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**INFORMATION MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

**SUBJECT:** Project SOLAR – T/TA and Staff Development Planning Tool

**INFORMATION:**

The Office of Head Start (OHS) is pleased to announce the release of a new resource to the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC): Project SOLAR, which stands for Strengthening Operations for Learning And Results. SOLAR is a set of web-based tools designed to support Head Start and Early Head Start programs in their training and technical assistance (T/TA) and staff development planning. SOLAR was developed under a grant to Education Development Center, Inc. through OHS’s Innovation and Improvement Project Initiative.

SOLAR consists of two online tools and Frequently Asked Questions to support Head Start and Early Head Start staff in accessing and using the tools, as described below:

**The SOLAR Profiler** is a web-based database that documents and produces reports on staff’s proficiency in the skills required for their positions. The Profiler allows programs to identify and track skills for six categories of staff positions: classroom staff-preschool; classroom staff-infants/toddlers; directors, managers, and supervisors; family, health, and disabilities services staff; home visitors; and support staff.

**The SOLAR Planner** is a downloadable application that guides programs through the development of a T/TA Plan.

Users of the ECLKC can download a copy of the SOLAR Planner and printable versions of the Staff Skill Profiles. To protect the privacy of local programs and their staff, access to the SOLAR Profiler is protected through the ECLKC user password system.

OHS, in partnership with the Education Development Center, Inc., will present an orientation webinar for Head Start and Early Head Start grantee and delegate agency directors and managers on Monday, September 29, 2008 from 2:00–3:30 EST. Online registration will open on September 22 at <http://www.hsnrc.org> and will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis. The SOLAR web site location and instructions on how to access SOLAR resources will be provided during the orientation. A recording of the SOLAR orientation webinar will be posted on the ECLKC for those who cannot attend.

OHS encourages leaders of all Head Start and Early Head Start programs to access and use these free, state-of-the art staff development planning tools—especially in light of the importance of professional development as reflected in reauthorization. For more information, contact your T/TA Network provider in your region or the staff at HSKIMS toll-free at 1-866-763-6481 .

/Patricia E. Brown/

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