

**Division of Elementary and Secondary Education – Office of Special Education  
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities  
Early Childhood, April 2022**

**Current Activities for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)/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 One to formalize processes for the State Leadership Team, Indicator Three to increase Family Engagement, and Indicator Twelve to increase Public Awareness around inclusion.
- **Early Childhood Behavior Support Discussion Group:** The early childhood special education program is convening a cross-sector collaborative 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 the committee is ready to review recommendations and suggestions from the last stakeholder group.
- **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 has been sent to ABC and Head Start as well.
- **Pre-K Special Education Teacher Competencies:** Early childhood special education is partnering with licensure to look at teacher competencies and Praxis assessments for the purpose of recruiting and licensing early childhood special education teachers.
- **International Inclusion Institute 2022: State Leadership Panel: Using Inclusion Indicators to Improve and Increase inclusive Opportunities:** Arkansas is joining with Oregon, Ohio and the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center in providing a panelist presentation that highlights early childhood inclusion work in these states for attendees of the International Inclusion Institute 2022 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
- **Monitoring:** Early childhood special education has assisted with three program monitoring visits during this quarter for programs who provide early childhood special education services.

**Current Early Childhood Special Education Technical Assistance and Professional Development:**

- **Arkansas Home Visiting Network Winter Institute: ECSE Overview**
  - over 100 home visitors
- **Kindergarten Transition Presentations:**
  - Regional Coordinators in Hope
  - Regional Coordinators in Warren
  - 4 Statewide Zoom Presentations – over 200 participants

- **New Coordinator Early Childhood Special Education and Transition Overview**
  - Presentations for 2 groups
- **Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices Training and Support:**
  - January – Leadership / Teaming and Collaboration
  - February – Transition / Assessments
  - March – Family / Environment
- **Early Childhood Outcomes, Goals and Present Level Training:**
  - Statewide Zoom
- **Program Level Present Level Technical Assistance Support:**
  - Arkansas River Coop
- **Early Childhood Virtual Discussion Group:** Coordinators and Office of Special Education Early Childhood staff meet monthly. We have heard information presented from Easterseals Outreach, Office of Special Education Finance, DESE Licensure, and Arkansas Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring.
- **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. Training began October fifth and sixth via Zoom. Coaching sessions are occurring monthly. Site visits/observations have occurred at each BASIC program this year. The district programs included in Cohort One of the project are Bryant, Harrison and Russellville. Cohort Two applications are currently being accepted for review.

### **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.
- **Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN)** This is a multiagency collaborative effort to ensure that all children have an opportunity to develop, learn, and reach their full potential, without experiencing discrimination or bias by utilizing concrete strategies,

policies, and action steps that address equity issues for early childhood administrators, teachers, and parents in order to improve outcomes for African American male children and to support effective teaching and racially unbiased methods in the early childhood classrooms across the state.

- **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 attend 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.

#### **Up-coming Conferences:**

- **International Inclusion Institute 2022:** Danita, Alesa and Fabiola will attend the in-person conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.