

ARKANSAS
Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge
Application for Initial Funding
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**APPLICATION FOR INITIAL FUNDING UNDER
RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE**

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II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The State must meet the following requirements to be eligible to compete for funding under this program:

(a) The Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement that the State must attach to its application, describing the Participating State Agency's level of participation in the grant. (See section XIII.) At a minimum, the MOU or other binding agreement must include an assurance that the Participating State Agency agrees to use, to the extent applicable--

- (1) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A set of statewide Program Standards;
- (3) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- (4) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

List of Participating State Agencies:

The applicant should list below all Participating State Agencies that administer public funds related to early learning and development, including at a minimum: the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of CCDF, the section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA programs, State-funded preschool, home visiting, Title I of ESEA, the Head Start State Collaboration Grant, and the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, as well as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the State's Child Care Licensing Agency, and the State Education Agency.

For each Participating State Agency, the applicant should provide a cross-reference to the place within the application where the MOU or other binding agreement can be found. Insert additional rows if necessary. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	Electronic	Hard Copy	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency
*Department of Human Services – Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education	X	X	Licensing/ Child Care Development Fund/ Foster Care/ Public Pre-K
State Education Agency- Arkansas Department of Education	X		Title I/ 619 Part B of I DEA/ State Funded Preschool
Arkansas Early Childhood Commission	X		

Arkansas Children's Hospital/HIPPY	X		
Head Start Collaboration Office	X		
Arkansas Department of Health*			Title V/ Maternal and Child Health Block Grant/ Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities	X		Part C Early Intervention

* Arkansas Department of Health required more time to process through system for signatures than was available.

(b) The State must have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education that meets the requirements described in section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b).

The State certifies that it has an operational State Advisory Council that meets the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

(c) The State must have submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (see section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)).

The State certifies that it submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding, consistent with the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

III. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are the focal point of the application and peer review. A panel of peer reviewers will evaluate the applications based on the extent to which the selection criteria are addressed.

Core Areas -- Sections (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development. (20 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's—

(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;

(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;

(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and

(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(1):

- The completed background data tables providing the State's baseline data for--
 - The number and percentage of children from Low-Income families in the State, by age (see Table (A)(1)-1);
 - The number and percentage of Children with High Needs from special populations in the State (see Table (A)(1)-2); and
 - The number of Children with High Needs in the State who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs, by age (see Table (A)(1)-3).

- Data currently available, if any, on the status of children at kindergarten entry (across Essential Domains of School Readiness, if available), including data on the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.
- Data currently available, if any, on program quality across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs.
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-4).
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-5).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, by age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (see Table (A)(1)-6).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-7).
- The completed table that describes the elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-8).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-9).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development workforce credentials currently available in the State, including whether credentials are aligned with a State Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have each type of credential (see Table (A)(1)-10).
- The completed table that describes the current status of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators (see Table (A)(1)-11).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see Table (A)(1)-12).

The completed table that describes all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State (see Table (A)(1)-13). (*Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of ten pages*)

History of investment. The state of Arkansas has a long history of supporting quality early learning environments in the state, including establishing a state-funded pre-Kindergarten program for Children with High Needs and a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) called Better Beginnings (AR-BB). Unfortunately, Arkansas has an equally long history of high rates of children living in poverty and special needs (See A-1-1 and A-1-2 for most

recent). The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) was created within the Arkansas Department of Human Services by Act 1132 of 1997. The purpose of DCCECE is to enhance the coordination of child care and early childhood education programs and to promote high quality early care and education within the state. DCCECE administers the following programs:

1. *Licensing and Quality* (AR-BB), regulating about 2,900 child care centers and homes to meet state minimum licensing standards; 25% meet higher levels through Arkansas' tiered quality rating and improvement system, Better Beginnings (AR-BB) QRIS.
2. *Child Nutrition*, a federal program that provides meals and snacks for eligible children in early care and education settings and for school-aged children during the summer.
3. *Child Care Development Fund*, a federal program that provides child care assistance to families on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and low-income families who work or attend school.
4. *Arkansas Better Chance* (ABC) state-funded pre-Kindergarten program to children from low income families from birth to age 5. The program is provided in center-based classrooms or through the Home Instruction Program for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). ABC, operated in partnership with Department of Education, is nationally recognized as one of the top ten pre-K programs in the US.

DCCECE, working with the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission/State Advisory Council (AECC; see Appendix A1-1 for Operational Policies and Procedures), adopted the following mission statement: *As good stewards of the public trust, the Early Childhood Commission will support and advise the Division by ensuring that all Arkansas children and families have access to a safe, high-quality, developmentally appropriate (nurturing learning) environment (and) by educating and assisting parents, child care providers, and communities to prepare our children for future success.* The following goals were established by the Early Childhood Commission in 2009: 1) increase the number of infant and toddlers served in quality, licensed centers annually; 2) increase parental involvement in the child's education through research-based models and programs to enhance child outcomes and success in school annually; 3) through state policies create an integrated system of professional development uniting the early childhood sectors which include child care, Head Start, pre-K, public schools, and early intervention and special education services (adopted from Workforce Designs; National Association for the Education of

Young Children); 4) support implementation of AR-BB QRIS; and 5) strengthen and expand local and state partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

Arkansas has made significant strides over the past decade to improve the quality and access of child care and early childhood education. We have increased investments in state-funded pre-Kindergarten, Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABC), from \$10 million in the early 1990's to \$111 million in 2011. While the commitment to increase ABC funding was reached in 2007 with an additional \$40 million added during the legislative session as part of Governor Beebe's legislative agenda to bring the total to \$111 million, the downward turn in the economy since 2008 has not resulted in cuts in the state's pre-K program as it has in many other states. DCCECE has worked strategically to fund or participate in projects that build on existing efforts and include evaluation to determine what works and what can be improved. Even though the state experienced some across-the-board cuts in the down economy, the state has prioritized pre-K funding by supplementing state cuts with additional TANF dollars. Specifically, the 2007 Keystone evaluation (Miller & Bogatova, 2007) of the Early Childhood Professional Development System provided an opportunity to make improvements to professional development and guided the development of AR-BB. Some projects provide technical assistance to the state rather than funding, such as the Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ACBD), a partnership with Medicaid, the Commonwealth Fund, and the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP). The goal of ABCD is to develop and test sustainable models for improving care coordination and linkages between pediatric primary care providers (PCPs) and other providers who support children's healthy development. Arkansas is working with the four other ABCD states to improve referral, care coordination, case management and linkages across systems that influence child development. Arkansas's project, called AR LINKS, builds on the state's previous participation in the ABCD Screening Academy. The Screening Academy focused on the promotion of developmental screening through the selection and use of a standardized developmental screening tool as part of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) screens provided by PCPs. A Physician's Work Group selected the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) as the developmental screening tool for use in the Arkansas project. The ASQ is a nationally recognized, validated screening tool that is completed by parents at ages recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. ASQ is an accurate and parent-friendly way to screen young children and identify potential developmental delays as

early as possible. As a result of the Screening Academy, ASQ is now widely use throughout the state.

Our 2004 partnership with other organizations in the School Readiness Indicators Initiative also provides evidence of our commitment to early learning and development. The first goal of the initiative was to determine a set of data indicators that could be tracked over time, published annually in a highly accessible way, and have a direct significance for public policy development. We now annually publish a *Family Connections* (described in Section C4) document that the AECC voted to move to a web access map, which currently under development. This will allow local programs, policy makers and any other stakeholders to have information regarding availability and access to licensed and quality child care as well as resources available to support parents (such as availability of mental health providers and food pantries, for example) in a given geographical area. The second goal of the initiative was to meet the requirements of Act 825 to develop an assessment of children's readiness upon entry to Kindergarten. Thus we have selected one screening tool for all children entering Kindergarten, the Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI). We provide a Kindergarten Readiness Checklist based on QELI and calendars with information on child development and activities for families of 3- and 4-year old children.

Increasing number of Children with High Needs served. The number of Children with High Needs birth through age five served in quality state-funded early childhood programs has increased from approximately 9,000 in the 90's to almost 25,000 today. Most children are served in ABC programs and are therefore predominantly three- and four-year-old children. However the number of eligible children has grown considerably between 2000 and 2010. Census 2000 had 47,930 children aged 3–Kindergarten entry under 200% Federal Poverty Line, while the 2010 Census has reported an increase to 68,746 children of the same ages (see Table (A)(1)-1). Between federally-funded Head Start programs and ABC, Arkansas is serving about half the eligible three- and four-year-old population living in poverty.

While there is room to improve the number of preschool aged children in high quality care, the need is even greater for infants and toddlers. As reported in Table (A)(1)-1, the 2010 census reported 71,609 infants and toddlers in poverty in the state of Arkansas, approximately 7% of those children with high needs were served in quality programs. Further, less than 3% of infants and toddlers living in poverty were served in federally-funded Early Head Start or ABC.

As can be seen in Table (A)(1)-5, from 2007, we increased funding for our ABC programs, which enabled us to serve 14% more children with high needs. Funding during 2009 and 2010 came from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Current levels of funding are increased over 2007, but to a lesser extent as was possible with additional federal funding. It is a goal to increase the number of children with high needs, particularly infants and toddlers, with access to higher quality child care. We propose to use funding from Race to the Top to pilot tiered reimbursement for infants and toddlers as a way of identifying sustainable strategies to improve the quality of their care. We describe this proposal in Section (B)(2).

Existing legislation, policies, or practices. Arkansas has established early learning and development as a priority through legislation and public policy. For example: 1) Act 49 amended the ABC Program to remove matching requirements and to set implementation goals. 2) Act 636 enhanced the effectiveness of early childhood programs in Arkansas by authorizing grants and supports for an early childhood foundation. 3) Act 1132 amended various sections of the Arkansas code pertaining to childcare and created the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE). 4) Act 825/2003 required the Department of Education to determine and prepare a list of the skills that a child should have in order to be prepared when entering Kindergarten.

Current status in key areas.

Early Learning and Development Standards.

Arkansas' Early Learning and Development Standards serve as the conceptual foundation of quality in programs throughout the state. These standards are published in two documents, the *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook* (Appendix A1-2) and the *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care* (Appendix A1-3). Purposes of the *Frameworks* are to shape and guide quality programs in early childhood education, to guide the growth and development of children through a successful transition to a Kindergarten curriculum, to assist in the design and development of curricula for three and four year old children, and to provide an assessment method through the use of the Developmental Rating Scale. Development of the *Frameworks* began in 1991. More than 30 educators widely recognized for professional contributions and quality of work in Early Childhood Education served on the task force. Since their Framework was accepted and adopted in 1996, the Frameworks have been revised several times to keep pace with research and changing best practices. The current version contains up-

to-date information about curriculum, strategies, and assessment in developmentally appropriate quality early childhood education programs. Both handbooks are user-friendly guides that assist early educators in the development of their programs. All state-funded professional development is directed to align with and support the implementation of the early learning standards described by Frameworks. Beyond conceptual guidance, Arkansas has established effective systems to support, assess and improve quality.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

Arkansas has implemented all aspects of a Comprehensive Assessment System in varying degrees. Strengths and areas for future growth are described.

1. *Screening.* Arkansas piloted the use of reliable, valid developmental screeners in voucher programs, state-funded home visit programs, and ABC preschool programs. The chosen screeners were the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (J. Squires & Bricker, 2009) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (J. Squires, Bricker, Twombly, & Squires, 2005). The pilot demonstrated feasibility for widespread use in state-funded programs (UAMS College of Medicine Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, 2011). Screenings used by programs with federal funding, Early Head Start and Head Start, vary by program, but include the ASQ-3 (19%).

2. *Formative Assessment.* ABC pre-K uses The Ounce Scale (Meisels, Marsden, Dombro, Weston, & Jewkes, 2003) for children birth to 3 years in center-based and home visiting programs and The Work Sampling System (WSS; Meisels, Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Dorfman, & Marsden, 1994) for children aged 3-5. Formative assessments used by programs with federal funding, Early Head Start and Head Start, vary by program, but include the Ounce Scale (9%) and WSS (24%). However, the AR-BB committee and DCCECE ABC administrators are reviewing potential replacements for the Ounce Scale and/or the WSS. We are committed to selecting a formative measure that includes all of the essential domains of school readiness.

3. *Environmental Quality.* The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) are a key component to AR-BB ratings, but are not required for programs not participating. Because, nationally, Early Head Start and Head Start programs have exceedingly high environmental quality and the stronger relationships between teacher-child interactions and children's outcomes, federal EHS/HS reviews no longer use the ERS, but have adopted the CLASS, described below.

4. Adult-child interactions. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (R. Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) is currently utilized in Head Start as part of the federal monitoring which assists Arkansas with alignment. To more widely measure adult-child interactions in other types of programs, we will adopt CLASS into higher levels of AR-BB. Section C2 describes implementation plans in greater detail.

Health promotion practices.

Arkansas has also focused to invest in obesity prevention and health promotion practices in the early learning environment. Specifically, we have funded training and technical assistance for nutrition and physical activity in early learning programs by supporting the use of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program across the state. NAP SACC targets child care policy, practice and environmental influences on nutrition and physical activity behaviors in young children (ages 2 to 5). NAP SACC uses an organizational self-assessment assessment of 14 areas of nutrition and physical activity policy, practices and environments to identify the strengths and limitations of the child care facility. Following the self-assessment, a health consultant (technical assistance provided through DCCECE contractors) works with the child care facility staff to set goals for change and develop plans for follow-up actions to improve practice. Collaborative goal setting is followed by staff training and targeted technical assistance to promote organizational change. Professional development training is then provided to the facility staff on the topics of: 1) Childhood Obesity, 2) Nutrition for Young Children, 3) Physical Activity for Young Children, 4) Personal Health and Wellness for Staff, and, 5) Working with Families to Promote Healthy Weight Behaviors.

DCCECE also administers a Special Nutrition Programs (SNP) which provides reimbursement for well-balanced, nutritious meals served to individuals enrolled in the Child Care Food Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

When children enter Kindergarten, parents are required to provide evidence of a physical evaluation by their child's physician. The primary focus of this documentation is to establish that the child's immunization record is up to date. As described below (in Section E1), all Kindergarten children receive a visual and hearing screen during this year.

Family engagement strategies.

The State has activated several initiatives to strengthen the capacity of Arkansas families to support their children (see Table (A)(1)-9). ABC programs requires two parent-teacher conferences and detailed parent involvement plans. As described in Section B1, AR-BB standards require activities related to the Strengthening Families initiative that specifically target family engagement and assess this area with the Program and Business Administration Scales (PAS/BAS; description in Section (B)(1) and Appendix B1-3). Additional initiatives in which the state has focused investment, such as the *TIPS for Great Kids* project and related trainings, the support for use of the *Family Map* inventories, and the development of the *Family Connection* materials (described in Section C4), all demonstrate key successes and the collaborative environment among stakeholders. Other important aspects of our family engagement include professional standards, training to support English Language Learners (ELL), and home visitation programs.

Professional Standards. The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission established the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (AECCS). The AECCS partnerships are comprised of over 150 early childhood leaders, including all of the state departments administering programs for young children, parents, and state leaders in health and mental health, higher education, child advocacy, early child care, and community development. Multiple AECCS workgroups (including the Family Support and Parenting Education work groups) have made substantial gains in coming to agreement regarding the goals of family engagement in the state's strategic plan for early childhood. One of the four key goals in the state's strategic plan is that 'parents have the information, services, and supports they need to ensure their young children are developing in healthy environments.

Arkansas' professional and career development document for early child care, entitled *Key Content Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals*, includes four areas targeting Family and Community (see Section D2). Generally, the competency requires that providers work collaboratively with families to meet children's needs and to encourage the community's involvement with early care and education. Specific competencies include skills related to showing respect for the family and engaging them in decision-making.

A key activity of AECCS was to implement and support coordination of the *Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education* initiative developed by the Center for the Study of

Social Policy. *Strengthening Families* (SF) is a research-based, cost-effective strategy to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It focuses on building five Protective Factors that also promote healthy outcomes: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children. The SF strategy is embedded in the AR-BB levels (see Section (B)(1), Appendices B1-1, B1-2, and B1-4, and Table (B)(1)-1 for details). We have developed professional development to help programs achieve requirements for AR-BB. These supports include a six-hour training, *Strengthening Families Assessment Program Director's Seminar*, and an online training module. In the seminar, program directors complete the SF self-assessment and write action steps required for AR-BB. The online training is based on ZERO TO THREE's *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care* curriculum and supports programs in using the SF self-assessment tool.

ELL Support. The State has also worked to be culturally sensitive and increase the knowledge of caregivers regarding cultural issues. Based on U.S. Census data, the number of Latinos living in Arkansas is projected to double in the next 20 years. Child care and early learning programs have been greatly affected by this influx of families and children. DCCECE provides training on cultural differences, assessing children for possible developmental delays, and second language acquisition through the Welcome the Children project. Project staff are working with community training teams and local healthcare providers to help identify effective referral processes. To further support and expand competency of professionals throughout Arkansas, Welcome the Children provides training through the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System using materials developed through the Nuestra Familia ("Our Family") project. To ensure sustainability, Welcome the Children is using a community team approach to develop the capacity of individuals across the state to present and support these training materials. Community teams consist of child care providers, early childhood educators, disability and healthcare providers, clergy, family members, and representatives of Latino groups. With in-depth project support, these community teams will coordinate local training efforts.

Home Visitation Programs. Arkansas has a long history of commitment to home visiting as an effective service delivery option. Arkansas is a rural state and home visiting is a particularly effective rural service delivery approach. Both HIPPIY and Parents as Teachers have been key

components of the ABC effort since its inception. In Arkansas, direct home visiting services for families with children ranging from pre-birth through age three use a wide variety of evidence-based models such as Nurse-Family Partnership (in six counties through ADH), Parents as Teachers (in 16 sites under the sponsorship of Jefferson Comprehensive Care System), Healthy Families America (in 26 sites through the Children's Trust Fund) and an additional 3 sites (through the Centers for Youth and Families). Together, these 51 programs currently serve more than 1,200 children and their families.

The successful collaboration among various home visiting providers, regardless of the model being implemented, resulted in the October 2011 award of funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program to create the Arkansas Home Visiting Network (AHVN). The project will not only expand services to rural, small town, and urban families but also strengthen a statewide network for resource sharing between DCCECE, Arkansas Children's Trust Fund, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Centers for Youth and Families, HIPPPY, and Jefferson Comprehensive Care System. This will ultimately result in meeting family needs with key services whether at the local, regional or state level and enhance the knowledge of parents whose children range in age from prenatal to age five.

Development of Early Childhood Educators.

Unfortunately, while the State has some components of a system to support on-going knowledge acquisition and encourage early childhood educators to seek advance degrees (see below), we realize we have serious gaps in this system. As see in Table A-1-10, we do not have systems in place to effectively track the status of the workforce knowledge and credentials. This has been an ongoing struggle to find the resources to monitor (see Section D for proposal).

All Early Learning and Development staff in Arkansas can attend free and low-cost professional development courses and workshops (see Appendix A1-4 for a list state-provided trainings and professional development opportunities). A coordinated system of professional development, The Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways (TAPP) is established to provide training and guidance to early childhood professionals. The TAPP Registry is the tracking component of professional development. Members can view transcripts of training they have attended and view and register for trainings online. Registration for educators in AR-BB and

ABC programs is required. Each member is assigned to one of the following levels based on level of education and training:

Foundation. Assistant Teachers (individuals with limited responsibility for planning the learning environment and curriculum). Possess high school diploma, GED or advanced degree unrelated to early childhood/school-age and have limited or extended experience with limited professional development.

Intermediate. Lead Teachers, Assistant Directors, Administration Team members (individuals responsible for planning and implementing learning environments and curriculum). Possess Child Development Associate credential; one-year technical certificate in early childhood education or related area; associate degree in early childhood education or related field. Have work experience or professional preparation (preferably with extended field experience) sufficient to plan and implement curriculum and learning environments and support assistant teachers within the classroom.

Advanced. Lead Teacher, Educational Coordinator, Curriculum Supervisor, Site Director, Owner, Agency/Central Office staff, Early Childhood Consultant (individuals with responsibilities for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and procedures based on current research and best practices/evidence based practice; modeling for and supervising other staff). Possess baccalaureate degrees (and beyond) in an appropriate areas for the age/setting with which the individual works. Work experience or professional preparation (preferably with extended field experience) sufficient to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and procedures based on current research and best practice/evidence-based practices; develop, implement and evaluate curriculum and learning environments; and model for and supervise other staff.

TAPP Trainer: Competencies to become a TAPP trainer include demonstrating mastery of appropriate training content, ability to design training formats that are relevant and meaningful, skills necessary for presenting effective training experiences, and the ability to manage a well-run, purposeful training event.

Arkansas early childhood educators can also access technical assistance by self-referral or by referral from the licensing office. Childhood Services, affiliated with Arkansas State University, has a contract with DCCECE to establish a group of early childhood professionals to offer this assistance at no charge to providers.

Kindergarten Entry Assessments

Starting in 2007, all Kindergarten students began receiving a statewide assessment the Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI) to fulfill the mandatory administration of the Arkansas Uniform School Readiness Screening for all Kindergarten children. The guidelines to teacher clearly state that the QELI is not to be used to determine special education referral, to discourage placement in transitional classes, to evaluate preschool programs, or to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction of a teacher. It is intended to support instruction decisions about individual children and class groups. Specifically it is intended to:

1. describe the developmental level of a student.
2. provide teachers with supplemental information or snapshot of a student's entering Kindergarten skills.
3. describe certain learning-related behaviors of students with special needs and those whose first language is not English.
4. assist identifying students who might be at risk due to delayed development.
5. provide information for planning instructional programs for individual students and/or groups.
6. provide ADE assistance in better preparing entering Kindergarten students.

QELI, formerly known as the Iowa Early Learning Inventory, is in a checklist format where teachers observe and record information about cognitive knowledge and classroom behaviors in six key areas: general knowledge, oral communication, written language, math concepts, work habits, and attentive behavior. A diagnostic report indicates the extent to which each child has mastered each skill and has and indicates *delayed*, *developing* or *developed* for each of the six subscales.

The inventory was developed to be appropriate for all students, including those students with special needs and English language learners (Qualls, Hoover, Dunbar, & Frisbie, 2003). The norming sample included 2,108 Kindergarten children in 47 states and 2,939 pre-Kindergarten children in 19 states, but demographic information on those children is not reported. Internal reliability of the instrument is high (over .80), but concurrent validity is low (lower than .50).

To strengthen the teacher-to-teacher and student-to-student uniformity in administering the inventory, a committee of educators assisted in the development of the specific written QELI

Guidelines and response rubric. Documents to assist teachers prepare and conduct QELI observations and to help them understand the associations between QELI and many other tools currently being utilized within the state are also available (Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public, 2008). As seen in Table A-1-12, there are elements of the domains of school readiness that are not assessed with the QELI, including physical well-being, motor development, and social emotional development (Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public, 2008). Thus, the Department of Education is currently considering replacements for the QELI that will be adopted statewide.

In separate screens, two domains of physical health, hearing and vision, are assessed. By state law, all children in pre-K, Kindergarten, grades one, two, four, six, and eight, and all transfer students receive an eye and vision screening. These data are currently linked to the Arkansas longitudinal data system.

Effective data practices.

The Arkansas Research Center (ARC) was founded in 2009 by a grant from the National Center of Education Statistics to the Arkansas Department of Education through the University of Central Arkansas. ARC has established **our state longitudinal data system that includes the essential data elements as defined in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act**. ARC has created a complete set of data from the Arkansas Department of Human Services (ABC program), Arkansas Department of Education (K-12), Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, and some Head Start Centers. Governance of the center is through Arkansas' Coordinating Council of Educational Efforts, which has representation from each of the agencies involved, including DCCECE. The goal of ARC is to use student longitudinal data to provide essential K-12 information to support effective data practices, program improvements, and evaluation.

According to the Data Quality Campaign's 2011 Data for Action survey, Arkansas has met ten of ten essential elements required to establish the state's capacity to use data from the state longitudinal data system.¹ A wide variety of research activities have already been completed, including analysis of the impact of early learning programs on Kindergarten readiness, high school indicators of college success, and wage outcomes of college graduates.

¹ <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/stateanalysis/states/AR/>

For K12 educators, ARC currently maintains two systems of frequent reporting, *QuickLooks* (<http://quicklooks.arkansas.gov>) and *hive* (<http://hive.arkansas.gov>). Arkansas has also created a smartphone application, *buzz* (<https://buzz.arkansas.gov>), to allow teachers to administer targeted literacy assessments and have these scores automatically uploaded to *hive* so educators can create visualizations and combine these data with state data. We are working with ARC to develop similar tools for early childhood programs. ARC has already linked all preschool data for children in the following categories to the longitudinal system: ABC, Part B, Part C, children receiving vouchers and/or in foster care.

ARC has developed a protocol for protecting individual privacy through a “dual-database” approach. Personally identifiable information and the information of research interests are kept in separate physical systems. This protocol is for both regulatory compliance and the protection of individual privacy. While our research databases contain data at the individual level, all data is completely de-identified. With RTT funds, this system will be improved (see Section E1 and D2).

Data on the status of children at Kindergarten entry. As discussed earlier in this section, Arkansas conducts Kindergarten readiness entry exams using the QELI. Combining data from entry examines for school years 2008, 2009, and 2010, we are given some indication in the readiness gap between children eligible for free/reduce lunch (e.g., in poverty) and their peers. The QELI scores of Children with High Needs who were not served in ABC programs were consistently lower than their peers across all subscales. For language and literacy development, QELI scores of Children with High Needs were 16% lower (3.9 of 24 points) for Oral Communication and 17% lower (3.4 of 20 points) for Written Language. For cognition and general knowledge, QELI General Knowledge and Math Concepts scores were 17% (2.1 of 13 points) and 17% (4.4 of 25 points) lower, respectively. For approaches toward learning and social and emotional development, QELI Work Habits scores were both 10% lower (2.1 of 21 points) for Children with High Needs compared to their peers.

Another way to examine QELI scores is to consider the percentage of children who are rated as having ‘developed’ in a given construct by their teachers. Children with High Needs differ from higher-socio economic status peers ranging from 19% in Attentive Behavior (38% of Children with High Needs are developed compared with 57% of peers) to 32% in Math Concepts (38% of Children with High Needs are developed compared with 70% of peers).

In the spring of the school year, Kindergarten students are administered the Metropolitan Achievement Tests®, Eighth Edition (MAT 8). Although the MAT 8 administration timing does not provide a true baseline of Kindergarten readiness and gaps between Children with High Needs and their peers could have been minimized during the course of the Kindergarten year, a benefit to also examining these scores is that the instrument is a direct test of children's abilities. MAT 8 scores are percentile rankings ranging from 1 to 100 with an average of 50. Scores of Children with High Needs were 45 in Sounds and Print and 43 in Math skills, where their peers' scores were 65 and 63, respectively. These scores represent differences of 20% for Children with High Needs even after the completion of nearly a year of formal schooling.

Data on program quality across different types of programs. Arkansas demonstrates ongoing commitment to evaluating the effectiveness of state-funded programs. Prior to the establishment of AR-BB, the state developed a Quality Approval (QA) system to which programs could apply based on meeting an ERS score of 5 or higher. The state invested in evaluations of the quality of our QA child care programs and our professional development system and registry. The state has also remained committed to evaluating the effectiveness of our ABC programs for minimizing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers, and evaluations have been ongoing since 2006.

Analyses from evaluations provide some evidence of program quality in the state. The evaluation of Arkansas' QA system, conducted in 2007, indicated that QA programs were distinctly different from those that only have licensure (Miller & Bogatova, 2007). The evaluation identified significant differences between QA programs and those at the minimum licensing level for the ERS in early childhood, infant-toddler, family-based, and school-aged programs. Programs in the quality system were found to have fewer part-time staff, lower turnover rates, better administrative practices, and higher ERS scores.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income² families, by age		
	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1	Infants and Toddler calculated numbers are combined	Infants and Toddler calculated percentages are combined
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	71,609	60%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	68,746	58%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	140,355	59%
<p><i>National data were calculated from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (the March supplement) of the Current Population Survey from 2010, representing information from the previous calendar year. State data were calculated from the 2009 American Community Survey, representing information from 2009, take from the National Center Children in Poverty state demographics.</i></p> <p><i>Note: No available data for Infants under age 1. Infants and Toddler numbers and percentages represent a combined calculation for the state of Arkansas.</i></p>		

² Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs		
<i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays³	(0-3) 3222 (3-5) 7722	(0-3) 3% (3-5) 6%
Are English learners⁴	(0-3) UNK (3-5) 522	(3-5).004%
Reside on "Indian Lands"	(0-3) UNK (3-5) unk	Unknown
Are migrant⁵	(0-3) UNK (3-5) unk	Unknown
Are homeless⁶	160	Unknown
Are in foster care	(0-5) 1,705	41.9%
Other as identified by the State		
Describe:		
<i>Homeless: This is the number listed in APSCN. This actual number would be much larger.</i>		

³ For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Percents are based on 2010 census counts of all children in the age categories in Arkansas.

⁴ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

⁵ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in ESEA section 1309(2).

⁶ The term "homeless children" has the meaning given the term "homeless children and youths" in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (425 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age				
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>				
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
State-funded preschool <i>Total Enrollment Numbers as of 09/23/ 2011</i>	87	523	20,732	21,342
Early Head Start and Head Start⁷	433	1365	11384	13182
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Data Source and Year:</i>	367	2855	10522	Unknown
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Data Source and Year:</i>	Unknown	226 <i>(These #s are birth-2)</i>	709	Unknown
Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program <i>Data Source and Year: See below</i>	4,761	6,955	14,842	26,558
<i>Head Start- Data Source and Year: Data is from the 2009 - 2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) compiled by the Head Start Enterprise System for the Office of Head Start. 2010-2011 data will not be available until Nov or Dec 2011. CCDF program Data Source and Year: Kid Care -2010, This includes additional ARRA funded children.</i>				

⁷ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start⁸	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
State-funded preschool <i>Specify:ABC</i>	103,500,000	103,500,000	103,500,000	96,809,000	103,500,000
State contributions to IDEA Part C	0	0	0	0	0
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry	12,000,000	14,870,625	15,316,744	15,623,079	15,623,079
Total State contributions to CCDF⁹	8,579,873	7,277,288	6,143,662	6,114,638	6,114,638
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs¹⁰	7,500,000	7,500,000	12,500,000	14,191,000	11,500,000
Total State contributions:	131579873	133147913	137460406	132737717	136737717
<i>[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data, including the State's fiscal year end date. Include 2011 if data are available.]</i>					

⁸ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

⁹ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

¹⁰ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹¹				
	2007	2008	2009 ¹²	2010 ¹⁷	2011 ¹⁷
State-funded preschool <i>Total Yearly Funded Enrollment Numbers</i>	21,778	24,741	24,870	24,708	22,285
Early Head Start and Head Start¹³ <i>(funded enrollment)</i>	11,038	10,938	10,921	11,318	11,595
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>(annual December 1 count)</i>	2838	2878	2720	3222	-
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)</i>	917	1100	862	987	-
Programs receiving CCDF funds <i>(average monthly served)</i>	27,533	24,360	20,500	29,712	22,091
<p><i>Head Start- The EHS and HS information for 2007-2009 and 2011 is based on data reported annually to the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office by local Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start grantees. PIR data was not used because the state summaries for 2007-2009 does not include data from programs operated by Community Development Institute out of Denver, Colorado. The Program Information Report data for 2011 will not be released until December 2011. The column at the end of 2011 will not match table A 1-3 for Head Start and Early Head Start because table one is cumulative enrollment from the PIR for the 2009-2010 program year which is usually higher than funded enrollment because of turnover of slots in the program. The 2010 total is from the Program Information Report from the Head Start Enterprise System.</i></p>					

¹¹ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹² Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending. Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

¹³ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State's Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the State's Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	X	X	X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	X	X	X
Approaches toward learning			X
Physical well-being and motor development	X	X	X
Social and emotional development	X	X	X
<i>Data found: Frameworks/Arkansas Standards</i>			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing The Arkansas Better Chance Program</i>	X Health screening required every 2 years and annual comprehensive developmental screening required	X Work Sampling System / OUNCE	X ERS assessment minimum 5.00	X ERS assessment minimum 5.00	X Required PAS / BAS training
Early Head Start and Head Start¹⁴	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	X			
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X	X	X		
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X				

¹⁴ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	X Tier 2 & 3- Measured in PAS/BAS assessment Tier 4- Proposed annual developmental & health screening	X Tier 2 & 3- Measured in PAS/BAS assessment Tier 4- Proposed annual developmental & health screening & assessment referral for identified children	X Tier 1- ERS or YPQA self-assessment or Technical Assistance Tier 2- ERS/YPQA assessment minimum 3.00 Tier 3- ERS minimum 4.00; YPQA minimum 3.75 Tier 4- Proposed ERS/YPQA assessment 5.00 minimum Tier 5- Proposed ERS/YPQA assessment 5.50 minimum	X Tier 2- Measured in ERS/YPQA assessment 3.00 minimum Tier 3- Measured in ERS assessment 4.00 minimum; YPQA 3.75 minimum Tier 4- Proposed ERS/YPQA assessment 5.00 minimum Tier 5- Proposed ERS/YPQA assessment 5.50 minimum	X Tier 1- PAS/BAS required training Tier 2- PAS/BAS assessment required Tier 3- PAS/BAS assessment minimum 4.00 (items 1-21; items 5-6 not included in average) Tier 4- Proposed minimum 5.00 (items 1-21) Tier 5- Proposed minimum 5.00 all items included
State licensing requirements					
[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool	X	X	X		X
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C		X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X				
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X	X	X	X	
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X	X	X		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>		X Tier 1- Medical and educational plans for children are implemented and documented	X Tier 1- Administrator receives training on physical activity for children Tier 2- Physical activities for children required in daily plans. Administrator/kitchen manager receive annual training on nutrition for	X Tier 1- Information on child development & health shared with families Tier 2- Information on medical homes for children shared with families Information on stages of development	X Tier 1- ARKids First information given to families of uninsured children

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
			children	shared with families Tier 3- Information on nutrition & physical activity for children shared with families	
State licensing requirements	X		X		
Other Describe:					
<p><i>State-funded preschool- Annual Growth Assessment/EPSDT, Annual Developmental Screening/Referral/Follow-up Required, All Meals/snacks must meet USDA nutritional requirements, ECERS/PAS/BAS.</i></p> <p><i>State licensing requirements- We require that all infants be place on their backs to sleep, significantly reduced the amount of screen time for children in care, require an emergency preparedness plan that includes staff training/involvement, safety alarms on vehicles transporting more than 7 children, and required training for anyone transporting children. We monitor facilities at least three times per year, unannounced to ensure these requirements are being met. This is all on top of the basic health and safety requirements that incorporate hand washing, sanitizing, first aid, cpr, playground fall zones, immunizations, and the buildings/grounds. We require all licensed and registered facilities in the state to follow the current USDA guidelines for meals, as well as require facilities to have a minimum of 1 hour outdoor time, and the opportunity for large motor activities.</i></p> <p><i>IDEA Part B, section 619- Children receiving Part B services are severed in the preschool setting of the parent choice. All programs must meet licensure standards</i></p>					

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
State-funded preschool	<p>ABC Rule 16-1 Family Involvement – Programs are encouraged to offer opportunities for parents to interact during program hours, such as mealtime. Also programs MUST provide two (2) parent-teacher conferences each program year. During this dialogue we hope programs have dialogue with parents regarding child development.</p> <p>Parent Involvement Plans are required which detail the strategies to be used to involve parents in their child’s educational program. Parent input is welcomed to the program. This plan must be maintained on site and recommended that it be included in the Parent Handbook.</p>
Early Head Start and Head Start	<p>A Head Start Handbook of the Parent Involvement Vision and Strategies. HHS/ACF/ACYF/OHS. 1996. English. New frameworks for family engagement, developed by The National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement (NCPFCE), are being released in the Fall of 2011. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom and program. Parents have the opportunity to provide input in the development of lesson plans. Parents are encouraged to participate and serve on the policy council and governing board, which helps provide direction for the program. Head Start programs offer educational opportunities on a variety of topics at monthly parent meetings. They also work with individual families to connect them with needed services and set goals for improving their lives (family Partnership Agreements). EHS/Head Start programs develop local inter-agency agreements, which are linked to community support and establish partnerships with other local providers in providing services to children and families with disabilities. Programs also participate in the Fatherhood Initiative which encourages fathers to be more involved and active in their child’s education and life activities.</p>
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	<p>Early Intervention programs provide family training and referrals for services families need to assist them in meeting the family needs and reaching their personal goals.</p>
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	<p>IDEA requires parental participation at every level. Parents are on their child’s evaluation and programming committees and help plan their child’s individual program plans each year. All early childhood special education programs are required to survey parents to facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.</p>

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<p><i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i></p>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	Programs differ but all are required to include activities to involve parent participation. Homeless programs activates are more in the position to help families find services needed. Even start requires parents to attend literacy interactive training.
Programs receiving CCDF funds	DCCECE requires CCDF Provider Participants to allow parents unlimited access to their child when the child is in the facility. DCCECE requires CCDF families to update their childcare assistance application every six months. The Family Support workers provide case management services to clients by linking families to community resources and make referrals for services based on the client need. Family support worker also encourage parental involvement and referrals to local quality programs, head start programs, and ABC programs.
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	<p>Tier 2 Administrator reviews the Strengthening Families website, views the video or receives training on the initiative</p> <p>Tier 3 Administrator completes Strengthening Families online self-assessment for 3 or more strategies</p> <p>Facility develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements an action step</p>
State licensing requirements	None
Other <i>Describe:</i>	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State				
List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Child Development Associate Credential coursework	Not Available	Unknown	Unknown	This is not tracked in our current system
AR Children's Program Administrator Credential	Not Available	32 Credential 245 Certificate	Unknown	The total is not known so percents not calculated
Child Development/(age ranges) credential	Not Available	Unknown	Unknown	
School age credential	Not Available	8	Unknown	The total is not known so percents not calculated
B-PreK Credential	Not Available	Unknown	Unknown	
P-4	Yes	16,686	30	State has a total of 55,736 teacher licenses; of those, 16,686 allow teachers to teach P (pre-school; before/lower than Kindergarten)
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>				

¹⁵ Includes both credentials awarded and degrees attained.

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/ Not Available)</i>
U of A Fayetteville	Unknown	Unknown
Arkansas State University/Early Childhood Services	Unknown	Unknown
All community colleges	Unknown	Unknown
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>		

State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? <i>(Y/N)</i>	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N/A	N
Instrument(s) used? <i>(Specify)</i>	QELI	QELI	QELI	N/A	QELI
Evidence of validity and reliability? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N/A	N
Evidence of validity for English learners? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N/A	N

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)	N	N	N	N/A	N
How broadly administered? (If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration)	This inventory is required by law to be administered to every incoming Kindergarten student and any first year first-grade student.	This inventory is required by law to be administered to every incoming Kindergarten student and any first year first-grade student.	This inventory is required by law to be administered to every incoming Kindergarten student and any first year first-grade student.	N/A	This inventory is required by law to be administered to every incoming Kindergarten student and any first year first-grade student.
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)	YES	YES	YES	N/A	YES

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State							
List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements						
	<i>Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
State funded Preschool (COPA)	X		X	X			
Work Sampling System	X		X				
Foster Care (COPA)	X			X			X
Voucher (COPA)	X			X			X
Disability status (Part B or C) State Information System	X		X				X
Kindergarten Assessment (ACTAAP)	X						X
AR Quality Ratings						X	
TAPP - Demographic		X			X		
TAPP- Professional Development		X					
Head Start programs	X		X	X			X
<p>ACTAAP – Includes Kindergarten assessment includes QELI and MAT8 and K12 assessments TAPP- has two separate data bases that are not linked, one for professional development and the other for listing of courses by individual ACTAAP - Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) COPA - Child Outcome Planning and Administration Child Unique identifier – each system uses an identifier; however, the ID's are not the same across systems. The longitudinal data system project is working to link by other data</p>							

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State							
List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements						
	<i>Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
<i>(DOB, Name, SSN) where possible.</i>							
<i>Head Start programs – do not have a uniform system but typically use COPA, Child Plus or other data management systems.</i>							

(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. (20 points)

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(2)

- The State's goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State's goals for improving child outcomes statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State's goals for closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry.

- Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C).
- Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D).
- Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E).
- For each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), a description of the State’s rationale for choosing to address the selected criteria in that Focused Investment Area, including how the State’s choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)) and why these selected criteria will best achieve the State’s ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of ten pages)*

Ambitious yet achievable goals in closing the gap.

Across our Kindergarten readiness assessments (the QELI which is completed in the fall and the MAT 8 which is completed in the spring of the school year), there is a range of a 10% to 20% gap in children’s abilities between children from at-risk (in poverty) and more affluent peers. When considering QELI scores indicating that skills of children are ‘developed,’ there are gaps of approximately 30% across many of the domains of school readiness including General Knowledge, Oral Communication, Written Language and Math Concepts. The social-emotional and approaches to learning domains have gaps of 19% and 20%.

Data from the ARC evaluations of ABC programs demonstrate that Children with High Needs served in ABC programs had significant gains in QELI scores over children from similar backgrounds served in other child care arrangements (Arkansas Research Center, 2011). ARC reported gains of 3.5% in General Knowledge, 2.7% in Oral Communication, 6.5% in Written Language, 4.6% in Math Concepts, 6.9% in Work Habits, and 8.1% in Attentive Behavior for children served in ABC. They also report greater numbers of ABC children with ‘developed’ skills compared to low-income peers without ABC preparation ranging from gains of 3% in General Knowledge to 11% in Attentive Behavior. Gains in the MAT 8 subscales were 5% for Sound and Print and 6% for Math skills. While these gains do not completely eliminate the gap between Children with High Needs and their upper-income peers, they show quality child care can have a significant impact on children’s outcomes.

Our goal to increase the number of Children with High Needs being served in high quality preschool settings has the capacity to minimize gaps present as children enter school. As seen in section B2, we believe that we can increase the number of for-profit child care programs participating in AR-BB by 20% per year. Based on the proposed changes to AR-BB, it is clear that programs would need to score at Levels 3 and higher to match the quality of ABC programs currently in the AR-BB system. There are currently 1,501 child care providers receiving voucher in the state. In 2014, we estimated that we will have over two-thirds of all programs in the AR-BB system at Levels 3 or higher, which could significantly reduce the school gap for Children with High Needs.

Overall summary of the State Plan.

Arkansas has demonstrated a long-term commitment to raising the quality of child care by laying an extensive foundation of resources and systems, implementing formal statewide quality systems, and establishing high quality statewide pre-Kindergarten. The solid foundation of promulgated standards and cross-sector partnerships already built will enable us to use RTT funds to boost the baseline of quality care for all licensed providers. We will also be able to introduce higher levels of quality, equivalent with nationally recognized standards, to better serve all Children with High Needs in the state, not just those in ABC. As the state's tiered quality rating and improvement system, Better Beginnings (AR-BB), is tied to most aspects of our proposal, we address specific plans for increasing incentives, training, and evaluation of continuous quality improvement and incentive programs in other sections.

Project 1: Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR (Details Section B)

To encourage more programs to enter the system, our initial strategy was to make the entry level of AR-BB above the basic licensing level but still relatively easy to attain. As more programs enter, we will shift our efforts to moving more programs into higher quality. With RTT funds this process will be feasible and result in a true comprehensive system that links across agencies and meets the following goals:

1. *Accessible to many children.* We will increase the overall level of quality in the state by raising minimum licensing standards up to AR-BB Level 1 to encourage greater participation. We will provide supports for programs to achieve this new baseline. Once sufficient numbers of programs have entered the system, we will work to move the AR-BB

system from voluntary to mandatory. This will require changes in the current law; however, we feel that adequate support for programs this would be supported by the public.

2. *Assures the best possible care for the most at-risk children.* We propose to increase the quality of programs that support children in foster care, children using vouchers, and children with disabilities. We will change requirements that state reimbursements will not be made if Level 3 is not achieved and maintained. There are some areas of the state where, until there is sufficient saturation of the AR-BB system, there will be insufficient quality placements for children, and policies will have to be developed to insure that children are provided the best care possible. These policies will provide additional technical support to programs in the cases where lower quality levels are met and maintained. In the case of children in foster care, we have recently released a policy brief, *Every Child in Foster Care Deserves Our Best* (see in Appendix A2-1), highlighting the importance of stability for these children and will provide additional supports to programs to try to reduce unnecessary movements of child care placements.
3. *Designed for ongoing quality improvement with shared data across systems.* We will focus on multiple improvements to our data systems to allow children's preschool records to link to the K-12 system. We will define and train programs to effectively use routine reports about children's progress and history. We will also use funding to train educators in two areas: first, how to conduct the screenings and assessments to insure reliability of data, and second, how to use screening and assessment for their own planning and instruction.
4. *Sustainable after RTT funding ends.* The most effective use of existing funds will be evaluated during the RTT funding to plan for sustainable long-term policy. We are focusing our efforts on developing infrastructure that will support quality once RTT funding ends. Also, we will move many programs into and up through the lower levels of AR-BB quality so long-term efforts and resources can be used to support movement to higher levels.

With these goals in mind, the state has chosen to focus investment in the following areas: supporting effective uses of comprehensive assessment systems (C2); engaging and supporting families (C4); supporting early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities (D2); and understanding the status of children's learning and development at

Kindergarten entry (E1). Our rationale is based on state evaluations and on empirical research on early childhood education and quality related to child outcomes.

Project 2: Complete the Comprehensive Assessment System (Details in Section C2)

The current AR-BB system has a good foundation for one of the four areas of a comprehensive assessment system: environmental quality. Other areas are not sufficiently included in our current system. We have been developing additional criteria for new AR-BB quality levels based on the findings from an external evaluation (L. McKelvey et al.). This evaluation identified three key areas for improvement that we have already begun to address. These areas are also federal priorities for a comprehensive system:

1. *Screening.* Findings from the evaluation recommended that screening be developed as a standalone criterion for quality programs. In the currently adopted AR-BB, child screening is measured as a component of quality in that it is contained within the measures of the quality of administrative practices, the Program Administration Scale (PAS) for centers and the Business Administration Scale (BAS) for family-based programs. Overall, AR-BB does not require screening outside of the context of these scales, but once a child is identified as needing specialized services, the system requires that programs implement existing individualized plans. Quality early childhood education should implement efforts to identify children with special needs and make referrals for early intervention. Without screening in ECE programs, delays and disabilities can stay unaddressed for years. Young children are more responsive to intervention than at any other time (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000), and the earlier children are identified with delays, the greater the possibility that applied intervention will be effective. The results would include reduced special education costs, and ultimately, reduced hardship for children and their families. In the proposed additional levels of AR-BB that the state will adopt, we will require screening as an element of care independent of the PAS/BAS assessment at Level 4 and higher.

2. *Formative Assessment.* The AR-BB evaluation highlighted the need to include formative assessments to guide instruction. Similar to the status of screening, formative assessment is included in the currently adopted measures of program administrative practices, but a criterion for formative assessment is not included independent of that assessment. The PAS includes an item, assessment done in support of learning, which measures the use of valid and reliable formative assessments in the classroom and the use of those assessments to guide curriculum

planning and instruction. There is also a criterion for programs at Level 3 of AR-BB that requires that programs maintain a portfolio for each child. The portfolio, a collection of a child's work or a teacher's documentation of a child's behaviors and activities over time, potentially enables providers to assess learning within the context of class curriculum and to make goals for individual students. Ideally, portfolios focus on change, individualized instruction, teacher and child reflection, and sharing information with others (Gullo, 2006).

As currently written, the AR-BB item on portfolio use may not discriminate between programs that use portfolios with a developmentally appropriate intent from those arbitrarily collecting products or recording behaviors without further reflection. Proposed changes to AR-BB will include the intent of the use of portfolios for assessment and require additional training. Additional levels will include the use of valid and reliable assessment instruments approved by DCCECE and assessment results used to inform instruction and planning.

3. *Adult-child interactions.* Findings from the evaluation of AR-BB documented the importance of measuring interactions. Elements of this content are captured using currently adopted measures of program quality, the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS). The ERS include items reflecting interactions, but there are not independent criteria for interactions. Research typically identifies an indirect relationship between structural features of programs and child outcomes. In comparative studies, measures of teacher-child interactions show more robust relationships with child outcomes than structural and even global measures. In other words, structural features improve child outcomes by setting the stage for good processes to occur (Child Trends, 2009).

Supporting children's social and emotional functioning are key abilities of caregivers in childhood settings. Early behavior and regulatory and social skills set the stage for learning into the school-age years. Stressed relationships with teachers and peers are associated with subsequent detachment from learning opportunities and difficulties in academic achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Ladd & Birch, 1999). Longitudinal studies find that preschool social-emotional climate and teacher-child relationships affect children's social competence into their elementary years (C. Howes, 2000; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001). Positive teacher-child interactions and the resulting strong relationships have some associations with academic outcomes, but to stimulate cognitive function and to achieve greater academic readiness, relationships must be combined with interactions of instructional value.

Instructional interactions are more sorely lacking than those promoting good relationships. Having the right tools—for example, evidence-based curriculum or a variety of play materials—is important. But if they are used without appropriate teacher guidance, they will fail to stimulate thinking processes or academic preparation. A large study of state-funded pre-K children showed that fall-to-spring academic gains were associated with teacher-child interactions, namely high quality instruction and teacher-child closeness, but not other structural elements of the classroom (C. Howes et al., 2008). Focusing effort on the climate and quality of interactions in AR-BB is crucial.

Project 3: Build System to Effectively Engage Families (Details in Section C4)

As seen in Table A-1-9, our state funded programs are modeled after the Head Start standards; however, as seen Table B-1-1, we recognize that our requirements in AR-BB need strengthening. We outline below the foundation and in Section C4 our plan to support preschool programs to engage families more effectively. Our plan includes engaging families at the local community (see Child Care Collaboratives), providing resources to providers (see geomapping of resources), supporting parents and programs that serve high needs children (see Project Play for ECMH consultation and Special Quest), and providing supports to programs to move into higher quality levels (see Family Map and TIPS).

Programs that involve and support parents in a culturally sensitive way produce more potent positive long-term effects than those isolating care to the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith, & Bellamy, 2002; Reynolds & Robertson, 2003; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). There are multiple goals of family engagement, but primary goals are to support the development of positive relationships between parents and children and to support general family well-being and social connectedness. Implementation of parent involvement varies widely by provider type. While Head Start programs are highly likely to offer opportunities for family engagement, for-profit providers are less likely to offer similar opportunities (Frede, 1995). To achieve more consistency, Arkansas has adopted the Strengthening Families (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2008) initiative to guide family engagement strategies for early childhood programs and the development of professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. The initiative's logic model was based on research highlighting five protective factors in families that correlate with greater child protection and observations of model child care programs: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development; concrete supports

in times of need, and children's social and emotional development (Horton, 2003). The SF goal is to implement strategies used by model child care programs to enhance these protective factors.

Although non-maternal care can provide modest support for a child's well-being, the combination of parent and familial characteristics such as parents' income, mental health, education, cultural beliefs and quality of caregiving have far greater influence on the trajectory of a child's development (Klebanov & Brooks-Gunn, 1998; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Kohen, 2002; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2001; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Yeung, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002). Traditional quality measures address the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical wellness of children, but have not yet gone far enough in how the parents' wellness in these same domains will shape the child's development. SF is intended to bridge this gap.

Another model of family support used in Arkansas is early childhood mental health (ECMH) consultation. The ECMH consultant is a professional with expertise in mental health and child development who builds a collaborative relationship with caregivers, child care center directors, other providers, and parents. The consultant typically works to assist teachers with children who have challenging behaviors, focusing on the classroom environment as well as on the individual child and his or her family. The consultant often serves as a link between centers and families and makes referrals to outside resources when needed. A study of six effective early childhood consultation programs with demonstrated positive outcomes identified key skills of consultants, including the ability to "link children/families/providers to other services and systems as needed" (Duran et al., 2009). Seventy-two percent of consultants in these model sites reported making referrals to other community supports and services for families at least monthly, and they reported following up to assist families in accessing the needed services.

In 2005, the Arkansas Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Pilot Project began a partnership with three community mental health centers to provide consultation services in early childhood centers around the state. Recent studies suggest that ECMH consultation can help improve children's classroom behaviors, reduce rates of preschool expulsion, and help teachers create a more positive classroom climate (Alkon, Ramley, & MacLennan, 2003; Brennan, Bradley, Allen, & Perry, 2008; Green, Everhart, Gordon, & Garcia Gettman, 2006; Perry, Dunne, McFadden, & Campbell, 2008; Raver et al., 2008). Similar results from the Arkansas ECMH study found improvements in positive behaviors and reductions in problem behaviors for

children and improvements in sensitive behaviors and reductions in permissive and detached behaviors for teachers (Conners-Burrow, McKelvey, Amini-Vermani, & Sockwell, under review).

Project 4: Professional Development System – Improve System (Details in Section D2)

As an additional priority, Arkansas has chosen to focus investment in supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. We plan to increase our efforts to increase the number of credentialed educators while revamping our system for continuing education. In particular, we propose to improve our reporting system so that we can track education attainment, staff turn-over, and link with the progress of children as they enter Kindergarten. Providing this system will allow us to set long-term policy to support increased retention and career advancement.

Within the past decade, a movement calling for a minimum of degree BA in ECE classrooms has gained considerable traction. Reviews by prominent committees and researchers support policies increasing teacher education requirements (Barnett, 2003; National Research Council, 2001; Whitebook, 2003). By the year 2013, 50% of all Head Start teachers must have a BA. **Our state-funded ABC pre-K programs also require BAs for preschool teachers.** This widespread appeal for degrees represents a general policy shift in the ECE field from one that emphasized in-service training and annual clock hours to one that favors pre-service training. Advocates of this shift point to evidence that college education focused on ECE or child development improves classroom quality, to evidence linking teacher education to child outcomes, and to evidence that teacher education is a better predictor of quality than years of experience (C. Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Snider & Fu, 1990; Zill et al., 2001). Many analyses show that BA-level teachers have the most optimal interactions with children. Advocates also contend that increasing educational requirements will make early childhood education a professional field, increase wages for currently underpaid employees, and reduce the very high turnover rates that negatively affect child attachments.

Arkansas' current minimum licensing standard for staff education, a high school diploma or GED and 10 hours of in-service training, is far-removed from the field's best practices. Investments must be made to increase teacher qualifications. In this regard, the incentive grants for professional development related to CDA or college-level training are a vital element of AR-BB. However, only rewarding programs that can afford to make the substantial leap from hiring

teachers with high school education to hiring teachers with four-year degrees in all classes would alienate many from system. Moreover, private providers who must pay more for better educated teachers would pass costs on to consumers, which might force lower-income families to choose informal or lower quality forms of child care (Kelley & Camilli, 2007).

In-service professional development for the ECE field is under-researched. The effects of workshop training are not typically studied in depth, and when they are, they are often found ineffective in comparison to college-level specialized education. There is no evidence of a simple linear relationship between the number of clock hours input and the output of levels of quality or enhancement to child outcomes, but there is general agreement that more positive gains are produced when training has the following characteristics: 1) an extended and continuous format with each session building on earlier sessions rather than one-day, “one-shot” type courses; 2) a curriculum that is fixed yet is individualized to its participants; 3) participants have opportunities to apply their knowledge; 4) includes trainer observation and feedback related to classroom implementation; 5) participants have opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and to share their accomplishments and challenges (Epstein, 1993; National Research Council, 2001; Spodek, 1996; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2005). There is also evidence that training which has a reform-type format (classified as committee task force, study group, mentor relationship) versus a traditional workshop or course is more effective than other types of workshops (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

AR-BB designers are turning toward Web-based training as a cost-effective, convenient medium for professional development. For instance, trainings on SF and our state’s Frameworks for Early Childhood Education are available online or live. A few clear advantages are that teachers do not have to travel, space is not required, and the curriculum is standardized. Nevertheless, inherent weaknesses are that training may be applied out of context and that anonymity will weaken results. The external evaluators investigated online ECE trainings and found that mentorship is a key ingredient for optimizing results. MyTeachingPartner (MTP) is one of the few evaluations of Web-based trainings available. The goal of MTP training is to enhance instructional, language, and social interactions by providing teachers opportunities to view and analyze video examples of classroom interactions using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (R. Pianta et al., 2008). Within one state pre-K program, teachers who only received access to the site and video clips showed significantly less improvement in their own

interactions than those who also received individualized online consultations (R. C. Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008). The combination of video access and individual feedback was particularly effective in classrooms attended by higher percentages of children from low income families.

In Arkansas, we currently have many professional development opportunities for program staff that meet the characteristics of more successful education. However, these trainings are often aimed at college-educated teachers working in programs already meeting high quality standards, such as those in ABC and Head Start. We will begin to steer all professionals into higher quality trainings that are appropriate to individual education levels and experiences. We can be more effective and precise in this regard by improving our career lattice such that it demonstrates professional development opportunities related to Arkansas Key Content Areas and Core Competencies. It is also necessary to re-examine each of our required professional development courses to insure that they meet the characteristics described above and to prepare a standard curriculum for each of the core trainings to insure standardization of content.

Project 5: Effective Use of Data including Kindergarten Assessment (Details in Section E1)

Finally, the state has chosen to focus investment in understanding the status of children's learning and development at Kindergarten entry. We propose to replace or enhance our current Kindergarten assessment to assure that all essential domains are assessed. We will work with our current longitudinal data system to incorporate more preschool children into the system. Finally, we will develop a system to more effectively use the data by creating standardized reports for teachers and programs, provide training on the use of the reports for educators and administrators, and create joint training for educators from early childhood and K to support transitions and program improvement.

Our state has a long history of evaluating the effects of our programs. We have actively investigated the quality of our professional development system, programming at the level of minimum licensing, our previously adopted Quality Approval system, and state-funded ABC pre-K programs. We have also examined outcomes of children in ABC programs compared to those in other early education programs. The downside of these large-scale external evaluations is that they have been costly, unsustainable, and provide snapshots in time that cannot be used for ongoing quality improvement. It is imperative for Arkansas to develop a data system where

ongoing assessments of program impacts are possible. Understanding Kindergarten readiness, measured with a valid and reliable tool, as related to the current and proposed levels of AR-BB will allow us to make continuous quality improvement the system.

Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
 (C)(2) *Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.*
 (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
 (C)(4) *Engaging and supporting families.*

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (D)(1) *Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.*
 (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) the State is choosing to address

- (E)(1) *Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.*
 (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (*e.g.*, policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State’s legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children’s museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (A)(3)(a) and (b):

- For (A)(3)(a)(1): An organizational chart that shows how the grant will be governed and managed.
- The completed table that lists governance-related roles and responsibilities (see Table (A)(3)-1).
- A copy of all fully executed MOUs or other binding agreements that cover each Participating State Agency. (MOUs or other binding agreements should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix to the application).

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(1):

- The completed table that includes a list of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State and indicates which organizations and councils have submitted letters of intent or support (see Table (A)(3)-2).
- A copy of every letter of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(2):

- A copy of every letter of intent or support from other stakeholders. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

(Enter *narrative* here – recommended maximum of five pages)

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) has been designated as the lead agency. DCCECE will be responsible for the oversight of budget expenses, compliance with AR laws and regulations, and monitoring work conducted contractually. DCCECE will assure that required reports and data are shared with other state agencies. DCCECE will submit, as required by the funding, an annual report that will include, in addition to the standard elements, a description of the State's progress to date on its goals, timelines, and budgets, as well as actual performance compared to the annual targets the State established in its application with respect to each performance measure.

The Department of Human Services will be responsible for ensuring participation of all programs outlined in the application for which the agency has responsibility. Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education as the Lead Agency will be responsible for handling administrative functions including staffing and financial, Division of Developmental Disabilities/Part C of IDEA, and the Division of Children and Family Services/Foster Care.

Grant activities will be carried out with shared governance from the AR Early Childhood Commission/State Advisory Council. The Commission can appoint an adhoc committee consisting of additional members not currently represented on the Commission to represent key members not currently represented. The AR Early Childhood Commission was established with Act 202 of 1989 (see Appendix for ECC Policy A1-1). The purpose of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission as prescribed by Acts 202, 1132, 1222 and 324 are clearly aligned:

- a) To advise the DCCECE on the administration of the Arkansas Child Care Facilities Loan Guarantee Trust Fund;
- b) To provide technical assistance in design of *training* programs to enhance the skills of professionals in early childhood programs, including the development of an annual comprehensive training plan for providers;
- c) Examine the recommendations of national and regional groups and systems producing scientifically proven and cost effective results used by others to provide child care and early childhood services;

- d) To assist in the development of a comprehensive long range plan for expansion, development and implementation of early childhood programs in Arkansas including recommending allocation and expenditures of funds appropriated to the Arkansas Better Chance Program;
- e) To facilitate coordination and communication among state agencies providing early childhood programs to promote non-application and coordination of services in such programs and recommend a structure for the administration of the current existing programs and the recommended programs;
- f) To advise the Department of Education and other appropriate state agencies in the development of programmatic standards for early childhood programs to be funded with funds appropriated to the General Education Division or to such other state agencies as may receive appropriations for such purposes;
- g) To promote strong local community support for early childhood education program;
- h) To promote public awareness of child care and early childhood programs;
- i) To review and approve proposed rules and regulations setting minimum standards governing the granting, revocation, refusal and suspension of licenses for a child care facility and the operation of child care facilities in the state;
- j) To review and select panel members for the Child Care Appeal Review Panel from applications submitted ensuring persons meet the qualifications for service and exhibit a willingness and time commitment to serve on the Panel;
- k) To serve as an advisory body to the Department of Education on early childhood program issues;

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission shall report progress toward meeting their duties annually to the House Education Committee and Senate Education Committee. The commission has clear bylaws (2005) that include articles related to conflict of interest, membership, meeting schedule and quorum. Membership of the commission is composed of 24 members:

Number of Commission Members	Affiliated agencies, organizations, or programs;
3	Child care provider agencies, organizations, or programs including family child care;

Number of Commission Members	Affiliated agencies, organizations, or programs;
4	A member representing each-Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start program and the Head Start Collaboration Office;
1	A HIPPIY program;
1	Administrator by a public school district;
1	Teacher with early childhood responsibilities in a public school district;
1	Director of the Department of Health or her designee;
1	Representative of the AR Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics;
1	Representative of the AR Chapter of the American Family Physician Association;
1	Trainer early childhood mental health professional;
1	Trained early childhood education professional;
1	Parent of a child who attends child care program;
1	Director of the Vocational and Technical Division of the Department of Education, or its successor, or his designee;
1	Director of the Department of Education or his designee;
2	Representing the business community who have an interest in early childhood education;
1	Appointed by chair of the House Subcommittee on Children and Youth of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs;
1	Appointed by chair of the Senate Committee on Children and Youth;
1	Appointed by chair of the House committee on Education;
1	Appointed by chair of the Senate Committee on Education.

With members representing all federal and state funded early childhood programs, the Commission is an established system to oversee the RTT project. Additionally, activities will be presented to the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems team, State Board of Education and the Interagency Coordinating Council, AR Head Start Association Board, Invest Early Coalition as well as other partners as appropriate for input and updating purposes.

The AR Early Childhood Commission/State Advisory Council will be responsible for approving activities funded by the RTT-ELC. Members of the Commission are appointed by both the Governor and members of the General Assembly; the Commission represents all funded early childhood programs as well as health, higher education, and the business sector and serves as the State's Advisory Council. Two organizational charts are shown in Appendix A3-1 shows

the July 2011 structure of DCCECE and the proposed structure for the RTT funding within DCCECE. Appropriate MOU are found in Appendix A3-2 along with letters of support (Appendix A3-3 and -4).

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education	Designated as the lead agency. Grant activities will be carried out with shared governance from the AR Early Childhood Commission/State Advisory Council.
Arkansas Department of Education	Responsible for working in partnership with both the DCCECE and the AECC to implement the activities as outline in the application with staff and resource supports as available and appropriate. Director Commission member
Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities	Responsible for advising and working in partnership to identify program barriers for AR-BB, support key activities targeting special needs children Representative will be on ad hoc committee
AR Early Childhood Commission/State Advisory Council	Responsible for approving activities funded by the RTT-ELC
Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family services	Responsible for advising and working in partnership to identify program barriers for AR-BB, support key activities targeting special needs children Representative will be on ad hoc committee
Other Entities	
Arkansas Head Start Association/State Collaboration Office	Responsible for working in partnership with DCCECE to ensure Head Start participation in grant activities and alignment with appropriate policies whenever possible. One member of Head Start program a Commission member
Arkansas Home Instruction for	Responsible for working in partnership with DCCECE to

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Parents of Preschool Youngsters	ensure home visitation program participation in grant activities and alignment with appropriate policies Commission member

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Arkansas Early Childhood Association	Yes
Early Learning Council State Board	Yes
Arkansas Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council	Yes
Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office	Yes
Resource and Referral Agencies	
Children of Northcentral Arkansas	Yes
Arkansas State University Childhood Services (ACQUIRE)	Yes
Child Care Connections, Inc.	Yes
Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc. (ChildCare LINKS)	Yes
Northwest Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral Center	Yes
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>	

(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (*e.g.*, CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) will be addressed in the Budget Section (section VIII of the application) and reviewers will evaluate the State's Budget Section response when scoring (A)(4). In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to (A)(4)(a) and (A)(4)(c) and may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(4)(a):

- The completed table listing the existing funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan (see Table (A)(4)-1).
- Description of how these existing funds will be used for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Evidence for (A)(4)(b):

- The State's budget (completed in section VIII).

- The narratives that accompany and explain the budget, and describes how it connects to the State Plan (also completed in section VIII).
(Enter *narrative* here, in particular to address (A)(4)(a) & (A)(4)(c) – recommended maximum of eight pages)
-

Existing funds are described below and in table A-4-1. Current funds provide the foundation of improvements proposed with RTT funds.

CCDF Block Grant.

The Arkansas Department of Human Resources receives an annual allotment from the Association for Children and Families for the CCDF Block Grant. These funds are used in a variety of ways including the provision of child care and early childhood education and efforts to improve the quality of that care. In addition, Arkansas spends over \$6.2 million dollars in state general revenue annually in order to meet maintenance of effort and matching requirements of the CCDF Block Grant. We describe below some of the activities currently underway in Arkansas' plan. RTT funds will build on most of these activities.

1. *Better Beginnings (AR-BB)*. AR-BB is the tiered quality rating and improvement system for Arkansas. The system gives Arkansas early childhood educators valuable tools for improving the quality of their programs at every level and emphasizes parents' understanding of the value of quality child care while providing them with an on-line vehicle for identifying and locating quality child care providers in their communities. By establishing recognized standards of excellence and providing a mechanism for providers to meet or exceed these standards, the quality of child care in Arkansas will continually improve.
2. *Intensive Coaching*. Technical assistants are assigned by regions coach child care programs that serve high-risk populations and have a history of licensing issues, high rate of vouchers, and/or area serving infant-toddlers. Coaching is intensive and focused on compliance and accountability to improve quality of care.
3. *Project Play - Foster Care Pilot Program*. We currently are funding a pilot study to identify and implement of best practices to improve the outcomes for Foster Care Children who also receive a voucher.
4. *SpecialQuest*. Pilot program uses a train-the-trainers model of supporting birth to five children partnerships as well as birth to three children with special needs, attempting to integrate them into normal classroom environments.

5. *Infant-Toddler and/or Child Health Consultants*. Regionally located staff support improvement and expansion of care for infant/toddler age children and child health issues.
6. *Quality Marketing Campaign*. A marketing campaign educates Arkansas parents and educators about the importance of Quality Early Childhood Development and Education.
7. *Quality Care Tool Kit*. This training supports use of online and hard copy tool kit items, self assessments, technical assistance tools, and implementation.
8. *TIPS*. Brief parenting interventions tip sheets are developed, educators are trained on their use, and the TIPS sheets are distributed in 100 classrooms targeting programs with high voucher usage.
9. *Al's Pals/Kids Making Healthy Choices*. This program provides regional training on child health and targets 60 classrooms per year in programs with high voucher usage.
10. *Al's Caring Pals: A Social Skills Toolkit for Home Child Care Providers*. This program on social-emotional development is offered in 50 family child care homes in 5 regions with 15 local facilitators targeting programs with high voucher usage.
11. *Infant/Toddler Education Framework Training*. Expand train-the-trainer programs and expands local delivery of education linked to the Arkansas Infant-Toddler Framework.
12. *Parenting Training*. Parenting training for women in substance abuse treatment homes.
13. *Ages and Stages*. A project to evaluate the feasibility of the integration of screening into programs. Assists programs implement the Ages and Stages screener for child care programs targeting programs with at least 50% voucher children enrolled.
14. *Business Model Training*. Development and delivery of a business model training appropriate to family child care settings and child care centers focused on good business practice, fiscal management targeting new programs and programs with compliance concerns.

Head Start Collaboration.

DCCECE works in partnership with the Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office as the pass-through entity for Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding in an effort to ensure the most beneficial integration of these two federally funded programs.

1. *MCH Block Grant*. DCCECE historically has received a portion of the MCH Block grant and has utilized these monies in conjunction with the Arkansas Department of Health in the formation of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (AECCS).

AECCS partnerships are comprised of over 150 early childhood leaders, including all of the

state departments administering programs for young children, health and mental health professionals, higher education, child advocates, early care providers, community based agencies, and parents. The Governor's Early Childhood Commission has also provided input into the strategic plan for the initiative. The mission of AECCS is to increase the health and well being of Arkansas' young children and their families by creating a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system that will maximize existing early childhood investments, address critical needs and assure that children in Arkansas are healthy and ready to learn by the time they enter school.

2. *Title IV-E*. DCCECE, in association with the Division of Children and Family Services, utilizes the TITLE IV-E funding stream to provide child care to qualifying foster care children. Quality accredited centers and homes are prioritized when choosing child care facilities for these vulnerable children. In addition, for those children not eligible for funding under Title IV-E, DCCECE funds care for utilizing CCDF grant funding. The choice of a quality facility remains a priority for these children as well.

Arkansas Better Chance State Funded Pre-K Program (ABC) / TANF

The Arkansas Better Chance program is funded through an appropriation in the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Public School Fund budget. ADE contracts with DCCECE to administer the program. DCCECE is responsible for all operational duties associated with ABC. The State Board of Education is the final authority for approval of rules and grants. DCCECE gives regular reports and updates to the State Board of Education, as well as an annual report to the Joint Legislative Committee on Education. The Arkansas Departments of Human Services and Education, in collaboration with statewide stakeholders, have established a list of curriculum resources that align with the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework

All children whose family income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for application to the ABC Program. The ABC Program's budget is \$111,000,000 annually and serves over 25,000 low income children in a quality setting with rigorous standards for curriculum, assessments and screenings, staff qualifications, and training requirements. Arkansas appropriates and funds general revenue of \$103,500,000 annually for this program and \$7,500,000 is funded via the TANF Block Grant.

It is important to note that Arkansas is not only fiscally invested in the ABC Program but that those dollars are achieving results. Arkansas is ranked in the top ten nationally for state

preschool education, according to the annual survey of state-funded preschool programs released in May of this year. The State of Preschool 2009 showed that Arkansas increased its enrollment, jumping its ranking to 8th place, met 9 of 10 quality standards benchmarks, and ranked 10th on per child funding.

Our RTT proposal identifies five large projects as described in the application and in the tables below. The activities build on many currently funded or previous pilot projects describe above including Coaching, Project Play Foster Care Pilot, SpecialQuest, TIPS, and Pilot Screening Project. Details of the funding levels and justification are found in Section VIII.

Project 1: Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR (Details in Section B)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
1. Raise Licensing to AR-BB Level 1	Grant funded staff with DCCECE staff, R&R staff, and partners	Year 1-4 with estimated 25% of programs meeting standard / year	Staff, equipment, training, R&R contracts
2. Bonus Grants for Increased Quality	Grant funded staff with DCCECE staff, State Advisory Council and R&R staff	Plan 6 months, Bonus available 3 years	Bonus funds / program / level, coaches
3. Evaluation of Bonus Grants	Grant funded staff to develop RFP	RFP executed by end of Year 1, activity Year 2-4	Evaluate quality improvement, barriers
4. Pilot/evaluate differential reimbursement rates	Grant funded staff to develop RFP for pilot and for evaluation	RFP executed by end of Year 1, activity Year 2-4	25% of foster and I/T children, evaluation, & into longitudinal system
5. Voucher payment linked to AR-BB Level 3 and higher	Grant funded staff	Policy development Year 1, Monitor gains in Level 3 sites Year 2-3, Implement Year 4	75% increased voucher, evaluation, & into longitudinal system
6. Expand our R&R network to meet additional needs for the duration of the grant	Grant funded staff to develop RFP	Year 1 Define RFP, Expansion in place for year 2-4, sustained with current funding	Staff and training for existing staff
7. Establish local Child Care Collaboratives throughout the	Grant funded coordinator, R&R staff, Part C and Part B staff	Plan 6m, implement staggered starting year 1, completed year 3, work on local	1 FTE coordinator, Seed money, training, facilitator support

Project 1: Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR (Details in Section B)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
State		sustainable year 4	
8. Target Children with Disabilities with Expansion of Special Quest	Grant funded coordinator, R&R staff, Part C and Part B staff	Identify expansion areas year 1, train year 2, implement year 3-4	Training for teams
9. Target children in foster care with expanded Project PLAY	Grant funded and DCCECE staff to develop RFP with Project Play and Community Mental Health Center Staff	Plan for expansion/ accept applications from CMHC's in Year 1, implement in 9/13 catchment areas in year 2, 13/13 areas in year 3 (with two most populous areas having 2 consultants)	Training, full-time consultants, supervision and support, travel
10. Target programs in areas with high numbers of Children with High Needs to increase quality	Grant funded staff with DCCECE staff, R&R staff	Identify expansion areas year 1, Implement year 2-4, evaluate year 4	R&R mentorship, scholarship, equipment
11. Expand development of the Resource directory for parent access	Grant funded staff with DCCECE staff to develop RFP	Year 1 and 2	0.5 FTE and programming support
12. Move programs with high % of children with disabilities into AR-BB	Grant funded staff with DCCECE staff, R&R staff, and Part C and Part B staff	Plan Year 1, Implement year 2 target 33% of programs, year 3, next 33%, Goal all programs in by end of year 4	Training, Mentorship, Adopt the CLASS (see Section C2)
13. Independent Evaluation of AR-BB Levels	DCCECE with input from longitudinal data center and DOE will develop RFP for evaluators	RFP executed by end of year 1, data collection year 2 and 3, report and recommendations year 4	Independent Evaluation with center and child development data collection
14. Increase links to the longitudinal data system	See Details in E1		

Project 2: Complete the Comprehensive Assessment System (Details in Section C2)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
1. Implement ASQ as common screen	Grant funded staff to develop RFPs	Year 1 to phase in over year 2 to 4	ASQ materials, R&R support, Training
2. Computer system to be accessed by all programs	Grant funded staff with DCCECE staff and IT staff to develop system and implement and develop RFPs	Year 1 to plan, Year 2 to implement RFPs and Year 3 and 4 to distribute to programs	Access of data entry and reporting by all PreK providers, training to providers, computer modifications
3. Implement common Formative Assessment	Grant funded staff to develop RFPs	Year 1 to plan, Year 2 to develop training and pilot, and Year 3 and 4 to implement	Materials, training, R&R mentorship and support
4. Adopt CLASS	Grant funded staff to develop RFPs	Year 1 to develop training, implement in year 2-4	Materials, training, R&R mentorship and support

Project 3: Build System to Effectively Engage Families (Details in Section C4)			
Activity	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources Needed
1. Link and develop materials with Child Care Collaborative	see B4, to support updated information		
2. Link the resource guides of the AR Mapping project for dissemination and sustainability by producing training and advertising materials	Grant Funded State Coordinator	Year 1-4	0.25 staff and materials
3. Expand the Community Café's for dissemination and sustainability	Grant Funded State Coordinator	Year 1-4	0.25 staff and materials
4. Imagination Library - Support for CCC or subgroups to apply for support for	Grant Funded State Coordinator	Yr 1-3	1 FTE Staff/ seed money
5. Develop PD series of curriculum-based 3-hour modules on each of the Strengthening Families	Grant staff with collaboration with the DCFS to develop RFP	Year 2-3	PD development
6. Develop PD for the effective use of the <i>Family Connection</i> material	Grant staff with collaboration with the DCFS to develop RFP	Year 2-3	PD development
7. Pilot and evaluate FASD screening and educational materials for childcare providers.	Grant staff with collaboration with the DCFS and FASD State	Year 2-4	On-line PD development, evaluate screen tool

Project 3: Build System to Effectively Engage Families (Details in Section C4)			
Activity	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources Needed
	Committee to develop RFP		
8. Offer Family Map training and materials to QIRS of level 3 and above	Grant staff with AECCS workgroup to develop RFP	Year 1-4	Materials and training
9. Offer TIPS training and materials available to QIRS of level 3 and above	Grant staff with AECCS workgroup to develop RFP	Year 1-4	Materials and training
10. Conduct a randomized assessment of TIPS/FM linked with mentoring from trained community professionals to support in mentor role	Grant staff with AECCS workgroup to develop RFP	Year 1-4	Evaluation and materials
11. Link AHVN data systems to DCCECE and longitudinal data systems; provide training of home visitors for transition support for families	Grant staff with AHVN steering committee with ARC monitor	Year 2	ARC staff to develop data system
12. Pilot screening and improving linkages to evidence-based treatments for maternal depression	Grant staff with AECCS workgroup to develop RFP	Year 2-4	Evaluation and materials

Project 4: Professional Development System – Improve System (Details in Section D2)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
1. Revise <i>the TAPP policies surrounding PD</i>	Grant funded staff with DCCECE to develop RFP to modify documents and make recommendations	Year 1 planning, implement RFP in year 2, report in year 3, Implementation in year 4	Review of current systems, recommend modification, develop materials with DCCECE approval
2. Revise <i>the TAPP computer system surrounding PD, and tracking /monitoring trainings</i>	Grant funded staff with DCCECE to develop RFP	Year 1 planning, implement RFP in year 2, report in year 3, Implementation in year 4	Computer system modifications, staff to monitor training content/curricula
3. Revise existing trainings and create new trainings	Grant funded staff with DCCECE to develop RFP	Year 1 planning, implement RFP in year 2, report in year 3, Implementation in year 4	Staff, equipment, training, R&R contracts
4. Create trainings	Grant funded staff	Year 1 planning,	Staff, equipment,

Project 4: Professional Development System – Improve System (Details in Section D2)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
targeted at career counseling and support for higher education of staff	with DCCECE to develop RFP	implement RFP in year 2, report in year 3, Implementation in year 4	training, R&R contracts
5. Community-based cross-training	DCCECE, grant funded, and ADE staff to develop RFP	Year 1-2	Training, pilot, and evaluation of implementation
6. Pilot and evaluate leadership programs	Grant funded staff with DCCECE to develop RFP	Year 1 implement RFP, report in year 2, Implementation in years 3 & 4	Staff, equipment, training, R&R contracts, evaluation
7. Revise the TAPP system to track changes in employment.	Grant funded staff with DCCECE to develop RFPs for computer and evaluation	Year 1 planning and evaluation, implement RFP in year 2, report in year 3, Full implementation in year 4	Computer system modifications, staff to record staff transitions, equipment, evaluation contract

Project 5: Effective Use of Data including Kindergarten Assessment (Details in Section E1)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
1. Support the transition to the new Kindergarten assessment tool	Grant funded staff with ADE including develop appropriate RFPs	Year 1 planning, year 2 training, and year 3-4 (and beyond grant period) with estimated 25% of programs meeting standard / year	Staff, equipment, training, R&R contracts
2. Create joint training for early childhood and K12 educators	DCCECE, grant funded, and ADE staff to develop RFP	Year 1-2	Training, pilot, and evaluation of implementation
3. Create reporting process using the longitudinal data system to link early childhood assessments for use by K12 educators	Arkansas Research Center, DCCECE/grant funded, ADE staff	Year 1, refine in 2-4	Web based and routine dissemination reports
4. Create reporting process using the longitudinal data system to link K	Arkansas Research Center, DCCECE/grant funded, ADE staff	Year 1, refine in 2-4	Web based and routine dissemination reports

Project 5: Effective Use of Data including Kindergarten Assessment (Details in Section E1)			
Activity	Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
assessments for use by Pre-K programs			
5. Create teacher and administrators training on effective data use	DCCECE/grant funded, ADE staff	Year 1-2	Training, pilot, and evaluation of implementation

The issue of sustainability has been addressed throughout the proposal. However, in general, our approach has been to avoid activities that require long term funds. We plan to use RTT funds to evaluate the best use of state dollars so that our policy can be based on informed data. We also use RTT funds to build our capacity and put our educators, programs, and other professionals in a position to best take advantage of ongoing state funds. For example, we will use RTT funds to support programs with resources (e.g., computers, education, materials) to move to higher quality. While we expect to have new programs requiring these supports after the project ends, the number will be manageable with our state funds. That is, RTT funds will raise our capacity to continue to provide high quality programs.

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>CCDF Block Grant</i>	55,163,202	55,163,202	55,163,202	55,163,202	220,652,808
<i>Head Start Collaboration</i>	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	500,000
<i>MCH Block Grant</i>	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	600,000
<i>Title IV-E</i>	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	6,000,000
<i>Arkansas Better</i>	103,500,000	103,500,000	103,500,000	103,500,000	414,000,000

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>Chance Program</i>					
<i>TANF(used in ABC)</i>	7,500,000	7,500,000	7,500,000	7,500,000	30,000,000
Total	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	671,752,808
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>					

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards¹⁶ that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included

¹⁶ See such nationally recognized standards as:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from:

http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (B)(1):

- The completed table that lists each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State and the elements that are included in those Program Standards (Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Qualified Workforce, Family Engagement, Health Promotion, Effective Data Practices, and Other), (see Table (B)(1)-1).
- To the extent the State has developed and adopted a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System based on a common set of tiered Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (B)(1)(a), submit--
 - A copy of the tiered Program Standards;
 - Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system;
 - Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

In 1993 Arkansas established a formal statewide system, called Quality Approval (QA), to help improve the quality of Early Learning and Development programs. While QA required assessments of environmental quality utilizing the Environmental Rating Scales, data in early 2000's revealed that more than 95% of the programs participating in QA were Head Start and state funded Pre-K. When the state received the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant in 2004, a primary goal was to develop a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and encourage participation from for-profit child care programs. With six years of thoughtful development, taking into consideration the extant research literature to determine what the system should include, the status of care and early childhood education programs in Arkansas at the time, reviewing the systems and evaluations of other states, and bringing in national experts, Arkansas introduced a tiered QRIS with additional standards in 2010. Participation in the new

system, Better Beginnings (AR-BB), is voluntary and includes standards and supports for all licensed and registered care in Arkansas that serve children birth to five, including center-based and family child care programs (see Appendix B1-1 for Center-Based Early Childhood Standards, Appendix B1-2 for Family Child Care Standards). Multiple determinants of quality are included in the system: Environmental Rating Scales, standards for the education and training of staff, parent involvement, developmentally appropriate planning, and curriculum.

As currently implemented, the system has three levels that are higher than and separate from licensing regulations. The initial plan included three additional levels that were held until the first three were implemented. However, as shown in Table B1-1, current levels do not meet critical quality levels. While this is problematic, the standards were conceived with attention to feasibility of implementation for programs in Arkansas and to encourage greater participation by for-profit programs. Once engaged, the hope was that programs would be more willing to commit to actions to progress up the quality levels.

One year after implementation, agreement has been reached to implement additional higher levels. The additional levels are based on a review of how Levels 1-3 relate to national standards and child outcomes and on evaluations of provider perceptions of barriers and incentives to participation. Standards for the higher levels will also align with those of the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) state-funded pre-Kindergarten and Head Start which use national best practices that lead to improved outcomes for children who participate. With RTT funding, we can hasten the implementation of standards for higher quality levels than those currently adopted because funds will be available to provide support for programs in the implementation phases (e.g., see Bonus plan below).

Early Learning and Development Standards. AR-BB incorporates two sets of linked Early Learning and Development Standards, the *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework*¹⁷ and the *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care*.¹⁸ AR-BB includes standards for staff training in Frameworks and for their implementation in programs (Appendix B1-1; Criteria

¹⁷ Standards address social-emotional, creative/aesthetic, cognitive/intellectual, physical, and language domains. Excerpts provided Appendix A1-2. Full standards at <http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/programsupport/pdf/aeceframework.pdf>.

¹⁸ Standards address self-concept, emotional, social, language, physical, and cognitive development. Excerpts provided Appendix A1-3. Full standards at <http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/general/infantframework.pdf>

2.B.5, 2.C.2 3.C.3). The Frameworks contain a mission, essential elements, and developmental learning strands that should be evident in quality early childhood education programs. Both Frameworks include vignettes illustrating various learning strands and address issues such as assessment and professional development.

Comprehensive Assessment System. In its current state, AR-BB implements most components of a comprehensive assessment system, but improvement is needed. Because scales are utilized for environmental and administrative quality, programs have some flexibility on components to focus improvement efforts. For example, the assessment of administrative practices includes child developmental screening, but there is not a standalone criterion in AR-BB. Therefore programs could still meet a quality rating without making developmental screenings available to children in their care. Like developmental screenings, there are other components of comprehensive assessment systems that are included in AR-BB, have been adopted by Head Start and state pre-Kindergarten programs and promoted in the state's professional development system, but have not been sufficiently emphasized in AR-BB. These components were targeted prior to the RTT call, and our proposed remediation, which can be expedited by RTT, are described:

Screening Assessments. The PAS/BAS assessments note the use of child screening but screening children's development is not a mandatory element of AR-BB Levels 1-3. With RTT funding, training and materials will be offered to implement a common screening measure for all programs in AR-BB (see Section A1, C2). As supports are available, AR-BB Levels above 3 will mandate a common measure.

Formative Assessments. AR-BB contains a standard requiring a portfolio to monitor student progress and to individualize planning in the classroom (Appendix B1-1, Criterion 3.C.2). With RTT funding, training and materials will be offered to implement a common assessment for all programs in AR-BB (see Section A1, C2). As supports are available, AR-BB Levels above 3 will mandate a common tool.

Environmental Quality. AR-BB uses the suite of Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) to assess program quality and increasingly higher scores are required to advance in the tiered system. Programs serving infants and toddlers are assessed with the *Infant/Toddler Rating Scale, Revised Edition* (ITERS-R; Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2003). Those serving children aged three

to five are assessed with the *Early Childhood Environment Scale, Revised Edition* (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). Programs serving children in family childcare settings are assessed using the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (FCCERS-R; Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2007). Reliability and validity of the currently used instruments is described in Appendix B1-3.

In addition to the ERS, a second set of standardized measures is used to assess business and administrative practices, *The Program Administration Scale* (PAS; Talan & Bloom, 2004) for center-based programs and *The Business Administration Scale* (BAS; Talan & Bloom, 2009) for family-based programs. PAS and BAS were adopted to equip more directors with management skills necessary to grow their businesses and to increase capacity for high quality care throughout Arkansas. See Appendix B1-3 for reliability and validity.

Adult-child interactions. The quality of adult-child interactions is currently assessed within the ERS. However, AR-BB does not specifically require high quality scores on this aspect of ERS. The committee planning additional levels has agreed to require assessment using *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* (CLASS; R. Pianta et al., 2008) at upper levels. Recent research indicates it is more closely related to child outcomes than the ERS (Mashburn et al., 2008). CLASS is also utilized in Head Start as part of the federal monitoring which assists Arkansas with alignment. The AR-BB committee will explore options to combine use of these two assessments to assure high quality with the least burden on programs. For example, the ERS may be used to enter the program and the CLASS used as the second year assessment, with a rotation of the tools over continuing years. With RTT, funds will be used support for the implementation of the CLASS; which includes training and reliability for state staff to administer the tool, costs associated with scoring and technical support, training of administrators and directors on the elements of interactions that are important to children's development, and the costs associated with tracking teacher improvements. Funding will be used to support the requirement at the higher levels of AR-BB

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications. The Administrator/Staff Qualifications/Professional Development component of AR-BB requires levels of training for teachers and administrators above minimum licensing. To maximize provider participation in the quality improvement process, AR-BB Levels 1-3 were calibrated to existing levels of provider education in Arkansas. Stakeholders were reluctant to emphasize formal college education or degrees, as

the financial burden of college tuition and increased hourly wages to retain well-qualified staff are beyond reach for most early childhood educators at current levels of support. The compromise established that at Level 1 additional professional development clock hours would be required above that required for minimum licensing.

DCCECE is using recommendations from prior and ongoing professional development evaluations to implement higher standards for college education for proposed higher levels. As seen in Appendix B1-4 (proposed Center-Based Requirements; Family Child Care standards are in development), the changes to AR-BB will include higher educational requirements will be imposed on both administration and teaching staff. With RTT funding, DCCECE and its partners will also require meeting specific clock hour requirements through courses available in Arkansas that meet the research-based criteria of effective professional development for early childhood educators (requiring attendance of courses that take place over multiple sessions, have a fixed curriculum, and focus on teacher-child interactions). In addition, with RTT support, critical improvements to the professional development system are proposed (see Section D2).

Family Engagement Strategies. Family Engagement is addressed in multiple components of AR-BB: 1) The Health and Development component requires sharing information with families on health and child development; 2) Within the Environmental Assessment component, the ERS item Provisions for Parents is assessed; and 3) The Administration component PAS assesses two items, Family Communications and Family Support and Involvement. BAS also assesses two related items, Provider-Parent Communication and Community Resources.

In addition to PAS/BAS items, the AR-BB Administration component also requires training, self-assessment, and action steps related to the national Strengthening Families initiative developed by the Center for Study of Social Policy. The initiative's logic model is based on research highlighting five protective factors in families that correlate with more optimal child development and on observations of model child care programs. The goal of the initiative is to help programs implement strategies that will support parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete supports in times of need, and children's social and emotional development. To increase quality in Levels above 3, AR-BB will require increased quality for Family Engagement (see Section C4). With RTT funds, additional supports and strategies building on state funded pilot work will be offered to enhance family engagement (see Section C4).

Health Promotion Practices. AR-BB standards to improve child health and development involve sharing information with parents and documenting the implementation of medical and educational plans. Level 1 programs share information on child development and health and on ARKids First, the state children's health insurance program. Level 2 programs share information regarding medical homes and on the stages of child development. Level 3 programs share information on nutrition and physical activity for children. AR-BB topics are appropriate to the needs of children, and there is literature to suggest that anticipatory guidance in the form of print information about child development or medical conditions increases use of medical and preventive care (Cates, 1990; Finney, Friman, Rapoff, & Christophersen, 1985), as well as parental willingness to communicate with providers (Frankenburg & Thornton, 1989).

At present, AR-BB does not require screening as an element of care independent of the assessment of administrative practices using the PAS/BAS. There is a requirement at the lowest level of AR-BB that "medical and educational care plans involving a child are written and on file, and implementation is documented" (1.E.3). In other words, programs need to adhere to an individualized plan (IFSP/IEP) for children with identified delays/disabilities. To increase quality, levels above 3 will require all children to be given the opportunity to receive a routine annual developmental and health screening to determine individual needs. Children so identified shall be referred to specialists within seven calendar days of the date of screening. The higher levels will also require programs to adopt an evidence-based curriculum for nutrition and health. RTT funds will be used to develop and implement professional development targeting effective screening and educational practices for children identified with delay, including screening and education practices for children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (see D2 and C4).

Effective data practices. At a program/child level, limited systematic information regarding the use of screening and assessment scores is available. In a recent evaluation of the implementation of the ASQ-3 screening tool in programs that receive state vouchers, 60% of providers surveyed indicate that they modified classroom activities for specific children based on screening results (UAMS College of Medicine Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, 2011). Further, systematic and clear professional development training is not offered to educators.

Use of data by all early childhood programs is generally limited in both use and connectivity because of program or funding requirements. Programs like Head Start and state-funded ABC

pre-K are required to have screening and assessment data on children, but the data may be in different systems that are not automatically linked to other data in early childhood or K-12. Further, the collection of data does not imply that early childhood programs required to collect information are utilizing the data to inform classroom practice or make program improvement changes. A major undertaking with RTT funds will be to improve these areas:

1. We will close gaps in the longitudinal data system to generate routine and informative data reports (see E1).
2. Professional development will be created to link assessments, early learning and quality improvement standards, and the critical use of data in customizing the classroom experience for children (E1, C2).
3. We will make major improvements to the current reporting system within DCCECE to allow the increased number of AR-BB programs using screening and formative assessments to report. This will also link these children to the longitudinal data system (C2).
4. A new system for the professional development registry (TAPP) will monitor and track trainings, their content and curricula, and individual educator progress toward competencies (D2).

Differentiate program quality levels. While the current system was informed by existing knowledge of quality and some empirical study of the resulting levels has been conducted (see below), a full evaluation of the meaningful differences in the levels and in overall program quality as related to children's outcomes, has not been conducted. RTT funds will be used examine these outcomes as described in B3 and B5.

All facilities operating under a regular child care license, a new provisional license, or registration as issued by DCCECE are eligible to apply for AR-BB certification. All facilities participating in AR-BB must be in good standing with the Department of Human Services. AR-BB is voluntary and encouraged for all licensed and registered child care facilities and early childhood programs. State funded Pre-K programs are required to meet minimum levels of quality (AR-BB level 1; Appendix B1-1) in addition to the requirements for being eligible to be an ABC provider. Participation in AR-BB is still voluntary for ABC programs, but rates of participation are high.

We have crosswalked AR-BB to national standards and have used data to steer decisions regarding future direction for the system. As reported in Section A1; analyses from a 2007

evaluation (Miller & Bogatova, 2007) indicated that quality programs have fewer part-time staff, lower turnover rates, better administrative practices, and higher ERS scores than those that only have licensure. QA programs that were also ABC had higher ERS scores on nearly every subscale than those that were not state-funded, which highlights the importance of elements of quality prescribed by ABC such as lower adult-child ratios, teacher education, and curricula above the definition of QA which was attaining an ERS score of 5 or more.

While AR-BB is too early in its implementation to have completed an outcomes evaluation, Arkansas conducted evaluations of ABC programs that may forecast what could be expected with proposed higher levels Better Beginnings programs. Like existing ABC standards, higher levels will include ratios lower than minimum licensing, higher staff qualifications and professional development requirements, developmental screening, and formative assessments. In 2011, ARC reported ABC pre-K's success in improving low-income children's school readiness compared to low-income children served in other types of programs (Arkansas Research Center, 2011). The evaluation used the state's Kindergarten readiness assessments, Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI) and Metropolitan Achievement Test 8th edition (MAT8), and reported average raw scores of students that participated in the ABC program were consistently higher on each assessment than similar low-income students that did not participate in ABC. Specifically, ABC students had higher QELI raw scores of 3.5% in General Knowledge, 2.7% in Oral Communication, 6.5% in Written Language, 4.6% in Math Concepts, 6.9% in Work Habits, and 8.1% in Attentive Behavior ($p < .001$). The same findings were demonstrated for MAT8 scores where average raw score for students that participated in ABC were consistently higher in both areas of the MAT8 as well as the overall battery performance on the MAT8 than other low-income students ($p < .001$).

State partners have developed crosswalks between AR-BB and other state QRISs, NAEYC, NAFCC, and Head Start/Early Head Start. The implemented AR-BB Levels 1-3 are not commensurate with these nationally recognized standards. The gap will be bridged by the addition of higher levels, which will improve teacher-child ratios, include screenings and assessment, raise requirements for staff qualifications and ongoing professional development, and incorporate CLASS to assess teacher-child interactions. While data on all indicators of quality as defined by AR-BB is unavailable, an external evaluation team used ERS quality data to determine that there are differences between Levels 1-3 for programs serving infants, toddlers,

and preschoolers (L. McKelvey et al.). The evaluators used publicly available data on the ERS to confirm that higher levels, when introduced, will further improve child outcomes. Data was from the large-scale national studies of Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) to examine the relationship between ITERS-R and ECERS-R and child outcomes for existing AR-BB levels across many ages. Using ITERS-R data collected on child care programs when children were 1 and 2 years showed some support for the AR-BB levels. There were no associations with cognitive outcomes for children, but there were between AR-BB levels and child socio-emotional and receptive vocabulary development. Using ECERS-R data collected on child care programs when children were 3 years old also showed some support for the AR-BB levels. Across the multiple assessments of child cognitive and language development available at the ages 3 and 5, there were two significant differences for children across levels. At age 5, children in Level 1 centers had significantly lower math and language skill scores than children in Level 3 programs that were nearly a full standard deviation below the national average.

Current standards include three levels (see Appendix B1-1 and B1-2) with a highest ERS score of 4. Proposed additional levels include cut scores that represent higher environmental quality (higher levels with ERS cut scores of 5, 5.5, and 6 respectively, see Appendix B1-4). Data from the Head Start evaluation demonstrated children in the highest level programs showed higher and academic skill scores than children in lower levels and that children in the lowest quality centers fared the worst in cognitive, academic, and social skills.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State***						
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Program Standards Elements					
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>					
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices
Implemented AR-BB Level 1 available to all licensed	1	7	X ¹³	X ¹⁹	X ²⁵	³¹

child care, family child care, and school-aged programs						
Implemented AR-BB Level 2 available to all licensed child care, family child care, and school-aged programs	X ²	X ⁸	X ¹⁴	X ²⁰	X ²⁶	³²
Implemented AR-BB Level 3 available to all licensed child care, family child care, and school-aged programs	X ³	X ⁹	X ¹⁵	X ²¹	X ²⁷	³³
Proposed AR-BB Level 4	X ⁴	X ¹⁰	X ¹⁶	X ²²	X ²⁸	³⁴
Proposed Better Beginnings Level 5	X ⁵	X ¹¹	X ¹⁷	X ²³	X ²⁹	³⁵
Proposed Better AR-BB Level 6	X ⁶	X ¹²	X ¹⁸	X ²⁴	X ³⁰	³⁶
<p>*** Full standards may be reviewed in Appendices B1-1 and B1-2. AR-BB is a block system; higher levels require meeting standards in lower levels, so standards for level levels are not repeated. Proposed indicates that a standard is under committee review and contained in Appendices B1-4. Items that substantially differ in FCC standards are noted and may be viewed in Appendices B1-2.</p> <p>¹1.C.1 , 1.C.2., 1.D.1 ²2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.3 ³3.C.1 ⁴Proposed 4.C.1 ⁵Proposed 5.C.1, 5.C.2, 5.C.3 ⁶met in Level 5. No additional standards. ⁷Not addressed. ⁸2.A.1, 2.D.1. Incorporates ERS, which provides environmental and teacher-child interaction assessment. Screening and formative assessment are included in PAS assessment but are not requirements of the system. ⁹3.C.2 ¹⁰Proposed 4.C.3 ^{11, 12}met in Level 4. No new standards. ¹³1.B.2 ,1.B.3, 1.B.4, 1.B.5 Administrator completes training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children. FCC: 1.B.2 (lower standards for PD than center-based standards). ¹⁴2.B.1 , 2.B.2, 2.B.3, 2.B.4, 2.B.5, 2.B.6, 2.B.7 ¹⁵3.B.1, 3.B.2, 3.B.3, 3.B.4, 3.B.5, 3.B.6. ¹⁶Proposed: 4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.3, 4.B.4 ¹⁷Proposed: 5.B.1, 5.B.2, 5.B.3 ¹⁸Proposed: 6.B.1, 6.B.2, 6.B.3 ¹⁹1.E.1, 1.E.2, 1.E.3 ²⁰2.A.2, 2.E.1, 2.E.2 ²¹3.A.2, 3.A.3, 3.E.1 ²²Proposed: 4.A.2, 4.A.3 ²³Proposed: 5.A.2, 5.A.3, 5.E.1</p>						

²⁴ Proposed: 6.A.2, 6.A.3, 6.E.1

²⁵ 1.B.5, 1.E.1, 1.E.2, 1.E.3

²⁶ 2.B.7, 2.C.3, 2.E.1

²⁷ 3.E.1

²⁸ Proposed: 4.E.1, 4.E.2

²⁹⁻³⁰ Met in Level 4; 5.E.1 and 6.E.1 also apply

³¹⁻³⁶ Not addressed

**(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)**

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA;
and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State’s CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality

of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (B)(2)(c). (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

Effective Policies and Practices to Maximize Participation and Affordability. Arkansas has implemented effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in AR-BB.

First, Arkansas implemented *AR-BB standards for center-based, family-based, and school-aged settings*. All types of programs may benefit from grants and technical assistance for quality improvements.

Second, Arkansas implemented *an incentive program* that ties receipt of equipment and professional development grants to AR-BB certification. The Incentive Grant is available at each of the three levels of certification. It is renewable at Level 1 and Level 2 for a maximum of nine years (not to exceed six years at either level). Once a facility is certified at Level 3, the Incentive Grant is available annually as long as the facility continues to meet the standards. Incentive Grant amounts are based on a combination of licensed capacities, current AR-BB level, and the number of years spent at that level (See Appendix B2-1). Program administrators may use Incentive Grants to increase or maintain the quality components of the facility. Expenditures may include staff/substitutes wages during training, management software, costs for employee benefits, retention and wage bonuses, CPR/First Aid training, curriculum materials, indoor and outdoor supplies and equipment, family involvement activities, and developmental screening and assessment materials. The Incentive Grant has a separate application dedicated to raising teacher qualifications, the professional development grant. Professional development grants may be used for CDA coursework, for professional development including use of substitutes allowing staff to participate, and for college coursework. This grant is available annually.

Third, the State has *engaged stakeholders and research teams* to make the system more user-friendly. DCCECE commissioned two teams to determine the most significant incentives and

barriers for participation in AR-BB. Ariel Strategic Communications conducted focus groups in different geographic areas of the State to identify emotional and rational motivators for directors to participate in the rating system (Jones, 2011). University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences administered online surveys to more than 400 directors across the state (L. McKelvey & Chapin-Critz, 2011b) and conducted qualitative interviews with 74 directors (L. McKelvey & Chapin-Critz, 2011a). The team sampled directors from center-based, family-based, school-aged, infant-toddler, and state-funded preschool programs. Findings from the two evaluations are convergent, and DCCECE has acted on recommendations by 1) allowing the use of professional development grants to be used for costs related to workshops, such as travel or overtime, rather than for college tuition only; 2) developing message maps for marketing the system and for training DCCECE employees and partnering staff; 3) increasing and refining training about AR-BB application and assessment among licensing specialists, program assessors, participating directors, and trainers in the professional development system; 4) investigating expansion of Web-based professional development opportunities; 5) increasing transparency in the assessment process by making details about reliability more widely available; 6) improving turnaround time for programs to receive assessment results and increased technical assistance surrounding their delivery; and 7) enriching the application Toolkit and guidance documents available to applicants.

Fourth, Arkansas established *a refundable credit for taxpayers* who place their children or dependents in a quality-certified child care program (Act 1268 of 1993). The credit is equal to twenty percent (20%) of the Federal Child Care Credit. The Arkansas Early Childhood Credit differs from the Federal Child Care Credit because it is refundable and any excess of the credit over the tax liability can be returned as an overpayment. To claim the Early Childhood Credit, a qualified individual must meet all the requirements for claiming the Federal Child Care Credit and have incurred child care expenses at an Arkansas facility certified at AR-BB Level 2 or 3. Fifth, to assist providers leverage their quality status locally, DCCECE provides certified programs banners for prominent display, a media kit that includes access to AR-BB logos, and sample scripts and letters to explain the importance of quality and AR-BB to families in their programs and to prospective clients. Programs are encouraged to display their rating onsite, but display is not mandatory.

Sixth, *children from families with low income may attend ABC pre-K free of charge or use vouchers to pay for early childhood education.* Resource and Referral Agencies educate families served through vouchers about the importance of quality child care and make recommendations for enrollment into AR-BB certified programs. ABC and vouchers are described below:

State-funded preschool programs. To improve school readiness skills of at-risk children, Arkansas established the state funded pre-Kindergarten program, Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) in 1991 (Act 49). ABC is funded through an appropriation in the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Public School Fund budget. ADE contracts with the DCCECE to administer the program. Although ABC utilizes some federal funding from TANF (\$ 7.5million), the bulk of the funding is state general revenue with a requirement that at least 40 percent of the program's overall funding must consist of local contributions. The full state general revenue funding level is currently \$111 million. Act 49 of 2003 expanded the public Pre-K program to the \$111Million level. Over the last two decades, ABC has grown to serve nearly 25,000 three- and four-year-old children in the 2010/2011 school year. The National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) has consistently ranked Arkansas in the top 10 for preschool access and rated ABC as meeting 9 out of 10 benchmarks for quality.¹⁹

To maintain eligibility for funding ABC programs must have obtained AR-BB certification or be eligible for such accreditation in the space to be used for the ABC program. The state developed crosswalks of standards used by ABC and AR-BB rules and assessments. The results identified significant overlap, such that a reciprocity agreement was developed to give ABC programs in good standing Level 3 certification with the verification of select items (Appendix B2-2 for ABC Reciprocity Agreement). Because ABC standards are based on with nationally recognized standards, language for many of the AR-BB components starting at Level 4 will align with ABC regulations. The highest levels of AR-BB are being guided by NAEYC guidelines, and are proposed to be more stringent than is required to receive ABC funding. Particularly, stronger requirements for the assessment of the environment and teacher-child interactions will promote ABC programs to even greater levels of quality than are currently sustained.

¹⁹ Ratings reported on the NIEER website: ¹⁹ <http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf/yearbook.pdf>. Accessed October 10, 2011.

Evaluation activities and meetings with stakeholders indicated some areas where programs operating within a school district were faced with onerous amounts of documentation. Therefore, DCCECE also devised reciprocity agreements for selected criteria when center-based preschool facilities are operated by Local Education Agencies (LEA; See Appendix B2-3). Certification that these criteria meet or exceed requirements must be provided. The selected criteria includes business and administrative practices for the facility including fiscal management (annual operating budget, recent audit), administrator and staff qualifications, staff evaluations/professional development plans, professional development hours, and participation in the USDA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Early Head Start and Head Start Programs. There are 19 Head Start grantees in Arkansas serving 10,011 children and families throughout all 75 Arkansas counties. Early Head Start serves 1,196 children and families. There is significant overlap between AR-BB and Early Head Start and Head Start standards. DCCECE developed crosswalks and engaged representatives from Head Start Agencies to determine the manner of participation. A reciprocity agreement was devised to allow Head Start programs in good standing with federal review to qualify for Level 3 (Appendix B2-4). Reciprocity for higher levels will be determined as these new levels are promulgated.

Programs funded under IDEA & programs funded under Title I of ESEA. Many of the children served through IDEA and Title I of ESEA are placed in AR-BB certified programs, but AR-BB is not tied to IDEA and Title I funding. Our expectation is that with RTT funds, we can raise minimum licensing standards to include certification at AR-BB Level 1 and increase the number of quality programs throughout the state. Thus, more children in IDEA and Title 1 programs will receive quality education and care. During our RTT funded project, the state team will work on a policy alignment with a goal of tying receipt of state or federal funds to programs with AR-BB quality of Level 3 or greater. As seen in Table B2C, many children with disabilities are not in programs participating in AR-BB. See Section B4 for more detail on programs in Arkansas serving high numbers of children with disabilities.

Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program. Arkansas' Child Care Assistance Program began in 1989 to provide subsidized child care services to low-income families, families needing protective service, and to children in foster care. In 1997, with the

authorization of welfare reform, the process was expanded to include families receiving Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) and families transitioning from TEA (TCC). Recipient families must be working, enrolled in an educational program, or attending training 30 hours per week. Unfortunately, this system has been identified as creating an unintended difficulty for children, parents, and programs. That is, when parents become employed they are not eligible and may not be able to afford to continue childcare in their currently placement. This disrupts childcare for the child and makes planning for the provider difficult. In response, the CCDF unit is revising policies with emphasis on child-focused, family-friendly, provider-fair approaches. Child focused includes policies that provide for continuity and stability of care.

As seen in Table (A)(1)-5, in 2010 state fiscal year, the number of children served was 29,682. Recipients have been given the freedom to choose from a wide range of state registered or licensed providers who are contracted to accept vouchers. Programs that participate in the voucher program must be licensed but are not required to participate in AR-BB. Reimbursement amounts are based on market rate by county, child age, and program type (center/home).

With RTT funds, we expect to substantially increase the number of programs at AR-BB quality Level 3 and above. This will allow us to phase in a requirement that children receiving CCDF funds must be enrolled in programs of quality level 3 or above.

As seen in Table B-2-c, a primary goal of the state, which Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds will be used to support, is to move our QRIS from a voluntary to a mandatory system. Current participation rates in AR-BB are high for state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs. As can be seen in Table (B)(2)(c), as of today, 81% of ABC programs are in the AR-BB system. We have set a goal of increasing the percentage of programs by 5% every year of RTT funding with a goal of moving 100% of programs into the AR-BB system. While participation in AR-BB is not currently required for ABC programs, Arkansas is committed to ensuring that state funding be targeted to quality programs and will change requirements that ABC programs participate in the system.

Participation rates for Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) programs in the state stand at 45% as of today. We have set a goal of increasing participation by 3 programs per year. While EHS/HS programs are of consistently high quality based on the federal standards that programs must maintain, we would like to increase participation in AR-BB. One barrier to participation for EHS/HS programs is replication of documentation as required by federal review

and AR-BB review. Given the high quality program reviews that are already done by federal reviewers, the state has adopted a reciprocity agreement with EHS/HS to avoid duplicated effort. Currently, programs in good standing on federal review are granted reciprocity at level 3 of AR-BB. Adoption of additional levels of quality will require another in-depth examination to determine if reciprocity above level 3 will be granted. Children served by IDEA Part B and C must be placed in licensed care. As all licensed care will move to AR-BB (at least Level 1) by 2014, we expect that all of these children will move into the AR-BB quality system.

Programs receiving CCDF funds are those that are voucher eligible. Arkansas is committed to improving program quality and is currently considering pursuing changes in the law to revise minimum licensing standards to be equivalent to AR-BB level 1. Moving the requirements for minimum licensing to level 1 will promote general knowledge of the QRIS and encourage wider participation until the legislature can meet to approve revisions to the law that governs AR-BB. Additional requirements for participation in and meeting certain AR-BB standards will also be approved for providers in the state voucher program and those that care for children in the foster care system. As of today, 22% of programs that are eligible for voucher reimbursement participate in AR-BB. We have estimated that we will add approximately 20% of these programs into the system each year of the funding. While changes to law will be made to require participation, there will be a need to roll programs into AR-BB in an ongoing way to insure there is sufficient staff to conduct assessments and review application materials. By the end of funding, we anticipate all programs receiving CCDF funds will be part of AR-BB.

In sum, the AR High Quality Plan will promote participation in AR-BB, the tiered quality rating and improvement system, through these actions:

1. RTT will allow us to *raise minimum licensing standards to include current AR-BB Level 1 standards*, increasing the quality of care readily available to all children. We will supply equipment, such as computers and software, to help many programs begin to meet reporting requirements for AR-BB. We will provide training and coaching to directors on the use of reporting systems. Although child screening is not a requirement of Level 1, we will offer and encourage lower level programs to attend ASQ-3 training in preparation for upward movement in the quality system. Also, we will provide remediation for staff to gain basic skills required to take advantage of higher education.

2. Incentive Grants are currently higher at the lower levels to impel more programs into the system. While start-up support in the form of incentive grants is critical, quality bonus awards would provide financial support to help cover the costs related to providing higher quality care and education. RTT will enable us to incentivize higher quality by *granting significant bonuses for moving into and maintaining higher levels*. Like incentive awards, funds from bonus awards may be linked to materials and equipment, training, college education, and staff compensation, but can also be used to off-set costs to programs for achieving higher quality such as those associated with applying for national accreditation and increased family involvement, and scholarships to private pay families in the cases where the cost of care is increased. Bonus awards will be offered with the expectation that the funds will be used to implement a quality improvement and/or staff professional development (described in Section D2) plan developed by the program and technical assistants.

3. We will *evaluate the impact of our incentive and bonus award programs with detailed examination of barriers and successes of upward movement by program and family type served*. Using results of this detailed evaluation, the incentive and bonus plans will be modified by project end to assure sustainability.

4. Arkansas will use RTT funds to *pilot and evaluate differential reimbursement rates tied to AR-BB rating for infants and toddlers and for children in foster care*. DCCECE will issue RFPs to recruit Early Learning and Development Programs into the pilot. Our target is to offer differential rates for 25% of children served in Arkansas foster care and for 25% of infant/toddlers. An external evaluation will determine the percentage of children served in quality care in Years 1 and 2 and then compare the percentage to those enrolled after implementation in Years 3 and 4. This pilot will allow us to have information to make a balanced decision on the use of state funds for future tiered reimbursement strategies.

5. *DCCECE will change policy to require all programs receiving vouchers for foster care meet Level 3 quality or above*. By the time RTT ends, the state's goal is that all children served through vouchers and in foster care will be in programs at AR-BB level 3 or higher. The state has developed a plan to increase the number of providers in the AR-BB system and a plan to support those programs in their continuous quality improvement efforts. We recognize that there are areas of the state where having an adequate number of high quality care arrangements for the large numbers of children in poverty will be difficult. Using RTT funding, we will evaluate the

availability of AR-BB programs state-wide and will target efforts at areas with more than 25% density of children in poverty.

6. *Recruitment for entry to AR-BB will target programs serving high percentages of children with disabilities.* Many of Arkansas' children are served in programs that provide specialized services. Directors of these specialized programs have reported the ERS assessments are barriers for participation. With RTT, the state will provide targeted mentorship, training, and support, as well as add measures of quality linked to staff-child interactions to ensure barriers for involvement in AR-BB are removed.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool <i>Specify:</i>	488	395	81%	418	86%	441	90%	464	95%	488	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ²⁰	22 Programs 257 Centers	10 Programs 205 Centers	45% 79%	13	59%	16	73%	19	86%	22 257	100% 100%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	104	Unknown		26	25%	52	50%	78	75%	104	100%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	Unknown										100%
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	Unknown										100%

²⁰ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	1501	331	22%	662	44%	993	66%	1226	82%	1501	100%
<p><i>Head Start- Of the 22 HS/EHS programs, 10 Programs have 100% of centers at level three, 9 programs have 65%-95% of their centers at level three.</i></p> <p><i>Title 1 - Title I funds are being used to supplement other programs. We were unable to determine a reliable list of programs to use as estimates.</i></p> <p>IDEA, Part B, section 619- Children receiving Part B attend other programs. We do not currently collect this data. All children receiving these funds must be in licensed care. We expect licensed care programs will be enroll in AR-BB by project end.</p>											

(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs. (15 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the

State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

Reliable, Valid Monitoring. Arkansas has a reliable system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development programs. AR-BB certification is valid for 36 months unless a facility changes location or ownership. Facilities requesting a review for a higher level of certification must wait at least six months after last certification date. Unannounced visits or random checks that result in an unfavorable review may trigger full-scale reassessments. Level 1 rating is based on review of documentation and self-assessment submitted by the provider to DCCECE. Above Level 1, AR-BB uses valid and reliable tools for monitoring programs. Two types of assessments are used, Environmental Rating Scales and Administration Scales.

Environmental quality of a program is documented by an independent observer using the appropriate versions of the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) based on the age of the children in care (see Section B1 and Appendix B1-3 for reliability and validity of ITERS-R, ECERS-R, FCCERS-R). These instruments have become the most widely used quality measures in early childhood education practice and research in the past 30 years. Empirical evidence has validated the relationship of ERS quality to child outcomes in child care research around the world, although findings are not always consistent and are often modest in strength.

AR-BB ERS assessors contracted through Arkansas State University are well-trained and reliable. Minimum qualifications for an AR-BB ERS assessor are a BA in early childhood education or related field and a minimum of 3 years experience working in an early childhood setting. Assessors are trained through practice and observation by trained, reliable supervisors. On a periodic basis, the ERS scale authors contract to certify assessors by conducting inter-rater

reliability training. To achieve reliable certification, an assessor must attain a score of 85% or higher across the last three observations and follow correct observation procedures. ERS assessors have their reliability checked every tenth time they use an ERS instrument. An assessor must be reliable on at least 85% of the items scored. The assessment team attends a three-day statewide annual training and monthly or bi-monthly regional meetings to receive updates and address assessment issues. In 2007, DCCECE contracted to conduct ERS assessments through the use of tablet PCs and a Web-based software program. The supervisor/feedback review feature allows for efficient review of all assessments and improves the accuracy of the written report sent to providers for program improvement.

In addition to the assessment of environmental quality, AR-BB includes an assessment of the quality of leadership and management functions of Early Learning and Development programs using PAS and BAS (See Section B1 and Appendix B1-3 for details). These are the first published instruments that solely focus on the administrative processes of early childcare programs. The PAS includes 25 items clustered in 10 subscales using a 7-point Likert scale similar to that of the ERS, 1 being inadequate and 7 being excellent. Subscales include Human Resources Development, Personnel Cost and Allocation, Center Operations, Child Assessment, Fiscal Management, Program Planning and Evaluation, Family Partnerships, Marketing and Public Relations, Technology, and Staff Qualifications. Within Staff Qualifications, Teacher and Teacher/Aide items are considered optional depending on the center's staffing patterns.²¹

The BAS is designed to monitor and help improve business practices in family child care and is designed for tandem use with FCCERS-R. The BAS contains 37 indicator strands clustered in 10 items including: Qualifications and Professional Development, Income and Benefits, Work Environment, Fiscal Management, Recordkeeping, Risk Management, Provider-Parent Communication, Community Resources, Marketing and Public Relations, and Provider as Employer (scored only if the provider employs other assistants). Reliability and validity for the PAS/BAS scales are provided in Appendix B1-3.

²¹ AR-BB Levels 1-3 exclude items 22-25 that address administrator and teacher qualifications from the assessment process. Items 5 and 6 rating staff benefits and staffing patterns and scheduling are scored to advise program improvements but are not counted in the program's overall score.

AR-BB program reviews are conducted by certified PAS and BAS assessors also contracted through Arkansas State University. These assessors complete rigorous four-day trainings. After training, assessors complete two PAS assessments and submit the assessments to the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National University in Wheeling, Illinois. If the two assessments demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the scale and scoring, the assessor is certified for two years. The renewal process, which occurs every two years, includes submitting assessments to the review committee at National Louis University and attending refresher training. The same procedure is followed for BAS assessors. PAS and BAS assessors must show they can score reliably on least 85% of the items in reviews that occur according to author-recommended schedule, every three months or every 10 reviews, whichever comes first. Arkansas expects assessors to participate in annual refresher training and regular teleconference opportunities. In May 2010 Arkansas began using PAS/BAS assessment Web-based software. The supervisor/feedback review feature allows for efficient review of all assessments and improves the accuracy of the written report sent to providers for program improvement. The assessor reliability tool facilitates more efficient and effective reliability checks for assessors.

Providing quality information to parents. The public can access information about all licensed programs in Arkansas through the DCCECE website.²² Information is viewable and easy to access on-line. Key information includes AR-BB status, dates of recent licensing monitor visits, and citations for health and safety regulations violations. Website visitors can narrow searches to identify Head Start programs, ABC programs, voucher programs, and programs that provide evening/weekend care. To spur public demand for high quality care, DCCECE ran a media campaign using TV ads, radio ads, and direct mail about AR-BB and the importance of high quality early learning and care. Programs in AR-BB receive banners that they are encouraged to prominently display and letters they are encouraged to hand out to parents. When in contact with parents, staff at DCCECE and in R&R Agencies explain the importance of quality programs and refer parents to rated programs.

In sum, the AR High Quality Plan will improve the system to rate and monitor Early Learning and Development Programs through the following actions:

²² <https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dcece/cclas/FacilitySearch.aspx>

1. *DCCECE will commission an independent evaluation of quality levels.* Besides independent assessment of ERS and PAS/BAS, evaluators will use the CLASS and Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett, 1989) to evaluate the concordance between quality indicators of program, teacher interactions, and current AR-BB classification. Using published cut scores, the category of programs in the AR-BB system will be confirmed and/or inconsistencies examined. This evaluation will be used to determine if modifications are necessary in the timing of certification (e.g., concordance may not be found if classification was 3 years ago), the training and monitoring of the certification staff (e.g., ERS may be more stable than teacher-child interaction scores), and the implementation of the CLASS for quality levels (e.g., what levels of CLASS are currently linked with AR-BB levels). See B5 for the description of the second goal of this evaluation.

Additional information will be collected to examine reasons for potential non-concordance between categorizations (e.g., by independent and current system). For example, the Support for Early Literacy Assessment (Smith, Davidson, Weisenfeld, & Katsaros, 2001) and the Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (Frede, Weber, Hornbeck, Stevenson Boyd, & Colon, 2005) may be useful in understanding detailed dimensions of quality. The SELA provides information on classroom practices that support children's early language and literacy skills and has been used extensively in New Jersey and other states. SELA scores are strongly correlated with ECERS-R Language and Reasoning subscale and overall test scores, but the SELA provides more detailed information about those aspects of classroom practice that impact children's literacy development. The PCMI measures the materials and methods used in preschool classrooms to support and enhance children's math skills. Preschool classroom support of children's mathematical skill development is recognized as an area that may need additional supports. We believe that as the AR-BB system is currently implemented, Level 3 programs include a range of programs that will be correctly classified into higher levels as we implement them.

2. To complete the construction of our Comprehensive Assessment System, *a thorough assessment of the quality of teacher-child interactions will be adopted* beyond the minimal currently included in AR-BB. We will integrate the CLASS in higher levels of AR-BB. Training and technical assistance to implement CLASS will be introduced as described in

Section A1, C2, and Appendix B1-3. We will establish similar strict reliability for CLASS as has been done for the other instruments currently used in AR-BB.

(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs. (20 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (*e.g.*, through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (*e.g.*, providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (B)(4)(c)(1) and (B)(4)(c)(2). (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

Our efforts to increase access includes efforts to increase the number of high quality programs, help programs serving children with special needs (e.g., disabilities, foster care) better serve children so that children maintain stable care, and expand the support system for teachers and programs.

Policies and Practices to Support Continuous Improvement

To support ongoing professional development a system of training has been established (see A1 and D2) and free access to technical assistance (see A1,D2). Early childhood professionals in AR-BB programs are required to become members of TAPP (see A1) and are provided free training (listed in Appendix A1-3). Although we have established the TAPP Registry and coordinated and funded many partners to offer excellent trainings, there are key areas of our professional development system that require improvement. These areas and our improvement plan are described in Section D2.

The current AR-BB Incentive Grants award programs is intended to encourage programs into AR-BB (described in B2). With RTT, a new, separate Bonus program will encourage programs into higher quality levels (see B2).

Community Engagement Strategies

Expand Resource and Referral (R&R) Services. As a rural state, Arkansas has a strong R&R system and multiple initiatives intended to make services, training, and resources available at the community level. However, to implement the expanded training required during the RTT project, the system will be expanded to support the increased demand. Each R&R agency will be given training and support to identify new staff and increase education of current staff. All R&R agencies will be required to have competency in key areas: coaching/training programs on implementation of child screening in ASQ; supporting Collaboratives; coaching programs in AR-BB policies and processes; and preparing programs for assessment in ERS, PAS/BAS, and CLASS.

Child Care Collaboratives. A related problem is a lack of coordination of resources, which results in under-utilization of the many training and resources currently available. We propose to

use RTT funds to establish and develop Child Care Collaboratives throughout Arkansas. Initially meeting agendas will be prescriptive to ensure that all networks have key basic information about statewide resources and policies. The goals of the Collaboratives will be somewhat driven by the local stakeholders. However, all will have common overarching goals: to link home-based and center-based early childhood educators with Kindergarten educators in routine meetings; to identify common resources useful to all; and to engage with parents. We will grant them yearly seed money to cover the costs required to establish Collaboratives, such as booking meeting space, advertising, purchasing materials, and offering lunch incentives. We will recruit local facilitators and assign them to R&R staff to increase sustainability by developing local support with training. Facilitators will receive start-up training to equip them with strategies to set local goals, link resources, and engage all stakeholders that affect children birth to 7 years old. Through these activities Collaboratives will identify gaps in local support. For instance, in some areas program directors have repeatedly expressed the need for pools of qualified substitutes. The State will also offer support for Collaboratives or linked parent-headed groups to establish themselves as non-profit organizations with tax-exempt status (501(c)(3)). We will encourage local initiatives to engage community and parents in activities linked to school readiness and health such as Imagination Library (see C4). Facilitators will link Collaboratives to the statewide Resource Directory described below, and encourage events such as back-to-school meetings between pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten teachers and administrators.

Community Based Support for Inclusion. The Arkansas Special Quest Initiative provides professional development on inclusion for the birth through pre-K population in five communities. The Special Quest Approach is designed to touch the “head, heart, and hands” of families and professionals working together to create inclusive communities for young children with disabilities. This relationship-and team-based approach enhances and sustains inclusive services, family leadership skills, and integrated, collaborative service delivery. Teams consist of members from early childcare, Part C, Part B, and health. This initiative will be expanded and linked to the Collaboratives.

Community Based Support for Foster Care children. Project PLAY (Positive Learning for Arkansas’ Youngest; see Appendix B4-1) is an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) program, funded by DCCECE in 2011 after a series of successful pilots. Project

PLAY facilitates collaboration between early childcare programs and specially trained mental health professionals located within Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs). A snapshot of the child care voucher system for foster children in August 2011 showed that 1,376 foster children were in child care paid for with vouchers. Of those, 29% were served in a state-funded pre-Kindergarten classroom or another childcare center participating in AR-BB. Project PLAY has already initiated these activities: 1) consultation to increase quality lower level AR-BB programs currently serving foster children; 2) identification of high quality centers that are currently serving foster children or may be appropriate future placements; and 3) education for biological parents, foster parents, and Division of Children and Family service workers on the importance of stable high quality child care regardless of custodial changes.

With RTT funding, Project PLAY will provide support for the caregivers managing difficult behavior and supporting healthy social and emotional development. It will also provide one-on-one education to biological and foster parents about the importance of continuity of child care when the child is transitioning between homes, or if a change in child care cannot be avoided, assist with the transition.

Pilot Program to Increase Child Care Options in High Needs Areas. In some parts of Arkansas, few high quality programs exist with the range of services needed for families. A pilot project will examine the usefulness of a program to provide targeted mentorship to selected programs in five areas with limited resources. The areas will be selected because they have been identified as having consistent foster care or voucher placements, low rates of quality, and have a high likelihood of reaching quality based on past assessments. Supports may include scholarships for directors and/or program staff to obtain additional formal education, key material and training, and intense mentorship by local R&R staff.

Resources to support Continuous Improvement

Statewide Resource Guide for parents and caregivers. We are developing a statewide guide to map resources for programs and families. The online, searchable Resource Directory is a joint effort of the DCCECE, Head Start State Collaboration Office, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), and the University of Arkansas for Little Rock (UALR). The original grant was to develop the website to allow parents to search for child care programs using geomapping and to launch by 7/1/2012 on the AR-BB website. In 2011, Medicaid provided funding to the contractor to add resources to the website. Resources were identified with the

help of DCCECE Family Support Workers. The resources are comprehensive, including medical, therapies, mental health, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence shelters, basic needs (housing assistance, emergency assistance, food pantries), safety, and educational and enrichment resources. Resources are organized by the Five Strengthening Families Protective Factors. Each resource includes agency name, address, email, primary contact, geomapping code, services provide, counties served, keywords, and domain number.

With RTT, we will further develop the Resource Directory, increase utility and capacity for sustainability, and develop a parent portal. We will create capacity to print individual information or resource directories by county or city, verify accuracy of information, and develop a program to periodically query agencies to update the information. In cases where emails are not successful, we will phone or fax programs to update the information.

Support for Programs that Target Children with Disabilities. There are primarily two systems serving young children with delays and/or disabilities: 1) general care and education programs typically available within the community that include state and federally funded programs such as Head Start; and 2) programs that provide specialized services and supports for young children with disabilities provided in a wide array of settings, including segregated care and education settings across varied service-delivery models. Rehabilitative Services for Persons with Mental Illness (RSPMI) are often delivered in day-treatment and outpatient settings for children and families. Services typically include individual, family, group, and play therapy sessions, as well as psychological testing, and diagnostic services. Additional services may include psychiatric evaluations and speech therapy services. Child Health Management Clinics (CHMS) provide both developmental and medically focused treatment. Services are available in a day-school setting and include physician and nursing services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nutrition, early childhood developmental teaching and psychological services. Finally, Developmental Day Treatment Clinic Services (DDTCS) provide clinic-based services to children with developmental disabilities. The core services include Early Intervention and/or preschool services for children birth to five years of age.

These programs are often accredited externally through the Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). A CARF-accredited organization goes through a rigorous on-site assessment that includes interviews with management, staff and clients, as well as extensive records review. Because of this thorough review, the state has granted reciprocity for some areas

documented as duplicative with AR-BB (L. McKelvey et al.) (Appendix B4-2 includes Reciprocity Agreements for Nationally Accredited Programs). Overall, CARF standards meet or exceed the standards of two AR-BB components: Administration, and Child Health and Development. External evaluators did not find evidence that CARF-accredited programs will reliably meet other components in AR-BB. Most importantly, CARF standards do not specifically observe many aspects of environmental quality more strongly associated with child development than other aspects of quality examined by AR-BB.

Assessment of quality care for children with disabilities has mostly been conducted with the ERS, and few studies of quality of the programs that young children with disabilities attend have been conducted (Spiker, Hebbeler, & Barton, 2011). There is one existing study examining childcare quality specifically for children with developmental delays and/or disabilities receiving care in inclusive versus segregated care environments (La Paro, Sexton, & Snyder, 1998). The study compared 29 segregated preschool special education classrooms and 29 inclusive child care programs. Results identified similar and moderate scores on environmental quality as measured with the ECERS in both settings. The average ECERS scores of the 29 segregated programs were 4.68 and of the 29 inclusive programs was 4.77.

Because so many of Arkansas' children are served in programs that provide specialized services, an external evaluation team is currently contracted to collect qualitative data to determine how to increase these programs' participation in AR-BB. Policies, procedures, and supports will be reviewed to ensure they are able to participate in a streamlined, efficient and cost-effective manner. Data collected by the external evaluation team indicates that directors of specialized programs are unlikely to participate in AR-BB due to the belief that the ERS is not appropriate for the care that is provided. With RTT, we will: 1) train existing ERS technical assistants on Medicaid requirements and program structural requirements; 2) provide technical assistance to directors of specialized services programs to assist with the structure of the environment and to support their movement into high AR-BB levels; 3) adopt use of the CLASS as an additional measure of AR-BB quality that is less dependent upon materials in the environment.

In sum, the AR High Quality Plan will promote access to high-quality Programs through the following actions:

Arkansas has multiple strategies for raising quality already in progress that will be significantly enhanced with RTT funding. RTT funding will lead to a higher rate of programs in the more expensive quality levels of AR-BB. The activities we propose to jumpstart with RTT will be sustainable after the grant has ended. As discussed in B2, with RTT funds we will pilot a tiered reimbursement system with a targeted high risk group and evaluate the impact. We are studying the issues related to changing the law to require licensing standards to meet AR-BB Level 1. After RTT, incentive funds will be repurposed to encourage maintenance of quality at higher levels rather than on increasing participation in lower levels.

As seen in Table B-4-C-1, a primary goal of the state, which Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds will be used to support, is to move our QRIS from a voluntary to a mandatory system. This will increase the number of programs at higher levels of quality available to serve Children with High Needs. We also propose to change the eligibility of programs that take voucher-eligible children to require participation in AR-BB and meet quality of a minimum of level 3. This will promote the top tiers of our QRIS and increase the number of Children with High Needs in quality programs.

Current participation rates in AR-BB are high for state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs. As can be seen in Table (B)(4)(c)(2), as of today, 76% of Children with High Needs that are served in ABC programs are in the AR-BB system. We have set a goal of increasing the percentage of programs by 5% every year of RTT funding with a goal of moving 100% of programs into the AR-BB system. This will also increase the number of children served, assuming programs of equivalent size, by about 6% per year.

As can be seen in Table (B)(2)(c)(2), participation rates for Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) programs in the state stand at 45% as of today, but those participating programs appear to be large in size and serve a large number of eligible children. As presented in Table (B)(4)(c)(2), we have set a goal of increasing the number of EHS/HS programs by 3 programs per year with a goal of moving 100% of programs into the AR-BB system, which will also increase the number of children served, assuming programs of equivalent size, by about 5% per year.

Children in Title I ESEA and IDEA Part B must attend licensed programs to receive funding. With RTT funding all licensed programs will be moving into the AR-BB system at least at Level 1. As a result all children receiving these funds will move into the system.

Programs receiving CCDF funds are those that are voucher eligible. As of today, 16% of voucher-eligible children are in AR-BB participating programs. As can be seen in Table (B)(4)(c)(2), we have estimated that we will add approximately 20% of these programs into the system each year of the funding, which would increase the children with high needs in quality care by approximately 20% per year. While we are changing the laws that govern voucher reimbursement and AR-BB, we still foresee the need to roll programs into quality over time. Table B4c1 demonstrates estimates of programs that are new to AR-BB and a timeline for increasing quality.

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.					
	Baseline (Today)	Target- end of calendar year 2012	Target- end of calendar year 2013	Target- end of calendar year 2014	Target- end of calendar year 2015
Total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	738	1278 (44%)	1818 (62%)	2358 (81%)	2900 (100%)
Number of programs in Tier 1	77	540	540	540	542
Number of programs in Tier 2	17	77	540	540	540
Number of programs in Tier 3	644	17	77	540	540
Number of programs in Tier 4	Not Currently Adopted	644	661	738	1278
Actual data used from the child care Licensing & Accreditation data system.					
<i>Include a row for each tier in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, customize the labeling of the tiers, and indicate the highest and lowest tier.</i>					
<i>[Please indicate if baseline data are actual or estimated; describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information. Also, if applicable, describe in your narrative how programs participating in the current Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System will be transitioned to the updated Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.]</i>					

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: ABC</i>	17,701	13,519	76%	14565	82%	15611	88%	16657	94%	17701	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ^[1]	11,595	8,989	78%	9,624	83%	10,204	88%	10,783	93%	11,595	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	Unknown										
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	10,521	4,773	45%	5,787	55%	7,365	70%	8,943	85%	10,521	100%

^[1] Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	Unknown										
Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program	10,933	1749	16%	4045	37%	6341	58%	8637	79%	10933	100%
Other <i>Describe:</i>											
<i>Tier 3 is the top tier; provided actual number of slots available.</i>											
<i>Title I ESEA - This information is not collected from AR public schools since the children are served through other programs.</i>											

(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children’s learning, development, and school readiness.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

*In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations. (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

With recent implementation of the AR-BB quality rating system, limited study has been conducted to link their impact on child learning outcomes. However, two studies of ABC suggest the levels have meaning, at least on the extreme ends. ABC standards align with higher AR-BB standards. Ongoing longitudinal study of children attending ABC started in 2005. Findings from these studies indicate “that the Arkansas Better Chance Program has statistically significant and meaningful impacts on children’s early language, literacy and mathematical development” (J. T. Hustedt, Barnett, Jung, & Thomas, 2007). An evaluation of ABC classrooms by independent evaluators during the 2005- 2006 school year stated, “Findings from conventional analyses at the beginning of Kindergarten point toward statistically significant positive effects of the ABC program on measures of language, math, and literacy.... However, results from the conventional analyses also showed substantial evidence of selection bias, and underestimate the effects of participating in pre-K”(J. Hustedt, Barnett, & Jung, 2008).

As reported above (B1, *Differentiate program quality levels*), a more recent evaluation conducted by the Arkansas Research Center (ARC) with data from school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 showed ABC programs' success in improving low-income children's school readiness compared to low-income children served in other types of programs. The evaluation used instruments the state's Kindergarten readiness exam to examine school readiness (QELI and MAT8) and demonstrated average raw scores of students that participated in the ABC program were consistently higher on each assessment than similar low-income students that did not participate in ABC.

In sum, the AR High Quality Plan will validate the effectiveness of the state tiered rating and approval system through the following actions:

1. *A statewide evaluation to confirm the quality system category of each level (see B3) and the impact on child development will be conducted.* The study will examine adequate numbers of programs at each level using rigorous methods (e.g., random selection) and consider program type (e.g., home based, center based, HIPPI). As describe in B3, the evaluation will examine the integration of the CLASS and confirm the current quality system.

The evaluation will also examine Kindergarten readiness indicators of child development across AR-BB levels. Constructs to be assessed include language, literacy, and early mathematics. Potential assessment tools include the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 3rd Edition (L. M. Dunn & Dunn, 1997) and for Spanish-speakers the Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (L. M. Dunn, Hugo, Padilla, & Dunn, 1986). The PPVT-3 is a valid and reliable measure of children's receptive vocabulary found to be strongly correlated to school success. In addition, subscales of the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (e.g., Subtest 10 Applied Problems to measure children's early mathematical skill development; subtest 1, Letter-Word Identification) are available in both English and Spanish.

Based on the current system, we expect to find meaningful differences in child outcomes based on the level of the program experienced by children in the year before entering Kindergarten. The evaluation RFP will ask for detailed power analysis and research design that assures that sufficient numbers of children are assessed in a full distribution of programs to assure a meaningful evaluation of program type and level.

2. *All programs in AR-BB will be link to the longitudinal data system to allow an ongoing ability to use data effectively.* According to the Data Quality Campaign's 2011 Data for Action

survey, Arkansas has met 10 of 10 essential elements required to establish the state's capacity to use data from the state longitudinal data system.²³ Key early childcare programs are currently providing information to link to the longitudinal system; however, not all programs in AR-BB are participating. For example all children attending ABC programs can be followed longitudinally as can children receiving vouchers and children attending HIPPPY. However, not all Head Start programs, home visiting programs, and AR-BB programs are linked to the system. See Section E1 for details on improvements to include more children in the longitudinal system.

3. We will conduct an analysis of the quality indicators linked to the use of the bonus and incentive programs to recommend a sustainable combination of the two strategies. This analysis will use information from the evaluations above along with an analysis of the movement of programs thru the AR-BB levels during the RTT funding. The goal of the analysis will be to determine the impact of the multiple initiatives on the quality of the systems. Data will include in-depth interviews with providers currently in the program to determine community perception of the value and usefulness of the initiatives to move programs into higher level quality.

²³ <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/stateanalysis/states/AR/>

Focused Investment Areas -- Sections (C), (D), and (E)

The State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);*
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and*
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).*

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Note: The total available points for (C)(1) through (C)(4) = 60. The 60 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria in the Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points.

The applicant must address two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C).

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

- (a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;
- (b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;
- (c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and
- (d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

*In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations. (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of three pages)*

As described in B1, the AR-BB assessment system has a good foundation but is targeted for RTT funds. We propose to move to a full Comprehensive Assessment system by

1. clarifying the acceptable **screening** tools, supporting programs in their implementation, and requiring their use in high quality programs.
2. clarifying the acceptable tools for **formative** assessment, identifying a clear schedule for assessment that allows time for remediation, supporting programs in their implementation, and requiring their use in high quality programs.
3. adopting an additional assessment to measure the quality of adult-child **interactions** accompanied by training to support early childhood educators develop optimal skills and support programs in appropriate uses of the results.
4. Introducing higher scores for ERS.
5. creating new training options to **effectively use assessments** to tailor the individual classroom experience for children and improve programs.
6. revising our system of **training on the implementation of assessment tools** to target tools selected as supported by the state.
7. providing the data system to allow **easier sharing of data** and improve use of data.

Screening Tool. As described in A1, we have selected a screening tool, *Ages & Stages Questionnaires*, (ASQ). We are moving to consistent use of ASQ because it is easy to administer, it is reported by parents, it will consolidate training to focus on one tool saving money for training development, and it will help in the use of data across time, across programs, and across children. Because of the state's ongoing commitment to increase the quality of programs' family engagement practices, choosing a tool that will further encourage family

involvement in child care programs was ideal. This was confirmed in the recent pilot study of the feasibility of the use of the ASQ tools (UAMS College of Medicine Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, 2011).

Given the success of pilot project, Arkansas will expand the ASQ project to target all voucher programs and all others willing to adopt the instruments that serve children birth to 5 years, including those in AR-BB. While there is currently variability in screenings used by Head Start (see A1), programs that receive state monies are already required to use the ASQ assessments. The use of the ASQ assessments will be required for programs at AR-BB Levels 4 and higher. Support (training and materials) will be offered to any level program in AR-BB.

Formative Assessment. A similar approach will be taken with the formative assessment, with selection in Year 1, training developed in Year 2, and implementation in Years 3 and 4. AR-BB includes a standard related to formative assessments (3.C.2). However, it does not designate use of an approved tool. While this flexibility was seen as an initial benefit, evaluations have shown that providers desire more concrete guidance for appropriate ways to meet the requirement. State-funded ABC programs use The Ounce Scale and Work Sampling System (see A1) and Head Start programs vary. We are currently reviewing measures to determine a state mandated choice for the formative assessment tool. We are committed to a tool that includes all of the essential domains of school readiness and has high reliability and validity. Once selected, the specific tool will be used in all state-funded programs. The use of the assessment tool and reporting on results will be required for programs applying for AR-BB Levels 4 and higher. Training and materials will be offered to all programs Level 3 and below that are willing to adopt the instruments.

Given that Arkansas will require voucher programs to achieve AR-BB Level 3 or higher, there is the possibility that some programs that receive state monies will not complete formative assessments of children. Through R&R mentorship and encouragement to take advantage of incentive and bonus funds, the state will focus additional attention on Level 3 programs that serve voucher eligible children to help them achieve Level 4.

Environmental Assessment. Environmental quality is currently assessed in all AR-BB programs at Level 2 or higher using the appropriate Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) for the program (see Section A1 and B1). However, AR-BB does not specifically require high quality scores on this aspect of ERS with the levels currently adopted in the system. The AR-BB

planning committee has proposed additional levels with more stringent requirements for ERS scores.

Measuring Adult-Child Interactions. The quality of adult-child interactions is currently assessed within the ERS, but we recognize that there are elements of instructional interactions that are not assessed well. The AR-BB planning committee has agreed to add the requirement of a comprehensive assessment at upper levels of AR-BB (i.e., CLASS, see Section A1 and B1). Recent research indicates the CLASS is more closely related to child outcomes than the ERS (Mashburn et al., 2008). CLASS is currently used in Head Start as part of the federal monitoring which assists Arkansas with alignment. The assessment schedule for CLASS may be different from the ERS (see B1). Currently, ERS assessments are conducted every third year and on a random sample of half of the classrooms in a given program. We will evaluate this in a pilot of the upper levels of AR-BB to make determinations for the CLASS. With RTT funding, the support for the implementation of the CLASS will be used to support the requirement at the higher levels of AR-BB.

Adoption of the CLASS to assess adult-child interactions will be new to the state. Training will address the appropriate ways to support programs to prepare for the assessment and support their educators in applying the most optimal behaviors with children. According to the developers, CLASS can be used to provide teachers with direct feedback about their actual classroom practices, as a training tool for teachers by providing them with a framework for understanding the components of their teaching that impact students, and as the basis for new models of in-service training that provides teachers with ongoing, flexible, individualized, and collaborative support to improve the interactions with students.

Assessment Tool Training. Requiring the use of a standardized screener and formative assessment tools enables the state to develop and implement fewer and more targeted trainings and supports for all AR-BB programs. Because the ASQ assessments are already in use in the state, trainings have been developed and implemented with success. As reported in the evaluation of the pilot project (UAMS College of Medicine Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, 2011), over 80% of the individuals participating in the training said they were better prepared to work with families and children with developmental disabilities. After the training, over 85% reported they understood the goal of the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE and were comfortable administering the screening tools. Post-training assessment revealed participants

were more confident in their ability to identify children with disabilities, to help identified children, and to talk to parents about developmental delays.

Trainings and technical assistance will be developed and implemented at the level of the director and teaching staff. At the director level, trainings and technical assistance strategies will be developed to help the administrator understand how to use the results from to enhance program quality. At the staff level, we will use CLASS as a framework to help teachers understand how their interactive behaviors with students foster their development.

With RTT funding, it will be possible to move the optional use of the ASQ to a requirement in AR-BB and offer materials and trainings to many more programs. In the pilot, R&R support and mentorship after the training was noted by most participants as a critical component to success. The implementation of a required, common formative assessment can move quickly with funds to provide the initial materials, develop standardized training, and train many providers. Trainings insure the proper use of the instruments, including working with programs to understand how to use the results at the level of the individual child to support the child's learning in areas where assessments indicate an issue. Trainings also teach programs how to use aggregated information to inform long-term decisions around instruction and curriculum choices (see D2 and E1).

Data systems. Common assessment tools will allow us to develop a data system with common elements that programs use to report screening results that can be linked to the longitudinal data system used in the K-12 system (See A1, E1). An upgrade to the existing DCCECE data system to allow child assessment results at the program level integrated into the system that programs are currently using to register voucher use will increase the accessibility of information. The computer system will be improved for tracking individual children and sharing information across programs. This will reduce the re-screening of children changing programs. The data system currently used by programs that receive state-funding allows for tracking of individual children. If a child should move from one state-funded program to another, his/her data is transferred to the new provider. However, this exchange of information does not happen, for example, if a child should move from a state-funded program to a federally-funded program like Head Start.

Linking the CLASS results to the TAPP professional development system (see D2 for revised system) will increase the ability to track teacher classroom quality. This will include a

system that allows teachers to use their individual assessments to guide improvements in their behaviors is a benefit of the CLASS system. Further, a data system where teachers' scores are tracked would allow the state to minimize the re-assessment of teachers when changes in employment occur.

Working with ARC (see A1 longitudinal data), these systems will be integrated into the current longitudinal system (i.e., linking teacher quality to child, child assessment to K12). We plan to facilitate coordination with ARC to link to other related data systems including early health assessments (e.g., the state's immunization registry).

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

(a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;

(b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and

(c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (C)(4)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of family engagement standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(4)(a), submit--
 - The progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate family engagement standards used in the Program Standards that includes strategies successfully used to engage families in supporting their children's development and learning. A State's family engagement standards must address, but need not be limited to: parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages

- with community supports and adult and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development;
- Documentation that this progression of standards includes activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children’s education and development.

Evidence for (C)(4)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support on the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(4)(c):

Documentation of the State’s existing resources that are or will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide, including through home visiting programs and other family-serving agencies and the identification of new resources that will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide. (*Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of three pages*)

As described in A1 and B1 the state has addressed family engagement through the AR-BB standards, the educational competencies for educators, and key stakeholder workgroups. Current AR-BB Levels 2 and 3 require education linked to *Strengthening Families* (SF; see Table (A)(1)-9 and B1). While these requirements start a program toward family engagement, current modes of implementation limit their impact. For example, as currently implemented, SF trainings are limited in scope and are required for administrators only. We would expect heightened awareness and improved relational helpgiving skills if all staff members, not just administrators, receive more intensive training in the SF model. Empirical evidence suggests that current standards—webinar training, self-assessment, and adoption of one or even a few of the SF strategies—is unlikely to produce detectable significant changes in child abuse and neglect (L. McKelvey et al.).

In the past, we have devoted funding to the area of family engagement. We introduced use of an interview called the *Family Map Inventory* to document family needs and resources and to increase teacher-parent communication (see below and Appendix C4-1). We introduced the *TIPS for Great Kids* intervention, a novel approach to parent education delivered by educators in parent-teacher informal and formal exchanges (Appendix C4-2). We also supported professional development to help administrators consider ways of using their resources to enhance their

family engagement activities through the six-hour Strengthening Families Program Directors Seminar. DCCECE developed a collection of materials, called *Family Connection*, to connect families with their early education programs and to encourage linkages with community supports. *Family Connection* shows programs how to provide parents activities they can do with children at home linked to early learning activities done during the day. These tools are available free on-line but they are under-utilized. We will develop training to encourage their use.

Family engagement is assessed as part of the Administration Scales (PAS & BAS). Currently a PAS score does not require a specific score for family engagement. In the PAS, the Family Partnerships subscale consists of two items: The Family Communications item measures orientation procedures, modes of communication with families, and frequency of communication between parents and program staff; The Family Support and Involvement item assesses tangible supports that programs provide, family involvement in the classroom, and family involvement in center activities. Examples of family-friendly supports include lending libraries, child care for sick children, extended care during evenings/weekends, information and referral for family issues, convenience services, adult classes, home visits, family meetings or support groups, social functions for families and staff, child care during parent conferences, provisions for food or clothing donations, and transportation to and from center.

We will use RTT funds to address limitations discussed above. Programs of Level 3 and higher will be encouraged and offered training in the *Family Map* and *TIPS*. We propose a full evaluation of the family engagement strategy that includes the *Family Map* and *TIPS* with the addition of mentorships from R&R staff. We will improve the training available by creating a series of three-hour, curriculum-based training modules developed for each of the SF protective factors. Through our proposed AR-BB standards, we will increase the level of PAS Family Partnerships subscale scores and raise requirements for professional development training as follows:

Level 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of staff complete the Strengthening Families webinar. 2. Administrators complete the 6-hour Strengthening Families Program Directors Seminar. 3. PAS Family Partnerships subscale score of 5, indicative of programs that regularly communicate with families, have 2 formal conferences per year, offer at least 5 family supports, and engage families in classroom activities.
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Level 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50% of teaching staff attend 3 hours of professional development in the family and community key content area. 2. PAS Family Partnerships subscale score of 5.5, indicative of programs with good to excellent family partnerships.
Level 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All teaching staff attend 3 hours of professional development in the family and community key content area. 2. PAS Family Partnerships subscale score of 6, indicative of a program with opportunity for daily communication between families and staff, procedures to achieve consistency between home and center, communication with families in 7 or more modes, 7 family supports, and families on the center's governing or advisory board.

These stronger requirements are not currently integrated because of the substantial financial costs that family engagement activities bring to programs. With RTT funding, bonus funds will be awarded to programs to support the implementation of more effective family involvement activities. Bonus award activities aimed at family engagement will be based on the newly released Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. The investments that the state has already made are helpful to programs, but these bonus award funds could be used to help programs implement more costly family engagement strategies. As outlined in B5, an RTT funded evaluation of the best use of current incentive funds, RTT bonus funds, and quality changes will inform DCCECE on the most effective sustainability plan.

Multiple efforts will result in more educators trained and supported to implement family engagement strategies.

Prescriptive Training. First, as seen in D2, with RTT funding the trainings required by educators will be more prescriptive and include training on SF. For example, the six-hour SF Program Directors Seminar is a highly interactive process that enables directors to complete their own SF self-assessment and identify a minimum of one action step in seven areas. We will also create a series of curriculum-based three-hour modules on each of the SF protective factors.

FASD and Depression Second, we will build professional development to support providers in the needs and effective strategies to support high risk families in two groups: children at risk for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and children living with depressed caregivers. Recent data from the Pulaski County Juvenile Court FASD project indicated that 25% of children entering the foster care system screened positive for FASD. Parental depression can interfere with parenting practices, caregiving, material support, communication and nurturance. A recent study

in Arkansas found rates of depression in Head Start families above the national average of 25% with rates 27% to 30% (Whiteside-Mansell, Bradley, Conners, & Bokony, 2007). The AECCS Social-Emotional Workgroup is targeting maternal depression in 2012 with the goal of developing an interagency action plan and policy recommendations.

Access to resources. Initiated with AECCS funds, the state has developed and continues to improve without AECCS funds an online wizard to help families easily determine eligibility for services such as ABC, KidCare, and special nutrition. A geomap of resources and services is also being developed as an online tool (see below and B4). Funding is requested to support improvements in the resource guide, to link it with the local Child Care Collaboratives (see B4), to produce training to use and update, and to advertise.

Parental input. AECCS also supported the pilot of the concept of Community Café. The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds developed the Community Cafes Program to "change the lives of children through conversations that matter." The program involves the Strengthening Families Framework, parent leadership, and parent partnership with childcare centers. Community Café's facilitate parent voices to impact policy, communities, and programs to promote protective factors for children and families. Limited infrastructure (e.g., trained teams) has been developed, but the pilot project was supported by the communities.

Home Visitation transition. With the new Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting funding, we will provide program training and support for families as children move to from home-based programs to preschool and Kindergarten. Funding will also support resources to integrate these families into the longitudinal data system to support the transfer of assessments. The Child Care Collaborative will also be used to link home visit program staff with sites likely for family transitions.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D).

(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (*e.g.*, scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (D)(2)(c)(1) and (D)(2)(c)(2). (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

The current infrastructure as described in A1 forms a strong foundation for an ECE training system. However, it has several components that are in critical need of improvement. These include incentives and scholarships to obtain higher education, revamp the educator professional development system to allow tracking by the state and individual educators of progress, increase the requirements for professional development to assure high quality, and clarifying the professional development that is critical for quality.

There were several policy/data changes recommended based on the evaluation conducted by Keystone, Inc to improve Arkansas' professional development. The evaluation stated that the full functionality of the registry databases (TAPP), and the benefits of having a robust system of data collection and reporting has not and cannot be realized given the current structure of the databases and the quality of the data contained therein. There were multiple recommendations made regarding improvements to the registry database and the ECEP career lattice (SPECTRUM) including 1) creating a more comprehensive list of available trainings and documenting their relationship to SPECTRUM; 2) collecting additional data elements, such as training content; 3) streamlining operational processes to include faster entry of trainings, online applications, and creating a unique ECP ID; 4) developing clearer guidelines and decision rules for determining individuals' TAPP levels; and 5) examining the differentiation of levels in the SPECTRUM, the required training, and the experience for each level to establish policies and procedures for determining "equivalencies" for persons with training and experience from outside the state.

It is clear that alterations to the current TAPP and SPRECTRUM are warranted. As described in Section A2, we know that training is most effective when provided in an extended and continuous format with sessions building upon one another. We also know that trainings that include a curriculum that is fixed yet is individualized to its participants, opportunities for participants to apply their knowledge and to reflect on what they have learned and to share their accomplishments and challenges, and trainer observation and feedback related to classroom implementation are related to the most positive gains in educators' competencies. There are multiple types of training available to the ECEP community, many include the elements we know make effective professional development, but many are trainer-initiated with varying levels of quality and content.

It is also clear that the SPECTRUM materials do not adequately prepare early childhood educators to determine their own course for professional development. Using the funding from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, we will revise SPECTRUM to link with *Arkansas' Key Content Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* (see Appendix D2-1), which will provide a more defined pathway for professional development by linking the content and competencies to trainings.

Requirements for professional development in minimum licensing standards need to be addressed. Current licensing standards require 10 clock hours of training that is left to the discretion of the facility administrator and staff. The state is committed to increasing the quality of licensed providers by increasing requirements to become commensurate with AR-BB Level 1. While this will lead to an improvement in quality, we also see the need to prescribe key content that must be covered with all child care staff. Arkansas is committed to revising policy to insure a common core of training for all staff that includes first aid and mandated reporter training for child abuse and neglect.

All levels of AR-BB include standards for staff qualifications and professional development (See Table B-1), and while currently adopted standards are a significant increase from licensing, they emphasize professional development clock hours more than college education. DCCECE has led the development of additional levels of AR-BB that include higher standards of college preparation for the qualifications of administrators and teaching staff. In the proposed higher levels, administrators will have AAs at Level 4 and BAs at Levels 5 & 6. At least 50% of

teaching staff will have CDAs, 135 clock hours, or 9 college hours at Level 4. At Level 5 at least 50% of teaching staff will have AAs or 25 semester hours. In the highest level (6) at least 50% of teaching staff will have BAs with 30 semester hours in early childhood education or a related field.

As described in Section B2, we provide incentive grants and professional development grants to programs participating in AR-BB. Our professional development grants were initiated to be used for college preparation only. As a result of evaluations to determine barriers to provider participation in AR-BB, we modified our professional development grants to be used to cover the costs of additional professional development clock hour requirements.

As described in Section A2, we acknowledge that prominent early childhood committees and researchers support increasing teacher education requirements (Barnett, 2003; National Research Council, 2001; Whitebook, 2003). We also acknowledge the evidence that college education focused on early childhood education or child development improves classroom quality and child outcomes (C. Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Snider & Fu, 1990; Zill et al., 2001). Arkansas' current minimum licensing standard for staff education, a high school diploma or GED and 10 hours of in-service training, is far-removed from the field's best practices and standards for qualifications in AR-BB also need to be improved.

Investments must be made to increase teacher qualifications. In this regard, the incentive grants for professional development related to CDA or college-level training are a vital element of AR-BB, but it is currently unclear how many providers are using these grants for this purpose. It is a goal of a current evaluation being conducted by UAMS to better understand how professional development grants are being used. We know that only rewarding programs that can afford to make the substantial leap from hiring teachers with high school education to hiring teachers with four-year degrees would alienate many providers from AR-BB. Moreover, private providers who must pay more for better educated teachers would pass costs on to consumers, which might force lower-income families to choose informal or lower quality forms of child care (Kelley & Camilli, 2007).

We are addressing supporting college preparation in multiple ways. First, as aforementioned, the state already provides professional development grants and we continue to strive to understand how to most effectively support child care staff qualifications. Second, as discussed in Section B2, we will use RTT funds to pilot and evaluate differential reimbursement rates tied

to AR-BB rating for infants and toddlers and for children in foster care. We know that supporting programs to help off-set the costs of hiring better prepared educators is essential. Third, as discussed in Section B2, we are planning to implement a system to grant significant bonuses for moving into and maintaining higher levels. Like incentive awards, funds from bonus awards may be linked to college education and staff compensation, but can also be used to off-set costs to programs for achieving higher such as scholarships to private pay families in the cases where the cost of care is increased. Fourth, in proposed Level 4 and higher of AR-BB, which will be promulgated into law, we expand state-supported technical assistance specific to professional development. Facilities will develop individual plans for staff which will include college preparation and clock hour professional development. Bonus awards will be offered with the expectation that the funds will be used in the implementation of staff development plans developed by the program and technical assistants. This will allow the state to help guide the use of funds toward retaining qualified staff in the early childhood field. Finally, as described in B4, we will use RTT funding to pilot a targeted program to offer scholarships in high need areas. We'll evaluate this program and if successful, it will be part of our long-term plan after funding ends.

Another system in place in Arkansas that is in need of improvement is the professional development registry (Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways, TAPP). Early childhood educators can view and register online for training opportunities by location, date, content area, or professional level (see TAPP in Section A1), but at present, TAPP does not approve or monitor content of trainings. TAPP was developed as a system to approve trainers to provide professional development opportunities. TAPP tracks trainers across the state and verifies that they have experience training adults and working with children, and that they have formal education in a related field. Competencies of trainers that provide registry-approved trainings through TAPP are confirmed by documentation review at application and by participant satisfaction surveys at the end of each course or workshop. Trainers are expected to align their courses with the document *Arkansas' Key Content Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* (Appendix D2-1) which defines competencies staff should be able to demonstrate at Foundation, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. However, with TAPP providing no oversight of training content, approved trainers have complete discretion over the content and format of their trainings.

There is also little evaluation of the efficacy of professional development. DCCECE contracts with outside institutions such as Arkansas State University, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville to develop and regularly provide training opportunities throughout the state. Much state-funded training is research-based, has a set curriculum, extends beyond a single session, and asks educators to make practical connections to their programs. Some state-supported training utilizes outcomes evaluations to measure gains in participants' skills, knowledge, or attitudes. Most professional development in the state, however, is not evaluated for participant outcomes. When evaluations occur, they focus on participant perceptions of quality rather than the acquisition of new knowledge or meeting learning objectives.

As quality initiatives have expanded, we have increased access to training and the number of online trainings in TAPP has increased. Since the new tiered rating system was introduced in 2010, the number of program directors applying for trainer status has also increased significantly. TAPP reports that as many as 80% of TAPP-registered courses are now initiated by an independent trainer rather than by an institution. Until the TAPP system is revised to monitor training content and curricula, the quality or effectiveness of independent trainings remains unknown.

Teachers, teacher's aides, and paraprofessionals in ABC programs are required to receive training in the following topic areas: Arkansas Early Childhood and Infant/Toddler Education Framework, Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas), Math/Science for Young Children, and Social/Emotional Benchmarks for Young Children. Teachers involved in child assessment must also receive mandatory Child Assessment Training provided by DCCECE. Prescribed topics for programs meeting AR-BB standards are less thorough. Educators in AR-BB are required to attend trainings in ERS, Arkansas Frameworks, developmentally appropriate physical activities, and nutrition for children, and program management and leadership for directors. However, there is great leeway in how these standards are met, whether by short orientation-type trainings or in longer trainings that have a set curriculum and require participants to demonstrate applications to their practice. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some educators fulfill their annual hourly requirements with trainings that do not fit their roles (for example, early childhood educators may take courses intended for school-aged educators because they are available online). At present TAPP does not provide adequate guidance and

safeguards to ensure that staff receive professional development appropriate to their positions and goals. To better guide the quality of the early childhood workforce, the state must make adjustments to our registry and professional development system as a whole.

Technical Assistance/Coaching-Mentoring

Through the professional development and mentoring/coaching embedded in various projects, we have been building a coaching culture in Arkansas for more than ten years. The strengths-based approach our technical assistance (TA) providers are using with staff and administrators models the strengths-based approaches that we support in their interactions with families and the children in their care. Arkansas State University (ASU) Childhood Services provides TA to child care programs upon request or to those identified in need of support by the Child Care Appeal Board, Child Care Licensing Specialist/Supervisor, Special Nutrition Program, or Early Childhood Education Commission. ASU Childhood Services works closely with DCCECE to assist programs into and up through AR-BB levels. With input from the program and child care licensing specialist, the consultant develops an individualized TA and improvement plan. ASU Childhood Services along with DCCECE make the final determination on the level of training/technical assistance to be provided to the child care program. Emphasis is placed on helping program staff develop their own resources for continuous quality improvement.

As stated, Arkansas has been building a mentoring/coaching model for supporting programs for over a decade. In the year 2000, two quality initiative projects established mentoring programs for directors of centers and family child care programs who were seeking Arkansas Quality Approval accreditation. Directors of accredited centers were trained and supported to mentor providers new to the QA system using methods outlined in *The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum: a Handbook for Mentors* (Bellm, Whitebook, & Hnatuik, 1997). In 2001 and 2002, we developed and piloted the Arkansas Early Childhood Mentor Endorsement (45 clock hours). From 2003 to 2006, we adapted the Arkansas Early Childhood Mentor Endorsement as a hybrid course; delivering half of the content delivered online and half in seminars at four locations in the state. We also modified the content; consolidating seven into three seminars. Currently, the Arkansas Early Childhood Mentor Endorsement has been subsumed under the umbrella of the new Leadership Credential.

Mentors and coaches receive the following professional development:

1. The *Essentials of Mentoring and Coaching* course is 24 clock hours which are available online. Content includes reviews of adult learning theory, the importance of relationship building, and a four-step coaching process.

2. The *Strengths-Based Coaching* course is 15 clock hours provided in a series of three seminars. The course uses the nationally recognized curriculum *Strengths-Based Coaching®: A Journey into Coaching* from the Francis Institute at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley in Kansas City. Many employees of DCCECE, all Arkansas State University (ASU) Childhood Services technical assistance providers and mentors/coaches, and staff at each Resource and Referral Agency have completed this training. There are trainers in Arkansas certified to conduct this training by the Francis Institute. For those who have completed the course, we also offer a refresher course on Strengths-Based Coaching.

3. *Instructional Coaching (4 clock hours)*. ASU developed and piloted an online course using facilitator materials provided by NAEYC. The course will be offered twice a year.

There are multiple programs in the state which currently use mentoring and coaching. The availability of mentorship ranges from support of program staff in minimally licensed to ABC programs to program administrators. Technical assistance and mentoring and coaching fill a crucial gap for providers in Arkansas. In evaluations of AR-BB, a majority of program directors report the importance of individual support in the form of TA and coaching (McKelvey & Chapin-Critz, 2011a; 2011b). Given the current voluntary nature of AR-BB, it would appear that TA and coaching/mentoring are valuable for retaining providers in the system. Further, quality programs report less staff-turnover than programs that are minimally licensed, which should lead to more qualified individuals in the early childhood workforce (Miller, 2007).

Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate/Credential

The Arkansas Children's Program Administrators Certificate/Credential (ACPAC/C) seeks to make continuing education on administrative topics accessible to the typical early care and education administrator. Participation in ACPAC/C provides increased professional recognition and growth for both the new and experienced early care and education administrator. This program of continuing education enhances administrator's skills and assists them in successfully achieving their career goals.

Arkansas offers two recognition levels of 60 hours each. The Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate is awarded after completion of a 60-hour course. Topics include organizational management, staffing and supervision, professional development, legal and financial management, family and community relations, and program development. The next level is the Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Credential. The Credential is a more individualized. Administrators working toward the credential select 60 hours from the more than 100 hours of identified curriculum content. This self-selection allows adult learners to exercise control over their professional development and to choose topics that best meet their needs. Credential modules are offered as individual seminars of 4-15 clock hours each. Participants may choose from topics such as managing change, mentoring, leadership, performance management, team building, leadership in diversity, managing conflict, financial management, and numerous other topics. The majority of the Credential curriculum is open to any administrator, regardless of previous participation in the Certificate/Credential program. Participants receive CEU credit upon completion of the Certificate and of the Credential.

In sum, the AR High Quality Plan will support Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities through the following actions:

1. We will monitor the use of *professional development bonus awards and policies around the development of staff professional development plans* to encourage the use of funds towards college preparation.
2. We will *revise the TAPP system and policies surrounding PD*. TAPP will validate training content and outcomes rather than trainer credentials only. TAPP quality standards will require key documentation to confirm the quality of the training. We will clearly map trainings to Core Competencies and to Spectrum levels. The Core Competencies document will be revised to denote trainings linked to each competency. It will prescribe pathways reaching higher Spectrum PD levels through particular courses. The Spectrum will be modified as needed to clarify and reflect prescribe path way. Core Competencies addressed by each training will be searchable and viewable on the TAPP Registry website.
3. We will *enable the TAPP data system to track professional development, advancement, and retention data*. The TAPP Registry will be equipped to track the training each member has received in each of the Core Competencies. A system for automated alerts will be built, so

educators will be notified when a course that fills gaps in their Competencies record has been entered into the system. Because our new licensing standards require all staff to be registered, these individualized notices will significantly increase awareness of Spectrum levels and high-quality trainings across our state. DCCECE will publicly report aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention. PD data will be linked to childcare program data (AR-BB level, number of staff, license history) and to the longitudinal data system.

4. *The content, format and availability of trainings will be improved.* First, we will require all coursework to link with Core Competencies, to be extended in depth and breadth, to have a fixed curriculum, and to address the importance of teacher-child interactions. Second, assessments of pre/post knowledge and skills will be built into all trainings. Results will be used to revise trainings that are ineffective and to target strengths and weaknesses of the trainer pool. Third, we will increase the availability and quality of online and distance training. We will create a standardized protocol for each of the state-sponsored trainings that are linked with Key Core Content Areas (see Appendix D2-1). We will revise trainings to include video-based preparation (to assure fidelity of information being shared) and live consultation on each Key Content topic. We will continue our efforts to link to the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) distance learning, similar to the K12 training system.
5. We will *create targeted training* opportunities that aren't currently addressed or widely available. Areas include career counseling for staff in AR-BB programs to help providers tap all of the higher education benefits available, including PELL grants and tax credits, and effective strategies for serving children with disabilities. We will expand training about the AR-BB application and assessment for directors and make this training mandatory for licensing specialists, program assessors, and TAPP trainers.
6. To improve alignment and transitions that children experience as they age, we will create two sets of *community-based cross-training*: one will train Kindergarten and pre-K educators together; the other will mix infant-toddler and pre-K educators (see E1).
7. We will *pilot and evaluate leadership programs* and study staff turnover throughout Arkansas. We will target specific groups of programs to increase director and staff education.

Directors in lower levels of AR-BB will receive mentorship. We will also offer scholarships to directors to attend college.

8. To learn more about staff turnover in Arkansas, we will *revise the TAPP system to track changes in employment*. We will survey staff to determine reasons for transitions. This data will be linked with licensing and AR-BB data to determine how turnover may impact ratings over time. A detailed evaluation of turnover in Year 1 will also be conducted to examine other effective efforts to reduce turnover.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework					
	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	Unknown				
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider	Unknown				
<i>[Please indicate whether baseline data are actual or estimated and describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information; and please include any definitions you used that are not defined in the notice. If baseline data are not currently available please describe in your High-Quality Plan in your narrative how and when you will have baseline data available.]</i>					

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.										
Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Credential Type 1 <i>Specify:</i>	Unkn	own								
Credential Type 2 <i>Specify:</i>										
Credential Type 3 <i>Specify:</i>										
Credential Type 4 <i>Specify:</i>										
<p><i>Include a row for each credential in the State’s proposed progression of credentials, customize the labeling of the credentials, and indicate the highest and lowest credential.</i></p> <p><i>[Please indicate if baseline data are actual or estimated; describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information.]</i></p>										

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Note: The total available points for (E)(1) and (E)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E).

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

*In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations. (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of eight pages)*

Overview of current and proposed. As seen in A1, Act 825 (the Arkansas Uniform School Readiness Screening legislation) mandated the screening of all children as they enter Kindergarten. Since 2004, the Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI) has been used, and since 2007, data have been included in the state longitudinal data system. As pointed out in A1 and can be seen in Table A-1-12, the QELI does not adequately assess physical well-being, motor development, and social-emotional development. One item on the QELI measures attentive behaviors of the child, but given the import of socio-emotional development and emotion regulation capacities for learning, this is insufficient. Health physicals and hearing/vision screenings are a requirement for all children entering Kindergarten. These hearing/vision screening are also entered into the longitudinal data system, but it is not clear how the data are being utilized. For example, K-12 educators can access ad hoc reports (see A1 for details) but standard reports for individual students or groups of students are not routinely disseminated. Section C2 describes proposed training for early childhood educators to make routine reports useful for instructions. We also propose improvements to the assessments currently being implemented in the state.

While the QELI is a reliable and valid measure (see A1 and Appendix B1-3 for details) and is aligned with the standards (see below), the state is moving toward a replacement assessment tool because QELI does not cover all of the essential domains of development. As seen below, the RTT funding will support the move to a more comprehensive assessment tool which will be implemented in phases starting in 2014. In the meantime, the State data system will be enhanced to support educators in more effectively use the data.

Early Learning Standards and Common Core Standards. The ADE developed a Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist (KRIC) in response to Legislative Act 825 enacted in 2003 by the Arkansas General Assembly. This list of 38 indicators identifies skills and knowledge that a child should have in order to be prepared to enter Kindergarten. In support of the indicators, early childhood and K-12 groups collaboratively developed the KRIC Instructional LINK for Teachers and Parents and supporting publications.²⁴ The LINK for

²⁴ “Getting Ready for Kindergarten Calendar of Family Activities,” and “Getting Children Ready for Kindergarten: A Guide for Teachers and Caregivers of Preschool Children.”

Teachers (LINK; see Appendix E1-1) demonstrates the alignment between benchmarks contained in the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (QELI), the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework, Work Sampling Performance Indicators used by ABC programs, Head Start Outcomes, and K-12 ADE Frameworks.

While the QELI is a list of items to be observed, the LINK for Teachers lists the indicators, plus a number of examples of observable behaviors. These examples give teachers a focus for their observations of each child and a foundation for assigning a rating (not developed, developing, or developed) for the child's level of attainment on each indicator. The LINK can be used by Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers. Kindergarten teachers can use the LINK and transfer the information they recorded into QELI. Pre-K teachers could use the LINK to help use children's Work Sampling System results to individualize instruction where needs are identified to better prepare children for Kindergarten entry.

In July, 2010, the State Board of Education adopted national Common Core Standards. The ADE has a phase in schedule with grades K-3 implementation in August 2011, grades 4-8 scheduled for implementation in August 2012, and the remaining grades for implementation in 2013. Minor revisions to the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework and to LINK publications will be required to maintain alignment between early childhood and K-12 standards.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment – Proposed. Prior to the RTT funding announcement, we recognized the need to obtain a more comprehensive assessment for Kindergarten entry. Arkansas is a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. We are currently working with a number of states in the PARCC consortium who are interested in partnering to develop/purchase a K-2 assessment to assess student learning and growth in Kindergarten through second grade that also provides comparable, valid and reliable information for evaluating the effectiveness of programs, teachers, and schools.

Individuals working with the PARCC consortium are interested in the following objectives for implementing a K-2 Assessment System using a comprehensive assessment tool: 1) to evaluate pre-K students for their readiness to enter Kindergarten, 2) to improve student instruction from Kindergarten through second grade, and 3) to inform teacher and principal

evaluations and serve as input data to states' growth / value added models. More specific key principles that guide thinking of the Consortium on this topic including the following:

- Assessments must be developmentally appropriate and take into account the most contemporary research on learning and assessment in the early grades. Alternatives to the standard paper-and-pencil multiple choice assessments are strongly preferred.
- Assessments provide timely information to inform instruction. Traditional testing procedures in which score reports arrive at schools weeks or months later are not acceptable for this assessment program.
- Assessments are designed to measure the Common Core State Standards.
- Assessments are preferably delivered by computer and ideally harness the power of Web 2.0 / innovation / gaming technology to ensure that students remain engaged in the assessment and that students provide responses from which valid inferences can be made.
- Assessments have sufficient security and validity evidence to be used evaluation of educators, programs, and schools.
- Assessment must be developed to be efficient and cost-effective to ensure sustainability in states such as New York with limited state budgets for assessment.
- Assessment should be developed to ensure all (census) K-2 students within the state are assessed.

As currently defined by the Consortium, the assessment tool is required to include the two common core domains of language and literacy and science. Based on the work of the Consortium, Arkansas will select a tool that includes the additional essential domains: Cognitive/general knowledge and Social and emotional development (e.g., science, executive functioning, socio-emotional development, physical well-being and motor development and approaches toward learning).

Implementation Plan

Assessment Tool. Our goal is to identify a comprehensive tool by the end of 2012, plan for implementation in 2013 (including training and adjustments to the DOE computer systems), and implement in a phased process by 2014. In the meantime, the ADE with the RTT state team will examine feasibility of the addition of assessments to supplement the QELI. However, the long-term goal will be to move forward in the implementation of a new, more comprehensive tool as it

is identified. Training on the new tool (or supplemental tool) will occur starting in 2013 and will be required for Kindergarten teachers statewide. Technology enhancements will also be required. RTT funding may be used for initial purchase of new and/or supplemental assessments, training on the administration and use of the assessments, and technology enhancements.

Effective Use of Data. While the QELI is included in the longitudinal data system (housed in the Arkansas Research Center), the effective and routine use of this data is not current practice. However, substantial work has been completed (see A1, C2, B5). Web-based reporting systems are available to allow educators to access data, however anecdotal evidence suggests that the results of screening assessments are not used as effectively as possible at the individual child level. In conjunction with professional development for teachers and administrators in the use of the new assessment tool, additional professional development will include training on how to use the results to tailor classroom experiences and, when developmental delay or severe deficits are identified, to refer to individual children to services (see also C2).

Transition. Two related activities supported by RTT funds will improve the transition of children into Kindergarten and result in more effective use of data. First, as seen in B4, we proposed to establish local community *Child Care Collaboratives*. A key goal of the Collaboratives will be to link early childhood and Kindergarten educators. Collaboratives will be encouraged to establish yearly meetings to discuss the effective use of data across early childcare programs and K-3.

Second, local professional development will be offered to educators (i.e., teachers and administrators) working with early childcare programs and K-3 classrooms to educate each on the standards, how to interpret assessment scores, and the implications for children and programs at each age of child development. The trainings will be offered locally to encourage educators in a community to jointly attend.

In sum, in addition to funding to support the transition to the new Kindergarten assessment tool, funding with RTT funds will be used to create:

1. Reporting processes using the longitudinal data system to link early childhood assessments for use by K-12 educators
2. Create reporting processes using the longitudinal data system to link Kindergarten Readiness assessments for use by Pre-K programs

3. Create joint training for teachers and administrators in both Pre-K and K-3 on effective data practices, including the individualization of instruction based on assessment results.
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IV. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Note about the Absolute Priority: The absolute priority describes items that a State must address in its application in order to receive a grant. Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, they address this priority throughout their responses to the selection criteria. Applications must meet the absolute priority to be considered for funding. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority

Priority 1: Absolute Priority – Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.

To meet this priority, the State’s application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State’s application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Note about Competitive Preference Priorities: Competitive preference priorities can earn the applicant extra or “competitive preference” points.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority – Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State’s licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

If the State chooses to respond to this competitive preference priority, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

*In scoring this priority, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the priority is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); and the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations. (Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of eight pages)*

Arkansas licenses all programs in the state provided that care is provided for six or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting. Arkansas laws regulate registered family child care homes that provide care for 5 or fewer unrelated children. Becoming a registered family child care home is voluntary, but is required to be eligible to accept child care vouchers. While the state has no current plans to reduce the number of children in care that are subject to licensing, we are currently studying a change in the law to move AR-BB from a voluntary to a mandatory system by moving the requirements for the licensing to the level of AR-BB.

The key goal of the plan is to increase the number of children from birth to Kindergarten entry who are participating in AR-BB, with the goal that all licensed programs will participate. Critical to this goal is to get a sufficient number of programs at quality levels 3 or higher to insure that high-needs children are served in high quality programs.

Arkansas is already in the process of making changes to minimum licensing in an effort to gradually increase the level 1 criteria contained in licensing. For example, as of August 2011, licensing requirements were modified to include a minimum of 15 annual clock hours of training, up from 10 hours, to match the requirements of AR-BB. An anticipated change in the upcoming months is to require that program staff be registered in the professional development registry (TAPP). While the activities outlined are related, we envision that the changes to the AR-BB law will require additional time to be reviewed by the state legislature.

Keeping the system voluntary, but increasing minimum licensing requirements, should increase the number of participants in AR-BB, as no additional action will be required to achieve

quality and incentive awards are offered starting at level 1. Tax credits for businesses and parents are available at level 2 of AR-BB, therefore, in addition to internal incentives to increase in quality, we foresee a system where external pressures from parents will also drive programs to create improvements. Changes to minimum licensing are occurring now and will continue through 2011 and the spring/summer of 2012. Revisions to AR-BB will have to be reviewed by the legislature in the fall session of 2012.

All providers that are eligible for child care or foster care payment vouchers will be part of the AR-BB system. There is a plan to require that vouchers are only paid to programs that reach a quality rating of 3 or higher starting in 2013 after the proposed AR-BB system that contains upper levels is reviewed by the legislature. While this is the best goal for providing that high-risk children are in high-quality programs, it will require time to achieve an adequate number of programs at the highest levels of quality to accommodate the large numbers of voucher-eligible children in the state. There are many areas of the state where level 3 programs are scarce. The state is developing a contingency plan to address care of voucher-eligible children when level 3 programs are unavailable in the area.

As discussed above, registered family child care homes that serve fewer than six unrelated children are eligible to receive payments from the child care voucher system. As of now, family child care homes in Arkansas are less likely to participate in AR-BB. There are multiple activities in this proposal that will support the application of family child care homes to AR-BB, but the state is actively engaged in increasing participation in this disenfranchised group of care providers. Last year, family care providers were interviewed as part of a larger study to understand barriers and incentives to participation. The majority of randomly selected family child care home providers were unfamiliar with AR-BB. Currently, Arkansas is contracting with an external evaluator to better understand the barriers to participation, using the currently adopted standards as a tool to guide discussion on components that may need to be altered to better fit this care group.

Priority 3: Competitive Preference Priority – Understanding the Status of Children’s Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry. (10 points)

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

For Competitive Preference Priority 3, a State will earn all ten (10) competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. A State earns zero points if a majority of reviewers determines that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.

Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, applicants address Competitive Preference Priority 3 either in Table (A)(1)-12 or by writing to selection criterion (E)(1).

Under option (a) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the reviewers determine that the State has not implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); under option (b) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the State earns a score of less than 70 percent of the maximum points available for selection criterion (E)(1).

Specify which option the State is taking:

- (a) Applicant has indicated in Table (A)(1)-12 that all of selection criterion (E)(1) elements are met.
- (b) Applicant has written to selection criterion (E)(1).

Note about Invitational Priorities: Invitational priorities signal areas the Departments are particularly interested in; however addressing these priorities will not earn applicants any additional points.

V. BUDGET

AWARD INFORMATION

Budget Requirements: To support States in planning their budgets, the Departments have developed the following budget caps for each State. The Secretaries will not consider for funding an application from a State that proposes a budget that exceeds the applicable cap set for that State. The Departments developed the following categories by ranking every State according to its share of the national population of children ages birth through five years old from Low-Income families and identifying the natural breaks in the rank order. Then, based on population, budget caps were developed for each category²⁵.

Category 1--Up to \$100 million--California, Florida, New York, Texas.

Category 2--Up to \$70 million--Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania.

Category 3--Up to \$60 million--Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin.

Category 4--Up to \$50 million--Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming.

In addition to considering other relevant factors (see 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3)), the selection of grantees may consider the need to ensure that early learning and development systems are developed in States with large, high-poverty, rural communities (including States with high percentages of high-poverty populations in rural areas and States with high absolute numbers of high-poverty individuals in rural areas). Awards may be granted to high-quality applications out of rank order to meet this need.

Grant Period: The grant period for this award is December 31, 2011 through December 31, 2015.

²⁵ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2009. American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

In the following budget section, the State is responding to selection criterion (A)(4)(b). The State should use its budgets and budget narratives to provide a detailed description of how it plans to use Federal RTT-ELC grant funds and funds from other sources (Federal, State, private, and local) to support projects under the State Plan. States' budget tables and narratives, when taken together, should also address the specific elements of selection criterion (A)(4)(b), including by describing how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan and do so in a manner that

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan

The budget narratives should be of sufficient scope and detail for the Departments to determine if the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable. For further guidance on Federal cost principles, an applicant may wish to consult OMB Circular A-87. (See www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars).

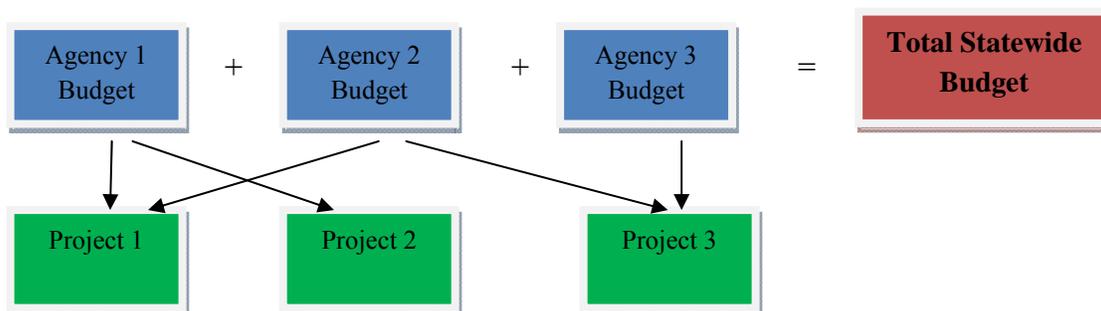
We expect the State to provide a detailed budget by category for each Participating State Agency that rolls up into the total statewide budget. We further expect that the budgets of each Participating State Agency reflect the work associated with fully implementing the High-Quality Plans described under the selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 and describe each Participating State Agency's budgetary role²⁶ in carrying out the State Plan.

For purposes of the budget, we expect that the State will link its proposed High-Quality Plans to "projects" that the State believes are necessary in order to implement its plans. The State might choose to design some projects that address only one criterion's High-Quality Plan, while other projects might address several similarly-focused criteria as one group. For example, the State might choose to have one "management project" focused on criterion (A)(3), organizing and aligning the early learning and development system to achieve success. It might have another "workforce project" that addresses criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) under the Great Early Childhood Education Workforce section.

Some projects may be done entirely by one Participating State Agency, while others may be done by multiple agencies in collaboration with one another. The State, together with its

²⁶ Participating State Agency's budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency's MOU or other binding agreement.

Participating State Agencies, will define the projects required to implement the State Plan and will determine which Participating State Agencies will be involved in each project, as shown below.



To support the budgeting process, we strongly suggest that applicants use the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets prepared by the Departments to build their budgets. These spreadsheets must be submitted together with, but in a file separate from, the application.²⁷ These spreadsheets have formulas built into them that are intended to help States produce the budget tables required within this section.

The following information must be included in the State's budget:

- I. **Budget Summaries:** In this section, the State provides overall budget summary information by budget category, Participating State Agency, and project.
 - a. **Budget Summary by Budget Category.** This is the cover sheet for the budget. (See Budget Table I-1.) States should complete this table as the final step in their budgeting process, and include this table as the first page of the State's budget. (Note: Each row in this table is calculated by adding together the corresponding rows in each of the Participating State Agency Budget by Category tables. If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically.)
 - b. **Budget Summary by Participating State Agency.** This summary lists the total annual budget for each Participating State Agency. (See Budget Table I-2.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-1 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II: Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically for the State.
 - c. **Budget Summary by Project.** This summary lists the total annual budget for each of the projects. (See Budget Table I-3.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-2 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II:

²⁷ See Application Submission Procedures, section XV. Please note that the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets will not be used by the reviewers to judge or score the State's application. However, these spreadsheets do produce tables that States may use in completing the budget tables that the State submits as part of its application. In addition, the budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these “roll-up” calculations are done automatically for the State.

- d. Budget Summary Narrative. This budget narrative accompanies the three Budget Summary Tables and provides the rationale for the budget. The narrative should include, for example, an overview of each Participating State Agency’s budgetary responsibilities and descriptions of each project that the State has included in its budget.

II. Budgets for Each Participating State Agency. In this section, the State describes each Participating State Agency’s budgetary responsibilities.²⁸ The State should replicate this section for each Participating State Agency and for each Participating State Agency complete the following:

- a. Participating State Agency By Budget Category. This is the budget for each Participating State Agency by budget category for each year for which funding is requested. (See Budget Table II-1.)
- b. Participating State Agency By Project. This table lists the Participating State Agency’s proposed budget for each project in which it is involved. (See Budget Table II-2.)
- c. Participating State Agency Budget Narrative. This budget narrative describes the Participating State Agency’s budget category line items and addresses how the Participating State Agency’s budget will support the implementation of each project in which it is involved.

The State should replicate Budget Part II for each Participating State Agency as follows:

- For Participating State Agency 1: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative
- For Participating State Agency 2: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative

²⁸ Participating State Agency’s budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency’s MOU or other binding agreement.

BUDGET PART I: SUMMARY**BUDGET PART I - TABLES**

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category--The State must include the budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant. These line items are derived by adding together the corresponding line items from each of the Participating State Agency Budget Tables.

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	275,415	275,415	275,415	275,415	1,101,660
2. Fringe Benefits	71,467	71,467	71,467	71,467	285,868
3. Travel	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	140,000
4. Equipment	24,000	0	0	0	24,000
5. Supplies	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	28,000
6. Contractual	5,531,231	12,381,231	13,031,231	12,831,231	43,774,924
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	5,944,113	12,770,113	13,420,113	13,220,113	45,354,452
10. Indirect Costs*	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000
12. Funds set aside for participation	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
in grantee technical assistance					
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	6,469,113	13,555,113	14,055,113	13,855,113	47,934,452
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	174,407,315	181,493,315	181,993,315	181,793,315	719,687,260
<u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.					
<u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.					
<u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.					
<u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.					
<u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.					
<u>Line 12:</u> The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.					
<u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.					
<u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.					

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency--The State must include the budget totals for each Participating State Agency for each year of the grant. These line items should be consistent with the totals of each of the Participating State Agency Budgets provided in Budget Tables II-1.

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

Participating State Agency	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<i>Arkansas Department of Human Services</i>	6,164,113	12,990,113	13,640,113	13,440,113	46,234,452
<i>Arkansas Department of Education</i>	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000
Total Statewide Budget	6,469,113	13,555,113	14,055,113	13,855,113	47,934,452

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project--The State must include the proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant. These line items are the totals, for each project, across all of the Participating State Agencies' project budgets, as provided in Budget Tables II-2.

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Projects	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR-BB	2,611,767	6,499,767	6,399,767	6,399,767	21,911,068
Complete the Comprehensive Assessment System	1,061,601	2,357,601	3,407,601	3,407,601	10,234,404
Build System to Effectively Engage Families	1,513,488	2,059,488	1,909,488	1,709,488	7,191,952
Professional Development System - Improvements	607,257	1,703,257	1,703,257	1,703,257	5,717,028
Effective Use of Data Including Kindergarten Assessment Tool	455,000	715,000	415,000	415,000	2,000,000
Technical Assistance Set Aside	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
Indirect Costs	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
Total Statewide Budget	6,469,113	13,555,113	14,055,113	13,855,113	47,934,452

BUDGET PART I -NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the overall structure of the State's budget for implementing the State Plan, including

- *A list of each Participating State Agency, together with a description of its budgetary and project responsibilities;*
 - *A list of projects and a description of how these projects taken together will result in full implementation of the State Plan;*
 - *For each project:*
 - *The designation of the selection criterion or competitive preference priority the project addresses;*
 - *An explanation of how the project will be organized and managed in order to ensure the implementation of the High-Quality Plans described in the selection criteria or competitive preference priorities; and*
 - *Any information pertinent to understanding the proposed budget for each project.*
-

The Arkansas Department of Human Services and in particular, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), will act as the lead agency in implementation of the state plan. In addition, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) will partner with DCCECE on the Effective Use of Data Including Kindergarten Assessment Tool project within the state plan. All remaining projects will be managed by DCCECE.

Both Agencies will utilize the Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System (AASIS), the State of Arkansas' accounting system, in fulfilling their individual accounting, budgeting, and reporting responsibilities.

All transactions within the projects will have to comply with and support policies and procedures promulgated by the Department of Finance and Administration Offices of Budget, Personnel Management, Accounting, State Procurement, and the Division of Employee Benefits. In addition, all project budgets will be monitored under the auspices and review of the Arkansas General Assembly and its applicable oversight committees. The projects are also subject to the appropriate authority of this body.

DCCECE's chief fiscal officer will be the lead agent in assuring the financial and reporting integrity of the project and will be aided by various members of the Office of Administration and Reporting inside DHS, drawing from their individual areas of expertise as necessary for the success of the project.

Details of the each project and activity are found by section (see in Project name). A timeline and responsible staff are listed in tables in A4. All RFP assume a minimal 20% contract fee (e.g., indirect).

Project 1: Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR (Details in Section B)	
Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
1. Raise Licensing to AR-BB Level 1	Increase compactly for mentorship with training for mentors, mentorship at program level (contract), computer equipment and assessment tools for programs, marketing supplies to support programs, training and software to report to DCCECE. Based on # programs x \$/program
2. Bonus Grants for Increased Quality	Estimated by # programs x average bonus per program (bonus includes some cost for coaches and education
3. Evaluation of Bonus Grants	Qualitative evaluation of bonus impact to include analysis of state data on quality, data collection from programs regarding barriers
4. Pilot/evaluate differential reimbursement rates	\$4,800 / year by ~ 200 children, \$10,000 by ~48 children, costs for support to move to longitudinal system, evaluation of impact with information from parents, programs and state system
5. Voucher payment linked to AR-BB Level 3 and higher	Policy change, funding continues from current sources
6. Expand our R&R network to meet additional needs for the duration of the grant	Train additional individuals statewide from local communities, training by contract, individuals work by contract or with R&Rs
7. Establish local Child Care Collaborative throughout the State	Funds for contract to develop training and materials, coordination by DCCECE grant staff, contract with identified facilitators in community and provide training; seed money by contract with community collaborative based on their response to RFP
8. Target Children with Disabilities with Expansion of Special Quest	Contract for training for SpecialQuest teams, teams identified by response to RFP
9. Target children in foster care with expanded Project PLAY	Based on current contract parameters, RFP will include costs for ECMH consultants in local mental health organizations, contractual supervision, support, and travel to monitor and implement.
10. Target programs in areas with high numbers of Children with High Needs to increase quality	RFP directed toward programs in high need areas (as defined by the state based on maps of need vs capacity). RFP to include scholarship for program staff/director, mentorship by identified support in local agency, equipment and supplies
11. Expand development of the Resource directory for parent access	Coordination of grant funded staff, contract to request programming support to implement parent access link
12. Move programs with high % of children with disabilities into AR-BB	RFP to mentor targeted programs and support program in transition to CLASS

Project 1: Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR (Details in Section B)	
Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
13. Independent Evaluation of AR-BB Levels	RFP for evaluation of center quality and child outcomes as describe in B5 including child data. Estimates for cost based on current statewide evaluation of ABC
14. Increase links to the longitudinal data system	DCCECE grant staff coordinate within current funding of longitudinal data system
15. Evaluate Financial Incentives to increase quality levels	DCCECE grant staff in collaboration of Commission
16. Implement ASQ as common screen in current programs	Support to existing programs to for materials and training to move to ASQ as screener
17. Computer system to link AR-BB quality, educator PD and credentials, with child assessments	(Linked to Project 4) – RFP for new or revision of current system to use web based technology to allow educators to track PD with link to program and child to incorporate ID to link all to longitudinal data system
18. Implement common Formative Assessment	RFP to purchase formative assessment tools, provide training and mentorship support for implementation
19. Adopt CLASS	Target CLASS into project in lower levels of quality or not in AR-BB to support transition, RFP will include heavy mentorship and support to effectively use the data
Project 2: Complete the Comprehensive Assessment System (Details in Section C2)	
Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
1. Implement ASQ as common screen	RFP for statewide expansion of ASQ to new projects. Estimates based on this project, with \$500/program for materials, mentorship thru R&R system, training for new R&R contract and training for program staff
2. Computer system to be accessed by all programs	RFP to create state system for data reporting by programs to replace all vendor software currently used, allow easy web based entry with useful features for programs to meet all reporting needs; include port for families to access information and link to longitudinal system
3. Implement common Formative Assessment	RFP to targeting existing programs to purchase formative assessment tools, provide training and mentorship support for implementation
4. Adopt CLASS	Costs linked to Project 1 and 2, RFP to implement CLASS in high quality programs, includes materials, training, and support for use of results

Project 3: Build System to Effectively Engage Families (Details in Section C4)

Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
1. Link and develop materials with Child Care Collaborative	DCCECE grant support staff will coordinate with activities described in E1
2. Link the resource guides of the AR Mapping project for dissemination and sustainability by producing training and advertising materials	DCCECE grant support staff will coordinate with activities described in B2 RFP for production of training and advertising materials
3. Expand the Community Café's for dissemination and sustainability	RFP to community agency to lead local groups with material produced by the DCCECE grant staff and other staff
4. Imagination Library - Support for CCC or subgroups to apply for support for	RFP for coordination with CCC programs and materials for 210,000 children for \$24/child for 4 years,
5. Develop PD series of curriculum-based 3-hour modules on each of the Strengthening Families	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation
6. Develop PD for the effective use of the <i>Family Connection</i> material	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation
7. Pilot and evaluate FASD screening and educational materials for childcare providers.	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation
8. Offer Family Map training and materials to QIRS of level 3 and above	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation
9. Offer TIPS training and materials available to QIRS of level 3 and above	RFP for materials from TIPS, training and train-the-trainer modules, mentorship
10. Conduct a randomized assessment of TIPS/FM linked with mentoring from trained community professionals to support in mentor role	RFP for extensive evaluation of implementation of family engagement system with addition of mentorship
11. Link AHVN data systems to DCCECE and longitudinal data systems; provide training of home visitors for	RFP to develop system to link AHVN programs to longitudinal system and share data with DCCECE

Project 3: Build System to Effectively Engage Families (Details in Section C4)

Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
transition support for families	
12. Pilot screening and improving linkages to evidence-based treatments for maternal depression	RFP for implementation and evaluation of materials and use in a range of settings

Project 4: Professional Development System – Improve System (Details in Section D2)

Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
1. Revise <i>the TAPP policies surrounding PD</i>	RFP for analysis, recommendations, development of new materials, policy, and documents to educate regarding the PD and TAPP system
2. Revise <i>the TAPP computer system surrounding PD, and tracking /monitoring trainings</i>	RFP for revisions to or creation of new computer system to allow state to track educator turnover, track credentials of educators, track offerings of PD, link educator , spectrum, and educator need for auto alters
3. Revise existing trainings and create new <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create trainings targeted at career counseling and support for higher education of staff b. Community-based cross-training c. Pilot and evaluate leadership programs 	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation

Project 5: Effective Use of Data including Kindergarten Assessment (Details in Section E1)

Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
1. Support the transition to the new Kindergarten assessment tool	RFP for purchase of tools, development of training, implementation and evaluation of training
2. Create joint training for early childhood and K12 educators	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation
3. Create reporting process using the longitudinal data system to link early childhood assessments for	RFP to develop web based reports and automatic distribution with documentation for effective use of data

Project 5: Effective Use of Data including Kindergarten Assessment (Details in Section E1)

Activity	Considerations for Estimates of RFP
use by K12 educators 4. Create reporting process using the longitudinal data system to link K assessments for use by Pre-K programs	RFP to develop web based reports and automatic distribution with documentation for effective use of data
5. Create teacher and administrators training on effective data use	RFP for PD materials using technology (video to standardize key content), pre/post, link to core competency, evaluation

The projects listed above when taken together will assist the State of Arkansas in fulfilling its goal of maximizing the implementation of a high quality child care system. Implementation of the projects in this state plan constitutes the logical extension of efforts to achieve the goals which were established by the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission in 2009:

- 1) Increase the number of infant and toddlers served in quality, licensed centers annually.
- 2) Increase parental involvement in the child's education through research-based models and programs to enhance child outcomes and success in school annually.
- 3) Through state policies create an integrated system of professional development uniting the early childhood sectors: child care, Head Start, pre-K, public schools, and early intervention and special education services (adopted from Workforce Designs National Association for the Education of Young Children).
- 4) Support implementation of the AR-BB QRIS.
- 5) Strengthen and expand local and state partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY

The State must complete Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, and a narrative for each Participating State Agency with budgetary responsibilities. Therefore, the State should replicate the Budget Part II tables and narrative for each Participating State Agency, and include them in this section as follows:

- *Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*
- *Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*

BUDGET PART II -TABLES

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency Budget By Budget Category--The State must include the Participating State Agency's budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant.

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) Arkansas Department of Human Services					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	275,415	275,415	275,415	275,415	1,101,660
2. Fringe Benefits	71,467	71,467	71,467	71,467	285,868
3. Travel	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	140,000
4. Equipment	24,000	0	0	0	24,000
5. Supplies	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	28,000
6. Contractual	5,531,231	12,381,231	13,031,231	12,831,231	43,774,924
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	5,944,113	12,770,113	13,420,113	13,220,113	45,354,452
10. Indirect Costs*	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
11. Funds to be distributed to localities,					

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) Arkansas Department of Human Services					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.					
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	6,164,113	2,990,113	13,640,113	13,440,113	46,234,452
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	671,752,808
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	174,102,315	170,928,315	181,578,315	181,378,315	717,987,260
<p><u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p><u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Arkansas Department of Education</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel					
2. Fringe Benefits					
3. Travel					
4. Equipment					
5. Supplies					
6. Contractual	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000
7. Training Stipends					
8. Other					
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000
10. Indirect Costs*					
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.					
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance					
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan					
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000

<u>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency</u> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Arkansas Department of Education</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p><u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p><u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency’s allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) Arkansas Department of Human Services					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Increasing the Quality and Quantity of Programs in AR-BB	2,611,767	6,499,767	6,399,767	6,399,767	21,911,068
Complete the Comprehensive Assessment System	1,061,601	2,357,601	3,407,601	3,407,601	10,234,404
Build System to Effectively Engage Families	1,513,488	2,059,488	1,909,488	1,709,488	7,191,952
Professional Development System - Improvements	607,257	1,703,257	1,703,257	1,703,257	5,717,028
Effective Use of Data Including Kindergarten Assessment Tool	150,000	150,000	0	0	300,000
Technical Assistance Set Aside	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
Indirect Costs	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
Total Budget	6,164,113	12,990,113	13,640,113	13,440,113	46,234,452

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Arkansas Department of Education</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Effective Use of Data Including Kindergarten Assessment Tool	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000
Total Budget	305,000	565,000	415,000	415,000	1,700,000

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the Participating State Agency's budget, including--

- *How the Participating State Agency plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work;*
- *For each project in which the Participating State Agency is involved, and consistent with the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:*
 - *An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities*
 - *An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived*
- *A detailed explanation of each budget category line item, including the information below.*

1) Personnel

Provide:

- The title and role of each position to be compensated under this grant.
- The salary for each position.
- The amount of time, such as hours or percentage of time, to be expended by each position.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The importance of each position to the success of specific. If curriculum vitae, an organizational chart, or other supporting information will be helpful to reviewers, attach in the Appendix and describe its location.

2) Fringe Benefits

Provide:

- The fringe benefit percentages for all personnel.
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

3) Travel

Provide:

- An estimate of the number of trips.
- An estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs for each trip.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the travel, how it relates to project goals, and how it will contribute to project success.

4) Equipment

Provide:

- The type of equipment to be purchased.

- The estimated unit cost for each item to be purchased.
- The definition of equipment used by the State.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The justification of the need for the items of equipment to be purchased.

5) Supplies

Provide:

- An estimate of materials and supplies needed, by nature of expense or general category (*e.g.*, instructional materials, office supplies).
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

6) Contractual

Provide:

- The products to be acquired and/or the professional services to be provided.
- The estimated cost per expected procurement.
- For professional services contracts, the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to this proposed grant award.
- A brief statement that the State has followed the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose and relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

7) Training Stipends

Note:

- The training stipend line item only pertains to costs associated with long-term training programs and college or university coursework that results in a credential or degree, not workshops or short-term training supported by this program.
- Salary stipends paid to teachers and other early learning personnel for participating in short-term professional development should be reported in Personnel (line 1).

Provide:

- Descriptions of training stipends to be provided, consistent with the “note” above.
- The cost estimates and basis for these estimates.

Explain:

- The purpose of the training.

8) Other

Provide:

- Other items by major type or category.
- The cost per item (printing = \$500, postage = \$750).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the expenditures.

9) Total Direct Costs

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures, across all budget categories in lines 1-8, for each year of the budget.

10) Indirect Costs

Provide:

- Identify and apply the indirect cost rate. (See the section that follows, Budget: Indirect Cost Information.)

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Provide:

- The specific activities to be done by localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners.
- The estimated cost of each activity.
- The approximate number of localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners involved in each activity.
- The total cost of each activity (across all localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of each activity and its relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Department expects that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Provide:

- The amount per year set aside for this Participating State Agency.

Note: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

13) Total Funds Requested

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 9-12, for each year of the budget.

13) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

Provide:

- A description of the sources of other funds the State is using to support the projects in the State Plan.
- A description of how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used for activities and services described in the State Plan, if applicable.
- Any financial contributions being made by private entities such as foundations.

Explain:

- Each funding source, the activities being funded and their relation to the State Plan or specific project, and any requirements placed on the use of funds or timing of the activity.

14) Total Budget

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 13 and 14, for each year of the budget

The majority of the activities will be conducted by contract services. A core team of staff will be hired to direct and monitor the grant activities. Staff members to be hired are described below. An organizational chart is included in Appendix A3-1 detailing the reporting and supervision structure envisioned for the new hires proposed in the State Plan.

Salaries are based on graded positions as determined by the Office of Personnel management and represent the normal hiring salary for each grade.

1) Personnel

Consistent with the policies of the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration those compensated under this grant will be classified as follows:

Title	DHS Program Administrator	Quantity	One new hire
Salary	\$41,159	Status	Full time employee dedicated to the project

To be Hired, DHS Program Administrator (1 FTE): The Program Administrator will work under the direction of the Assistant Director of DCCECE and will supervise four Program Managers and a Budget Manager by developing short and long term goals and objectives, determining the allocation of internal and external resources, and overseeing the functions of program activities to ensure fulfillment of the organization's mission and objectives. Interviews, recommends for hire, trains, coordinates, assigns, reviews work, and evaluates the performance of incumbents. Monitors and evaluates service programs and recommends corrective action when needed. Writes and implements grants, assesses grant criteria to ensure compliance, and researches alternative grant sources. Provides technical assistance regarding program, personnel, and policy matters and provides oral/written information and testimony. Develops and prepares operational and personnel budgets by analyzing, compiling, and preparing reports, proposals, and correspondence. Serves on various committees and task forces to stay abreast on service program information. Performs other duties as assigned.

Title	DHS Program Manager	Quantity	Four new hires
Salary	\$37,322	Status	Full time employee dedicated to the project.

To be Hired, DHS Program Managers (4 FTE): Program Managers work under direct supervision from the Program Administrator. Program Managers determine program goals, objectives, and guidelines, develop and implement policies and procedures, evaluate program effectiveness and compliance, initiate corrective actions or revisions, and provide technical direction and administrative support to program personnel. Program managers will disseminate and interpret regulations, policies, and procedures to program participants, coordinates internal and external personnel and activities to identify needs, problems, and accomplishments of program, conducts meetings to discuss program progress or problems, and presents program workshops or training. Participates in the development of an operating budget by identifying program needs, preparing justifications, monitoring expenditures, approving reallocation of funds, and preparing related reports. Performs one or more of the following activities related to program responsibilities, including approving final orders, system design and/or licenses, researching and compiling survey and statistical data, and performing the duties of professional program staff as needed. Performs other duties as assigned.

Title	DHS Budget Manager	Quantity	One new hire
Salary	\$47,646	Status	Full time employee dedicated to the project

To be Hired, DHS Budget Manager (1 FTE): The Budget Manager works under supervision of the Program Administrator. The Budget Manager works in conjunction with senior staff in implementation and management of projects related to the RTT-ELC state plan. Manages staff dedicated to individual projects within the overall state plan. Prepares ad hoc reports concerning budgets and expenditures for RTT-ELC. Monitors and analyzes the fiscal operations of the agency to identify potential problems and provide advice concerning budgetary or operating adjustments that may be necessary. Receives information regarding budget adjustments and state funds management and prepares revisions. Compiles and analyzes data on major budget issues

for consideration by senior management. Knowledge and proficiency in the Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System (AASIS) and the Planning Budgeting and Accountability System (PBAS). Knowledge of the principles and practices of accounting. Ability to interpret and apply laws, rules, and policies governing public expenditures. Ability to analyze financial data, project outcomes, and recommend future actions. Ability to compile and analyze detailed manual and/or computerized records and prepare financial and narrative reports. Ability to provide technical assistance and convey and exchange specialized oral and written information. Ability to plan, organize, and oversee the work of subordinates and/or co-workers.

2) Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefit calculations are based on a fourteen percent payroll burden plus the projected cost of health insurance for each employee. All calculations are based on historical trends and are consistent with the standard calculations with DHS.

3) Travel

All travel will be consistent with the goal of local integration and buy in for the projects. Very little overnight travel is expected but will be necessary from time to time. Travel will include grant staff travel to community meetings and meet with contract staff to monitor progress. Employees are eligible for reimbursement of any private use of a personal vehicle as well as meals and hotel expense for overnight trips. Mileage rates will be based on current state policy.

4) Equipment

Each position will be outfitted with a mobile computer, a desktop computer and a smart phone. DCCECE considers these tools to be necessary to maintain the level of efficiency within the Division and they are consistent with the equipment assigned to individuals performing similar duties within the existing organization. All equipment will be procured under the guidelines discussed in the response #6 below and will follow current Arkansas procurement laws, policies and regulations.

5) Supplies

The costs of supplies have been estimated based on the expected needs of the positions with consideration given to the normal annual cost for similar employees within the Division. Supplies will be limited in nature and will be mainly made up of items needed for the efficient performance of their duties.

6) Contractual

The individual contract descriptions envisioned in this grant proposal are provided in the attached excel documents. Detail contract specifications will be developed as described in the timeline and Section A4. Contracts are broken out by project, year, and applicable State entity. Estimates for contract amounts are based on past contracts of similar work (e.g., development of professional development, evaluation of child outcomes). Also see Tables in A4 detailing activities and resource needs.

Arkansas will continue to follow the successful model utilized in existing contract initiatives in place for contracts related to Quality and Targeted expenses under the CCDF Block Grant. In

addition, the schedule indicates the proposed lengths of the contracts and breaks out the expected expenditures on an annual basis over the life of the grant.

The State of Arkansas and follows the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36. The following excerpt details applicable State of Arkansas procurement policies, rules and laws:

The Financial Guidelines for Purchased Services (hereinafter referred to as Financial Guidelines) provides the rules and regulations governing financial control of purchase of services funds administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Finance and Administration (OFA). The Financial Guidelines is applicable to all funding sources unless exceptions or additions appear in regulations governing specific funding sources.

The following state and federal laws, regulations, and policy govern the operation of the purchase of services program.

- A. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (Section 2352 P.L. 97-35)
- B. The Civil Rights Act of 1964: prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in all federally funded programs
- C. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in federally funded programs
- D. Age Discrimination Act of 1975: prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in federally funded programs
- E. Anti-Lobbying Act (P.L. 101-121 Section 319): prohibits recipients of federal contracts, grants, and loans from using appropriated funds for lobbying the Executive or Legislative Branches of the federal government in connection with a specific contract, grant or loan
- F. Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336): prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and provides equal opportunities in employment, state and local governmental entities, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications for persons with disabilities
- G. funds between a federal agency and a state to encourage development of efficient cash management systems
- H. Debarment and Suspension (Executive Order 12549): prohibits doing business with persons suspended or barred from doing business with any agency of the Executive Branch
- I. Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (P.O. 100-690, Title V. Subtitle D): requires contractors
- G. Cash Management Improvement Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-453): requires the timely transfer of and grantees of federal agencies to certify that they will provide drug-free workplaces
- J. Pro-Children Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-227): prohibits smoking in certain facilities in which education, library, day care, health care, and early childhood development (including Women, Infant, and Children's and Head Start) services are provided to children

1220 Applicable Federal Regulations

The major federal regulations governing the operation of the programs are:

- A. 2 CFR Part 215 (Revised as of January 01, 2009): regulates implementation of uniform administrative requirements for awards and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations
- B. 2 CFR Part 376 (Revised as of January 01, 2009) Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension: regulates implementation of the common rule; restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred and suspended or otherwise excluded from participation in Federal assistance programs
- C. 3 CFR 1986 Comp., p. 189 (Revised as of January 01, 2010): regulates implementation of Drug-free Workplace Act of 1988
- D. 28 CFR Part 35 (Revised as of July 01, 2009): regulates implementation of Subtitle A of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- E. 31 CFR Part 205 (Revised as of July 01, 2009): regulates implementation of the Cash Management Improvement Act to provide effectiveness and equity in the exchange of funds between the states and the federal government for federal assistance programs
- F. 45 CFR Part 74 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of uniform administrative requirements for awards and sub-awards to institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofit organizations, and commercial organizations
- G. 45 CFR Part 76 (May 01, 2010): regulates implementation of Health and Human Services Government-wide debarment and suspension (non-procurement)
- H. 45 CFR Part 80 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of Civil Rights Act of 1964
- I. 45 CFR Part 84 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of nondiscrimination against the handicapped (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended)
- J. 45 CFR Part 86 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): eliminates discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance
- K. 45 CFR Part 87 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): establishes equal treatment for faith-based organizations
- L. 45 CFR Part 90 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- M. 45 CFR Part 91 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of nondiscrimination on the basis of age in Health and Human Services programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance
- N. 45 CFR Part 92 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of uniform administrative requirements for grants and cooperative agreements to state, local, and tribal governments
- O. 45 CFR Part 93 (Revised as of October 01, 2009): regulates implementation of new restrictions on lobbying so that federal grant funds may not be used by grantee or sub-grantee to support lobbying or influence legislation
- P. 48 CFR Part 31 (Revised as of October 01, 2009) Contract Cost Principles and Procedures: addresses the cost principles to which organizations, vendors, and subcontractors are subject
- Q. 41 USC Chapter 10 (Revised January 05, 2009): regulates implementation of Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988

- R. Section 1352 of Title 31 USC (Revised as of January 05, 2009): regulates implementation of the Anti-Lobbying Act
- S. OMB Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions"
- T. OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments"
- U. OMB Circular A-102, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments"
- V. OMB Circular A-110, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations"
- W. OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations"
- X. OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations"
- Y. Government Auditing Standards – 2007 Revision (Yellow Book)
- Z. Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, Common Rule

7) Training Stipends

None planned in the proposal.

8) Other

None planned in the proposal.

9) Total Direct Costs

\$45,354,452 - See attached excel documents detailing this information.

10) Indirect Costs

\$480,000 - See attached excel documents detailing specific amounts..

The DHS Cost Allocation Plan is updated quarterly by the DHS Office of Finance and Administration, Managerial Accounting, Cost Allocation/Research and Statistics. The completed amendments to the Plan are submitted to and approved by the regional office of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Cost Allocation, once each quarter. The Plan contains a description of each of the allocation methodologies employed in allocating costs of DHS to the appropriate programs. The Plan also includes cost center and cost allocation narratives and definitions.

Managerial Accounting is responsible for reviewing operations on a continuing basis to ensure that the currently approved Plan adheres to requirements established in Subpart E of 45 CFR Part 95 and 2 CFR Part 225. The existing Plan will be amended if:

- A. The procedures in the existing Plan become outdated because of organizational changes, changes in federal law or regulations, or significant changes in program levels affecting the validity of the approved procedures.
- B. DHS, the Director of the U.S. DHHS Division of Cost Allocation (DCA) or DHHS service program divisions discovers a material defect in the Plan.
- C. The State Plan for public assistance programs is amended to affect the allocation of costs.
- D. Program funds become fully expended or are eliminated due to congressional action.
- E. A twelve to eighteen month review of each methodology reveals an inconsistency within a division.
- F. Other changes occur which make the allocation basis or procedures in the approved Plan invalid.

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

\$1,700,000 Arkansas Department of Education

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

As seen in the budget detail, Arkansas set aside \$100,000 on an annual basis in order to comply with this provision.

13) Total Funds Requested

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	6,469,113	13,555,113	14,055,113	13,855,113	47,934,452

13) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	167,938,202	671,752,808

See Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan for detail financial figures.

VI. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) The State's application must be signed by the Governor or an authorized representative; an authorized representative from the Lead Agency; and an authorized representative from each Participating State Agency. The State must provide the required signatures in section IV, Application Assurances and Certifications of the application.

(b) The State must submit a certification from the State Attorney General or an authorized representative that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation. The State must provide this certification in section IV, Application Assurances and Certifications of the application.

(c) The State must complete the budget spreadsheets that are provided in the application package and submit the completed spreadsheet as part of its application. These spreadsheets should be included on the CD or DVD that the State submits as its application.

Note: The budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews. However, the reviewers will not judge or score these budget spreadsheets. Reviewers will limit their evaluation of the State's response to (A)(4)(b) to the information provided by the State in the budget section of the application (see section VIII, Budget).

(d) The State must submit preliminary scopes of work for each Participating State Agency as part of the executed MOU or other binding agreement. (See section XIII in this application.) Each preliminary scope of work must describe the portions of the State's proposed plans that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement. If a State is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, the State will have up to 90 days to complete final scopes of work for each Participating State Agency. (See section (k) of the Program Requirements, section XI in this application.)

(e) The State must include a budget that details how it will use grant funds awarded under this competition, and funds from other Federal, State, private, and local sources to achieve the outcomes of the State Plan (as described in selection criterion (A)(4)(a)), and how the State will use funds awarded under this program to--

(1) Achieve its targets for increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs that are participating in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criterion (B)(2)(c)); and

(2) Achieve its targets for increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criterion (B)(4)(c)).

(f) The State must provide an overall summary for the State Plan and a rationale for why it has chosen to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area, including—

- How the State's choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)); and
- Why these selected criteria will best achieve the State's ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

(g) The State, within each Focused Investment Area, must select and address--

- Two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
- One or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Areas (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

(h) Where the State is submitting a High-Quality Plan, the State must include in its application a detailed plan that is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and includes, but need not be limited to--

(1) The key goals;

(2) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation;

(3) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;

(4) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;

(5) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;

(6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;

(7) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;

(8) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and

(9) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

VII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A State receiving funds under an RTT-ELC grant must submit an annual report that must include, in addition to the standard elements, a description of the State's progress to date on its goals, timelines, and budgets, as well as actual performance compared to the annual targets the State established in its application with respect to each performance measure. Further, a State receiving funds under this program is accountable for meeting the goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets established in the application; adhering to an annual fund drawdown schedule that is tied to meeting these goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets; and fulfilling and maintaining all other conditions for the conduct of the project. The Departments will monitor a State's progress in meeting the State's goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets and in fulfilling other applicable requirements. In addition, we may collect additional data as part of a State's annual reporting requirements.

To support a collaborative process with the State, we may require that applicants who are selected to receive an award enter into a written performance or cooperative agreement. If we determine that a State is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, we will take appropriate action, which could include establishing a collaborative process or taking enforcement measures with respect to this grant, such as placing the State in high-risk status, putting the State on reimbursement payment status, or delaying or withholding funds.

VIII. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A State that receives a grant must meet the following requirements:

(a) The State must continue to participate in the programs authorized under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA; in the CCDF program; and in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program (pursuant to section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)) for the duration of the grant.

(b) The State is prohibited from spending funds from the grant on the direct delivery of health services.

(c) The State must participate in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS, individually or in collaboration with other State grantees in order to share effective program practices and solutions and collaboratively solve problems, and must set aside at least \$400,000 from its grant funds for this purpose.

(d) The State must--

(1) Comply with the requirements of any evaluation sponsored by ED or HHS of any of the State's activities carried out with the grant;

(2) Comply with the requirements of any cross-State evaluation--as part of a consortium of States--of any of the State's proposed reforms, if that evaluation is coordinated or funded by ED or HHS, including by using common measures and data collection instruments and collecting data necessary to the evaluation;

(3) Together with its independent evaluator, if any, cooperate with any technical assistance regarding evaluations provided by ED or HHS. The purpose of this technical assistance will be to ensure that the validation of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and any other evaluations conducted by States or their independent evaluators, if any, are of the highest quality and to encourage commonality in approaches where such commonality is feasible and useful;

(4) Submit to ED and HHS for review and comment its design for the validation of its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criteria (B)(5)) and any other evaluations of activities included in the State Plan, including any activities that are part of the State's Focused Investment Areas, as applicable; and

(5) Make widely available through formal (*e.g.*, peer-reviewed journals) or informal (*e.g.*, newsletters) mechanisms, and in print or electronically, the results of any evaluations it conducts of its funded activities.

(e) The State must have a longitudinal data system that includes the 12 elements described in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act by the date required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) grant and in accordance with Indicator (b)(1) of its approved SFSF plan.

(f) The State must comply with the requirements of all applicable Federal, State, and local privacy laws, including the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act, and the privacy requirements in IDEA, and their applicable regulations.

(g) The State must ensure that the grant activities are implemented in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

(h) The State must provide researchers with access, consistent with the requirements of all applicable Federal State, and local privacy laws, to data from its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the State's coordinated early learning data system (if applicable) so that they can analyze the State's quality improvement efforts and answer key policy and practice questions.

(i) Unless otherwise protected as proprietary information by Federal or State law or a specific written agreement, the State must make any work (*e.g.*, materials, tools, processes, systems) developed under its grant freely available to the public, including by posting the work on a Web site identified or sponsored by ED or HHS. Any Web sites developed under this grant must meet government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

(j) Funds made available under an RTT-ELC grant must be used to supplement, not supplant, any Federal, State, or local funds that, in the absence of the funds awarded under this grant, would be available for increasing access to and improving the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs.

(k) For a State that is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, the State will have up to 90 days from the grant award notification date to complete final scopes of work for each Participating State Agency. These final scopes of work must contain detailed work plans that are consistent with their corresponding preliminary scopes of work and with the State's grant application, and must include the Participating State Agency's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures for the portions of the State's proposed plans that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement.

IX. CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES

Generally, all procurement transactions by State or local educational agencies made with RTT-ELC grant funds must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition, consistent with the standards in section 80.36 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). This section requires that grantees use their own procurement procedures (which reflect State and local laws and regulations) to select contractors, provided that those procedures meet certain standards described in EDGAR.

Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

X. PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE
PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY
MODEL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING****(Appendix C of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge
Notice Inviting Applications)****Background for Memorandum of Understanding**

Each Participating State Agency identified in a State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State Plan is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement with the State's Lead Agency that specifies the scope of the work that will be implemented by the Participating State Agency. The purpose of the MOU or other binding agreement is to define a relationship between the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency that is specific to the RTT-ELC competition; the MOU or other binding agreement is not meant to detail all typical aspects of grant coordination or administration.

To support States in working efficiently with their Participating State Agencies to affirm each Participating State Agency's participation in the State Plan, ED and HHS have produced a model MOU, which is attached. This model MOU may serve as a template for States; however, States are not required to use it. States may use a document other than the model MOU, as long as it includes the key features noted below and in the model MOU. States should consult with their State attorneys on what is most appropriate. States may allow multiple Participating State Agencies to sign a single MOU or other binding agreement, with customized exhibits for each Participating State Agency, if the State so chooses.

At a minimum, an RTT-ELC MOU or other binding agreement should include the following key features, each of which is described in detail below and exemplified in the attached model MOU: (i) terms and conditions; (ii) a scope of work; and, (iii) authorized signatures.

(i) Terms and conditions: Each Participating State Agency must sign a standard set of terms and conditions that includes, at a minimum, key roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency; State recourse for non-performance by the Participating State Agency; and assurances that make clear what the Participating State Agency is agreeing to do.

(ii) Scope of work: RTT-ELC MOUs or other binding agreements must include a preliminary scope of work (included in the model RTT-ELC MOU as Exhibit I) that is completed by each Participating State Agency. The scope of work must be signed and dated by an authorized Participating State Agency official and an authorized Lead Agency official. In the interest of time and in consideration of the effort it will take for the Lead Agency and Participating State Agencies to develop detailed work plans for RTT-ELC, the scope of work submitted by Participating State Agencies and Lead Agencies as part of a State's application may be preliminary. Preliminary scopes of work must, at a minimum, identify all applicable

portions of the State Plan that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement and include the required assurances. (Note that in order for a State to be eligible for the RTT-ELC competition, the Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency an MOU or other binding agreement, which the State must attach to its application and which must describe the Participating State Agency's level of participation in the grant and must include the required assurances.)

If a State is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, Participating State Agencies will have up to 90 days to complete final scopes of work, which must contain detailed work plans that are consistent with each Participating State Agency's preliminary scope of work and with the State's grant application, and must include the Participating State Agencies' specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, and key personnel.

(iii) Authorized Signatures: The signatures on the MOU or other binding agreement demonstrate an acknowledgement of the relationship between the Participating State Agency and the Lead Agency. With respect to the relationship between the Participating State Agency and the Lead Agency, the Lead Agency's counter-signature on the MOU or other binding agreement indicates that the Participating State Agency's commitment is consistent with the requirement that a Participating State Agency implement all applicable portions of the State Plan.

MODEL PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is entered into by and between _____ (“Lead Agency”) and _____ (“Participating State Agency”). The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration, as well as articulate specific roles and responsibilities in support of the State in its implementation of an approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant project.

I. ASSURANCES

The Participating State Agency hereby certifies and represents that it:

- 1) Agrees to be a Participating State Agency and will implement those portions of the State Plan indicated in Exhibit I, if the State application is funded;
- 2) Agrees to use, to the extent applicable and consistent with the State Plan and Exhibit I:
 - (a) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
 - (b) A set of statewide Program Standards;
 - (c) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
 - (d) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

(Please note that Participating State Agencies must provide these assurances in order for the State to be eligible for a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant.)

- 3) Has all requisite power and authority to execute and fulfill the terms of this MOU;
- 4) Is familiar with the State’s Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application and is supportive of and committed to working on all applicable portions of the State Plan;
- 5) Will provide a Final Scope of Work only if the State’s application is funded and will do so in a timely fashion but no later than 90 days after a grant is awarded; and will describe the Participating State Agency’s specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, and key personnel (“Participating State Agency Plan”) in a manner that is consistent with the Preliminary Scope of Work (Exhibit I), with the Budget included in section VIII of the State Plan (including existing funds, if any, that the Participating State Agency is using for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes of the State Plan; and
- 6) Will comply with all of the terms of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, this agreement, and all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including laws and regulations applicable to the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge program, and the applicable provisions of EDGAR (34 CFR Parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98 and 99).

II. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

A. PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the Lead Agency in implementing the tasks and activities described in the State’s Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application, the Participating State Agency will:

- 1) Implement the Participating State Agency Scope of Work as identified in the Exhibit I of this agreement;
- 2) Abide by the governance structure outlined in the State Plan;

- 3) Abide by the Participating State Agency's Budget included in section VIII of the State Plan (including the existing funds from Federal, State, private and local sources, if any, that the Participating State Agency is using to achieve the outcomes in the RTT-ELC State Plan);
- 4) Actively participate in all relevant meetings or other events that are organized or sponsored by the State, by the U.S. Department of Education ("ED"), or by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS");
- 5) Post to any Web site specified by the State, ED, or HHS, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned developed using Federal funds awarded under the RTT-ELC grant;
- 6) Participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant conducted by the State, ED, or HHS;
- 7) Be responsive to State, ED, or HHS requests for project information including on the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered, consistent with applicable local, State and Federal privacy laws.

B. LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the Participating State Agencies in implementing their tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application, the Lead Agency will:

- 1) Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating State Agency in carrying out the Participating State Agency Scope of Work, as identified in Exhibit I of this agreement;
- 2) Timely award the portion of Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant funds designated for the Participating State Agency in the State Plan during the course of the project period and in accordance with the Participating State Agency's Scope of Work, as identified in Exhibit I, and in accordance with the Participating State Agency's Budget, as identified in section VIII of the State's application;
- 3) Provide feedback on the Participating State Agency's status updates, any interim reports, and project plans and products;
- 4) Keep the Participating State Agency informed of the status of the State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant project and seek input from the Participating State Agency, where applicable, through the governance structure outlined in the State Plan;
- 5) Facilitate coordination across Participating State Agencies necessary to implement the State Plan; and
- 6) Identify sources of technical assistance for the project.

C. JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) The Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency will each appoint a key contact person for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant.
- 2) These key contacts from the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU, consistent with the State Plan and governance structure.
- 3) Lead Agency and Participating State Agency personnel will work together to determine appropriate timelines for project updates and status reports throughout the grant period.
- 4) Lead Agency and Participating State Agency personnel will negotiate in good faith toward achieving the overall goals of the State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, including when the State Plan requires modifications that affect the Participating State Agency, or when the Participating State Agency's Scope of Work requires modifications.

D. STATE RECOURSE IN THE EVENT OF PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY'S FAILURE TO PERFORM

If the Lead Agency determines that the Participating State Agency is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is in some other way not fulfilling applicable requirements, the Lead Agency will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include initiating a collaborative process by which to attempt to resolve the disagreements between the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency, or

initiating such enforcement measures as are available to the Lead Agency, under applicable State or Federal law.

III. MODIFICATIONS

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the parties involved, in consultation with ED.

IV. DURATION

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant is received by the State, ending upon the expiration of the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant project period.

V. SIGNATURES

Authorized Representative of Lead Agency:

Signature Date

Print Name Title

Authorized Representative of Participating State Agency:

Signature Date

Print Name Title

XI. SCORING RUBRIC

I. Introduction

To help ensure inter-reviewer reliability and transparency for the RTT-ELC applicants, ED and HHS have created and are publishing a rubric for scoring State applications. The pages that follow detail the rubric and allocation of point values that reviewers will be using. The rubric will be used by reviewers to ensure consistency across and within review panels.

The rubric allocates points to each criterion. In all, the RTT-ELC scoring rubric includes 17 selection criteria and two competitive preference priorities. These collectively add up to 300 points. The selection criteria are divided into two sections: Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas.

- Applicants must respond to all of the selection criteria within each of the two Core Areas: (A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs.
- Applicants have more flexibility within each of the Focused Investment Areas: (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress. In these sections, applicants may select which selection criteria to address, focusing on those that the State believes will have the most impact on school readiness for its Children with High Needs, given that State's context and the current status of its early learning and development activities. The Focused Investment Areas must be addressed as follows.

Focused Investment Areas

- The applicant must select and address--
 - At least two selection criteria from Focused Investment Area (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
 - At least one selection criterion each from Focused Investment Areas (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.
- Each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E) is worth a specific number of points; these points will be evenly divided across the selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that section.

Priorities

Applicants address the absolute priority throughout their applications; they do not write separately to this priority. The absolute priority must be met in order for an applicant to receive funding.

Applications that choose to address a competitive preference priority will earn extra points under that priority if the reviewers determine that the response is of high quality. Applicants may choose to write to invitational priorities to extend the scope of the application; applicants are invited to address these and may apply funds from this grant to implement activities under them, but do not earn additional points for doing so.

Reviewers will be required to make thoughtful judgments about the quality of the State's application and will be assessing, based on the criteria, the comprehensiveness, feasibility, and likely impact of the State's application. Reviewers will also be asked to evaluate, for example, the extent to which the State has set ambitious but achievable annual targets in its application. Reviewers will also need to make informed judgments about the State's goals, the rationales for the Focused Investment Areas, the activities the State has chosen to undertake, and the timelines and credibility of the State's plans.

This appendix includes information about the point values for each criterion and priority, guidance on scoring, and the rubric that we will provide to reviewers.

II. Points Overview

The chart below shows the maximum number of points that are assigned to each criterion.

	Points Available	Percent
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Points Overview		
A. Successful State Systems		
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.	20	
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating work across the State	10	
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work	15	
Core Area A Subtotal	65	23
B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs		
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs	20	
(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	
Core Area B Subtotal	75	27
C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children		
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	60 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems		
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs		
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families		

	Points Available	Percent
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Points Overview		
	60	21
Focused Investment Area C Subtotal		
D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce		
(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	40 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators		
Focused Investment Area D Subtotal		
	40	14
E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress		
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	40 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system		
Focused Investment Area E Subtotal		
	40	14
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria		
	280	
Competitive Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS	10	
Competitive Priority 3: Understanding status of learning and development at Kindergarten Entry	10	
Grand Total		
	300	

III. About Scoring

General Notes about Scoring

There are two terms that we use repeatedly in the notice: High-Quality Plan and “ambitious yet achievable” goals or targets. These are anchor terms for both applicants to understand and reviewers to use in guiding their scoring. We discuss each below.

- *A High-Quality Plan.* In determining the quality of a State’s plan for a given selection criterion or competitive preference priority, reviewers will assess the extent to which the plan meets the definition (as provided in the notice) of a High-Quality Plan, including whether it is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and contains the following components--
 - (a) The key goals;
 - (b) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up to achieve statewide implementation;

- (c) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;
- (d) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;
- (e) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;
- (f) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;
- (g) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;
- (h) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- (i) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

Using the information provided to them in the application, reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed plan in a specific selection criterion is a High-Quality Plan that is credible, feasible to implement, and likely to result in the outcomes the State has put forward.

- *Ambitious yet achievable.* In determining whether a State has ambitious yet achievable goals or targets for a given selection criterion, reviewers will examine the State's goals or targets in the context of the State's plan and the evidence submitted (if any) in support of the plan. Reviewers will not be looking for any specific targets nor will they necessarily reward higher targets above lower ones with higher scores. Rather, reviewers will reward States for developing goals and targets that, in light of each State's plan and the current context and status of the work in that State, are shown to be "ambitious yet achievable."

About Assigning Points

Reviewers will assign points to an application for each selection criterion in Core Areas (A) and (B) and for each selection criterion that the State has chosen to address within Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E). Reviewers will also assign points to the competitive preference priorities. Points for a selection criterion or priority (e.g., (B)(4) or Priority 2) are assigned by reviewers for the totality of the applicant's response; that is, reviewers need not divide the total available points equally across the sub-criteria.

There are two scoring rubrics to guide reviewers when awarding points:

- The Quality Rubric, which provides guidance on how to allocate points for high-, medium-, and low-quality responses to specified selection criteria; and
- The Quality and Implementation Rubric, which provides guidance on how to allocate points for selection criteria and competitive preference priority two where reviewers are assessing the quality of both plans and existing implementation.

The chart below indicates which rubric the State will use for each criterion or competitive preference priority.

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Rubric Table	Points Available	Type of Rubric Used
A. Successful State Systems		
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.	20	Quality
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	Quality
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating work across the State	10	Quality and Implementation
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work	15	Quality
Core Area A Subtotal	65	
B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs		
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	Quality and Implementation
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	Quality and Implementation
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	Quality and Implementation
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs	20	Quality and Implementation
(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	Quality
Core Area B Subtotal	75	
C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children		
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	60 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems		
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs		
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families		
Focused Investment Area C Subtotal	60	
D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce		
(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	40 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators		
Focused Investment Area D Subtotal	40	
E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress		
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	40 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system		
Focused Investment Area E Subtotal	40	
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Rubric Table	Points Available	Type of Rubric Used
Competitive Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS	10	Quality and Implementation
Competitive Priority 3: Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	10	Addressed in Table (A)(1)-12 or in selection criterion (E)(1)
Grand Total	300	

Quality Rubric

The following scoring rubric will be used to guide the reviewers in scoring selection criteria governed by the Quality Rubric. (See “General Notes about Scoring” for more information about how reviewers will assess High-Quality Plans and “ambitious yet achievable” targets and goals.)

	Percentage of Available Points Awarded
High-quality response	80-100%
Medium/high-quality response	50-80%
Medium/low-quality response	20-50%
Low-quality response	0-20%

Quality and Implementation Rubric

This scoring rubric provides guidance on how to allocate points for selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 where reviewers are assessing both plans and existing implementations. In reviewing the elements for each selection criterion, reviewers will need to consider the degree of implementation; more points are awarded for implementation efforts in the implementation phase than those that are in the planning stages, and more points are awarded for efforts where implementation is complete or closer to completion. When evaluating the degree of implementation, reviewers will consider:

- The extent to which each element in the selection criterion is implemented in the State;
- The extent to which the State has implemented each element across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- The extent to which the State has implemented each element across the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs, if applicable.

The reviewers will also need to make a determination about the quality of the response to each element. High-quality responses are rewarded over low-quality responses. Therefore, elements that are fully implemented with high quality are rewarded over plans that are of fully implemented but of lower quality. (See “General Notes About Scoring” for more information about how reviewers will assess High-Quality Plans and “ambitious yet achievable” targets and goals.) The chart below shows how points will be awarded.

	Not or Minimally Implemented	Partially Implemented	Substantially or Fully Implemented
High-quality response	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%
Medium-quality response	1-40%	10-60%	20-80%
Low-quality response	0%	0-10%	0-20%

About Priorities

There are three types of priorities in the RTT-ELC competition.

- Applicants should address the absolute priority across the entire application and should not address it separately. It will be assessed by reviewers after they have fully reviewed and evaluated the entire application, to ensure that the application has met the priority. If an application has not met the priority, it will be eliminated from the competition. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority.
- The competitive preference priorities earn points in a manner similar to selection criteria.
 - Competitive Preference Priority 2 is worth up to 10 points and will be assessed using the Quality and Implementation Rubric.
 - Competitive Preference Priority 3 is worth 10 points; all 10 points are earned if the competitive preference priority is met. A State will earn competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. No points are earned if a majority of reviewers determine that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority. A State meets the competitive preference priority for—
 - Demonstrating , by verifying that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 have been met, that the State has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); or
 - Writing to selection criterion (E)(1) and earning a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.
- The invitational priorities are addressed in their own separate sections. While applicants are invited to write to the invitational priorities, these will not earn points.

In the Event of a Tie

If two or more applications have the same score and there is not sufficient funding to support all of the tied applicants, the applicants' overall scores on Core Area (B) will be used to break the tie

XII. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Please note that you must follow the Application Procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

Submission Information and Deadline.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted by mail or hand delivery. The Departments strongly recommends the use of overnight mail. Applications postmarked on the deadline date but arriving late will not be read.

The deadline for submission of applications is October 19, 2011.

Application Submission Format.

The Secretaries strongly request the applicant to limit the application text narrative to no more than 150 pages and limit appendices to no more than 150 pages. A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Line spacing for the narratives is set to 1.5 spacing, and the font used is 12 point Times New Roman. Each page in the application should have a page number. The Secretaries strongly requests that applicants follow the recommended page limits, although the Secretaries will consider applications of greater length.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted in electronic format on a CD or DVD, with CD-ROM or DVD-ROM preferred. In addition, applicants must submit a signed paper original of section IV of the application and one copy of that signed original. Autopen, copies, .PDFs (Adobe Portable Document Format), and faxed copies of signature pages are not acceptable originals. Section IV of the application includes the Application Assurances and Certifications.

We strongly request the applicant to submit a CD or DVD of its application that includes the following files:

1. A single file that contains the body of the application, including required budget tables, that has been converted into a .PDF (Portable Document) format so that the .PDF is searchable. Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable.

2. A single file in a .PDF format that contains all of the required signature pages. The signature pages may be scanned and turned into a PDF.

3. Copies of the completed electronic budget spreadsheets with the required budget tables, which should be in a separate file from the body of the application. The spreadsheets will not be reviewed by peer reviewers but will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

Each of these items must be clearly labeled with the State’s name and any other relevant identifying information. States must not password-protect these files.

We must receive all grant applications by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. ***We will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.*** Therefore, we strongly recommend that applicants arrange for mailing or hand delivery of their application in advance of the application deadline date.

Submission of Applications by Mail.

States choosing to submit their application (*i.e.*, the CD or DVD, the signed paper original of section IV of the application, and the copy of that original) by mail (either through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) should use the following mailing address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.412)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

We must receive applications on or before the application deadline date. Therefore, to avoid delays, we strongly recommend sending applications via overnight mail. ***If we receive an application after the application deadline, we will not consider that application.***

Submission of Applications by Hand Delivery.

States choosing to submit their application (*i.e.*, the CD or DVD, the signed paper original of section IV of the application, and the copy of that original) by hand delivery (including via a courier service) should use the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.412)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

If we receive an application after the application deadline, we will not consider that application.

Envelope Requirements and Receipt.

When an applicant submits its application, whether by mail or hand delivery--

(1) It must indicate on the envelope that the CFDA number of the competition under which it is submitting its application is 84.412; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to the applicant a notification of receipt of the grant application. If the applicant does not receive this notification, it should call the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

In accordance with 34 CFR 75.216(b) and (c), an application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program.

XIII. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please use the following checklist to ensure that your application is complete:

Formatting Recommendations (page 11)

- Are all the pages 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides?
- Are all pages numbered?
- Is the line spacing for the narratives set to 1.5 spacing, and the font to 12 point Times New Roman?

Application Assurances and Certifications (page 20)

- Is all of the requested information included on the Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge Application Assurances and Certifications page?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Governor or his/her authorized representative signed and dated the Application Assurances and Certifications?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has an authorized representative from the Lead Agency signed the Application Assurances and Certifications?
SIGNATURE REQUIRED -- Has an authorized representative from each Participating State Agency signed the Application Assurances and Certifications? (Note: all Participating State Agencies must sign the application. See definition of Participating State Agency, page 17)

State Attorney General Certification (page 22)

- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the State Attorney General or his/her authorized representative signed the Certifications?

Accountability, Transparency, Reporting, and Other Assurances and Certifications (page 23)

- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Governor or his/her authorized representative signed the other Assurances and Certifications?

Eligibility Requirements (page 24)

- Has the State Provided a list of the Participating State Agencies?
- Has the State completed an MOU with each Participating State Agency?
- Does each MOU include the necessary assurances?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has every Participating State Agency signed an MOU that includes a preliminary Scope of Work, using Exhibit I or an equivalent model?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Lead Agency counter-signed every MOU and preliminary Scope of Work?
- Has the State certified that it has an operational State advisory council that meets the necessary requirements?

- Has the State certified that it is participating in the home visiting program, consistent with the requirement on page 25?

Selection Criteria

Core Areas (page 26)

(A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs

- Has the State responded to each of the selection criteria in Core Areas (A) and (B)?

Focused Investment Areas

(C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children (page 56)

- Has the State responded to at least two of the selection criteria in section (C)?

(D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce (page 64)

- Has the State responded to at least one of the selection criteria in (D)?

(E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress (page 68)

- Has the State responded to at least one of the selection criteria in (E)?

OPTIONAL: Competition Priorities (page 71)

- Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, if the State has chosen to respond.
- Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry, if the State has chosen to respond.
 - If yes, has the State provided the necessary information in Table (A)(1)-12 or written to (E)(1)?
- Invitational Priority 4: Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades
- Invitational Priority 5: Encouraging Private-Sector Support

Budget (page 75)

- Has the State completed the following elements of the Budget?
 - Budget Part I: Summary Tables and Narratives
 - Budget Part II: Participating State Agency Budget Tables and Narratives, for each Participating State Agency
 - Indirect Costs form
- Has the State created its budget spreadsheets?

Appendix (page 117)

- Has the State created a table of contents for its appendix?
- Has the State included all required documents per the instructions in the application?
- OPTIONAL: Has the State included supporting information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers?

Application Requirements (page 92)

- Has the State fulfilled all of the application requirements?

Application Submission Procedures (page 111)

- Has the State complied with the submission format requirements, including the application deadline for submission?
- Has the State submitted a single .PDF file of the entire application that was created in a format that is searchable? Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable.
- Has the State submitted originals of all the required Signature pages?
- Has the State submitted its budget spreadsheets?

XIV. APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

#	Attachment Title	Relevant Selection Criterion
A1-1	Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Operational Policies and Procedures	(A)(1)
A1-2	Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook (Excerpt)	(A)(1)
A1-3	Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care (Excerpt)	(A)(1)
A1-4	Professional Development Opportunities; AR Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education	(A)(1), (B)(4)
A2-1	Every Child in Foster Care Deserves Our Best	(A)(2)
A3-1	Department of Human Services and Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education Organizational Charts	(A)(3)(a)(1)
A3-2	Memoranda of Understanding: Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (Licensing and Accreditation Unit, Child Care Development Fund Unit, and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Unit) Arkansas Department of Education Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office Arkansas Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters	(A)(3)-1
A3-3	Letters of Support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations: Arkansas Early Childhood Association Early Learning Council State Board Arkansas Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office Resource and Referral Agencies: Children of Northcentral Arkansas Arkansas State University Childhood Services (ACQUIRE) Child Care Connections, Inc. Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc. (ChildCare LINKS) Northwest Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral Center	(A)(3)(c)(1) and (A)(3)(c)(2)
A3-4	Letters of Support from Other Stakeholders: Arkansas Department of Human Services; Division of Children and Family Services Arkansas Department of Health Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators Arkansas Children's Hospital Arkansas Children's Trust Fund	(A)(3)(c)(1) and (A)(3)(c)(2)
B1-1	Better Beginnings: Center-Based Program Requirements	(B)(1)
B1-2	Better Beginnings: Family Child Care Program Requirements	(B)(1)
B1-3	Instrument Reliability and Validity	(B)(1),

		(B)(3)
B1-4	Better Beginnings: Proposed Center-Based Higher Levels	(B)(1)
B2-1	Better Beginnings: Incentive and Professional Development Grants	(B)(2)
B2-2	Better Beginnings: Arkansas Better Chance Reciprocity Agreement	(B)(2)
B2-3	Better Beginnings: Local Education Agencies Reciprocity Agreement	(B)(2)
B2-4	Better Beginnings: Early Head Start/Head Start Reciprocity Agreement	(B)(2)
B4-1	Project PLAY Description	(B)(4)
B4-2	Better Beginnings: Nationally Accredited Programs Reciprocity Agreement	(B)(4)
C4-1	Family Map Inventories Description	(C)(4)
C4-2	TIPS for Great Kids Description	(C)(4)
D2-1	Arkansas' Key Content Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals (Excerpt)	(D)(2)
E1-1	LINK for Teachers: Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist (Excerpt)	(E)(1)
1	Definitions	All Sections
2	References	All Sections

XV. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs (Executive Order 12372)

This program falls under the rubric of Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to strengthen federalism--or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government--by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have devised for coordinating and reviewing proposed Federal financial grant applications.

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works.

Further information about the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) process and a list of names by State can be found at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372--CFDA# 84.412, U.S. Department of Education, room 7E200, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

Proof of mailing will be determined on the same basis as applications (see 34 CFR §75.102). Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 4:30 p.m. (eastern time) on the closing date indicated in the notice.

Important note: The above address is not the same address as the one to which the applicant submits its completed applications. **Do not send applications to the above address.**

Not all States have chosen to participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located in a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to the Department as described in the *Federal Register* notice.