



CONSUMER EDUCATION: FULL DIVERSITY OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

The Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (OCC) is committed to helping families access support services for children. The reauthorization of the *Child Care and Development Block Grant Act* (CCDBG Act of 2014) provides an opportunity for States and Territories to share information with families, providers, and the general public which can promote informed choices when accessing resources for children.

The information in this issue brief is organized in three main sections:

- An overview of the *Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014* requirements specific to consumer education and information on programs, policies and research that support families;
- Information about how States are currently sharing resource information; and
- Other related resources.

This is one of a series of four issue briefs that address CCDBG Act of 2014 requirements and provide state examples and links to state Web sites that can serve as examples for States and Territories in enhancing their own consumer education efforts.¹ These briefs were developed based on several regional webinars and meetings that focused on consumer education.

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 Requirements

Consumer Education - Support Services

According to *CCDF Reauthorization Frequently Asked Questions*, the statute strengthens requirements for States to provide consumer and provider education information and interact with parents to help them make the best child care choice for their families. The law explicitly identifies a number of items that States must provide to parents receiving Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) assistance, the general public, and, where applicable, child care providers.² This includes information about:

1. Other financial assistance programs that families might be eligible for, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start and Early Head Start, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC), the

¹ These issue briefs were originally produced by the National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement, a previous contract of the Office of Child Care. The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance is disseminating the issue briefs. These briefs and other resources about consumer education can be found on the Child Care Technical Assistance Network Web site at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/>.

² Office of Child Care. (2015). *CCDF reauthorization frequently asked questions*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-reauthorization-faq>.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Medicaid, and the State children's health insurance programs (SCHIP);

2. Programs carried out under the Individuals with Disabilities [Education] Act (IDEA) such as the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and the Part B Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities;
3. Research and best practices concerning children's development; and
4. Policies regarding the social-emotional behavioral health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models and policies about the expulsion of preschool-aged children in early childhood programs. (Reference: Section 658E(c) (2) (E)(i))

In addition, the statute requires States to provide information regarding developmental screenings as part of consumer education activities. Specifically, the law requires the State to include:

1. Information on existing resources and services the State can provide, including the coordinated use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program and developmental screening services available under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), to conduct developmental screenings and to provide referrals to services for children receiving CCDF assistance, and;
2. A description of how a family or provider may use these resources to obtain developmental screenings for children who may be at risk of developmental delays.

State Information and Examples

Access to information about early care and education resources affords families the critical information they need to provide for the holistic development and wellness of their children. In addition to describing services related to child care, most States post links to family resources and services offered through other state agencies or departments.

A review of state Web sites showed that while most States provide some information, it was often difficult to find and did not help a parent or family member access the service or additional information as needed. The following are examples of state Web sites that effectively direct families to specific support services.

- The **Alaska** Department of Health and Social Services Web site, at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/default.aspx>, provides information regarding Alaska's Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral network, **thread**. Thread assists programs in providing high-quality care and education for young children. In addition to providing materials to assist families in selecting quality child care, helping children transition to a new child care program, and maintaining positive relationships with child care programs, thread distributes information about community resources and financial assistance for families with young children.
- The **Colorado** Office of Early Childhood provides online resources for children, families, and early care professionals to best prepare Coloradans for future success through access to collaborative, coordinated, quality early childhood programs and supports. The Web site provides a critical link for families to The Family Resource Center Program (FRCP). More than 56,000 families are served by Family Resource Centers each year. Of those, more than 2,500 families opt to receive comprehensive coordinated case management services, helping them navigate the pathways to economic, educational, social, and health success for all generations, moving families from crisis, to self-reliance. For more information visit <http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/#!parent-resources/c1qzc>.
- The **Connecticut** Office of Early Childhood features a number of programs on its Web site that are available to provide services to help children and their families (<http://www.ct.gov/oec/cwp/view.asp?a=4546&q=536096>). Via the Web site, families gain information

regarding the Connecticut Family Resource Centers. These Centers promote comprehensive, integrated, community-based systems of family support and child development services located in public school buildings. Family Resource Centers provide access, within a community, to a broad continuum of early childhood and family support services that foster the optimal development of children and families. See <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?A=2678&Q=320774> for more information. Also available on the Web site is information regarding Help Me Grow, a prevention program for children up to age 5 experiencing the challenges of growing up. Help me Grow provides parents and providers access to a variety of community resources that address a child's behavioral or developmental needs. The Child Development Infoline, also featured on the Web site, connects callers with care coordinators trained to listen and ask questions that identify needs and resources.

- The **New York** State Office of Children and Family Services provides a user friendly Web site (http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/Resources_for_Families.asp) that provides information about child care quality and resources to support families. The easy to navigate site uses a tab system to help families find all of the information required under the Reauthorization Act. Each content area on the site includes a simple language description of the service and the contact information for the service provider.
- The Department of Early Learning (DEL) in **Washington** features a Web site (<http://www.del.wa.gov/Default.aspx>) with easy to navigate information and resources for parents and others who care for and teach young children. The front page of the site provides a general list of resources available and in one click parents are directed to a page that offers printable resources or links to Web sites that offer support services. The Help and Assistance for Families page provides resources about child development, financial assistance, parent coaching, or support. Washington also provides links to subsidy forms on its site.
- The **Utah** Department of Workforce Services, Office of Child Care's Web site, Care about Child Care (<http://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov/resources/>) features valuable links for multiple audiences who care about child care, child development, early childhood education, school readiness, nutrition and more. One feature of the site is a direct link to Help Me Grow Utah, a free information line connecting families to community resources and child development information, including access to developmental screening questionnaires.
- **Tennessee** has a Web site (<http://kidcentraltn.com/>) where parents can find information about a variety of services. Information is centered on four topics: health, education, development, and support, and includes access to a comprehensive directory of state-operated and state-funded services for children and families. The site includes a mobile app and offers the option to set up a profile, allowing parents to customize the information they receive to the age of their child, and to receive recommendations for articles and services that might fit their family.

Resources

The resources listed below are aligned with the four content areas addressed in this brief and can be utilized by States as a supplement to their existing consumer education information.

Content Areas	Supplemental Resources
State by State resources for families on financial assistance programs, health and social services	Child Care Aware http://www.childcareaware.org http://www.childcareaware.org/node/1405 (state by state resources)
Programs carried out under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	Center for Parent Information and Resources (English and Spanish) http://www.parentcenterhub.org/

Content Areas	Supplemental Resources
(IDEA)	
Research and best practices concerning children's development	<p>Zero to Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and families http://www.zerotothree.org</p> <p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/freematerials.html</p>
Policies regarding the social-emotional behavioral health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models and policies about the expulsion of preschool-aged children in early childhood programs	<p>Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Learning Settings by the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS). https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecl/expulsion_suspension_final.pdf</p> <p>Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation – Materials for Families http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/mental-health/ec-mental-health-consultation/materials-for-families.html</p> <p>Social and Emotional Development from Birth to Preschool (ES) (Tips for Parents) http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/safety-injury-prevention/domestic-violence/SocialandEmotio.htm</p>
Information regarding developmental screenings	<p><i>Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!</i> is a coordinated federal effort to encourage healthy child development, universal developmental and behavioral screening for children, and support for the families and providers who care for them. Written resources targeted at early care and education providers, early interventionists, early childhood special education providers, families, primary care providers, communities, child welfare, home visitors, behavioral health providers, and housing and homeless shelter providers. <i>Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! Resources can be accessed at</i> http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecl/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive.</p> <p>Developmental Screening, Assessments and Evaluations (Webinar) http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/saeo/DevelopmentalScr.htm</p>

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