



**Early Learning Interagency Policy Board (IPB)
Report to the
Secretaries of Education and Health and Human Services**

January 2017

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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Secretaries of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) formed an Early Learning [Interagency Policy Board \(IPB\)](#)¹ to advise the Secretaries on how to better align programs and systems, and improve coordination and administration of federally funded early learning programs serving children from birth to age eight [e.g., Head Start, Child Care, Home Visiting, and early learning programs funded under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)].

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed to outline the purpose and membership of the IPB, which originally included senior staff officials from ED and HHS (Departments), the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and was expanded in later years to include officials from other agencies. Meeting quarterly, the IPB has provided a venue for developing policy recommendations and improving program coordination and quality across federally funded early learning and development programs, including those that support health, serving children from birth through age eight. In addition, much work has transpired between meetings through established IPB workgroups. This has resulted in the development of joint policy statements, as well as coordinated activities related to new initiatives, policies, research, and technical assistance, all which came about because of the increased investments of over \$6 billion in early childhood initiatives from FY2009 to FY2016 for such specific grant efforts as the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), the Preschool Development Grants (PDG), and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. These investments and our collaborative endeavors also focused on improving child care subsidies, evidence based home visiting, and programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

As the work of the IPB has evolved, additional representatives have been invited to participate in IPB meetings, including representatives from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) at the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). IPB membership was formally expanded in 2016 to include DoD, USDA and the BIE. More information on IPB membership and the MOU can be found in the appendices. A decision was made to include other agencies as “IPB partners” – namely HUD, DOL, the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the General Services Administration (GSA) — that play an important role in supporting early learning, yet do not operate any programs with the primary purpose of providing early learning services to young children. These agencies have been invited periodically to attend IPB meetings and provide input to improve interagency collaboration.

Over the last six years, the IPB has led activities to better align and improve the quality in federal early learning programs and aid State and local partners in using resources effectively and efficiently. These activities included providing cross agency resources, joint policy guidance and statements, and expert research studies to State and local communities on critical early learning issues where the federal government could lend expertise. The first such effort was the shared

¹ <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/partnerships.html>

collaborative development of the [*Birth to5: Watch me Thrive*](#) initiative to encourage healthy child development and the use of universal developmental and behavioral screening for children. This effort was followed by the series of joint policy statements (described later in this report) to improve the quality of early learning programs.

Particularly noteworthy has been the consistent, positive response from the early learning field. The Departments have received feedback from across the country indicating appreciation for the interagency coordination example set by the IPB at the federal level which has, in turn, made it easier for similar coordination and collaboration to occur at the State and local levels. Early learning stakeholders have repeatedly commented on the importance of the various joint policy statements, which influenced the development or revision of state and local policies to improve the quality of programs and better outcomes for children.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Secretaries of ED and HHS and the public a summary of the IPB coordination and collaboration efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development across federal agencies since 2010. The report also summarizes the accomplishments and future plans of the IPB.

BACKGROUND

Although the roots of the collaboration undergirding the IPB began when the Departments engaged federal staff, national early learning stakeholders, and the general public in various peer learning groups and broader meetings, such engagement came about in direct response to requests from various states and early learning communities for the Departments to provide early learning guidance and model coordination and collaboration of the agencies overseeing early learning. Three major examples of engagement followed, namely study groups, listening and learning tours, and a major stakeholder meeting, which are described in more detail below.

1. **Study Groups.** In September 2009, the Departments initiated six Early Learning and Development Study Groups to strengthen relationships among federal staff responsible for administering federal early learning programs. The six groups focused on building internal capacity and knowledge around the following key components of a high-quality coordinated State system of early learning and development:
 - Early Learning Program Standards
 - Early Learning Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment
 - Workforce and Professional Development
 - Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
 - Health and Safety Promotion
 - Data System Integration

The overall purpose of the study groups was to strengthen collaborative relationships across staff responsible for administering federal early learning programs and to build internal capacity and knowledge around the component areas. As part of this process, the members of each study group shared relevant information about their respective early

learning programs and gathered information on the state-of-the-field with regard to the research base and current State and community practices related to their component area.

Based on the information gathered, each study group developed a list of the characteristics for their component area that would contribute to a high-quality coordinated State system of early learning and development. The characteristics focus on birth through five programs and services, but each makes a critical link to kindergarten through third grade programs in order to successfully build a birth to age eight early learning and development continuum.

Four common themes across components also emerged from the study groups. The common themes included the need for:

- *A State governance structure* that facilitates system-wide coordination across all early learning and development programs and services, early learning councils, and collaborative initiatives; enables and streamlines decision-making; and ensures sustainability;
- *Financing* that leverages and sustains current investments in early learning and development and secures future dedicated funding for building and enhancing coordinated State and local systems;
- *Building State capacity and local infrastructures* to implement the components of a high-quality system statewide; and
- *Public outreach* that includes communication with and involvement of a broad range of stakeholders on an on-going basis.

Additionally, the study groups discussed the relationships across component areas and concluded that the component areas should overlap and complement one another in developing a high-quality coordinated system of early learning and development.

2. **Engagement of the Early Learning Community.** In spring 2010, the Departments solicited feedback from the early childhood field through an in-person and live broadcast [Listening and Learning about Early Learning Tour](https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/tour.html)² in four cities, which included topics building on the six study groups:

- Understanding Preschool-Grade 3 Structures, held on April 23, 2010 in Washington, D.C.;
- Workforce and Professional Development, held on April 26, 2010 in Denver, Colorado;
- Family Engagement, held on May 4, 2010 in Orlando, Florida; and
- Standards and Assessments, held on May 11, 2010 in Chicago, Illinois.

² <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/tour.html>

Rosters of expert presenters from each of the four public and expert input meetings, along with biographical information about each expert, their presentation materials, and written input received by the Departments can be found on the [website](#).³

3. **Stakeholder Joint Meeting.** Finally, the Departments convened a joint meeting of over 1,800 stakeholders on August 4-5, 2010 in Washington, D.C., Early Childhood 2010: Innovation for the Next Generation. A [report](#),⁴ documenting the convening, draws on themes from state team discussions, and information shared at the meeting and interviews conducted through January 2011. Six interrelated themes emerged during the EC 2010 state team discussions: coordinated state leadership; effective use of data; systematic quality improvement; partnerships with families and communities; physical and behavior health integration; and children with multiple risks. In convening Early Childhood 2010, ED and HHS sought to highlight and encourage innovative and integrated state early learning and development systems. The many state examples detailed in the report illustrate an array of approaches and activities now underway, with numerous opportunities for state leaders to learn from each other.

Input from the study groups, public meetings, and the convening became the foundation for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) program) and helped set the direction for much of the policy work of the IPB moving forward.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The IPB first convened on October 25, 2010. Through its quarterly meetings, the IPB has held listening sessions and policy briefings on a variety of cross-cutting topics, federal programs, and initiatives, and has addressed key issues in program policy and implementation. These meetings provided a tangible example of how agencies can engage in joint communication and outreach activities with stakeholders, leading to improved technical assistance and guidance to the field across agencies and programs. The IPB's quarterly meetings were chaired by both Departments and supported by flexible working groups that allowed the IPB to extend and deepen its work between meetings.

The IPB established two workgroups to tackle the issues identified by the board and to develop strategies for addressing these issues. These staff-level workgroups have met more frequently than the larger IPB, and lead cross-cutting work across agencies to look at current early childhood research, data collections, and technical assistance efforts.

- **Children With Disabilities Workgroup** – Led by the ED Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the HHS Administration for Children and Families Office of Early Childhood Development (ACF/ECD), this workgroup develops recommendations to

³ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/tour.html>

⁴ The Meeting was documented in the Departments' report, *State Issues and Innovations in Creating Integrated Early Learning and Development Systems, A Follow-Up to Early Childhood 2010: Innovations for the Next Generation* <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA11-4661/SMA11-4661.pdf>

ensure that programs meet the needs of young children with and at risk for disabilities and their families. The IPB has held multiple public meetings and members of the workgroup continue to solicit input from early learning professionals, families, and other early learning stakeholders at every opportunity. Following the initial stakeholder engagement efforts, the workgroup developed the [*Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs*](#), which states that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations. Since the release of this policy statement in 2015, the workgroup continues to meet on a regular basis to continue to report on progress made and to advance its action plan to support the implementation of this policy in more and more communities throughout the country.

- **Research and Data Workgroup** – Led by the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and the ED Office of Policy and Program Studies Service (PPSS), this group provides technical research support to the full IPB and a venue for federal staff to communicate about ongoing and upcoming federally-funded research on early learning. In response to the IPB’s interests, the research and data workgroup has reviewed current research on topics of critical policy significance across agencies and developed recommendations for how to align research efforts across agencies to help inform federal early learning initiatives. This workgroup serves as an important platform for researchers across agencies to ensure that their efforts and investments build on each other, that they are informed by key research findings funded by other agencies and offices, and that the most cutting-edge research is used to support leadership decision-making.

This workgroup also engaged with state data leaders and experts to identify opportunities to improve early childhood data capabilities. Through this effort, the IPB was able to create a resource to help States continue to develop their capacity to use existing administrative data from early childhood programs to improve services for children and families. The report, [*The Integration of Early Childhood Data: State Profiles and A Report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education*](#), discusses the purpose of and potential for linking early childhood data, 10 key considerations for states when integrating and linking data, case study examples of eight states that are successfully linking and using certain types of integrated data to improve services for children and families, a summary of legal requirements under applicable laws, and federal resources to help states link data.

Joint Policy Statements

Beginning in 2011, the IPB has used the development of a number of joint policy statements to drive attention to key issues that States and communities are struggling with in the early childhood space, make recommendations and provide resources to support states and communities in addressing these challenges, and highlight the policy consistency between agencies. Eight policy statements have been released to date:

- *Expulsions and Suspensions*. At the December 2014 White House Summit on Early Education and as part of the My Brother’s Keeper Initiative, intended to address the specific challenges faced by young boys of color, the Departments released a joint [Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings](#)⁵ to encourage States, early childhood programs, and families to prevent, reduce, and eliminate the expulsion and suspension of young children from child care and preschool programs.
- *Inclusive Programs for Children with Disabilities*. In September 2015 the Departments released the joint [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#),⁶ which states that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations.
- *Family Engagement*. In May 2016, the Departments issued a joint [Policy Statement on Family Engagement: From the Early Years to the Early Grades](#)⁷ to support teachers and administrators in birth to third grade early learning programs. The Departments created the policy statement with input from a public IPB meeting and written comments from the public.
- *Dual Language Learners*. In June 2016, the Departments released a joint [Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs](#).⁸ The statement recognizes the cultural and linguistic assets of this population of children, and provides important resources and recommendations to the early childhood field to ensure that our nation’s early education programs are accessible to these families, and that they appropriately foster the learning and development of this large and growing group of children.
- *State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care*. In September 2016, the Departments released a [Policy Statement on State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care](#) to provide guidance to [State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care \(SACs\)](#)⁹ on sustaining federal and State investments, and advancing work that supports the coordination of quality, comprehensive systems of early care and education at the state level. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 authorized the creation or designation of the SACs. These governor-appointed SACs are charged with ensuring broad statewide coordination among early childhood programs and services in the state, including child care, Head Start, early intervention, and preschool.

⁵ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ece/child-health-development/reducing-suspension-and-expulsion-practices> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>

⁶ <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf> and <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ece/inclusive-high-quality-early-childhood-programs>

⁷ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ece/family-engagement> and <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/policy-statement-on-family-engagement.pdf>

⁸ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/dll_policy_statement_final.pdf

⁹ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ece/early-learning/state-advisory-councils>

SACs are important vehicles to bring together state level decision makers to better coordinate services.

- *Early Learning and the Use of Technology*. In October 2016 the Departments released the [Early Learning and Use of Technology](#)¹⁰ policy statement that supports early educators' use of technology to promote active, meaningful and socially interactive learning. It includes the following four guiding principles for families and early educators on the use of technology with young children:
 - Technology, when used properly, can be a tool for learning.
 - Technology should be used to increase access to learning opportunities for all children.
 - Technology may be used to strengthen relationships among parents, families, early educators, and young children.
 - Technology is more effective for learning when adults and peers interact or co-view with young children.

- *Early Childhood Data Integration*. In October 2016, the Departments issued a joint report, [The Integration of Early Childhood Data: State Profiles and a Report from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education](#),¹¹ that will help states continue important work to integrate early childhood data with other data systems (e.g., K-12, workforce, health) and build their capacity to use existing data from early childhood programs to improve services for young children and families. The report covers key considerations for states to consider when integrating early childhood data and highlights progress in eight states that are actively developing and using early childhood integrated data systems (ECIDS). The report also includes resources available to states and reflects on lessons learned from these states when approaching this work.¹²

- *Early Childhood Homelessness*. In October 2016, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Education (ED) issued a joint [Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness](#).¹³ The policy statement provides research and recommendations on ways in which early childhood and housing providers at the local and, in some cases, state levels can intentionally collaborate to provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments for pregnant women and families with young children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

¹⁰ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/eecd/joint-policy-brief-on-the-use-of-technology-with-young-children>

¹¹ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/eecd/intergration_of_early_childhood_data_final.pdf

¹² Additional information resources are available at [IDEA and FERPA Confidentiality Provisions and Frequently Asked Questions on Understanding the Confidentiality Requirements Applicable to IDEA Early Childhood Programs](#). See also, the IDEA and FERPA Confidentiality Provisions Comparison Chart at <http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/IDEA%20FERPA%20Confidentiality%20Provisions%20Comparison%20Chart%2006.06.14.pdf>.

¹³ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/eecd/echomelessnesspolicystatement.pdf>

- *IDEA Part C/Federal Home Visiting Program.* In January 2017 the Departments will release a joint statement on *Coordination of Federal Home Visiting Program and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C Programs* to set a vision for stronger partnerships and coordination between awardees of the Federal Home Visiting Program (also known as Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program or MIECHV) and the IDEA, Part C Programs (State lead agencies that implement programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families). Specifically, this joint statement provides recommendations to State and local programs to identify and enhance opportunities for coordination between the Federal Home Visiting and IDEA, Part C programs to improve services for infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- *Early Childhood Health Policy Alignment.* In January 2017, the Departments will release a joint *Policy Statement to Support the Alignment of Health and Early Learning Systems*, the purpose of which is to support States and communities in their efforts to better coordinate, align, and enhance health and early learning systems to promote the healthy development and well-being of all children in the United States. The policy statement also aims to encourage an integrated approach across the health and early learning sectors through shared vision, goals, and priorities, mutual accountability, partnership, communication, and coordination. The statement highlights the importance of early childhood health, mental health, and early learning, and their foundational influence on school-readiness as well as long-term health and well-being. It identifies resources and shares best practices to support states, communities, and families in cross-system efforts to promote the foundation for healthy development and well-being of all children.

Collaboration with the National Academies

Through the IPB, the Departments have sponsored, along with philanthropic organizations, four National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine consensus studies on key early childhood issues: early childhood workforce, family engagement, dual language learners, and financing of early care and education. These four studies, described below, are helping those at the local and state levels work collaboratively to improve quality in early learning settings:

- [Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation](#), released in April 2015, offers recommendations to build a workforce that is unified by the foundation of the science of child development and early learning and the shared knowledge and competencies that are needed to provide consistent, high-quality support for the development and early learning of children from birth through age 8.
- [Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8](#), released in July 2016, examines the state of research with respect to parenting knowledge, attitudes, and practices that support positive parent-child interactions and healthy development of children ages 0-8; strategies for supporting parents and helping them engage in parenting practices associated with healthy child development; barriers and facilitators to strengthening parenting capacity and parents' participation in effective programs and services; and gaps in research on parenting.

- [Fostering School Success for English Learners: Toward New Directions in Policy, Practice, and Research](#), to be released in Spring of 2017, will address the continuum of young English learners (EL) and dual language learners (DLL) from birth through the end of high school. The study will focus on the foundational elements of language development and cultural influences from the home to the community for children from birth to age 8; and the systems and policies affecting EL and DLL children and youth in grades K-12.
- [Financing Early Care and Education](#), to be released in 2017, will be a review of the available evidence on funding mechanisms across early care and education settings that are currently being employed successfully on a large scale, as well as illustrative examples of funding strategies that are being employed on a smaller scale but have promise for expansion. It will also take into consideration lessons that can be drawn from financing of early care and education in other countries and from workforce development in sectors other than education

REPORT TO CONGRESS

In 2014, Congress required that the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, review the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report [2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue \(GAO-12-342SP\)](#) on duplication of early learning and care programs and submit a report to Congress that outlines efficiencies that can be achieved, including recommendations for eliminating overlapping programs and streamlining early learning programs serving children under age six.

In November, 2016, the Departments transmitted the report, [The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education Joint Interdepartmental Review of All Early Learning Programs for Children Less Than 6 Years of Age, to Congress](#). This report discusses the federal programs identified by GAO and concludes that only eight programs have the primary purpose of promoting early learning for children from birth to age six. The report also discusses the Administration's efforts to maximize the current and future investments to increase the quality of and access to early learning for children from birth to kindergarten and it describes how the Departments are fostering coordination and collaboration at the Federal, state, and local levels, including through the IPB, to ensure a more effective, efficient, and high-quality system of early learning. The eight early learning programs discussed in the report receive far less funding than is needed to serve all or even most eligible children or provide the level of resources needed to support and sustain high-quality services to ensure all children have a strong foundation of learning. For example, only four percent of income-eligible infants and toddlers are receiving Early Head Start services, and only 40 percent of income-eligible preschool-aged children are enrolled in Head Start.

The report reviews the Administration's policies and budget requests that would provide the resources to help reduce gaps in services, improve quality, and better coordinate and streamline programs across the birth to kindergarten continuum. The eight identified early learning

programs receive far less funding than is needed to serve all or even a fraction of eligible children or provide the level of resources needed to support and sustain high-quality services to ensure all children have a strong foundation of learning.

EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

The IPB has been an active partner in other joint activities that seek to advance key Federal early learning initiatives such as the elimination of suspensions and expulsions, the reduction of chronic absenteeism, support for working families, the highlighting of early childhood workforce pay disparities, and the improvement of vocabulary and STEM development. In addition, the IPB has consistently engaged in monitoring the progress being made by the Departments' jointly administered RTT-ELC and Preschool Development Grants programs.

- *Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)*
The RTT-ELC program, jointly administered by the Departments, aims to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. RTT-ELC grants to states focus on improving early learning and development programs for young children by supporting each grantee's efforts to increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children in each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs. Twenty States were awarded four-year grants in three phases from 2011-2013. In total, \$1 billion was invested to support these 20 states in raising the bar on quality across their early education systems. The [2015 Progress Update](#) showed nearly 70,000 more early learning programs in the RTT-ELC states were participating in quality rating and improvement systems (systems to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early learning settings), with more than 21,000 programs rated highest in quality—more than double the number five years ago.
- *Preschool Development Grants (PDG)*
The PDG program, jointly administered by the Departments, has provided \$750 million to date to support 18 States with the purpose of strengthening state and local efforts to build, develop, and expand high-quality preschool programs so that more children from low- and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school. PDG has supported two types of grants to states: (1) five Development Grants for states with small or no state public preschool program to develop or enhance their preschool program infrastructure and capacity to deliver high-quality preschool services to children in one or more high-need communities; and (2) thirteen Expansion Grants to states with more robust preschool systems to implement and expand high-quality preschool programs to serve additional children in high-need communities. The [2015 Progress Update](#) showed over 18,000 children were served in high-quality preschool programs through PDG.
- *White House Summit on Early Childhood Education*
In December 2014, the White House convened state and local policymakers, mayors, school superintendents, corporate and community leaders, and advocates to highlight

collective leadership in support of early education for America's children and share best practices and effective strategies to support high-quality early childhood education. At the event, the Secretaries of ED and HHS announced \$750 million in new federal grant awards in 2014 from the two agencies to support early learning for over 63,000 additional children across the country. In addition, over \$330 million in new actions from corporate and philanthropic leaders were announced to expand the reach and enhance the quality of early education for thousands of additional children. The White House also released a [Playbook](#) to offer strategies for local leaders to develop and expand early education in their communities.

- [*The White House Summit on Working Families*](#)

In June 2014, the Departments released [*Supporting Working Families with Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education*](#) to highlight actions the Obama Administration has undertaken to support states and communities to help working families access high-quality early care and education, particularly through support of state quality rating and improvement systems.

- [*White House Symposium on Early STEM*](#)

In April 2016, ED, HHS and the White House hosted an event focused on early Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. At the event, policy leaders, researchers, and practitioners identified research gaps, best practices, and education technologies to best support our youngest learners, parents and caregivers, educators, and community leaders with early STEM education. The Administration also highlighted commitments from over 100 organizations and released a suite of federal STEM resources and materials.

- [*White House Summit and Workforce Pay Disparities*](#)

In June 2016, ED and HHS released a report, [*High-Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High-Quality Workforce*](#), that shines a spotlight on the gap in pay for early education teachers—97 percent of whom are women—and the impact that inequity has on schools' ability to attract and retain experienced, high-quality staff with higher levels of education. The report was released in conjunction with the [*United State of Women Summit*](#), convened by the [*White House Council on Women and Girls*](#), to celebrate the great achievements by and for women, and to organize around solutions that address the many issues where inequalities and injustices remain for women and girls. The Summit emphasized issues of educational opportunity, economic empowerment, health and wellness, violence against women, leadership and civic engagement, and entrepreneurship and innovation.

- [*Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!*](#)

In March 2014, the Departments launched a coordinated federal effort to encourage healthy child development, universal developmental and behavioral screening for children, and support for the families and providers who care for them. The Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! initiative draws heavily on previous developmental and behavioral screening efforts by consolidating materials from a wide array of federal agencies and their non-federal partners, which include the Administration for Children and Families,

Administration for Community Living, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, Health Resources and Services Administration, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at the HHS, as well as the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at ED. This effort helps families and providers celebrate milestones, promote universal screening, identify possible delays and concerns early, and enhance developmental supports.

CONCLUSION

The IPB has been a consistent means by which ED and HHS work together and collaborate with the White House and other federal agencies to improve early learning programs and services. It has provided a model for state and local governments on how to coordinate and collaborate and the release of the joint statements has been welcomed as unprecedented and transformative by the broad community of national and state early childhood and early learning policy leaders, programs and advocates. In addition, the expansion of the IPB to include representatives from USDA, DOI, and DOD will further strengthen the alignment and coordination needed to expand high-quality early learning services for our most vulnerable children.

In the next Administration, the IPB has an opportunity to continue this work and amplify its reach to include additional federal agencies. The IPB can be helpful in the implementation of the recently revised [Head Start Performance Standards](#), the new [Child Care regulations](#), and supporting the early learning provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#). Early learning is woven throughout the new education law as a means of addressing education equity in order to eliminate disparities in student achievement and support students' school success. With this reauthorization, the ESEA has been transformed from a K–12 education law to one which envisions a preschool through 12th grade (P–12) continuum of learning. In October 2016, ED released new [non-regulatory guidance](#) to support states and local communities. The IPB must continue to be flexible to tackle multiple issues and be driven by the challenges that emanate from research and the early learning field, as well as continue to engage career staff, who have been engaged in and learned from IPB activities since its inception. The IPB has created sustainable policies and a pathway for the next administration to continue to support the IPB's mission to ensure that all children get the strong start they need to succeed in school and in life.

Appendix A

Interagency Policy Board (IPB) Membership, 2010-2017

Membership of the IPB originally included eleven senior staff from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In 2012, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) recommended in their *2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap, and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue* that “the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services should extend their coordination efforts to other federal agencies with early learning and child care programs to mitigate the effects of program fragmentation, simplify children’s access to these services, collect the data necessary to coordinate operation of these programs, and identify and minimize any unwarranted overlap and potential duplication.” Over the next four years, representatives from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) at the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) were invited to join the IPB and attend the quarterly meetings.

Organization	2010 (11 members)	2016 (17 members)	2017 (17 members)
ED	Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning, Office of the Secretary (OS)	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning in the Office of Early Learning (OEL)	Group Leader for the Office of Early Learning (OEL)
	Assistant Secretary for Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)	Assistant Secretary for Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)	Acting Director for Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)
	Assistant Secretary for Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD)	Assistant Secretary for Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD)	Acting Chief of Staff for Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD)
	Assistant Secretary for Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)	Assistant Secretary for Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)	Acting Director, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
		Director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)	Commissioner of the National Center for Special Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
		Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)	Senior Education Program Specialist, Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)
HHS	Deputy Assistant Secretary	Deputy Assistant Secretary	Acting Deputy Assistant

Organization	2010 (11 members)	2016 (17 members)	2017 (17 members)
	for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)	for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)	Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
	Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)	Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)	Acting Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)
	Director of the Office of Head Start (OHS)	Director of the Office of Head Start (OHS)	Acting Director of the Office of Head Start (OHS)
	Director of the Office of Child Care (OCC)	Director of the Office of Child Care (OCC)	Acting Director of the Office of Child Care (OCC)
	Director of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)	Director of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)	Director of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
		Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development	Acting Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development
DoD		Director, Office of Family Readiness Policy	Director, Office of Family Readiness Policy
DOI		Director, BIE Early Childhood Programs	Director, BIE Early Childhood Programs
USDA		Director, USDA Child Nutrition Programs	Director, USDA Child Nutrition Programs
DPC	Special Assistant to the President for Education, White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC)	Special Assistant to the President for Education, White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC)	TBD
OMB	Associate Director for Education, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)Income Maintenance and Labor Branch	Associate Director for Education, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)Income Maintenance and Labor Branch	Program Examiner, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)Income Maintenance and Labor Branch

Appendix B

IPB Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

ED and HHS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to formally establish the IPB. By 2014, membership had expanded from the original 2010 group to include the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to correspond with the HHS research representation from ASPE. When an Office of Early Learning was established at ED, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning replaced the Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EARLY LEARNING INTERAGENCY POLICY BOARD

I. Purpose

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) enter into this Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU" or "Agreement") to establish the Early Learning Interagency Policy Board (IPB). Membership of the IPB shall include the U.S. Department of Education (ED), including, but not limited to, the Office of the Secretary (OS), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD), and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES); the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including, but not limited to, the Office of the Secretary (OS), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start (OHS/ACF), Office of Child Care (OCC/ACF), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB); the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC); and other federal representatives as determined by the IPB.

Under the terms of this Agreement, ED and HHS (the Parties) will work together with OMB and DPC to develop policy recommendations and improve program coordination and quality across federally funded early learning and development programs, including those that support health, serving children from birth through age eight.

II. Background Information

Achievement gaps between children living in poverty and their more affluent peers are apparent at or before kindergarten entry. For young children with high needs, participation in high-quality early learning and development programs can lead to improved cognitive, social-emotional, and language outcomes and help prepare them for success in school and beyond.^{14 15}

¹⁴ Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., & Nares, M. (2005). Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40. (Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press.

¹⁵ FPG Child Development Institute. Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Project. Available online:

Unfortunately, the quality of early learning and development programs varies greatly, and many children who are at risk for school failure do not have access to high-quality and comprehensive programs and services. A critical step in systematically improving the quality of all early learning and development programs is creating high-quality and coordinated systems of early learning and development. Some states and local communities have made significant progress in shaping and developing coordinated early learning and development systems. The major federal early learning and development programs serving children from birth through age eight include programs administered by both HHS and ED. These programs primarily serve children with high needs.¹⁶ The Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge program is jointly administered by both departments. The major HHS programs are the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV), Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems program (ECCS), Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The major ED programs are authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C for infants, toddlers, and their families and Part B for children ages 3-21, including the Preschool grants program for children ages 3-5 under Section 619 of Part B; and Title I Part A formula grant funds of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for children from birth through age eight. A critical step in improving the quality of all early learning and development programs is improved coordination and collaboration across these federal investments.

On August 3, 2010, the U.S. Secretaries of ED and HHS announced the formation of the IPB to improve the quality of early learning and development programs and outcomes for young children; increase the coordination of early learning and development research, technical assistance, and data systems; improve family engagement; and advance the effectiveness of the early learning and development workforce among the major federally funded early learning and development programs across the two departments. The IPB will act in an advisory capacity, focusing on reducing duplication and maximizing resources across the federally funded early learning and development programs at ED and HHS and coordinating efforts across the agencies to improve early learning, and development program effectiveness, especially for children with high needs.

III. Summary of Activities

The IPB will:

- A. Develop and implement long- and short-term goals and activities of the IPB;
- B. Engage in communication and outreach activities with the early learning and development field, including:
 1. Issuing statements on critical early learning and development topics; and
 2. Highlighting and sharing information with the field and the media about early learning and development strategies of states and communities engaged in effective early learning and development collaborations;
- C. Develop and implement a strategy for policy proposal discussions among the Parties on early learning and development topics of interest, including:

http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/#summary_follow_up

¹⁶ For example, in the RTT-ELC program Children with High Needs means children from birth through kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands" as that term is defined by section 80 13(7) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA); who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the state.

1. Reauthorizations of relevant ED and HHS early learning and development program statutes, including ESEA, CCDF, IDEA, MIECHV, and the Head Start Act;
 2. The development of policy recommendations that relate to or may have an impact on early learning and development; and
 3. The development of recommendations for joint ED/HHS guidance for specific federal early learning and development programs;
- D. Develop recommendations for coordination of effective technical assistance strategies and research across federal early learning and development programs;
- E. Develop an annual report to the Secretaries of ED and HHS on the status of early learning and development federal programs serving children from birth through age eight and the accomplishments and future plans of the IPB; and
- F. Support the Administration's early learning and development policy initiatives.

IV. Responsibilities of the Parties

Representatives from ED, HHS, OMB, and DPC will:

1. Meet on a regular basis, on a schedule to be developed and agreed upon by the agency contact persons named in this Agreement, to discuss how best to achieve the goals and purposes of this Agreement and, in particular, how best to carry out the activities outlined in Article III.
2. Collaborate on the development of additional short- and long-term IPB goals toward achieving the purposes of this Agreement.
3. Employ consensus-based decision-making in relation to IPB goals and activities.
4. Commit agency staff time, as authorized and feasible, to efficiently promote the IPB's goals and activities.
5. Collaborate on the development of plans for the dissemination of promising practices and lessons learned as a result of the activities carried out under the terms of this Agreement.
6. Identify any areas where increased information-sharing about agency activities that support or are related to the IPB's goals and activities may be needed and develop a plan to enhance communication between the Party agencies.
7. Engage other federal agencies, as appropriate, to inform the IPB in its deliberations and help achieve the IPB's goals.
8. Collaborate on periodically monitoring the overall effectiveness of the activities of the IPB.
9. Collaborate on periodic evaluations of the program agencies' progress in carrying out the activities outlined in Section III of this Agreement.

V. General Provisions

- A. Amendments/Modifications: This MOU may be amended and modified as agreed to in writing by the Parties.
- B. Effective Date and Termination: This MOU shall take effect once it has been signed by the authorized officials of the respective Parties, as designated below. It shall remain in effect for five years and will be subject to review and reauthorization or termination at that time by mutual written agreement or upon 30 days advance written notice by either party.

VI. General/Miscellaneous

- A. This MOU is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Nothing in this MOU authorizes or is intended to obligate the participating Parties to expend, exchange, or

reimburse funds, services, or supplies, or transfer or receive anything of value. No funds will be transferred to, or among, the participating agencies pursuant to this MOU. Each participating agency will bear the costs of its own participation in the activities described in this MOU, subject to the availability of funds.

- B. This MOU is strictly to facilitate interagency management and coordination of the IPB. This MOU shall not be construed to create a private right or cause of action for or by any person or entity.
- C. Specific activities or initiatives contemplated herein are subject to, and will be carried out in compliance with, all applicable laws, regulations, and other legal requirements.
- D. Any disputes that may arise as a result of this MOU will be discussed among the participating agencies' points of contact listed in Section VIII. Should the points of contact fail to reach resolution on a given matter, it will be referred by the IPB to the Secretaries of ED and HHS for review and resolution.

VII. Authorities

- A. ED enters into this MOU under authority of § 415 of the Department of Education Organization Act (DEOA) (20 U.S.C. 3475) and consistent with the purposes set forth in § 102(4), (5) and (6) of the DEOA (20 U.S.C. 3401(4), (5) and (6)).
- B. HHS enters into this MOU under authority of § 642B and § 649 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. § 9837b and 42 U.S.C. § 9844, respectively), as well as § 6581 of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. § 985g).

VIII. Points of Contact

Education:

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

U.S. Department of Education
Lyndon B. Johnson Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 401-2176

Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Lyndon B. Johnson Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 401-0113

Assistant Secretary, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
U.S. Department of Education
Lyndon B. Johnson Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 401-3676

Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education

Potomac Center Plaza
550 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 245-6496

Director of the Institute of Education Sciences
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208
(202) 219-1385

HHS:

Assistant Secretary for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families
Aerospace Building
901 D Street, SW
6th Floor West
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 401-5383

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Aerospace Building
901 D Street, SW
6th Floor West
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 401-9200

Director- Office of Child Care
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Aerospace Building
901 D Street, SW
5th Floor West
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 690-6782

Director - Office of Head Start
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Portals Building, Suite 8000
1250 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 205-8573

Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW- Room 415F
Washington, DC 20201
(202) 690-7858

Associate Administrator
Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Health Resources and Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10-86
Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 443-8590

OMB:

Associate Director for Education, Income Maintenance and Labor
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

DPC:

Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy
White House Domestic Policy Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

IX. Signatures

In witness whereof, the undersigned, duly authorized officers have subscribed their names on behalf of the Parties this 23rd day of April, 2014.

/s/
Arne Duncan, Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

/s/
Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services