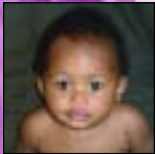




Good Start, Grow Smart Background Information



In 2001, Congress passed the *No Child Left Behind Act*, a bipartisan education reform bill. The goal of the Act was for every child to be reading at grade level by third grade. *No Child Left Behind* focuses specific attention on services for children who are more likely to fall behind in reading, such as children from low-income families or children who are English language learners.

President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush recognized that efforts to achieve the goals of *No Child Left Behind* must start before children enter kindergarten. In April 2002, the Bush Administration announced the *Good Start, Grow Smart (GSGS)* initiative to help States and local communities strengthen early learning for young children. The goal of GSGS is to ensure that young children enter kindergarten with the skills they will need to succeed at reading and other early learning activities.

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GSGS includes several priorities that span Federal agencies

- ✓ **Partnering with States to Improve Early Childhood Education**—Federal agencies are working in partnership with States to strengthen early learning in child care and other early childhood programs. GSGS calls on States to develop quality criteria for early childhood education, including voluntary guidelines on early literacy and early math concepts that align with State K–12 standards. To help States meet these criteria, States have more flexibility with their Federal child care funds.
- ✓ **Strengthening Head Start**—The Head Start program has developed a new accountability system, known as the National Reporting System, to ensure that every Head Start center assesses student learning in language, early literacy, and pre-math skills. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) implemented a national training program that used a train-the-trainer approach and mentoring to reach all Head Start teachers with techniques to promote prereading skills for Head Start students.
- ✓ **Providing Information to Teachers, Caregivers, and Parents**—To close the gap between the best research and current practices in early childhood education, the U.S. Department of Education initiated a broad public awareness campaign for parents, early childhood educators, child care providers, and the public. In summer 2002, the First Lady and Education officials hosted Early Learning Summits and Early Childhood Educator Academies. New publications were released for parents and caregivers (see Resources section). In addition, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Administration for Children and Families in HHS and offices in the Department of Education collaborated on a 5-year, \$40 million research agenda to identify language and early literacy curricula and teaching strategies.

What are Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs)?

ELGs, or content standards, describe what children need to know, understand, and be able to do at certain ages or developmental stages.

Selected State ELG documents are available on the Web at:

<http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/elgwebsites.html>.



Although GSGS activities are occurring in early childhood programs across the Federal government, this booklet focuses on the work of the Child Care Bureau (CCB) and the State agencies that administer the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Within this priority area, key goals for the CCB include:



✓ **Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs).** Voluntary State guidelines on early reading skills and early math concepts for children ages 3 to 5 that are adaptable to various child care settings and align with State K–12 standards;



✓ **Professional Development.** A State plan for offering education and training activities to child care and preschool teachers and administrators, which also can include Federally funded training initiatives; and



✓ **Program Coordination.** A State plan for coordinating at least four early childhood programs, which may include the CCDF program, Head Start, public pre-Kindergarten programs, and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, among others.



Under the leadership of the Child Care Bureau's Associate Commissioner, Shannon Christian, the CCB has created strategic partnerships with States to improve early childhood programs through a significant infusion of guidance, training, and technical assistance to help States meet these key goals.



The CCB encouraged States to include GSGS objectives in their plans for administering CCDF, provided national and regional training for States, Tribes, and Territories and provided individualized technical assistance, including onsite consultation for many States. The CCB also invested in research and evaluation to help policymakers and practitioners make sound decisions that support the professional development of the early care and education workforce and promote school readiness in young children.

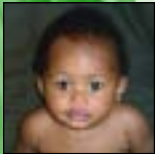
Key Facts About the Child Care and Development Fund

- ✓ The Child Care Bureau (CCB) in the Administration for Children and Families at HHS administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). In FY 2004, the CCDF made available \$4.8 billion in Federal funding to subsidize child care for low-income working parents and improve the quality of child care for all families who use child care. Federal CCDF funds leverage State child care funds and funds from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and other related programs.
- ✓ In FY 2002, approximately 2.4 million children per month received child care assistance from CCDF, TANF, and related programs.
- ✓ More than 75 percent of families who receive child care assistance are served through child care vouchers. Families who receive a subsidy choose from a variety of types of care, including child care centers, family child care homes, and family, friend and neighbor care. CCB has a strong interest in the quality and affordability of care throughout the child care market.
- ✓ States invest a significant amount of their CCDF funds in child care quality improvements, which amounted to about \$881 million in FY 2003.

Do ELGs only address early literacy and early math concepts?

GSGS asks States and Territories to specifically address early literacy and early math concepts of children ages 3–5, but many States have developed guidelines that address other domains of development, such as social-emotional development and physical development. Some States also have developed guidelines for children birth to 5 years of age.

Key Facts



Child Care Bureau's Good Start, Grow Smart Accomplishments

As a result of the support and technical assistance provided by the CCB in partnership with States, the following accomplishments related to the priorities of the GSGS initiative have been achieved as of September 2004:

- ✓ All 50 States; Washington, DC; and the Territories are actively engaged in developing or implementing ELGs applicable to all early care and education programs within their States.
- ✓ More than 27 States are implementing their guidelines through dissemination, training, and/or embedding the guidelines in their professional development system.
- ✓ All 50 States; Washington, DC; and the Territories have created partnerships with at least four key early care and education programs in their States and are coordinating with these stakeholders in the establishment of their professional development systems.

See the *Child Care and Development Fund: Report of State Plans FY 2004-2005* for further highlights of State accomplishments in meeting their GSGS goals and early literacy objectives, available on the Web at: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/stateplan/>.

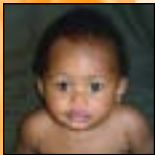
Accom

Since 2002, the Child Care Bureau has supported State progress on GSGS objectives by providing:

- ✓ Regionally-based training for States, Territories and Tribes focused on ELGs, professional development, program coordination, and financing. Since GSGS was launched in 2002, the CCB, its technical assistance providers, and the ACF Regional Offices have joined together to produce two rounds of training for States on GSGS. At regional meetings, State stakeholders from child care, Head Start and education came together to develop a strategic plan for implementing GSGS in their States. The first phase of training focused on developing and disseminating ELGs; the second phase focused on implementation of ELGs across settings and in professional development systems.
- ✓ National training for States, Territories, and Tribes in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education and the Head Start Bureau, including a Forum on Child Care and Early Literacy (February 2002) and two State Roundtables on *Developing ELGs* and *Implementing ELGs and Professional Development Systems*. The CCB has emphasized early learning in its annual State Child Care Administrators Meetings, facilitating cross-state sharing and momentum for early learning across child care programs.
- ✓ Publications and training tools for Parents, Providers, and Policymakers, such as *A Guide to Early Literacy in Child Care: Learning to Read & Write Begins at Birth* and the *Supporting an Early Learning Framework* CD-ROM (see the Resources Section for more information and related resources from other Federal programs). In addition, the CCB has distributed *What Works Briefs* and training modules for early childhood educators describing research-based practices to support young children's social and emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors.

Are ELGs Voluntary?

All States and Territories have been asked to develop ELGs for children ages 3–5, but the use of ELGs at the program level is voluntary, unless required by the State or Territory.



- ✓ Individualized technical assistance for many States, including onsite consultation, such as with Alaska on developing ELGs, Oklahoma on implementing ELGs, and West Virginia and Ohio on developing a comprehensive professional development system.
- ✓ A requirement for States to document their progress on GSGS goals in their CCDF State Plans. Every State successfully submitted State Plans for GSGS only 1 year after its launch. The FY 2006–2007 CCDF State Plans, which will be submitted in July 2005, will provide a status report on implementation.
- ✓ Research and evaluation on the effectiveness of strategies to improve children's early learning; the impact of professional development efforts in changing caregiver skills and practice (including coordination of training efforts across early care and education systems); and the impact of partnerships and collaborations between Head Start, child care, and pre-Kindergarten in promoting child, provider, and family outcomes. In addition, the CCB has funded projects to support research and data capacity efforts at the State level, and these projects are addressing early learning, school readiness, and program coordination issues. Findings will help States make informed early care and education policy decisions.
- ✓ An Interagency GSGS work group representing early childhood programs at HHS and the Department of Education that coordinates GSGS activities and works together to achieve school readiness goals for young children. This work group is focused on: (1) creating and maintaining a shared vision for early childhood education at the Federal level and with State and local constituents, (2) sharing technical assistance tools and professional development opportunities, and (3) identifying new technical assistance resources. Participants from HHS include: the CCB, Head Start Bureau, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Education participants include: the Office of Student Achievement and School Accountability, the Office of Special Education Programs, and the Institute for Education Sciences. Other Federal agencies, such as the National Institute for Literacy, also participate.

Timeline of Milestones

- July 2001** First Lady Laura Bush hosted a Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development in Washington, DC.
- January 2002** *No Child Left Behind Act* was signed into law.
- April 2002** President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush introduced the *Good Start, Grow Smart* early childhood initiative to support the goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.
- August 2002** The CCB's 11th Annual State Child Care Administrators Meeting, *Strengthening the Foundation for Quality Child Care*, introduced GSGS to State policymakers and other child care leaders.
- Fall 2002** GSGS Training—Phase I trainings in 10 locations around the country focused on providing States with definitions, research, and guidance on each of the three priority areas: ELGs, professional development, and program coordination.
- July 2003** States submitted their CCDF Plans for FY 2004–2005 which, for the first time, included each State's plans for GSGS implementation.
- August 2003** The CCB's 12th Annual State Child Care Administrators Meeting, *Supporting an Early Learning Framework*, focused on literacy and learning, statewide professional development planning, and collaboration across the early care and education communities.

What is the GSGS definition of a Professional Development Plan?

Professional development plans are defined as systems of training and instruction developed for the purpose of improving the preparation and ongoing development of early care and education providers. States and Territories are encouraged to develop systems of professional development that are aligned with the ELGs. Information on State Early Care and Education Professional Development Web sites is available at: http://nccic.org/pubs/good_start/state-ece.html.

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**Fall 2003**

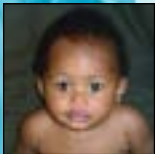
GSGS Training—Phase II focused on supporting State's efforts to move forward with the implementation of GSGS, implementing ELGs, developing comprehensive professional development systems, and developing outreach and access for family, friend, and neighbor care, at regional meetings and onsite technical assistance to States.

**December 2003**

The CCB released *Supporting an Early Learning Framework*, a free CD-ROM training tool with more than 4 hours of edited video clips, print materials from 15 workshops, and more than 150 unique Web links. It can be ordered at: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/sam2004>.

**July 2004**

The CCB focused its 13th Annual State Administrators Meeting on *Leading the Way to Quality Early Care and Education*.

**Fall 2004**

GSGS Training—Phase III will support States as they continue to implement GSGS, integrating ELGs into professional development systems and strengthening collaboration across early care and education programs.



Good Start, Grow Smart Partners

Federal Contacts

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



- ✓ Child Care Bureau

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/>



- ✓ Head Start Bureau

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/>



- ✓ National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov>

U.S. Department of Education



- ✓ Institute for Education Sciences

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ies/index.html>

- ✓ Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/index.html>

- ✓ Office of Special Education Programs

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>



- ✓ National Institute for Literacy

<http://www.nifl.gov>

With which programs should State Child Care Administrators coordinate?

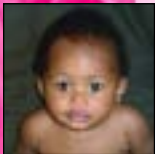
GSGS encourages States and Territories to coordinate funding and/or administration of at least four early childhood programs. A coordinated system of early care and education may include CCDE, Head Start, TANF, and public pre-k programs. Other early childhood programs also may be included, such as Tribal early childhood programs, faith-based early care and education programs, and before and after-school programs.

continued on next page...



State Contacts

- ✓ State Child Care and Development Fund Contacts
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/statedata/dirs/devfund.html>
- ✓ Head Start State Collaboration Offices
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/contacts/index.htm>
- ✓ National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education
<http://naecs.crc.uiuc.edu/>
- ✓ State Early Childhood Special Education Contacts
<http://www.nectac.org/contact/contact.asp>
- ✓ State Early Care and Education Professional Development Web Sites
<http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/state-ece.html>



Resources & Information Related to Good Start, Grow Smart

Resources Especially for Families

- ✓ *Healthy Start, Grow Smart: Newborn–12 months* (English and Spanish)
- ✓ *A Child Becomes a Reader*
- ✓ *7 Super Things Parents and Caregivers Can Do: 7 Cosas Geniales Que Los Padres Y Los Cuidadores Pueden Hacer* (English/Spanish Bookmark)

Order from ED Pubs at: <http://www.edpubs.org/webstore/Content/search.asp> or by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS

- ✓ *Learning to Read & Write Begins at Birth: A Guide to Early Literacy in Child Care* (English/Spanish)
- ✓ *Making the Transition from Child Care to Kindergarten: Working Together for Kindergarten Success* (English/Spanish)

Available at: <http://www.childcareaware.org/en/tools/pubs/>

- ✓ *Transitions from Infant Toddler Services to Preschool Education*
- ✓ *Assuring the Family's Role on the Early Intervention Team: Explaining Rights and Safeguards*

Available at: <http://www.nectac.org/pubs/pubs.asp>

Resources Especially for Practitioners

- ✓ *Teaching Our Youngest: A Guide For Preschool Teachers And Child Care And Family Providers*

Available at: <http://www.edpubs.org/webstore/Content/search.asp>

How can I find out what my State is doing related to GSGS?

Each State and Territory submitted a State Plan in July 2003 that described what they were doing or planned to do in the three priority areas of GSGS. The *Child Care and Development Fund Reports FY 2004–2005* summary document contains information on your State and national summaries on a number of components of child care funding. This report is available on the Web at: <http://nccic.org/pubs/stateplan/index.html>. Also, see the “State Contacts” section in this document.



- ✓ *What Works Brief 3: Helping Children Understand Routines and Classroom Schedules*
- ✓ *Training Module 1: Classroom Preventive Practices: Promoting Children's Success*
Available at: <http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu>



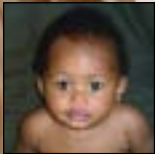
- ✓ *Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence to Learning*
- ✓ *Linguistic Diversity and Early Literacy: Serving Culturally Diverse Families in Early Head Start*
Available at: <http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/catalog/index.cfm>

Resources Especially for Policymakers and Administrators



- ✓ *Good Start, Grow Smart: The Bush Administration's Early Childhood Initiative*
(announcement from April 2002)
Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/toc.html>

- ✓ *Good Start, Grow Smart: Training and Technical Assistance Materials*
Available at: <http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/index.html>



- ✓ *Status of State Efforts to Develop and Implement Early Learning Guidelines*
Available at: <http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/elg-efforts.html>

- ✓ *Report of Child Care and Development Fund State Plans for FY 2004–2005*
Available at: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/stateplan/>



- ✓ *A Tribal Guide to the Good Start, Grow Smart Early Learning Initiative*
Available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/ta/gsgs1.htm>

- ✓ *Selected Resources on Financing Early Childhood Systems to Support Inclusive Options for Young Children with Disabilities*
Available at: <http://www.nectac.org/pubs/pubs.asp>



So much is happening in States and communities to promote quality early learning and school readiness. Your involvement is critical. Please find out how your State defines kindergarten readiness in its early learning guidelines, and join the Child Care Bureau in this national movement to help every child enter kindergarten ready to succeed.



A publication of the Child Care Bureau,
Administration for Children and Families,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/ta/guide.htm>