies that support culture, completing early learning guidelines, providing opportunities for family engagement training, and infant mental health professional development opportunities. The Council leads the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Committee, which oversees scholarships for early childhood professionals working in child care, Early Intervention, Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and Home Visiting programs, and those involved in other early childhood programs.

NEW MEXICO

Early Learning Standards

The Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers were completed and consist of five domains that reflect universal aspects of development. *The Preschool and Kindergarten Early Learning Guidelines* were aligned across early childhood systems to ensure the criteria were uniformly applied in all settings throughout the state. After implementation and use, it was determined that validation of the assessment system relating to the guidelines would be reviewed to confirm that the guidelines met program requirements. The guidelines and companion materials also have been translated into Spanish to ensure that more of New Mexico's children and caretakers have access to the information.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$857,642
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,021,919
- Amount Expended: \$1,021,918
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

NEW YORK

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Council on Children and Families

Council Website: <http://www.nysecac.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 41–50

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2009, the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) was established to provide advice and guidance to the Governor and the commissioners of relevant health, education, and human services agencies on building a comprehensive system of supports and services for young children and their families. The ECAC is administered by the Council on Children and Families. This was established in 1977 as an independent state entity to coordinate the state health, education, and human services agencies in providing more effective systems of care for children and families. The Council on Children and Families also administers the State Head Start Collaboration Project; the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems initiative; and New York's Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health), a grant program of the federal government that seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8.

At the time of the ECAC's development, the Governor appointed as members approximately 50 representatives of state agencies that serve young children and their families and many nonprofit agencies that also serve young children, families, teachers, and programs. Co-chairs that represent both state government and the private, nonprofit sector were selected to lead. Once a strategic plan was developed, six workgroups were established: Strong Families, Promoting Healthy Child Development, Quality Improvement, Workforce, Data, and Finance. In addition to ECAC members, each of the workgroups includes additional representatives from the field.

NEW YORK

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

New York met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In 2008, New York's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant commenced a statewide needs assessment prior to the implementation of the State Advisory Council grant. The Council leveraged findings from the ECCS statewide needs assessment to create a strategic plan used to further engage leaders statewide. The Council in partnership with community leaders developed response strategies for high-priority issues.

The Council conducted a targeted needs assessment to prepare the state's application for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. The Council sought to identify high-need communities across the state. Data were collected from the fields of child welfare, education, health, social services, and labor on a range of 20 childhood risk factors. For the purposes of this analysis, high-need communities were defined as areas where young children were

NEW YORK

Needs Assessment (continued)

disproportionately exposed to high risk factors compared to the average of the total New York population of young children. The findings were used to identify and prioritize high-need communities in rural, suburban, and urban settings.

The Council used local forums to hear from stakeholders on community needs. For example, the Council awarded a contract to evaluate local programs and providers' readiness to participate in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Also, the Council established parent focus groups across the state to seek input over a 3-year period on the development of a new parent kit.

The Council used the findings from the needs assessments and forums to identify New York's top early childhood priorities, including improving the quality of early childhood education programs, supporting early childhood professionals in developing their knowledge and competencies to provide high-quality services, and meeting children's social and emotional needs.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council collaborated and coordinated with early childhood programs and stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels.

Federal Level

- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:*** The Council worked closely with the state's home visiting workgroup to support the building of a comprehensive home visiting system.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Council supported implementation efforts of the CCDF plan by establishing, disseminating, and providing professional development in the areas of the Early Learning Guidelines and Core Body of Knowledge. A trainer credential also was developed, and CCDF spearheaded changes to improve quality by requiring early childhood professionals receiving financial aid to receive training from a credentialed trainer. The Council led implementation of the state's QRIS, which incorporated and updated CCDF participant data.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):*** The Council worked closely with ECCS and utilized the needs assessment performed in 2008 to address issues identified.
- ***Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):*** The Council's Promoting Healthy Child Development Workgroup served as the Project LAUNCH advisory group. They used the Council's strategic plan to develop the Project LAUNCH plan and aligned the Project LAUNCH plan with the ECAC strategic plan to ensure activities were closely coordinated. Project Launch is a grant program of the federal government and promotes the wellness of young children birth to age 8.

NEW YORK

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Part B, Section 619 of IDEA:** The Council established a joint task force with the Early Intervention Coordinating Council and an additional joint task force with the Preschool Special Education Program to develop guidance on identifying and treating children from birth to age 5 who are experiencing social and emotional issues. The Council also worked with both programs on issues of inclusion and supporting staff in meeting the needs of children with disabilities.

State and Local Level

- **Universal Pre-Kindergarten:** The Council collaborated with the state's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program to provide quality assurance parameters that align with QUALITYstarsNY, the state's QRIS. These standards will be used to support the quality assurance protocols for newly funded pre-kindergarten programs.
- **Early Learn NYC:** The Council supported the Early Learn NYC program (a partnership bringing together funding from child care subsidies, Head Start, and state-funded pre-kindergarten) to include all Early Learn NYC programs in QUALITYstarsNY.
- **State Home Visiting (HV) Programs:** The Council worked closely with representatives from state and locally funded HV programs to develop and implement a comprehensive HV system by developing tools to assist providers in blending and braiding funds for enhanced and expanded services. Key HV programs included the following:
 - » **Healthy Families New York and Nurse Family Partnership:** These programs worked with pregnant mothers, young children, and families to deliver in-home health visits, assist in building strong family relationships, and provide developmental assessments.
 - » **Parent Child Home Program:** The program promoted early literacy and school readiness by providing evidence-based HV services to at-risk young children.
- **Shared Services Alliance Project:** The Council evaluated national early learning shared services web platforms that offered an array of customizable resources to meet state specifications. The Council determined that a shared services platform was an important strategy for supporting program quality by streamlining administrative costs and enhancing delivery of services across the state. In 2012, on behalf of the Council, the Early Care and Learning Council and New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) convened focus groups of providers and parents to discuss and consider the opportunity for a statewide shared services alliance. Shared services focus groups were conducted across the state in urban, suburban, and rural areas in Albany, New York City, and Rochester to assure a diversity of perspectives. The Council used the findings from the focus groups to shape the shared services program launched in April 2013.

NEW YORK

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Kindergarten Transition Forums:** The Council in partnership with other early childhood programs conducted kindergarten transition forums around the state. The forums were designed to raise awareness of transition planning needed in Head Start and other preschool settings to ensure children have a smooth transition to kindergarten.
 - **New York Works for Children:** The Council supported the establishment of New York's workforce development system. It partnered with the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI) at the City University of New York and the NYSAEYC and developed and piloted a workforce database (registry), *Aspire*, to track all professionals working in the early childhood field.
 - **QUALITYstarsNY:** The Council supported the initial implementation of New York's tiered QRIS in communities with high-need families, as determined by data made available from the State Education Department. The PDI coordinates this project on behalf of the Council, and several state and local partners also are integrated into implementation components.
-

Participation of Children

The Council initiated efforts to increase the participation of children in early childhood education programs to include underserved and special populations. Examples of some of these efforts include the following:

- **Increase Rural Child Care Subsidies:** Rural counties have lower enrollment and unspent subsidies compared to suburban and urban areas using CCDF subsidies. The Council worked with the National Opinion Research Center to sample high-need rural areas in the state in conjunction with the National Survey of Early Care and Education that was underway. Future analysis of this data will be reviewed to determine if future program and policy changes are needed to increase rural child care subsidies and access.
 - **Increase Quality Care:** The Council led the development of the QRIS QUALITYstarsNY and invested in efforts to strengthen the professional development system to increase the quality of the state's early childhood education system. The Council was an essential partner in advising the Governor on investments needed in the child care subsidy, pre-kindergarten, and HV programs. The Council's efforts contributed to a 5-year, \$1.5 billion early childhood investment in the budget that Governor Cuomo sent to the state legislature. The funding is intended to support full-day universal pre-kindergarten, increased qualifications for pre-kindergarten teachers, and increased compensation.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council used findings from an early learning data system baseline report to create recommendations for a unified early childhood data collection system in the following areas:

NEW YORK

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

- **Funding:** The Council estimated the cost of building the unified data system to be \$14 million.
 - **Child-Level Data:** The Council recommended collecting data that includes child characteristic data for licensed and registered child care programs, including Early Head Start and Head Start. Currently child-level data are only collected for children receiving subsidies and services under IDEA Parts B and C.
 - **Unique Identifier:** The Council recommended establishing a unique identifier system to assign a number to each child in an early childhood education program.
 - **Workforce and Quality Data:** The Council supported the establishment of Aspire, a workforce database (registry), and the QUALITYstarsNY Web-based Early Learning System for data. These two comprehensive systems communicate and capture essential data to be used to make decisions, form recommendations, and design policy changes.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council used the 2009 statewide workforce study to set priorities and inform the design of the Council's Workforce Workgroup's agenda. Objectives of the workgroup included developing a workforce registry, strengthening early childhood curricula in higher education, and establishing a trainer credential and training approval system. The Council successfully completed a workforce registry and the trainer's credential and approval system. It also made significant progress in strengthening early childhood teacher preparation programs in institutions of higher education across the state. The Council supplied every faculty member in these programs with a copy of the revised *Core Body of Knowledge* and the *Early Learning Guidelines* to serve as the foundation for their curricula. After distributing copies to higher education teachers, several college bookstores ordered both resources.

Early Learning Standards

In 2012, the Council completed the *New York State Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to Age 5*. The Council funded the creation and distribution of copies of the guidelines to all child care center-based programs, early education higher education programs, and university faculty members throughout the state. The Council developed online and in-person training modules and resources to support provider usage. It also provided information to parents on how to support relationship building and use of the guidelines at home and in the classroom. The guidelines were aligned with the *New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core* and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*.

In 2011, the Council supported the revision of early learning standards for children ages 3 to 5. The revised standards, *New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core*, were aligned with the state *Common Core Learning Standards for Grades K–12*. The Council printed and disseminated the pre-kindergarten standards statewide, including a sample curriculum for providers.

NEW YORK

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Parenting Support:** The Council partnered with the New York State Parenting Education Partnership to develop a new comprehensive Parent Kit for families with newborns. This empowered parents with current research and practices on providing a nurturing environment for babies and supporting healthy child development. Rounds of parent focus groups were held at various stages from 2010 to 2013 to gain input and feedback for the design and content of the kit. The Council also co-sponsored a training institute on family engagement with the New York State Parenting Education Partnership to help parent educators increase their content knowledge on how to meaningfully and effectively work with parents of young children.
- **Health:** The Council supported efforts and distributed brochures on the Good Nutrition Pays initiative, which recruited family child care providers in center-based programs and family child care homes to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The Council also developed and disseminated information on Prototype Communities, which highlighted successful developmental screening initiatives for children. Posters for parents, early care and education providers, and pediatricians were distributed to encourage routine developmental screening of children from 9 to 30 months.
- **Mental Health and Social and Emotional Development:** The Council established a joint task force with the state Early Intervention Coordinating Council to provide guidance to the field on meeting the social and emotional development needs of young children. A member of the Council also serves on the state Medicaid Redesign task force on behavioral health to guide the task force in including strategies for addressing the unique behavioral health needs of young children.
- **Focus on Infants and Toddlers:** The Council co-sponsored a summit with Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health). This convening led to the award of small grants where community leaders developed local partnerships with infant and toddler technical assistance specialists, child care health consultants, Part C coordinators, and mental health early detection specialists to improve the quality of services for infants and toddlers.
- **QUALITYstarsNY QRIS:** The Council leveraged funds from several sources that lead to the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY and developed and field-tested quality standards to offer a universal set of program expectations for all early care and education settings. The Council held a series of forums across the state to gauge the readiness of programs and providers to effectively participate in QRIS.
- **Financing:** The Council supported the development of a web-based early childhood cost model to provide policymakers with budgetary and financial analyses of existing and proposed programs, services, and policies, and insight on how to maximize resources. A return on investment component was added to the Council's early childhood cost model, as well as a dissemination and training plan. The Council produced issue briefs to help communicate results of the model and policy implications. In October 2013, the Council conducted a second financing strategies forum to create two guides on blending and braiding funds to support early childhood systems building and enhance HV programs.

NEW YORK

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$5,424,273
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$5,588,550
- Amount Expended: \$5,577,400
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.80%

NORTH CAROLINA

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Division of Public Health

Council Website: N/A

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council (SAC) grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2010, the Governor's Policy Office was designated to establish the state's new Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to coordinate and strengthen the early childhood system and help ensure that all of the state's young children come to school ready to succeed. In 2011, North Carolina applied for and was awarded a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, for which the ECAC is the lead agency with responsibility for oversight, grants management, and implementation of several projects. In 2012, the ECAC was moved the Division of Public Health.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

North Carolina met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

NORTH CAROLINA

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council began gathering data on the quality and availability of early childhood care as part of the SAC grant and expanded its efforts through the RTT-ELC grant application. The state found significant disparities between children with high needs and their peers at the end of third grade, especially among children living in rural, economically distressed parts of the state. Leveraging the RTT-ELC grant, the Council was able to support the development of Transformation Zones to deliver comprehensive services to geographical areas in the state with low infrastructure.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council supported efforts to coordinate and collaborate with federal, state, and local early childhood partners.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:*** The Council contributed to development of the application and is the lead agency for the successful RTT-ELC grant.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):*** The Council served as an advisory group for the MIECHV. The Council leveraged RTT-ELC and MIECHV funds to expand the implementation of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) in local communities. The Triple P program provides evidence-based practical strategies to help parents manage children's behavior, prevent problems from developing, and build healthy relationships.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Council supported the CCDF plan by allocating SAC funds to increase the child care subsidy. The Council also allocated funds to increase the provision of T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® scholarships.

NORTH CAROLINA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The ECCS project coordinator provided advice and guidance, particularly in the areas of early childhood health and mental health, to support the Council's work.

State and Local Level

- **State-Funded Pre-K Program:** Council efforts impacted the RTT-ELC efforts in consultation provided to state-funded pre-kindergarten teachers, supporting teachers' birth-to-kindergarten licensure requirements.
 - **Smart Start Initiative:** Smart Start projects, such as child care health consultants and pediatric developmental screening, were aligned with the Council and RTT-ELC efforts. This alignment enabled North Carolina to use one-time grant funds to strengthen these ongoing projects.
 - **Local Partnerships for Children:** Local partnerships in four RTT-ELC Transformation Zones were involved in ensuring alignment among Council, RTT-ELC services, and local systems-building efforts.
-

Participation of Children

The Council, as the lead agency for the RTT-ELC grant, began work on the implementation of the Transformation Zone initiative in four of the state's highest-need counties. The Transformation Zone initiative targeted intensive interventions through family engagement, high-quality child care, and early literacy to improve outcomes for the state's most vulnerable young children. The Transformation Zone initiative was guided by a focus on implementation science that is intended to ensure effective implementation of these targeted interventions, as well as to inform current and future local and state early childhood system-building. RTT-ELC funding is being used to continue the implementation of Transformation Zones.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified priorities for implementing a unified early childhood data system, including the following:

- **Data Governance:** Develop and implement a governance system for an integrated early childhood data system with agreements among participating agencies to guide data sharing.
- **Unique Identifier:** Expand the unique child identifier system for public school students to early childhood data systems to allow longitudinal tracking.
- **Infrastructure:** Develop the technical infrastructure to enable the individual early childhood data systems to interface.

NORTH CAROLINA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council helped increase the capacity of institutions of higher education in partnership with North Carolina's Division of Child Development and Early Education. Together they developed a memorandum of agreement to offer small grants to support 20 community colleges in obtaining national accreditation for their early childhood teacher preparation programs. Through RTT-ELC, that opportunity was extended to all 58 community colleges in the state.

Early Learning Standards

In 2013, the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* was updated to combine the previous 2007 *Foundations for Infants & Toddlers* and the 2005 *Foundations for Preschoolers* into one document. The revised *Foundations* spanned children from birth through age 5 and included goals, developmental indicators, and strategies to support children's development in five domains. The Council supported the printing and distribution of the *Foundations* document.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Mental Health:** Council members participated in the North Carolina Institute of Medicine Task Force on the Mental Health, Social, and Emotional Needs of Young Children and Their Families and helped align task force recommendations on social and emotional development to the Council and RTT-ELC-related activities.
 - **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** Because the North Carolina public may not be aware of the high-quality, coordinated early childhood system that North Carolina built over the past two decades, the Council supported the Raising North Carolina public engagement initiative. This was designed to help raise the visibility of the early childhood system and services. The initiative engaged the full range of service providers and supporters in communicating their contributions. Early childhood services are one of the many investments that North Carolinians make in young children.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$3,053,061
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$3,217,338
- Amount Expended: \$3,205,101
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.62%

OHIO

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Council Website: <http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In August 2008, Governor Ted Strickland created the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and designated the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services as the fiscal agent for the ECAC. In 2010, Governor John Kasich used the expertise of the ECAC to help craft the application for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, which was awarded to Ohio in December 2011.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Ohio met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

OHIO

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In July 2013, the Council performed the latest needs assessment of the availability of high-quality early childhood care and sponsored the development of a statewide supply and demand profile for each county's early learning and development programs. The profiles contained an inventory of the current supply of early learning and development programs within each county, including the number of quality early child care slots available. Each profile was generated using current census data along with current data from state agencies operating early childhood programs.

The Council recommended the following steps as a result of the needs assessment:

- Support providers in communities without high-quality programs in the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to become quality star rated.
 - Review state agencies' enrollment and capacity methodology to ensure consistent reporting of availability and access to early care and education spaces.
 - Create a discussion guide for communities to use when analyzing needs assessment data to encourage and support discussions about quality and access at the local level. The Council completed a 4-page guide that communities are now using to understand profile data, with visuals on each page to aid communities in understanding the findings.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council supported efforts to increase collaboration and coordination at the state and federal level:

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:*** The Council provided ongoing support to the RTT-ELC leadership team. After the RTT-ELC grant was awarded, the Council hosted regional meetings with early childhood professionals across the state to gather input regarding Ohio's RTT-ELC plans.

OHIO

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):** The Council worked with its MIECHV program to better understand racial health disparities and infant mortality rates in Ohio. Discussions explored changes or enhancements that may be needed to the current system.
 - **Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):** This grant program of the federal government seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. Ohio's Project LAUNCH grant was administered in three communities. The Council analyzed results from the grant's implementation and explored implications for statewide replication.
 - **Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The Council discussed screening and assessments across all programs for infants and toddlers and facilitated joint training for Part C and other early care and education providers.
 - **Part B, Section 619 of IDEA:** The Council was instrumental in recommending and discussing common standards and verification procedures for all settings. This is vital, because preschool special education programs in the state are required to participate in the QRIS.
-

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.

The Council's recommendations to increase participation included the following:

- **Funding:** The Council recommended an increase in state funding for programs supporting high-needs children.
- **Pre-Kindergarten:** The Council recommended ways to recruit underserved families for participation in the state pre-kindergarten program. Ohio made progress in this area. In June 2013, the state pre-kindergarten program was expanded by \$10 million for the 2014 school year and \$22 million for the 2015 school year. The Governor charged the Council with implementation of the program. The Council created a plan and allocated the new pre-kindergarten slots to families who were not receiving publicly funded child care and other state or federal funds. The prioritization allowed families, regardless of work or education status, to receive services if the family's income fell below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.
- **Targeted Needs Assessment:** The Council recommended a targeted needs assessment to identify communities with dual language learners and develop strategies, in conjunction with the English Language Learners Advisory Council, for recruiting more dual language learners into early learning and development programs.

OHIO

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

In April 2011, the Council recommended establishing a statewide student identification number to be used in early childhood programs and to link to the K–12 system. In June 2012, the Council supported the successful establishment of a unique identifier through legislation. To further the progress on developing a unified early childhood data system, the Council determined the following top priorities:

- **Resources:** Ohio called for additional resources to develop and design an early childhood data warehouse.
 - **Child-Level Data:** Ohio recommended that a kindergarten readiness assessment tool be administered in all public, private, community and charter schools to capture child-level data.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council funded an update to the state's Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) to reflect the new *Birth to Kindergarten Entry Early Learning and Development Standards* and Ohio's plans for a new assessment system. The Council supported the creation of a bridging document that demonstrated the alignment of the CKCs and Ohio's Educator Standards in order to educate schools about the competencies that are expected by professionals working with young children. The Council completed an assessment of the current content of Ohio's degree and credentialing programs. The assessment was followed by an outreach effort to encourage higher education institutions to utilize the CKC framework. A workforce study updated a 2005 study to profile the state of the early childhood workforce.

Early Learning Standards

The Council supported a collaborative effort of state agencies with national experts and stakeholders to revise and expand the early learning standards. The revisions built upon the *Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines* and the pre-kindergarten standards for ages 3 to 5. In October 2012, the State Board of Education adopted Ohio's new comprehensive *Birth to Kindergarten Entry Early Learning and Development Standards* in all domains of school readiness. The new standards were aligned to the kindergarten to third grade standards and utilized a common framework across all domains of school readiness.

OHIO

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Third Grade Reading Guarantee:** Ohio supports young children through third grade who struggle with pre-reading and reading skills. The Ohio legislature asked the Council to make recommendations on early childhood programming to help children read at grade level. In June 2012, the Governor signed the Third Grade Reading Guarantee into law. In February 2013, the Council in partnership with the State Board of Education submitted recommendations to address distinct areas: family engagement; professional development; quality, access, and financing; and standards and assessment, with 12 primary strategies to implement the program successfully.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$3,511,771
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$3,676,048
- Amount Expended: \$3,554,896
- Percent of Funds Expended: 96.70%

OKLAHOMA

Council Name: Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board

Designated State Agency: Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Council Website: <http://www.smartstartok.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 32

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2003, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) was established by state law to promote school readiness through community-based efforts to coordinate services in Smart Start communities and strengthen state-level early childhood policy. Through a memorandum of understanding in 2008 and legislation in 2010, Governor Brad Henry appointed the OPSR Board to serve as Oklahoma's Early Childhood State Advisory Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Oklahoma met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

OKLAHOMA

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council performed qualitative needs assessments that gathered information pertaining to the child care and social service needs of low-income families and how families are meeting those needs. Findings led to further data gathering, including information on the availability of early childhood programs and data related to school readiness risk factors, to better determine issues and obstacles and the most effective strategies to address them. There were two important results of the findings:

- A School Readiness Risk Index was developed to analyze school readiness risk indicators by county. This information enabled the calculation of an overall School Readiness Risk Index and the development of a map to plot readiness data.
- The Council gathered local-level data by training local Smart Start communities (as described in the Coordination and Collaboration section) to conduct needs assessment surveys and administer surveys to parents in families with young children. The survey reported on all children for the purpose of determining who does and does not participate in high-quality early childhood programs in the local Smart Start communities.

The Council regularly assessed needs, implemented strategies to address needs, and gathered additional data to assess outcomes. Below are recommendations the Council developed based on the most recent needs assessment findings:

- Establish an Ad Hoc Child Care Committee to explore trends in the reduction of licensed child care programs providing child care to the public and the impact that other early childhood programs might have on the child care industry in Oklahoma.
- Maximize braiding and blending of funds and promote program collaboration to maximize resources in local communities. The Council developed and delivered a statewide collaborative training session to advance this recommendation.
- Explore current child care subsidy policies and procedures to determine the extent to which these either assist families or create barriers to families seeking care. The Council acted on the recommendation to begin reviewing child care subsidy eligibility and rules. It continues to gather data on how these factors affect participation.

OKLAHOMA

Coordination and Collaboration

Council funding supported improved coordination and collaboration at the federal, state, and local level.

Federal Level

- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The Council provided a letter of support for the MIECHV grant application. Local Smart Start communities were partially funded by MIECHV and Council funding to enhance local infrastructure, support home visiting programs, and integrate and align these programs within the broader early childhood system.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: The Council's strategic plan was integrated with the ECCS early childhood plan. The Council collaborated with ECCS on the latest ECCS application and identified professional development for infant and toddler providers as a priority area for joint work.
- ***Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health)***: This grant program of the federal government seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. The Council served as the state advisory council for the newest Project LAUNCH award.
- ***Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)***: The Council and Part C were active participants on the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application and collaborated on several workgroups.
- ***Early Childhood-Child Welfare Partnerships***: The Council supported partnership efforts to ensure that children involved in the child welfare system have increased access to early care and education programs. The Council's efforts included assessing current policies and practices to promote inclusion of this population in quality care and programs.

State and Local Level

- ***State Home Visiting (HV) Programs***: The Council collaborated with both HV programs—Children First Nurse-Family Partnership and Start Right—in needs assessment activities. The assessments targeted professional development, program standards, and core competencies for the purpose of aligning these areas across HV programs.
- ***Smart Start Communities***: Oklahoma's Smart Start communities are essential to building local early childhood systems that align with state-level initiatives. The Council supported Smart Start efforts to build program collaboration models, increase access to early childhood programs, and support collaborative professional development opportunities. Smart Start communities were funded by state appropriation and through private donations made directly to local organizations. Smart Start Oklahoma partnered with private and nonprofit organizations to convene the Oklahoma Champions for Early Opportunities (OKCEOs), a network of business leaders across Oklahoma who support early childhood investments. Mini-summits were held across the state to engage current OKCEOs and to reach new business and civic leaders for the purpose of promoting early childhood investments and encouraging participation in early childhood programs.

OKLAHOMA

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations. The Council supported the following efforts:

- **Revise Child Care Subsidy:** The Council recommended examining and revising the Child Care Subsidy system in Oklahoma to expand participation. The Council reviewed Child Care Subsidy eligibility and rules and gathered data on the impact these have had on participation.
 - **Expand Pre-Kindergarten:** The Council supported ongoing efforts to increase the number of full-day pre-kindergarten classrooms. Increases were positive, allowing the number of children participating in pre-kindergarten to increase from 71 percent in 2010 to 74 percent in 2012. In 2010, only 57 percent of children enrolled in pre-kindergarten were in full-day programs. By the 2012–2013 school year, children in full-day programs had increased to 72 percent. The Council has continued to focus on expanding pre-kindergarten to increase the participation of early learners.
 - **Strengthen Partnerships:** The Council strengthened partnerships between systems that focus on special populations, such as families in home visiting programs, children in state custody, and children with special needs. Five local Smart Start communities received MIECHV funding to serve as Community Connectors to home visiting programs by providing outreach to at-risk populations.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the following top needs to develop and implement a unified data system:

- **Linkage of Data:** The Council recommended that data about children, personnel, and programs be linked across childhood programs.
 - **Unique Identifier:** Oklahoma should create a unique identifier to facilitate the linkage of child data across programs.
 - **Data Governance:** Establishing clear guidelines and creating a shared data governance agreement is a critical first step to a linked data system. This is important because early childhood data reside in multiple state agencies.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council studied and assessed the capacity of higher education to support the development of early childhood professionals. While the Council's investigation of workforce needs yielded mixed results, Council members still were able to use these results to inform future discussions and the development of other studies, such as one conducted to determine the effectiveness of the higher education system in preparing the early childhood workforce for employment. The study also spurred interest in creating a crosswalk of core competencies across early childhood programs.

The Council developed a process to consolidate the assessments and reports conducted under this project into one overarching strategic plan. Based on a model process from the Above and Below

OKLAHOMA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

the Line (ABLE) Change Framework, a process was designed to identify weaknesses and gaps in various components of the early childhood system. Based on the reports, the Council will make further recommendations.

Early Learning Standards

In 2010 Oklahoma developed early learning guidelines for children ages 3 to 5 years. In 2011, the state finalized birth to 3 early learning guidelines. These standards were aligned at the time of development with the Oklahoma pre-kindergarten program, child care, and Head Start. In 2011, the Council's Quality, Access, Standards, and Accountability Workgroup supported the State Department of Education in developing the *Priority Academic Student Skills* (PASS) pre-kindergarten standards by reviewing and providing input to ensure the standards were developmentally appropriate and aligned with the early learning guidelines.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- ***Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:*** The contract with local Smart Start communities ensured parent involvement by requiring strategies to increase family and community engagement and requiring at least one parent to serve on the local coalition. Contractors were trained on the ABLe Change Framework to guide community systems change, and parents and community members were an important part of the process.
 - ***Reaching for the Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):*** The Council's Quality, Access, Standards, and Accountability Workgroup supported the Oklahoma Department of Human Services' Child Care Services in exploring strategies to enhance the QRIS and expand it to other early childhood programs such as Head Start and pre-kindergarten. The study to develop a crosswalk of early childhood program standards will lead to additional revisions and expansions of QRIS and will inform a process that recognizes early childhood program quality.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,506,605
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,670,882
- Amount Expended: \$1,649,507
- Percent of Funds Expended: 98.72%

OREGON

Council Name: Early Learning Council

Designated State Agency: Established in the Office of the Governor; Currently in the Department of Education

Council Website: <http://www.oregonearlylearning.com>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In May 2010, Governor Ted Kulongoski issued an executive order to establish the Early Childhood Matters Advisory Council and meet the requirements of the Head Start Act. When elected, Governor John Kitzhaber made systemic education reform a top priority of his administration, with particular focus on children from birth to age 5. An early childhood and family investment transition team was appointed in December 2010 and submitted a report with recommendations for early childhood priorities in three areas: early identification and support, shared measurement and accountability, and budget and governance.

In March 2012, the Oregon legislature adopted House Bill (HB) 4165, which established the Early Learning Council as the single body charged with guiding early childhood services in Oregon. The Council replaced three different bodies and systems: the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the Oregon Commission for Child Care, and the Early Childhood Matters Advisory Council. Per statute, the Council now serves as the State Advisory Council to streamline and strengthen more than two dozen state programs for children from birth to age 6, to target resources more effectively, and to assist children most at risk for school failure. Specific strategies include local oversight, incentives for improving the quality of services, and improved accountability. The priorities of the Council are based upon Oregon's periodic needs assessments and the priorities of HB 4165.

OREGON

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Oregon met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In 2011, the Council supported the completion of the *Early Childhood and Family Transition Report*, which included data and information on child readiness and risk factors related to young children, families, and early learning. The report identified over 108,000 at-risk children under the age of 6, with less than half of those getting the proper nutrition, health care, or preschool services appropriate to ensure kindergarten readiness. The report also highlighted that early childhood programs often lacked coordination and accountability, and were poorly integrated with the Oregon K–12 system.

Additional data were provided by Oregon State University on the types of early learning environments that children and families access in Oregon. Early childhood center and program data were collected from licensed centers and family child care homes, non-licensed care,

OREGON

Needs Assessment (continued)

Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and Early Head Start programs. Workforce data also were captured in the newly developed online Oregon Registry professional development database.

The Council developed recommendations that resulted in important next steps:

- In 2012, Oregon was awarded the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, which enabled the Council to expedite priority initiatives that the legislature adopted into statute. These included implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment, establishing universal developmental screening, forming community Early Learning Hubs, and enhancing the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The QRIS enhancement expanded upon the results of previous assessments such as the *Quality Indicators Report*. QRIS provided the Council with ongoing information about the quality and availability of early learning programs.
- In 2013, the Oregon legislature adopted HB 2013, to ensure that children are prepared for kindergarten and raised in stable and attached families and that early childhood services in the state are integrated and aligned. The legislation created the Early Learning Division within the Oregon Department of Education to serve as the central office to streamline Oregon's early learning services. Community Early Learning Hubs also were created to streamline community early learning services dedicated to kindergarten readiness and increasing the number of stable and attached families.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked across sectors and on the federal, state, and local levels to increase the coordination and collaboration between and among early learning programs and stakeholders.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:*** The Council's priorities are interchangeable with those of RTT-ELC. Oregon was awarded \$30 million for RTT-ELC priorities. The Council provided oversight to the priority initiatives to strengthen the early learning system.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):*** The Council worked closely with the MIECHV to align the priorities of initiatives. The state MIECHV grants are integral to the development of the statewide home visiting network, which is a Council priority.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Council priorities were aligned with the CCDF plan, including the development of the QRIS.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Grant:*** A needs assessment from the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) informed the State Advisory Council ARRA grant application. The HSSCO Director led in the establishment of the Early Childhood Family Matters Advisory Council and has continued integration and alignment efforts on the Early Learning Division leadership team.

OREGON

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The ECCS Manager supported the development of the State Advisory Council ARRA grant application. The Council priority initiative to increase developmental screenings is supported by ECCS efforts.
- **Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):** This grant program of the federal government seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. Project LAUNCH staff contributed to the State Advisory Council ARRA grant application and provided support on integration of the early learning system efforts.
- **Part C and Part B, Section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** In 2011, legislation passed that formed the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) with a mission to ensure interagency coordination and to support the development of quality statewide services. The Council worked with SICC to develop recommendations to improve inclusion of children with special needs in early learning programs.
- **State Innovations Model (SIM) Grant:** Through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Oregon was awarded a SIM grant for up to \$45 million. Funds were dedicated to testing innovative approaches that improve health and lower costs across the health care system, including Medicaid, Medicare, and the private sector. The SIM grant efforts are aligned with the Council priority initiatives to coordinate health and transform the early learning system using technical assistance and shared learning.

State and Local Level

- **Early Learning Hubs:** In July 2013, the Oregon legislature adopted HB 2013, which created community Early Learning Hubs to streamline community-based early learning services. The Hubs will promote children's readiness for kindergarten and support raising children in stable and attached families. The community-based reform efforts through emerging Early Learning Hubs are a direct result of the Council's vision.

Participation of Children

The Council participated in projects to increase the number of children served, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations. It created a definition for target populations and adopted an Equity Lens. This approach is intended to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in education, create an equitable educational system for all in Oregon, and ensure all activities and initiatives prioritize services to underserved populations:

- **Target Populations:** The Council defined the target population as children in poverty, children already served by the state system, or children of color for the purpose of increasing the participation of the most at-risk populations.
- **Equity Lens:** The Council adopted the Equity Lens Report and charged all of the Council initiatives to use this lens to develop programs and improve systems that will lessen educational and opportunities gaps for at-risk children.

OREGON

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

Efforts are under way to develop a cradle-to-career unified data system, linking early childhood data with the K–12 and higher education systems. Partners in the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority are leveraging the ARRA Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau grant resources to pilot a project involving children and families served by MIECHV-funded programs. The pilot has allowed the state to build capacity to capture data from additional programs and early learning services as resources and technology have allowed. The Council developed recommendations for ongoing development and implementation of a unified system with these features:

- **Population Data:** Collect and report on aggregate population-level data for systems accountability.
 - **Data Sharing:** Share child-level data with individuals on a care team to ensure coordination of services and child-level outcomes.
 - **Unique Identifier:** Develop a universal, unique identifier with associated privacy and security systems in place.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Since 2011, the professional development registry database has captured the state's entire licensed child care workforce and has been used to generate reports on the level of training and education obtained. As of 2012, the online registry provides 100 percent of workforce data on practitioners in regulated facilities and is accessible to individual practitioners, licensing specialists, and the QRIS. All licensed child care centers, family child care programs, and licensed Head Start programs are captured in a database called the Oregon Registry Online (ORO). The ORO database links to the early childhood workforce in the online Oregon Registry database as part of Oregon's emerging QRIS, which provides improvement activities and supports for early learning programs and informs consumers, providers, and policymakers about key research-based indicators of quality.

The online registry also provides aggregate data to policymakers to better inform workforce and quality improvement investments. As a result, two studies were commissioned using the online registry data. The first evaluated the Oregon Community Foundation Betty Gray Early Childhood Training and Certification Scholarship Program administered by Portland State University. The evaluation studied to what extent the scholarship was associated with increased professional development as measured by an increase in steps in the Oregon Registry and by having earned training hours in excess of those required for licensing. The second study was the first look at Oregon's child care and education workforce, using the Oregon Registry and QRIS database to examine characteristics of the workforce.

The Council used the established early childhood resources including the Core Knowledge and Competencies framework (Oregon Core Body of Knowledge), professional development registry (Oregon Registry), and career ladder tools to enhance workforce development. The Council shared

OREGON

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

goals with RTT-ELC, and both groups have focused their efforts to increase the number of early childhood educators that achieve a step 9 or above (associate of arts degree or higher) by 30 percent in the Oregon Registry by 2015 and to increase non-white, Hispanic, or native language and non-English speaker populations by 10 percent by 2015.

The Council supported efforts to engage community colleges and universities to update the core body of knowledge and ensure alignment with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards to support stackable, portable certificates and degrees. Additionally, the Council participated in policy discussions regarding the role of higher education and increasing access for the early childhood workforce across the state. Oregon now has articulation agreements between the Oregon Registry and all of the state's 17 community colleges. Oregon's Core Body of Knowledge is integrated into community college early childhood coursework and aligned to NCATE standards, which are aligned to higher education early childhood degree programs.

Early Learning Standards

Oregon utilizes the 2007 comprehensive Early Childhood Foundations (ECF) that incorporate infant and toddler standards from birth to age 3. The passage of HB 4165 formally adopted the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* as the early learning standards for children ages 3 to 5. The crosswalk of the ECF and Head Start framework and QRIS was completed to align child outcome standards across the early learning system. The early learning standards are aligned across Head Start, QRIS, and the early childhood professional development system.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Home Visiting (HV):** The Council received funding from HV to provide support and oversight to the early learning system, including HV data system development. This enabled access to child data.
- **Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA):** The Council partnered with the state Department of Education to develop a statewide KEA as directed through the passage of HB 4165. In 2012, the KEA was completed, adopted, and piloted in 16 schools. In 2013, the Council funded statewide training to kindergarten teachers and administrators on KEA usage prior to the complete rollout in the fall of 2013. Since the fall of 2013, all Oregon children entering kindergarten participated in the statewide assessment, which includes measures in early literacy, math, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and self-regulation. The KEA is intended to provide a snapshot for communities and schools of the skills that students have when entering kindergarten. It informs teachers of students' strengths and needs, supports instructional decisions, and identifies achievement gaps early.

OREGON

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Health:** The Council and Health Policy Board Joint Committee adopted a framework for implementing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) in early learning and development programs statewide.
 - **QRIS:** Oregon's QRIS is a collaborative effort of the Council, the Early Learning Division, and early learning programs. QRIS offers an incentive for providers to improve quality and provides parents tools to evaluate early learning settings based upon quality. In 2013, Oregon launched the QRIS and received applications from 275 programs to receive a quality rating. Applicants represented licensed centers and family child care programs involving more than 8,000 Oregon children. The QRIS launched a large field test in four regions of the state to obtain 290 rated programs by June 2014. The RTT-ELC grant required development of the QRIS and accelerated statewide implementation.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,000,761
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,165,038
- Amount Expended: \$1,165,038
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

PENNSYLVANIA

Council Name: Pennsylvania Early Learning Council

Council Website: http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning_OCDEL

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: More than 51

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Council was established by executive order in 2009 and serves as an advisory body to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Pennsylvania met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

PENNSYLVANIA

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council examined the rates of usage of early childhood programs for two age groups—those from birth through age 2, and those ages 3 and 4. Programs included Head Start, the Nurse-Family Partnership program, Parent as Teachers, and the Parent-Child Home Program. The Council also examined the risks faced by the state's children under 5, including the following: living in poverty; being born to a young mother or a mother with little education; and having birth-related risks, such as low birth weight. The Council's main recommendations to increase quality and access were as follows:

- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** The Council found that a disproportionate number of providers and children with high needs were in lower-quality child care settings and recommended developing a new strategy to encourage early learning providers to participate in the state's QRIS.
 - **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Grant:** The Council analyzed the reach of infant and toddler support services and determined that a strategy was necessary to successfully apply for and implement the MIECHV grant.
 - **Data Collection:** The Council found gaps in data regarding the transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten. As a result, the Council recommended expanding the state's data collection efforts to better understand the status of children's readiness for school and to further develop and pilot the Pennsylvania Kindergarten Entry Inventory.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked across sectors and on the federal, state, and local levels to increase the coordination and collaboration among early childhood programs and stakeholders.

Federal Level

- **Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:** The Council provided input into the successful 2013 application for this grant.

PENNSYLVANIA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Head Start State Collaboration Grant:** The Council and the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) worked together to streamline the process for Head Start programs to participate in Keystone STARS, the state's QRIS.
- **Home Visiting:** The Council supported the creation of a cross-system home visitation stakeholders workgroup to develop home visiting competencies, common professional development standards, and marketing and messaging strategies.

State and Local Level

- **Teacher Effectiveness:** The Council supported the development of teacher effectiveness measures in early learning programs. The state's Teacher Effectiveness Model largely relied on an assessment called the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The Council worked with focus groups to develop an Early Childhood Supplement to the Danielson Framework for Teaching with possible pre-kindergarten examples. As a result, the state implemented an action plan to further apply this framework in early childhood programs beyond Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Early Intervention using a grant from the National Governors Association.
- **Standards Aligned System (SAS):** The Council worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to promote and increase engagement with the SAS website. This is a repository for pre-kindergarten to 12th grade resources, assessment tools, a curriculum framework, and materials related to safe and supportive schools.
- **Parents Website:** The Council partnered with the Grable Foundation, Heinz Endowments, and William Penn Foundation to develop a web-based resource for parents, Guiding Parents Smoothly (GPS). Parents can access the GPS to learn more about child development and early learning in the Commonwealth and the options available to support their children.

Participation of Children

The Council's work had a direct impact on policies to increase the participation of children in quality early learning and development programs. As a result of the Council's needs assessment recommendations, the state implemented the Rising STARS Initiative to encourage more child care programs to move to higher levels of quality and increase awareness of quality programs among vulnerable children. Rising STARS provided financial incentives and more intensive technical assistance to remove commonly cited barriers to participation in the QRIS. To further increase the participation of children, the Council recommended increasing public funding for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, as well as promoting collaboration between early education programs and Early Intervention programs.

PENNSYLVANIA

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified a number of challenges involved in bringing a unified data system to the state:

- **High-Speed Internet:** Dial-up service in rural communities significantly impeded the communities' ability to quickly and efficiently share and synthesize data.
 - **Professional Development:** Many early childhood education staff lack basic computer skills and data entry expertise. Professional development must be provided to successfully implement a unified data system.
 - **Infrastructure:** The last need the Council identified was continued investment in system infrastructure. This would allow for greater analysis and dissemination of early childhood data.
-

Professional Development

- **Core Knowledge and Competencies:** The Council supported the revision of the *Pennsylvania Core Knowledge Competencies for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals* to be more inclusive of all group settings and to reflect revised learning standards and current research on best practice. Further, the Council supported the development of the *Pennsylvania Big Ideas Framework and Individual Professional Development Plan for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals* (formerly known as the PDR), a companion document to the *Core Knowledge Competencies*. This resource is the primary tool for consideration of long- and short-term professional development goals and the creation of professional development plans for individual early childhood and school-age educators.
 - **Workforce Registry and Learning Management System (LMS):** The Council supported the development of the LMS, which was released in 2014. This new system provides real-time reports on professional development needs at all levels, tracks workforce demographics and career lattice progression for all early childhood programs, and allows students to complete self-assessments and create their own professional development plan, among other features.
-

Early Learning Standards

Pennsylvania aligned its Early Learning Standards for infant and toddlers, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten, as well as first through 12th grade. The Council supported the revision of the third through 12th grade and pre-kindergarten standards to align with the adoption of the *Pennsylvania Core Standards* and continued to create alignment with the infant and toddler standards.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Kindergarten Entry Assessment:** Pennsylvania completed a third and final year of the Kindergarten Entry Inventory Pilot. In addition to piloting the newest version of the inventory, kindergarten teachers were able to access a state-developed reporting system for aggregate class and individual reports. The state continues to plan recruitment strategies to invite all Pennsylvania kindergarten teachers to participate.

PENNSYLVANIA

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$3,020,281
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$3,184,558
- Amount Expended: \$3,184,558
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

PUERTO RICO

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Board

Designated State Agency: Governor's Office/Administration for Integral Child Care and Development (Administración para el Cuidado y Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez, or ACUDEN)

Council Website: <http://www.consejodelaninez.pr>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/e cd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2009, former Governor Luis Fortuño established the Early Childhood Advisory Board through executive order as the territory's Early Childhood Advisory Council. In 2013, Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla continued to lead the Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Puerto Rico met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

PUERTO RICO

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In September 2013, the Council performed an assessment of the quality of care based on findings from the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), PASITOS. The pilot study provided information on the present quality level of early childhood care and the feasibility of implementing an assessment rating system throughout Puerto Rico. Based on the findings, the Council developed these recommendations:

- Develop a program unit to support the implementation of the QRIS that would include child care centers island-wide.
 - Identify funding to continue reviewing and ensuring compliance with quality standards.
 - Complete the changeover of QRIS from the University of Puerto Rico to ACUDEN.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council coordinated early childhood services at the federal level:

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Council worked with the CCDF agency to recruit child care providers for the PASITOS pilot program.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:*** The Council worked with the MIECHV program to provide individualized technical assistance to informal family child care providers on issues such as health, safety, cognitive development, physical growth, language, arts, nutrition, and parent-provider relationship building.
- ***Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health):*** This grant program of the federal government seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. As part of its mission, Project LAUNCH ran "Seremos Grandes," a public awareness campaign that provided consumer education to parents on high-quality child care services and informed the general public about the Council's overall early childhood initiatives and children's developmental stages.

PUERTO RICO

Participation of Children

The Council encouraged the participation of children in early care and educational programs through activities including the following:

- **Outreach Campaign:** “Seremos Grandes” was a public campaign to provide consumer education to parents regarding the importance of high-quality child care services. Through the campaign, the Council disseminated information about children’s developmental stages and how high-quality caregivers can support and expand children’s learning.
 - **QRIS:** The PASITOS QRIS initiative helped increase the participation of children in early care and educational programs in Puerto Rico. The Council supported the development of a website to educate the public about high-quality child care centers.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council examined the types of early childhood data residing in various state agencies and identified opportunities and barriers for linking early childhood data statewide. The data collected statewide were consolidated into a report. The results helped establish the next stages toward developing an integrated data system infrastructure:

- **Data Sharing Agreement:** Agreements among the early childhood government agencies and private sector programs are necessary to fully implement a unified early childhood data system.
 - **Technical Assistance:** Qualified personnel are required to provide training and technical assistance to ACUDEN personnel.
 - **Funding:** Continuous funding is required to retain personnel and to support development and implementation of the integrated data system infrastructure.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council subsidized the development and implementation of agreements among institutions of higher education. Through Council funding, two departments of the University of Puerto Rico now are able to offer Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ training and a special education certificate.

Early Learning Standards

In 2000, Puerto Rico established *Early Learning Guidelines*. Based on the Department of Education Early Learning Standards revisions in 2010, ACUDEN developed and implemented the *Early Learning Standards* in all CCDF-funded programs in Puerto Rico. The Council circulated the information among early childhood programs and families through training, materials, and outreach activities. The Council also developed a manual of activities for families and child care providers and provided trainings to implement the standards and accomplish proposed goals.

PUERTO RICO

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Parent Education:** The Council supported the development of workshops consisting of six training modules on early childhood social and emotional development for parents.
 - **PASITOS QRIS:** Through Council funding, the University of Puerto Rico and ACUDEN initiated a pilot program for QRIS for child care centers. Participating centers were trained on the PASITOS system, completed a self-evaluation, received technical assistance through the mentoring process, prepared a portfolio, and developed an improvement plan. To encourage participation, the Council provided scholarships for the CDA Credential™ and the special education certificate to the centers. An outreach campaign, Invest in Us, was funded by the Council to share information about early childhood quality care and create awareness about the QRIS.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$2,273,137
- Supplemental: N/A
- Total Award: \$2,273,137
- Amount Expended: \$2,186,713
- Percent of Funds Expended: 96.20%

RHODE ISLAND

Council Name: Rhode Island Early Learning Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Council Website: <http://www.earlylearningri.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In June 2010, Governor Donald Carcieri created the Rhode Island Early Learning Council as the State Advisory Council, appointed the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT as co-chairs, and designated Rhode Island KIDS COUNT as the organization responsible for the Council's day-to-day activities. The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education manages the grant funding for Council operations. Upon taking office in 2011, Governor Lincoln Chafee recognized the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and supported the state's application for a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, which was awarded late in the year. Governor Chafee appointed additional members to the Council in January 2012. The Council has five subcommittees, one for each Council focus area.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Rhode Island met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies

RHODE ISLAND

Council Representation (continued)

- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

To assess the availability and access children had to high-quality early learning programs, the Council reviewed data on the following: children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, the Child Care Assistance Program, Early Intervention, preschool special education, state-funded pre-kindergarten, full-day kindergarten, licensed programs and slots by age, and BrightStars quality ratings (Rhode Island's Quality Rating and Improvement System). In addition, the Council used Rhode Island KIDS COUNT data and program quality data from a statewide random sample of licensed centers and family child care homes to assess the availability of quality early learning programs throughout the state. The Council also contributed funds to complete a statewide Early Learning Workforce Study.

In December 2012, the Council used findings from the assessments to complete the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council Strategic Plan 2012–2016*, which identified the following primary focus areas:

- Expanding access to high-quality early learning and development programs, particularly for children with high needs.
- Improving program quality.
- Developing and sustaining an effective early care and education workforce.
- Improving early learning and development outcomes for children.
- Tracking ongoing measurement of outcomes and progress.

RHODE ISLAND

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council played an essential role in the coordination and collaboration of early childhood programs at the federal, state, and local level. The Council's alignment and streamlined processes were reflected in the state's successful 2011 Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant:*** The Council held planning meetings to review and provided recommendations to the RTT-ELC grant application in 2011. The state received the \$50 million RTT-ELC grant, and the Council has provided leadership and oversight to the implementation to ensure the development of cross-sector and cross-departmental systems and programs. The Council organized subcommittees to advise each RTT-ELC project and is charged with ensuring stakeholder input to guide overarching policy decisions and ensure the effective implementation of the grant. The Council reviews all RTT-ELC final products and policies.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):*** The Rhode Island Department of Human Services provided the Biennial CCDF State Plan for Council review and communicated opportunities for participation in public hearings.
- ***Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):*** The Council was involved in the development of Rhode Island's Part C Early Intervention state plan and reviewed and provided feedback on the plan.
- ***Child Welfare:*** The Council provided input on the development of two successful federal Early Childhood Child Welfare grant applications. The purpose of the grants was to increase collaboration among child welfare and early childhood systems so that children involved in the child welfare system have better access to early care and education opportunities.

State and Local Level

- ***State Early Learning Programs:*** The Council's Access Subcommittee regularly reviews and provides recommendations to expand access to high-quality early learning programs. The programs include state pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten, Head Start, and the state Child Care Assistance Program. The Council requires that all providers receiving child care subsidy funds participate in BrightStars, Rhode Island's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- ***Providence Children & Youth Cabinet (Cabinet):*** The Cabinet aligned several goals with the Council. This included increasing program participation in BrightStars and increasing the participation of children in high-quality early learning programs.
- ***Providence Talks:*** In March 2013, the Bloomberg Philanthropies announced Providence, Rhode Island, as the grand prize winner of the Mayor's Challenge. The competition included over 300 applications with innovative ideas to solve major challenges and improve city life and, ultimately, the well-being of the nation. A few Council members have been involved in this effort.

RHODE ISLAND

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase the participation of children in high-quality child care and early learning programs. It focused on ensuring children with high needs have access to high-quality early learning programs, including low-income children, children with delays and disabilities, and children who have been victims of child maltreatment. Following is a sample of the Council's key efforts to increase participation:

- **Increased Eligibility for Child Care Subsidies:** The Council made a recommendation to adopt a policy to address the cliff effect for low-income working families receiving Child Care Assistance at the top end of the eligibility range to allow them to continue assistance until they reach a higher percentage. In October 2013, a pilot program was launched that allowed currently enrolled families to retain their child care subsidy as family income grows. They can reach up to 225 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (beyond the 180 percent eligibility level). The plan is to assess and determine if this change minimizes the cliff effect and reduces hardship on low-income families.
 - **Child Welfare Participants:** The Council examined data and policies to increase access for young children involved in the child welfare system to high-quality early learning programs, including Early Head Start and Head Start, child care, and Early Intervention (Part C of IDEA). Several active planning groups made progress to improve policies and systems to increase the participation of this targeted at-risk child population.
 - **State Pre-Kindergarten:** The Council supports the 10-year expansion plan for state pre-kindergarten and reviews annual progress.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council recommended the development of a common, shared early learning data system, as well as a statewide kindergarten entry assessment. Using RTT-ELC resources, Rhode Island moved forward to develop a coordinated early learning data system.

The Council identified the following needs to implement the system:

- Funding to create and sustain a workforce registry.
 - Data sharing agreements and other resources to connect and coordinate child-level data in various data systems.
 - Capacity and resources to gather and manage more data on children's development and learning, including developmental screening, formative child assessment, and kindergarten entry assessment.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council supported the development of a child care professional development system plan building on the work of the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children.

RHODE ISLAND

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

Additionally, the Council used funds to establish the use of the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® model in Rhode Island. In 2011, the Council provided T.E.A.C.H.® scholarships, which provided funding for early childhood educators to pursue an associate's degree at the Community College of Rhode Island. In 2012, RTT-ELC expanded the T.E.A.C.H.® program to offer scholarships for bachelor's degrees at Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island.

T.E.A.C.H.® convened several statewide meetings of college administrators to identify and discuss issues related to the availability and articulation of early childhood coursework across the colleges in the state. In coordination with these meetings, the Council supported efforts to conduct a study of higher education institutions that provided early childhood education coursework and degrees. The Council also supported alignment efforts by bringing in national experts (University of California, Berkeley) to review current higher education offerings in Rhode Island. The identified issues have been pursued further through RTT-ELC funding.

The Council supported RTT-ELC tasks by engaging experts to consult on the development of Workforce Knowledge and Competencies and Career Pathways and by conducting and completing an Early Learning Workforce Study in December 2013.

Early Learning Standards

Prior to the Council's work, Rhode Island did not have early learning standards for infants and toddlers. The Council identified the need to update and expand Rhode Island's 2003 *Early Learning Standards*, which at the time focused on preschoolers. The Council used funds to support phase one of the development of new, comprehensive *Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards* for children from birth to age 5. Resources were used to engage national experts and provided multiple opportunities for community members to provide input throughout the drafting process. The new *Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards* were finalized in May 2013.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- KIDSNET:** KIDSNET is a universal health and development database that provides confidential, computerized child health information. It is managed by the Rhode Island Department of Health. It facilitates the collection and appropriate sharing of health data with health care providers, parents, maternal and child health programs, and other child service providers for the provision of timely and appropriate preventive health services and follow-up. The Council established objectives to increase and better track developmental screening data in KIDSNET. A strategy also was created to incorporate KIDSNET and the Rhode Island Department of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data System into the cross-departmental, shared Early Learning Data System to track child outcomes by population, programs, and workforce. This work is being continued through RTT-ELC support.

RHODE ISLAND

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA):** The Council recommended the development and implementation of a high-quality, comprehensive, statewide KEA system to inform kindergarten instruction and policy decisions on how resources could be directed to improve children's development and learning. This includes increasing access to high-quality, effective early learning programs. The Council's recommendations were used to develop a KEA framework to be completed through RTT-ELC and the federal Enhanced Assessment Grants.
 - **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** The Council facilitated multiple community meetings and forums to engage families and the community. The Council developed and managed a website and e-news to support the Council and RTT-ELC. The website provided best practices, research, and data on early care and education. A regular Council e-news bulletin informed the public of the Council's current work.
 - **Program Standards Alignment:** The alignment of program quality standards, measurement, and monitoring was identified early by the Council as a key topic of interest. Specifically, the Council was interested in aligning child care licensing, BrightStars, and the Rhode Island Department of Education Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval. Revised, aligned program standards were completed in 2013.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$663,349
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.86%

TENNESSEE

Council Name: Established as Early Childhood Advisory Council; Currently Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council

Designated State Agency: Governor's Children's Cabinet

Council Website: <http://www.kidcentraltn.com>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In July 2010, Governor Phil Bredesen designated the Tennessee Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Advisory Council as Tennessee's Early Childhood Advisory Council within the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination. In early 2012, Governor Bill Haslam updated the Council membership and placed administration of the Council under the Children's Cabinet. Governor Haslam and First Lady Haslam co-chair the Children's Cabinet, with commissioners from six state departments serving as members. The Children's Cabinet set the priorities and provided overall leadership for the Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Tennessee met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services

TENNESSEE

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council used a variety of techniques to gather and analyze early childhood data to complete needs assessment projects that included the following:

- **Data Analysis:** The Council compiled an inventory of early childhood needs assessments completed over the last several years. The Council, in coordination with the Children's Cabinet, identified high-needs indicators for children. The Council then used indicator data to develop profiles for 95 counties, and a statewide heat map to show high-needs areas and populations across systems.
- **Surveys and Focus Groups:** A cross-departmental workgroup developed a customer satisfaction survey to gauge client perception of state services related to availability and quality of services. The Council convened focus groups with stakeholders to gather input about school readiness indicators, quality of services indicators, factors affecting availability of quality care, and interaction between models of services.

The Council developed recommendations based on the analyses. First, the Children's Cabinet should use the county profiles and statewide heat maps, especially in cross-departmental activities and alignment to support future decision making. Second, the state should develop a shared set of values and principles of engagement to guide state employee interactions with customers across departments. Using insights gained through focus groups and key stakeholders, a cross-departmental workgroup was established and coordinated efforts.

TENNESSEE

Coordination and Collaboration

The Children’s Cabinet, supported by the Council, was tasked with coordinating, streamlining, and enhancing efforts to provide needed resources and services to Tennessee’s children. The Council coordinated and collaborated at the federal, state, and local levels through aligned early childhood systems.

Federal Level

- **Head Start State Collaboration Grant:** The Tennessee Head Start Association and the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) promoted the Council’s projects through Head Start networks, assisted in developing parent focus groups, and contributed to developing the School Readiness Model.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The Council merged with ECCS to sustain priorities at the conclusion of the State Advisory Council grant to form the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council.

State and Local Level

- **Advanced Workstations in Education (AWE), Early Literacy Stations, and Tennessee State Library and Archives:** The Council provided AWE Early Literacy Stations awards to public libraries and family child care providers around the state. Training was provided free of charge for applicants working on developing early literacy skills in children. Through this effort, librarians and child care providers were able to build stronger collaborative relationships.
- **Tennessee Association on Early Education and Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children:** The Council partnered with the Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children to support implementation of two early childhood summits and supported local affiliate training sessions. Topics covered at the summit included brain development, school readiness, social and emotional development, strengthening families, home visiting programs, cultural diversity, and early learning and development standards.

Participation of Children

The Council supported projects to increase the participation of children in the following quality care programs and centers:

- **Central Website, <http://www.kidcentraltn.com>:** Results from the parent and provider focus groups and survey input revealed that these stakeholders wanted a central resource for information and support in navigating state systems. This finding prompted the Children’s Cabinet to prioritize the development of a single, comprehensive website. It offers easy-to-locate information from across state departments organized by categories: health, education, development, and support. In July 2013, the website was completed and launched in beta form. It pulled content from six departments in state government and organized it into the designated

TENNESSEE

Participation of Children (continued)

categories for easy access. Leadership created a Facebook account, a companion mobile app, an extensive directory of state-operated and state-funded services, and a customized section for parents in the My Profile section so families could receive information on developmental milestones. By September 2013, more than 5,000 visitors had accessed the site.

- **School Readiness:** The Council led the effort to develop a statewide definition of school readiness and the School Readiness Model, which emphasized ready families, schools, and communities to support ready, healthy children.
- **Promote Enrollment:** The Council funded the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program when launching a statewide enrollment campaign. The Imagination Library Program delivers a book per month to enrolled children from birth to age 5 at no cost to the family. The Council funded the development and printing of a statewide enrollment brochure and funded four early literacy events for parents, teachers, and child care providers across the state.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the following top needs for implementing a unified early childhood data system:

- **System Integration:** Legal restrictions on when and by whom information can be accessed, even within a single state agency, make it extremely difficult to develop and implement strategies for sharing information to better serve clients.
- **Participant Data Sharing:** It is crucial to find opportunities to get participant permission to share personal information so the state can more easily coordinate services.
- **Data Sharing Agreements:** Mechanisms should be developed for state employees to share data so the client process for engaging services is not complicated, repetitive, and cumbersome.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council convened a professional development workgroup that created a training video based on the School Readiness Model, *Kindergarten Here We Come: Partnering to Ensure Children's Successful Transition*. The Council distributed copies of the video to early childhood education faculty at 2- and 4-year colleges and through professional development networks. The video focused on bridging the gap between early childhood and elementary schools to promote stronger coordination and collaboration, to create a smooth transition for children. Packets included the video, discussion guide, and the School Readiness Model.

The Council provided funding through the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA). This is a statewide multi-site system established to provide affordable professional development

TENNESSEE

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

with academic degree credit possibilities for Tennessee's early childhood education personnel. TECTA distributed scholarships for textbooks and tuition and helped to pay testing fees for selected students. The Council funded fees at postsecondary academic institutions, tuition, and textbooks.

Early Learning Standards

In 2013, the *Tennessee Early Learning Development Standards* for children from birth to 4 years of age were reviewed and revised to align with the *Tennessee Early Learning Development Standards* for 4-year-olds.

In 2012, the *Early Learning Development Standards* for 4-year-olds were reviewed and revised to align with the *Common Core Standards* for educational achievement starting in kindergarten.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Mental Health:** The Council used a research firm to compile a meta-analysis report about the cross-systems implications of diagnosing and labeling mental and behavioral health conditions in young children. The Children's Cabinet invested staff time to analyze the report and the implications of diagnosing and labeling young children with mental and behavioral health issues. A cross-departmental dialogue session was held to review the report findings and draft next steps.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$2,254,123
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$2,418,400
- Amount Expended: \$2,418,400
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

TEXAS

Council Name: Texas Early Learning Council

Designated State Agency: Children's Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Council Website: <http://earlylearningtexas.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In December 2009, Governor Rick Perry designated the Children's Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston as the early childhood State Advisory Council, now called the Texas Early Learning Council. The Council sought to lead the development of the state's early childhood system by extensively collaborating to build high-quality, integrated systems to serve young children and families throughout Texas.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Texas met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

TEXAS

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

In November 2012, the Council funded the first statewide comprehensive needs assessment in over 40 years. The needs assessment measured the availability and supply of early childhood care and programs compared to the need and demand for services. The Council collected an extensive amount of data about the population of young children; providers; type of service; program; location; and socioeconomic risk factors such as living arrangements, family income, and parent employment status. The analysis also reviewed barriers and constraints to participation and school readiness by conducting a gap analysis of services and quality in early childhood care and education programs throughout the state by regional areas.

The Council compiled the findings into the *Texas Early Childhood Education Needs Assessment Final Report* and utilized data and findings to engage other university partners to provide further analysis and complete additional reports. These included: *Change in the Early Childhood and School Age Population in Texas, 2000 to 2010, and Projected to 2015; Supply and Quality of Early Care and Education and School-Age Programs*; and *Gaps Between Need and Availability of Early Care and Education*.

The Council used the needs assessment findings to develop the following recommended priorities for early childhood care and services:

- **Promote Available Services:** Identify and better articulate the array of available services to enable communities to better support young children and families.
- **Implement Data Collection:** Adopt a common protocol across all existing services to gather program data on an annual basis. Determine if legislation is required to specify governance and data reporting requirements for early childhood care and education programs.
- **Align Childhood Offices:** Assess the feasibility and benefits of creating a comprehensive, independent agency of early learning to administer all early childhood services, education, and care programs. Evaluate if a central early learning office would enhance, coordinate, and improve early childhood outcomes, and increase kindergarten readiness.

TEXAS

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council's partnerships across federal, state, and local agencies and organizations were essential to the successful completion of several large-scale, cross-sector, and cross-agency projects. These projects included the statewide needs assessment and creation of a professional development system.

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:** The Council included MIECHV program data in the needs assessment. The Council funded four Texas Community Campaign for School Readiness (TCCSR) communities to implement the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The Council's TCCSR communities established an implementation framework to share with MIECHV and funded the use of EDI in six home visiting communities.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The Council investigated the value of using a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and analyzed expenditure of CCDF funds. In January 2013, the Council prepared a report called *A Strategic Plan for a Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System* to detail findings of research, potential constraints, and costs associated with developing and implementing a QRIS in Texas.
- **Head Start State Collaboration Grant:** The Council developed a professional development system with new workforce tools, registries, and resources. The system will be housed and maintained by the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO). For more information, see the *Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions* section of this state profile.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The Council funded the development of an online developmental screener now employed by ECCS. It will be available for use by the Part C programs in the spring of 2015.

State and Local Level

- **Texas Community Campaign for School Readiness (TCCSR):** The school readiness campaign was a major Council initiative. In 2011, the Council awarded four grants to Texas cities (Brownsville, El Paso, San Antonio, and Wichita Falls). The cities were required to perform a needs assessment of the early childhood population and develop a response plan to improve school readiness at the local level. Each grantee or TCCSR organization partnered with community early childhood stakeholders and school districts to collect data and assess school readiness. The TCCSRs also coordinated with local United Way branches to implement the EDI, a comprehensive, community-level early development and school readiness assessment tool. TCCSRs partnered with school districts to deliver the assessment to kindergarten classrooms in coordination with the local United Way. Mapped EDI data allows for response strategies to be tailored to specific community needs. The TCCSR's communities completed 2012 and 2013 EDI data analysis to develop sustainability plans and share lessons learned with the Texas Home Visiting Program that is being implemented in six more Texas EDI cities.

TEXAS

Participation of Children

The Council operated across public, private, and nonprofit organizations to increase participation in early childhood programs and improve school readiness. The Council's most notable activity was the development and implementation of *Little Texans Big Futures* campaign. The Council utilized needs assessment data to develop strategies that targeted and reached parents and providers, especially in underrepresented and special population areas.

The Council focused a targeted media campaign on three Texas areas that data showed had a high percentage of at-risk populations, large child populations, and child populations that are expected to grow over the next 5 years. The Council chose campaigns in Houston, Dallas, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley as the primary focus areas. The campaign was designed to have a statewide reach that was user friendly, comprehensive, and online with school readiness information and child development resources. The targeted campaign focused on first-time, at-risk parents with children from birth to 4 years of age. The website for *Little Texans Big Futures* became a central location for all campaign advertisements, child development resources, an online *Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines* tool, developmental screening material, and information about selecting quality child care. The website, materials, and resources were available in both English and Spanish. Within the first months of website launch, there were over 60,000 site visits.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council partnered with early childhood data system stakeholders to research the extent of early childhood data systems throughout Texas and to assess the feasibility of integrating systems. The Council initially intended to design and implement The on Track System (TOTS) into a fully functional early childhood information exchange system linked to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). SLDS is being revamped into the innovative Texas Student Data System. The Council concluded that the state lacked interagency governance standards and interagency data sharing agreements and had long-term sustainability concerns. Therefore, the Council drafted recommendations to the Governor to inform the future of TOTS and suggested reinvesting TOTS funds.

The Council's report to the Governor identified the following needs for implementing a unified early childhood data system:

- **Data Warehouse:** Build an integrated data warehouse to provide a central repository and to support research and analysis.
- **Unique Identifiers:** Provide each child and early childhood center and program with unique identifiers to facilitate linking early childhood services to state longitudinal data systems.
- **Governance Structure:** Ask the Texas Legislature to designate a public state agency to host the TOTS early childhood data system. Mandate an interagency advisory board to guide decisions associated with the creation and maintenance of TOTS.

TEXAS

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council researched building a comprehensive professional development system that includes the elements of the workforce, training, and early childhood higher education systems in one location. In the fall of 2013, after three years of development, the Council launched the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS), which includes the core elements of professional development in one website divided into five areas: core competencies, career lattice, resources and tools, higher education articulation agreements, and policy. Following are the details for four areas:

- **Core Competencies:** The Council developed new list of Core Competencies for early childhood professionals. Based on the experiences and expertise of professionals, the Core Competencies are divided into three categories: introductory, intermediate, and advanced. In March 2013, the Council released the revised *Core Competencies for Practitioners and Administrators*. The Spanish version was released in June 2013. The Council will continue developing core competencies for trainers, mentors, and coaches.

The Council also funded training modules for the Core Competencies. The training modules were published on the TECPDS website in the fall of 2014 to showcase the core competencies.

- **Career Lattice:** The Council overhauled the 1993 career lattice for Texas early childhood professionals. The new career lattice relates training hours, education, work experience, and other factors to a position on the career lattice ranging from entry-level to expert in the early childhood field. Professionals can advance by gaining more experience, or by obtaining additional education credentials, such as a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or beyond.
- **Resources and Tools:** The Texas Workforce Registry and the Texas Trainer Registry are complementary tools, offering users an avenue for listing professional development opportunities and tracking professional development.
 - » **Texas Trainer Registry (TTR):** In 2013, the new TTR was launched in TECPDS. The TTR identifies approved early childhood trainers to conduct trainings for Texas early care and education professionals. Approved trainers listed on the TTR provide trainings that meet the requirements mandated by state legislation Senate Bill 265. This law altered the requirements for early childhood training hours for professionals. Users are able to search for trainers and trainings using search filters such as trainer name, trainer county, core competency area of the training, trainer level, training delivery method (e.g., face-to-face or online), and the audience's experience level.

TEXAS

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

- » **Texas Workforce Registry (TWR):** The Council developed the TWR to provide the workforce with an online tool for keeping track of completed professional development. The Registry allows practitioners and administrators to enter personal data to catalog training hours, college coursework, and employment history in an online professional profile. Several resources are available for professional development including an online job board, information on financial aid, scholarship opportunities, and higher education opportunities.
- » **Higher Education Articulation Agreements:** The Council assessed higher education articulation agreements among programs that offer early childhood degrees, and developed an articulation toolkit for institutions which was added to the TECPDS website in May 2013. Model articulation agreements supported a systematic, seamless transition from community colleges to universities. This maximizes resources and minimizes course duplication.

In July 2013, the Council partnered with University of Texas at Austin to release the *Workforce Compensation Study*, which assessed the compensation of early childhood professionals in Texas. The study included Texas state data and included a cross-sector analysis of early childhood professionals working in a variety of programs. The information collected provided a baseline of statistics to support the state's compensation plan for early childhood professionals. The report explained that Texas providers were underpaid. They earned over \$1.00 per hour less than the national average. Geographic patterns suggested differences in pay in urban versus rural areas.

The Council funded the Beginning Education: Early Childcare at Home 2-year project. This project provided and studied the effectiveness of web-based professional development courses for home child care providers on the topic of improving cognitive development; socio-emotional development; and language, literacy, and math skills of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The 20 online classes were provided in both English and Spanish to meet the needs of the early childhood workforce.

The Council also redirected funding from the TOTS data system to the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children for scholarships through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® TEXAS Project. Participants in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® program receive a scholarship to fund higher education coursework and related expenses towards an associate's degree in child development or early childhood education, or a scholarship to help pay for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ assessment fee. The Council invested additional funds in scholarships in 2013.

TEXAS

Early Learning Standards

The Council developed the *Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines* (ITELG) over a 2-year period with input from early childhood collaborators. In March 2013, the ITELG were published and utilized as the foundation of the *Little Texans Big Futures* campaign and were the centerpiece for the campaign website. *The Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines* were developed in 2008 for children ages 3 to 5 years. The Council used the newly developed ITELG to create the *Texas Early Learning Pathways* document that creates a birth to age 5 pathway of child development. This user-friendly tool demonstrates how caregivers can support optimal child development in this critical period.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Standards Crosswalk:** The Council created an online crosswalk tool that can be utilized by any group to align standards. It is currently being used to reform the Texas Rising Star system. The Texas Rising Star system includes child care providers with agreements to serve the Texas Workforce Commission. This group accepts subsidized children and meets the requirements of the Child Care Licensing Standards.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$11,274,474
- Supplemental: \$0
- Total Award: \$11,274,474
- Amount Expended: \$11,189,666
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.25%

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Committee

Designated State Agency: Office of the Governor

Council Website: N/A

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 31–40

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In June 2008, Governor John de Jongh signed an executive order creating the Governor’s Children and Family Council (GCFC). Under this order, the Committee on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECAC) was created to serve as the State Advisory Council. The ECAC and the GCFC work in collaboration on all initiatives for early learners for the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ECAC focused on exploring new ways of improving service delivery to and the health of children and families, and increasing the school readiness of young children in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

The U.S. Virgin Islands met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- Agency responsible for child care
- Agency responsible for child welfare
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Federally qualified health centers
- Single state agency for mental health
- The Governor’s Office

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Council Representation (continued)

- Foundation representatives
- Agency responsible for home visiting
- Parent representative

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed three needs assessments during the grant period to assess the quality and availability of early childhood programs. The 2011 report examined child demographic data, community economic factors, socioeconomic factors, center health and safety conditions, and the quality and availability of early learning programs. It included an action plan with priority initiatives of the Council. In both the 2012 and 2013, the Council continued to conduct a needs assessment containing demographic information, economic and health indicators, and the quality and availability of programs for young children. In addition to these reports, the Council also evaluated the effectiveness of *Early Learning Standards*, staff qualifications, staff-child ratios, screening, referral and support services, available resources, spending per child, and current monitoring practices. The 2013 report also included recommendations for professional development and an assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of the University of the Virgin Islands to meet the professional development needs of early childhood educators.

The Council used the initial assessment to understand the baseline of needs and developed a strategic plan to address the needs. The second assessment provided additional detailed information about the current early childhood system and reported progress on initiatives. Using the findings, the Council created recommendations for next steps to implement a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), implement a pre-kindergarten program within the public education system, and create a professional development plan for the early childhood workforce.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council fostered agency partnerships on shared priorities and services for young children and families. It advanced key initiatives such as a QRIS; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program grants; infant and toddler early learning guidelines; and public pre-kindergarten legislation.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV):** The Council adopted the Strengthening Families Framework and provided training on protective factors to support optimal family functioning, prevention of child abuse and neglect, and healthy child development home visitors. Protective factor trainings specifically addressed family resilience, social connections, concrete supports in times of need, parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The Council collaborated with CCDF on development of the QRIS. It also supported efforts to plan and design a professional development system that includes linking QRIS with the workforce, higher education institutions, and training data.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The Council served as the advisory body for the first U.S. Virgin Islands ECCS grant award. It also designated ECCS to lead the follow-up on professional perinatal depression training developed as a component of the Children's Health and Wellness Fair. This coincided with ECCS strategy on mitigating toxic stress and trauma in infants and toddlers.

State and Local Level

- **Children's Health and Wellness Fairs:** The Council's Health and Wellness workgroup coordinated the first Children's Health and Wellness Fair. The fair connected interagency services and programs serving children from birth to 5 years of age with communities and families with young children. The Council partnered with Part C and Part B, Section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Maternal Child Health; Immunization; and federally qualified health clinics to support the event. At the event, partners offered developmental, vision, hearing, dental, and body mass index screenings, as well as flu shots. Programs disseminated materials to participants about high-quality care and the value of engaging children in positive learning experiences. In 2013, the Council sponsored training-of-trainer events on the Mothers and Babies Course, which was designed to prevent perinatal depression, and also hosted Parent Cafés for families.
- **Key Stakeholder Summits:** The Council partnered with public and private foundations to host three summits for key stakeholder populations on the importance of high-quality early childhood experiences, to stress the importance of leaders' advocating for children, and to spearhead policy changes to ensure better child development outcomes and stronger communities.
 - » **Business Leaders Summits:** In 2010, through a public-private partnership, summits held on both St. Croix and St. Thomas promoted investment in early childhood initiatives. National experts discussed economic benefits and the return on investment from early childhood development. Presenters include experts from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and the Partnership for America's Economic Success.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- » **Faith-Based Summits:** In 2012, summits were held on both St. Croix and St. Thomas to engage the faith community. National and local presenters discussed early childhood development and the impact of the Strengthening Families Framework in optimizing child development and preventing child abuse and neglect.
- » **Policymakers' Summits:** In 2013, national experts presented at summits on St. Croix and St. Thomas on economic research showing the importance of quality care and education investments on young children's development. The Council supported national presenters from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, the Partnership for America's Economic Success, and local speakers who presented strategies to improve outcomes and increase school readiness.
- **The Virtues Project:** The Virtues Project is an international initiative focused on building peaceful and caring communities aligned to 52 virtues such as compassion, integrity, and respect. The Virtues Project promotes community capacity-building to teach positive behaviors and attitudes and contribute to healthy and supportive environments across sectors. This initiative originated with a Council workgroup and is moving forward with support from the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands. In 2010, the Virtue of the Week was disseminated to Head Start and child care centers with suggested developmentally appropriate activities. The Virtue of the Week events engaged the community in discussion and awareness throughout schools, child care settings, homes, and the workplace. In fall 2011, the Council supported training for facilitators on the five strategies for implementation of the Virtues Project.

Participation of Children

The Council supported efforts to increase participation of children in early care and education programs by taking the following steps:

- **QRIS Guidelines:** The Council's Quality Education Workgroup drafted guidelines for QRIS implementation at the Governor's request upon the passage of legislation to develop pre-kindergarten in the public school system. The Council participated in pre-kindergarten implementation planning and recommended that CCDF develop partnerships with child care centers receiving CCDF subsidies to target underserved and high-need areas.
- **Pre-Kindergarten Initiative:** The Governor advocated on behalf of the U.S. Virgin Islands to the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services requesting that the territory become eligible for federal early learning funding opportunities beyond the State Advisory Council grant.
- **Pre-Kindergarten Legislation:** The Governor signed legislation to establish universal voluntary pre-kindergarten programs aligned with child care licensing and the *Virgin Islands Early Learning Guidelines*. However, funding has not been allocated.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council supported efforts to link early childhood data with school-age data through a federally funded unified longitudinal data system grant secured by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education. The Council also developed recommendations for integrating early childhood data into the unified data system and offered advice about its development. Progress included the following:

- **Interagency Agreements:** The U.S. Virgin Islands' first longitudinal data system was launched in 2013. Current efforts are focused on gathering data on the K–12 system. After the K–12 system is completed, funding will be made available for the early childhood system. The next step is to establish interagency agreements to provide clear guidelines for data sharing between early childhood departments for smooth integration of systems.
- **Training:** After the early childhood system is established, the next step is to develop system training for users.
- **Funding:** Plans are under way to establish ongoing funding for support staff and for maintaining and upgrading the systems.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council determined that a professional development system was essential to creating an aligned, high-performing, high-quality early childhood system. The Council's Professional Development Workgroup, an interagency leadership team, and public and private stakeholders participated in creating a unified professional development system, *Pathways to Excellence*. The Council identified the Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative Policy Blueprint by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as a guide for developing the professional development plan. It funded an NAEYC consultant with a national perspective to assist in adapting best practices to the system needs of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The professional development team determined that the unified system should incorporate the entire early childhood workforce and fully align and integrate early childhood initiatives, including the *Early Learning Guidelines, Infant & Toddler Developmental Guidelines* (ITDGs), QRIS and the *Core Knowledge and Competencies*, and *Career Pathways* developed by that team.

In July 2013, the Virgin Islands' professional development system plan, *Pathways to Excellence*, was published with the assistance of NAEYC consultants. The Council funded a study assessing the capacity of the University of the Virgin Islands, the only higher education institution in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It created recommendations to support current and future early childhood workforce professional development needs. The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services also funded a workforce study to assess the training status and needs of the early childhood workforce.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Early Learning Standards

In 2013, the Council's Quality Education Workgroup completed the ITDGs for children birth to 3 years of age. The ITDGs describe developmental milestones and suggestions for parents, providers, community members, and policymakers concerning developmental milestones. They also provide specific guidance on the development of diverse learners and suggest strategies for facilitating inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays, and for teaching dual language learners. The guidance emphasizes that children with disabilities and dual language learners develop best in inclusive environments where teachers and caregivers welcome all children and provide flexible programming to meet their individual needs. The ITDGs are aligned to the *Early Learning Guidelines* (ELGs) for 3- to 5-year-olds.

In April 2010, the ELGs were completed to outline child development milestones for children ages 3 to 5 years. The Council funded and participated in disseminating copies and providing training on ELGs. The ELGs are aligned with the *Virgin Islands Kindergarten Standards* and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. The ELGs have been designated by the University of the Virgin Islands as a course textbook and will be used for the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Program.

The Council provided training workshops on both ITDGs and ELGs for teachers, program directors, and parents. The standards will be used in child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Health:** The Council partnered with the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands to launch the Text4Baby initiative, a service that provides free text messaging to pregnant women and new parents with health and safety tips through the first year of a baby's life. The Council purchased Text4baby posters in English and Spanish, as well as other materials that were distributed through the following locations: doctors' offices; clinics; pharmacies; Head Start; child care centers; the Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families offices; high school nurses' offices; public housing communities; and not-for-profit agencies working with children and families. The Council and its partners also set up displays at community events for families with young children.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements (continued)

- **Mental Health:** The Council promoted children's social and emotional competence in conjunction with National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day by disseminating information for parents and suggesting classroom activities for early childhood teachers and caregivers. The Council also noted the limited access to health and mental health services due to a shortage of professionals and differences in Medicaid eligibility. The Council improved the physical and social and emotional development of young children by training health care providers in administering Ages and Stages developmental questionnaires; supporting revised licensed child care regulations to incorporate daily tooth brushing and oral health preventative care; and conducting children's health and wellness fairs throughout the territory that provided developmental, hearing, vision, dental, and body mass index screenings, as well as influenza vaccinations.
- **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** The Council supported a public awareness campaign to provide best practices on child rearing through print, radio, and television advertisements. It also publicized activities with press releases and public service announcements.
- **Steps to Quality QRIS:** The Department of Human Services, with an interagency team of stakeholders, led the development of QRIS measures, incentivized quality, and supported early childhood education programs' efforts to enhance quality. The Council's professional development system efforts linked QRIS to the professional development system. It also integrated ITDGs and ELGs and provided a mechanism to align and coordinate the implementation of QRIS improvements. In July 2013, child care and Head Start centers launched the first QRIS pilot.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$663,485
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.88%

UTAH

Council Name: Early Childhood Utah

Designated State Agency: Department of Health, Bureau of Child Development

Council Website: N/A

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 50

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Since 2002, the Early Childhood Council (ECC) served as the advisory board for the state's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant project. In September 2011, Governor Gary Herbert combined ECC and ECCS to form Early Childhood Utah and designated the team to function as the State Advisory Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Utah met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

UTAH

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council performed targeted needs assessments that examined early childhood data systems and data elements related to children from birth to age 5. The Council also examined types of kindergarten entry assessments to be used in Utah.

Coordination and Collaboration

Council funding provided Utah with the opportunity to increase coordination and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels.

Federal Level

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: Utah leveraged federal technical assistance from the Office of Child Care to combine the functions of the Council and the ECCS grant. This allowed a comprehensive, unified effort dedicated to building one early childhood system in Utah.
- ***Head Start State Collaboration Grant***: The Council partnered with the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) to collaborate on submission of the successful grant application, the Early Childhood Workforce Data Systems Grant.
- ***Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)***: As mentioned above, the ECCS state team was combined with the Council to form one coordinated body known as Early Childhood Utah.

State and Local Level

- ***Utah State Office of Education***: The Council supported development of the *Early Learning Standards* and coordinated approval by the State Board of Education.

UTAH

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Help Me Grow Utah (HMGU):** HMGU began in 1999 and expanded in 2010 with the help of the United Way. HMGU connects families with community resources and child development information. It offers referrals to Early Intervention, family therapy, literacy support, and parenting classes and provides developmental screening questionnaires and coordination of care for Utah families to support their success. In January 2012, staff from the national Help Me Grow team visited Utah, and in May 2013, Utah hosted the National Help Me Grow Forum. The Council prioritized expanding HMGU to include families statewide and increased collaboration on local early childhood initiatives, programs, and grants. HMGU was previously established in Salt Lake and Utah Counties, which account for over 50 percent of the state's population. The 2013 HMGU expansion connected three additional functioning HMGU county systems: Carbon, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties.
-

Participation of Children

The Council supported initiatives to increase the participation of children in early care and education programs, including implementing the voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), establishing *Early Learning Standards* for children ages 3 to 5, exploring options for a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment, and supporting the integration of data systems.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

Utah's early childhood programs were originally funded and administered separately. Each program maintained data separately from others. This made tracking long-term outcomes for children challenging. It was difficult to obtain an unduplicated count of children receiving early childhood services. The Council, in coordination with several early childhood programs—including the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program; CCDF; HSSCO; and Part C and Part B, Section 619, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—worked jointly on the Utah Early Childhood Statewide Data Integration Project (UECSDIP) to facilitate data sharing and coordination among early childhood programs. Enhancements included updates to the Child Health Advanced Records Management (CHARM) and the Master Person Index (MPI). Once CHARM and the MPI are enhanced, early childhood data, such as child care, Head Start, special education, foster care, and home visiting, will be linked. The UECSDIP assigns unique identifiers to protect the identity and privacy of children and families as they match child records across programs. The Council will share early childhood data with the Utah Data Alliance, which links various early childhood systems and uses preschool-level data in Utah's comprehensive P-20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

UTAH

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System (continued)

The Council identified needs to enhance the implementation of the unified data system and made the following recommendations:

- **Data Sharing Agreement:** Implement a data sharing agreement across programs to increase coordination and collaboration for a united system. The data sharing agreement should include language related to ensuring security in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and should address other security concerns to satisfy stakeholders.
 - **Funding:** Secure and sustain funds to pay the maintenance costs for servers.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Utah has an established professional development registry, an early childhood career ladder, and an infant and toddler credentialing endorsement. The Council enhanced the state's professional development systems by participating in a technical assistance program to develop a high-quality early learning system.

Early Learning Standards

The Utah State Office of Education took the lead in developing *Early Learning Standards* for 3- to 5-year-olds as part of Utah's implementation of the *Utah Common Core*. The standards were officially adopted by the State Board of Education in 2012 and later translated into Spanish. The Council supported disseminating the standards statewide.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Health:** The Council supported increasing the number of developmental screenings for children by collaborating with HMGU, child care, health care professionals, and mental health providers.
- **Mental Health:** The Council supported efforts to establish a mental health consultation program, which trained early childhood providers on using screening tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for assessing social and emotional problems in young children. A major goal of the training program was to help providers successfully intervene to correct identified behavioral issues and to introduce providers to local community mental health care that promotes collaboration. ASQ data were collected and stored in a statewide database for future analysis.
- **Care About Child Care QRIS:** Utah developed and implemented a web-based QRIS program to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in child care and programs. Utah's QRIS is a voluntary system connecting providers to parents and provides a platform to inform and promote quality care.

UTAH

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$695,884
- Supplemental: N/A
- Total Award: \$695,884
- Amount Expended: \$694,488
- Percent of Funds Expended: 99.80%

VERMONT

Council Name: Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Vermont Department of Children and Families

Council Website: <http://www.buildingbrightfutures.org>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Vermont began building an early childhood system with funding from the federal Head Start State Collaboration grant and the Child Care Development Block Grant in the early 1990s. In 2002, a grant from the Smart Start Technical Assistance Center further supported this effort. In 2006, Building Bright Futures (BBF) was created as a public-private partnership by executive order to spearhead coordinating early childhood activities in Vermont. In 2010, BBF was legislated by statute and designated as the State Advisory Council. BBF is dedicated to improving statewide early care, health, and education services.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Vermont met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

VERMONT

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed its last needs assessment in January 2013 to determine the state of early childhood care and access for Vermont's infants and children. This assessment examined accessibility, analyzed demographic trends, identified the needs of the early childhood workforce, and produced recommendations to close gaps within the system. The recommendations for an early childhood system and financial sustainability included the following:

- Creating a comprehensive, high-quality early care, health, and education system.
 - Increasing access to quality pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds throughout Vermont.
 - Improving accessibility to affordable, quality child care.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked on the federal, state, and local levels to increase the quality, availability, and awareness of early childhood programs in the state of Vermont.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC):*** The Council's Executive Director and two Council members served as members of the state team that conceptualized and drafted the RTT-ELC grant application, particularly in the area of infrastructure and data systems development. Networks from both the state and regional Councils developed the successful grant application. The Council received funding from the state to help support RTT-ELC grant implementation.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:*** The Council worked with the MIECHV program to incorporate program data in the Council's data reporting system and to expand evidence-based home visitation programming in the state.

VERMONT

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Project LAUNCH (*Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health*):** Project LAUNCH, a grant program of the federal government, seeks to promote the wellness of young children from birth to age 8. The Council's Executive Director co-wrote the Project LAUNCH application with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and is VDH's primary partner in overseeing the Project LAUNCH grant implementation. The Council established a state committee, the LAUNCH Implementation Team, and funded one of Vermont's 12 Regional Councils in Chittenden County for both service and infrastructure development. As a result, migrant communities gained access to otherwise unavailable mental health services. Two strategies from the Project LAUNCH framework were added to the RTT-ELC grant application and slated for statewide expansion.

State and Local Level

- **Early Childhood Framework:** The Council supported the development of the first Early Childhood Framework and subsequent Action Plan. Governor Peter Shumlin announced the Early Childhood Framework at his Early Childhood Summit in 2013. The Council is responsible for coordinating the implementation of this framework.
- **Awareness Campaign:** The Council worked with the Permanent Fund, a Vermont nonprofit dedicated to improving the development of the state's children. Funding supported a public awareness campaign to complement the Council's efforts on promoting young children's healthy development.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council completed a working prototype 1.3 of the Early Childhood Data Reporting System (ECDRS), a searchable integrated public platform containing care, education, health, and program quality datasets. Staff populated ECDRS with data, visualizations, and stories about data and explained how data can be used to inspire action and positive change. Funding from the RTT-ELC grant is being used to continue and improve this work. ECDRS will be fully operational by December 2015.

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

Following the policy recommendations of the Council's Professional Preparation and Development Committee, the Council sought and received funding for a statewide workforce and professional development system to bring T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®, which gives scholarships to child care workers to complete course work in early childhood education and to increase their compensation, to Vermont. Using funding from the A. D. Henderson Foundation, the Council initiated this project. Later, the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children assumed responsibility for operations in Vermont. Funding from RTT-ELC has supported implementation.

VERMONT

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

- **Kindergarten Entry Assessment:** The Council successfully applied for a grant in the amount of nearly \$100,000 from the A. D. Henderson Foundation to improve the validity of the state's kindergarten entry assessment. In partnership with the Vermont Agency of Human Services and Agency of Education, the Council used this funding to contract with the American Institutes for Research to conduct a validation study of the assessment.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$664,277
- Amount Expended: \$664,275
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

VIRGINIA

Council Name: Virginia Early Learning Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Virginia Department of Social Services

Council Website: <http://www.earlychildhood.virginia.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

Governor Tim Kaine created the Governor’s Working Group on Early Childhood Initiatives in 2006 to coordinate executive branch efforts on early childhood programs and strengthen public and private programs. In September 2009, Governor Kaine issued an executive order to establish a Council and rename the working group Virginia’s Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Virginia met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

VIRGINIA

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council completed a needs assessment to measure a number of early childhood indicators. The indicators included the number of children from birth to 5 who would be eligible for early childhood education programs and services within the next 5 years; the near-term (5 years) and long-term (15 years) demand for early childhood programs for this population; the current supply of formal early childhood programs and services across the state; gaps and barriers related to providing and accessing early childhood programs and services; and a fiscal map of funds allocated for early care, preschool, and home visiting programs in Virginia.

As a result of this needs assessment, the Council recommended taking the following actions:

- **Funds Management:** Designate the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation as the principal agency for developing and managing an early childhood endowment fund to coordinate public funding streams and solicit private investments and contributions for the early childhood system.
 - **Data Systems Analysis:** Examine the current capacity and compatibility among Project Child HANDS (Helping Analyze Needed Data Securely), the Virginia Longitudinal Data System, the Virginia Case Management System, and other data systems in Virginia to gather data for decision making.
 - **Funding:** Provide adequate funding to incentivize the participation of early childhood programs in quality improvement activities at all levels and improve business operations.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

Guided by Virginia's Plan for Smart Beginnings (VPSB), the state's strategic plan for a comprehensive early childhood system, the Council coordinated at the federal, state, and local levels to increase quality. These efforts included enhancing the quality of parenting support programs, early care and education programs, and enrollment services for Virginia families.

VIRGINIA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

Federal Level

- **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program:** The Council aligned its work with VPSB, the state's strategic plan for a comprehensive early childhood system to increase the number of eligible families enrolled in evidence-based or evidence-informed home visiting programs. To better understand the need for and reach of services, the Council surveyed home visiting programs and included the findings in a needs assessment report. Council staff and workgroup members served on the MIECHV grant's continuous quality improvement (CQI) team and Virginia's Home Visiting Consortium. The Virginia Home Visiting Consortium created the CQI Committee, which selected common areas for CQI among home visiting programs funded through MIECHV and offered seminars with the opportunity for follow-up on each topic.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The VPSB goals included improving the quality of early care and education programs and expanding the availability and access to high-quality programs. Virginia developed a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). CCDF and Council funds supported research and development of a draft QRIS plan.
- **Head Start State Collaboration Grant:** The VPSB also aimed to increase the number of children enrolled in the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start and Early Head Start, and other high-quality early care and education programs. The Council assessed the barriers to collaboration and coordination among state and federally funded early childhood programs. The Council concluded that some collaboration and coordination was occurring at the local level, and positive models could be replicated. The Council found that collaboration was not widespread across other early childhood program sectors. It recommended establishing a cross-sector resource team to provide technical assistance to communities working to align and replicate best practice models.

State and Local Level

- **Virginia's School Readiness Report Card:** The Council supported revising and updating Virginia's School Readiness Report Card. The Report Card examines and assesses the capacity and effectiveness of the state's early childhood system to support the school readiness of young children. The public also can access a companion online data dashboard.

Participation of Children

The Council's Coordination and Collaboration workgroup assessed the barriers to participation in high-quality early childhood programs. The main barrier was lack of alignment among programs in the following areas: age criteria for enrollment, variables for assessing family risk, and program capacity to serve children with mixed abilities and needs. The workgroup suggested intentional collaboration among programs to improve recruitment tools and outreach, help families navigate the process, and support increased participation in programs.

VIRGINIA

Participation of Children (continued)

The workgroup recommended the following actions to address these issues:

- **Solving the Preschool Puzzle Framework:** Revise Solving the Preschool Puzzle, a framework for navigating the process of collaborating and leveraging resources available in the community to enable serving more preschool-age children at risk of school failure. The Council funded *Virginia's Preschool Puzzle—A Community Guide for Smart Beginnings*. The guide provides guidance for participating communities to develop public-private partnerships and funding strategies to access state dollars for the Virginia Preschool Initiative.
 - **Preschool Puzzle Companion Guide:** Develop a companion guide to Virginia's Preschool Puzzle that identifies how early childhood entities serving infants and toddlers can collaborate.
 - **Technical Assistance:** Establish a resource team consisting of representatives from cross-sector early childhood programs to provide technical assistance to communities striving to implement collaboration strategies and replicate the best practice models for collaboration and coordination among early childhood programs. The team assisted in planning and implementing a common curriculum, a single point of entry for enrollment, braiding and blending of funds and services, adopting inclusive services and practices, and aligning standards.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

When the Council examined the current data systems in the state, it made the following recommendations:

- **Data Governance:** Develop a data governance structure for the state's early childhood data system, Project Child HANDS, which is intended to build an integrated, web-based data system for Virginia initiatives for low-income families. The Council recommended that the governance structure be formalized to include one executive-level representative from each agency and division contributing data to the system, as well as one researcher to support and maintain the system. The Council further proposed that job duties for these positions be specified so public and private entities can support the comprehensive early childhood data system.
 - **Knowledge-Transfer System:** Establish a knowledge-transfer system for the new generation of Virginia public policy scholars, researchers, and program evaluators. This system would establish and maintain institutional knowledge and ensure continuity of information about the early childhood system. It also would enlarge the pool of those prepared to use and analyze the system appropriately.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council worked with the Administration of Children and Families' Office of Child Care for guidance on developing standards and professional development for technical assistance providers in the state. This project guided a team of Virginia's leaders and cross-sector committee members through a multi-step process to adopt common technical assistance definitions, develop

VIRGINIA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions (continued)

core standards, identify competency areas, determine needed training and support, and draft a sustainability plan. The Council also funded the dissemination of a number of early childhood professional development materials. It took the following steps:

- Reprinted and distributed family child care toolkits to unregulated providers receiving child care subsidies and to agencies that work with newly licensed and voluntarily registered child care homes.
- Reprinted and distributed copies of the Virginia Star Quality Initiative Mentor Toolkit to new Star Quality Mentors.
- Purchased and distributed copies of *Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs*, Third Edition, to the Star Quality Mentors for their use in QRIS.

The Council also supported research to inform the revision of Virginia's QRIS plan by taking the following steps:

- Developing an alignment plan for state pre-k, Head Start, and nationally accredited child care and family child care homes.
- Developing a framework that recognizes intentional teaching and child assessments as indicators for higher levels of quality in early childhood settings.
- Redesigning the QRIS technical assistance and support structure to be sustainable.

Early Learning Standards

The Council reviewed and provided feedback on revisions to *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds*. The standards provide a measurable range of skills and knowledge essential for 4-year-olds to be successful in kindergarten. They also provide early childhood educators with a set of minimum standards in literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, health and physical development, personal and social development, music, and the visual arts, with indicators of success for entering kindergarten. *Virginia's Milestones for Children (Early Learning Standards for 0–5)* were updated with Council funds to include the most recent evidence-based information on young children's skills, including self-regulation.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,052,613
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,216,890
- Amount Expended: \$1,193,262
- Percent of Funds Expended: 98.06%

WASHINGTON

Council Name: Washington Early Learning Advisory Council

Council Website: <http://www.del.wa.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

The Washington State Legislature created the Washington Early Learning Advisory Council in 2007 and charged the Council and the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to work together to develop a long-range early learning plan to ensure school readiness for all children in the state. This plan was developed by DEL, Thrive by Five (Washington State's public-private partnership supporting early education), and the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Washington met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

WASHINGTON

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council examined a number of state data sources to explore the quality and accessibility of child care, preschool programs, home visiting services, and the status of the workforce. Based on the needs assessment, the Council identified the following recommendations:

- Expand the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, Washington's state-funded preschool program.
 - Increase the quality and accessibility of child care through the implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
 - Develop an efficient state-local alignment of communication and action for state, local, and regional entities and partners.
-

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked with state and local agencies and with federal programs to increase early childhood system engagement and coordination and engagement.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council and the Regional Early Learning Coalition supported the development of the state's QRIS (Early Achievers); the state's Kindergarten Entry Assessment (Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS); and implementation of the state's professional development system. These activities supported the state's successful grant application in the first round of RTT-ELC.
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Council leveraged funds to support CCDF activities. It supported the state's interdisciplinary consultation model for infants and toddlers in licensed child care settings and the establishment of regional Infant and Toddler Steering Committees in 10 state regions.

WASHINGTON

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Head Start State Collaboration Grant:** A portion of Council funding supported Washington's Head Start State Collaboration grant and community mobilization efforts through state Early Learning Regional Coalitions. The grant also supported implementation and coordination of components of WaKIDS in communities.
- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):** The state's ECCS and Council work supported the development of the Early Learning Regional Coalitions. The Council partnered with ECCS and the Coalitions to create awareness of the state's universal developmental screening.

State and Local Level

- **Early Learning Regional Coalitions (ELRCs):** ELRCs are Washington's recognized local and regional early learning system building and coordination entities that interface with state partners and the state-level Council on early childhood matters. They are funded via public and private resources. Some also include local funding sources. Washington's SAC grant also supported state and local coordination and communication on the work of ELRCs, state partners, and the Council.
- **State-Local Coordination Team:** DEL created a State Department-Local Coordination Team to support the overall state-local coordination work. DEL is primarily responsible for implementing the Council on the state level and Thrive by Five is responsible for the ELRCs.
- **Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project:** DEL collaborated with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington to complete the 16-month Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project in June 2013. The project's goal was to strengthen the coordination of the state's early learning system, including state agencies, regional coalitions, K–12 educators, and early learning providers.

Participation of Children

The Council identified the following recommendations for increasing participation in high-quality early childhood programs:

- **Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP):** Continue to expand ECEAP, the comprehensive state-funded preschool program that provides free early learning and development services and support to low-income children. This will ensure that all eligible children are reached by the 2018–2019 school year.
- **Funding:** Create a sustainable state funding stream source to support infants and toddlers and increase state funding for home visiting.
- **Early Intervention Policy:** Reform Early Intervention policy and funding to increase access for infants and toddlers needing Early Intervention services.

WASHINGTON

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council proposed the following steps to implement a unified data system for early childhood:

- Hire a data governance coordinator, develop a data governance team, and convene a data workgroup.
 - Develop a comprehensive data governance plan.
 - Engage policymakers in understanding the importance of data to inform early learning and development.
-

Early Learning Standards

The Council supported a major revision of the state's *Early Learning and Development Guidelines*, first created in 2005. The revision focuses on racial equity and accessibility, common core alignment, and guidelines through third grade. The guidelines are aligned with QRIS standards, pre-k standards, core competencies for early learning professionals, and *Head Start Program Performance Standards*.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,542,064
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,706,341
- Amount Expended: \$1,706,341
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

WEST VIRGINIA

Council Name: Early Childhood Advisory Council of West Virginia

Designated State Agency: West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts

Council Website: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/oel/>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 11–20

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2010, Governor Joe Manchin established the Early Childhood Advisory Council of West Virginia and shared this vision:

- All children in West Virginia are healthy and ready to learn, have safe and nurturing environments, and have positive early learning experiences.
 - All families in West Virginia are respected as their child's first and foremost teacher and have access to information and resources to meet the individual needs of their children.
 - All communities in West Virginia share responsibility for the well-being of all children and have a comprehensive system of services to support children and families.
-

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

West Virginia met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state

WEST VIRGINIA

Council Representation (continued)

- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council conducted a needs assessment on the accessibility and availability of services for children from birth through age 3 in West Virginia and the current state of early mental health services. It also completed a needs assessment to measure the quality and availability of professional development opportunities for the state's early childhood workforce. The Council found that there is an increased need for home visiting programs, family support services, and parent education in the state, and more demand for social and emotional training and consulting services. The state made progress in addressing these concerns.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked at the federal, state, and local levels to increase the quality of and access to early care and education for West Virginia's children.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The RTT-ELC application process offered an opportunity to improve the state's early learning system. The Council made advances by implementing portions of the work outlined in the application, though the state did not receive an award.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: Representatives of the state's home visiting program were Council members. The Council funded a train-the-trainers event on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the ASQ Social Emotional developmental screening.

WEST VIRGINIA

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF):** The Council worked with the state's CCDF program to disseminate West Virginia's *Infant/Toddler Early Learning Standards*.

State and Local Level

- **West Virginia Universal Pre-Kindergarten:** The Office of Early Learning in the West Virginia Department of Education ensured that the Council's work was aligned to and supportive of the state's pre-kindergarten program. The Council funded the development and printing of the first county-by-county school readiness profile and school readiness brochures for families.
-

Participation of Children

The Council conducted the following activities to increase the number of children and families with access to high-quality early childhood education and care:

- **Public Awareness Campaign:** The Council completed a statewide public awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness of the importance of early childhood education and care. This effort included the promotion of Help Me Grow, the state's free referral service that links families to critical developmental resources for their children from birth through age 5.
 - **Parental Leadership and Engagement:** The Council analyzed and released the Parent Leadership and Engagement Report based on the findings of two assessments. One assessed whether parents felt they had the opportunities for leadership and engagement in their child's development. The second measured whether early childhood program staff believed that opportunities for parental leadership and engagement existed.
-

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council identified the following major needs for developing the state's unified data system:

- **Planning:** Based on a Comprehensive Data Gap Analysis, the Council determined that a year of planning is needed to develop a work plan, budget, and governance agreements for linking data systems.
- **State Leadership:** Support from the Governor and state legislature is a critical driver for authorizing links of existing data systems.
- **Funding:** Funding is necessary after planning to enable systems to link.

WEST VIRGINIA

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council advanced work in the early childhood workforce development area and with higher education institutions.

- **Core Knowledge and Competences (CKCs) and Career Ladder:** The Council revised the state's CKCs to include home visiting competencies and developed support for the competencies across all early childhood sectors. It published the revised CKCs in March 2014. The Council also developed an early childhood career ladder.
 - **Early Childhood Education Summit:** The Council convened early childhood professors from the state's 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education to discuss articulation, curricula, and ways to improve the education system for those entering the early childhood workforce. The Council held regular meetings and conference calls to discuss instituting the professors' recommendations, which included adding the *Early Learning Standards* and CKCs to coursework.
 - **Infant Mental Health Competency and Endorsement System:** The Council funded and planned the rollout of this system, which allows early childhood professionals to gain training and recognition for their expertise in social and emotional development.
 - **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** The Council continued to work with the Governor's Early Childhood Planning Taskforce and the Division of Early Care and Education to develop recommendations for moving QRIS development forward.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$642,214
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$806,491
- Amount Expended: \$806,491
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

WISCONSIN

Council Name: Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Council Website: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac/default.htm>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 31–40

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In 2008, Wisconsin created a Department of Children and Families along with a Division of Early Care and Education. In 2009, Governor Jim Doyle established the Early Childhood Advisory Council with a vision that “every child will be healthy, nurtured, safe, and successful.” Wisconsin sought to carry out this vision by promoting quality early learning experiences; safe and healthy children; and stable, nurturing, and economically secure families. Wisconsin continued to support its Council’s efforts with funds received through a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant in 2012.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Wisconsin met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs

WISCONSIN

Council Representation (continued)

- Head Start State Collaboration Director
- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council measured the quality and availability of child care and the credentials of the workforce through partnerships to gather data from the Department of Children and Families, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, and the Department of Public Instruction. Findings from this effort were extracted from a number of reports, briefs, data summaries and measures of system functioning provided by partners. These findings were grouped into physical health, mental health and safety, early care and education, parent education, and family support. The Council identified the following major issues:

- **An Incoherent System:** Assessment results showed a complex mix of county, regional, state, and federal early childhood structures and services for children and families.
- **Significant Data Gaps:** The assessment found that while pockets of data resided in various agencies and departments, there was no statewide comprehensive early childhood data system with data on programs, individual children and families, or communities.
- **Insufficient Measures:** The assessment indicated inadequate data measures on the types of children's early education experiences, the quality of services, and unmet community needs.
- **Inadequate Developmental Screening:** Findings revealed that a substantial proportion of children under 5 years did not receive standardized screenings for developmental delays.

Based on the assessment, the Council released recommendations to increase screening and assessment of children, improve data collection and tracking, work with the private sector to support early care efforts, promote cross-sector professional development, and increase the engagement of families and communities.

WISCONSIN

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council worked on the federal, state, and local levels to increase the funding for and availability of quality early child care and education programs within the state.

Federal Level

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)***: The Council contributed to the development of the RTT-ELC application. The state used the Council's early childhood agenda as the framework for Wisconsin's successful application. The Council provided feedback about the grant's implementation and has received updates on the progress and status of the grant.
- ***Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)***: The Council helped develop the successful application for the MIECHV grant. The award provided both formula and competitive home visiting grants of over \$4 million. As a result, the state significantly expanded home visiting to high-risk families. Also, the Council aligned the state's Family Foundation Home Visiting Program with the federal home visiting program and the Council's priorities.

State and Local Level

- ***Department of Public Instruction 4K Program***: The Council supported increasing Wisconsin districts' implementation of 4-year-old pre-kindergarten (4K). As a result, the availability of 4K grew by more than 45 percent in districts. The Council continued work to align 4K with Young Star, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) program.
- ***Celebrate Children Foundation Grant***: Celebrate Children Foundation grants made to community coalitions supported the implementation of Council objectives at the local level. These grants successfully matched federal dollars with resources and in-kind donations from businesses, foundations, and local governments at a more-than-100 percent match rate.
- ***Regional Action Teams***: The Council supported six Regional Early Childhood Action Teams that supported local professional development efforts in each state region.

Participation of Children

Wisconsin sought to increase the participation of children in quality early childhood care through the following activities:

- ***Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant***: The Council developed goals that informed development of the reform agenda outlined in the state's successful RTT-ELC grant. It also developed a plan to increase the engagement of high-risk families in high-quality early childhood care.
- ***Head Start and Child Welfare Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)***: The Council supported state efforts to develop an MOU with the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare and Milwaukee Head Start grantees. This established a formal and efficient process to identify and enroll child welfare system children into Head Start programs. The Council worked on expanding this agreement throughout the state.

WISCONSIN

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

The Council responded to the identification of significant data gaps by developing an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System workgroup. The Council supported their work plan and project charter. Their efforts contributed to inclusion of a data systems development project in the RTT-ELC grant.

The Council identified the following steps to address in order to complete the implementation a unified data system:

- Develop a data governance structure.
 - Provide a tool to link records.
 - Advance a research agenda and data policy questions.
-

Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions

The Council undertook a number of efforts to improve the skills of providers and ratings of state child care programs:

- **Professional Development Registry:** The Council funded a coupon program for child care providers and trainers for the *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards* (WMELS) so they could become certified and recognized in the state's professional development registry system. More than 900 early care professionals benefited from this effort. This project was included in Wisconsin's supplemental request for RTT-ELC funds.
- **Professional Development Initiative (PDI):** The state's PDI strengthened professional development for the early childhood workforce with the support of the Council. An annual conference for higher education professionals disseminated early childhood professional development information. The Council worked with the technical college system to incorporate WMELS training into coursework, and that training is now a component of all entry-level courses. As part of the PDI, the Council funded a Cross-Sector Professional Development Coordinator and updated the format and content for the online career guide to make it more user friendly. The Council's support also provided best practices guidance on response to intervention and early childhood; developed a webinar series on community health screenings; and provided partial tuition for the Infant, Early Childhood, and Family Mental Health Certificate Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- **Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) Pilot Project:** The Council funded a pilot project with the state's Child Care and Development Fund to increase the quality rating of child care programs that lacked educational opportunities. The major barrier to a quality rating was the absence of a credit-based education. The pilot project supplied child care providers with credit-based instruction to enable a significant number of new participants to complete the 12-credit infant-toddler credential.

WISCONSIN

Early Learning Standards

The Council supported the WMELS, which outline developmental benchmarks from birth to first grade entrance. The Council provided new materials for WMELS trainer kits and funded a WMELS Coordinator and training for Milwaukee public school elementary staff. In addition, the Council strengthened the standards' literacy components and developed a process and training package to align WMELS to the K–12 *Common Core* literacy standards.

Advancements Beyond Council Requirements

The Council conducted a number of activities to increase the social and emotional and physical health of Wisconsin's children and expanded outreach to vulnerable populations.

- **Pyramid Model Training:** Wisconsin used the Pyramid Model, a framework that targets children with delays in social or emotional development and promotes prevention and intervention for unhealthy behaviors. The Council provided additional trainings on this model and extended the program to increase certification of Pyramid Model trainers in the state's professional registry system.

- **Health:** The Council expanded access to health resources by translating obesity prevention radio ads and screening and assessment tip sheets into Spanish. The state's obesity prevention efforts incorporated nutrition training and physical activity into programs for children, including early childhood programs and in the state's QRIS. The state received the Weight of the Nation award from First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move Child Care* initiative in recognition of these efforts.

The Council also conducted an early childhood oral health survey through child care providers. Survey recommendations included increasing the contact of oral health providers with families at schools; clinics; and Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children offices; and improving families' awareness of the importance of oral health.

- **Tribal:** Wisconsin is home to 11 tribal nations. The Council brought together representatives from the tribes for a listening session on improving relationships and increasing tribal engagement in early childhood programs. The feedback was successfully used in the RTT-ELC application to increase funds to maintain the role of tribal nations in early childhood programs serving tribal populations.
-

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$1,272,323
- Supplemental: \$164,277
- Total Award: \$1,436,600
- Amount Expended: \$1,436,600
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%

WYOMING

Council Name: Early Childhood State Advisory Council

Designated State Agency: Department of Family Services

Council Website: <http://dfsweb.wyo.gov>

State Advisory Councils 2013 Report: The *Early Childhood State Advisory Councils Status Report, April 2013* can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

Total Number of Council Members: 21–30

Council History

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, Public Law (P.L.) 110-134, authorized the State Advisory Council grant to promote high-quality early childhood education systems. The grant was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, for the period between 2010 and 2013. The grant required states to conduct a needs assessment, implement improvements, and develop recommendations to improve the coordination, collaboration, quality, and access of their early childhood systems.

In June 2010, Governor Dave Freudenthal signed an executive order establishing the Wyoming Early Childhood State Advisory Council. The Council builds on the past work of other early childhood coordinating bodies in the state, including the Wyoming Early Childhood Partnership, Interagency Planning Team for At-Risk Children, and the Governor's Early Childhood Development Council.

Council Representation

The Head Start Act requires states and territories to include representatives of specific agencies, institutions, and other entities as members of their State Advisory Councils.

Wyoming met the requirement for Council representation from the following entities:

- State agency responsible for child care
- State educational agency
- Local educational agencies
- Institutions of higher education in the state
- Local providers of early childhood education and development services
- Head Start agencies located in the state, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs
- Head Start State Collaboration Director

WYOMING

Council Representation (continued)

- State agency responsible for programs under Part B, Section 619, or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- State agency responsible for health or mental health care
- Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the state's Governor, such as the Governor's office, the legislature, parents, businesses, philanthropy/foundations, statewide or community organizations, health care providers, local government, home visiting, and abuse and neglect prevention

Appendix A displays the current Council membership for participating states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. This appendix includes modifications to representation since the 2013 interim report.

Needs Assessment

The Council assessed the effectiveness of the state's early childhood services and programs for children birth to age 5, and developed a report that identified available resources and gaps and recommended data and policy changes. For instance, the Council found that current developmental screening efforts in the state did not adequately reach the population of children birth to age 5 and made policy recommendations for developing capacity. Using the data collected in the needs assessment, the Council developed a tool to track Wyoming's progress for young children over time. They applied core elements of the Ready Child Equation developed by the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative to create the tool and identified a set of measurable readiness indicators to establish a baseline of early childhood readiness across Wyoming.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Council's efforts to coordinate and collaborate across federal, state, and local early childhood programs were supported by legislation that provided funding for increased coordination and collaboration. This led to the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the four major early childhood agencies in the state. This MOU governed how the new funding would support the collaborating partners and guide grant awards to local early childhood programs.

Federal Level

- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***: The Council served as an advisory body for the development of Wyoming's Child Care and Development Fund State Plan. In addition, the Council supported CCDF quality initiatives.

WYOMING

Coordination and Collaboration (continued)

State and Local Level

- **WY Quality Counts!™:** The Council collaborated with WY Quality Counts!™ in the State Department of Workforce Services to promote quality initiatives in child care and enhance professional development for child care workers. WY Quality Counts!™ aims to raise awareness about quality child care and provides scholarships, grants, and training to Wyoming's early childhood workforce.
 - **Wyoming Kids First:** The Council partnered with Wyoming Kids First to advance early childhood systems building at the local level in Wyoming communities. Modeled after North Carolina's Smart Start and Partnership for Children programs, Wyoming Kids First uses a public-private approach to achieve better outcomes for children.
 - **First Lady Carol Mead's Literacy Initiative:** The Council supported the Literacy Initiative by providing statewide outreach to early childhood providers, stakeholders, and parents to increase support for and awareness of early literacy.
-

Participation of Children

The Council advanced its Readiness Equation as a strategy for increasing the participation of children in early care and education programs. The equation lays out a framework to ensure that families support their children's readiness for school, children have good health, high-quality early care and education programs exist, and communities prepare children for school. The Council marketed the Readiness Equation to the general public to gain support for early care and education programs.

Progress and Need for a Unified Data System

In 2013, the Council performed an assessment to identify early childhood data system needs. Based on the findings, the Council identified a need for a data system to manage the Quality Rating and Improvement System and developed a recommended action plan for implementation. The Council highlighted three main needs to further the completion of a unified data system:

- A designated entity responsible for data collection.
 - Established governance with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.
 - A robust and aligned kindergarten readiness assessment system.
-

Early Learning Standards

In 2011, the *Birth to Three Early Learning Guidelines* were completed through the partnership of the Department of Family Services and the Department of Workforce Services. The guidelines were disseminated in both print and electronic formats to providers, parents, and other partners working in early childhood.

WYOMING

Early Learning Standards (continued)

In 2013, the Council released the *Early Learning Foundations* (ELF) for children of 3 to 5 years. The ELF built on the Readiness Equation and was based on the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. The Foundations were aligned with the *Common Core* standards for kindergarten. The Council in partnership with the University of Wyoming created training modules to complement the ELF and provide guidance on usage. Training provided highlights of each of the 10 domains within the ELF. More in-depth online training modules were piloted in selected child care programs and Head Start centers across the state. After pilot completion, the training modules were offered online for public use. The ELF training was tailored to parents as well as to early childhood professionals.

Funding and Funds Expended

- Amount Approved: \$500,000
- Supplemental: N/A
- Total Award: \$500,000
- Amount Expended: \$500,000
- Percent of Funds Expended: 100%



APPENDIX A

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AL–WY

Y=State has membership

	AL	AS	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	DC	FL	GA	GU	HI	IL	IA	KS	KY	LA	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS
State Agency Responsible for Child Care	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Educational Agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Local Educational Agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Institutions of Higher Education	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Local Providers of Early Childhood Education and Development Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Head Start Agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Director of Head Start Collaboration	Y	*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Agency Responsible for Programs under Part C of IDEA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Coordinator of Part B, Section 619 of IDEA	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	
State Agency Responsible for Health	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Agency Responsible for Mental Health	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Representative from Governor's Office	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y
Legislator(s)	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	
Parent Representative	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tribal Representative	Y		Y										Y						Y			Y	Y	Y
Migrant Representative	Y		Y	Y						Y	Y			Y							Y	Y		Y
Business Representative	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Philanthropy/Foundation Representative	Y		Y			Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Statewide and Community Organizations	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Health Care Provider	Y		Y	Y		Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	
Local Government	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y			Y	Y
Home Visiting	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Judicial Representative	Y		Y								Y	Y				Y								
Abuse and Neglect Prevention/Child Welfare	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Military Child Care							Y		Y	Y														

*These territories do not have directors of Head Start collaboration.



APPENDIX A

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AL–WY (continued)

Y=State has membership

	MO	MT	NE	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	OH	OK	OR	PA	PR	RI	TN	TX	VI	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV	WI	WY
State Agency Responsible for Child Care	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Educational Agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Local Educational Agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Institutions of Higher Education	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Local Providers of Early Childhood Education and Development Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Head Start Agency	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Director of Head Start Collaboration	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Agency Responsible for Programs under Part C of IDEA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Coordinator of Part B, Section 619 of IDEA		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y
State Agency Responsible for Health	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State Agency Responsible for Mental Health	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Representative from Governor's Office	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Legislator(s)		Y	Y	Y			Y			Y										Y		Y			Y
Parent Representative		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
Tribal Representative		Y	Y	Y			Y					Y										Y		Y	Y
Migrant Representative		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y								Y	Y		Y					Y	Y
Business Representative	Y	Y					Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Philanthropy/Foundation Representative		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Statewide and Community Organizations	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Health Care Provider	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y					
Local Government	Y	Y						Y											Y			Y			Y
Home Visiting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Judicial Representative	Y	Y							Y							Y									
Abuse and Neglect Prevention/Child Welfare	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y			Y			Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Military Child Care		Y				Y			Y												Y				

