



State Capacity Building Center Impact Project An Opportunity for States, Commonwealths, and Territories

The Impact Project is a new service to help States as they develop and expand their systemic capacity while planning and implementing their own early childhood priorities. This document includes all the information States need to consider this opportunity and prepare their proposals. The first three sections include substantive and logistical details about the Impact Project and the application process. The sections labeled Proposal Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4 contain templates for all required elements of the proposal, which applicants should fill in and submit directly in this document. The proposal templates are followed by several appendices for applicants' reference.

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Highlights of the Impact Project

Overview

The Impact Project is a new service to help States as they develop and expand their systemic capacity while planning and implementing their own early childhood priorities. The focus for each State participating in the Impact Project is state-directed, based on the State's particular context, vision, and goals for the development of a strong early childhood system. The Impact Project offers intensive consultation and assistance from well-regarded experts with extensive state-based experience at no charge over an 18- to 48-month period. As a result of the Impact Project, state early childhood systems leaders should be able to successfully strengthen systems building for effective high-impact services that can improve outcomes for children and families. The purpose of the Impact Project is to assist States as they develop and expand their capacity for planning, investing in, and implementing quality early childhood systems, policies, and practices. States must include systems and services that are fully or partially supported by their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) resources as part of their projects, and their projects must address the CCDF goal of addressing the needs of working families by providing more low-income children with quality services. Projects may be new or underway. Applications are due April 22. States will determine the length of the project, and services are expected to be made available by summer 2016.

Project Start Date

August 1, 2016

Project End Date

To be individually determined; projects are expected to last from 18 to 48 months.

Technical Assistance and Consultation

The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) provides consultation and technical assistance to state leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and quality programs that improve results for children and families, especially low-income children. The Impact Project offers intensive consultation and assistance from the State Capacity Building Center's well-regarded experts from ICF International, WestEd, and Child Trends. Consultants with extensive state-based experience will be available to each participating State. Through the Impact Project, States will be provided with intensive consultation and technical assistance to develop and implement action plans focused on their specific priorities. Services are available for a period of 18 to 48 months, with the exact timeframe determined based on each State's project plan.

Participating States will receive the following services:

- ◆ Ongoing consultation and technical assistance from the State Capacity Building Center's Intensive Capacity Building team that is specifically tailored to the State's needs
- ◆ At least monthly calls and tailored support
- ◆ Onsite in-person consultation and visitation

Eligibility

States, Commonwealths, and Territories (States) are eligible to apply. Up to 10 States will be selected to participate in this project. States may apply in multistate consortiums.

Webinar

An optional webinar will be held Monday, March 21, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. ET to provide an overview and to answer questions about the request for proposal. States and their partners are welcome to participate. Preregistration is required through https://ccssn.adobeconnect.com/impact_webinar/event/registration.html.

Letter of Interest

States interested in participating should send a brief letter of interest to OCCInfoServices@icfi.com. The letter of interest is due Friday, March 25, 2016, 8:00 p.m. ET.

Proposal

States interested in working on this project should send their proposals to OCCInfoServices@icfi.com. Proposals are due Friday, April 22, 2016, 8:00 p.m. ET.

Selection Process

The State Capacity Building Center will consider the quality and completeness of the applications, the extent to which selected States represent diverse current capacity and geography, significance of projected outcomes, demonstrated relationship to the State's priorities, the degree to which the work is related to a priority heading in appendix 1, the likelihood of achieving the goals, the likelihood that the project would create sustained change, and the extent to which the project is systemic. States will be notified about their award status in late June 2016.

Questions and Support

Feel free to call upon us during the application process for follow-up discussion and support, as well as with questions. Please contact us at OCCInfoServices@icfi.com.



Detailed Project Overview

Purpose

The State Capacity Building Center provides consultation and technical assistance to state leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The State Capacity Building Center is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System. The Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, Offices of Child Care and Head Start.

Through the Impact Project, States will receive intensive consultation and technical assistance to develop and implement action plans focused on their specific state policy priorities. Services are available for a period of 18 to 48 months. The purpose of the Impact Project is to assist States as they develop and expand their capacity for planning, investing in, and implementing quality early childhood systems, policies, and practices. States must include systems and services that are fully or partially supported through their CCDF resources as part of their projects, and their projects must address the CCDF goal of addressing the needs of working families by providing more low-income children with quality services. Projects may be new or underway. Intensive consultation and assistance for state leaders and their partners are available through the Impact Project.

By focusing on a state-designated priority, States will be provided with an opportunity to strengthen essential capacity necessary to design and/or implement their work. *Capacity* refers to an organization or institution's potential to be productive and effective by applying its human and organizational assets to identify and achieve its current and future goals. There are five dimensions of capacity that States need to develop and sustain effective systems and services for early childhood:

1. Culture and climate: Values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and work environment
2. Engagement and partnerships: Engagement and partnership with citizens, families, providers, stakeholders, and oversight groups
3. Financial resources: Revenue maximization, financial management, and financial forecasting
4. Infrastructure: Planning, execution, policies, procedures, governance, services continuum, decisionmaking, and quality improvement
5. Knowledge and skills: Expertise and competencies specific to early childhood and to systems design, development, and implementation

Guiding principles for the consultation and technical assistance provided by the State Capacity Building Center include the following:

- ◆ Effective state-level technical assistance establishes credibility and expertise, builds partnerships, and develops capacity to support a results-oriented early childhood system.
- ◆ Context matters. Effective capacity building requires understanding each organization and respecting its history, values, and vision.
- ◆ Technical assistance and capacity building require examining root causes of issues. Our capacity-development approach fosters creation of effective policy and implementation systems, guides States through institutional reforms, and ensures the sustainability of those practices.

For more information on systems building, please see appendix 4.

Impact Project Goal

The goal of the Impact Project is to support state leaders and their partners to develop and implement state systems to expand access to and improve the quality of early childhood education. The project is designed to help state leaders and their partners address their specific goals and strategies, to strengthen and support their capacity, and to provide national expertise for their efforts. As a result of the Impact Project, early childhood systems leaders should be able to successfully strengthen systems building for effective high-impact services that improve outcomes and results for children and families.

Through this application process, each State will indicate its own strategic priorities, goals, and approach. Appendix 1 provides ideas that state leaders identified during the planning phase for this project, which are mapped onto the priorities of the Administration for Children and Families. This information was gleaned through interviews with nearly 50 leaders from throughout the United States, drawing upon current and former state government staff as well as others whose day-to-day work involves the development of state and local systems in early childhood.

The information in appendix 1 is provided to demonstrate the wide range of possibility and opportunity for States. States are not limited or bound by the projects identified in appendix 1 although preference will be given to States whose projects align with the high-level priorities outlined in the appendix headings. The focus for each State is state-directed, based on the State's particular context, vision, and goals for the development of a strong early childhood system. States may request participation for an effort that has already started, as well as for new efforts.

The Impact Project requires applying States to focus on a project that is a priority to the State and is of significance to the system that the State is seeking to develop and implement to best meet the needs of young children and their families for quality early childhood services.

States must include systems and services that are supported through their CCDF resources as part of the application and address the CCDF goal of addressing the needs of working families by providing more low-income children with quality services.

State Activities

Selected States will establish an Impact Project management team to lead the project. Each team must have a leader and a coleader and have sufficient leadership responsibility and authority to oversee the State's project. Each state management team, with support from the State Capacity Building Center, will undertake the following:

- ◆ Finalize its project plan (design and/or implementation), which will include detailed steps, timelines, and roles and responsibilities. The project plan will also describe any anticipated changes needed for successful implementation (for example, financing, governance, program policy, and data systems), and strategies to measure success over time.
- ◆ Identify a lead and colead for the Impact Project management team. These individuals must have sufficient leadership responsibility and authority to move the State's plan forward.
- ◆ Have a State official executive sponsor (who may be a lead or colead).
- ◆ Include those who are essential to design and implementation of the State's project in the overall management team, bringing in all necessary partners no later than 6–9 months into the project.
- ◆ Ensure meaningful family and stakeholder communication and partnership.
- ◆ Identify the commitment of time and resources to the State's project.
- ◆ Participate in regular communication with the State Capacity Building Center, including monthly calls.

- ◆ Convene the management team and SCBC consultants for regular in-state meetings (at least four times a year) to facilitate planning and problem solving.
- ◆ Brief the head(s) of the sponsoring agency (or agencies) and the early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council) on the project and its progress on a regular basis, and gain their input.
- ◆ Track progress toward completion of the State's action plan and reassess and revise strategies as needed and at least annually.
- ◆ Complete a semiannual self-assessment (provided by the State Capacity Building Center) as part of required semiannual progress reports.
- ◆ Participate in occasional peer learning and advisement with the Impact Project network, with designation of the state coleads as leadership fellows representing the State in the peer learning and advisement network.

Technical Assistance, Consultation, and Support

The State Capacity Building Center will support selected States in their efforts. The State Capacity Building Center is accountable for the following:

- ◆ Designating a dedicated senior consultant for each State.
- ◆ Supporting the lead, colead, and management team in their progress on the project.
- ◆ Providing appropriate types of consultation, to be specifically determined based on each State's application and follow-up conversation, to meet the needs of the State. Appendix 2 provides an overview of some of the types of consultation that may be made available to support each State's plan.
- ◆ Securing additional expertise from the rich array of experts at the federally funded Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System, as relevant to each State's project.
- ◆ Providing opportunities for the state management team to learn the skills and develop the capacity to sustain the project and develop and implement new projects so that project management, documentation and analysis, facilitation, and other system-building skills identified by the State and the SCBC are embedded in the team at the end of the project.
- ◆ Providing intensive assistance throughout the project through telephone and email consultation and onsite visits (anticipated to occur four times during each full year of participation).
- ◆ Providing leadership and coordination to promote strengthened capacity to accomplish the proposed project.
- ◆ Providing formative and summative evaluations for ongoing action planning, progress monitoring, and outcome assessment, including use of a semiannual assessment tool.
- ◆ Establishing and supporting an occasional peer learning and advisement Impact Project network whose purposes are to provide advisement to the State Capacity Building Center on the overall progress of the Impact Project, including recommendations to strengthen the work, and to provide a peer learning forum for participating States.

The SCBC will designate a lead consultant from its team and will work in cooperation with the publicly funded training and technical assistance network as well as privately funded initiatives (e.g., the BUILD Initiative) to coordinate resources.



Timeline

Following is the planned schedule for the Impact Project.

Date	Activity
Friday, March 11	Announcement of Impact Project.
Monday, March 21	Optional webinar from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. ET. Register by March 18th at https://ccsssn.adobeconnect.com/impact_webinar/event/registration.html . Registration open to States and their partners.
Friday, March 25	States submit letters of interest by 8:00 p.m. ET.
Friday, April 22	Proposals due by 8:00 p.m. ET.
May 16–27	Interviews (via Skype or other virtual means).
By late June	State selection completed.
July	Details finalized with selected States.
August	Projects commence.
Ongoing	At least monthly consultation. Site visits at least four times in each 12-month period. Semiannual self-assessment and reporting. Annual plan review and revision as needed.

Application Process

Eligibility

States, Commonwealths, and Territories (States) are eligible to apply. Up to 10 States will be selected to participate in this project. States may elect to apply in multistate consortiums.

State Selection

The State Capacity Building Center will consider the following factors to as part of the selection process:

- ◆ Application quality and completeness
- ◆ Significance of projected outcomes
- ◆ The project's demonstrated relationship to the State's priorities
- ◆ The degree to which the work is related to a priority highlighted in the appendix 1 headings
- ◆ The likelihood that goals will be achieved and that the project will create sustained change
- ◆ The extent to which the work is systemic
- ◆ The extent to which the selected States represent diverse current geography and capacity

The Impact Project expects to engage a range of States, including those that have had previous support to develop their systems and those that have had more limited support.

States may be requested to participate in an interview involving the executive sponsor, the lead and colead, the CCDF administrator, and the relevant agency head(s) and chair of the early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council). Interviews will take place via Skype or other virtual means.

States will be notified about their award status in late June 2016.

Optional Webinar

An optional webinar will be held on Monday, March 21, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. ET to provide an overview and answer questions about the request for proposal. States and their partners are welcome to participate. Preregistration is required by March 18: https://ccssn.adobeconnect.com/impact_webinar/event/registration.html.

Letter of Interest

States interested in participating should submit a brief letter of interest by Friday, March 25, 8:00 p.m. ET, to OCCInfoServices@icfi.com. The letter of interest, which should be signed by the head of the agency applying and the head of the state early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council), should indicate the State's intent to apply for the project and include a few sentences describing the project. The letter should be submitted as a PDF.

Proposal Submission Information

States interested in working on this project should send their proposals to OCCInfoServices@icfi.com. Proposals are due by 8:00 p.m. ET on Friday, April 22, 2016. Only one proposal will be accepted per State. Proposals must be submitted as a single PDF (although the cover letter may be separate). States should contact OCCInfoServices@icfi.com if they would like a word document of the application.

Required Proposal Content

States' proposal packets shall contain the following items:

- ◆ Letter of application signed by the head of the agency, the head of the State's early learning council (for States with councils), and the State's CCDF administrator. If the project is a multiagency project, the head of each agency must sign the application.
- ◆ Proposal using the fillable templates provided in the following sections of this document:
 - Proposal Part 1. State Context and Vision
 - Proposal Part 2. Project Narrative
 - Proposal Part 3. Management Team Membership
 - Proposal Part 4. State Investment Tables and Narrative

The letter of application and all required elements of the proposal must be submitted together in one email, with all required elements of the proposal submitted as a single PDF. The letter may be submitted as its own PDF file.

Letter of Application

The letter of application—signed by the head of the agency applying, the State's CCDF administrator, and the head of the State's early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council)—should briefly articulate the State's interest in and desired outcomes related to this project and how those outcomes fit within the State's priorities for early childhood.

The letter must also designate, by name, the lead and colead from the State's management team who will lead the team efforts and maintain relationships with the State Capacity Building Center. The letter should indicate understanding of the lead and colead's responsibility to brief the agency head(s) and early learning council about project progress and to gain their input.

If a State chooses to submit a proposal that crosses multiple agencies, each agency head must cosign the letter.

If a State chooses to submit a multistate proposal, each participating State (head of relevant agency or agencies as well as head of early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council) must sign the application letter.

States are encouraged to have the governor sign the application letter as well; additional consideration will be given States with support from the governor.

If a State does not have an early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council), please indicate this in the application letter.

Please contact us to discuss any questions about what constitutes an agency.

Proposal

The following table summarizes required proposal content that must accompany the letter of application.

Category	Description
State context and vision (proposal part 1)	Describe the state context and the State's vision. Be sure to include the following: ◆ A description of the top early childhood policy priorities for the State with supporting information that validates these as the State's top priorities (for example, state strategic plan, budget, CCDF plan, legislation, public-private partnerships). ◆ An overview of the current state context, including current early childhood strengths, key early childhood issues, and the State's early childhood population. ◆ An overview of the specific state-determined priority that the State is addressing through the Impact Project. Please include ■ how the project relates to the State's top early childhood priorities and the current key issues the State is addressing; ■ the overall rationale for why the State is selecting this initiative; ■ evidence of the State's commitment to this priority and, specifically, to this project to meet its priority; and ■ how the current policy environment is suited to addressing the selected project.
Project narrative (proposal part 2)	Describe your project using the template in the "proposal part 2" section of this document. Provide the specific project goals, strategies, activities, person responsible, timeline, and measures of progress, as well as the consultation and assistance you would like from the State Capacity Building Center. Once a State has been selected, the State Capacity Building Center will work with the State to refine and strengthen state plans as needed and to tailor consultation to the needs of the State.
State management team (proposal part 3)	Please complete the management team table using the template in the "proposal part 3" section of this document. This table includes information such as the proposed team roster, a brief summary of each team member's experience, and how much time state staff and other team members will be devoting to this project. Teams must include those who are necessary to successfully plan and implement the proposed project, such as members outside state government, including providers (child care, Head Start, early intervention, prekindergarten, etc.); teachers; families; and leaders from statewide policy organizations, school districts, the business community, foundations, state early childhood associations, tribal organizations, and/or organizations representing immigrants and other critical populations. As appropriate, the Head Start State Collaboration Director should be invited to participate on the management team. During the first nine months, representatives of those essential to planning and implementing the project must be brought into the management team; States may elect to tentatively identify these individuals in their proposals with the understanding that their participation is critical for achieving quality implementation and sustainability over time. Teams are expected to include a non-state government representative from the state early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council).



Category	Description
	In addition to completing the state team table, please provide a narrative to address the following information: ◆ If the management team is a preexisting group, please indicate how long it has been working together, for what purpose, and its key points of progress. ◆ Describe how this team will work together to ensure that it regularly communicates and solves problems to keep the work moving forward. ◆ Describe the plan for ensuring meaningful family and stakeholder communication and partnerships. ◆ Each team must have an executive sponsor—a high-level state official with decisionmaking authority for this project. It is preferable that this person be the lead or colead for the project. ■ Please identify the executive sponsor and explain the reporting relationship of the team lead and colead to that person. ■ Explain how the State will assure that the executive sponsor provides necessary leadership, engagement, support, and problem-solving assistance, whether the executive sponsor is lead, colead, a member of management team, or in another role. ◆ Each team must be led by two state employees (lead and colead) with the demonstrated leadership and authority to move the identified project forward. ■ Identify the lead and colead and provide evidence of their leadership authority to move the project forward ■ Describe how the lead and colead will regularly communicate with the executive sponsor (if neither the lead nor colead is the executive sponsor) and head of the agency (or agencies) and the early learning council (or equivalent stakeholder council in the absence of an early learning council) and the CCDF administrator (if neither the lead nor colead is the CCDF administrator) about project activities and garner their support for moving forward and solving problems. ■ Describe how the lead and colead will be responsible for ensuring that the team meets regularly, makes steady progress toward carrying out the action plan, and fulfills all reporting requirements. ■ Describe how the lead and colead will work with the intensive consultation team. Note that the team lead and colead will be responsible for serving as the Impact Project leadership fellows and for advising the State Capacity Building Center on ways to strengthen the project and to share learning with other leadership fellows.
State investment (proposal part 4)	States are not being provided with a cash grant for this project, but with valuable consultation and technical assistance. The purpose of the investment chart and narrative is to show the State's investment (financial and nonfinancial) in the project; specifically, the value of the time commitment for assigned staff, as well as any other dedicated resources. Use the tables and space for narrative in the "proposal part 4" section of this document to describe the investment.



Proposal Part 1. State Context and Vision

Describe the state context and vision. Be sure to include the following:

- ◆ A description of the top early childhood policy priorities for the State with supporting information that validates these as the State's top priorities (for example, state strategic plan, budget, CCDF Plan, legislation, public-private partnerships).
- ◆ An overview of the current state context, including current early childhood strengths, key early childhood issues, and the State's early childhood population.
- ◆ An overview of the specific state-determined priority that the State is addressing through the Impact Project. Please include
 - how the project relates to the State's top early childhood priorities and the current key issues the State is addressing;
 - the overall rationale for why the State is selecting this initiative;
 - evidence of the State's commitment to this priority and, specifically, to this project to meet its priority; and
 - how the current policy environment is suited to addressing the selected project.

Proposal Part 2. Project Narrative

Overall Project Information

Please provide the following information regarding your proposed project.

State Name

Contact person (name, title, email, phone)

Proposed time period for participation in the Impact Project

Start date

End date

Briefly explain how your project supports the goal of addressing the needs of working families by providing more low-income children with high-quality child care.

Briefly explain the relationship of your project to one or more of the priorities outlined in the headers in appendix 1 and check all those that apply.

- ☐ Building the supply of high-quality family child care
- ☐ Delivering comprehensive services and family supports through quality child care
- ☐ Expanding access to high-quality infant and toddler care
- ☐ Improving the skills, qualifications, and stability of our workforce
- ☐ Modernizing and coordinating monitoring
- ☐ Promoting equal access to high-quality child care, especially for vulnerable populations and in underserved areas
- ☐ Strengthening the early childhood system and its infrastructure, cross-sector functioning, and integration (e.g., continuous quality improvement, collection and use of data, assessment, etc.)



Project Goals

Use this template to summarize project goals, strategies, activities, person responsible, timeline, and measures of progress, as well as the consultation and assistance you would like from the State Capacity Building Center. Space is provided for up to five goals, but only one goal is required. For each goal, please describe the following:

- ◆ **Goal:** What is your goal?
- ◆ **Strategies and activities:** What are the strategies and activities needed to reach your goal?
- ◆ **Lead team member:** Who is the person(s) responsible for this goal? If he or she is not on the management team, please describe his or her role and time commitment, and how he or she will participate.
- ◆ **Proposed timelines and deliverables:** What is your timeline? What constitutes the deliverable?
- ◆ **Indicators of progress and success:** How will you and the team know if you made progress and were successful?
- ◆ **Request for consultation:** What is the assistance and consultation you need to address the goal, strategy, and activities?

Goal 1:

Strategies and activities

Lead team member

Proposed timelines and deliverables

Indicators of progress and success

Request for consultation



Goal 2:

Strategies and activities

Lead team member

Proposed timelines and deliverables

Indicators of progress and success

Request for consultation

Goal 3:

Strategies and activities

Lead team member

Proposed timelines and deliverables

Indicators of progress and success

Request for consultation

Goal 4:

Strategies and activities

Lead team member

Proposed timelines and deliverables

Indicators of progress and success



Goal 4:

Request for consultation

Goal 5:

Strategies and activities

Lead team member

Proposed timelines and deliverables

Indicators of progress and success

Request for consultation

Proposal Part 3. Management Team Membership

Management Team Table

Use this template to complete the management team membership table. The table includes a brief summary of each team member's experience, rationale for inclusion on the management team, and how much time he or she will be devoting to this particular project.

Name	Job Title and Organization ^a	Team Role ^b	Experience	Rationale for Participation	Time Devoted to This Project ^c

Name	Job Title and Organization ^a	Team Role ^b	Experience	Rationale for Participation	Time Devoted to This Project ^c

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^a Please do not use abbreviations. Specify whether the organization is a government entity and, if so, indicate the agency or office its authority is derived from.

^b ES = Executive Sponsor, L = Lead, CoL = Colead, M = Member, ELC = non–state governmental representative of Early Learning Council, CCDF = State’s designated CCDF administrator

^c Percentage of full-time equivalent, assuming a 40-hour work week (or whatever your State defines as a full work week).



Management Team Narrative

Please use this space to provide your management team narrative (see detailed guidance on pages 10–11).

Proposal Part 4. State Investment Tables and Narrative

Please use the tables below to illustrate the state investment and provide a brief narrative.

The purpose of the state investment tables and investment narrative is to show the State's investment in the project (financial and nonfinancial resources), specifically detailing the value of the time commitment of assigned staff, as well as any other dedicated resources. States are not being provided with a cash grant for this project but with valuable consultation and technical assistance.

For *Personnel*, indicate the names of the individuals who will be participating over the proposed project period, indicating these individuals by name, the percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) devoted to this project, and the value of their time. Please include salary and benefits in calculating the value. Please include all individuals on the management team and any other individuals who will be devoting significant time to this project. Along with the value, indicate the time period for the project by identifying the anticipated start and ending dates in the column header.

Under *Other*, please identify any other investments the State has committed to this project for services, data, or other key elements. Identify each item and report the value over the project period. If no nonpersonnel resources are committed, please do not complete the "other" section.

Under *Total State Investment*, please report the total personnel investment, total other (nonpersonnel) investment, and the sum of both values.

Provide a brief narrative description of each item following the investment templates.

Investment Tables

Personnel Investment

Name of Person	Percent FTE Devoted to This Project	Value – project start and end dates are
		Total:

Other Investments (nonpersonnel)

Item	Value Over Project Period

Total:**Total State Investment**

Investment Type	Value Over Project Period
Total personnel investment	
Total other (nonpersonnel) investment	
Total state investment	



State Investment Narrative

Appendix 1. Ideas from State Leader Interviews

We conducted interviews of 30 to 60 minutes with more than four dozen state leaders, drawing upon current and former state government staff as well as others whose day-to-day work involves the development of state and local systems in early childhood. These project ideas are advanced for illustrative purposes only to show a broad range of content and approach. These ideas do not have the well-defined outcomes or required level of specificity that would be needed to support their advancement as part of the Impact Project. States are expected to identify a project that reflects state priorities; contributes, in an innovative manner for the state, to the development of the state early childhood system; includes child care; and contributes to the provision of high quality child care to low-income children.

There was a natural fit between the project ideas and critical interests and priorities of the Administration for Children and Families. These ideas are organized by these critical interests and priorities. Although the ideas themselves are merely illustrative, States are encouraged to choose goals that align with the critical interests and priorities represented by the headings:

- ◆ Building the supply of high-quality family child care
- ◆ Delivering comprehensive services and family supports through quality child care
- ◆ Expanding access to high-quality infant and toddler care
- ◆ Improving the skills, qualifications, and stability of our workforce
- ◆ Modernizing and coordinating monitoring
- ◆ Promoting equal access to high-quality child care, especially for vulnerable populations and in underserved areas
- ◆ Strengthening the early childhood system and its infrastructure, cross-sector functioning, and integration (e.g., continuous quality improvement, collection and use of data, assessment, etc.) with the end goal of increasing access to high-quality care for low-income children

I like the idea of focusing on things that we're already working on, or that are important to the State, and connecting for a long period of time is good. I'm excited about this.
—State leader

An opportunity like this for States is really timely based on the changes and the moving forward we are going to be doing. This is going to be a great support for those who apply and take advantage.
—State leader

Building the Supply of High-Quality Family Child Care

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Developing and implementing a plan to support family child care homes as an integral part of the quality service environment.
- ◆ Increasing the number of family child care homes participating in quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) and reaching high levels.

- ◆ Increasing the number of family child care providers with credit-bearing credentials or degrees.
- ◆ Planning and implementing family child care networks in a set of communities, with a focus on improved quality in services for children.
- ◆ Working with family child care providers with a diverse array of linguistic and cultural backgrounds to help build a well-qualified group of providers that can be culturally responsive to diverse families.
- ◆ Adopting assessment tools as part of a multistate project, including successful implementation and training on the tools for use in child care settings, which will result in more child care programs increasing their quality and their rating in the QRIS.

Delivering Comprehensive Services and Family Supports through Quality Child Care

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Building parent demand for quality child care and effective parent engagement to better support the developmental and learning trajectory of their children.
- ◆ Rethinking our policy and implementation approach for developmental screening to achieve a meaningful increase in the number of children in early childhood programs who are screened and have appropriate follow-up referrals.
- ◆ Planning for and incorporating early childhood mental health services into child care.
- ◆ Coordinating child and family services for children in child care settings to ensure connections to other needed services and support the family holistically.
- ◆ Using the Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework for Head Start in state child care systems.

Expanding Access to High-Quality Infant and Toddler Care

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Planning for the infant-toddler set-aside and supporting implementation to increase access and quality.
- ◆ Preparing for and supporting expansion of Early Head Start–Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships in terms of state systems, including child care assistance.
- ◆ Determining how to leverage EHS-CC Partnerships to contribute to state system improvements in the supply of high-quality, comprehensive care for infants and toddlers, consistent with EHS, and best leveraging subsidy investment.
- ◆ Tackling infant-toddler care as a joint early learning and public health collaboration with a cross-agency team.
- ◆ Developing a solid understanding of where infants and toddlers are being served and mechanisms to help improve infant and toddler services where the children are.
- ◆ Developing and implementing policies to support the supply of quality infant-toddler care in light of ongoing prekindergarten expansion. For example, greater subsidy payments or paying more for providers that maintain infant and toddler slots.



- ◆ Preparation of and support for implementation of an infant-toddler strategy with a focus on messaging around the value of infant-toddler care and approaches to help communicate and identify policy strategies.
- ◆ Looking at best practices for infant-toddler services, surveying how districts work with infant-toddler programs, and determining how they should work with programs.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a plan that focuses on transition for infants and toddlers into prekindergarten.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a plan to help think about the prekindergarten provider, whether it is a child care center or a district, and how to help shape these providers' interest in the infant-toddler setting.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a professional development perspective and approach for the infant-toddler workforce, including issues of certification, higher education inclusion, and the like.
- ◆ Working with infant-toddler programs with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to help build a well-qualified group of providers that can be culturally responsive to diverse families.

Improving the Skills, Qualifications, and Stability of Our Workforce

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Using *Transforming the Workforce* to inform our workforce planning and implementation efforts by evaluating what we are funding and supporting and fill in gaps.
- ◆ Leveraging existing courses for CCDF-required training topics, and making sure that credit is more appropriately attached to training.
- ◆ Using the new early learning outcomes framework for children to assure good content and to assess the professional development system to see what is working and what can and should be improved and integrated.
- ◆ Taking our professional development work to a more concrete place that allows us to make specific proposals for support to our legislature.
- ◆ Implementing the progression requirements of CCDF.
- ◆ Assistance in having our coursework and training articulate across our systems—State-approved training, community colleges, and four-year colleges—by working with our agency, the state education agency, and higher education.
- ◆ Addressing equity in the state workforce by examining the ladders of opportunity and improving supports.
- ◆ Developing an approach to higher education that helps preserve workforce diversity.
- ◆ Helping create and manage a professional-development program specific to state staff so they can cultivate and improve themselves in key areas such as child development, school readiness, and leadership.
- ◆ Delivering and building high-quality supports for teaching staff, especially for child care programs that don't participate in Head Start or prekindergarten.
- ◆ Developing leaders with the capacity for instructional leadership and administrative leadership at the level of birth-to-five programs.
- ◆ Looking at how teachers learn, and creating and implementing a realistic plan through which teachers in birth-to-five programs have and use data to inform improvement.

Modernizing and Coordinating Monitoring

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Designing and implementing a system of monitoring for all providers taking child care assistance and creating a more holistic system in which, for example, license-exempt providers receive training and assistance to become licensed and licensed family child care providers are included in the QRIS and are provided support to move up in the system.
- ◆ Assistance with policy and planning for monitoring unlicensed providers.
- ◆ Designing and implementing a new monitoring system that more efficiently uses the resources of multiple programs—licensing, child care assistance, QRIS, prekindergarten, and the like—and improves reliability and burden on providers and state staff.
- ◆ Alignment of monitoring practices and business practices across different program areas.
- ◆ Looking at training for people doing monitoring across all programs and determining how monitoring can work across all programs.

Promoting Equal Access to High-Quality Child Care, Especially for Vulnerable Populations and in Underserved Areas

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Examining, modifying, and implementing subsidy-eligibility policy to promote continuity.
- ◆ Shifting access to serve the at-risk populations specifically identified through reauthorization.
- ◆ Using partnerships with state and local special education agencies, local school districts, and community partners to increasing the number of young children with special needs who are served in inclusive settings by a specified percentage.
- ◆ Reducing the incidence of suspension and expulsion, with a focus on improving responses to children of color and boys, who are disparately impacted by preschool suspension and expulsion.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a plan to educate others in state government—specifically, those in in health and education and child welfare—about quality rating and improvement systems so they know and understand this framework and buy into it.
- ◆ Planning for a state-level QRIS based on local community efforts.
- ◆ Examining and developing the State's capacity to support the QRIS so we do a better job at fulfilling the State's responsibilities to the community.
- ◆ Helping us articulate a quality supply-building strategy to address underserved populations, payment rates, and paying for quality. The focus would be on policy, planning, and execution.
- ◆ Reducing the amount of quality money going to licensing and regulation, and repurposing it to more meaningful quality supports.

- ◆ Adopting assessment tools as part of a multistate project, including successful implementation and training on the tools for use in child care settings, which will result in more child care programs increasing their quality and their rating in the QRIS.
- ◆ Identifying and implementing best practice assessment policies, supports, and practices for dual-language learners.

Strengthening the Early Childhood System and Its Infrastructure, Cross-Sector Functioning, and Integration (e.g., continuous quality improvement, collection and use of data, assessment) with the End Goal of Increasing Access to High-Quality Care for Low-Income Children

The ideas below were gathered from interviews as part of the planning for the Impact Project. These ideas are not meant to limit or prescribe the work of States applying to participate in the Impact Project, but to help encourage creative work that fits with each State's priorities and context.

- ◆ Cross-sector planning and implementation involving Head Start, child care, and prekindergarten.
- ◆ Cross-sector planning and implementation bringing together child health, child welfare, and all of early learning, including child care.
- ◆ Developing state-level policy that articulates the relationship between home visiting and early education programs, including child care, and then implementing the policy.
- ◆ Developing and implementing a large statewide plan that would be used by all early childhood partners, under the umbrella of the advisory council group, to guide the investment as well as communication work.
- ◆ Developing partnerships for the purpose of resource sharing with the child care, military, Tribal, and prekindergarten systems.
- ◆ Determining a strategy to educate Medicaid about our work, working with Medicaid to understand what can and cannot be handled in that system, and moving to implement new partnerships with Medicaid that leverage Medicaid resources to support the child care mission.
- ◆ Supporting consistent policy development and implementation across all the programs in our new integrated early childhood office.
- ◆ Working with social services and child welfare to create and implement a meaningful plan for improving quality; continuous access for children in the child welfare system.
- ◆ Looking at non-early learning funding streams to better understand them and see how they can help fund the system.
- ◆ Integrating all our funding across many different funding streams, moving beyond the alignment of our policies and standards. On the ground, our providers have too many standards and too many bosses.
- ◆ Integrating our services at multiple levels.
- ◆ Tackling eligibility across early learning programs so each program does not have different and separate requirements as well as application processes.
- ◆ Addressing the poor quality of our health and safety content in licensing and supporting the creation and execution of a plan to address this, perhaps using *Caring for Our Children Basics* as the regulatory floor.
- ◆ Strengthening the system of local educational coalitions as part of overall state systems building.



- ◆ Creating and improving state and regional partnerships to support higher-quality services for children from low-income families.
- ◆ Assistance with developing our approach to public-private partnerships and support in executing our plan.
- ◆ Development and implementation of the State Early Learning Council to move it from low- to high-functioning and high-impact.
- ◆ Planning a racial equity framework and then working to implement it through infrastructure, policy, and programs.

Appendix 2. State Capacity Building Center Project Team

The core members who will provide the day-to-day work with participating States include representatives from ICF International (the lead for the State Capacity Building Center) as well as its partners at WestEd and Child Trends.

Harriet Dichter oversees the Impact Project team at the State Capacity Building Center. In addition to extensive experience consulting with state and local government, policy and service organizations, and foundations on a broad range of early childhood systems issues and services, she developed and led state and local public systems and services in early childhood (founding deputy secretary, Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning; secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; executive director, Delaware Office of Early Learning; director, City of Philadelphia Office of Maternal and Child Health; deputy managing director for child policy, City of Philadelphia). She has led locally and nationally in the nonprofit (legal services, United Way, Ounce of Prevention Fund, First Five Years Fund) and philanthropic (Pew Charitable Trusts) sectors on children's issues. She is a graduate of Yale University (BA, summa cum laude) and the University of Pennsylvania (JD, cum laude).

Erin Hill Freschi has over 20 years of experience in early care and education in public, private, and nonprofit settings, including Early Head Start and Head Start. She has developed and led county and state-level initiatives focusing on early childhood education (ECE) systems development, school readiness, early childhood mental health, and ECE professional development (including implementation of My Teaching Partner, CLASS and school-readiness assessment tools). She designed and led an effort to develop comprehensive ECE bachelor's degree programs at multiple universities in the Bay Area including the University of California, Berkeley, and Mills College. She has served as an adjunct faculty member at several higher education institutions. At WestEd, Freschi oversees the provision of Program for Infant/Toddler Care courses online internationally, provides professional development and support to infant-toddler specialists, and tracks policy and related funding developments.

Sangree Froelicher, associated with the State Capacity Building Center at ICF International, is an early childhood and social services leader who has worked at the national, regional, and state levels in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She has developed and managed numerous projects and programs and researched and conceptualized initiatives at private, nonprofit, and public agencies. In her work leading others in outcome-based planning and change management, she has specialized in public policy, continuous quality improvement, and system-change initiatives, as well as in negotiating and managing complex projects entailing multifaceted relationships. Throughout this work, Froelicher has built a reputation for being a big thinker while maintaining a focus on practical steps that can be taken to assure success.

Diane Harkins is an early care and education specialist at WestEd with over 25 years of experience leading early childhood and family-based initiatives at the state and local level. Much of her work has focused on building systems and services that strengthen the capacity of early childhood educators and their collaborative partners. Her contributions have extended to the international arena in the development of child protection policies and practices. She has emphasized outcomes-based planning as well as strengthening coalitions across disciplines and settings. She is a certified trainer with the Program for Infant/Toddler Care and has studied at the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary.

Kelly Maxwell, PhD, is codirector of early childhood research at Child Trends and has over 20 years of experience in early childhood policy, research, and evaluation. She is known nationally for her policy-relevant research and evaluation focused on helping States improve their early care and education systems. Her areas of expertise include early childhood policy issues, QRIS, school-readiness assessment, evaluation of early childhood initiatives, and use of administrative data. Maxwell is currently working on two projects related to the use of administrative data. She coleads, with Dr. Kathryn Tout, the Quality Initiatives Research and Evaluation Consortium (INQUIRE), which provides a learning community for researchers engaging in QRIS or quality improvement work and provides resources for state early childhood leaders.



Kim M. Means, part of the State Capacity Building Center at ICF International, is a leader in early childhood education who has worked at the national level for over 25 years. She has a deep understanding of the science, art, and practice of developing and operationalizing standards and policy and navigating the challenges related to the variation that exists within and across States. Her work has focused on setting standards, classroom and program assessment, accreditation, the use of CLASS by large systems, reliable monitoring, and policy alignment across settings. She has worked at the Office of Head Start, as a consultant to state and Federal agencies, and with nonprofit and for-profit companies, and led National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation during the transition and implementation of the reinvented system and revised standards.

George Philipp, a senior program associate at the WestEd E3 Institute, provides leadership on a range of issues of importance to the early education workforce, including quality rating and improvement systems, early learning standards, and the creation and management of coherent professional development systems. In California, Philipp led the Workforce Integration Project to enhance the statewide professional development system, created a career ladder for the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry, and managed the Santa Clara County Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards Program and the Santa Clara County QRIS. His background includes serving as a preschool teacher and a crisis-intervention teacher, and coordinating a program for “latchkey” children.

Desiree Reddick-Head is a leader in early childhood who has worked at the national, regional, and state levels in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She has developed and managed numerous projects and programs at the state and local levels. She has specialized in public policy, quality improvement, system development, and supporting state leaders in a strength-based approach to planning and management. As a state child care administrator, Reddick-Head implemented state laws related to professionalizing the field, created the first quality improvement system for the state, and redesigned policies to support children’s development. She has worked as a consultant in the field assisting States with child financial assistance policy development, creating quality improvement systems, improving professional development, and developing early childhood systems. She is part of the State Capacity Building Center at ICF International.

Gerrit Westervelt serves as director of early childhood policy and resource development for WestEd’s Center for Child and Family Studies. He provides leadership on early childhood policy and practice nationally and regionally, with a focus on systems development, quality improvement, strategic financing, peer learning, and public-private collaboration. He served for many years as executive director of the BUILD Initiative, led the creation of the QRIS National Learning Network, and has worked extensively with state early childhood and K–12 leaders, foundation officials, and media organizations to scale up policies that help young children succeed.

Appendix 3. Types of Consultation

During the preparation phase for the Impact Project, we interviewed more than four dozen state leaders and their partners and asked them to identify types of consultation that would be valuable to them. We recognize that what may be needed in one State (for example, subject-matter expertise and facilitation) might not be needed elsewhere. For example, one state leader said, “We might package expertise along with the ability to analyze, synthesize, and translate what is being said and to bring the group to consensus.”

The following list was developed based on these interviews and is available to assist States in thinking about the consultation and assistance requested. States are not limited by the list and are encouraged to identify and submit requests that they believe will best meet their needs.

Coaching

Several felt that the consultant should serve as a coach, with the understanding that more direct assistance might be necessary at first, particularly with less experienced staff, and that the consultant would then take on a more traditional coaching role.

Documentation and Analysis

Several noted that the consultant should assure that decisions are documented and that analysis and rationale are provided to support the decisions, and provide back-up in case of staff changes or work with external parties (such as the legislature).

As one leader put it, “we need help memorializing what we are doing and creating a clear playbook that documents the steps that we have taken and why.”

Facilitation

The role of facilitator was mentioned by some, with leaders indicating that it can be hard to have state staff function as participant and facilitator when working in teams, particularly with other agencies and with stakeholders. “It can be challenging to listen and help people think, and have to do the facilitation.” At the same time, many who talked about facilitation mentioned that content knowledge and expertise would also be needed.

Interviewing and Focus Group Services

Consistent with those who felt that the consultant could be a “neutral” in the State’s work, respondents wanted to know that the consultant could conduct interviews and focus groups as part of the consultation.

Networked Individual Who Can Easily Bring Information to the State

Some did not feel that the consultant had to be a subject-matter expert but felt that the individual should have a network of relationships around the country and tap into that network to bring additional information and knowledge to the State. Some state leaders feel isolated and have difficulty creating relationships with others around the country, whether in state government or elsewhere, and would rely on the consultant’s network.

Project Management

Several mentioned that they felt having someone who could serve as a project manager would be essential, particularly given small staff size or staff inexperience. When asked what was meant by project management, one state leader responded, “Help us figure out everything we need to talk about and listen. What research do we need to do? What peer to peer? Help us get through these steps and make decisions.”

Process Consultation

Process consultation was seen as important to helping move things along. This function entails competence to help assess the larger external political environment and take it into account with the work.

Subject-Matter Expert/National Expert

Many noted the value of having a subject-matter expert who would bring content as well as process expertise. One state leader noted, “I like having the national expert listen to us talk and then reflect back. This provides a valuable external point of view and information.” Another state leader said, “We want people who are subject-matter experts. We have plenty of people to facilitate. We value an external perspective.” Others noted that the person should, in particular, be innovative in his or her approach. Some content areas that were mentioned specifically include financing, governance, and strategic planning. On the other hand, some leaders said that they had deep content expertise in their own States and would not be looking to the consultant for content expertise.

Thought Partner

Many felt that having a consultant serve as a thought partner would be essential and would help shift, challenge, and clarify thinking.

Appendix 4. Resources on Systems Building

This appendix provides resources on systems building that may be of interest to States as they focus on their work in the context of the Impact Project's support for systems-oriented efforts.

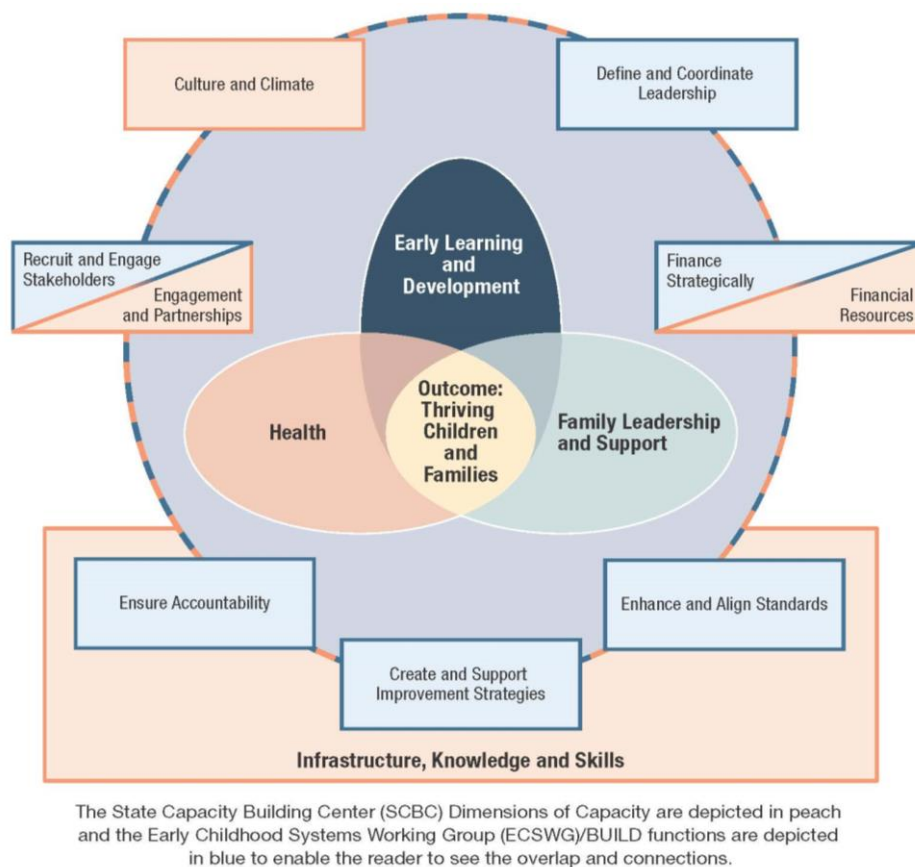
Comparison of Systems Frames

There are several frameworks for thinking about early childhood systems. The table compares the dimensions of capacity for the State Capacity Building Center's support for effective systems and services with Heckman's Invest + Develop + Sustain = Gain, Implementation Science's Effective Interventions x Effective Implementation x Enabling Context = Significant Outcome, and the Early Childhood Systems Working Group's approach.

SCBC Dimensions	Heckman	Implementation Science	Early Childhood Systems Working Group
Culture and climate + Engagement and partnerships +	Sustain +	Enabling context x	Define and coordinate leadership + Recruit and engage stakeholders +
Financial resources + Infrastructure + Knowledge and skills	Invest + Develop	Effective Interventions x Effective Implementation	Finance strategically + Enhance and align standards + Create and support improvement strategies + Ensure accountability
= State capacity	= Gains	= Significant outcomes	= Comprehensive early childhood system

Figure 1 provides an orientation to how the State Capacity Building Center's dimensions of capacity and the Early Childhood Systems Working Group's "ovals" relate to one another.

Figure 1. Visual Orientation to State Capacity Building Center Dimensions of Capacity and Early Childhood Systems Working Group/BUILD Ovals and Functions, 2016



Early Childhood Systems Working Group

The Early Childhood Systems Working Group (ECSWG) is a volunteer group of national leaders engaged in providing technical assistance to state policymakers in the development of comprehensive early childhood systems. The group came together in 2005 to consider how they and their respective organizations could work together more effectively in supporting state system-building efforts. Many state leaders are engaged in efforts to increase quality, alignment, and efficiency among the systems serving young children and their families. The ECSWG seeks to help States implement systems that can provide an integrated continuum of policies, services, and programs across early learning and development, health, and family leadership and support, so that children and families thrive. Since 2006, this group of expert organizations and individuals has met on an as-needed basis to engage in a peer learning community and develop resources for the early childhood field.

For more information, see <http://www.buildinitiative.org/OurWork/EarlyChildhoodSystemsWorkingGroup.aspx>.

The BUILD Initiative

The BUILD Initiative works with early childhood leaders within States and nationally to better prepare young children to thrive and succeed. Specifically, the BUILD Initiative helps state leaders develop early childhood systems—programs, services, and policies tailored to the needs of the State's unique young-child population. This work focuses on connecting programs and services that may have previously functioned in isolation, been redundant, lacked resources to meet critical needs, or operated at cross-purposes. The Early Childhood Funders

Collaborative created the BUILD Initiative over a decade ago as a catalyst for change and a national resource on early childhood development and policy.

For more information, see <http://www.buildinitiative.org/AboutUs/Overview.aspx>.

Publications

Various publications on systems building follow.

The ABLe Change Framework: A Conceptual and Methodological Tool for Promoting Systems Change, by Pennie G. Foster-Fishman and Erin R. Watson, presents a new approach to the design and implementation of community-change efforts like a system of care.

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/ABLe%20Framework.pdf>

Comprehensive Early Childhood System Building: A Tool to Inform Discussions on Collaborative, Cross-Sector Planning, by the Early Childhood Systems Working Group, is designed to help multiple stakeholders conceptualize and plan for an integrated early childhood system.

http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/ECSWG%20Systems%20Planning%20Tool_2014.pdf

Early Care and Education Systems Building Resource Guide, by the Office of Child Care, provides an overview of key systems-building issues to help States pursue system-building initiatives. The modules serve as a framework and tool for exploring and establishing strategic steps to implement and sustain systems-building work.

<https://ecesystemsbuilding.icfwebservices.com/>

Framework for Evaluating Systems Initiatives, by Julia Coffman, provides a roadmap for describing and connecting the diverse efforts and activities that States have undertaken in seeking to build an early childhood system.

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/WhatsNew/ViewArticle/tabid/96/smId/412/ArticleID/621/Default.aspx>

A Framework for State Leadership and Action in Building the Components of an Early Childhood System, by Charles Bruner, offers an overview of each Early Childhood Systems Working Group system component (oval) according to its evidence base and status of development, along with exemplary state actions in building the component and, finally, a set of exemplary state actions in linking each component with other components.

http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Four_Ovals_paper.pdf

Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families, a BUILD Initiative e-book edited by Harriet Dichter, provides eight chapters on the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge. The book's aim is to share learning from the initial implementation of this state system-building effort, highlighting experiences, trends, and reflections stemming from the significant Federal investment in this strategic work. By documenting the experience of the States as captured through interviews with state leaders, *Rising to the Challenge* provides a source of learning for all States and Territories.

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/OurWork/StateandLocal/EarlyLearningChallenge.aspx>

Updating the “Ovals”: A Guide to our Rationale, by Rachel Schumacher, provides a rationale for the revision of the Early Childhood Systems Working Group ovals, and explains the key changes.

http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Updating_the_Ovals_Guide_to_Rationale.pdf