

**Division of Elementary and Secondary Education – Office of Special Education
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities
Early Childhood, July 2023**

Current Activities for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)/619 Coordinator:

- **State Leadership Team for Early Childhood Inclusion:** 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 meet monthly to address Indicator Three increasing Family Engagement, Indicator Nine to increasing access to inclusion Professional Learning opportunities, and Indicator Twelve increasing Public Awareness around inclusion.
- **Pre-K Prepare Partnership with Easter Seals:** The Early Childhood Special Education program is currently partnering with Easter Seals to create a platform entitled *Pre-K Prepare* to give early childhood staff around the state access to free videos and materials aligned to evidence-based practices to support our youngest learners.
- **National Association of State Directors of Special Education Part B/619 Affinity Group:** The Arkansas Part B/619 Coordinator will serve as co-chair for the affinity group until October 2023.
- **Coordinator Visits:** The ECSE program meets with each coordinator 1:1 during the school year to discuss strengths and needs.

Current Early Childhood Special Education Technical Assistance and Professional Development:

- **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 to create model classrooms for early childhood inclusion in the state. Site visits and monthly planning sessions each month for each program.
 - Continuing with the six programs
 - Bringing on entire programs
- **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) Intensive Technical Assistance Project:** The Early Childhood Special Education program was chosen by the OSEP funded NCPMI to provide three years of intensive support to create a Preschool Pyramid Model Support Network in Arkansas. The system is to provide a consistent platform of evidence-based strategies, resources, and support for state staff to aid children with peer interactions and behavior support for birth to five.
- **Arkansas Head Start Conference:** Presented on preschool inclusion.
- **Head Start Disability Specialist/Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator Discussion Group:** The Early Childhood Special Education Program is collaborating

with the Head Start State Collaborative Office to host a series of meetings between the two groups to discuss how to improve collaboration in the future. The first meeting occurred in the spring with a follow-up meeting planned when school resumes in the fall.

Current Statewide Collaboration Projects:

- **AAIMH** (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 childcare 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** Partners for Inclusive Communities facilitates this project with the goal building capacity within the early childhood education network for successful inclusion of children with disabilities.