

**Division of Elementary and Secondary Education – Office of Special Education  
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities  
Early Childhood, October 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 One to formalize processes for the State Leadership Team, Indicator Three to increase Family Engagement, and Indicator Twelve to increase Public Awareness around inclusion.
  - Action Item Accomplishments
    - Hashtag Approved:
    - Guiding Principles Document Ready for Approval
- **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 is ready for the third and final stakeholder group to review and provide feedback.
- **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 edited and is being re-recorded. Overview being provided in person to ABC leadership at October meeting.
- **Early Childhood Special Education Overview** trainings have been provided for:
  - State Head Start Conference
  - Arkansas Academy of Pediatrics
  - Excel by 8 Stakeholder Group
  - Division of Childcare Monthly Provider Call

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

- **Early Childhood Outcomes, PLAAFP and Goals Professional Development:**
  - Four trainings completed. Added seats and still had a waiting list.
  - Recording a version of the training for those who were absent.
- **Site Visits:** We are beginning to schedule on-site visits for fall.
- **Early Childhood Virtual Discussion Group:** Resumed monthly workgroup in August.
- **Summer Book Study on *Making Preschool Inclusion Work*:** A joint book study was completed 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 were held weekly through the summer months. This book served as a follow-up to last year's book study on inclusion. The book chosen offers practical inclusion strategies and activities for use in the field and foster discussions about practice across the state.

- **Inclusion Training** provided for the Arkansas Special Education Professionals (ASEP) Fall Conference
- **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 being scheduled monthly. The district programs included in Cohort One of the project are:
  - Bryant Public Schools – Bryant Pre-K
  - Harrison School District – Harrison Preschool
  - Russellville School District - Oakland Heights Elementary

### **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 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.