

**Division of Elementary and Secondary Education – Office of Special Education
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities
Early Childhood, July 2021**

Current Activities for Early Childhood Program Advisors/619 Coordinator:

- **Multi-state Inclusion Cohort:** The State Leadership Team (SLT) for Early Childhood Inclusion is currently working to accomplish action items related to the previous indicator analysis work. The SLT chose to prioritize three Indicators of Quality Inclusion the team felt were crucial to address immediately. Sub-committees have been formed for Indicator 1: to formalize processes for the State Leadership Team, Indicator 3: to increase Family Engagement, and Indicator 12: to increase Public Awareness around inclusion.
 - Action Item Accomplishment 1: The team has published a collaborative Early Childhood Inclusive Practices for Birth – 5 site to increase awareness of early childhood inclusion and resources for early childhood inclusion within our state.
- **Early Childhood Behavior Support Discussion Group:** The early childhood special education program is convening a cross-sector collaborative workgroup to create a comprehensive user-friendly platform that guides early childhood teachers in accessing behavior support services that are age-appropriate and discourage suspensions and expulsions. A draft site has been created and a secondary stakeholder group is reviewing. Comments are due by June 24, 2021.
- **Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Partnership:** Early childhood special education and the Arkansas Better Chance Program are partnering to create a special education basic training for all ABC staff members. The presentation is ready, and we are working on approval to upload to the Professional Development Registry (PDR) for early childhood professionals.

Current Early Childhood Special Education Technical Assistance and Professional Development:

- **Early Childhood Outcomes, PLAAFP and Goals Professional Development:**
 - Pulaski Count Special School District refresher
 - Refreshers scheduled for fall (repeat and new staff)
- **Site Visits:** We are currently scheduling/holding spring 1:1 virtual site visits with programs to discuss specific program needs, questions, and concerns.
- **Summer Book Study on *Making Preschool Inclusion Work*:** A joint book study is being held for our early childhood special education coordinators, early childhood special education staff interested or participating in inclusive practices, and members of our State Leadership Team on Early Childhood Inclusion. Book study sessions are being held weekly through the summer months. This book study will serve as a follow-up to last year's book study on inclusion. The book chosen offers practical strategies and activities for use in the field and foster discussions about practice across the state.
- **Early Childhood Virtual Discussion Group:** Monthly meetings have been suspended through the summer months to allow for that time to be utilized for the Summer Book Study.
- **Building Arkansas Strong through Inclusive Classrooms (BASIC) Training and Coaching Project for Early Childhood:** The early childhood special education program has partnered with the University of Denver's Positive Early Learning Experiences (PELE) Center to provide intense professional learning and coaching in order to create three model classrooms for early childhood inclusion in the state. The early childhood special education program and the application review team have accepted letters of intent and applications, reviewed applications, and have chosen three early childhood program to participate in the

training and monthly coaching support for the 2021-2022 school year. Sites chosen were Harrison Preschool, Oakland Heights Elementary Preschool in Russellville, and Bryant Pre-K.

Current Statewide Collaboration Projects:

- **AIMH** (Arkansas Association of Infant Mental Health) Analyzes mental health needs of infants/toddlers/preschoolers and available support services.
- **ABICE** (Arkansas Bilingual Interpreter Credential in Education) Provides professional credential training and support in Arkansas for bilingual adults acting as interpreters in educational settings from birth through twelfth grade.
- **AECCIG** (Arkansas Early Childhood Collaborative Impact Group: formerly Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Medical Home Workgroup) Work on drafting recommendations and providing feedback for the plan and standards for Better Beginnings.
- **Arkansas None for Nine Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Taskforce** Brings state-wide attention to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
- **BehaviorHelp** A workgroup created to support a single point-of-entry support system for teachers struggling to manage challenging behaviors in child care center classrooms.
- **Excel by Eight (E8)** Formerly known as the Pritzker Grant, this is a planning grant and initiative to allow a team to develop a well-informed plan for infant and toddler support within the broader realm of developing successful children overall.
- **Head Start School Readiness Team** The early childhood special education programs attends meetings to help analyze results and plan for quality transitions for Head Start students who will be attending kindergarten. The team assists the state Head Start office in planning and holding the annual Kindergarten Readiness Summit, a collaborative team of cross-agency personnel who work together to hold transition meetings for Head Start children.
- **Learn the Signs, Act Early Network!** A grant designed to bolster early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, including through use of the Learn the Signs, Act Early (LTSAE) parent developmental monitoring tool, and to advance the promotion of existing resources that enhance resiliency among families with young children during COVID-19 response efforts.
- **TECI (Teaming for Early Childhood Inclusion) Project** This project is led by the Partners for Inclusive Communities and is designed to build capacity within the early childhood education network for successful inclusion of children with disabilities.