



# NATIONAL CENTER ON Afterschool and Summer Enrichment

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Introduction:** In October 2015, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Care (OCC) launched the new National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE). This center is one of nine national training and technical assistance centers funded by the Office of Head Start and/or the Office of Child Care as part of an integrated Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System.<sup>1</sup> Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) will lead NCASE, along with its partners the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at Wellesley College, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), and WRMA, Inc. The goal of NCASE is to ensure that school-age children in families of low-income have increased access to high-quality afterschool and summer learning experiences that contribute to their overall development and academic achievement.

### Who will NCASE serve?

NCASE's primary audience is composed of the state, territory and tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies and their designated networks, which include the statewide afterschool networks, State and Local Education Agencies (SEAs/LEAs), provider associations, and child care resource and referral agencies. The CCDF lead agencies administer the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant at the state/territory/tribal level and set the policies that govern the use of CCDF funds for school-age care (as well as other child care). NCASE's secondary audience includes out-of-school time program staff and the families whose children attend afterschool and summer programs. NCASE will reach its secondary audiences through its work with the primary audience groups.

### What is the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)?

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a multibillion-dollar federal and state partnership administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC) to promote family economic self-sufficiency and to help children succeed in school and life through affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. The Child Care Development Block Grant Act establishing the CCDF program (which was reauthorized in November 2014) authorizes states, territories, and tribes to administer child care services, including determining policies for the use of child care subsidies and setting quality guidelines for child care programs. Subsidies offset the expense of child care for low-income working parents (or those in job training or education programs) by paying for a portion of child care costs. While CCDF is often

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<sup>1</sup> The other National Centers and their funding sources are: Head Start Program Management and Fiscal Operations (OHS); Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (OHS/OCC); Parent, Family and Community Engagement (OHS/OCC); Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning (OHS/OCC); Early Childhood Health and Wellness (OHS/OCC); Early Childhood Quality Assurance (OHS/OCC); Tribal Child Care Implementation and Innovation (OCC); and Child Care Subsidy, Innovation and Accountability (OCC).

associated with care for very young children, nearly half of the low-income children served by federal subsidies are school-age (between the ages of 5-12).

### **How do eligible families access and use CCDF subsidies?**

Families typically apply for child care subsidies through the CCDF lead agency or other entities the lead agency designates, such as child care resource and referral agencies or local health and social services. Many states streamline parents' access to child care subsidies by using a single application to determine eligibility for a variety of state assistance programs. Once eligibility is determined, parents may be referred to child care resource and referral agencies for help in finding child care providers (including afterschool and summer learning providers) who accept CCDF subsidies. In most cases, the subsidy covers only a portion of the cost of the program. Parents may be required to pay a co-payment as determined by the parents' income, family size and other factors established in state policy.

### **Do all states/territories administer the CCDF program in the same way?**

While there are some requirements that all states/territories must follow in administering the CCDF program (for example, all states/territories must set aside a minimum percentage of their funds for targeted quality improvement activities), states/territories have some flexibility in framing their policies provided they meet the federal regulatory requirements. For example, CCDF lead agencies can adopt quality improvement standards with specific provisions about the care of school-age children. There is wide variability across states regarding the specific school-age policies that CCDF lead agencies adopt.

### **Are there designated "subsidy afterschool/summer" programs?**

No, there are no specific "CCDF subsidy" afterschool or summer learning programs. Instead, local programs decide whether they will accept subsidies to enable low-income children to participate in their program. However, the amount of the CCDF subsidy and the parent co-payment rarely meet the true per-child cost to operate the program, which is one factor that affects whether afterschool and summer learning programs are able to offer "subsidy slots" (this is true for child care programs serving younger children as well). Afterschool and summer learning programs that accept CCDF subsidies may need to meet certain regulatory requirements and adhere to the subsidy administration policies set by the state lead agencies.

### **What types of training and technical assistance will NCASE provide?**

NCASE will examine existing resources that focus on subsidy administration and school-age care as well as resources on key related topics--such as family engagement, workforce development, and continuous quality improvement--and modify them as needed to address the needs of its target audiences. NCASE will also develop new resources in response to the needs of the field. NCASE plans to develop and maintain a comprehensive online resource library to house these resources, which will be hosted on the Office of Child Care's Technical Assistance Network website. In addition to resource development, NCASE plans to provide technical assistance to members of its primary audience group through virtual events such as webinars and online chats with subject matter experts, and through online professional learning communities that come together to advance their work in a particular area of policy or practice.

NCASE plans to use a case management approach in working with states by assigning regional Technical Assistance Liaisons (TALs) and much of NCASE's technical assistance will be virtual.

### **Will NCASE work with the Office of Child Care State Capacity Building Center?**

Yes, NCASE will work closely with the State Systems Specialists Networks from OCC's State Capacity Building Center. These specialists work with CCDF lead agencies to help them develop and implement technical assistance plans to align with goals outlined in the state plan and with the newly reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

### **What role will the Mott Statewide Afterschool Networks play with the new NCASE?**

The Mott Statewide Afterschool Networks help local afterschool and summer program providers to innovate and improve the quality of their services. The Networks provide local programs with training and technical assistance, inform policies that foster continuous improvement and expanded access to quality afterschool and summer learning, and develop stakeholder partnerships to engage in systems development. State Network leads often serve on CCDF lead agency task forces and other stakeholder groups, and provide input into the CCDF state plans and activities. Ideally, the Networks can serve as a "bridge" between state agencies and providers and will be critical in NCASE's efforts to disseminate resources and technical assistance opportunities in a targeted fashion.

### **Will NCASE work with the 21st Century Community Learning Centers?**

The 21st CCLC program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides funding to State Education Agencies (SEAs) to support non-school academic enrichment, and training and technical assistance, both online and in-person. States typically designate a 21st CCLC lead within the SEA, and this person is responsible for coordinating efforts with other statewide afterschool and summer learning efforts. As SEAs are among its primary audience group, NCASE will work with 21st CCLC state leads to gather and share information and develop collaborative technical assistance and outreach activities. However, NCASE is not a technical assistance provider for 21st CCLC programs.

### **How will NCASE's work fit with the other National Centers in the integrated OHS/OCC TTA system?**

Most of the other National Centers focus on children from birth to age five, whereas NCASE focuses specifically on school-age children (ages 5-12). NCASE will also focus on program issues that cut across other National Center focal areas, such as family engagement, quality assurance, and healthy child development. NCASE will work with other National Centers to identify areas of common interest and, where appropriate, engage in joint product development and/or joint technical assistance efforts.

### **If I have questions about NCASE's work, who should I contact?**

For more information, please contact the NCASE team at [NCASE@edc.org](mailto:NCASE@edc.org).