



## Preschool Development Grant Questions and Answers (Updated April 8, 2019)

### **What does it mean for a child to be ready for school when entering kindergarten?**

In the state's PDG B-5 application, school readiness is defined as, *"Children have been nurtured to have the physical, social, emotional and cognitive capacity in order to meaningfully engage in, and benefit from, the learning and social experiences provided in the K-12 environment."*

Over the next 10 months, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) will develop a five-year strategic plan to ensure all Colorado children are ready for school when entering kindergarten. We will be working with a vendor and in partnership with stakeholders to formulate this plan.

Additionally, the OEC is engaging a vendor to develop an evaluation plan and tools to determine how the PDG B-5 efforts identified in our strategic plan will be measured to ensure we achieve our goal.

### **What is the goal for alignment and how will you measure success?**

The federal funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for the PDG B-5 asked states to develop a statewide strategic plan that, among other requirements, *"Recommend[s] partnership, collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities and opportunities that can leverage existing resources to improve coordination, policy alignment, program quality and service delivery, across early childhood care and education programs in the B-5 Early Childhood State System, including activities to improve children's transition from early childhood care and education programs into elementary schools."*

Success will be measured in several ways:

- 1) completion of the strategic plan, meeting the criteria identified above;
- 2) the development of strategies to enhance children's transitions into elementary school;
- 3) the development of new or strengthened partnerships among Head Start providers, State and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and private entities (including faith and community-based entities) to improve coordination and delivery of services; and
- 4) the blending or braiding of other public and private funding to maximize access to high quality early childhood care and education programs.

**What does mixed delivery system mean in the context of the PDG?**

The state’s PDG B-5 application utilizes the Every Student Succeeds Act definition of mixed delivery system, which means “[...] a system of early childhood care and education services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings, such as Head Start, licensed family and center-based child care programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations, that is supported by a combination of public and private funds.”

**What does it mean to coordinating delivery models and funding streams in the context of the PDG?**

The PDG B-5 requires states to streamline administrative infrastructure and improve state-level early childhood care and education funding efficiencies to maximize the number of children and families served by Colorado’s mixed delivery system.

The OEC is employing two grant-funded staff to research and recommend opportunities for alignment of these structures and funding, which includes a look at rules and regulations, program structures, and eligibility requirements for programs that include, but may not be limited to, the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program, federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, child care licensing, Early Head Start and Head Start, and the Colorado Preschool Program.

**What does provider mean in the context of the PDG?**

Generally, provider means anyone that falls within the B-5 Early Childhood State System defined within the PDG B-5 funding opportunity announcement (FOA) as, “[...] core early childhood care and education programs, including the Child Care and Development Fund and State child care, which may include center-based, family child care, and informal care providers, Early Head Start and Head Start, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, and other State or locally funded home visiting services, Part C and Section 619 of Part B of IDEA, State preschool programs, and programs funded by Title I of the ESEA. In addition, it also includes a wide range of early childhood care and education programs and services that strengthen, engage, and stabilize families and their infants and young children including supports that target health and wellness, such as Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs, Healthy Start, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the infrastructure components that support these programs and services.”

As you look at specific Colorado Shines Brighter PDG B-5 strategies, the definition of provider may be narrower. For example, Roots Training (under Sharing Best Practices) targets providers of early childhood mental health consultation.

**What is the “no wrong door approach”? And how will success be measured for the no wrong door approach?**

Colorado’s PDG B-5 project, Colorado Shines Brighter, will build upon the state’s consumer education and engagement efforts to develop a “no wrong door” entry point to high-quality early childhood care and learning programs and services that support children B-5 and their families. The “no wrong door” strategy would provide families access to all early care and learning and family support services meeting their needs regardless of their initial entry point. The strategy makes certain that families can access information quickly and make timely connections to services that optimize the wellbeing of their child and the family. This strategy will improve family-system connections, increase parent engagement, and leverage quality relationships with trusted community resources to embed consumer education and engagement throughout the B-5 early childhood state system, as well as other community-based systems used by families. The “no wrong door” strategy also creates formal linkages between programs that serve as pathways for transitions from one setting to another, including from preschool into kindergarten or elementary school.

The infrastructure to support this strategy will be developed during the grant period. We anticipate the impact of this strategy to unfold beginning in 2020.

Success will be measured by tracking how information about available existing programs for children from birth to kindergarten entry is disseminated to parents and families, and how involvement by parents and family was improved.

**What were the considerations when selecting the programs that fall under “best practices”? And what are the methods for sharing best practices?**

The federal funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for the PDG B-5 asked states to: “[...] *provide a plan for how to share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers in the State to reduce duplication of effort, leverage financial and other resources, and increase program quality, collaboration, and efficiency of B-5 services, including improving transitions across programs and into the early elementary grades. The applicant is also required to:*

- *Describe the partnerships and opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and sharing best practices, as they relate to efforts conducted by researchers, national technical assistance centers, Head Start State Collaboration Offices, State educational agencies, lead agencies for Part C of IDEA, national organizations, and other relevant entities identified by the State; and*
- *Discuss how the State will provide systematic technical assistance to local communities and community-based organizations, and on what topics.”*

To meet these requirements, the OEC focused on sustainable strategies to increase alignment, coordination and collaboration, as well as embed new research and best practices into early care and education practice. Best practices will be shared with providers, including friend, family and neighbor (FFN) caregivers, early childhood mental health consultants,

licensed early care and learning programs, and others through a variety of modalities that include:

- With the support of a process management vendor, convene workgroups to assess and make recommendations to:
  - The Colorado Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators
  - The Early Childhood Professional Credential
  - Early Childhood Professional Qualifications
  - Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Framework
- Evaluate and revise the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to include indicators focused child development, outcomes, and to improve quality relationships; initiate a retooling process to transition from Environment Rating Scales (ERS) to the ERS - 3
- Mine and analyze data to inform long-term training and technical assistance plans for Colorado Shines
- Develop new course offerings on the Colorado Shines Professional Development and Information System (PDIS) to enhance quality relationships and to expand the use of the PDIS across the mixed-delivery system
- Analyze the organizational capacity and alignment of local community partners
- Leverage the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Contract for Slots Pilot Project to inform statewide adoption of child care slot contracts
- Implement the ROOTS™ Early Childhood Mental Health Training Program
- Enhance the Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists program
- Develop a strategic plan for the FFN Strategic Partnership Action Network to guide friend, family and neighbor caregiver support strategies going forward
- Augment the Growing Readers Together model
- Pilot home visiting programs (HIPPY and PAT) to licensed family child care home providers and friend, family, and neighbor caregivers

**What are the enhancements being made to Colorado Shines, Quality Improvement System?**

Several strategies under Sharing Best Practices will result in enhancements to the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). These strategies include:

1. Engaging a process management vendor to design and facilitate a QRIS Framework Workgroup. The workgroup will make recommendations to align the Colorado Shines QRIS framework to focus on outcomes versus outputs and the reinforcement of a theory of change for early learning and care that encourages, enriches, and empowers human interactions within all quality indicators. Additionally, the workgroup will consult with national experts to conduct a review of ways to strengthen the existing quality indicators associated with child development and direct outcomes.
2. Mining and analyzing data to inform long-term training and technical assistance plans for user groups that utilize the Colorado Shines QRIS and PDIS, Attendance Tracking System (CCCAP ATS), and child care licensing systems.
3. Developing an information technology (IT) strategic roadmap to inform IT enhancements to improve the user experience of Colorado Shines systems.

4. Initiating a process to transition from Environment Rating Scales (ERS) to ERS-3. This includes providing training on the ECERS-3, ITERS-3 and FCCERS-3 for early childhood education professionals, Colorado Shines Coaches, and the Quality Assessment Services Team. Additional efforts include certification of 100 Colorado Shines Coaches with one third version scale, and 50 Coaches with two third version scales, and supporting reliability for all Quality Rating Assessors with all third version scales.

### **The PDG reference quality improvement for licensed and unlicensed care; how will unlicensed care be included in the activities?**

The Office of Early Childhood identified three outcomes for the PDG B-5. One of these outcomes focuses on informal early care and learning settings: *Informal early childhood care and education environments (parental, friend, family, and neighbor care) are enhanced to enrich and support children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.*

To achieve this, the Office of Early Childhood will utilize the needs assessment to identify opportunities to support parental, friend, family, and neighbor caregivers, and will include these strategies in the statewide strategic plan.

Additionally, the Office of Early Childhood is implementing the following strategies to support informal caregivers:

- Update the Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines to align with best practices and other standards, and create new content that addresses caregivers' experiences and early childhood transitions
- Develop new course offerings on the Colorado Shines Professional Development and Information System (PDIS) that support or address the needs of informal caregivers
- Augment the Growing Readers Together model to expand services to more friend, family and neighbor caregivers
- Pilot home visiting programs (HIPPI and PAT) to licensed family child care home providers and friend, family, and neighbor caregivers
- Develop a strategic plan for the FFN Strategic Partnership Action Network to guide friend, family and neighbor caregiver support strategies going forward

### **What is the ROOTs Early Childhood Mental Health Training Program?**

The OEC has contracted with Dr. Sarah Watamura to provide Roots training. Dr. Watamura is the co-director of the Stress Early Experience & Development Research Center, and associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences at the University of Denver.

Dr. Watamura and her team will provide training in the Roots curriculum (an intensive, experiential trauma processing and stress reduction) to ECMH specialists across Colorado. These specialists will then be eligible for certification as Seedlings coaches, which is a trauma and stress reduction program for parents. This model will equip ECMH specialists and consultants with skills to partner successfully with child care providers and community members on trauma, adversity and resilience.

More Details: The Roots Early Childhood Mental Health Training is a targeted training and coaching approach for Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists (ECMH). The 10-week evidence-based psychoeducational curriculum is designed to help professionals understand how adversity and trauma impacts health and how to prevent its transmission. Roots uses a train-the trainer approach and will equip ECMH Specialists with skills to partner successfully with child care providers and community members on trauma, adversity, and resilience. Using a train-the trainer approach, ECMH Specialists can be deployed to local communities to provide ongoing training on best practices.

**What are the commonly used acronyms involved the PDG work?**

- CCCAP - Colorado Child Care Assistance Program
- CCR&R - Child Care Resource and Referral
- CDE - Colorado Department of Education
- CDHS - Colorado Department of Human Services
- CHP+ - Child Health Plan Plus
- ECC - Early Childhood Councils
- EC - Early Childhood Education
- ECLC - Early Childhood Leadership Commission
- ECPD - Early Childhood Professional Development Advisory Work Group
- ELDG - Early Learning & Development Guidelines
- ERS - Environmental Ratings Scale
- FCCH - Family Child Care Homes
- FCCRS - Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale
- FFN - Family, Friend and Neighbor care
- FRC - Family Resource Centers
- LAUNCH - Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health
- MIECHV - Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting
- OEC - Office of Early Childhood
- PDG - Preschool Development Grant
- PDIS - Professional Development Information System
- PQA - Program, Quality & Alignment Subcommittee
- QRIS - Quality Rating and Improvement System
- RFA - Request for Application
- RFP - Request for Proposal