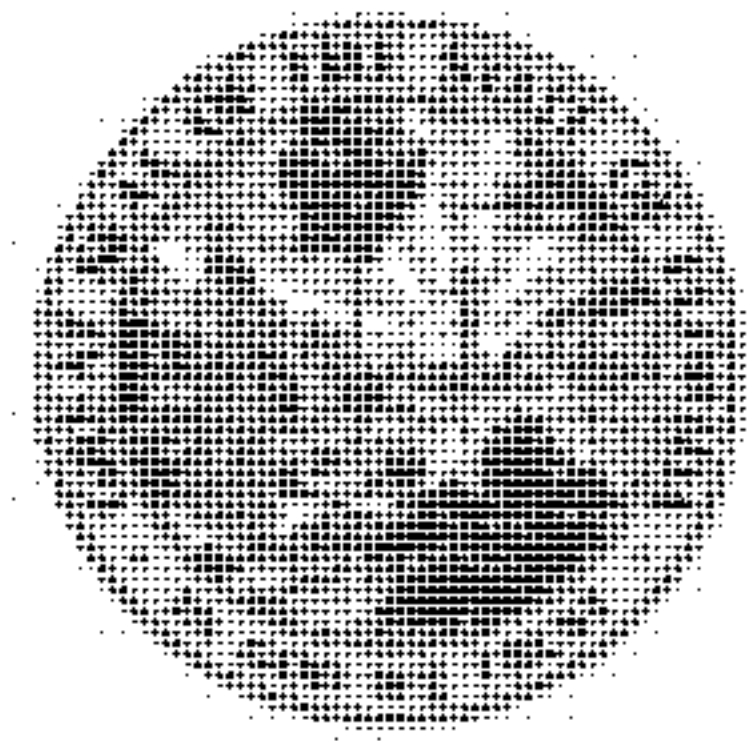


Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

Application for Initial Funding

CFDA Number 84.412



Narrative

The State of Florida

October 19, 2011

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V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The State must meet the following requirements to be eligible to compete for funding under this program:

(a) The Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement that the State must attach to its application, describing the Participating State Agency’s level of participation in the grant. (See section XIII.) At a minimum, the MOU or other binding agreement must include an assurance that the Participating State Agency agrees to use, to the extent applicable--

- (1) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A set of statewide Program Standards;
- (3) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- (4) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

List of Participating State Agencies:

The applicant should list below all Participating State Agencies that administer public funds related to early learning and development, including at a minimum: the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of CCDF, the section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA programs, State-funded preschool, home visiting, Title I of ESEA, the Head Start State Collaboration Grant, and the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, as well as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the State’s Child Care Licensing Agency, and the State Education Agency.

For each Participating State Agency, the applicant should provide a cross-reference to the place within the application where the MOU or other binding agreement can be found. Insert additional rows if necessary. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	MOU Location in Application	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency
Florida Office of Early Learning*	N/A	CCDF, State Advisory Council, State funded Preschool, Head Start State Collaboration
Florida Department of Children and Families	Appendix (A)(1)-3	Child care licensing, TANF
Florida Department of Health	Appendix (A)(1)-3	Title V to include Maternal and Child Care Block Grant and Home Visiting, Part C – IDEA
Florida Department of Education	Appendix (A)(1)-3	Title I, State Education Agency, Part B - IDEA

(b) The State must have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education that meets the requirements described in section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b).

The State certifies that it has an operational State Advisory Council that meets the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

(c) The State must have submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (see section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)).

The State certifies that it submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding, consistent with the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are the focal point of the application and peer review. A panel of peer reviewers will evaluate the applications based on the extent to which the selection criteria are addressed.

Core Areas -- Sections (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development. (20 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's—

(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;

(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;

(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and

(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(1):

- The completed background data tables providing the State's baseline data for--
 - The number and percentage of children from Low-Income families in the State, by age (see Table (A)(1)-1);
 - The number and percentage of Children with High Needs from special populations in the State (see Table (A)(1)-2); and
 - The number of Children with High Needs in the State who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs, by age (see Table (A)(1)-3).

- Data currently available, if any, on the status of children at kindergarten entry (across Essential Domains of School Readiness, if available), including data on the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.
- Data currently available, if any, on program quality across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs.
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-4).
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-5).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, by age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (see Table (A)(1)-6).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-7).
- The completed table that describes the elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-8).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-9).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development workforce credentials currently available in the State, including whether credentials are aligned with a State Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have each type of credential (see Table (A)(1)-10).
- The completed table that describes the current status of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators (see Table (A)(1)-11).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see Table (A)(1)-12).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State (see Table (A)(1)-13).

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs—

For over a half a century, Florida has provided bold visionary leadership in shaping public policy and making significant investments to respond to the needs of high needs children. In 1946, the first of now 11 Children’s Services Councils was conceived in response to lack of

services for at-risk children. In 1986, the Florida Legislature passed the Handicapped Prevention Act (Chapter 411, F.S.) requiring interagency collaboration toward implementing a continuum of prevention and early intervention services focused on high-risk children. As early as the 1980s Florida's Department of Education had a premiere PreK program for at-risk children funded with lottery dollars. The '80s also brought state-of-the-art regional perinatal system for premature babies and former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno connected the dots between teen mothers, poverty, and early childhood by starting child care centers and employment training for low-income moms in the projects in Miami. Florida is the only state with legislation incentivizing teen parents to stay in school through health and social services, childcare, and transportation (Florida Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention Act of 1986, amended in 1994 and 1997). Responding to high infant mortality rates, the late Governor Lawton Chiles birthed Florida's Healthy Start in 1991 (Florida Statutes, Section 409.906) with universal screening for all pregnant women and infants, which became the model for the federal Healthy Start. In 1998, Florida implemented Healthy Families, an intensive home visiting program in several Florida counties with proven success at preventing child abuse and neglect. Former Governor Jeb Bush furthered Florida's policies through The Florida School Readiness Act, 1999, with the intent of preparing children to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Subsequent legislation in 2004 created the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), a free program for all four-year-olds.

Florida hopes to continue this tradition of valiant leadership for its youngest children with a successful application for Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge funds. Florida continues to be challenged by pervasive and growing poverty, lack of health care, emotional and behavioral challenges and lack of school readiness. Decades of longitudinal research have shown that quality early childhood programs can successfully alter the trajectory for children with high needs. However, there is no one single agency or program dedicated to coordinating the spectrum of physical and mental health, childcare, developmental or socio-economic needs of families with young children. This proposal offers a bold vision, an ambitious plan, and targeted resources to create a real integrated system to benefit children with high needs.

Florida's Young Children and Families

As the fourth largest state in the nation, with over 350 languages and a rich multicultural diversity, more than a million children birth to age 5 call Florida their home. Florida is a microcosm of our diverse multicultural nation with rural farms with seasonal migrant workers, large urban cities with many immigrant families, isolated fishing communities, busy tourist towns, small quaint towns with high unemployment, large retirement communities, 24 military installations with over 100,000 personnel, and even a Magic Kingdom. But Florida's children do not live in fairytale castles; rather, they have pervasive needs. Of the 7-million households in Florida, about 3 in 10 include children under the age of 18. A little more than a million of these children are under the age of 5, representing 28% of Florida's total youth population. According to the KID COUNT data book, in Florida, 10% of the state's children were impacted by foreclosure since 2007, and in 2010, an estimated 468,000 or 12 % of children lived in households where there was at least one parent who was eligible for and or seeking employment, but was unemployed at the time the data were collected. Florida has the fourth largest number of children living in poverty nationally. An estimated 26.1% of children under age 6 live in povertyⁱ (defined as living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or \$18,530/annual income for a family of three).ⁱⁱ For Florida children under age 6 who live in poverty, 66% live with a single parent. By almost every measure of health and development, children living in poverty are at greater risk for poorer outcomes than other children; they are more likely to have inadequate nutrition, mental health and emotional problems, accidents and injuries, and chronic health problems, dental problems, developmental delays and learning disabilities (*Children in poverty: Trends, consequences, and policy options*, 2002).

Fortunately, Florida has expansive early learning programs to support children with high needs. Head Start programs serve 42,667 low income children; 4,040 starting in pregnancy with Early Head Start until the child's third birthday and another 38,627 children ages 3-5 in Head Start. Even with this significant expansion, only 3% of all eligible birth to 3-year-olds are served and only 28% of eligible 3-5 year olds.

In addition to Head Start, Florida's children with high needs are served by a network of diverse child care programs, including the more than 10,000 child care providers who delivered Florida's child care subsidy program, School Readiness, in 2010-2011 and served more than 236,000 children. More than 6,000 providers offered the state's constitutionally established,

free, Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program to more than 157,000 4-year-old children in the same year. The state's network of early learning providers includes private centers and schools, family child care homes, public schools, faith-based organizations, and informal settings. Florida has a network of respected home visiting programs with a proven track record of family engagement, healthy birth outcomes, enhanced child development, child abuse prevention; and the state's IDEA Part C and B services strive to keep pace with the increasing number of young children with identified developmental delays.

Florida children served who are from low-income families with high needs, and considered within special populations with high needs, are shown in Tables (A)(1)-1 and (A)(1)-2. Children supported by program area, in addition to historical data on these children are shown in Tables (A)(1)-3, (A)(1)-4 and (A)(1)-5.

The data demonstrate that there are more children from low-income families in Florida in the 3 to kindergarten entry age range than there are children ages birth-12 months or 1-3. In terms of high needs, the largest percentage of children birth to kindergarten entry from low-income families (3%) have developmental delays, as opposed to being English learners (1%), in foster care (1%), residing on Indian lands, migrant or homeless (each <1%). Florida's School Readiness (CCDF funded) program enrolls the largest number of young children (140,823) with developmental disabilities and other needs, followed by the state's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program (81,005).

As reflected in Table (A)(1)-4, *Florida has invested consistently* within the Early Learning and Development Programs. Although total State contributions to CCDF have decreased by about \$8-million over the past 5 years, VPK funding has increased by about \$41-million. Overall, State contributions to all early learning and development programs have increased about \$32-million over the past 5 years. In addition, Florida has two substantial sources of local match with the non-federal share of Head Start and the Children's Services Councils. During FY 2009, Florida Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant/Seasonal programs received a total of \$272,067,200 for 35,390 enrollment slots. As part of the 20% non-federal share of match, Florida's communities generated an additional \$54,413,440.

Florida is the only state in the country that has **Children's Services Councils (CSCs)** as investment partners. CSCs are a countywide special district created by ordinance, and approved by voters, to fund programs and services that improve the lives of children and their families. In 2010-2011 alone, Florida's 11 CSCs collectively invested more than \$370-million in hundreds of local programs and services for children and their families – primarily prevention and early intervention programs that produce measurable results. Among these investments are a voluntary, pilot Quality Rating Improvement System in 8 counties that includes more than 600 child care centers and 250 family child care homes; in Miami-Dade County the QRIS also includes all local Head Start and Early Head Start programs (72) and over 60 VPK classrooms in public schools. While the standards for these systems vary slightly among the counties, these pilot sites are working together to create shared standards and cross-county collaboration, informing the statewide TQRIS being developed in this quality plan.

In tandem with consistent investments in early learning, *Florida has been planning and investing in its statewide early learning system for many years*. These efforts were solidified in 2006 with the collaborative adoption of a *clear and united vision*, articulated in Florida's Framework for Children (2006). (See Appendix (A)(1)-1). This shared vision guides the development of quality programs and improvements by stakeholders across this state and serves as a united path for serving children and their families. The vision is also shared by the *Florida Children and Youth Cabinet*, which includes all child-serving state agency heads, and which added Safe and Supportive Communities to the vision. The Cabinet further developed key focus areas on 4 indicators important to the well being of Florida's youngest citizens: health care, kindergarten readiness scores, child abuse and neglect, and homelessness. These focus areas strengthen Florida's commitment to a quality early learning system, especially for children with high needs. The Cabinet also has been operating the *State Advisory Council*, and the State has the unique benefit of having the state's First Lady, Ann Scott, serve as Florida's Chief Child Advocate. This appointment demonstrates the Governor's commitment to the children of Florida and First Lady Ann Scott's eagerness to serve in this capacity illustrates the importance of this work.

In addition to this State-level impact, *Florida's early childhood system benefits from a strong local governance structure designed to meet the individual needs of each community.*

There are 31 single- and multi-county Early Learning Coalitions (ELC) that serve each of the state's 67 counties. The ELCs are local, non-profit organizations established as community hubs for early learning and family services. Florida's OEL benefits from each ELC given the diversity of the State's population and variance in topography and geographic regions (i.e., rural panhandle versus major, metropolitan areas such as Orlando and Miami). Florida's OEL and other state agencies can rely upon the local expertise within each ELC to ensure services are catered to individual family needs, unique living conditions, and working environments. The ELCs are local implementers of the School Readiness program, VPK program and provide Child Care Resource and Referral services. The ELCs are funded, by legislative design, through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), and generate private match dollars. The decentralized approach in Florida highlights the importance of services for the state's youngest children. The ELC have collaborated to build many of the state's local best-practice models for enhancing quality and reaching more children with high needs.

The State's commitment to early learning is further demonstrated by implementation of the Early Learning Partners Initiative, see Appendix (A)(1)-2, in 2009 with American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds. This allowed Florida's early learning system to make a significant investment in standardizing assessment and accountability practices and developing a statewide comprehensive professional development system. This initiative also engaged in further technology enhancements for child and program data collection and sharing, and developed the professional development registry, which will enable professionals within Florida to document their educational and professional accomplishments and follow a career pathway if they choose.

Focus on Children with High Needs

The numbers of children with high needs who are served by state early learning programs have been consistently increasing since 2007. The number has increased most significantly in the VPK program. Children served historically since 2007 are shown in Table (A)(1)-5.

The current programs where children are being served within Florida are:

Florida's State Funded Preschool: Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Florida is one of only three states in the nation with a voluntary, universal prekindergarten program. A total of 165,341 or 76.2% of all 4-year-olds in the state participate in VPK with choices in faith-based, community-based child care programs, Head Start) or public school programs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Head Start

The comprehensive federal child development program helps 4,040 low-income children starting in pregnancy with Early Head Start until the child's third birthday, 3% of all eligible birth to three-year-olds. Head Start is focused on children from ages 3-5 serving another 37,245 children, representing an enrollment of 28% of all eligible three- to five-year olds.

Services for Children with Special Needs

Children's Medical Services (CMS) provides services to children from birth to 21 years of age who have special health care needs through two program divisions, the Division of Prevention and Intervention and the Division of CMS Network and Related Programs. The Division of Prevention and Intervention provides specialized services for two groups of children: those with special health care needs and those who have been alleged to be abused or neglected. Part C of the IDEA services include identification, evaluation, service coordination, and individualized family support plan (IFSP) development if the child is determined eligible, as well as early intervention services such as physical, occupational and speech therapies and special instruction, behavior support and family support services. Services are free of charge for eligible children, and are based on concerns and priorities of the family, the IFSP team, and the outcomes described in the plan. In 2010-11, 45,350 children were in the data system during the year, of these 25,350 children were newly referred to Early Steps and 26,021 were eligible and received a Family Support Plan for additional services.

Part B of IDEA entitles eligible children with disabilities, ages 3-21, who has not graduated high school, to receive special education and related services through school districts. Specifically, Part B, Section 619, serves children ages 3-5. A child is determined eligible when the requirements listed in the State Board of Education Rules for Exceptional Student Education

have been met. For children age 3 to kindergarten, 22,758 children had Individual Education Plans authorizing services in 2010.

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Child Find program is a discretionary project funded by federal dollars through the Department of Education's Bureau of Exceptional Education & Student Services (BEESS). It is administered in coordination with school districts to identify and locate children ages 3-5 who are potentially eligible for services under the IDEA and links them with needed services. This program screens children to determine the need for formal evaluation, and facilitates service planning and initiation through tracking potentially eligible children and providing service coordination as they progress through the continuum from identification to placement.

Florida's Subsidized Child Care Program: School Readiness Program

An estimated 64.8% of young children in Florida have working parents, making child care a necessity. The state of Florida supports approximately 105,000 children ages birth to 5 on a monthly basis with school readiness funds^{iv}, representing 5% of eligible one-year-olds and 14% of eligible 4- to 5-year olds.^v More than 80% of participating children are cared for in center-based settings, while 11% are cared for in family childcare homes, 5% in public schools and 1% in informal arrangements. More than 58% of families receiving School Readiness services need child care to maintain employment, while 18% have children enrolled to ensure protection and 16%, so that parents can participate in training and maintain employment.

School readiness funding is administered by OEL and is distributed to 31 local Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs). Local implementation of the School Readiness program by ELCs allows for adaptation of the program to focus on the areas of greatest need in each unique community and to prioritize local quality initiatives.

Mental Health Services

The Florida Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Medicaid agency and the Department of Health provide early childhood mental health services to children. These departments also provide mental health and substance abuse services for the family members of the young children. Children's mental health services are provided through a network of providers that are contracted with the Department of Children and Families. With the exception of a few programs, the large community mental health centers

have not traditionally provided early childhood mental health services. The Florida State University Harris Institute for Infant Mental Health Training and other partners have trained more than a 200 mental therapists in addition about a thousand frontline practitioners to help address the social emotional needs of young children. Florida also has made strides toward building a cadre of early childhood mental health consultants to childcare.

Healthy Start

The Healthy Start Prenatal and Infant Coalitions have the legislative authority (Section 383.216, Florida Statutes) and responsibility to plan and develop improved local Maternal Child Health (MCH) service delivery systems. In calendar year 2007, 161,206 pregnant women and 194,441 infants (of the 239,120 birth total) were screened through Healthy Start. The screening process identified a total of 124,645 women and infants at risk for poor outcomes.

Florida also has successfully competed for six federal Healthy Start sites that are focused on inter-conceptual care, maternal depression and eliminating racial disparities in birth outcomes. These sites provide services to women living in predominantly African American communities during and between pregnancies to reduce poor birth outcomes.

Taken holistically, Florida's early learning landscape has both breadth and depth. The leadership behind the services described above can be credited for initiating several projects and programs aimed at improving child health and development outcomes. Ranging from the foundational work of the Early Learning and Developmental Standards to the creation of a comprehensive professional development opportunity for early childhood educators, Florida's trajectory for tangible change is solid. Following is a brief description of some of these projects and programs.

Early Learning and Developmental Standards

Florida was one of the first states in the nation to have early learning guidelines. The School Readiness Act, Section 411.01 of the Florida Statutes called for the creation of standards for all school readiness programs. In 2000, the Partnership approved standards for 5-year-olds, which were augmented in 2001 by standards for 3- and 4-year-olds. In 2004, the Office of Early Learning adopted the Florida Birth to Three Learning and Developmental Standards, and in 2005, the Florida Department of Education's Office of Early Learning established the Voluntary Prekindergarten Standards, which were revised in 2008. Recently the Office of Early Learning

and the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning partnered to create one comprehensive set of 4-year-old standards for Florida's children, which streamline implementation for providers that administer multiple programs. In an effort toward continuous quality improvement, The Early Learning Partners Initiative used the ARRA funding to further improve the Early Learning and Development Standards for children ages birth to 5 years old and the Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners. These revised standards will be approved and adopted in October 2011.

Table (A)(1)-6 demonstrates that Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards address essential domains of school readiness for all age groups. The Standards are further discussed in section C.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems

Florida has made significant investments and strides toward implementing a comprehensive assessment system for children with high needs. **Florida's comprehensive assessment system includes 5 key components: Screening and referral, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality, measure of adult-child interactions, kindergarten readiness and overall systems evaluation.**

Screening and referral

Florida has an outstanding system for screening with has multiple portals and high utilization rates to identify children with high needs. Florida's Healthy Start provides universal screening for high needs beginning in pregnancy; all newborns receive the Healthy Start Newborn screening while in the hospital. After birth, developmental screenings are offered by multiple disciplines in numerous places--- doctor's offices, school readiness programs, VPK, Head Start, teen parent programs, schools, churches, home visiting programs, county fairs and community round-ups are conducted to find children wherever they are. The Medicaid Child Health Checkup Handbook recommends that providers follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Bright Futures program for screenings under the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Testing program. Of the 745,924 EPSDT eligible children ages 0-5 in 2010, Florida had 100% screening rate for children <age 1, with the number of screens (632,059) exceeding the expected number (409,346) for the periodicity schedule; for ages 1-2 there were 494,076 expected screens and 413, 181 actual screens, (a 84% screening rate); and for ages 3-5,

there were 317,292 expected screens but 268,472 actual screens (85% screening rate). Of the 745,924 children ages 0-5 eligible for EPSDT, 9.15% or 68,252 children were referred for treatment. Training of judges and child protective services workers, and interagency agreements between DCF and DOH have facilitated the implementation of CAPTA, the federal mandate to refer all children 0-3 with verified maltreatment to Part C for developmental screening. Based on the high rate of delays and mental health problems in maltreated children, Comprehensive Behavioral Assessments are conducted for each child in out-of-home care as part of their case plan. Children who fail screening are referred to for more in-depth assessment to either Early Steps, the Part C program for 0-36 months, or the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System, the Part B program for 3-21 years of age.

In 2009, a panel of state experts on child screening and assessment engaged in a review of practices throughout the state. With input from state agency staff and other statewide stakeholders, they concluded that there were a wide a variety of screening tools in use by various state and local agencies and organizations. Further, not all children receive a screening that addresses the full range of developmental capacities, and often the individual administering the screening lacks sufficient knowledge of child development and skill in screening. In too many instances, screening information for children with findings is not referred to a qualified provider for further assessment and diagnosis. Screening and assessment information, when produced, may not be shared between programs, services, and providers resulting in duplication of screenings, unknown or lost information as a child/family accesses more than one service, and/or delay in receiving needed interventions. This creates missed opportunities to build resiliency and optimal development in the child and family. The panel did not further explore assessments, but agreed that consistency at the screening level was a predecessor for a trusted referral pathway that results in assessments for those who need them, and assessments that are used to guide learning and development.

Florida adopted and implemented the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, 3rd edition (ASQ-3TM) statewide through the Early Learning Partners Initiative in 2010. Recognizing the importance of the early detection of developmental and learning delays, Florida prioritized this project, which has resulted in every child enrolled in the School Readiness program receiving a screening for delays in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, and problem solving. In addition, the state has created a Statewide Screening Task Force, led by the Florida

Developmental Disabilities Council, which is developing recommendations and policy changes for broader application of the streamlined screening system accomplished through the Early Learning Partners Initiative.

Recently, stakeholders throughout the State have combined efforts to implement statewide screening for all young children. These efforts are supported by highly reliable public poll data from The Children’s Movement of Florida, which shows strong approval for accessible, affordable screenings available to all parents in their children’s early years to see whether they might have special needs. Providing statewide screenings for all children is an admirable goal. Additional issues to be addressed to develop a comprehensive system include the availability and supply of services for children screened and determined eligible for them, and how to further utilize assessments for those children not “delayed” enough to be eligible for Part C services, yet not functioning at developmental level and therefore at-risk.

Ongoing, observation-based assessment used for formative purposes and to inform instruction

Table (A)(1)-7 shows that elements of a comprehensive assessment system have yet to be put in place or fully implemented across all programs, and are not represented in all tiers of Florida’s developing TQRIS. One reason is that effective assessment of young children, particularly those with high needs, requires skilled and well-educated staff. Like screening, there are a variety of assessment practices across the state. Currently, in School Readiness assessment practices are defined independently by ELCs based on very broad requirements established in (Section 411.01, (5)(c)2.d., Florida Statutes). Most early childhood programs in Florida administer one of a number of observation-based early childhood assessment instruments, including Teaching Strategies GOLD, the Child Observation Record, Galileo, or Work Sampling. The Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC), represented by executive directors from all 31 ELCs representing all of Florida’s 67 counties, began an initiative in 2010 to adopt a standard ongoing assessment measure and reporting system. This work is in progress and is developing in partnership with OEL, and will inform practice in state Early Learning and Development programs.

Early Steps, the IDEA Part C state program for high needs children, also allows flexibility in assessment instruments used, but does require that the assessments guide the

Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) and subsequent intervention. These assessments generally follow the children into Part B, school-based programs, but there is a need for a stronger linkage for young children in Part C and in School Readiness programs.

Program assessment, including classroom-level measures of environmental quality and teacher-child interactions

ELCs use a variety of program assessment processes to ensure accountability for subsidized child care programs. The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are the most frequently used program assessment tools. Implementation of the tool varies, with some coalitions utilizing coalition staff (trained by the developers) and others contracting with a vendor trained in use of the instrument. ELCs will begin standardizing consistent adoption of the ERS. Tied to technical assistance, and in some areas of the state, local QRIS, coalitions have demonstrated progress in improving program quality through ERS reports. Approximately five coalitions have begun to use Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Replication of these program assessment practices will be informative. As well, it will be helpful to review how the parameters for program assessment align with those of other programs and services for young children, especially those with special needs.

Health Promotion Practices

Knowing that optimal child development is achieved when children are healthy and well nourished, all of Florida's early childhood programs provide health promotion. The Department of Children and Families and Department of Health oversee all child care licensing ensuring base health and safety including up-to-date child immunizations. ELCs are responsible for ensuring that publicly-funded early learning programs meet the requirements of the School Readiness Act, (section 411.01, Florida Statutes) requiring developmental screening and implementation of Florida's Early Learning Standards which include physical development with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating habits and health literacy. Head Start provides the most comprehensive health services including nutrition, dental, immunizations, lead screenings, depression screenings and other mental health services. Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) works with the privatized child welfare partners to address the health needs of maltreated children including a full medical examination, developmental screen and appropriate referrals for services. OEL maintains a statewide toll-free Warm Line for the purpose of

providing assistance and consultation to early childhood educators about health, developmental, disability, and special needs issues. A statewide network of professional Inclusion Specialists are available to provide timely on-site technical assistance to the child care centers when children have special health care needs. Each are knowledgeable about community resources available to assist the child and their families including programs such as CMS and Early Steps.

Social/emotional/ behavioral issues are frequent challenges for the child care programs. DCF's Mental Health program funded the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy to research funding and expansion of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in child care centers. The local ELCs and Children Services Councils have funded Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation for child care centers in several parts of the state. Additionally, the Florida's Association for Infant Mental Health has 19 Infant Mental Health chapters, many of which are co-located with Early Learning Coalitions, to promote services and practices that support the social and emotional health of young children. Many ELCs utilize the ASQ-SE to identify problems and contract with Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants to help programs address behavioral challenges. The University of South Florida is a National Technical Assistance Center has trained numerous child care centers in positive behavioral supports. As Table (A)(1)-8 demonstrates, key elements of high-quality health promotion practices are in place but tend to underemphasize the area of health literacy.

Family Engagement Strategies

Family involvement is the cornerstone of all of Florida's early childhood programs (Table (A)(1)-9). Healthy Start engages pregnant women through prenatal providers offering parenting manuals and supports in all the hospitals and home visiting during infancy. Head Start is mandated to engage families from pregnancy until kindergarten through home visiting, volunteering in classrooms, monthly group socializations, participation in child screening and assessments, development of Family Partnership Agreements, outreach to fathers, and empowerment through decision making on Policy Councils. The DCF provides a toll-free number as well as web-based resource and referral by zip code and licensure results for parents in search of childcare. Early Learning Coalitions engage families through "one-stop centers" where they can register for multiple services, community "round-ups" for screenings, daily communication with caregivers, and parent training and special family events, Early Steps (Florida's Part C), engages parents in the NICUs and links to First Contacts, a program where

families share their child development concerns and receive information about Early Steps which engages parents in screening, evaluation and if needed, Individualized Family Support Plans, customized to meet their child's needs in the natural environment. Similarly, Part B's Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System engages parents in every step along the way of meeting their child's individual special needs. Numerous programs provide outreach through home visiting to engage parents as their child's first teacher such as Even Start, Parents as Teachers, HIPPIY, Early Head Start and Healthy Families. Department of Children & Families and Department of Health sponsor a variety of evidence based parenting classes such as the Nurturing Program and Positive Parenting Program (Triple P).

Development of Early Childhood Educators

Tables (A)(1)10-11 clearly demonstrate that an early childhood professional development system is currently being built in Florida. The 5 components of the framework are funding, core competencies, quality assurance, qualifications and credentials, and access and outreach. The system ensures that high quality, professional development opportunities are available to the early childhood workforce with informal training and formal education available and an articulated pathway from high school to higher education. The system, called Steps to Success, has an infrastructure to build and sustain a stable, high skilled, knowledgeable, and diverse workforce. The project includes: creating a registry to track success, capturing data to target workforce needs, and communicates trainer-training quality assurance system policies and procedures. The project will also house core competencies for practitioners, directors, and coaches, trainer-training standards, and assessments tools, support of career advisors and coaches, a mechanism to distribute scholarship dollars and incentive awards (see Section D).

Kindergarten Entry Assessments

Florida has a substantial and fully implemented kindergarten-entry measurement system. The state has allowed or required some assessment or screening at kindergarten entry since 1997, but the creation of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program under section 1002.53, Florida Statutes in 2005 was changed to require that each school district "administer the

statewide kindergarten screening to each kindergarten student within the first 30 days of each school year.”¹

Each year, over 180,000 children entering kindergarten (over 94 percent) are administered Florida’s kindergarten assessment. The results from these assessments are used to calculate a school readiness rate, to drive instruction and educate parents about their child’s school readiness. It also enhances program improvement, by holding programs accountable for promoting school readiness. The kindergarten assessment calculates a VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate based on the scores of children who completed VPK and who are screened upon entry using into kindergarten. More information is in Table (A)(1)-12 and Section E.

Effective Data Practices

Florida currently has 3 projects underway to realize and support the required elements for a coordinated early learning data system with the ultimate goal of connecting these data systems to the Department of Education (DOE) State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Florida's early learning data system consists of 3 primary elements: an Early Learning Data System, a process for performing on-site program assessment and guiding quality improvement, and a professional development registry. Table (A)(1)-13 reflects the development of this system, which is further discussed in Section E.

Legislation

Current early learning legislation includes federal regulations, state statutes, and Florida Administrative Code provisions. Florida’s high quality plan shall be implemented pursuant to specific legislative authority, as enacted and revised by the Florida Legislature. Furthermore, local early learning coalitions are allowed to adopt operating procedures that must be incorporated into their Early Learning Coalition Plans, which are subject to review and approval by Florida’s Office of Early Learning. See Appendix (A)(1)-3 for a list of current guiding legislation, policies and practices that support the State’s early learning and development programs.

¹ Section 1002.69(1), Florida Statutes, which created the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, also included language for the statewide kindergarten assessment.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income² families, by age		
	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1	110,000	53%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	210,000	49%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	333,000	51%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	654,000	51%
<i>Number of children from low-income families obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010. State population data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census. Percentages were calculated by dividing the Number of Children from Low-Income families by the Number of children in the state (e.g., percentage of children Infants under age 1 who are low-income = 110,000/208,724).</i>		

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs		
<i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays³	35,916	3%
Are English learners⁴	10,780	1%
Reside on "Indian Lands"	317	< 1%
Are migrant⁵	1,882	< 1%

² Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

³ For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

⁴ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

⁵ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in ESEA section 1309(2).

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs

The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.

Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Are homeless⁶	288	< 1%
Are in foster care	8,408	1%
Other as identified by the State		
Describe:		

Have disability or developmental delay: Part B, section 619 Source - Department of Education (DOE), Survey 2, October 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as having a disability and are receiving services through the public school system.] Part C Source: Department of Health Annual Child Count consistent with DOE, Survey 2 October 2010. This is a point-in-time count. Number of Part C children served for the whole fiscal year is reflected in Table A1-5, which includes children who aged in and out of the program during the fiscal year.

Are English learners: Source – DOE Survey 2, October 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as English language learners.]

Reside on “Indian Lands”: Source - Census 2000 American Indian and Alaska Native Summary File (AIANSF) – Sample Data. Population reported is limited to Seminole Tribe. Miccosukee Tribe was not included in the Census results.

Migrant: Source – DOE Survey 3, Spring 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as migrant.]

Homeless: Source - DOE Survey 3, Spring 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as homeless.]

Foster Care: Source - Florida Department of Health, Florida Charts: 2010.

State population data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census. Percentages were calculated by dividing the Number of Children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in each special populations category by the total Number of children in the state (from birth to kindergarten entry) (e.g., percentage of children who have developmental disabilities or delays (from birth to kindergarten entry) = 35,916/ 1,073,506.

⁶ The term “homeless children” has the meaning given the term “homeless children and youths” in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (425 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
<p>State-funded preschool</p> <p><i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i></p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Department of Education, Survey 2 results for High Needs children who participated in VPK during the 2009/2010 program year.</i></p>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	81,005	81,005
<p>Early Head Start and Head Start⁷</p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: 2009/2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR); Enrollment Statistics Report – State Level</i></p>	1,459	3,789	37,245	42,493
<p>Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619</p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Part B, section 619 Source - Department of Education (DOE), Survey 2, October 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as having a disability and are receiving services through the public school system.] Part C Source: Department of Health Annual Child Count consistent with DOE, Survey 2 October 2010. Number if Part C children served for the whole fiscal year are reflected in Table A1-5.</i></p>	1,440	11,718	22,758	35,916
<p>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA</p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Department of Education 2011/2012 Title I, Part A Applications.</i></p>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	9,600	9,600

⁷ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program <i>Data Source and Year: Office of Early Learning. State fiscal year 7/1/2010 – 6/30/2011. Data exclude children who have been identified as at-risk of abuse but who have not been placed in foster care.</i>	8,501	46,384	85,938	140,823
Note for CCDF: Children with High Needs served represents a unique count of children served during the state fiscal year and is not based on a monthly average as reported in Table (A)(1)-5.				

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development

Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	343,750,562	353,488,827	353,802,409	331,610,249	384,606,382
State contributions to IDEA Part C	20,136,608	19,331,144	19,537,612	19,938,254	23,906,056
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry	172,267,977	177,865,395	184,899,978	196,680,761	185,386,844

⁸ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development

Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total State contributions to CCDF⁹	113,410,056	116,078,112	108,588,737	108,846,182	105,709,676
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Exceeded 13,520,957	Exceeded 13,884,745	Exceeded 2,354,728	Exceeded 7,713,164	Not Available
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs¹⁰	256,835,731	246,902,340	238,902,340	238,902,340	238,902,340
Total State contributions:	906,400,934	913,665,818	905,731,076	895,977,786	938,511,298

State-funded preschool: funding is based on State fiscal year (i.e., 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2008).
IDEA Part C: funding is based on the State fiscal year (i.e., 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2008).
Special Education: 2011/2012 State contribution is estimated.
State match to CCDF: funding is based on the Federal Fiscal Year.
TANF spending: funding is based on Federal Fiscal Year. [\$18,340,755 in Direct TANF is contingent upon receipt of TANF supplemental grant funds. \$11,887,136 in TANF transfer to CCDF is contingent upon receipt of TANF supplemental grant funds.]

⁹ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

¹⁰ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹¹				
	2007	2008	2009 ¹²	2010 ¹²	2011 ¹²
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	67,552	69,541	81,005	Not Available	Not Available
Early Head Start and Head Start¹³ <i>(funded enrollment)</i>	39,345	39,423	38,708	40,494	Not Available
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619	44,299	46,973	49,384	48,779	Not Available
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)</i>	4,618	7,767	9,806	5,613	Not Available
Programs receiving CCDF funds <i>(average monthly served)</i>	95,060	96,545	94,881	94,144	Not Available

State-funded Preschool: Source - Florida Department of Education, Survey 2 administered in October of the school year following Voluntary Prekindergarten participation. Only includes children who attended public school after participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten program. Only includes children identified as eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (185% FPL) and/or with developmental disabilities.

IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619: Part C Source: University of Florida Early Steps frozen data sets for children served with an IFSP for the whole fiscal year. Part B Source: Annual Child Count based on Survey 2, October.

Title I of ESEA: Department of Education Title I, Part A Applications provided by Office of Federal Programs.

CCDF: Source - Office of Early Learning. Data exclude children who have been identified as at-risk of abuse but who have not been placed in foster care.

¹¹ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹² Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending. Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

¹³ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	X	X	X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	X	X	X
Approaches toward learning	X	X	X
Physical well-being and motor development	X	X	X
Social and emotional development	X	X	X
<i>Sources: Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (2010); Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-olds (2011)</i>			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	X				
Early Head Start and Head Start¹⁴	X	X	X		
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	a	a	a	X ^b

¹⁴ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA		^c			
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X				X ^d
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements ^e <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>					
State licensing requirements					

Sources:

State-funded preschool - State of Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement

Early Head Start and Head Start source – 2009-2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

Programs funded under IDEA Part C - Early Steps Policy Handbook and Operations Guide

Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 – Part B State Annual Performance Report (APR) for FFY 2009

Programs funded under Title I of ESEA – No Child Left Behind Act

Programs receiving CCDF funds - School Readiness Act, s. 411.01, F.S.; Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Florida FFY 2012-2013.

State licensing requirements – Chapter 65C-20 Florida Administrative Code Family Day Care Standards And Large Family Child Care Homes; Chapter 65C-22 Florida Administrative Code Child Care Standards

Notes:

^a *While not state required, this may be occurring at the district and school-level.*

^b *refers to the required assessment that must be done upon entry and exit into the preschool disability program as an accountability measure required by Indicator #7 of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report. This plan is required by the federal DOE, Office of Special Education Programs for all state education agencies*

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other

(SEA)

^c There are no required assessments through Title I, Part A; however Title I, Part A requires that LEAs use assessment data for several purposes including evaluating the program and making decisions about the types of activities to provide at Title I schools.

^d Section 411.01(5)(c)2.d, F.S. requires an age-appropriate assessment administered to children when they enter a program and an age-appropriate assessment administered to children when they leave the program.

^e QRIS is not required statewide, but it is being implemented locally in some areas. Some early learning coalitions that have a QRIS require programs obtain a minimum score in order to contract to provide school readiness services.

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	X		X		
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X	

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
Programs funded under IDEA Part C		X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	a	a	a	
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA					
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X	X	X		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements ^b <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>					
State licensing requirements	X		X		
Other <i>Describe:</i>					

Sources:

State-funded preschool - State of Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement

Early Head Start and Head Start source – 2009-2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

Programs funded under IDEA Part C - Early Steps Policy Handbook and Operations Guide

Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 –Florida Rule 6A-6.0331; 1003.22, F.S.

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
<i>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA – No Child Left Behind Act</i>					
<i>Programs receiving CCDF funds - School Readiness Act, s. 411.01, F.S.; Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Florida FFY 2012-2013.</i>					
<i>State licensing requirements – Chapter 65C-20 Florida Administrative Code Family Day Care Standards And Large Family Child Care Homes; Chapter 65C-22 Florida Administrative Code Child Care Standards</i>					
<i>Notes:</i>					
<i>^a While not state required, this may be occurring at the district and school-level.</i>					
<i>^b QRIS is not required statewide, but it is being implemented locally in some areas. Some early learning coalitions that have a QRIS require programs obtain a minimum score in order to contract to provide school readiness services.</i>					

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
<p>State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program is the state funded program that serves over 165,000 4 year olds.</i></p>	<p>Curriculum's require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies be implemented by director's which promote alliances with families and collaboration among programs, families, and community resources • Directors to recognize the importance of family involvement in all aspects of early care; Education programs and awareness of the diverse strengths and needs of families and understanding of families in the cultural contexts • Knowledge of community support systems, including public and private resources for families and how to access them. • Early Literacy Training for Florida VPK teachers includes learning on the "Dad's Playbook" program. <p>The early learning community in Miami-Dade operates the Kindergarten Transition Program which links the childcare providers to the principals and teachers of their local public schools. The goal of involving the family and linking the child preschool teacher to the kindergarten principal is a shared goal among early learning coalitions.</p> <p>Early learning communities across Florida conduct the "It's OK to Play" training program teaches child care providers to have meaningful discussion with parents about the developmental importance of playing. In a similar effort one early learning community developed "all about me posters" for all VPK children to complete with their parents as a communication tool for VPK teachers.</p>
<p>Early Head Start and Head Start</p>	<p>Head Start Policy Council/Committee; Home Visits; Healthy Marriage; Fatherhood Initiatives; Even Start; Safe Family-Safe Homes; Earned Income and Child Tax Credits; Housing; Employment Strategies; Financial Literacy; Classroom Volunteers; Transition (K-12 activities including transfer of portfolio of children's records); Parent Training; Referrals for Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Child Abuse Prevention.</p>
<p>Programs funded under IDEA Part C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Contacts – Families share their concerns related to their child's development. During this time, families also receive information about Early Steps; Families participate with their child during the evaluation and assessment process, communicating whether their child's functioning during the evaluation and assessment process is typical. • Families are active participants in the development of the Individualized Family Support Plan. • Families identify their priorities for outcomes they would like their child and family to achieve • Families work with service providers to identify and learn a variety of strategies to enhance their child's learning and development within their typical, everyday home and community routines.

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	<p>The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) must provide information and referral resources to parents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents must be invited to all meetings with regard to the consideration of eligibility for special education • Parents must be invited to attend individual educational plan meetings • Parents must be provided with information regarding their procedural safeguards and remedies if they disagree with decisions made • Parents must be provided written notice prior to any changes related to the provision of a free appropriate education • The SEA is required to annually obtain statewide data on the % of parents of children with disabilities, including preschool children with disabilities, who believe that the school facilitated parent involvement. For more information link to http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/FFY-APRforOSEP.pdf. <p>Note: while not “required” by state regulations, districts and other IDEA funded discretionary projects provide training opportunities, resource information, and other supports for parents.</p>
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	<p>According to the Title I, Part A requirements, each local education agency (LEA) must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the effectiveness of parental involvement activities in Title I schools; • Develop a plan that include high quality professional development parents • Coordinate activities found in section 1120B(b) with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other entities who carry out early childhood development programs; • Coordinate Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A for parents, if appropriate; • Provide parents of participating private school students are provided services and activities developed pursuant to sections 1118 and 1119 on an equitable basis; • Ensure that the comprehensive school wide program plans are available to parents in an understandable and uniform format • Provide to parents of each student enrolled in a school served by an LEA identified for improvement the results of the state's review of schools receiving assistance under Title I; • Disseminate the required information contained in the annual report card(s) to all parents; • Implement programs, activities, and procedures to involve parents in programs assisted under Title I, Part A; • Shall ensure that each Title I school has a written parental involvement policy/plan (PIP) according to Section 1118(b)(1), (c-f); • Write a parental involvement policy/plan (PIP); • Ensure Title I schools convene an annual parent meeting • Develop a school-parent compact; • Conduct annual evaluations with • Provide parents timely notice regarding the "Parents' Right-to-Know" requirement • Ensure schools receiving Title I funds provide communication on child’s level of achievements
Programs receiving CCDF funds	<p>Throughout Florida there are exciting programs such as: “Wee Read”, “Wee Count”, “Parents as Partners”, “World Café”, “Reading Stars”, “Word Words Words”, “Let’s Read Together”, “Born Learning”, “Parenting Counts”, “Positive Solutions for Families”, “Father Child Connection”, “Grandparents as Parents” and “Five Protective Factors” targeting the early</p>

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p>learning community professionals as well as parents and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Statutes requires the Office of Early Learning to have expanded access to community services and resources to help families achieve economic self sufficiency (Section 411.01). • The Governor’s office created the Governor’s Child Abuse and Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; the promotion of adoption; and the support of adoptive families. • 20 local councils for abuse prevention and permanency were established with representation from Florida’s 31 early learning coalitions. Florida’s Office of Early Learning was designated as the lead agency to incorporate the five protective factors as a foundation for work within Florida’s early education and care systems by 30 June 2015. <p>Parental access to a child’s programs is required.</p> <p>Several early learning communities are utilizing the “World Café” approach and have implemented parent cafés which bring parents to the table for community conversations and decision making.</p> <p>Providers receive community resource information from monthly Systems Partners Gatherings and quarterly Child Care Provider meetings where representatives from community organizations attend and notify participants about their services and available community resources.</p> <p>One of the more common and cost effective approaches to increasing family involvement practices among child care providers is by conducting trainings at workshops and symposiums.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalitions conduct specific trainings such as “Communication Skills for Challenging Conversations”, “Parents as Partners”, “Take 5 minutes for fun” to help increase the skills needed for child care providers to actively engage parents into their programs. • Other family involvement strategies include using families to help screen their children. <p>Some coalitions conduct parent and child care provider surveys to evaluate current family engagement practices. These survey results are often used to initiate technical assistance visits.</p> <p>Special effort is given to involve fathers and grandparents such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Grandparent’s as Parents” are designed specifically for grandparents to educate grandparents on current child development practices and provide supports such as social networks and assistance navigating the social services community. • Other outreach activities targeted the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organization • A community partnership with United Way and Success By 6 was leveraged to conduct “Daddy and Me” trainings as well as other initiatives • One early learning coalitions training entitled “Developmentally Appropriate Practices”

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p>provides home activity sheets to providers to share with parents.</p> <p>The early learning community in Broward conducts focused on creating exciting ways to enhance parent education in child development.</p> <p>Florida First Start activities address increasing parent education in child development.</p> <p>Other strategies involve providing parents calendars, newsletters and parent kits</p> <p>Some early learning communities have Parent Specialists who work with parents to conduct ASQ screenings on children.</p>
<p>Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements^a <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i></p>	
<p>State licensing requirements</p>	<p>Florida licensing requires the following curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of policies promoting alliances with families and collaboration among programs, families, and community resources. • Education programs and awareness of the diverse strengths and needs of families and understanding of families in the cultural contexts • Knowledge of community support systems, including public and private resources for families and how to access them. • Directors should also be able to describe five strategies they use or plan to use to involve families in their programs • Required to develop written operational polices for families in the centers
<p>Other <i>Describe:</i></p>	
<p><i>Sources:</i></p> <p><i>State-funded preschool - Early Learning Coalitions Executive Director Race to the Top Survey 2011</i></p> <p><i>Early Head Start and Head Start source – 2009-2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)</i></p> <p><i>Programs funded under IDEA Part C - Early Steps Policy Handbook and Operations Guide</i></p>	

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p><i>Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 – Florida Rule 6A-6.03028; Section 1006.03, F.S.</i></p> <p><i>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA – No Child Left Behind Act</i></p> <p><i>Programs receiving CCDF funds - Early Learning Coalitions Executive Director Race to the Top Survey 2011</i></p> <p><i>Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements – Guiding Stars of Duval (Quality Rating and Improvement System; 2009)</i></p> <p><i>State licensing requirements – Early Learning Coalitions Executive Director Race to the Top Survey 2011</i></p> <p><i>^a QRIS is not required statewide, but it is being implemented locally in some areas. Some early learning coalitions that have a QRIS require programs obtain a minimum score in order to contract to provide school readiness services.</i></p>

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Florida Staff Credential^a	Yes ^b	56,177	Not available ^c	The total number reflects all individuals that have ever received the credential and is not reflective of how many practitioners are currently

¹⁵ Includes both credentials awarded and degrees attained.

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
				working in the field with the credential
Advanced Professional Certificate – Preschool (to be developed)	Not available	0	Not available ^c	
Advanced Professional Certificate – Infant/Toddler (to be developed)	Not available	0	Not available ^c	
College Certificates in Preschool, Infant-Toddler, Child Care Management, Inclusion	Yes ^b	235 ^d	Not available ^c	
Technical Assistance Specialist Credential (to be developed)	Not available	0	Not available ^c	
Director Credential - Level I	Yes ^b	9,328	Not available ^c	
Director Credential - Level II	Yes ^b	5,161	Not available ^c	
Director Credential – Advanced	Yes ^b	3,656	Not available ^c	
AA/AS in field	Yes ^b	938	Not available ^c	
AA/AS out of field +480 of ECE	Yes ^b	810	Not available ^c	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
BA/BS in field	Yes ^b	303	Not available ^c	
College Education^e	Yes ^b	1,199	Not available ^c	
BECE	Yes ^b	Not available	Not available ^c	
Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialist	No	366	Not available ^c	
Master Degree ECE/CD^f	Yes ^b	Not available	Not available	
Ph.D. ECE/CD^f	Yes ^b	Not available	Not available	

*Data available:
Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.*

Early Steps State Office Infant Toddler Developmental Specialist database

^a Florida Staff Credential requirements can be met via several options, including completion of the National Child Development Associate (CDA), several approved Florida equivalencies to the CDA, or ECE college Associate or Bachelor degrees/coursework. The number of degreed practitioners are also included in the total number of Florida Staff Credentials – as degrees are one option for recognition as having a Florida Staff Credential. The number listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.

^b Although all Florida credentials have been aligned to Florida’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, the alignment (see Appendix (A)(1)-4) is to course standards, and the competencies have yet to be embedded within the coursework. RTT-ELC work focuses on embedding the competencies in all informal and

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	

formal pathway options resulting in a comprehensive alignment.

^cPercentages were not available because the number of early childhood educators listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.

^dThe baseline number of college certificates reflects the actual number of certificates awarded by the one State College that has integrated Core Competencies into all coursework. Six additional State Colleges award certificates. During RTT-ELC, efforts will be made to encourage all State Colleges to utilize the certificate options and to integrate Core Competencies into coursework.

^eData collected prior to system enhancements categorized all degrees as 'Education' and did not differentiate between degrees

^fData on graduate degrees is not currently collected and tracked; Steps to Success Registry will collect this information.

Additional notes:

Baseline data are actual, data available in the Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/Not Available)
Barry University	10	No
Brevard Community College	140	No
Broward College	27	No
Central Florida Community College	20	No
Charlotte Technical Center	2	No
Child Care Education Institute	75	No
Child Care of Southwest Florida, Inc.	21	No
Child Development Education Alliance (CDEA)	100	No
Childhood Development Services, Inc.	65	No
Chipola College	3	No
College of Central Florida	15	No
Community Development Institute serving Brevard County	22	No
Daytona State College	6	No
Edison State College	13	No
Florida A&M University	4	No
Family Central Training Academy Inc.	70	No
Florida CDAE Training Program	21	No
Florida Gateway College	46	No
Florida Gulf Coast University	6	No
Florida International University	36	Yes ^{vi}
Florida League of Christian Schools	37	No
Florida State College	14	No
Florida State College at Jacksonville	28	No
Florida State University	26	No
Gulf Coast State College	19	No
Hillsborough Community College	12	No
Indian River State College	68	No
Jose Maria Vargas University	22	No
Lake-Sumter Community College	13	No
Learey Technical Center	56	No
Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus	108	No
Miami-Dade College – North	69	No
Miami Dade College School of Community Education	8	No
Miami Dade College, School of Education	370	No
Miami Dade College-Wolfson Campus	16	No
Miami Jackson Adult & Community Ed.	1	No
North Florida Community College	10	No
Northwest Florida State College	32	No
Nova Southeastern University Mailman Segal Inst. for Early Childhood Studies	26	No

Palm Beach Atlantic University	1	No
Palm Beach State College	43	Yes
Pensacola State College	29	No
Pinellas Technical Educational Center	12	No
Polk State College	34	No
Santa Fe College	14	No
Sarasota County Technical Institute	14	No
Seminole State College	11	No
State College of Florida	47	No
South Florida Community College	38	No
South Florida Literacy Institute, Inc.	55	No
Southwest Florida College	14	No
St. Petersburg College	15	No
Tallahassee Community College	129	No
University of Central Florida	99	No
University of Florida	21	No
University of North Florida	46	No
University of South Florida – Tampa	20	No
University of West Florida	1	No
Wesley House Family Services, Inc.	15	No

Sources:
Florida Department of Children and Families Florida Child Care Provider Credential database (2010-2011); Florida Department of Education Community Colleges and Technical Centers Management Information Systems (2010-2011); Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development, and Retention, state-approved program completers

Note: University degree data only includes state-approved programs.

State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Instrument(s) used? (Specify) <i>ECHOSTM = Early Childhood Observation System</i> <i>FAIR = Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading</i>	ECHOS FAIR	ECHOS	ECHOS	ECHOS	ECHOS
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)	Yes for both	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Evidence of validity for English learners? <i>(Y/N)</i>	Yes for both	Y	Y	Y	Y
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? <i>(Y/N)</i>	Yes for both	Y	Y	Y	Y
How broadly administered? <i>(If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration)</i>	statewide	statewide	statewide	statewide	statewide
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? <i>(Y/N)</i>	Y	Y ^a	Y ^a	Y ^a	Y ^a
<p><i>Sources:</i></p> <p><i>Florida Department of Education (2009-2010). Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading Technical Manual Kindergarten - Grade 2.</i></p> <p><i>Florida Department of Education (2011). Kindergarten Assessment: History and Legislative Authority.</i></p> <p><i>Harcourt. (2006). Early Childhood Observation System.™ Technical Report. Pearson.</i></p> <p>^a <i>Data is merged into the system.</i></p>					

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State

List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements <i>Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)	X	X	X	X	X		X
Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Care Training application data system (CCTA)		X			X		
Florida DCF Childcare Licensing Application (CCLA)		X	X				
Early Learning Data System	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enhanced Field System (EFS)	X		X	X	X		X
PLATINUM						X	
UF Early Steps Family Data Center system				X			

SLDS: Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services (EIAS)

CCTA: Includes educational attainment, State credentials, and licenses held.

CCLA: Includes Social Security Number, training, State credentials, educational attainment, and employment history.

Early Learning Data System: Includes information related to Early Childhood Educators and Program Structure for the subset of providers participating in the State's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK). Information may include Instructor Information: credential, employment history, compensation, education level; Quality Information: accreditation, VPK Readiness Rate, and programmatic monitoring results; and Program Structure Information: curricula, special services, and program schedule.

EFS: Includes unique child identifier for those clients that provide the Social Security Number. IT does not include instructor demographic information but does include the instructor's highest degree and credential for VPK programs.

PLATINUM: Quality data is rigorously collected in eight counties as a result of local QRIS initiatives, which also includes data system support. Lessons learned from their experience are being incorporated in the

establishment of a statewide TQRIS, which will be supported by data generated, analyzed, and maintained in the PLATINUM application.

UF Early Steps Family Data System: *Includes child demographic information, service authorizations and intervention and payment information.*

(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. (20 points)

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(2)

- The State's goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State's goals for improving child outcomes statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State's goals for closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry.
 - Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C).
 - Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D).
 - Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E).
- For each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), a description of the State's rationale for choosing to address the selected criteria in that Focused Investment Area, including how the State's choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as

outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)) and why these selected criteria will best achieve the State's ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes –

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

As demonstrated in Section (A)(1), Florida has a unique, respected and rich history of developing innovative strategies to meet the needs of its youngest citizens and their families. The State has a clear and articulated vision that has been adopted by many stakeholders throughout the State, our Partners and the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. The State intends to build upon that history and vision to improve school readiness for children with high needs. Our goals are:

- To improve the quality of early learning settings so that children with high needs have more access to and are more frequently served within these settings
- To increase the expertise of early childhood educators who serve high needs children
- To integrate and align services so that the early learning experience of the high needs child is positive, consistently meets his/her needs and results in improved kindergarten readiness scores

Florida's plan for realizing these goals relies upon the involvement of many Partners, including our licensed child care providers, Early Start and Head Start, Early Steps (Part C of IDEA), Healthy Families, Healthy Start, Early Learning Coalitions and Children's Services

Councils. Together, we intend to ensure that the experience of every young child in Florida who “touches the system” will find it inviting and welcoming, self-actualizing, and virtually seamless. The Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation has identified kindergarten readiness as an indicator of progress toward securing Florida’s future. Florida is ready to enhance our children’s readiness. Our plan to do that follows.

Goal: To improve the quality of out-of-home settings so that children with high needs have more access to and are more frequently served within these settings

The quality of child care and early education and, in particular, the quality of the daily transactions between providers and the children for whom they are responsible, carry the weight of the influence of child care/early education on children’s development. The positive relationship between child care/early education quality and virtually every facet of children’s development that has been studied is one of the most consistent findings of developmental science.^{vii}

High-quality early childhood settings offer economic benefits, as well. The economic development impacts of quality early childhood settings include effects on regional economies (in terms of jobs, income and purchase of commodities in other economic sectors), effects on parents (supporting workers and their employers),^{viii} and effects on children (building human capital).^{ix}

One way to promote high-quality settings is to implement a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). Florida has been working toward statewide TQRIS with pilots in seven regions of the state and extensive investment in TQRIS infrastructure over the last three years, to include systems for program assessment, professional development and data. Through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding Florida will become the first state to apply a high standard of scientific rigor to the evaluation of a statewide TQRIS to ensure that standards and levels are meaningfully tied to children’s outcomes. Florida’s TQRIS also will integrate innovative technology strategies to reduce overhead; having validated assessment strategies; adopt highly effective quality assurance policies and procedures; support the whole TQRIS with proven data solutions to enhance quality improvement work and investments; and employ innovative, effective quality improvement strategies that target children with high needs. Incentives will be available for providers who serve children with high needs.

Goal: To increase the expertise of childcare providers who serve high needs children

Florida has intentionally and methodically built a comprehensive professional development system, Steps to Success, with the major objective of making accessible high quality professional development for every early childhood educator statewide to facilitate optimal child learning and developmental outcomes. The foundation and framework of this state-of-the-art professional development system, the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and a progression of credentials is fully implemented. With the RTT-ELC investment, Florida is poised to launch the nation's foremost professional development system that will serve as a model for improving the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of early childhood educator professional development while advancing student learning and healthy child development outcomes. Florida's plan will do this by embedding core competencies for early care and education practitioners into Florida's entire early childhood educator training and education offering; building a robust quality assurance system to ensure the promotion of children's learning and development; evaluating Florida's professional development system for linkage to child outcomes; expanding Florida's Steps to Success Career Pathway to ensure each step's alignment with the Core Competencies, its appropriateness for serving children with high needs, and its availability in English and Spanish; and continuing Florida's successful stakeholder engagement strategies.

Goal: To integrate and align services so that the early learning experience of the high needs child is positive, consistently meets his/her needs and results in improved kindergarten readiness scores

Improving outcomes for high-need children requires that programs "begin with the end in mind." Florida's Early Learning and Developmental standards consist of two documents that form a continuum of development and learning from birth to age five across multiple domains of development. The state's recently revised standards are world-class, and outline high expectations for the state's youngest children. They are research-based; developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; horizontally aligned to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and vertically aligned to the state's K-12 standards; and, appropriate and inclusive for children with disabilities.

Florida standards provide the learning and development goals for children to which every program should aspire. Therefore, Florida's plan is to train all early childhood educators and

program administrators on the new standards. In order to improve instruction and promote program quality, particularly for high-need children, early childhood administrators and educators must understand the expectations for children set forth in the standards, why they are important, and how they should be used. The standards guide how program administrators conduct planning for their programs and how teachers will plan for and provide instruction for their children.

The State also will implement reforms that more closely align system components to the revised standards. Workforce development policies and the state's career ladder will be aligned to the standards to ensure the state is promoting teacher competencies that help them work with children to meet the standards.

Then, the State will reform its assessment and data systems to better monitor children's progress toward the standards, and finally, the State will engage in a revision of the standards using a statutory requirement for "periodic revision." While the State believes that its current early learning standards are state-of-the-art and reflect the latest thinking in child development and learning, it is important that the standards be revised at periodic intervals to incorporate new research in the field.

Improving kindergarten readiness scores also will incorporate work toward a comprehensive assessment system that is grounded in the state's early learning standards; reliable and valid; aligned to the other components of the state's early childhood system; well funded; and, financially supported to ensure appropriate implementation. Florida will plan for a high-quality assessment system builds on the current infrastructure to create a comprehensive assessment system that contains the characteristics outlined above.

At the heart of Florida's work in this area is the goal of ensuring that all assessment information collected on children, and the teachers and the programs that serve them, is accurate, and has a clear purpose and use, either in guiding pedagogical decisions, informing program improvement, or guiding systemic change. To be accurate, assessment instruments must be designed for their intended use, have strong psychometric properties, and have individuals who are trained to use them. To be useful, assessment data has to be collected with a clear purpose or set of questions in mind, and have individuals who are available to analyze and respond appropriately to the findings that are revealed.

The importance of the kindergarten readiness data to improving the school readiness of high-need children in the state cannot be overstated, so the plan moving forward involves reviewing the kindergarten readiness assessment system Florida has built in the state with an eye to the continued improvement of the quality of data that is collected, particularly for high-need children, as well as improvements in how the data are used to assess program effectiveness.

The State will draw upon the latest research in assessment practices, psychometrics and innovations in technology to ensure alignment to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds. Particularly, the State wants to obtain more predictive assessment of later school success, particularly for high needs children. This will be facilitated by issuing an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for a new assessment instrument that is developed specifically for the purpose of measuring the extent to which Florida's children have met the expectations set forth in the standards upon entering kindergarten. The new tool will be developed and tested in the state, and its success as an instrument will be measured based on its alignment to the standards, as well as whether it has good assessment properties for all children especially those with high-needs, and its predictive validity.

Florida also will work toward a high quality early childhood longitudinal data system that allows parents, programs, and policymakers to answer key questions about the overall quality and functioning of a state early childhood system, as well as the outcomes that are achieved at the child, program, and system levels. In order to truly move the needle on child outcomes, it is critical to be able to understand all of the factors acting on a child in the early childhood system, the quality of those factors, and the impact they are having on child outcomes. Florida's high-quality plan will allow the state to complete an already initiated data system that consolidates program administration and data collection into one system, and allows flexible, understandable, real-time reporting on both process and outcome measures. These reports are designed for multiple audiences including parents, programs, and state administrators, and will allow those working with the children in the state to make informed, data-driven decisions about how best to improve outcomes.

Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
- (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.
- (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
- (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.
- (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) the State is choosing to address

- (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.
- (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (*e.g.*, policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (A)(3)(a) and (b):

- For (A)(3)(a)(1): An organizational chart that shows how the grant will be governed and managed.
- The completed table that lists governance-related roles and responsibilities (see Table (A)(3)-1).
- A copy of all fully executed MOUs or other binding agreements that cover each Participating State Agency. (MOUs or other binding agreements should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix to the application).

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(1):

- The completed table that includes a list of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State and indicates which organizations and councils have submitted letters of intent or support (see Table (A)(3)-2).
- A copy of every letter of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(2):

- A copy of every letter of intent or support from other stakeholders. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by—

Florida has a long history of establishing highly-effective early learning governance structures for uniting like-minded organizations in the accomplishment of worthy goals. The management of the RTT-ELC grant award will build upon that experience and maximize the use of existing councils and other partnerships wherever possible.

Over the last several years, Florida has witnessed the implementation of Public-Private Partnerships with governance structures that cultivate involvement of business and civic leaders to get involved in early childhood work encouraging these individuals to bring new insight into how to best meet the needs of children and families.

This infrastructure uniquely positions Florida to propel this work to the next level by better coordinating and maximizing investments and services across systems and funding streams. While leadership across agencies and organizations prioritize collaboration and coordination, there are not dedicated resources to ensure this occurs.

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

Establishment of the RTT-ELC Coordinating Council

Florida benefits from a statutorily established Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet). Created in July 2007 (Section 402.56, F.S.), the vision of the Cabinet is that all children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential. Since this date, several Florida early learning stakeholder groups have aligned strategic and legislative efforts to the Cabinet's vision. For example, the Florida's Framework for Children (2006), referenced earlier in this section, comprehensively aligned conceptual goals to the Cabinet's vision to move closer to the accomplishment of shared outcomes for young children.

By design, the membership of the Cabinet consists of a powerhouse of policy- and decision-makers on behalf of programs and services for children ages birth to 18. Florida's First Lady, Ann Scott, serves as the state's Chief Child Advocate.

Her participation connects her passion and dedication to issues directly impacting the health and success of children to the goals of the Cabinet. Further, of all Florida state agencies, 9 have direct responsibilities to provide services to children and youth – each of which, serve as a required member including partners in Florida’s application and others such as the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection. In addition, 5 ex-officio members serve including the designee of the Florida Senate President, Speaker of the House, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Attorney General and Chief Financial Officer. The remaining 5 seats include Governor appointees such as the President of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Miami.

For more than 4 years, the Cabinet has worked to establish a dedicated focus on Florida’s children, youth and families. The Cabinet created a strategic plan and implemented several initiatives which have improved the coordination of services for the state’s children and youth. Through the leadership of the Cabinet, Florida has established a priority focus on 13 key child well-being indicators and has specifically targeted its efforts and resources in these areas in order to improve outcomes for children and youth.

The Children’s Summit Workgroup provided the Cabinet with the State of Florida’s Child Report (2009, <https://flcyc.cyciss.org/sites/default/files/cyciss/flcyc/stateofflchild.pdf>) from which the identified indicators originated. The report provides an objective knowledge base that supports the Cabinet in its mission and provides data and information from which the Cabinet can move toward its stated goal of promoting increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children and their families in Florida. The baseline data in the report closely relates to outcomes shown by research to signify child well-being or improvement in child well-being. These outcomes may be used to form a “results based” framework leading to shared goals and a cohesive vision for child and youth outcomes.

Cabinet’s Outcomes for Children and Youth--

Goal 1: Every child is healthy. Outcome: All children have health insurance.

Goal 2: Every child is ready to learn and succeed. Outcome: Children whose kindergarten entry assessment scores show they are ready for school.

Goal 3: Every child has a stable and nurturing family. Outcome: Reduce child abuse and neglect.

Goal 4: Every child lives in a safe and supportive community. Outcome: Reduce the number of homeless children.

Through the Cabinet's leadership, Florida continues to make marked progress in each of the identified goal areas. Recently, the Chair of the Cabinet requested that the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (Advisory Council) take lead on the creation of action reports in 3 goal areas to ensure continued and coordinated efforts toward true change in the lives of children, youth and their families. Florida benefits from a highly functioning Advisory Council established with one-time grant start up funds in September of 2010 from ACF. The Advisory Council was designated an advisory body to the Cabinet to ensure coordination and to avoid duplication for early learning programs. The Advisory Council serves as an expert work group with membership closely aligning with the federal recommendations in addition to members reflecting Florida's system diversity.

The Advisory Council, administratively supported by the Office of Early Learning, will serve as the RTT-ELC coordinating body and shall conduct a RTT-ELC meeting within 30 days of the notice of award. The Advisory Council will continue to promote and facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision-making, effectively allocate resources (both staff and funding), and create long-term sustainability of products, services, and results attained using the grant award. The Advisory Council will address activities related to the management of RTT-ELC grant activities as a whole and interagency coordination in particular. The existing Advisory Council staff support will also be responsible for ensuring that actions and reports specified in the RTT-ELC grant agreement are completed satisfactory and on time. Florida's plan to capitalize on existing advisory and expert coordinating councils is a plan to realistically accomplish system collaboration and coordination.

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

The following organizational chart, **Table A-1**, describes the governance structure Florida will use to govern and manage the RTT-ELC grant.

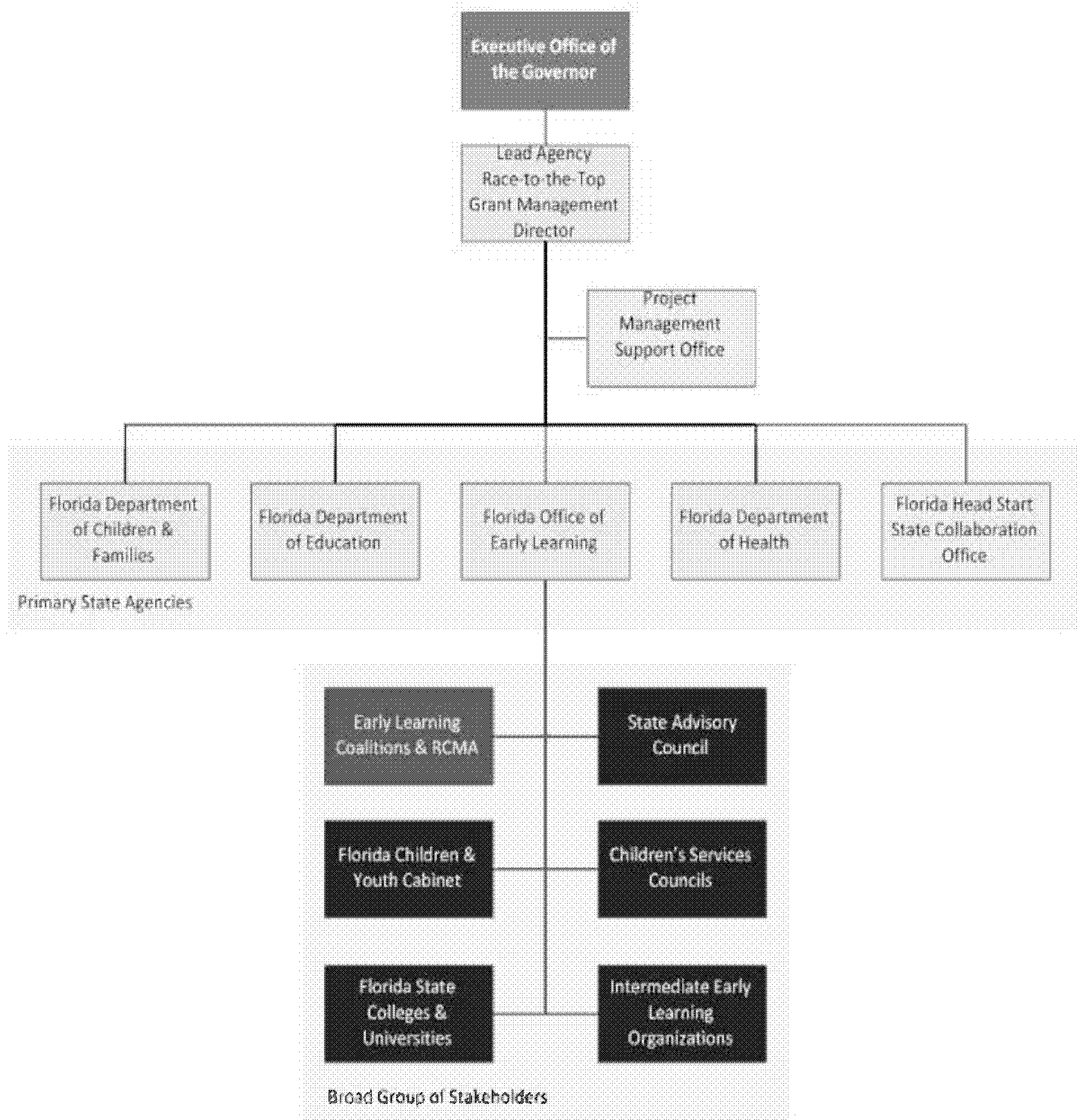


Table A-1 - RTT-ELC (A)(3)(a)(1) Organizational Chart

This chart reflects the collaboration which will continue upon existing interagency agreements. This chart also reflects the contracted staff who will work side by side with the Office of Early Learning, agencies and partners to manage based upon the key reform areas. The organizational structure will build off of existing interagency governance structures which exist today and are described as follows:

Governance: State Agency Leadership

Florida benefits from a unique early childhood governance structure which involves four state agencies. As the designated lead agency for early learning (Section 411.01(4)(c), Florida Statutes), the Office of Early Learning is required to submit a biennial Child Care and Development Fund plan to serve as the blueprint that coordinates early learning and child care services for Florida's families (45 CFR 98). Furthermore, Office of Early Learning is statutorily responsible for the School Readiness Education program (subsidy program) under Section 411.01, Florida Statutes, the VPK operational requirements under Section 1002.75, Florida Statutes, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network under Section 411.0101, Florida Statutes. Additionally the Office houses the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network Office.

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) is statutorily responsible under Section 1002.73, Florida Statutes for standards, curricula and accountability related to the VPK program. DOE is statutorily responsible for the administration of the accountability requirements, approval of the Director Credential, adoption and administration of the screening procedures, and calculation of the readiness rate. DOE is also responsible for the administration of the Part B, section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) services for eligible children ages 3 to 5 with disabilities.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is statutorily responsible for administration of child care licensing and regulation under Section 402.301, Florida Statutes, administers Florida's Gold Seal Quality Care Program under Section 402.281, Florida Statutes, and issues credentials. The purpose of DCF services is to ensure that children are well cared for in a safe, healthy, positive and educational environment by trained, qualified staff.

The Department of Health (DOH) is statutorily under Section 391.308, Florida Statutes responsible for the administration of Part C of the IDEA services, through the ESSO, for children younger than 3 with established conditions or developmental delays and their families. The DOH also administers services for maternal and child well-being including infant mental health services under Section 383.011, Florida Statutes.

Governance: Local Organizational Leadership

Florida families also benefit from a grassroots approach to the administration of early learning services. OEL works closely with 31 independent 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations, called early learning coalitions, which serve each of the state's 67 counties. OEL allocates Child Care Development Block Grant funds to each early learning coalition through a grant agreement making each responsible for service delivery locally of the School Readiness program, VPK Education program, Child Care Resource and Referral services, and quality initiatives including those targeting infant and toddlers and children with special health care needs.

Eleven of the state's counties benefit from Children's Services Councils (CSC) which receives funding to ensure a dedicated funding source in those counties for children's programs and services. Where applicable, the early learning coalitions and CSCs partner to maximize resources and enhance services, most notably in the implementation of local Quality Rating improvement Systems.

High needs children of migrant farm workers have a resource in the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), which provided early learning services to more than 3,500 children through 97 providers in 22 counties. The RCMA is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that works in partnership with a variety of public and private entities to serve the families of migrant farm workers and other low-income, rural families.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (Ounce) under Section 409.147, Florida Statutes was established 20 years ago with a vision of creating a private, non-profit organization dedicated to funding research and demonstration projects to help Florida's children with high needs and their families. The Ounce is a public-private partnership, blending state and private dollars and investing in innovative, community-based programs. In prevention and early intervention services, collaboration is essential to maximize effective use of resources and eliminate duplication of efforts. This collaboration provides the Ounce with a means to share information on evidenced-based and effective programs and strategies for prevention and early intervention with Florida's communities.

Governance: Coordinating Council Leadership

To promote coordination across several state agencies that serve young children and youth, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet) under Section 402.56, Florida Statutes was created in 2007. Legislation governing the Children and Youth Cabinet establishes a vision

that all children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential as described above. The Children and Youth Cabinet is a council within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Governor and the Florida Legislature receive an annual report detailing the Cabinet's progress. (OACP) was created under Section 39.001(7), Florida Statutes within the Executive Office of the Governor in 2007.

For purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection (OACP) was created under Section 39.001(7), Florida Statutes within the Executive Office of the Governor in 2007. Former Governor Charlie Crist appointed Chief Child Advocate serves within OACP and is bound by statute to consult with the Governor on matters that relate to the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect, the promotion of adoption, and the support of adoptive families.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council (CAPP) was established in 2007 under Section 39.001(8)(b)1., Florida Statutes, and consists of 33 members representing child serving and advocating agencies, organizations and parents across Florida. The Advisory Council assisted the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection to review, develop, and monitor state and local planning efforts. The statewide five-year plan was launched on July 1, 2011 to empower communities to address the promotion of adoption and the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The local planning efforts are achieved by local planning teams who represent the 20 circuits throughout Florida.

These teams are typically known as the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Local Planning Teams (CAPP LPT) and membership consists of local leaders representing community agencies and organizations whose work touches the lives of children and families in their communities. The culmination of their planning consists of their local (Circuit) five-year plans which were submitted to the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection and was launched on July 1, 2011.

Florida benefits from another Advisory Council, the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), which works to support workforce development with local solutions for quality care for working families and universally available education for young children. The ELAC was statutorily established in 2005 under Section 1002.77, Florida Statutes and is comprised of 33 appointed individuals across the state. The membership of ELAC consists of the chair (who is

appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor), the chair of each of the 31 early learning coalitions (which oversee child care subsidy funding, VPK and CCR&R), a member who serves at the pleasure of the President of the Senate, and a member who serves at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House. The ELAC meets quarterly as arranged by OEL.

The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT) is authorized and required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended by Public Law 105-17. The role of FICCIT is to assist public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families. The FICCIT is to advise and assist the lead agency in providing policy and definitions for the minimum components of Part C of the IDEA as amended by P.L. 105-17, particularly the identification of the sources of the fiscal and other support services for early intervention programs, assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency and the promotion of interagency of the state's population including parents, members of the legislature, early intervention, preschool services, health insurance, Head Start.

Expanding Opportunities is a national-level interagency early childhood inclusion initiative that began in 2005 and is supported by federal partners including the Child Care Bureau, the Office of Head Start, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Special Education Programs. Florida was part of the first cohort of states chosen to participate in this cross-agency initiative to promote inclusive options for young children with disabilities and their families. State partners who participate in Florida's Expanding Opportunities Initiative include the Department of Education (both Section 619 and VPK), OEL, Department of Health Children's Medical Services – Part C, Florida's Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Children's Forum, Parent/Family Organizations, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, institutions of higher education, family members, and representatives from local programs.

Florida's Expanding Opportunities initiative continues to support federal and state law by bringing together policy makers to promote high quality inclusive opportunities for all children and families. Florida's Expanding Opportunities partners work to inform policy and policymakers to increase the numbers of young children served in high quality inclusive settings, align professional development for practitioners working with children with disabilities to the

state early childhood professional development system, develop strong public awareness priorities to promote early childhood inclusion. For the past two years, Florida's Expanding Opportunities initiative has collaborated with OEL's Professional Development Initiative (PDI).

The Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS) initiative is a national and statewide effort to involve a broad range of public and private agencies and organizations, parents, and communities who share the goal of promoting the health and well-being of children from ages birth to age five. Florida's ECCS initiative is housed in the DOH. The State Advisory Council works closely with ECCS to ensure coordination of efforts.

The RTT-ELC Lead Agency will use contracted staff for the duration of the grant including a project management support office lead, business analysts to provide project support and supporting staff assigned specific functions to manage scope, deliverables, budget and other activities as needed. The objective of the contractors is to provide the structure needed to standardize project management practices, facilitate RTT-ELC project portfolio and determine approaches for repeatable processes. This will provide a central agent to keep a close watch on project progress and budgets, report on project status, and will enable us to complete more projects on time and on budget with fewer resources.

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

Referring back to section (A) (3) (a) above, the RTT-ELC coordinating council, named as the existing State Advisory Council, will determine those governance-related roles and responsibilities of the named council participants. Further roles and responsibilities will include the following:

The State Advisory Council decisions that are not otherwise constrained by statute, rule, or requirements specified in the RTT-ELC grant agreement will be submitted to deliberation by the council membership and then determined by vote of the majority. The State Advisory Council shall provide oversight for all projects being conducted with RTT-ELC funds. The day-to-day management of these projects will be under the direction of Participating State Agency sponsor for the project. Where more than one state agency is actively involved, a single agency will be selected to serve as primary sponsor.

The planning, execution, monitoring and controlling of all early learning and development reform projects supported by RTT-ELC grant awards will be the responsibility of the sponsoring state agency with project sponsors responsible for execution, solicitation and contracting for services or products, the acceptance of contract deliverables, and the approval of invoices.

The status and progress of each project will be reported periodically to the State Advisory Council, including variances in planned scope, cost, and schedule and such other information that is required by the council in the performance of its duties. Further information on the related roles and responsibilities can be found in Table (A)(3)-1.

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

As stated above, the RTT-ELC coordinating council, named the State Advisory Council, will promote and facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources (both staff and funding), and create long-term sustainability of products, services, and results attained using the grant award. Contracted staff will assist in the development of policies and operational procedures as it relates to the RTT-ELC grant and high quality plans for all proposed projects. These decisions will be made by workgroups who represent the State Advisory Council. All final decisions will be made after review and agreement by members. Furthermore, resolving disputes will be part of the policies developed and all disputes will be reviewed and resolved by members.

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

The Coordinating Council, named the State Advisory Council, shall have the authority to establish and charter workgroups and committees composed of stakeholder volunteers and contracted support staff to perform studies, conduct research, examine challenges, and develop recommendations as required to further the goals and of the council and the RTT-ELC grant. This will include engaging parent and families of children with high needs.

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency—

State agencies will be committed to the State Plan and to conducting ongoing collaboration established within Florida in years past. This commitment is demonstrated in the fully executed MOU's which have been signed by each participating agency and can be found in Appendix (A)(3)-1.

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

The terms and conditions which demonstrate the strong commitment to the State Plan by each state agency, which includes those terms and conditions needed to align and leverage existing funds within the agencies can be found in the MOUs which are located in Appendix (A)(3)-1.

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

Based on the OEL's high quality plans and the proposed budget found in Section (A)(4) the scope-of-work for each state agency has been described at a high level and will be finalized during initial project planning of the RTT-ELC application. During this time, project charters and work breakdown structures will be completed to fully describe an agreed upon approach with all state agencies and within current statutory authority. The descriptions of the scope-of-work for the purposes of this response can be found in the MOU's located in Appendix (A)(3)-1.

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency;

Signatures from an authorized representative of each state agency can be found in the MOU's located in Appendix (A)(3)-1.

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining—

There are many industries, organizations, state agencies, and individuals in Florida who have “wrapped” their arms around Florida’s children and desire to support the Early Learning Programs and the needs of Florida’s most vulnerable children. The biggest demonstration of this commitment was seen when Florida’s voters passed a constitutional amendment to create its VPK program. The letters of support can be found in Appendix (A)(3)-2.

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

The letters of support showing commitment by Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils can be found in **Appendix (A)(3)-2**. Furthermore, Table (A)(3)-2 lists those Early Learning and Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils who have submitted letters of support.

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State’s legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children’s museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

The letters of support showing commitment by the above named stakeholders can be found in **Appendix (A)(3)-2**.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Florida Department of Children and Families	The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is statutorily responsible for administration of child care licensing and regulation, administers Florida’s Gold Seal Quality care accreditation program, and issues credentials. The purpose of DCF services is to ensure that children are well cared for in a safe, healthy, positive and educational environment by trained, qualified staff.
Florida Department of Education	The Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for standards, curricula and accountability related to the VPK program. The DOE is statutorily responsible for the administration of the accountability requirements, approval of the Director Credential, adoption and administration of the screening procedures, and calculation of the readiness rate. Further, the DOE is responsible for the administration of the Part B,

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) services for eligible children ages three to five 5 with disabilities.
Florida Department of Health	The Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for the administration of Part C of the IDEA services, through the ESSO, for children younger than 3 with established conditions or developmental delays and their families. The DOH also administers services for maternal and child well-being including infant mental health services.
Florida's Office of Early Learning	Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) is required to submit a bi-annual Child Care and Development Fund plan to the federal government. This plan is the blueprint by which OEL coordinates early learning and child care services for Florida's families (45 CFR 98). OEL is responsible for the School Readiness Education program (subsidy program), Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Moreover, OEL houses the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network Office.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Other Entities	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council (CAPP)	CAPP was created in Florida Statute in 2007 (Section 39.001(8)(b)1., Florida Statutes) and consists of 33 members representing child-serving and advocating agencies, organizations and parents across Florida. As a council the members review, monitor and develop state and local planning efforts to empower communities to address the promotion of adoption and the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The local planning efforts are achieved by local planning teams who represent the 20 circuits throughout Florida.
Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)	ELAC works to support workforce development with local solutions for quality care for working families and universally available education for young children. The membership of ELAC consists of the chair (who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor), the chair of each of the 31 early learning coalitions (which oversee child care subsidy funding, VPK and CCR&R), a member who serves at the pleasure of the President of the Senate, and a member who serves at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House.
Early Steps/Children's Medical Services	Early Steps is Florida's early intervention system that offers services to eligible infants and toddlers (birth to thirty-six months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay. Early Intervention is provided to support families and caregivers in developing the competence and confidence to help their child learn and develop. Early Steps services are based on Early Steps evaluations and your family's concerns, resources, and goals. Early Steps uses a Team Based Primary Service Provider approach which aims to empower each eligible family by providing a comprehensive team of professionals from the beginning of services through transition.
Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS)	ECCS is a national and statewide effort to involve a broad range of public and private agencies and organizations, parents, and communities who share the goal of promoting the health and well-being of children from ages birth to age five. Florida's ECCS initiative is housed in the Department of Health.
Expanding Opportunities	Expanding Opportunities is a national-level interagency early childhood inclusion initiative that began in 2005 and is supported by federal partners including the Child Care Bureau, the Office of Head Start, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Special Education Programs. Florida was part of the first cohort of states chosen to participate in this cross-agency initiative to promote inclusive options for young children with disabilities and their families. State partners who

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Other Entities	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	participate in Florida's Expanding Opportunities Initiative include the Department of Education (both Section 619 and VPK), OEL, Department of Health Children's Medical Services – Part C, Florida's Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Children's Forum, Parent/Family Organizations, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, institutions of higher education, family members, and representatives from local programs.
Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet)	The Cabinet was created to promote coordination across several state agencies that serve young children and youth. It is a council within the Executive Office of the Governor and includes 20 members including the eight state agencies responsible for services to children birth to eighteen. The Cabinet is charged with developing a strategic plan to promote collaboration, creativity, increased efficiency, information sharing, and improved service delivery between and within state agencies and organizations. The Governor and the Florida Legislature receive an annual report detailing the Cabinet's progress.
Florida KidCare	Through Florida KidCare, the state of Florida offers health insurance for children from birth through age 18, even if one or both parents are working. It includes four different parts. When you apply for the insurance, Florida KidCare will check which part your child may qualify for based on age and family income.
Head Start Collaboration	The Head Start State Collaboration Office is a federal-state partnership organized to support and encourage collaboration with Head Start and various other state and local stakeholders that serve low-income families with young children.
Healthy Families Florida	Healthy Families Florida is a nationally accredited home visiting program for expectant parents and parents of newborns experiencing stressful life situations. The program improves childhood outcomes and increases family self-sufficiency by empowering parents through education and community support. Parents voluntarily participate in Healthy Families so they can learn how to recognize and respond to their babies' changing developmental needs, use positive discipline techniques, cope with the day-to-day stress of parenting in healthy ways, and set and achieve short- and long-term goals.
Healthy Start Coalition	Healthy Start is dedicated to strengthening maternal and child health by ensuring that all Florida families have access to a continuum of affordable and quality health and related services and advocating for public policy initiatives to facilitate those services. Healthy Start provides universal risk screening for all pregnant women and infants and care coordination services for eligible participants. Through infant screening, the program identifies children in need of additional services and makes referrals to other programs.
Office of Adoption and Child Protection (OACP)	OACP was created under Section 39.001(7), Florida Statutes, within the Executive Office of the Governor in 2007 for purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (Ounce)	The Ounce is a public-private partnership, blending state and private dollars and investing them in innovative, community-based programs that serve at-risk children and their families. The organization has taken on the additional role of housing statewide initiatives, including the voluntary home visiting program, Healthy Families Florida, and the Florida Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.
State Advisory Council on early childhood education and care	The State Advisory Council provides leadership across agencies and organizations to prioritize collaboration and coordination and assists Florida in facilitating a coordinated effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services for families and children.
Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT)	The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT) is authorized and required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended by Public Law 105-17 to assist public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families. The FICCIT is to advise

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Other Entities	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	and assist the lead agency in providing policy and definitions for the minimum components of Part C of the IDEA as amended by P.L. 105-17, particularly the identification of the sources of the fiscal and other support services for early intervention programs, assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency and the promotion of interagency agreements. FICCIT is composed of governor appointed members who are representative of the state's population including parents, members of the legislature, early intervention, preschool services, health insurance, Head Start.

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Association of Early Learning Coalitions	Y
DOH, Division of Family Health Services (Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting and Maternal and Child Health Title V)	Y
Early Learning Advisory Council	Y
Early Steps – Part C IDEA	Y
Florida Association for the Education of Young Children	Y
Florida Children's Services Councils	Y
Florida Family Child Care Home Association	Y
Florida Head Start Association	Y
Redlands Christian Migrant Association	Y
State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care	Y

(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (*e.g.*, CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) will be addressed in the Budget Section (section VIII of the application) and reviewers will evaluate the State's Budget Section response when scoring (A)(4). In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to (A)(4)(a) and (A)(4)(c) and may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(4)(a):

- The completed table listing the existing funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan (see Table (A)(4)-1).
- Description of how these existing funds will be used for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Evidence for (A)(4)(b):

- The State's budget (completed in section VIII).

- The narratives that accompany and explain the budget, and describes how it connects to the State Plan (also completed in section VIII).

(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

Florida's investment in its early learning system through the Florida Office of Early Learning is over \$1 billion annually. The current budget request for 2012-13 includes \$636.6 million for School Readiness funded through CCDF and \$401 million for universal VPK funded through state general revenue. Florida's VPK is a state constitutionally mandated entitlement program voted in by the citizens of Florida that allows any four year old in the state to attend a state-funded pre-k program. School Readiness and VPK programs combined to provide 386,426 children in Florida access to quality early learning experiences during the 2011 SFY. This level of funding support committed to Florida's early learning system is the foundation for improving and expanding the state's TQRIS system by ensuring Florida's most at risk families and children with high needs have access to affordable child care and quality early learning programs.

Through state-led collaborative reform efforts already underway, Florida has marshaled substantial financial resources from public and private funding partners to further the state's efforts in improving and expanding early learning quality initiatives in the state. (note: Florida calls funding through CCDF *School Readiness Funding*. This term is used throughout the descriptions below and is synonymous with CCDF).

School Readiness Funding (child care subsidies funded through CCDF) - Estimated annual budget is \$645,659,854 providing children with child care subsidies annually, for an estimated total of \$2.5 billion through the RTT-ELC grant period. Florida's school readiness program supports the goals of the State Plan through providing the children of low income working parents access to affordable child care at quality early learning providers. Florida also prioritizes

children in the child welfare system and other High Need Children to ensure they have access to child care.

School Readiness Quality Set Aside (CCDF) – The Florida Office of Early Learning quality set aside, included in the total CCDF School Readiness budget, is divided into two parts, an allocation set aside at the state program office for statewide strategic quality initiatives and an allocation awarded to Florida’s 31 Early Learning Coalitions as a quality earmark within their CCDF grant agreement. The state program office set aside for 2012 is \$2.8 million with an estimated total budget of \$4.8 million through the grant period ending in 2015. This funding is targeted for statewide training, materials and ongoing support services for ERS and CLASS program assessment instruments as well as expansion and enhancements to the statewide TQRIS data system. The quality set aside allotment awarded to the ELC is estimated at \$85.7 million annually and \$343 million through the grant period. These quality expenditures includes program monitoring, social services, case management, child care placement, provider recruitment, staff training, administration and Gold Seal quality program payment differential incentives (tiered reimbursement). These services support the state plan through quality improvement activities in early learning settings funded through the CCDF block grant and state general revenue.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (State General Revenue) - Estimated annual budget is \$400,000,000 for an estimated total of \$1.59 billion through the RTT-ELC grant period. Florida’s VPK is a state constitutionally mandated entitlement program voted in by the citizens of the Florida that allows any 4 year old in the state to attend a state-funded pre-k program. The state VPK program, administered through the Florida Office of Early Learning with support from the Florida Department of Education Office of Early Learning is projected to serve 165,341 four year olds annually, for a total of 661,364 during the RTT-ELC grant period. The total estimated number of VPK children of high needs served is 81,000 annually is for a total of 324,000 during the RTT-ELC grant period.

Florida’s Department of Education Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B (IDEA) – Estimated annual expenditures are \$4.6 million for a total estimated budget of \$18.4 million through the RTT-ELC grant period . Florida’s Department of Education IDEA Part B ensures that a free appropriate public education is available to preschool children with disabilities residing in the State. Children and youth (ages 3-5) with disabilities are evaluated and

receive special education and related services. An individualized education program, or an individualized family service plan is developed, reviewed and revised for each child identified with a disability.

Title I ESEA – Title I of ESEA – The estimated annual budget for 2011-12 is \$21million with a total estimated budget through the RTT-ELC grant period of \$81 million. This program supports the goals of the State Plan by supplying high quality supplemental instruction and support services for educationally disadvantaged children including service to local school districts, agencies, private schools and local neglected and delinquent institutions for Title I, Migrant, and Homeless Programs.

Head Start Collaboration Office – Estimated annual budget of \$225,000 with a total estimated budget of \$900,000 through the grant period. The Florida Office of Early Learning houses the Head Start Collaboration Office and will continue to coordinate efforts through the RTT-ELC grant to ensure collaboration and the accomplishment of State Plan goals. This includes collaboration on statewide training and the development of data sharing capabilities to further link Head Start and the state's other early learning systems.

Head Start Advisory Council – The State Advisory Council 2012 grant budget supporting the State Plan activities is \$3.4 million with an addition \$1.4 million budgeted in 2013; the estimated budget through the RTT-ELC grant period is \$4.8 million. Florida's State Advisory Council has deepened statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide array of early childhood education programs and services; this work would be furthered through a RTT-ELC award. With a focus on strengthening state-level coordination and collaboration, the State Advisory Council grant funds are being targeted at broad-level infrastructure improvement projects already in motion statewide. Beyond supporting council responsibilities such as conducting a needs assessment, the majority of the grant funds are being spent on system-changing quality improvement and infrastructure projects including the comprehensive and accessible workforce and professional development system; comprehensive assessment system; and unified information technology system.

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant/Title V MCH Block Grant-

The estimated 2012 budget for this program is \$4.9 million with an anticipated total budget of \$27.9 million through the grant period. The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) and Healthy Start Statewide Programs build on the life course approach to meeting a family's needs through collaboration and integration of services. The life course approach underscores the interplay of how risk and protective factors, such as socioeconomic status, health behaviors, environment, stress, and education, influence health and development throughout one's lifetime. Collaboration and integration of services are conducted at the state and local level across agencies, organizations, coalitions and with multiple programs. There are 32 Healthy Start coalitions (HSC) across the state that are partially funded through the Title V Maternal Child Health Block Grant who work to ensure every baby has a healthy start so they may begin their life course as healthy as possible; HSCs work with Healthy Families, Early Head Start, WIC, Children's Medical Services and others. The expectations of the local home visiting evidenced based models to be implemented is working with existing programs and the community to ensure that children are healthy, safe, nurtured, and live in stable homes and environments that promote well-being.

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Kids 1-4 – Estimated annual expenditures for 2012 for children ages 1-4 are \$56.6 million increasing each year to an estimated \$69 million in 2015. Estimated total expenditures during the RTT-ELC grant period are \$254 million. Florida's SCHIP program supports the State Plan by aligning with the state's clear and united vision that Florida's children are physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally healthy and prepared to be successful. To meet these goals, children with high needs require access to low-cost health insurance.

Medicaid Children (AHCA) – An estimated annual budget of \$2.2 billion is dedicated to children 0-5, for a total estimated budget of \$8.9 billion through the RTT-ELC grant period. Overall Medicaid spending for children age 0-20 through the grant period is estimated at \$19 billion. Florida's Medicaid program for children is administered through the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Children and Families determines eligibility. The Medicaid Children budget supports the goals of the State Plan by aligning with the state's clear and united vision that Florida's children are physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally

healthy and prepared to be successful. To meet these goals, children with high needs require access to low-cost health care.

Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act⁴ /Child Welfare – Estimated annual budget for the RTT-ELC grant period is \$300,000,000 with an estimated total budget of \$1.2 billion for 2012-2015. These funds support the goals of the State Plan by supporting children of high needs through child welfare assistance, supports for safe and stable families, foster care, adoption assistance and other supports for at risk families.

The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) – The estimated budget for 2011-12 and 2012-13 is \$754,000 annually for a total of \$1,754,000. Florida has two CHIPRA outreach grants that were awarded in 2011. This program supports the State Plan by providing outreach to promote enrollment and retention in Medicaid and CHIP to eligible families. These outreach effort supports children with high needs.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (DOE) – The estimated annual budget for the statewide longitudinal data system in the Florida Department of Education is \$552,981 annually through the grant period for an estimated four-year total of \$2,211,924. The SLDS is an integral part of the State Plan and is a key component to building a successful quality early learning system. Linking other early learning data including program assessment, child progress and developmental screening data to the SLDS as proposed in the State Plan will provide Florida the means to analyze early learning data over an unprecedented timeline and the ability to make data driven strategic system adjustments accordingly.

The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT) – Estimated annual budget for the RTT-ELC grant period is \$27,000 with an estimated total budget of \$108,000 from 2012-2015. These funds support the goals of the State Plan by assisting public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families.

Florida Children's Services Council (CSC) – Estimated annual budget for the RTT-ELC grant period is \$437,821,563 with an estimated total budget of \$1.7 billion for 2012 – 2015. These funds are generated through local property taxes enabled through voter referenda for children and support the goals of the State Plan by focusing investments on prevention and early intervention strategies that produce measurable results for the children and families served in the eleven CSC counties. Eight of the eleven CSC's have independent taxing authority ensuring that a dedicated funding source is available for children's programs and services. The majority of CSC funding is dedicated to children birth to age 5.

WAGES - Developed in North Carolina by the Child Care Services Association, WAGES® aims to improve child care quality by reducing turnover and encouraging the continued education of early childhood teachers (including center staff and family child care providers). This program provides education-based salary supplements to early childhood teachers working with children ages birth to five. Funded at a level of \$2.3 million annually by local children's services councils in coordination with local early learning coalitions, WAGES is available in multiple counties in Florida; these communities plan to continue the program at this level. WAGES is designed to assist with retention of qualified practitioners, rewarding them for educational achievements, resulting in higher quality early learning programs and more stable relationships for children.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) – The state of Florida invests \$3 million annually in TEACH scholarships and local communities invest an additional \$2.9 million annually. These investments are expected to continue at these levels, for a total of \$23.6 million through the grant period. TEACH scholarships support the goals of the State Plan by providing financial supports for early care educators and center directors to work towards earning an Associate's degree in early childhood education, Florida Staff Credentials and other training. The model involves a three-way partnership for the sharing of expenses by the caregiver receiving the scholarship, the sponsoring child care center or family child care home and T.E.A.C.H.

W. K. Kellogg Foundation – The estimated budget for 2012 state match is \$1 million. Building upon a \$3 million investment in a statewide professional development system in 2009, Florida secured a \$2 million match grant in 2011 from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation through the

University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning to deepen the early childhood professional development system work. This match is applied to a current professional development contract between the OEL and the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning and supports the State Plan through the development of statewide blueprint for professional development, state-of-the-art training modules for early learning educators, a peer to peer coaching model and engaging institutions of higher education to develop a common course catalog for early care and education courses

Microsoft Corporation – Estimated 2012 budget for in-kind services is \$1.2 million increasing annually to \$1.5 million in 2015. Microsoft has agreed to provide Florida an estimated \$5.2 million in in-kind services over the next four years through the development of a Career Hub, which will provide an on-line mechanism for the coordination of professional development planning among faculty, coaches, career advisors, other technical assistance specialists, directors, and practitioners. Cloud and smart technology supports will be provided via an in-kind donation (estimated at \$5 per practitioner per month) from Microsoft Live@edu hosted, co-branded communication and collaboration services including email, email storage, calendars, document sharing, instant messaging, video chat, and mobile email. This service will continue after RTT-ELC at no charge to Florida’s early learning practitioners.

Publix Super Markets Charities of Florida – Total contribution of \$1 million for 2012 to be disbursed through the RTT-ELC grant period by the United Way of Florida and the Women’s Leadership Councils. This donation is targeted toward the implementation of a statewide early literacy initiative focusing on ensuring that more of Florida’s children are reading by third grade and supports the goals of the State Plan by providing supports to children of high needs.

See Table (A)(4)-1 for details on other existing federal, state, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) is addressed in the Budget Section.

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Florida has been incrementally strengthening its early learning system through targeted investments and a commitment to ensuring expanded access and improved quality for young children in the state. Many of these investments were designed to create efficiencies so existing funding could be invested directly in ensuring more High Need Children could access early learning and development programs. For example, a feasibility study for the early learning data system estimated a cost savings of over \$28 million a year from enhanced efficiencies in program operations; these saved funds can serve an additional 7,000 children annually with expanded access to child care subsidies.

RTT-ELC funding will further strengthen Florida's early learning and development system so it functions more efficiently and ensures the needs of High Need Children are better met. As a result of the work outlined in this application, Florida will be able to more effectively target and invest its early learning and development program funding thereby being able to quantifiably determine the impact from these investments. The funding requested through RTT-ELC is in three general categories: creating more efficient and effective systems; building capacity; and helping to implement more effective practice and invest resources.

There are many innovative investments outlined in the RTT-ELC proposal that will result in more *efficient and effective systems*, thereby better supporting early learning and development programs. These investments include enhancing early learning data systems, expanding PLATINUM statewide and strengthening the professional development system by expanding professional development options. Since RTT-ELC funding will cover the start-up costs of these investments, the minimal ongoing maintenance can be paid for through realized cost benefits from created efficiencies.

RTT-ELC funding will allow the state to invest in scholarships, fully articulate formal and informal pathways of professional development and ensure a viable early childhood

workforce. Through the supports provided by the 4 year grant funding Florida will work to finalize a comprehensive system of professional development that will serve as a model for improving the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of early childhood educator professional development while advancing student learning and healthy child development outcomes. The costs to maintain this comprehensive professional development system after the liquidation of the grant funding will be based on course fees already collected by the Florida Department of Children and Families and already existing TEACH scholarship dollars (Section 411.0103, Florida Statutes) made available to date.

RTT-ELC funding is also covering the cost of significant *capacity building* in the state. Florida will provide significant capacity building support to child care businesses, such as support to help more programs achieve Gold Seal Accreditation, scholarship assistance for professional development, access to tools such as those available through Teachstone, new resources to help integrate formative assessment and the early learning and developmental standards into the planning and implementation of daily work with young children. As a result, early learning and development programs will have more resources available to them to enhance their businesses. On boarding of trainers will occur through RTT-ELC funding, building significant local capacity related to the CLASS, ERS and ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE. These trainers will provide extensive training for providers during the RTT-ELC period and new tools through the creation of highly interactive, on-line trainings. The ongoing cost of this training following RTT-ELC funding will be absorbed through existing training budgets and provided by local trainers.

Through RTT-ELC funding there will also be assessment of early learning and development programs in year 4 of the grant on the new TQRIS standards. Materials to ensure programs understand the new tools used (e.g. CLASS, ERS) will be provided in multiple years of the grant so providers are fully equipped to implement the tools. Using the assessment schedule outlined in Section B, these ongoing costs for program assessment will be sufficiently spread over future years that they can be covered through existing program assessment funding from the Quality set-asides that are part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The RTT-ELC funding will ensure assessments implemented after the RTT-ELC funding are of the highest quality and are targeted to measure program elements that impact the outcomes of High Need Children. Families will also have access to new tools and information that will enable them to

make informed decisions. The creation of smart phone apps, high quality materials on website and other resources for families will be funded through RTT-ELC funding and then sustained through existing Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and family outreach commitments.

RTT-ELC funding will allow the state to create a list of approved observation-based early childhood assessments that have been vetted to ensure that they are designed for formative assessment, have strong psychometric properties, align to the state’s early learning standards, and have web-based data reporting capabilities. Furthermore training will be provided to ensure that every early childhood educator is appropriately trained in observation-based assessment in order to utilize the assessments results to inform their classroom practices. The state has, and will continue to, dedicate significant resources to working with early childhood programs to strengthen their understanding of the purposes and uses of different types of assessment in order to ensure appropriate child outcomes. This funding will be sustained by the Quality set-asides that are part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. RTT-ELC funding will also help Florida determine more effective ways to *implement policies and invest resources* to best serve High Need Children. The pilot and validations studies and coordination of the research will inform the TQRIS standards and strategies to streamline oversight so programs are focused on ensuring positive outcomes for children. Oversight and monitoring are standard practices that were taking place prior to RTT-ELC. With RTT-ELC Florida will ensure monitoring, oversight and TQRIS standards are as effective, efficient and streamlined as possible. Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will also align existing investments so they are targeted more effectively. As stated in the Application RTT-ELC funding will allow Florida to work with stakeholders to ensure the state’s quality investments are made in strategic ways proven to leverage quality and improve outcomes for Children with High Needs.

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>CCDF School Readiness¹</i>	\$ 557,527,681	\$ 550,285,000	\$ 550,285,000	\$ 550,285,000	\$ 2,208,382,681
<i>CCDF Quality Set Aside OEL¹</i>	\$ 2,652,885	\$ 715,000	\$ 715,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 4,832,885
<i>CCDF Quality Set Aside ELC¹</i>	\$ 85,749,288	\$ 85,000,000	\$ 85,000,000	\$ 85,000,000	\$ 340,749,288
<i>CCDF Total¹</i>	\$ 645,929,854	\$ 636,000,000	\$ 636,000,000	\$ 636,035,000	\$ 2,553,964,854

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)-State General Revenue¹</i>	\$ 392,191,430	\$ 400,000,000	\$ 400,000,000	\$ 400,000,000	\$ 1,592,191,430
<i>Title I of ESEA²</i>	\$ 21,075,290	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 81,075,290
<i>IDEA Part B Preschool²</i>	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 18,400,000
<i>Head Start Collaboration Office²</i>	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 900,000
<i>HS State Advisory Council</i>	\$ 3,420,815	\$ 1,427,232			\$ 4,848,047
<i>Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant/Title V MCH Block Grant²</i>	\$ 4,900,000	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 27,900,000
<i>State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Kids 1-4³</i>	\$ 56,665,342	\$ 62,321,951	\$ 66,327,932	\$ 69,306,379	\$ 254,621,604
<i>Medicaid Children (AHCA)²</i>	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 8,983,351,088
<i>Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act⁴</i>	\$ 298,397,103	\$ 303,437,727	\$ 308,629,570	\$ 313,977,168	\$ 1,224,441,568
<i>The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Outreach Grants</i>	\$ 877,000	\$ 877,000			\$ 1,754,000
<i>Statewide Longitudinal Data System (DOE)¹</i>	\$ 552,981	\$ 552,981	\$ 552,981	\$ 552,981	\$ 2,211,924
<i>Florida Interagency Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT)through Early Steps Part C</i>	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 108,000
<i>Florida Children Services Councils</i>	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 1,751,286,253

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
(CSC) ⁵					
TEACH ⁶	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 23,600,000
TQRIS Collaborative ²	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 11,600,000
WAGES ²	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 9,200,000
Microsoft	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,320,000	\$ 1,440,000	\$ 1,560,000	\$ 5,520,000
Kellogg Foundation	\$ 1,000,000				\$ 1,000,000
Publix Supermarkets	\$ 1,000,000				\$ 1,000,000
					\$ -
Totals	\$ 4,126,821,150	\$ 4,132,548,226	\$ 4,140,561,818	\$ 4,149,042,863	\$ 16,548,974,059

¹ Estimated based on 2011-12 budget and 2012-13 LBR. 2014 and 2015 budget estimates based on flat rate projections.

² Estimated based on 2011-12 budget. 2013, 2014 and 2015 budget estimates based on flat rate projections.

³ Based on summaries from the Social Services Estimating Conference.

⁴ Based on 2011 expenditures from the Department of Children and Families and assumes a 3% increase each year.

⁵ Based on average total CSC funding from 2009-2011. Estimates for 2012-15 based on flat rate projections and are subject to change based on local millage rate adjustments.

⁶ Estimate includes \$3,000,000 annually of state general revenue and \$2,900,000 annually from local Children Services Council funding

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Status in the past 12 months by sex by age. 2010 American Community Survey.

ⁱⁱ The 2011 HHS poverty guidelines: One version of the [U.S.] federal poverty measure. Available: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11poverty.shtml>.

ⁱⁱⁱ AWI-Office of Early Learning Fact Book <http://factbook.flawwi.com/>

^{iv} Policy Group on Florida's Families and Children (2009). The state of Florida's child: A report for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. Available: <http://www.policygroup.org/downloads/2009-03-07%20The%20State%20of%20Floridas%20Child%20Report.pdf>.

^v Policy Group on Florida's Families and Children (2009). The state of Florida's child: A report for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. Available: <http://www.policygroup.org/downloads/2009-03-07%20The%20State%20of%20Floridas%20Child%20Report.pdf>.

^{vi} applies to the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education

^{vii} National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

^{viii} Morrissey, T. W., & Warner, M. E. (2007) Why early care and education deserves as much attention or more, than prekindergarten alone. *Applied Development Science*, 11, 2, 57-70.

^{ix} Heckman, James. 1999. "Policies to Foster Human Development." Working paper 7288. Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research. p. 22 and 41.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards¹ that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (B)(1):

- The completed table that lists each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State and the elements that are included in those Program Standards (Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Qualified Workforce, Family Engagement, Health Promotion, Effective Data Practices, and Other), (see Table (B)(1)-1).
- To the extent the State has developed and adopted a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System based on a common set of tiered Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (B)(1)(a), submit--
 - A copy of the tiered Program Standards;
 - Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system;
 - Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

Summary

Florida has a strong history of tiered reimbursement through its Gold Seal Quality Care Designation Program which was authorized by the Florida Legislature in 1996. This Gold Seal Quality Care Program must be based on the nationally recognized standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association of Family Child Care, and the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission. Florida has been working toward statewide TQRIS with pilots in seven regions of the state and extensive investment in TQRIS infrastructure over the last three years, to include systems for program assessment, professional development and data collection.

Through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding Florida will become the first state to apply a high standard of scientific rigor to the evaluation of a statewide TQRIS to ensure that Gold Seal standards and levels are meaningfully tied to children's outcomes. Florida's high-quality plan for building upon its existing TQRIS system will enable Florida to use data collected as part of the state's TQRIS and other work outlined in the RTT-ELC proposal to inform policy makers and determine what reforms are needed to the early learning system to create stronger outcomes for young children, particularly Children with High Needs. Within the next four years Florida will implement a TQRIS statewide, creating a national model and blueprint to validate that the TQRIS standards and levels equate to strong child outcomes. Using technology to streamline and create efficiencies in the quality improvement process will result in reduced administrative costs so that more funding goes directly toward

proven quality improvement strategies and targeted supports for child care businesses and schools.

With RTT-ELC funding Florida will implement a validated, statewide quality rating improvement system that will, within four years, include every legally operating early learning and development program type in the state. Florida's current early learning and development landscape consists of 8,704 centers and 5,587 family child care homes with a collective capacity to serve over 687,000 children; an estimated 6,560 centers, 3,049 family child care homes and 966 public school programs serve an estimated 236,000 children who receive child care subsidies. Leading up to statewide implementation, the state will ensure providers are fully prepared to participate in TQRIS. The programs serving Children with High Needs will receive extra supports as outlined in this proposal so they benefit from high-quality early learning and development programs.

Florida's TQRIS will serve as the nation's TQRIS model by:

- integrating innovative technology strategies to reduce overhead;
- having validated assessment strategies to ensure the TQRIS tiers are tied to meaningful outcomes for children;
- adopting highly effective quality assurance policies and procedures;
- implementing innovative strategies to engage and support families;
- supporting TQRIS with proven data solutions to enhance quality improvement work and investments; and
- employing innovative, effective quality improvement strategies that support businesses that serve large populations of Children with High Needs.

With Florida's diverse population, our plan ensures that cultural diversity and equity are authentically present in the validated standards, implementation strategies, quality improvement supports and outreach to families. Florida's ability to develop a psychometrically validated and reliable TQRIS that reflects cultural practices will make this blueprint invaluable to other states.

The timeline for adopting TQRIS statewide in Florida is as follows (an * indicates these activities are paid for with funding other than RTT-ELC):

Phase 1: (2007-2011)

- Pilot and refine TQRIS in seven pilot communities*
- Develop professional development system (competencies, registry, etc.)*
- Create the Early Learning Data System and PLATINUM to enhance data capacity*
- Build statewide capacity for ASQ and ASQ-SE screenings*
- Build statewide capacity for Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and CLASS assessments*

Phase II: (January 2012-August 2012)

- Pilot PLATINUM. Take statewide*
- Train assessors and Assessor Trainers on ERS and CLASS*
- Finalize TQRIS Pilot Study standards based on extensive input from providers, researchers and other stakeholders
- Design stratified random sampling plan for Pilot Study
- Train providers statewide on ASQ and ASQ-SE, provide kits and access to Enterprise data system
- Further customize PLATINUM based on pilot and program needs
- Finalize curriculum review/approval process to reflect Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

Phase III: (September 2012-August 2013)

- Implement Pilot Study to measure degree to which standards and levels meet TQRIS goals, to include being tied to children's outcomes
- Training on PLATINUM for providers
- Shared services website available for providers who complete PLATINUM training and Registry enrollment
- Start Provider Outreach/Engagement Campaign moving toward statewide implementation of TQRIS by 2015
- Providers implement ASQ statewide for all children
- Support from coalition for providers on ASQ as needed
- Develop and evaluate licensing/technical assistance models to best support programs
- The Early Learning Data System finalized
- Start rulemaking process for TQRIS standards/levels that will be implemented in 2015

- Use results of Pilot Study to refine TQRIS standards and levels for Validation Study

Phase IV: (September 2013-August 2014)

- Implement Validation Study to ensure standards and levels meet TQRIS goals, to include being tied to children's outcomes
- Training on PLATINUM for providers
- Shared services website available for providers who complete PLATINUM training and have current Registry enrollment
- Continue Provider Outreach/Engagement Campaign moving toward statewide implementation of TQRIS by 2015
- Providers implement ASQ statewide for all children
- Support from coalition for providers on ASQ as needed
- Refine and finalize licensing/technical assistance models to best support programs
- Further rulemaking for TQRIS standards/levels that will be implemented in 2015
- Revise Early Learning and Developmental Standards to reflect HS Outcomes Framework
- Use results of Validation Study and feedback from stakeholders throughout RTT-ELC project to inform policymakers and rulemaking on final TQRIS standards and levels

Phase V: (September 2014-December 2015)

- Finalize TQRIS standards and levels in rule
- Building from Provider Outreach/Engagement Campaign, provide orientation to new standards to programs throughout state
- Statewide assessment of early learning and development programs
- Shift to new model of licensing/technical assistance as refined in Phases II-IV
- Complete case study documenting systems evolution over RTT-ELC grant and share widely with field

Context of TQRIS in Florida

Florida is fully implementing a tiered reimbursement system through the Gold Seal Quality Care Program and piloting its TQRIS in seven counties. The TQRIS includes tiered program standards that reflect best practices in program assessment and quality measures; sets high expectations for program excellence; builds upon state licensing requirements; includes all

sectors of early learning and development program types; uses valid and reliable tools implemented by reliable assessors; and provides engaging and publicly available information to families in multiple languages.

The pilot of the TQRIS in seven counties represents phase I for statewide implementation (see timeline in opening summary of Section B); this work has occurred since 2005. These TQRIS pilot projects are heavily supported by local Children's Services Councils and early learning coalitions (see Section A for description). These community systems are hubs for innovation and creating strategies to meet local needs and effectively leverage public and private funding for children especially those with high needs.

A diverse group of seven both rural and urban counties currently implement a TQRIS and serve as pilot communities for the state. These counties include Broward (Fort Lauderdale), Duval (Jacksonville), Hillsborough (Tampa), Miami-Dade (Miami), Osceola (Kissimmee), Palm Beach, Pinellas (Clearwater), Polk (Lakeland, Winter Haven), Sarasota and Seminole (Lake Mary/Longwood/Sanford) and represent 53.6% of the state's population of children under the age of six. These pilot TQRIS leaders work closely together through a multi-county collaborative to align their standards and improvement strategies and share best practices.

Together, these county-based TQRIS include 1,614 programs, including 1,124 centers, 273 family child care homes, 137 Head Start and Early Head Start programs and 80 school-based pre-K programs. A total of 82% of these programs overall serve Children with High Needs who receive child care subsidies or have diagnosed special needs.

A total of \$31 million is invested annually in these pilot TQRIS systems. A majority is invested back into program improvements and provider supports for grants/materials, scholarships, training, wage incentives, technical assistance and career counseling and accreditation support (see (B)(4)(c)(1) for the number of programs listed by star level). Florida's strong foundation of implementing the Gold Seal Quality Care Program and the lessons learned from these pilots will inform the statewide TQRIS.

There is a strong commitment to developing a statewide TQRIS and learning from these pilot communities on what best supports providers in attaining and maintaining consistent high-quality standards of care. In 2009 as part of the development of Florida's Early Childhood Framework (see Appendix (A)(1)-1 for a copy of the Framework), a diverse group of statewide leaders identified as one of their top priorities to "*Create a statewide quality rating improvement*

system including support to help programs increase and sustain quality.” In 2010 early childhood stakeholders including early learning associations that represent all provider types, early learning coalitions, and governing state agencies worked with the Florida Legislature to pass law supporting implementation of quality rating and improving systems (Section 411.01(4)(d)3.i., Florida Statutes.)

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

Through RTT-ELC funding, Florida will build from its strong Gold Seal Quality Care Program and pilot TQRIS systems and implement Phases II-V of its plan to create rigorously validated standards and quality levels that are tied to children’s outcomes. *(B)(1)(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards*

Florida has a high-quality plan to build on its existing tiered program standards to adopt a validated TQRIS statewide. RTT-ELC funding will allow Florida to implement TQRIS in all legally operating early learning and development program types with a statewide set of tiered Program Standards:

- Validate improved tiered program standards and levels for TQRIS including: use of the state’s Early Learning Standards (Standards) for children birth to five-years-old which will be codified through formal rulemaking enabled by Section 411.01(4)(d)8., Florida Statutes; a comprehensive assessment system applicable to all types of early learning and development programs (Section 411.01(5)(c)2.d., Florida Statutes); early childhood educator qualifications aligned to the Florida Career Pathway (Section 411.01(5)(c)1.c., Florida Statutes); effective family engagement strategies (Section 411.01(2)(a), Florida Statutes); include health promotion practices; and be supported by leading-edge effective data practices (Section 411.01(5)(c)1.e., Florida Statutes).
- Ensure TQRIS standards are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect expectations of program excellence through the Pilot and Validation Studies.
- Ensure TQRIS standards are linked to and build upon state licensing requirements.
- Leverage a more efficient licensing system by streamlining inspections.

Current Status

The Gold Seal Quality Care Program is currently being implemented statewide as Florida's tiered reimbursement program. These standards must be based on the nationally recognized standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association of Family Child Care, and the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission. The QRIS Multi-County Collaborative has agreed to QRIS standards that are being implemented in the TQRIS pilot sites. These standards for center-based care and family child care are outlined below.

**Table (B)(1)-1a: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State
Centers**

Program Standards Elements				
Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified Workforce	Family Engagement	Other
Overall domain weigh 15%	Overall domain weigh 40%	Overall domain weigh 20%	Overall domain weigh 7.5%	Overall domain weigh 10%
CURRICULUM	ITERS	STAFF QUALIFICATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	One Star	RATIOS
One Star	One Star	One Star	1.1 A family handbook.	One Star
1.1 A Coalition approved, developmentally appropriate curriculum.	3.00 - 3.49	1.1A Director holds a current Foundational Level Florida Director's Credential.	Two Stars	Ratio *Max Group Size
Two Stars	Two Stars	1.1B 1 staff per 20 children enrolled have a DCF Staff Credential, with CDA/CDAE or higher education.	1.2 A minimum of three modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families.	Infants 1:4 N/A
1.2 Lead Teachers have received a minimum of 6 hrs of training on the implementation of the adopted curriculum.	3.55-3.99	1.1C All staff have completed the 40-hour DCF mandated basic training and the 5-hour Early Literacy course (in the allowable time frame).	Three Stars	Ones 1:6 N/A
Three Stars	Three Stars	2.1 100% of Lead Teachers have completed the 40-hour DCF mandated basic training and the 5-hour Early Literacy course (in the allowable time frame)	Four Stars	Twos 1:11 N/A
1.3 All instructional staff employed for 6 months or more have been trained on the use of the adopted curriculum.	4.00-4.49	3.1 100% of Assistant Teachers have completed the 40-hour DCF mandated basic training and the 5-hour Early Literacy course (in the allowable time frame).	1.3 At least two family involvement activities are provided each year.	Threes 1:15 N/A
Four Stars	Four Stars	4.1 All staff complete 10 hours of annual in-service training.	Three Star	4/5s 1:20 N/A
1.4A A developmentally appropriate curriculum is fully implemented in each classroom	4.50-5.49	1.2 Director holds a current Foundational Level (Level I or Level II) Florida Director's Credential.	1.4A Family-teacher conferences to review child's progress and needs and set goals for the child.	Ratio *Max Group Size
1.4B A system	Five Stars	2.2A 100% of Lead Teachers have a HS Diploma or GED.	1.4B Activities are provided for children and families to assist in the transition.	Infants 1:4 12
	5.50-7.00	2.2B 50% have a DCF Staff Credential, with CDA/CDAE or higher education.	Five Stars	Ones 1:6 12
		3.2 25% of Assistant Teachers have a DCF Staff Credential or are currently enrolled in a credential program.	1.5A Families have the opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually.	Twos 1:11 18
		4.2 50% of all teaching staff complete 15 hours of annual in-service training.	1.5B Resources are available to communicate with families in the family's primary language.	Threes 1:15 26
		Three Stars	1.5C	4/5s 1:20 32
		1.3 Director Level I or Level II Florida Director's Credential.		Three Star
		2.3 100% of Lead Teachers have DCF Staff Credential on file documenting CDA/CDAE or higher education.		Ratio *Max Group Size
		3.3 50% of Assistant Teachers have DCF Staff		Infants 1:4 8

<p>for ongoing child observations is in place. Five Stars 1.5 Child assessment guides differentiated program planning and communicating with families.</p>		<p>Credential Recognition or are currently enrolled in a credential program.</p> <p>3.3 50% of Assistant Teachers have DCF Staff Credential Recognition or are currently enrolled in a credential program.</p> <p>4.3 50% of all teaching staff have 20 hrs of annual in-service training.</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p>1.4 Director holds a current Advanced Level Florida Director's Credential.</p> <p>2.4 25% of Lead Teachers have an AS in ECE, an AA or higher degree, or 60 credit hrs of college coursework with 18 credits in ECE.</p> <p>3.4 A 75% of Assistant Teachers have a HS diploma or GED.</p> <p>3.4 B 25% have a DCF Staff Credential, with CDA/CDAE or higher education.</p> <p>4.4 50% of all teaching staff complete 25 hrs of annual in-service training.</p> <p>Five Stars</p> <p>1.5 Director holds a current Advanced Level Florida Director's Credential and has an AA/AS degree or higher, or 60 credit hrs of college coursework with 18 credits in ECE.</p> <p>2.5 50% of Lead Teachers have an AS in Early Childhood Education, an AA or higher degree, or 60 credit hrs of college coursework with 18 credits in ECE.</p> <p>3.5A 100% of Assistant Teachers have a HS diploma or GED.</p> <p>3.5B 50% have a DCF Staff Credential, with CDA/CDAE or higher education.</p> <p>4.5 50% of all teaching staff complete 30 hrs of annual in-service training tied to their professional development plan.</p>	<p>Developmental screening and referral process is in place for 90% of all children and results are shared with staff and families.</p> <p>Activity suggestions are developed with staff and families for children identified with potential delays.</p>	<p>Overall domain weigh 7.5% STAFF ADMINISTRATION One Star 2.1A Risk Management plan. Two Stars 2.2 Personnel policy manual. Three Stars 2.3A Staff meetings are held at least quarterly. 2.3B Written performance evaluations are completed annually. Four Stars 2.4A Policies & procedures. 2.4B Marketing plan. 2.4C Written performance evaluations are completed annually and include classroom observation. Five Stars 2.5A A salary scale is in place and is differentiated by education and experience. 2.5B A financial record-keeping system. 2.5C Written performance evaluations are completed annually, and include a classroom observation and professional development plan.</p>
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RATIONEL FOR RATIOS:

Rich learning environments and positive, pro-social relationships contribute to a child's developmental progress (Kroll, & Rivest, 2000). Structural features of care that support such interactions include better staff child ratios and group size (Kroll, & Rivest, 2000; Zaslow, Calkins, & Halle, 2000). Children are best served and learn more in small group settings with experienced early childhood professionals who have time to plan for children's individual development. The younger the child, the more individualized the programming must be for quality outcomes (Dwyer, Chait, & McKee, 2000). Smaller group size is associated with greater child initiations, opportunities to work on extending language, mediation of children's social interactions and support for exploration and problem solving (Ghazvini, & Foster, 2004). Programs with lower adult-to-child ratios individualized experiences based on child's needs, provide appropriate care and stimulating learning activities and a safe environment. Children do well when they have numerous opportunities for interaction and bonding with their teacher, and lower ratios and group size allow for those important relationships.

Dwyer, M. Christine, Chait, Robin, & McKee, Patricia. (2000). *Building strong foundations for early learning: Guide to high-quality early childhood education programs*.

Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service.

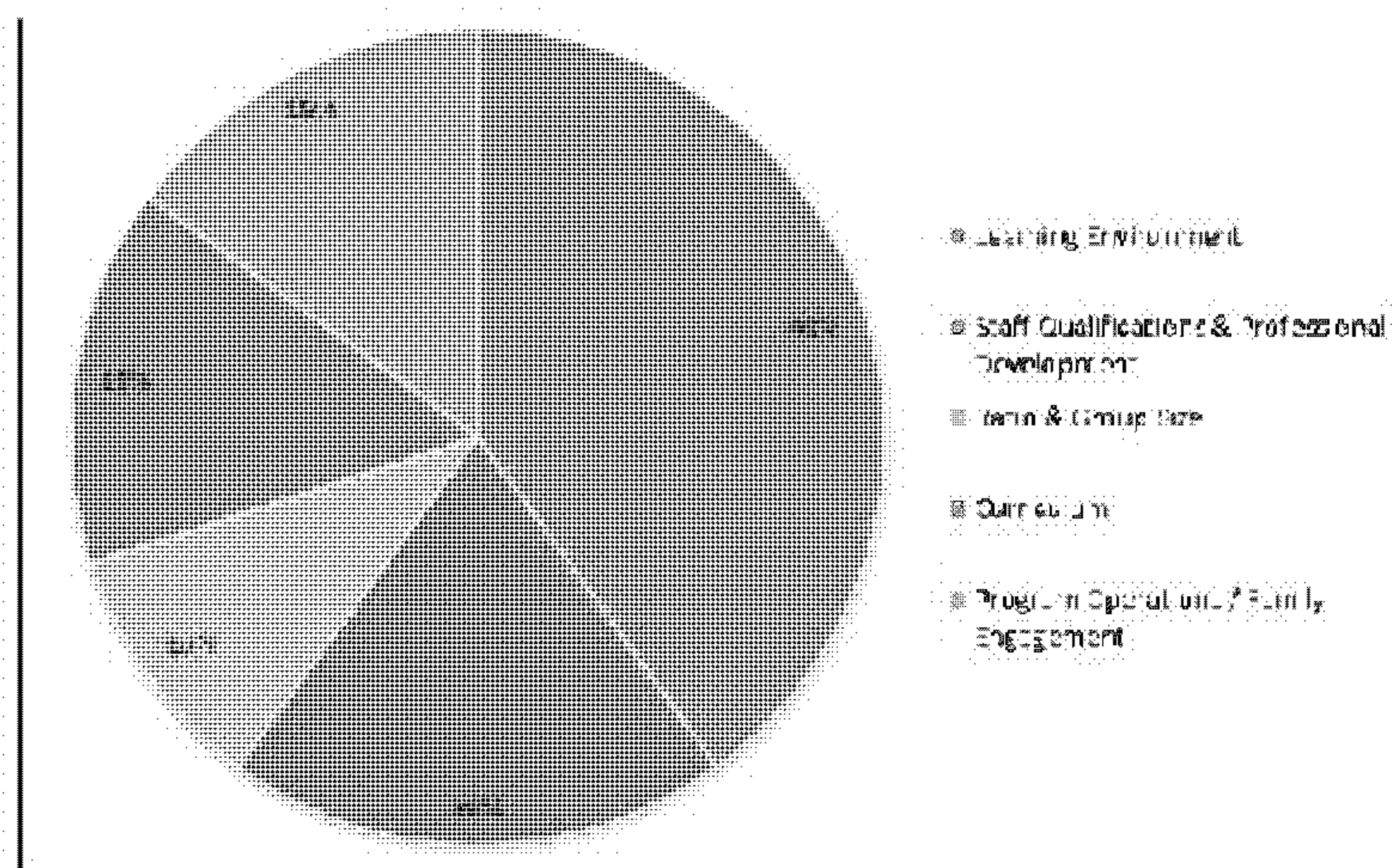
Ghazvini, A. S., & Foster, B. F. (2004). *Implementing a quality universal prekindergarten program in Florida*. THE POLICY GROUP for Florida's Families and Children.

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<http://www.policygroup.org/downloads/upk%20series/2004-B001.pdf>

Kroll, C.K. & Rivest, M. (2000). *Sharing the stories: Lessons learned from five years of Smart Start*. Early Childhood Initiatives in North Carolina.

Zaslow, M., Calkins, J., & Halle, T. (2000). *Background for community-level work on school readiness: A review of definitions, assessments, and investment strategies*. Child Trends.



**Table (B)(1)-1b: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State
Family Child Care Homes**

Program Standards Elements				
Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified Workforce	Family Engagement	Other
Overall domain weigh 15%	Overall domain weigh 30%	LICENSING	Overall domain weigh 10%	Overall domain weigh 5%
CURRICULUM	FCCERS-R	Overall domain weigh 20%	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	Ratios
One Star	One Star	Staff Qualifications- Professional Development	One Star	One Star
Developmentally appropriate curriculum.	Score of 3.0 – 3.49	One Star	Family Handbook.	Meets Licensing requirements
Two Star	Two Star	A. Provider and substitute meet licensing requirements.	Signed	Two Star
Written lesson plans for 3 months.	Score of 3.5 – 3.99	B. Substitute meets licensing requirements.	acknowledgement of receipt of handbook by parent.	Meets Licensing requirements
Three Star	Three Star	Two Star	Two Star	Three Star
Continue to implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum.	Score of 4.0 – 4.49	A. Provider has a H.S. diploma or GED.	Two methods of communication with families including the following:	Infants only 1:4
	Four Star	B. 15 hours annual in-service training.	-Individualized daily written communication is sent home with children under age three.	Birth-5 1:6 (no more than 2 infants)
All instructional staff employed 6 months or longer have received training on their chosen curriculum.	Score of 4.5 – 5.49	C. Substitute has 2 hours annual in-service.	A weekly summary of activities is posted OR sent home with children over age three.	3s & 4s only 1:6
Four Star	Five Star	Three Star	A family meeting/social event/workshop is offered once per year.	Birth-12 1:10 (no more than 1 child <age 2; no more than 5 children <age 5)
Curriculum is fully implemented.	Score of 5.5 – 7.0	A. Provider has completed DCF Staff Credential or higher.	Three Star	Large FCCH:
Five Star	Overall domain weigh 15%/10%	B. Completed Second Helping or 3 college credit hr course.	At least 2 family activities per year provided and 1 parent-teacher conference.	Infants & 1s only 2:8
Child assessment guides differentiated program planning and communicating with families.	DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING	C. 20 hours annual in-service training.	Four Star	Birth-5 2:12 (no more than 3 are < age 2)
	One Star	D. Substitute has 4 hours annual in-service.	A family meeting/social event/workshop is offered once per year.	Four Star
	Consent for screening is obtained for all children at time of enrollment.	Four Star	Three Star	Infants only 1:3
	The provider has received training on Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ).	A. Provider has a DCF Staff Credential* or higher and 9 college credits in ECE.	Four Star	Birth-5 1:5 (no more than 2 infants)
	The ASQ completed on every School Readiness child within 45 days of enrollment and every six months thereafter.	B. 25 hours annual in-service training.	Three Star	3s & 4s only 1:6
	Parents participate in the completion of the ASQ and are informed of the results.	C. Provider is a current member of a family child care association or other early childhood professional association.	Four Star	Birth-12 1:9 (no more than 1 child <age 2; no more than 4 children <age 5)
	Children who fall outside the typical	D. Substitute has 6 hours annual in-service.	Three Star	Large FCCH:
		Five Star	At least 2 family activities per year provided and 1 parent-teacher conference.	Infants & 1s only 2:8
		A. Provider has an A.A. or A.S. degree or higher with 18 credits in ECE.	Four Star	Birth-5 2:12 (no more than 2 are < age 2)
		B. 30 hours annual in-service training.	Three Star	3s & 4s only 2:12
		C. Provider plays an active role in a family child care association or other	Four Star	Five Star
			Three methods of communicating with families including the following:	Infants only 1:3
			Individualized daily	Birth-5 1:5 (no more than 2 infants)
				3s & 4s only 1:6

	<p>range of development on two or more ASQ domains are referred for further assessment and/or evaluation.</p> <p>Two Star The ASQ is completed on all other children (birth to five) enrolled in the program.</p> <p>Three Star The provider gives written information to all parents regarding developmental milestones.</p> <p>Four Star The provider has completed a minimum of 3 hrs of training on working with children with special needs.</p> <p>Five Star The provider has completed a minimum of 3 hours of training annually on working with children with special needs.</p>	<p>early childhood professional association.</p> <p>D. Substitute has 8 hours annual in-service.</p> <p>Large FCCH</p> <p>One Star A. Provider and employee meet licensing requirements.</p> <p>Employee A. Employee meets licensing requirements.</p> <p>Two Star A. Provider has a H.S. diploma or GED. B. 15 hrs annual in-service training.</p> <p>Three Star C. Substitute has 2 hrs annual in-service.</p> <p>Employee A. Provider has completed Second Helping or 3 college credit hrs course in ECE or Business Management. B. 15 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Employee A. First Aid/CPR. B. Employee has completed 30 hours FCC. C. Employee has completed 5 hour literacy D. 15 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Three Star A. Provider has 6 college credits in ECE B. 10 hours training in Special Needs. C. 20 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Employee A. Employee has H.S. diploma or G.E.D. B. 20 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Four Star A. Provider has 12 college credits in ECE B. 25 hours annual in-service training. C. Join a FCC association or other ECA.</p> <p>Employee A. 10 hours training in Special Needs.</p>	<p>written communication is sent home with children under age three and a weekly summary of activities is posted OR sent home with children over age three.</p> <p>Opportunities for 2 parent-teacher conferences; information on community resources provided to families.</p> <p>Five Star Families have opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually.</p> <p>Resources are available to communicate with families in the family's primary language. Activity suggestions are developed with staff and families for children identified with potential delays.</p> <p>The family child care provider has established at least one method to support children and families transitioning into the FCCH and/or transitioning out of the FCCH into another program or kindergarten.</p>	<p>Birth-12 1:9 (no more than 1 child <age 2; no more than 4 children <age 5)</p> <p>Large FCCH: Infants & 1s only 2:8 Birth-5 2:12 (no more than 2 are <age 2) 3s & 4s only 2:12</p> <p>Overall domain weigh 10%</p> <p>ADMINISTRATION</p> <p>One Star Provider meets licensing standards</p> <p>Two Star Written Policies and procedures as well as a Risk Management Plan.</p> <p>Annual Provider-Parent Agreement</p> <p>Job descriptions</p> <p>Substitute Orientation The provider utilizes at least two public relations tools.</p> <p>Three Star Standard Business practices are in place to include financial record-keeping for revenue and expense.</p> <p>The provider utilizes at least four public relations tools.</p> <p>Four Star Annual Budget Marketing Plan Liability insurance</p> <p>There is defined space to conduct the family child care business.</p> <p>Five Star The provider computer, printer, internet access and email</p> <p>Large FCC-Salary and</p>
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		<p>B. 25 hours annual in-service training. Five Star</p> <p>A. Provider has an A.A. or A.S. degree or higher with 18 credits in ECE.</p> <hr/> <p>B. 30 hours annual in-service training.</p> <hr/> <p>C. Provider plays an active role in a family CCA or other EC professional association.</p> <hr/> <p>Employee</p> <p>A. Employee has DCF staff credential</p> <hr/> <p>B. 30 hours annual in-service training.</p>	Benefit structure for employee
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Calculating the Overall Star Quality Rating

The compiled score for each component is multiplied by the "weight" to achieve total points for each component. Points are then summed, and the total point score is placed on a pre-determined range to identify the program's overall Star quality rating.

Bonus Points

Overall Maximum of 3 Bonus Points per provider

- 1 Bonus point will be given if the Provider has a bachelor's degree or higher and at least 18 credits in ECE/CD
- 2 Bonus points will be given if the Provider has a B.S. degree or higher in ECE/CD.

Component	Score	Weight	Max Total Points
Learning Environment (FCCERS-R)	5	X3	15
Professional Qualifications	5	X2	10
Family Engagement	5	X1	5
Program Administration	5	X1	5
Curriculum	5	X1.5	7.5
Developmental Screening	5	X1.5/1	7.5/5
Staff to Child Ratio and Group Size –Local Decision	5	X.5	2.5

Total points	50
Extra Bonus Points (Maximum 3 points)	3
Total Possible Star Rating Points	53

Point range per Star level	
Star Rating	Points
1	4 - 12
2	13 - 24
3	25 - 36
4	37 - 42
5	43 - 50

In addition to supporting and learning from the pilot TQRIS communities, the state of Florida has built important statewide infrastructure over the last three years in preparation for statewide TQRIS implementation, to include developing the following system components.

Early Learning and Developmental Standards

Florida has Early Learning and Developmental Standards for children birth to five-years-old that are researched-based; developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate; aligned to the state's K-12 standards and the national core standards; and appropriate and inclusive for dual language learners (DLLs) and children with disabilities. These standards are the foundation of Florida's early care and education system. See Section (C)(1) for more information on the standards.

The creation and adoption of the integrated standards for birth to age five in 2011 set the stage for the next phase of TQRIS expansion in Florida to align the TQRIS standards to these rigorous expectations of what children should know and be able to do. Through the reforms made possible with RTT-ELC funding, the state's early learning and developmental standards will be a central part of the new TQRIS standards and system. The revised TQRIS standards will each be aligned to the state's Birth to Five Early Learning and Developmental Standards.

Comprehensive Assessment System Capacity

Florida has methodically developed statewide, comprehensive assessment capacity on screening measures, formative assessment strategies, and program assessments of both the learning environment and adult-child interactions:

- *Screening measures:* Florida law requires all children who receive child care subsidies (approximately 236,000/year in FY 2010/2011) are screened at least once annually. After a thorough review of the psychometric qualities of various screening tools and their appropriateness for the diverse population of Florida's children, the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE were selected as the statewide screening tool in 2009. Child care subsidy providers receive both training and materials on the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE. To ensure sustainability, 175 trainers were trained by Brookes Publishing in 2010 to maintain ongoing training capacity. Results of the screenings will be documented in Enterprise (ASQ data system) and interface with PLATINUM (see later in this Section for description of PLATINUM) to inform early learning program delivery.

Screening alone will not ensure Children with High Needs receive necessary support. A priority for state systems development and coordination is to provide a more comprehensive assessment in a timely and thorough manner if screening results indicate concerns about special needs. In 2009, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet identified child screening and assessment as a priority area for coordination across Florida's state agencies serving children. At the request of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, The Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children convened a task force of experts and stakeholders to assess the strengths and challenges of the state's system of child screening and assessment and make recommendations for improved coordination. The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet adopted the recommendations, including the creation of a statewide protocol for child screening and sharing of data across state agencies.

The Office of Early Learning, the statewide Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) and other departments with responsibility for services for children with special needs are currently developing a statewide protocol for child screening by actively building greater coordination with pediatricians, family practitioners, state agencies and entities to improve screening, assessment and delivery access (see Section C for additional detail.)

- *Curriculum and Formative assessments:* Florida law requires child care programs offering child care subsidies implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum (Section 411.01(5)(c)2.a., Florida Statutes. Additionally, all low-performing VPK providers must implement an approved curriculum that is aligned with scientifically based research from the Department of Education's Approved VPK Curricula Packages for Low-Performing Providers. The Department of Education and Florida's Office of Early Learning are collaboratively developing a curriculum review process to ensure approved curricula align to the state's Standards. The offices developed evaluation rubrics and trainings that will begin in November 2011, after the official adoption of the Early Learning and Developmental Standards, anticipated October 18, 2011 through action by The Florida State Board of Education. The curriculum review will be a rolling review in which models are evaluated for their alignment to the Early Learning and Developmental Standards. Providers will continue to have choice in choosing curricula deemed to be aligned to the state-defined learning expectations, as defined by the early

learning standards. Publishers will also maintain the ability to submit curricula and revisions as they occur to maximize provider choice in curriculum selection.

There are similar plans to approve formative assessment systems based on alignment with the newly adopted early learning standards in accordance with Section 411.01(5)(c)2.d., Florida Statutes. Currently, there is a prominence of use of Teaching Strategies GOLD, Galileo, and Work Sampling by early childhood educators across the state. There are promising curriculum training models using communities of practice with High/Scope and Creative Curriculum. This work has increased the fidelity of curriculum implementation and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores in participating programs. The trainings were provided in English and Spanish; extensive materials were developed on the curricula in Spanish to support the professional development needs of Spanish speaking providers and the children they serve, many of whom have been identified as high need. These will be expanded in 2012 through public-private partnerships and complement the RTT-ELC reforms.

- *Program assessment:* In 2010, as part of the Partner's Initiative, providers, early learning coalitions, and governing agencies recognized the significance of teacher child interactions in facilitating optimal child outcomes and agreed to create a more consistent program assessment strategy statewide of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and the CLASS. The Office of Early Learning will contract for statewide assessor training, train-the-trainer instruction and orientation models for these tools by the time RTT-ELC awards are announced. Current assessor capacity is outlined in Section (B)(3).

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications

In the last three years, Florida developed many necessary key elements for a comprehensive early childhood professional development system; these are explained in more detail in Section D:

- *Comprehensive Core Competencies for every role in the field:* Florida has adopted statewide competencies for Early Care and Education (ECE) Practitioners, ECE Directors, Technical Assistance Specialists, Trainers, Career Advisors, and Afterschool Practitioners (see Section (D)(1)).

- *Training and Trainer Registry*: A training and trainer Registry is nearly complete; the system will be available statewide by the end of 2012 (see Section (D)(2)).
- *Trainer/Training Qualifications and Standards*: Comprehensive, evidence-based standards have been adopted statewide and will be used to validate training registered in the training Registry (see Section (D)(2)).
- *Career Pathway*: This whole system, supported by the Florida *Steps to Success* Early Learning Career Pathway, provides both formal and informal routes to increasing knowledge, skills, credentials and degrees (see Appendix (D)(1)-1).
- *Career Pathways Training Modules*: Florida has created 315 hours of training in the core competencies (45 hours in each of the seven areas of the competencies) for early childhood educators. These courses were designed to form the foundation for articulation for credentials or college credits (see Section (D)(1)).
- *Commitment to racial equity*: The University of Florida, which has deep expertise on issues of racial equity, is working closely with OEL and the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) Steering Committee to ensure a strength-based approach to diversity and inclusiveness by including *Leading for Racial Equity* training, a research and outcomes-based model for heightening awareness and skills of professionals (see Section (D)(2)).
- *Scholarships*: Florida invests more than \$3 million annually in TEACH scholarships and TQRIS counties invest an additional \$2.9 million in higher education and training scholarships for early childhood practitioners.
- *Wage Stipends*: The TQRIS counties invest more than \$2.3 million annually in WAGES and similar programs to help attract and retain quality early learning professionals.

Family Engagement Strategies

Florida has a strong commitment to engaging and supporting families, particularly of high need children. Specifically, Florida has invested in a number of strategies that designed to ensure early learning and development programs have additional skills and knowledge to support families. Examples of this commitment include:

- The establishment of a statewide training and technical assistance network targeting specialists in Infant/Toddler, Special Needs, After School and School Readiness.

- Florida's Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect Plan outlines Florida's Office of Early Learning's commitment to incorporating the Five Protective Factors as a foundation for work within Florida's early education and care systems by June 30, 2015.
- Early learning coalitions are conducting specific trainings such as "Communication Skills for Challenging Conversations", "Parents as Partners", "Take 5 minutes for fun" to help increase the skills needed for child care providers to actively engage parents into their programs. Early learning coalitions are also partnering with other organizations such as Head Start to implement a community café focused on building the Five Protective Factors among child care providers, parents and the local community organization.

Cultural Competence

Nationwide, Florida has the third highest Hispanic population and the third highest enrollment of Hispanic students from K-12 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011, <http://pewhispanic.org/states/?stateid=FL>). Similarly, Florida has the largest concentration of Haitians outside of Haiti (The Haitian Times, 2011, <http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/>).

These facts make it a priority to ensure culturally competent and responsive care for children, and a culturally competent and responsive TQRIS. Miami-Dade County, which is larger than 16 states in population and is one of the most diverse communities in the nation, is one of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) pilot projects for the Pathways to Cultural Competence project. Miami-Dade County has the largest TQRIS statewide and is a nationally recognized leader in integrating issues of race, culture and diversity in the standards, professional development of quality improvement staff and overall implementation philosophy.

Health Promotion Practices

Currently, each coalition has determined which health screening practices it implements locally. Some coalitions have focused on vision and hearing while others have focused on dental and even Body Mass Index. As part of RTT-ELC funding to support health promotion the OEL will develop a health screening (Section 411.01(2)(a), Florida Statutes) checklist that will inventory what health services a child has received. Based on the answers to the checklist a provider will be given referral resources to community supports that will help high-needs

children be paired with resources that ensure that basic developmental health services can be accessed.

Effective Data Practices

Florida has invested significantly in its data infrastructure over the last several years and by the end of 2013 will have one of the strongest early childhood data systems in the nation. The primary elements of this system are the Early Learning Data System and PLATINUM (Program Leveraging Assessment Technology through Integrated, Networked, Uniform Measures) (see below for more thorough description of each system). These two systems, the Early Learning Data System as the administrative data system and PLATINUM as the program quality Software as a Service (SaaS) solution, provide complete analysis of the child care subsidy program's system. The proposed development of supplemental data systems and interfaces (i.e., Head Start data system and interface to the Early Learning Data System) will allow for a system-wide, comprehensive approach to data access and analysis.

The Early Learning Data System

The Early Learning Data System is a web-based data system that accesses, manages, stores, and shares programmatic, administrative, financial and outcome data across departments and funding streams (more detail provided in Section (E)(2)). The Early Learning Data System will replace the twenty-year-old distributed information system that currently supports the work of thousands of child care professionals throughout the state. It will be completed in 2013. More than 387,000 children and their families access the information and resources of Florida's early learning programs each year. The development and implementation of the Early Learning Data System means ensuring accountability for an annual budget of approximately \$1 billion and strengthening the state's early learning programs. A feasibility study estimated a cost savings of over \$28 million a year from enhanced efficiencies in program operations through the Early Learning Data System; these saved funds can serve an additional 7,000 children annually with expanded access to child care subsidies.

PLATINUM

PLATINUM is Florida's statewide quality improvement Software as a Service (SaaS) solution for early learning and development programs. After seeing demonstrations of the systems developed by the TQRIS pilot communities in 2009, early learning coalition directors

requested development of a statewide solution. The use of these data solutions are extremely popular with child care businesses as they simplify paperwork, streamline administration and support quality improvement in targeted, effective ways. As part of the State Advisory Council dollars allocated through the Administration for Children and Families, Florida is developing a system for use statewide to support program quality improvement work. With input from coalitions and a detailed examination of the systems used for quality improvement in both Florida and other states, the Office of Early Learning developed a request for proposals for an existing Software as a Service (SaaS) solution that could be implemented statewide; procurement of an existing system will occur by the end of 2011. PLATINUM will be piloted in early 2012 and available statewide by the end of 2012.

PLATINUM will enhance Florida's ability to efficiently capture valid and reliable program assessment data, combined with information from other state and local systems (e.g., licensing, professional development registry) to automatically calculate a program's star rating and create individual program profiles on each center and family child care home. These program profiles will give a summary picture of the key data pieces on the individual program that can be shared with early childhood educators, directors, technical assistance specialists and other local quality improvement teams. All data in PLATINUM also is available in both standardized and customizable reports of statewide, regional or local data.

One of its unique features is that it creates efficiencies relative to the process of quality improvement and effectively measures what best facilitates quality improvement over time. PLATINUM will identify the predictable next steps to meet higher standards. Given the PLATINUM system requirements, programs can use this information to create work plans; this information will then populate an individualized quality improvement plan. All quality investments (training, scholarships, technical assistance, career advising, grants) are documented in PLATINUM and can be used to measure the impact of these investments on program quality over time. Deployed statewide, this will help Florida, local early learning coalitions, and providers determine what investments create quality improvements and how they add value to small businesses.

In 2012 with PLATINUM, Florida will have statewide data available to streamline all areas of program documentation, program assessment, development of quality improvement plans and documentation of progress toward goals to inform future quality improvement

investments and create provider and statewide administrative efficiencies. With RTT-ELC funding Florida can maximize this tool and integrate PLATINUM into its statewide TQRIS, providing a bold new model for maximizing resources. Collectively, PLATINUM and the Early Learning Data System and the high-quality plan outlined in this Section, will enable Florida to expand its existing TQRIS statewide, document its impact and implement a series of leading edge innovations that will be the model for the nation of the next generation of TQRIS for early learning and development programs.

Plans for Transformative Reform

There is statewide commitment from the early learning coalitions, Children's Services Councils, provider groups and leadership at the state level that the TQRIS program standards will include: the Early Learning and Developmental Standards; formative assessment and ongoing anecdotal records; measures of environmental quality using the Environment Rating Scales; measures of adult-child interactions using the CLASS tools; early childhood educator qualifications aligned to the Florida Career Pathway (informal and formal pathways); family engagement strategies; health promotion; and meaningful measures of cultural competence. Throughout Phases II-V of this high-quality plan there will be significant opportunities for provider input and provider association contributions in order to support best business practices. Once the Office has completed the TQRIS Pilot Study it will submit findings to Florida's Governor's Office, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives prior to engaging in the rulemaking process. This will result in significant and sustained opportunity for provider engagement to inform standards and ensure they are supportive of small businesses throughout the period of RTT-ELC funding.

As outlined in the opening summary of Section B, Florida has a five-phase plan for ensuring the TQRIS program standards and levels meaningfully differentiate program quality and are predictive of children's outcomes. The existing tiered program standards created in Phase I (see tables (B)(1)-1a and (B)(1)-1b) will be built upon to include additional key measures strongly correlated to children's outcomes.

In Phase II additional elements (teacher-child interactions, formative assessment, early learning and developmental standards, health promotion) will be factored into the TQRIS. Draft standards for the Pilot Study are provided in tables (B)(1)-1c and (B)(1)-1d.

Table (B)(1)-1C: Draft Program Standards for Pilot Study
Centers

Table (B)(1)-1C: Draft Program Standards for Pilot Study
Centers

Program Standards Elements

1 star = Meets licensing requirements

2 star = meet School Readiness Contract requirements

3 star = Gold Seal Accredited OR meets requirements for 3 star program as outlined below

4 star = Gold Seal Accredited *and* meets 4 star CLASS score requirements OR meets all requirements for 4 star program as outlined below

5 star = Gold Seal Accredited *and* meets 5 star CLASS score requirements OR meets all requirements for 5 star program as outlined below

Standards are cumulative. Requirements for all previous level must also be met.

**** - If a Program is Gold Seal accredited in Florida these requirements will be waived for Star designation*

Integration of ERS TBD in Phase II

STANDARDS, WEIGHTING PER ELEMENT AND CALCULATIONS OF SCORES TO BE FINALIZED IN PHASE II

Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Early Childhood Educator Qualifications**	Family Engagement Strategies**	Other**
<p><i>Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II</i></p> <p>Three Stars</p> <p>100% of staff complete 5 hr. orientation to Florida standards training within 6 months of employment</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p>50% of staff complete 15 hours of standards training on how to use standards to inform assessment, program planning</p> <p>Five Stars</p> <p>100% of staff complete 15</p>	<p><i>Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II</i></p> <p>CLASS</p> <p>Three Stars</p> <p>Director and at least 50% of staff complete training on CLASS and self-study on classrooms using Toddler and PreK CLASS</p> <p><i>CLASS score requirements</i></p> <p>ES: 4.0-4.49</p> <p>CO: 4.0-4.49</p> <p>IS: 3.0-3.49</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p><i>CLASS score requirements</i></p> <p>ES: 4.5-4.99</p> <p>CO: 4.5-4.99</p> <p>IS: 3.5-4.0</p> <p>Five Stars</p> <p><i>CLASS score requirements</i></p> <p>ES: 5.0-5.49</p> <p>CO: 5.0-5.49</p> <p>IS: 4.0-4.49</p>	<p><i>Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II</i></p> <p>Three Stars</p> <p>Director Level I or Level II Florida Director's Credential.</p> <p>100% of Lead Teachers have DCF Staff Credential on file documenting CDA/CDAE or higher education.</p> <p>50% of Assistant Teachers have DCF Staff Credential Recognition or are currently enrolled in a credential program.</p> <p>50% of Assistant Teachers have DCF Staff Credential Recognition or are currently enrolled in a credential program.</p> <p>50% of all teaching staff have 20 hrs of annual in-service training.</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p>Director holds a current Advanced Level Florida Director's Credential.</p> <p>25% of Lead Teachers have an AS in ECE, an AA or higher degree, or 60 credit hrs of college coursework with 18 credits in ECE.</p> <p>75% of Assistant Teachers have a</p>	<p><i>Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II</i></p> <p>Three Stars</p> <p>Family handbook provided to all families.</p> <p>A minimum of three modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families.</p> <p>At least two family involvement activities are provided each year.</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p>All written and verbal communication provided in family's preferred language.</p> <p>Family-teacher conferences held 2x/year to review child's progress and needs and set goals for the child.</p> <p>Score of 40% on Pathways to Cultural Competence Project Teacher and Program checklists</p> <p>Five Stars</p>	<p><i>Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II</i></p> <p>HEALTH PROMOTION PRACTICES TBD in Phase II</p> <p>Two Stars</p> <p>Three Stars</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p>Five Stars</p> <p>STAFF ADMINISTRATION TBD in Phase II</p> <p>Three Stars</p> <p>Risk Management plan Personnel policy manual.</p> <p>Staff meetings are held at least quarterly.</p> <p>Written performance evaluations are completed annually.</p> <p>Four Stars</p> <p>Policies & procedures.</p>

<p>hours of standards training on how to use standards to inform assessment, program planning within 6 months of employment</p>	<p>Developmental Screening** Three Stars ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE screenings completed annually on all children in program; referrals provided if additional assessment needed Four Stars Screening results shared with families; referrals for additional assessment followed up on. Five Stars Screening results shared with families along with suggested activities to do at home.</p> <p>Formative Assessment Three Stars Coalition approved, developmentally appropriate curriculum implemented. Lead Teachers have received a minimum of 6 hrs of training on the implementation of the adopted curriculum. Instructional staff employed for 6 months or more have been trained on the use of the adopted curriculum. Four Stars An approved, online observation-based assessment system for documenting ongoing child observations is in place and used at least 3x/year. Five Stars</p>	<p>HS diploma or GED. 25% have a DCF Staff Credential, with CDA/CDAE or higher education. 50% of all teaching staff complete 25 hrs of annual in-service training. Five Stars Director holds a current Advanced Level Florida Director's Credential and has an AA/AS degree or higher, or 60 credit hrs of college coursework with 18 credits in ECE. 50% of Lead Teachers have an AS in Early Childhood Education, an AA or higher degree, or 60 credit hrs of college coursework with 18 credits in ECE. 100% of Assistant Teachers have a HS diploma or GED. 50% have a DCF Staff Credential, with CDA/CDAE or higher education. 50% of all teaching staff complete 30 hrs of annual in-service training tied to their professional development plan.</p>	<p>Families have the opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually. Score of 60% on Pathways to Cultural Competence Project Teacher and Program checklists</p>	<p>Marketing plan. Written performance evaluations are completed annually and include classroom observation. Five Stars A salary scale is in place and is differentiated by education and experience. Financial record-keeping system. Written performance evaluations are completed annually, and include a classroom observation and professional development plan.</p>
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	Regular observation guides differentiated program planning and providing results to families with recommendations for activities to do at home.			
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Table (B)(1)-1d

<p align="center">Table (B)(1)-1D: Draft Program Standards for Pilot Study <i>Family Child Care Homes</i> Program Standards Elements 1 star = Meets licensing requirements 2 star = meet School Readiness Contract requirements 3 star = Gold Seal Accredited OR meets requirements for 3 star program as outlined below 4 star = Gold Seal Accredited <i>and</i> meets 4 star CLASS score requirements OR meets all requirements for 4 star program as outlined below 5 star = Gold Seal Accredited <i>and</i> meets 5 star CLASS score requirements OR meets all requirements for 5 star program as outlined below Standards are cumulative. Requirements for all previous level must also be met.</p> <p align="center">** - if a Program is Gold Seal accredited in Florida these requirements will be waived for Star designation STANDARDS, WEIGHTING PER ELEMENT AND CALCULATIONS OF SCORES TO BE FINALIZED IN PHASE II</p>				
Program Standards Elements				
Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified Workforce	Family Engagement	Other
Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II	Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II	Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II	Overall domain weight TBD in Phase II	Health TBD in Phase II
Three Stars	FCCERS-R or CLASS TBD in Phase II	Staff Qualifications- Professional Development	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	Three Star
5 hr. orientation training on Florida standards completed within 6 months of opening home	Three Star	Three Star	Three Star	Four Star
Four Stars	Score of 4.0 – 4.49	Provider has completed DCF Staff Credential or higher.	Two methods of communication with families including the following:	Five Star
10 hours of standards training on how to use standards to inform observations, program planning	Score of 4.5 – 5.49	Completed Second Helping or 3 college credit hr course.	-Individualized daily written communication is sent home with children under age three.	NAFCC Accredited
Five Stars	Five Star	20 hours annual in-service training.	-A weekly summary of activities is posted OR sent home with	ADMINISTRATION
	NAFCC Accredited	Substitute has 4 hours annual in-service.		Three Star
	DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING	Four Star		Written Policies and procedures as well as a Risk Management Plan.
	Three Star	Provider has a DCF Staff Credential* or higher and 9 college credits in ECE.		Annual Provider-Parent Agreement
	ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE is completed on all children enrolled in	25 hours annual in-service training.		Job descriptions
		Provider is a current member of a		Substitute Orientation

NAFCC Accredited	<p>program. The provider gives written information to all parents regarding developmental milestones.</p> <p>The provider has completed a minimum of 3 hrs of training on working with children with special needs. Referrals for further assessment provided if special needs suspected.</p> <p>Five Star NAFCC accredited</p>	<p>family child care association or other early childhood professional association.</p> <p>Substitute has 6 hours annual in-service.</p> <p>Five Star NAFCC Accredited</p> <p>Large FCCH</p> <p>Three Star Provider has 6 college credits in ECE</p> <p>10 hours training in Special Needs. 20 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Employee Employee has H.S. diploma or G.E.D.</p> <p>20 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Four Star Provider has 12 college credits in ECE</p> <p>25 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Join a FCC association or other ECA.</p> <p>Employee 10 hours training in Special Needs. 25 hours annual in-service training.</p> <p>Five Star NAFCC Accredited</p>	<p>children over age three.</p> <p>A family meeting/social event/workshop is offered once per year.</p> <p>At least 2 family activities per year provided and 1 parent-teacher conference.</p> <p>Resources and materials in family's preferred language.</p> <p>Four Star</p> <p>Three methods of communicating with families including the following: Individualized daily written communication is sent home with children under age three and a weekly summary of activities is posted OR sent home with children over age three.</p> <p>Opportunities for 2 parent-teacher conferences; information on community resources provided to families.</p> <p>Five Star NAFCC Accredited</p>	<p>Standard Business practices are in place to include financial record-keeping for revenue and expense.</p> <p>The provider utilizes at least four public relations tools.</p> <p>Four Star Annual Budget Marketing Plan Liability insurance</p> <p>There is defined space to conduct the family child care business.</p> <p>The provider computer, printer, internet access and email</p> <p>Large FCC-Salary and Benefit structure for employee</p> <p>Five Star NAFCC Accredited</p>
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In Phase II (see timeline in opening Summary of Section B) these program standards, levels and points per section will be refined and finalized within the first seven months of RTT-ELC funding using results from research, best practices in field, statewide input from early childhood educators and the existing standards in place in Florida's Gold Seal Quality Care programs and pilot TQRIS. State and national experts with expertise in psychometrics and program quality and child outcomes will work together to define the quality tiers for the Pilot Study (Phase III) and Validation Study (Phase IV), refine the standards and the tiers as needed to determine the final tiered program standards for TQRIS (see Section (B)(5)(a) and (b) for description of Pilot and Validation studies). Completing these standards is a central part of Phase II (see timeline Summary at beginning of Section B) of statewide TQRIS implementation and will be completed within the first seven months of RTT-ELC funding.

In addition to the tentative new TQRIS standards and levels, important reforms will be made possible with RTT-ELC funding related to integrating the early learning and developmental standards, a comprehensive assessment system and effective data practices that are outlined below.

Early Learning and Developmental Standards

Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards which will be codified through formal rulemaking enabled by Section 411.01(4)(d)8., Florida Statutes, will continue to serve as the foundation of all of the state's programmatic standards, ensuring consistent alignment to learning expectations, and will be integrated into TQRIS to increase use of the standards. In this high-quality plan, we will provide Early Learning and Developmental Standards training across the state to all categories of programs, child care subsidy, VPK, Head Start, and private non-subsidy programs (see Section C). Since the Head Start program aligned program expectations to a separate, but related set of standards, tools for the Head Start community will be developed through RTT-ELC funding to assist in compliance of the state's early learning and developmental standards.

When the state approaches a revision of its early learning and developmental standards in 2014, it will convene a multi-disciplinary, multi-programmatic team of early childhood education experts to refine the standards using the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework in the design. Before, standards were developed independent of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. In this high-quality plan we will start with the existing standards, the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and updated research all together to streamline revisions. For more detail regarding the state's quality plan for early learning and developmental standards, see Section C.

Formative Assessment

As outlined above, Florida is developing a system to approve formative assessment systems (Section 411.01(5)(c)2.d., Florida Statutes). The purpose for utilizing a curriculum aligned with scientifically-based research and ongoing assessments is two folded: 1) to create a system of accountability that can report information about children's outcomes, and 2) to identify areas of achievement and improvement to assure the quality of the preschool experience for all children. When early learning programs share this information with the QRIS, support can be

provided to early learning programs for improvement.¹ To provide valuable, reliable findings, anecdotal assessments must be standardized or must utilize consistent evaluation and data-collection methodologies across programs and localities. These assessments must involve all students, including Children with High Needs, English language learners and children with disabilities, and must be appropriate for measuring gains across diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ability levels.² A curriculum aligned with scientifically-based research with an ongoing assessment companion provides tools for practitioners to plan and guide instruction, and for QRIS to follow processes of accountability and quality assurance.³ With these tools practitioners can collect data over a variety of contexts and over time to gain a more valid and reliable picture of what children know and can do.⁴

Formative assessment models that include the state's early learning and developmental standards and data reporting capabilities will be approved by the state for early childhood educators to inform instruction throughout the year. This standardization of formative assessment expectations and data reporting allows for concurrent validation of assessment models in real time (see Section C for fuller description). This level of scientific rigor will allow all programs in the state to have feedback on the most effective formative assessment approaches.

A Comprehensive Assessment System: Screening Measures

Nearly half of children with special needs are not diagnosed prior to school entry, which means they miss important early intervention opportunities.⁵ Consistent screening as required by Section 411.01(5)(c)2.c., Florida Statutes, using reliable tools can identify children who need further assessment. Building on existing ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE screening capacity, all children in

¹ Tout, K., Starr, R., Soli, M., Moodie, S., Kirby, G., & Boller, K. (2010). *Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations*. Child Trends & Mathematica Policy Research. Retrieved on 10/19/2010 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_quality/compendium_qrs/qrs_compendium_final.pdf

² National Research Council. (2008). *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How*. Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, C.E. Snow and S.B. Van Hemel, *Editors*. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

³ Tout, K., Starr, R., Soli, M., Moodie, S., Kirby, G., & Boller, K. (2010). *Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations*. Child Trends & Mathematica Policy Research. Retrieved on 10/19/2010 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_quality/compendium_qrs/qrs_compendium_final.pdf

⁴ National Research Council. (2008). *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How*. Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, C.E. Snow and S.B. Van Hemel, *Editors*. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

⁵ Glascoe, F. P. (2000). Evidence-based approach to developmental and behavioural surveillance using parents' concerns *Child: Care, Health and Development*. Volume 26, Issue 2, pages 137–149, March 2000.

TQRIS programs will be screened annually using these screening tools. The way screening and referral will be integrated into the updated TQRIS standards is outlined in tables (B)(1)-1c and -1d. The child care subsidy program has already adopted ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE into practice. Early learning coalitions will offer regular screening tool trainings and follow up support for programs requesting technical assistance with the new tools. ASQ materials and training will be made available and programs will be encouraged to use these tools for statewide consistency. In addition to the statewide, cross-program adoption of these tools, Florida will expand statewide the use of the Enterprise solution, an online data system developed for the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE, so that consistent reporting of screening data are provided and interfaced with other data systems.

RTT-ELC funding will reduce the time between a child's screening and the need for further assessment and intervention. New collaborations and partnerships will ensure that children receive early intervention services to remedy their delay. Streamlined data sharing with Part B and Part C will eliminate system failure delays and allow for sharing of profiles of children (with parental permission) to render services more efficiently and effectively. See Section (C)(2) for more details.

A Comprehensive Assessment System: Measures of Environmental Quality

Other studies show, a positive association between ECERS scores and children's language and communication skills,^{6 7} reading, cognitive development and math scores.⁸ Using ECERS, a stronger relationship was found between child care quality and children's academic, language, and social development on items focusing on instruction and interactions.⁹ More information on the ERS is provided in Section (B)(3).

6 Burchinal, M. R., Peisner-Feinberg, E., Bryant, D. M., & Clifford, R. (2000). Children's social and cognitive development and child-care quality: Testing for differential associations related to poverty, gender, or ethnicity. *Applied Developmental Science, 4*, 149-165.

7 Burchinal, M. R., Roberts, J. E., Nabors, L. A., & Bryant, D. M. (1996). Quality of center child care and infant cognitive and language development. *Child Development, 67*, 606-620.

8 Burchinal, M. R., Peisner-Feinberg, E., Bryant, D. M., & Clifford, R. (2000). Children's social and cognitive development and child-care quality: Testing for differential associations related to poverty, gender, or ethnicity. *Applied Developmental Science, 4*, 149-165

9 Burchinal, M. R., Kainz, K., Tout, K., Zaslow, M., Martinez-Beck, I., et al. (2009). Early care and education quality and child outcomes. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation Research-to-Policy Brief #1.

A Comprehensive Assessment System: Measures of Adult-Child Interactions

Numerous large-scale studies have shown that the quality of teacher-child interactions has a predictive effect on children's social competence and level of behavior problems as well as language, reading and math skills. These effects are particularly strong for low-income children.^{10 11} More information on the CLASS is provided in Section (B)(3).

Family Engagement

Longitudinal research shows that through high school, family involvement contributes to positive results for students.^{12 13 14 15 16} Early childhood is a uniquely effective time to engage families; when strengthened it can have a predictive effect on children's academic achievement and social development.¹⁷ Particularly for high need children, parent participation in early learning programs (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, extended program visits, helping with program activities) and regular communication between families and teachers are positively associated with children's language, self-help, social, motor, adaptive, and basic school skills.¹⁸ Florida will enhance and validate its family engagement TQRIS standards to ensure they positively relate to children's outcomes.

10 Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R., & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between

child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(2), 166–176.

11 Curby, T. W., LoCasale-Crouch, J., Konold, T. R., Pianta, R. C., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., et al.

(2009). The Relations of Observed Pre-K Classroom Quality Profiles to Children's Achievement and

Social Competence. *Early Education & Development*, 20(2), 346–372.

12 Catsambis, S. (2001) Expanding knowledge of parental involvement in children's secondary education: Connections with high school seniors' academic success. *Social Psychology of Education*, 5, 149-177.

13 Epstein, J. L. & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 95, 308-318. Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; *Reflecting on the Homework Ritual: Assignments and Designs. Theory Into Practice - Volume 43, Number 3, Summer 2004, pp. 205-212.*

14 Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2005a). Involvement counts: Family and community partnerships and math achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 98, 196-206.

15 Sheldon, S. B & Epstein, J. L. (2005b). School programs of family and community involvement to support children's reading and literacy development across the grades. In J. Flood and P. Anders (Eds.), *Literacy Development of Students in Urban Schools: Research and Policy* (pp. 107-138). Newark, DE: International Reading Association (IRA).

16 Harvard Family Research Project: Family Involvement that Makes a Difference. Spring 2006

17 Harvard Family Research Project: Family Involvement that Makes a Difference. Spring 2006.

18 Marcon, R. (1999). Positive relationships between parent school involvement and public school inner-city preschoolers' development and academic performance. *School Psychology Review*, 28(3), 395–412.

Cultural Competence

Florida is committed to culturally responsive care for children and a culturally responsive TQRIS. While there is philosophical consensus that culturally responsive care and systems matter for children, there is little research evidence on this topic.¹⁹ Culturally responsive care should be embedded in the standards for TQRIS to ensure the systems are best serving families and communities,²⁰ yet there are nearly no rigorous research or guidance on this topic for state systems.²¹ Building from the Culturally Competent Pathways project with NAEYC, guidance and feedback of national experts, local experience, and feedback from providers and families, Florida will ensure that TQRIS meets the needs of all children, families and providers. These standards, levels and quality improvement incentives will be validated through the Pilot and Validation studies, helping to fill a critical gap in the early learning and development field and improving early learning programs diverse children, families and providers experience.

Effective Data Practices

The TQRIS will be supported by the Early Learning Data System and PLATINUM (see earlier information in this Section for full descriptions of the Early Learning Data System and PLATINUM). RTT-ELC funding will expand the data interfaces and data sharing agreements with other state agencies and partners for integration with the Early Learning Data System. All early learning and development programs will have access to PLATINUM through RTT-ELC funds. Most critically, the data in PLATINUM will interface with both the Early Learning Data System and the Florida Department of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data Warehouse (see Section E) transforming Florida's ability to link early learning data with the Prek-12 system to longitudinally assess program and child data.

Funding will enable fuller automation of the TQRIS: enrollment, applications for supports, applications for Pell Grants and other publicly available higher education grants, and scholarships for to access information, and support to improve program quality. Through the

19 Zaslow, M., Martinez-Beck, I., Tout, K., & Halle, T. (2011) *Quality Measurement in Early Childhood Settings*. Brookes Publishing: Washington, D. C.

20 Bruner, C., Ray, A., Stover-Wright, M., & Copeman, A. (2009) *Quality rating improvement systems for a multi-ethnic society*. www.buildinitiative.org/files/QRIS-Policy%20Brief.pdf.

21 Zaslow, M., Martinez-Beck, I., Tout, K., & Halle, T. (2011) *Quality Measurement in Early Childhood Settings*. Brookes Publishing: Washington, D. C.

implementation of the Early Learning Data System, providers in Florida will be able to complete all documentation and paperwork online for VPK and other publicly funded programs streamlining record keeping and paperwork. Support will be provided to programs without this capability (see Section (B)(4)(a). This funding also will increase system usability by allowing early learning coalitions to customize fields and enter local program data which is key to serving children with high needs and their families.

RTT-ELC funding will increase system usability by allowing early learning coalitions to customize fields and enter local program data which is key to serving children with high needs and their families.

PLATINUM's early childhood educator portal helps programs to manage their own quality improvement work. PLATINUM will feature both Spanish and English languages make sure all early childhood educators benefit from strong program improvement resources. This ensures businesses have more autonomy to design and manage their own quality improvement work and have tools available to them to do this in an efficient and targeted way that will directly impact their program. Early childhood educator training will occur in Phase III (September 2012). To encourage usage; one of the benefits of accessing PLATINUM will be access to the Shared Services Florida website and gain access to valuable program management tools and cost savings (see Section (B)(4)(a) for more information on this incentive).

(B)(1)(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children

Florida's existing Gold Seal Quality Care programs and tiered program standards are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards (see tables (B)(1)-1a and (B)(1)-1b). RTT-ELC funding will allow for:

- Increasing the number of gold seal quality child care programs.
- Enhancing existing standards to include adult-child interactions, health promotion and a more authentic reflection of meaningful standards related to cultural diversity (see draft standards for Pilot Study at tables (B)(1)-1c and (B)(1)-1d).
- Rigorously evaluating the enhanced standards through an independent Pilot Study and independent Validation Study (see Section (B)(5)).

Current Status

The existing TQRIS program standards included in Tables (B)(1)-1a and (B)(1)-1b). To date there have been no validation studies of these standards or quality levels. While there is evidence that many of the elements of these standards improve children's outcomes, no data exists to evaluate the relationship between the standards and levels and children outcomes.

Plans for Transformative Reform

This foundation, combined with research and best practices nationally, will inform the standards that will be taken statewide for the TQRIS Pilot Study in Phase III (see timeline in opening Summary of Section B); preliminary standards for the Pilot Study are provided in Tables (B)(1)-1c and (B)(1)-1d in the previous Section.

Florida plans to create the nation's most comprehensive and rigorously evaluated TQRIS. The standards will be more comprehensive than any existing standards in their assessment of the multiple domains that impact children's outcomes, to include health, culture and family engagement. As outlined in Section (B)(5), Florida will complete large-scale Pilot and Validation Studies to ensure the standards are meaningfully tied to children's outcomes and that they differentiate program quality.

The Phase III Pilot Study will assess the standards, cut points and any impacts on child outcomes. These findings will be used to inform the refinement of the TQRIS standards and levels, which will then be empirically tested through a broader Validation Study. This Validation Study will be completed in Phase IV to empirically validate that the standards are appropriate, the levels meaningfully differentiate program quality and higher levels are related to improved child outcomes. From these results the TQRIS standards will be finalized through formal rule promulgation for statewide implementation in 2015.

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will dedicate significant funding toward increasing the number of Gold Seal child care programs in the state. Funding will be available to assist with accreditation fees, technical assistance to ensure programs will be successful at achieving accreditation, scholarships for training and other professional development improvements and grants to materials to enhance the physical environment of the early learning and development programs. All programs that receive this support will also receive training on the CLASS tools, have access to the Teachstone video library and receive access to the shared services website (see Section (B)(4)(a)); these resources will be designed to support their businesses and provide

new resources to enhance adult-child interactions in a way that will improve the outcomes of children, particularly Children with High Needs.

(B)(1)(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs

The state child care licensing standards will serve as the foundation for Florida's TQRIS. Florida's child care licensing has some of the strongest oversight in the nation, ranked 2nd by NACCRRRA's annual report on child care licensing and oversight, but on standards the state was ranked 28th.²² On August 31, 2010, Department of Children and Families (DCF) then Secretary George H. Sheldon designated a Work Group to carefully examine child care standards and identify areas which can and must be improved and strengthened to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which the children of the State of Florida can grow and thrive. As a result this work group identified areas for improvement to include licensure requirements (See Appendix (D)(1)-4). Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will revisit the recommendations of the Child Care and Improvements Work Group to determine what improvements can be made to the system within existing legislative authority in an effort to accomplish the following:

- Strengthen basic licensing standards.
- Streamline oversight and monitoring to create efficiencies for schools and child care businesses and ensure they operate with consistent and streamlined regulation.
- Help programs move through a system of continuous quality improvement through incentives, accountability and supports.

Current Status

This agreement to build TQRIS from licensing standards is widespread. Among other evidence, it was agreed upon in a series of recommendations created in 2010 to strengthen the state's licensing recommendations by the Child Care Standards and Improvements Workgroup with stakeholder representation of child development experts, early learning coalitions, Children Service's Councils, providers, and governing agencies.

²² National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (2011). We Can Do Better: 2011 Update: NACCRRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulation and Oversight. Available: http://www.nacerra.org/publications/nacerra-publications/publications/Alabama_Mississippi_0315111.pdf

Plans for Transformative Reform

Florida will continue to build from licensing through TQRIS. These basic standards will be strengthened by determining the status of and means to improve staff training requirements and testing procedures (Section 402.305, (2)(d)8., Florida Statutes) and looking at key predictive indicators a child care facility must meet in order to provide quality care and programming.

All programs that meet licensing requirements will automatically become a 1 Star program in the improved TQRIS. Programs that meet eligibility requirements for any publically funded programs would receive a 2 Star designation. Programs that have attained Gold Seal Accreditation in accordance with Section 402.281, Florida Statutes will receive a 3 star designation. Programs that have attained Gold Seal Accreditation in accordance with Section 402.281, Florida Statutes and have completed a CLASS assessment with a minimum score of 4.5 for the emotional support and classroom organization subscales and a 3.5 on the instructional support subscale will receive a 4 star designation. Finally, programs that have attained Gold Seal Accreditation in accordance with Section 402.281, Florida Statutes and have completed a CLASS assessment with a minimum score of 5 for the emotional support and classroom organization subscales and a 4 on the instructional support subscale will receive a 5 star designation. If a provider has not received a Gold Seal Quality Care Designation the star ratings would be based on the continuous program improvement system as preliminarily outlined in tables (B)(1)-1c and (B)(1)-1d.

Currently the state conducts child care licensing inspections three times a year for child care facilities and two times a year for family child care homes. These inspections are based on established frequencies and are not usually triggered by any one event.

In an effort to look at administrative efficiencies and building on the recommendations of the Work Group, the child care program office at DCF, OEL and the early learning coalitions will work together to identify areas where streamlining of oversight and inspections can occur. This would help ensure that DCF and coalitions are maximizing resources to ensure that children are being cared for in healthy, safe and high quality environments.

Florida is committed to developing strategies to support child care businesses. Through the RTT-ELC funding, the Pilot and the Validation Studies the state will ensure early learning and development programs have consistent regulations and do not receive conflicting advice or operate under conflicting regulations. Based on issues identified by the stakeholder group and

assessed through the Pilot and Validation Studies the Office will utilize this information to help inform the TQRIS standards that will be codified through formal rulemaking. The goal of this work will be to clarify regulatory guidance for providers and ensure they do not operate with conflicting guidance. By providing consistent expectations and eliminating conflicting guidance for providers, oversight will be streamlined.

(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State’s CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (*e.g.*, maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components

reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (B)(2)(c).

(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement

System

Florida will maximize participation in TQRIS by taking the system statewide and making it available to include all legally operating program types starting in 2015. To prepare providers for this, we will offer comprehensive early childhood educator campaign that includes web-based resources, summaries of the standards, standardized training (available in multiple languages throughout 2014) for differing early learning and development program types.

(B)(2)(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- All legally operating early learning and development program types in Florida will participate in the validated TQRIS by 2015
- Fully preparing early childhood educators for statewide implementation of TQRIS.

Current Status

Existing Phase I TQRIS projects are voluntary. While they include good representation from all early learning and development program types in the state, they may not represent the various early learning and development program types in any community.

Plans for Transformative Reform

With RTT-ELC funding, more than 10,000 early learning and development programs assessed by 2015 with the validated TQRIS standards. We will launch a statewide outreach and education campaign for programs that offer care to subsidized children and Children with High Needs in years 2 and 3 of this grant including: presentations at conferences, information sharing at all trainings, opportunities to review and provide feedback to the proposed standards and

levels, incentives such as scholarships and other professional development support (see Section D), business operations support through shared services website and PLATINUM (see Section B(4)(a)) and CLASS and ERS training (see Section (B)(3)(a)).

Early learning coalitions will be funded to provide these supports and complete the program assessments in year 4 of the RTT-ELC grant with strategic capacity building throughout the four grant years.

Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from State's CCDF program

During the 2010 fiscal year, more than 236,000 children received child care subsidies (called School Readiness Funding) and were served in 6,560 centers, 3,049 family child care homes and 966 public schools and 819 religious-exempt programs. A total of \$637 million is invested in child care subsidies annually; this includes \$494 million in federal CCDBG and TANF funds and \$143 million in state funding. Receipt of RTT-ELC funding will enable Florida to require programs receiving child care subsidies participate in TQRIS; this represents 75% of all centers and 55% of all family child care homes.

State funded preschool programs

Florida has one of three universal, VPK programs and nationally has the highest number of children enrolled of any pre-K program and the highest percentage of eligible children enrolled. In November 2002, Florida's voters passed a constitutional amendment to offer free, VPK programs to every 4 year old in the state. In 2010-2011 157,072 4 year olds, or about 76.2 percent of the eligible population, now participate in this program, with an appropriation of \$404,372,806.

While Florida has a solid foundation, enhancements to the current model would help Florida continue to deliver a high-quality preschool education. A total of 74% of VPK providers also receive child care subsidies, and will therefore be some of the first to participate in the state's TQRIS.

Early Head Start and Head Start programs

Federal Head Start funding supports 37,245 children ages 3-5 and Early Head Start funding supports 5,248 children ages birth to age 3. These children are served in diverse settings, including 717 center-based Head Start funded programs, 225 center-based Early Head Start programs, 281 family child care homes and 775 home-based programs. Additionally, 285

pregnant women are served by 39 Head Start and 31 Early Head Start grantees. All Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the state have agreed to participate in TQRIS as it is expanded statewide in 2015.

Early Learning and Development Programs under Section 619 of Part B of IDEA and Part C of IDEA

Developing a system that ensures children with special needs attend high-quality early learning programs is a priority for Florida's RTT-ELC application. With RTT-ELC funding and support, new partnerships will be developed with the Department of Education, Local Education Agencies (LEA) and early learning coalitions for Part B and with the Department of Health, Early Steps entities and early learning coalitions for Part C. Any time a child has an education plan tailored to his or her specific needs that includes placement in, or early intervention services delivered in a highly-rated program. Our goal is to have all children with special needs served by 4 and 5 star programs. If the family would like to use a program that is not currently 4 or 5 star program, a partnership will be developed between the early learning coalition and the program to support quality improvements. PLATINUM and the Early Learning Data System (see Section (B)(1)(a)) will support these referrals and to help families and children with special needs.

Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA

In many parts of the state there are already precedents for school district-based programs to participate in TQRIS. DOE has committed to reach out to school districts implementing early childhood programs funded through Title I to encourage their participation in TQRIS.

Other Early Learning and Development Programs

For the TQRIS expansion that will take place during RTT-ELC funding, other early learning and development programs can choose to participate in TQRIS. Priority for assessment will be based on programs serving the highest proportion of Children with High Needs.

(B)(2)(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the support of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Implement a more effective targeted program support system to ensure families that have Children with High Needs can access high-quality programs at no increased cost.
- Map supply, quality and resources and target supports to improve access to quality programs for High Need children.

Current Status

Florida provides child care subsidies to more than 236,000 children statewide. These subsidies are paid at 73% of the market rate. Providers that have made up front investments in quality qualify for higher subsidy reimbursement (up to 20%) if they have a Gold Seal Quality Care Designation.

Plans for Transformative Reform

Through the Gold Seal Quality Care Program, Florida will implement a more effective tiered reimbursement system that will both provide a ladder to quality improvement for providers, better supporting their small businesses, while also enabling more families to afford better quality care without having that cost passed on to them. See Section (B)(4)(a).

The searchable website and smart-phone apps outlined in Section (B)(3)(b) will enable Florida to create geo-coded maps that show the total supply of early learning and development programs in each community.

For planning purposes, we will then overlay the supply of care by Star-rating and/or Gold Seal Quality Care Programs; with the availability of funding (to include child care subsidies, VPK, Head Start/EHS funding, local tax levy funding through Children’s Services Councils, other local funding as appropriate); and data regarding High Need children and families. This will help leadership in local communities and at the state level identify areas where the need is greatest but where the supply of high-quality programs is lacking and/or subsidy funds are in short supply. Using this information, we will target resources strategically to programs in these areas. Strategies may include:

- Targeting supports, financial bonuses and other incentives aimed at increasing the supply of higher star-rated programs in these areas (see Section (B)(4)(b));
- Using private funding, seeding the development of Shared Service Alliances in these areas – via a statewide request for proposals aimed at finding Hub agencies with a proven track record of providing high-quality child development services to Children with High

Needs and that are willing to expand these services in targeted communities in which there is a large proportion of Children with High Needs using a shared services approach; based on successful, self-sustaining (within three years) alliances.

- Developing training for technical assistance providers and other intermediary agencies to strengthen their capacity to improve program quality in areas where many Children with High Needs live. Special emphasis will be placed on addressing issues of race, culture, diversity and isolation.

Strategies will be developed based on needs and available resources. Active state and local monitoring of capacity and provider type will ensure full parental choice.

(B)(2)(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Implement a statewide TQRIS that includes all legally operating early learning and development program types in Florida.

Current Status

The baseline and annual targets for expanding participation in Florida’s TQRIS is outlined in the chart below.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	# of programs in the state	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets – Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target – end of calendar year 2012		Target – end of calendar year 2013		Target – end of calendar year 2014		Target – end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool	6,249	852	17	1,562	25	2,312	37	3,125	50	4624	74

Specify:											
Early Head Start and Head Start	1,223	137	11	306	25	612	50	917	75	1,223	100
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	16 Local Entities (LES) ²³	64		100		200		300		400	
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B section 619	67 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) ²⁴	132		200		300		400		500	
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	2,978	80	3	100	3	150	5	225	8	300	10
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	9,609	1,324	14	1,950	20	2,460	27	3,843	40	9,609	100

Baseline numbers are actual and were gathered through a self-report survey of the TQRIS pilot site directors. Part C is operated by 16 local entities (LES) working independently in early learning programs. Part B is operated by 67 local education authorities (LEAs). Projections were estimated based on current data on program quality and experience to date expanding access to TQRIS and completing CLASS assessments on a representative group of providers in small-scale pilots. Participation in 2015 based on current number of programs that receive child care subsidies and other public funding.

²³ Florida’s Early Steps Program ensures services are provided to eligible infants and toddlers and their families in accordance with Part C of IDEA through contract with 16 local entities. Through contract each local entity services are delivered to children in “natural context” in early learning programs and schools. *Florida Part C Performance Plan 2005-2013.*

²⁴ Florida’s Part B IDEA program is administered through classrooms within school across Florida’s 67 Local Education Authorities. *Florida Department of Education*

Plans for Transformative Reform

Florida will expand a strengthened TQRIS in Phase V of RTT-ELC funding to include all early learning and development program types. Starting in 2015, all programs that receive child care subsidy funds will be able to participate; assessments will be prioritized based on number of high-need children served. This includes 6,560 centers, 3,049 family child care homes and 966 school-based programs serving approximately 236,000 high-need children. To ensure the needs of high-need children are met, all Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the state have also committed to participate starting in 2015.

Other programs that choose to participate may elect to do so after initial on-boarding of programs that receive child care subsidy funds.

(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs. (15 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (*e.g.*, displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs

Florida has a high-quality plan to build on its existing TQRIS. As outlined below, Florida has been a leader in ensuring ERS and CLASS tools and training are available in Spanish to make certain early childhood educators whose preferred language is Spanish, can access quality improvement tools and resources.

(B)(3)(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring, having trained, reliable monitors, and monitoring programs with appropriate frequency

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Integrate existing validated tools using reliable assessors into TQRIS' standards.
- Train additional assessors in areas of the state where capacity is not currently sufficient.
- Implement effective reliability practices to ensure assessments are all reliable and of high-quality.
- Assess programs at an appropriate frequency.

Current Status

Florida has significant reliable assessor capacity on the two validated tools necessary to implement TQRIS statewide.

- *Environment Rating Scales (ERS)*: Twenty-one of the 31 local early learning coalitions already actively use the ERS and possess significant early childhood educator and assessor capacity; coalitions complete over 2,900 ERS assessments annually as part of child care subsidy contracts (this is in addition to the TQRIS assessments completed annually). These coalitions have access to at least 122 reliable assessors whom they work with regularly.
- *CLASS assessments*: All of the Head Start grantees are actively using the CLASS to inform program improvement and professional development strategies; collectively they have over 200 reliable pre-K CLASS assessors. Further, 28 of the 31 coalitions have agreed to implement the Pre-K CLASS starting in the spring of 2012 and the toddler CLASS when it is available. Many of the TQRIS projects in the state were already moving toward a model of incorporating the CLASS in the TQRIS and at least 15 assessors are already trained and reliable.

Plans for Transformative Reform

The core of the state's TQRIS will be the CLASS tools, the ERS, validated formative assessment tools and information that will include family engagement, cultural competence, health and workforce data (validated as part of the Pilot and Validation studies (see (B)(5))). The strategies for creating and sustaining assessor capacity are outlined in the description of each tool; the assessors reliable on the CLASS and ERS will form the state's cadre of TQRIS assessors for 2015. Assessors will have reliability checked and provided with additional training/mentoring as needed to achieve and sustain reliability; all assessors who provide assessments for the statewide rating in 2015 must achieve and sustain reliability for at least three months prior to the end of 2014. All assessors who complete TQRIS assessments will also be trained in PLATINUM in 2014 (as noted in Section (B)(3)(a); providers will start receiving training on PLATINUM at the end of 2012 so they are familiar with the system prior to 2015.

Programs in TQRIS will be assessed every 24-48 months, depending on program quality or unique circumstances (e.g., director leaving, number of violations, etc.). The timeline and triggers for reassessment are outlined at the end of Section (B)(3)(a).

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

Florida will use both CLASS tools: Pre-K CLASS (for children 36-60 months) and the toddler CLASS (for children 15-36 months) when it is published. The CLASS has proven validity and reliability.^{25 26}

Given its strong commitment to Dual Language Learners and providers who speak Spanish as their first language, Florida has also been a leader in ensuring CLASS materials are available in Spanish. The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation has translated the following CLASS tools into Spanish: Looking at CLASSrooms, Teachstone's online, self-paced professional development program and the on-line introduction to the CLASS; funding was provided to shoot original video in Spanish, video scripting in Spanish for sections with voice overs, translating, Spanish narration and written material translation. A total of \$100,000 in free

²⁵ La Paro, K. M., Pianta, R. C., Stuhiman, M. (2004). The Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Findings from the prekindergarten year. *The Elementary School Journal* Volume 104, Number 5, 404-426.

²⁶ Ritchie, S., Howes, C., Kraft-Sayre, M., & Weister, B. (2001). *Emerging Academics Snapshot*. Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles.

subscriptions to the Spanish speaking materials will be available free of charge to providers in Florida to support their use of the CLASS.

Prior to the RTT-ELC announcement, Florida procured train-the-trainer instruction to significantly build its CLASS assessor capacity. By the end of 2012, there will be dozens of additional CLASS assessor trainers available in Florida. In turn these trainers will train 150 CLASS assessors throughout the state in 2013.

Through its existing contract with Teachstone, Florida already developed CLASS reliability protocol to test for reliability independently online after training. Reliability testing must be completed within two weeks of training. Testing involves watching and accurately coding five master-coded video segments. To pass, trainees need to score within 1 point of the master code on 80% of all codes given and demonstrate the ability to code reliably across all ten CLASS dimensions. Trainees have three opportunities to pass the reliability test; typically, approximately 80% of trainees pass within these three opportunities. Teachstone will provide support to those trainees who do not meet minimum reliability standards after the first and second testing opportunities. This support may include phone calls, webinars and score analysis.

After CLASS Observation Training and Certification, those who pass the CLASS Reliability Test are certified for one year to use the CLASS tool to observe and code in classrooms. All CLASS observers must recertify annually. Teachstone will provide calibration services to support accurate use of the CLASS tool. Each quarter, CLASS observers will have access to the Teachstone calibration system, which allows observers to watch and code a master-coded classroom video. Teachstone will provide calibration videos four times a year. In addition, Teachstone Quality Assurance staff will provide quarterly calibration webinars for observers who need support.

Florida has developed a formula for determining assessor capacity and needs based on current assessment practice throughout the state.²⁷ Based on current capacity and the planned capacity expansion in 2012, 200 more assessors are needed statewide to complete reliable CLASS assessments; this training will start in 2013 using CLASS assessor trainers trained

²⁷Formula assumes 50% of assessors are full time employees/contractors who will complete an estimated 5 assessments completed every two weeks (assessment + report writing and uploading results into PLATINUM) and working 45 weeks a year (factoring time in for vacation training, etc.). The other 25% of assessors will work part time and complete approximately 50% of this number of assessments annually; the final 25% of assessors will work part time and complete approximately 25% of this number of assessments annually. This will enable local coalitions to repurpose and/or use existing resources to to meet their local needs, while offering sufficient quality control to ensure reliability and strong assessment skills.

through current Train the Trainer work. Assessors will be identified from within existing early learning coalition staff. Reliable assessor capacity will be reevaluated in early 2014 and additional assessors will be trained on the ERS tools, CLASS tools or both as needed. Further, reliable assessors that will assist with the TQRIS assessments in 2015 will receive training on the other checklists and PLATINUM in the last two quarters of 2014 to ensure they can complete full TQRIS assessments and upload the results seamlessly.

Environment Rating Scales

Florida will use the Environment Rating Scale tools, to include the Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R) for classrooms serving children ages birth to 30 months, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) for classrooms serving children ages 30-60 months, the School-Age Environment Rating Scale for programs serving school-age children (SACERS) and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R) for family child care homes. Given its strong commitment to Dual Language Learners and providers who speak Spanish as their first language, Florida has also been a leader in ensuring ERS materials are available in Spanish. While the scales are available in Spanish, the critical support materials of the All About books have never been translated. The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation has paid to have the All About ITERS-R and All About ECER-R translated into Spanish through a partnership with the Kaplan Early Learning Company. Through this creative, public-private partnership, early childhood educators in Florida will receive a discount on the All About books in Spanish and no shipping charges. These translations will be completed in early 2012 and sold by Kaplan nationwide, benefitting the entire field.

These tools have proven reliability and validity.²⁸ Reliability will be re-determined at least every 20 ratings, with a double rating completed alongside a master assessor. The reliability schedule was determined through current reliability of assessors, with more frequent reliability checks completed on less reliable assessors. Required reliability will be 85% for an assessor to continue independent ratings. If an assessor's reliability is below 85% the assessor will receive one-on-one mentoring for a master assessor and/or a trained ERS trainer to ensure an increase in reliability of no less than 85% before independent ratings are resumed. Assessors who require this one-on-one mentoring will complete reliability checks every 10 assessments until reliability

²⁸ Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Program implementation and Quality Instruments. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/ehs/perf_measures/reports/resources_measuring/res_meas_imp.html.

is sustained at no less than 85% for three reliability checks. At this time the reliability check schedule will resume on regular schedule.

Prior to the RTT-ELC announcement, Florida had started to procure training to further build its existing ERS assessor capacity. By the end of 2012, there will be ERS assessor training that will train approximately 75 additional assessors to reliability on the different ERS tools. Florida also procured train-the-trainer to cultivate highly reliable assessors who are also good trainers enabling Florida to continue to grow its own assessor capacity more cost effectively. As part of the pilot and validation study the state will assess the effectiveness of the subscales in predicting positive child outcomes in order to minimize assessment of inputs and maximize assessments leading to the greatest child outcomes.

Florida has developed a formula for determining assessor capacity and needs based on current assessment practice throughout the state.²⁹ Based on current capacity 75 more assessors are needed statewide to complete reliable ERS assessments; this training will start in 2013 using ERS assessor trainers trained through current Train the Trainer work. Assessors will be identified from within existing early learning coalition staff. Reliable assessor capacity will be reevaluated in early 2014 and additional assessors will be trained on the ERS tools, CLASS tools or both as needed. Further, reliable assessors that will assist with the TQRIS assessments in 2015 will receive training on the other checklists and PLATINUM in the last two quarters of 2014 to ensure they can complete full TQRIS assessments and upload the results seamlessly.

Formative Assessment Tools

Florida will integrate formative assessment models into its TQRIS. The Office of Early Learning and Department of Education will identify approved formative evaluation systems for provider use. (see Section C for fuller description).

Checklists for Family Engagement and Health Promotion

The assessment and research team will develop checklists on family engagement and health promotion, heavily relying upon the Head Start Performance Standards, the U.S.

²⁹Formula assumes 50% of assessors are full time employees/contractors who will complete an estimated 5 assessments completed every two weeks (assessment + report writing and uploading results into PLATINUM) and working 45 weeks a year (factoring time in for vacation training, etc.). The other 25% of assessors will work part time and complete approximately 50% of this number of assessments annually; the final 25% of assessors will work part time and complete approximately 25% of this number of assessments annually. This will enable local coalitions to repurpose and/or use existing resources to meet their local needs, while offering sufficient quality control to ensure reliability and strong assessment skills.

Department of Defense standard operating procedures for family engagement and health, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, et al national health and safety performance standards.

Timeline for Assessment

Florida’s TQRIS will follow the assessment timeline below.

Draft Assessment Schedule	
Star 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program meets licensing standards • If a program would like to seek a 2 Star rating it can submit the required documentation.
Star 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional self-assessment annually on TQRIS program standards with incentives available for completion <p><i>All self and formal assessment results documented in PLATINUM</i></p>
Star 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment annually on TQRIS program standards • Gold Seal Accreditation must remain current OR formal program assessment using TQRIS standards year four of RTT-ELC • As appropriate, re-assessment every 24* months or upon request from program if self-assessment indicates a 4 star or greater <p><i>All self and formal assessment results documented in PLATINUM</i></p>
Star 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment annually on TQRIS standards • Gold Seal Accreditation must remain current AND 4 Star CLASS score required OR formal program assessment using TQRIS standards year four of RTT-ELC • As appropriate, re-assessment every 36 months* or upon request from program that indicates possibility of being a 5 star <p><i>All self and formal assessment results documented in PLATINUM</i></p>
Star 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment annually on TQRIS standards • Gold Seal Accreditation must remain current AND 5 Star CLASS score required OR formal program assessment using TQRIS standards year four of RTT-ELC • Re-assessment every 48 months* <p><i>All self and formal assessment results documented in PLATINUM</i></p>
<p>* The following conditions will trigger a reassessment sooner than the above schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Director leaving</i> • <i>Change of owner</i> • <i>Change of location</i> • <i>More than 50% staff turnover</i> • <i>Flag from licensing for more than one class I violations within two years</i> 	

(B)(3)(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Develop multi-media strategy for getting information on high-quality early learning programs and their importance to children's development to families, including using smart-phone apps, creating resources in multiple languages and specifically targeting the children with high needs and their families.

Current Status

Florida's Child Care Licensing Information System is nationally recognized as one of the most complete, fully integrated, and up-to-date technology systems in the country. The Child Care Licensing Information System is a comprehensive web-based resource for parents interested in locating quality child care arrangements. Parents can access early childhood provider demographic data, maps displaying the location of child care resources within each community and the actual compliance/noncompliance inspection report history of licensed child care facilities and homes statewide.

Florida's TQRIS model builds from significant local work, including the development of extensive marketing and promotional materials designed to help families choose high-quality early learning programs; these are available in English, Spanish and Haitian/Creole. These materials were carefully developed by marketing experts with input from providers and families and communicate the importance of quality early learning and development programs to children's development. The materials available include: posters, radio spots, TV ads, newspaper ads for families and are available in multiple languages. These will be adjusted as needed for statewide expansion.

Plans for Transformative Reform

Florida will strategically utilize child care resource and referral to ensure families have high-quality information on their child's development (based on birth date), have tools to locate quality early learning and development programs and learn more about the importance of high-quality early learning experiences for their children's development. Information distributed through Child Care Resource and Referral will be developed in multiple languages to ensure it meets the needs and communication styles (e.g., reading level) of High Need families.

Florida proposes to enhance the automated Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) that will be part of the Early Learning Data System to create an inventory and corresponding smart-phone application that will enable families to answer questions about family values, individual temperament and learning styles of their children, preferred curriculum and various other personalized supports to assist parents with the selection of a quality early learning programs that meets their child and family's needs. This will be available in English and Spanish.

With both the enhanced CCR&R functionality within the Early Learning Data System and the smart-phone app, families will be prompted to answer a brief, simplified series of questions that will assist with narrowing early learning options that are a fit for the needs of their family. These questions will be designed to help families identify individual child needs and guide families to prioritize meeting these needs based on their family priorities. Individuals accessing the system will first select the age of their child(ren): in utero, infant, toddler, preschooler, and/or school-age. Based on the response, the individual will be provided with a series of questions. For expectant families, or those with young infants, the system will focus on family culture, values, expectations, and needs. For families with toddlers, preschoolers, and/or school-age children, questions will also include questions about learning styles, temperament, and development.

The system will then generate information about early learning program options based on family needs and priorities. For example, a parent of a young toddler that is an only child, overwhelmed by large social scenes, and has parents that value having a caregiver that can nurture the child's development in a personal, intimate setting would be given information on the benefits of a family child care home. The system would then provide multiple locations that match the family's geographic needs with corresponding costs and ratings of the TQRIS. Explanation of the star ratings and benefits of higher ratings would be provided to the family.

This system will be developed as part of Florida's online CCR&R system within the Early Learning Data System and linked to the State licensing website and the websites of community partners (United Ways, children's services councils, community action organization, faith-based programs), with corresponding applications that can be accessed via smart-phones. Additionally, families without technology will be able to access this service through Florida's 31 early learning coalitions serving all communities in Florida. Child Care Resource and Referral

specialists will be trained to walk families through the system, provide additional child development consultations, and assist families in need of additional support services.

Further, research shows that in order for the TQRIS ratings to have the greatest impact on parental behavior and the choices they make as they select care for their children, parents need to better understand the importance of the early years of life and the critical impact quality early care and education have on children's development. A comprehensive family education campaign will be implemented that includes affordable paid media (plan to be developed Year 1 of RTT-ELC funding), social media and earned media. The state's existing *Everyone's a Teacher* campaign will serve as this campaign's foundation. Through this approach, families will have more information to make more informed choices about child care and will receive good information on child development and the importance of choosing a quality setting. Families will also be able to access information on Florida's prekindergarten and subsidy programs and other resources available in their community, such as parent education and support programs.

Social media is an effective and inexpensive way to connect with families with young children. Our social media outreach will focus on using tools such as Facebook, Google+, YouTube and Twitter. These tools will allow us to connect with families in a way that will provide information that is easy to use. Through a partnership with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, this work will be informed by the leading experts in the field of civic engagement, particularly of high need families and children.

Through the extensive network of relationships the Children's Movement has with editorial boards and newspaper outlets throughout Florida, the Movement will work with media outlets over the course of the grant to rally support from residents and raise awareness of the critical importance of the early years.

(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs. (20 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (*e.g.*, through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily. In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (B)(4)(c)(1) and (B)(4)(c)(2).

(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs

(B)(4)(a) Developing and implement policies and practices that provide support and incentives to Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Provide targeted capacity building support for programs to prepare them for statewide implementation of TQRIS in 2015.
- Develop and implement policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve. These strategies, which include increasing the number of programs achieving Gold Seal Quality Care Designation, will be expanded for statewide implementation.

- Focus existing quality improvement funding to make them more effective and support activities that are proven to improve children's outcomes.

Current Status

Florida has a strong track record of implementing effective strategies for improving the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in TQRIS. TQRIS pilot communities have developed many local innovations, including developing highly-effective practices that support programs in the most cost effective and efficient ways. This has resulted in more funding for early learning small businesses. For example, many local TQRIS initiatives have developed different levels of support and funding based on program quality and the degree to which programs serve Children with High Needs. The supports that will be provided statewide are heavily informed by these strategies, particularly those that are most effective at improving the quality of programs that serve Children with High Needs.

Plans for Transformative Reform

Florida will implement targeted, effective and outcomes-based investments in quality improvement activities in partnership with early learning and development programs to best support their quality improvement goals.

There will be some universally available supports to every program that participates in TQRIS. These will include:

- *Tiered reimbursement*: Florida's tiered reimbursement system recognizes providers that have made up front investments in quality so that they may qualify for higher subsidy reimbursement (up to 20%) if they have a Gold Seal Quality Care Designation. Programs with Gold Seal Accreditation also have their property taxes waived, which is a significant savings for businesses. The Gold Seal Quality Care Program will serve as the foundation of tiered reimbursement to ensure high-quality programs serving high need populations receive higher payment rates. Florida proposes to embed the existing tiered reimbursement system into the TQRIS to incentivize access to high-quality care for high need families.
- *Customized quality improvement plan*: Each program that participates in TQRIS will receive an automated, detailed strengths and needs report. Through PLATINUM, early learning programs will have access to customizable, individualized quality improvement plans based on their strengths and needs. Programs can independently manage their own

quality improvement work through the PLATINUM portal and track their progress over time; they have access to technical assistance specialists and career advisors and help prioritizing needs related to achieving higher TQRIS levels.

- *Access to the Shared Services Florida website:* To facilitate participation in and use of PLATINUM, all programs that attend two PLATINUM orientation trainings, complete Registry enrollment for all staff and log on at least quarterly will receive a free subscription to the ECE Shared Services Florida website (a branded version of www.ecesharedresources.org, which will be launched in November 2011).

The shared services website was developed by CCA Global and helps programs save time and money, and strengthening administrative practices. Cost savings accrue through bulk purchasing, discounts on commonly used services, reduced rates for business operations like credit card processing and payroll administration, insurance, etc. Time savings accrue through customizable templates that support typical business functions, such as parent handbooks, employee policies, forms, job descriptions, interview guides, marketing tools that help identify and send direct mail to prospective families in the neighborhood, budget tools and templates, and more. Additionally, documents on the website will be strategically linked to the TQRIS standards, enabling providers to easily obtain resources for compliance. The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation has already paid to have www.ecesharedresources.org customized for Florida. The website is currently being translated into Spanish for completion in January 2012.

Early learning and development programs in other states have found that the website saves them so much that they are willing to pay the small service fee (approximately \$25/year); programs could decide if they would like to continue the subscription after the startup funding RTT-ELC provides is completed.

- *Access to marketing materials:* The TQRIS pilot projects have developed a world-class provider marketing tool kit, which will be provided to participating TQRIS programs. This marketing tool kit was designed with and for providers and allows programs to insert their own logos and program information and brands them as a participating TQRIS program. The marketing tool kit provides templates for brochures, newsletters, parent letters, media release templates, signage, and other tools for customization; these

will be provided on CDs. All of the marketing materials communicate the importance of quality early learning programs to children's development. A professional advertising and public relations agency has designed the materials and created the strategies to execute these efforts. These will be adjusted as needed for statewide implementation and made available to all participating TQRIS sites to assist them with marketing their services to families.

- *Deeper supports for lower quality programs:* Based on the lessons learned from the TQRIS pilot projects, targeted supports will be available to programs who have rated themselves low on the self-assessment and programs serving children in the Child Welfare System or children with special needs as well as providers in high-risk neighborhoods as identified by the state's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting application
(http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Admin/General_Services/Purchasing/FA11-004.pdf).

Targeted supports will include:

- *Technical Assistance:* Based on the star rating, programs will identify and receive time-limited and task-specific technical assistance. A technical assistance specialist and the early learning program leadership will together develop a plan with clearly identified responsibilities, time lines and expectations. Particular attention will be provided to ensuring a good match, with care taken to be responsive to culture, diversity, socio-economic status, curriculum philosophy and other characteristics to ensure there is a good match between mentors and mentees.

Through RTT-ELC Florida will develop a new model to build the skills of technical assistance specialists by creating a Technical Assistance Specialist Credential. This training will be built from the Technical Assistance Specialist Core Competencies; details on this training and credential are outlined in Section (D)(2). As part of this training/credential, technical assistance staff will receive Leading for Racial Equity training, a research and outcomes-based model for heightening awareness and skills of professionals to implement a strengths-based approach to diversity and inclusiveness.

Technical assistance specialists will also receive support through the Teachstone resources for technical assistance specialists during all four years of the RTT-ELC grant. Following RTT-ELC funding coalitions will be responsible for ensuring on-going

training. This will allow coalitions to repurpose staff who currently provide technical assistance strategically. These resources, along with targeted training, will ensure they have the skills to effectively support quality improvement in programs, particularly those serving children with high needs.

- *Scholarships*: Information on scholarship support is provided in Section (D)(2).
- *Career Counseling*: Information on career counseling is provided in Section (D)(2).
- *Targeted accreditation supports*: Providers wishing to advance in the TQRIS, including achieving Gold Seal Accreditation, will be offered specialized training and technical assistance. The formation of specialized communities of practice will support cohorts of programs going through self-assessment toward achieving accreditation. Additionally, targeted funds will be provided during the RTT-ELC grant period to offset the cost of obtaining accreditation. Programs serving children in the Child Welfare System, children with special needs and programs in high-risk communities (rural and urban) as identified by the state's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting application will be prioritized to ensure they receive this support if they desire.
- *Access to Teachstone resources for providers*: Teachstone has an extensive video library and other materials to build the interaction and instructional skills of early childhood educators. Providers who complete a CLASS orientation training and a self-assessment on at least one classroom in their program *annually will* have free access to the web-based resources offered by Teachstone. These will be available to programs that serve high-need children to assist them with improving their interactions and instruction practices. The model for delivery will be determined by local early learning coalitions.
- *Partnerships with Head Start*: in many of the Highest Need communities in the state Head Start is already operating effective partnerships and has strong programs. Through RTT-ELC funding partnerships will be created that will leverage this existing track record and community relationships to improve the quality of other High Need community programs and provide more intensive services for High Need children. These partnerships will vary based on community needs and resources. Consistent, equitable and appropriate strategies for determining what supports are provided at each level, the amount of supports and the timelines for receiving supports will be developed as part of the overall reforms proposed in this application.

Currently, local early learning coalitions make substantial quality investments, totaling over \$54 million annually not including the Gold Seal Quality Care Program differential. Through the RTT-ELC opportunity, Florida with local buy-in will more effectively target quality improvement investments. Early learning coalitions will work individually and together to direct their quality funds toward those activities that support TQRIS standards and improving program ratings, particularly those serving children with high needs.

(B)(4)(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Provide effective and targeted supports to programs serving children with high needs.
- Embed the state's tiered reimbursement system in the TQRIS to ensure higher reimbursements are based on standards related to improved children's outcomes.

Current Status

Florida already prioritizes child care subsidies for children at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, foster care and children of working families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance; they automatically receive subsidies regardless of any waiting list.

Plans for Transformative Reform

Through RTT-ELC funding community-based partnerships between Head Start, early learning coalitions, Part B and Part C providers will be deepened to coordinate the delivery of services for high-need children as eligibility allows. All partners are committed to this vision and local strategies will be created in 2012 and 2013.

Florida will ensure that families know about high-quality early learning and development programs and know how to access them for their children. As outlined in Section (B)(2)(a), reforms will be implemented via RTT-ELC to programs serving Children with High Needs who receive public investments to ensure they maintain high quality or are on a path of quality improvement. Also as outlined in Section (B)(2)(a), partnerships will be created to ensure children with special needs attend high-quality programs.

Targeted, more extensive quality improvement supports will be provided to programs serving the Highest Need children and located in the Highest Need communities (see Section (B)(4)(a)).

As outlined in Section (B)(2)(b), strategies to improve the affordability of care in the Highest Need sections of communities will be implemented to ensure the availability of programs for High Need children.

(B)(4)(c)(1) Setting ambitious yet achievable goals for increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered TQRIS

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Gradually expand participation in TQRIS in the early years of RTT-ELC funding.
- Assess all programs receiving child care subsidies in the 4th year of RTT-ELC funding using the new, validated TQRIS standards.

Current Status

There are currently 1,614 programs participating in the TQRIS pilots throughout Florida. The spread of the star quality levels is outlined in Table (B)(4)(c)(1).

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.					
	Baseline (Today)	Target – end of calendar year 2012	Target – end of calendar year 2013	Target – end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	1614	2350	3000	4000	9,609
Number of programs in Tier 1	113	165	210	260	150
Number of	275	400	500	680	2,649

programs in Tier 2					
Number of programs in Tier 3	532	775	990	1,320	3,770
Number of programs in Tier 4	468	680	870	1,320	2,290
Number of programs in Tier 5	226	330	430	1,740	750
<i>Baseline numbers are actual and were gathered through a self-report survey of the TQRIS pilot site directors. Projections were estimated based on current data on program quality and experience to date expanding access to TQRIS and completing CLASS assessments on a representative group of providers in small-scale pilots.</i>					

Plans for Transformative Reform

Through the TQRIS pilot communities and the Pilot and Validation studies, there will be significant information on program quality from more than 2,000 programs, with the majority of these serving Children with High Needs. Early learning coalitions will receive training for technical assistance specialists, professional development supports (see Section D) and support in more effectively targeting their quality investments through RTT-ELC. Early learning coalitions will receive additional quality improvement funds through the RTT-ELC grant period to jumpstart this work and invest in targeted strategies to improve the quality of programs serving children with high needs. The effectiveness of these investments will be documented and analyzed through PLATINUM. Coalitions will problem solve and refine these strategies together through communities of practice (see Section (D)(2)); successful practices will be refined during the first three years of this grant and made statewide during the last year.

Programs that are already participating in the pilot TQRIS programs will have special support to transition them to the new standards. They will receive training on the new standards, with a specific focus on how the new standards and scoring may change their rating. As outlined, training and resources will be specifically provided in years 2013-2015 on the CLASS instruments to ensure providers are prepared to use this new tool. A transition strategy will be created among the TQRIS sites and OEL leadership to ensure a smooth transition from the old to the new standards. The planning will take place in 2013 and implemented in 2014-2015. Partnerships will be developed with the Children's Services Councils, early learning coalitions,

providers and other funding partners to ensure the smoothest transition possible of existing TQRIS participants into the new system.

(B)(4)(c)(2) Setting ambitious yet achievable goals for increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered TQRIS

Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Provide targeted supports to programs serving a high percentage of Children with High Needs in order to move programs into the top tiers of the TQRIS.
- Provide support to increase the number of programs with Gold Seal accreditation.
- Provide capacity building support to early learning and development programs on the CLASS to achieve higher levels on the TQRIS.

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets – Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target – end of calendar year 2012		Target – end of calendar year 2013		Target – end of calendar year 2014		Target – end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool Specify:	81,005	8,400	10	12,151	15	16,201	20	20,251	25	32,402	40
Early Head Start and Head Start	42,493	5,430	13	8,500	20	12,000	28	16,000	38	21,000	49

Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	13,158	526	4	789	6	1,053	8	1,447	11	1,974	15
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B section 619	22,758	458	2	1,365	6	2,048	9	2,731	12	4,552	15
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	9,600	210	2	384	4	576	6	768	8	960	10
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	243,000	13,553	6	26,730	11	41,310	17	55,890	23	77,760	32
<i>Baseline numbers are estimated based on projected participation in each program among High Need Children. Projections were estimated based on current data on program quality and experience to date expanding access to TQRIS and completing CLASS assessments on a representative group of providers in small-scale pilots.</i>											

Current Status

Of the 1,614 programs participating in Florida’s TQRIS pilots, 532 are 3 star (33%), 468 are 4 star (30%) and 226 are 5 star (14%). This means approximately 34,580 children are in 3 star programs, 30,420 children are in 4 star programs and 14,690 children are in 5 star programs.

Plans for Transformative Reform

As outlined in Section (B)(1)(b) and (B)(4)(a), the first step to ensuring more children are in the upper tiers of the TQRIS in Florida will be to increase the number of programs that have Gold Seal accreditation. This will be accomplished through providing technical assistance, grants for materials and support to paying accreditation fees. This will be highly supportive of businesses as it will eliminate property taxes and enable tiered reimbursement. There will also be significant opportunities for programs to become familiar with and build capacity around the CLASS tools; these resources are outlined in Section (B)(4)(a). While the cut points by star level

will be determined through the Pilot and Validation studies, early support on using the CLASS and improving scores on the CLASS will be important to programs' building program quality and improving children's outcomes, particularly of Children with High Needs.

By 2015, an estimated 170,990 children will be in high-quality early learning programs. Through working with local coalitions to most effectively direct quality investments, it is expected that these numbers will continue to improve following the end of RTT-ELC funding.

(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

Florida has a high-quality plan to design and implement rigorous evaluations of the relationship between the ratings generated through TQRIS and children's outcomes. Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will accomplish the following:

- Validate that standards and levels of TQRIS meaningfully differentiate program quality.
- Ensure standards and levels related to improved child outcomes.

As outlined in the timeline in the opening Summary of Section B, the draft standards for the TQRIS in Florida will be finalized by August 2012, followed by a Pilot Study in Phase III (September 2012-August 2013) and a Validation Study in Phase IV (September 2013-August 2014) completed by an independent evaluator. The Pilot and Validation studies will be designed to ensure Florida's TQRIS has strong psychometric properties like construct validity (the items measure what they are intended to measure); predictive validity (higher scores on TQRIS mean better child outcomes); inter-rater reliability (two assessors looking at the same program come to the same conclusion about the rating); and sensitivity (the assessment can pick up relatively small differences in program quality). To ensure Florida's TQRIS standards and levels are designed with these psychometric properties in mind, the Pilot and Validation studies are necessary to ensure that the standards and levels meet these goals and are meaningfully connected to children's outcomes.

The Pilot Study in Phase III (from September 2012-May 2013) will ensure the standards are appropriate, the weighting of the different elements are correct, the cut points between levels are accurate, the different tiers are predictive of improved child outcomes, and elements such as the state's early learning and developmental standards are fully and appropriately integrated into the program standards and workforce qualification expectations of TQRIS. The standards and levels will be refined based on the Pilot Study results for the Validation Study.

The Validation Study in Phase IV (September 2013-May 2014) will specifically evaluate the degree to which the standards and levels are valid related to culture, diversity and equity. The standards, tiers and weighting will then be revised as needed based on the results of the validation study.

The Pilot and Validation studies will be completed by an independent evaluator. The team that will oversee the study design and implementation and revision of the standards based

on the results will include researchers, psychometricians and recognized experts in program quality and child outcomes. The full methodology is outlined below.

In addition to this comprehensive Pilot and Validation studies, the evolution of this system will be documented by an independent researcher throughout the grant to inform a detailed case study of effective early childhood systems reform to document the effect of the innovations on program quality, children's outcomes and system reform. This report and its findings will be widely shared with the early learning field and other states to inform their work.

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan, whether the tiers of the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality and (b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to program in children's learning, development and school readiness.

The first purpose of the pilot phases of this proposed project are to identify teacher, classroom, center, and program quality indicators for inclusion in the quality composite scores, and to do so based on their relationship to child outcomes. The second purpose of the pilot phases of this project is to adjust and validate the cut scores on the quality composite measures so that quality level designations are based on empirical evidence and maximize differences in child outcomes between the levels. The unique strengths of our design are as follows: (1) child outcomes and growth will be assessed across domains of development within a well-designed and carefully implemented sampling strategy designed to represent geographical regions of the state, program types, and quality levels, (2) valid potential quality indicators will be collected by trained and reliable external observers who will be following carefully designed observational protocols that include indicators at the teacher, classroom, center, and program levels; and (3) advanced statistical methods will be used to obtain empirical evidence indicating relationships between quality and child outcomes.

Design, Sample, and Statistical Power: The overall proposed design for the pilot study phases of the project is similar to a cluster randomized trial. We will conduct three level hierarchical linear models (HLM) to predict child growth from quality indicators. These analyses will include child growth as the level one outcome and child demographics as predictors. Child growth will be defined as gain from fall to spring on each child outcome measure. The level two models will include classroom and teacher level characteristics and

quality indicators as predictors and the level three models will include program level characteristics and quality indicators as predictors. In this design the power to detect an association between a particular proposed quality indicator and child growth is a function of the following parameters: alpha, number of level two cluster clusters (classrooms), the number of level three clusters (centers), sample size of children for each classroom, the expected treatment effect magnitude, the intraclass correlation coefficients, and the residual variance terms including the effect of covariates. For our calculations, alpha was set at the traditional level of .05, the number of level two clusters (classrooms) was set at 360, and the number of level three clusters (centers) was set at 120. We assumed an average rate of three classrooms per center. We set the cell size, the average number of children per classroom, at 17 based on the experience of the research team with preschool settings in the state. This design will result in an average of 51 children assessed per center (3×17), for a total of 6,120 children in the study. We set the interclass correlation coefficients for levels two and three (tau pi and tau beta) at .10 based on our experience with this type of analyses in preschool settings. These values mean that we expect approximately 10% of the total variability in the dependent variable to be between classrooms and approximately 10% between centers. In order to determine the statistical power of the proposed design, we used the *Optimal Design* software package (Spybrook, Raudenbush, Liu, & Congdon, 2006).

It should be noted that the stratified sampling plan whereby we will attempt to represent the different geographic regions of the state, program setting types, and quality levels based on existing quality indicators, is expected to create some heterogeneity between strata of centers while creating greater within strata homogeneity. Once the variance due to the stratification center characteristics is accounted for in the analysis, this homogeneity should enhance the statistical power of the design. Previous research designed to demonstrate the associations between classroom, center, and program quality have often found very modest associations between quality indicators and child outcomes. We therefore set effect sizes at .16, .18, and .20. Effect sizes in this range can be considered small according to the recommendations set forth by Cohen (1988). However, it is important to note that effect sizes of smaller magnitude are often worth detecting in early childhood research. Furthermore, both realizing effect sizes of this magnitude or larger in field research, and making interpretations of such effect sizes that designate them as “small” or “moderate”, are highly context dependent. Factors such as program

and community conditions, consistency of implementation for particular quality indicators, the actual power and efficacy of the quality indicators within a particular context, and issues related to the selection and use of outcome measures all contribute to the actual results of field studies (Spybrook, Raudenbush, Liu, & Congdon, 2006). We therefore wanted to be sure that our design would be suitable for detecting effects that while considered small in some research contexts, might translate into meaningful components of an overall quality system where multiple indicators are used within a composite quality score.

Our power calculations resulted in estimates of the probability that we will detect effect sizes of the specified magnitude or larger and find them to be statistically significant, given that they actually exist, that ranged from .81 to .93. These values apply to the detection of a relationship between a given quality indicator and child growth. For an effect size of .16, power equals .81, for an effect size of .18, power equals .88, and for an effect size of .20 power equals .93. According to Cohen (1988), power of .8 or higher is considered adequate for this type of field research. It is important to note that these power estimates are likely to be conservative estimates that are lower bound estimates of the actual power of the design. We plan to include child level covariates that are likely to decrease between-student residual variance such as gender, disability status, English Language Learner status, and age. In addition, we plan to intentionally oversample low quality programs serving high needs children, adding another 20 centers, 60 classrooms, 1,020 children. This would bring the total number of centers to 140, classrooms to 420, and children to 7,140, thereby also raising statistical power.

Data Analysis: To address the research questions regarding the associations between quality indicators and child growth, we will use a special case of HLM, three level organizational effects model, through the HLM software. This approach will be used to examine potential quality indicators for inclusion in the quality composite to be developed and will facilitate selection of quality indicators based on their associations with growth in child outcomes. While a complete description of the details of both the advantages and properties of HLM is beyond the scope of this proposal, the reviewer is referred to several references for a further description of the techniques to be used in analyzing the data from this project (Arnold, 1992; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1987; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; and Osborne, 2000). Descriptions of the process of application of this class of strategies to educational research can be found in (Burchinal, Bailey, & Snyder, 1994; Burchinal, 1999; Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal, McAdoo, & Coll, 2001).

In the proposed research application of HLM, the level one model will consist of child outcome fall to spring gains scores as the dependent variable. The level two models will be comprised of classroom and teacher characteristics and quality indicators and the level three model will be used in the same way at the center level. The level three models will be comprised of contextual characteristics of the centers including the stratification variables (geographic region of the state, program type, and quality level) and will include the center level quality indicators. Children will be nested within their respective classrooms, which will be nested within their respective centers. Child characteristics such as gender, disability status, English Language Learner status, and age will be used as level one covariates. These predictors are expected both to reduce residual variance and thereby increase statistical power, and to account for their potential association with the observed growth patterns in the child outcomes. In addition, statistical power will be much higher for any effects that are larger than the very conservative values selected for these power calculations.

The three level HLM analytical strategy will allow offer several important advantages. First, separate models will be created for each outcome measure, allowing researchers to examine whether some quality indicators are more related to specific domains of child development. Second, the researchers will be able to estimate and begin to understand where the variability in child growth can be found within the state in several important ways. The unconditional models, the first step in analyzing the data for each outcome, include no predictor variables and simply provide variance decomposition to identify the proportion of the variance in child growth that can found between children within classrooms, between classrooms with centers, and between centers. These analyses will provide valuable information regarding the most appropriate strategies for targeting quality improvement programs. For example, if there is not variability between classrooms within centers for a particular outcome, but there is variability between centers, then working with whole centers will be more meaningful than with particular teachers within centers. Third, this analytical strategy will allow the researchers to simultaneously examine each of the following effects:

- The associations between child and family attributes and child growth across developmental domains
- The associations between teacher characteristics and child growth

- The associations between classroom structural characteristics and quality indicators and child growth
- The associations between the quality of teaching processes and teacher child interactions and child growth
- Differences in child growth across centers in different geographic regions, program types, and quality levels
- The associations between center structural characteristics and quality indicators and child growth.

Each of these effects occur within a particular level in the design and will lead directly to decisions to retain specific quality indicators in the quality composite scores. The researchers will also be able to use this proposed analytical strategy to test cross level interaction effects that may have important implications for the creation of the quality composite. The three level HLM organizational effects model allows the researcher to model whether quality indicators and organizational characteristics from one level in the model are associated with the slopes in another level in the model. Specifically, we will test:

- The relationships between teacher characteristics and the associations between child and family attributes and child growth
- The relationships between classroom structural characteristics and quality indicators and the associations between child and family attributes and child growth
- The relationships between the quality of teaching processes and teacher child interactions and the associations between child and family attributes and child growth
- The relationships between center structural characteristics and quality indicators and the associations between classroom and teacher quality indicators and child growth.

These more complex effects are often not easily included in HLM analyses. However, if the proposed design of this project they will be facilitated by the large sample size, high statistical power, and diversity of the sample across geographic regions, program types, and quality levels. Previous studies of the relationships between classroom and center quality and child outcomes may have failed to detect potentially important effects by leaving out these more complex interactions. For example, if there are center level quality indicators do not have a direct effect on child growth, but that are found to influence child growth outcomes indirectly

through their effects on teachers and their ability to support child growth, they may still be important contributors to the overall quality composite measure.

Once the quality indicators are selected and the quality composite scores begin to be assigned to centers in the third year of the study, we will again select a sample of centers and classrooms for an additional validation study. We will use the same sampling plan to conduct two level HLM analyses in order to directly test the associations between the quality levels assigned to centers, based on the quality composite scores, and child growth. The level one model will include child gain scores as the dependent variable and child and family characteristics as the independent variables. Center quality designation will be the independent variable at level two to examine whether the quality levels are associated with differential patterns of child growth. Children will be assessed within their centers and the sampling plan will be modified to create a balanced sample across the quality levels. The results of these models will be used to modify and adjust the cut scores from the quality composite measure that are used to create the quality level designations in order to maximize differences in child outcomes between the quality levels.

Focused Investment Areas -- Sections (C), (D), and (E)

The State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);*
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and*
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).*

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Note: The total available points for (C)(1) through (C)(4) = 60. The 60 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria in the Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points.

The applicant must address two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C).

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (C)(1)(a) and (b):

- To the extent the State has implemented Early Learning and Development Standards that meet any of the elements in criteria (C)(1)(a) and (b), submit--
 - Proof of use by the types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State;
 - The State's Early Learning and Development Standards for:
 - Infants and toddlers
 - Preschoolers
 - Documentation that the standards are developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate for all children, including children with disabilities and developmental delays and English Learners;
 - Documentation that the standards address all Essential Domains of School Readiness and that they are of high-quality;
 - Documentation of the alignment between the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and the State's K-3 standards; and

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Guidelines (15 points)

Florida's Early Learning and Developmental standards consist of two documents that form a continuum of development and learning from birth to age five across multiple domains of development. The first document is a set of birth-to-four-year-old standards that was revised in 2010 based on the latest research on child development and learning. These standards are divided into specific age ranges that correspond to important developmental milestones in young children, and include standards for children birth to eight months; eight months to 18 months; 18 months to 24 months; end of age two; and, end of age three. The second document is a set of standards for the instruction of four-year-olds that was revised in 2011. This document is completed and scheduled to replace two sets of separate standards for instruction of four-year-olds, one used by the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program and one by the Florida School Readiness program in October of 2011.

The state's recently revised standards are world-class, and outline appropriate, yet high expectations for the state's youngest children. They are research-based; developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; horizontally aligned to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and vertically aligned to the state's K-12 standards; and, appropriate and inclusive for children with disabilities.

Florida's early learning standards are the foundation of the state's early care and education system. By providing expectations for what children should know and be able to do at different ages of early childhood, these standards represent Florida's developmental and learning goals that have guided decisions regarding the state's current early childhood infrastructure, as well as the reform strategy outlined throughout this proposal. The state's program standards and Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS); workforce and professional development system; comprehensive assessment system; and health and community engagement initiatives have been designed to help early childhood programs and teachers meet these expectations. At the state level, reforms proposed in this application will allow child outcomes resulting from the system to be evaluated in light of the standards and used to guide decisions around system improvement. At the program level, the new standards will guide the pedagogical and program decisions made by program administrators and educators, including those related to curriculum, assessment, professional development, and family engagement.

Equally important, the state's early learning guidelines will serve as a way to coordinate the various early childhood programs that exist within the state. While Head Start, the Florida School Readiness Program (the Child Care and Development Block Grant), IDEA parts B and C, Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, and the Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Home Visiting Program have different eligibility criteria, funding administration, and program standards, it is Florida's goal to unite them around a common set of expectations for children. Uniting around one set of standards is particularly important from a systems-building perspective as most early childhood programs in Florida participate in more than one federal or state early childhood program.

Most importantly, improving outcomes for high-need children requires that programs "begin with the end in mind." Florida standards provide the learning and development goals for children to which every program should aspire. As such, Florida's high-quality plan has a number of goals related to the state's early learning standards.

The first is to train all early childhood educators and program administrators on the new standards. In order to improve instruction and promote program quality, particularly for high-need children, early childhood administrators and educators must understand the expectations for children set forth in the standards, why they are important, and how they should be used. The standards guide how program administrators conduct planning for their programs and how teachers will plan for and provide instruction for their children. It is the state's expectation that programmatic decisions and teacher interactions with children are designed to help children meet the expectations articulated in the standards.

To this end, the state has developed scaffolded, outcome-based training to ensure that early childhood program leadership and educators understand the standards and use them as the basis of programmatic and pedagogical decisions related to curriculum, assessment, teacher training, technical assistance, and family engagement initiatives. The trainings will be administered through the Early Learning Coalitions to administrators and teachers **in all early childhood programs across the state** including Head Start, child care programs, VPK programs, and programs receiving IDEA Parts B Section 619 and C funding. Future professional development will be adapted depending on the type of program.

In addition, a training module for Head Start programs will be developed that focuses on using the state standards in conjunction with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The Head Start Framework contains domains, domain elements, and examples, but does not contain specific expectations for children. As part of the state's goal to unite programs through common expectations for children, the training will use the domain elements of Framework and the expectation set forth in the state standards to help Head Start programs develop school readiness goals for their children as required by the new proposed regulations for Head Start redesignation.

The second goal involves the implementation of reforms that more closely align system components to the revised standards. In the VPK and School Readiness Programs curriculum and assessment approval processes are in place to ensure that the materials designed to educate and assess children are strongly aligned to the standards. Workforce development policies and the state's career ladder will be aligned to the standards to ensure the state is promoting teacher competencies that help them work with children to meet the standards. The alignment of the different program components is discussed in detail in sections B, C-2, and D.

The third goal is to reform the state's assessment and data systems to better monitor children's progress toward the standards. This goal is discussed in detail in sections C-2 and E.

The final goal is to engage in a revision of the standards in 2014 using a statutory requirement for "periodic revision." While the state feels that its current early learning standards are state-of-the-art and reflect the latest thinking in child development and learning, it is important that the standards be revised at periodic intervals to incorporate new research in the field. The state plans to use the revision process in 2014 to incorporate published research in child development and learning since the last revision, incorporate stakeholder input and the new Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, combine the two standards documents into one seamless set of standards, and continue to improve on the universal design of the standards and their linguistic and cultural appropriateness based on any new research.

The rationale, activities, timeline, specific responsibilities, and other requirements related to the implementation of these goals are discussed in the high-quality plan in Section E.

(a) Evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness.

As evidence that Florida meets the elements of (C)(1)(a) Appendix (C)(1)-1 includes the two new standards documents in truncated form¹. Florida's revised standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Indeed, as a state with one of the largest Hispanic populations in the country, it is imperative that the standards possess these characteristics. "Developmentally appropriate" as it relates to standards means that the standards represent expectations for children that are challenging, yet achievable and derived from the vast body of literature on child development and early learning.² "Culturally and linguistically appropriate" means that standards are written and applied with a respect for the diversity of languages spoken in the state, how parents and families born outside of the United States or who speak a home language other than English interact, educate, and

¹ Both the birth-to-four and four-year-old standards include domains, sub-domains, standards, and benchmarks. To keep the page count of the appendices down, we have combined the documents and only included the domains, subdomains, and standards in the appendix.

² *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8, Third Edition*, Carol Copple & Sue Bredekamp, eds. Copyright 2009 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

nurture their youngest children at home; and, how parents and families approach involvement in the state's educational system and their barriers to involvement.

To ensure that the standards are research-based, as well as developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, their development was guided by an expert panel of state practitioners, researchers, and administrators. The panel consisted of experts in different domains of development, and in different populations of children (English-language learners and children with disabilities). In addition, the panel also consisted of expert practitioners who have to apply the standards in their programs. The panel critically evaluated each domain to ensure that the sub-domains, standards, and benchmarks included in the documents were reflective of the literature, universally applicable to all children, and would be of use to practitioners in the field. National and state experts also reviewed the draft and provided valuable feedback. Additionally, over 700 public feedback surveys were submitted and reviewed by the Florida Department of Education.

Finally, the standards address all important domains of development and learning. The RTT application defines “Essential Domains of School Readiness” as “the domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge (including mathematics and early scientific development), approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills), and social and emotional development.” Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards are organized into five domains, or areas of development. These domains closely mirror the domains cited in the application, and include the following: physical development; approaches to learning; social and emotional development; language, communication, and emergent literacy; cognitive development and general knowledge (including mathematical thinking and scientific inquiry).

As evidence that the standards address all Essential Domains of School Readiness as defined by the application, we have included an alignment of the standards to the domains highlighted in the application in Appendix (C)(1)-2. This alignment clearly indicates that all of the domains are addressed.

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the K-3 academic standards in, at minimum, early literacy and mathematics

The revision of Florida's Standards for Four-Year-Olds took place after Florida's adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). The Standards for Four-Year-Olds were revised to be aligned with the kindergarten CCSS. In addition to mathematics and ELA, Florida has kindergarten-standards in the subject areas of social studies and science. The progression of the Standards for Four-Year-Olds into the kindergarten standards is seamless across all of these subject areas. As evidence of this alignment, Appendix (C)(1)-3 provides an alignment of the Standards for Four-Year-Olds to the kindergarten standards.

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities.

Florida's early learning standards represent the foundation of the state's early learning system. All aspects of the system are either currently designed to help children meet the state's early learning standards, or will be aligned based on the reforms outlined in this application. Specific examples include:

- Curriculum and assessment approval processes ensure that these vital aspects of early learning programs are aligned with the standards;
- A set of workforce development competencies and career ladder that are aligned with the standards;
- A kindergarten readiness screening assessment aligned with the standards (evidence of this alignment can be found in Appendix (C)(1)-2);

(c) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development programs.

The typical early childhood program in Florida receives funding from a variety of federal and state early childhood funding sources. For example, Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Programs also receive funding from Florida's School Readiness program. Given the complications and burden of having a single program adhere to multiple sets of early childhood

standards, Florida has begun the process of moving every early childhood program in the state to one set of early childhood standards.

The revised Standards for Four-Year-Olds, approved by the State Board of Education in October 2011, were created through a collaborative process between the Agency for Workforce Innovation (now the Office of Early Learning) and the Florida Department of Education. While each program prior to this collaboration had to adhere to its own set of early learning standards, the new Standards for Four-Year-Olds will apply to both Florida's School Readiness program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. Another key area of coordination is between the state standards and the recently revised Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. State School Readiness and VPK programs are required to align their curriculum and other program features to the state's early learning guidelines, while Head Start programs are required to do the same with the Framework. Given that both the Federal Head Start program and the State of Florida used the latest research on child development and learning to guide the expectations for children, there is strong alignment between the two sets of standards. Appendix (C)(1)-4 highlights this alignment. As discussed above, Head Start programs in the state will be trained on how to use the state standards in conjunction with the Framework set school readiness goals for their children.

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems (15 points)

With the turbulent economic times, Florida has more high need children in early childhood programs than ever before; many of whom are in multiple programs, making interagency collaboration and efficiency crucial. Florida has made significant investments and strides toward implementing a comprehensive assessment system which like our proposed reforms are based on two highly respected works in the field of early childhood assessment, *Taking Stock: Assessing and Improving Early Childhood Learning and Program Quality* (Early Childhood Accountability Task Force, 2007) and the National Research Council's *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How*, 2008. These works articulate a vision for a comprehensive assessment system that is grounded in the state's early learning standards; reliable and valid; aligned to the other components of the state's early childhood system; well-funded; and, financially supported to ensure appropriate implementation. Florida's high-quality plan for its assessment system builds on the current infrastructure to create a comprehensive assessment system that contains the characteristics outlined above.

There are five components to Florida's comprehensive assessment system. These are:

1. A screening and referral process;
2. Ongoing, observation-based child assessment used for formative purposes and to inform and individualize instruction;

3. Program assessment, including classroom-level measures of environmental quality and teacher-child interactions;
4. A kindergarten readiness assessment; and,
5. Overall system monitoring and evaluation

Florida's reforms focus on ensuring that all assessment information collected on high-needs children, and the teachers and the programs that serve them, is secure, accurate, and has a clear purpose and use, either in identifying delay, guiding pedagogical decisions, informing program improvement, or guiding systemic change. To be accurate, assessment instruments must be designed for their intended use, have strong psychometric properties, and have individuals who are trained to use them. To be useful, assessment data has to be collected with a clear purpose or set of questions in mind, and have individuals who are available to analyze and respond appropriately to the findings that are revealed. Each of Florida's five assessment system components is in various stages of development. The sections below outline the current state of each component, and how each will be improved and connected through this grant. Data security issues are discussed in E-2 of the proposal.

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes

Component 1: Early Childhood Screening and Referral

The early identification of developmental and learning delays is vitally important to a child's long-term success, particularly among children with high needs. Therefore, the purpose of early childhood screening is the early identification of children who may be at risk of developmental delay, and the referral of children identified at risk for additional testing and intervention as necessary. Florida's Healthy Start provides universal screening beginning at birth with all newborns receiving the Healthy Start Newborn screening while in the hospital. After birth, developmental screenings are offered in numerous places including School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten, and Head Start programs, as well as through home visits.

Florida's screening rate is outstanding. The Medicaid Child Health Checkup handbook recommends that providers follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Bright Futures program for screenings under the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Testing

program (EPSDT). For children younger than one year, Florida had 100% screening rate with the number of screens (632,059) exceeding the expected number (409,346) for the periodicity schedule. For children between the ages of 1-2 there was an 84% screening rate; and for ages 3-5, there was an 85% screening rate. Of the children ages 0-5 eligible for EPSDT, 9.15% were referred for treatment to Early Steps (the Part C program for 0-36 months) or the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System (the Part B program for 3-21 years of age).³

Florida's high screening rates can be attributed partially to the fact that in 2010 the state went to the statewide implementation of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3rd edition (ASQ-3TM). Currently, every child who receives a School Readiness subsidy in Florida receives a screening for delays in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, and problem solving. The instrument, which takes 10-15 minutes to administer and 3 minutes to score, was chosen specifically for its psychometric properties, ease of use, and reporting features. For example, the technical report, which summarizes psychometric data on over 18,000 children at specific age breaks from birth to five-year-old, indicates that it has high overall validity (measures what it is intended to measure), reliability (measures it the same way repeatedly), sensitivity (can distinguish delays at small age intervals), and has a similar identification rate to other high-quality tools (concurrent validity).

The state has a contract with the ASQ-3TM for 240,000 screens annually. Early Learning Coalition staff and contractors have been trained to train on the ASQ-3TM screening protocol and these trainers have begun training teachers. The selection of one appropriate screening tool simplifies this area of the comprehensive assessment and assures that the right instrument is used for the right purpose.

The statewide implementation of the ASQ-3 is a good first step, but many high-need children fall through the cracks. Of particular concern are children in child welfare for whom national data indicate that 27.8% of children reported for maltreatment two years or younger would require early intervention; however, of those, only 13.4% had an IFSP indicating services. Similarly in Florida, many children involved in the child welfare system with delays are not getting services. Using national longitudinal data and Florida child welfare data, a total of 29,825 children ages 0-3 touched by Florida's child welfare system are estimated to have delays

³ Florida Agency for Health Care Administration analysis using 2011 screening data.

but did not receive Part C services in 2009-2010. For Florida children 0-5, an estimated 53,363 have delays but did not receive intervention services in 2009-2010. Although these are estimates, clearly the need exceeds the number of current children referred to Part C from child welfare.

Currently, there are both redundancies and gaps in the screening process, and poor communication regarding the follow-up on referrals. Through this application, Florida will improve access to services through a screening and referral process that is simple, well known and understood by families, coordinated, community based, and connected with the child welfare and early education systems. To accomplish this, the State's high-quality plan creates better communication linkages between its early childhood and early intervention programs. In partnership with the Children's Cabinet, the state will include as part of its Early Learning Data System the ability to share screening and referral data so that Early Learning Coalitions and their providers can see and share the screening histories of children and track the progress of children they have referred to early intervention programs.

A second goal for the state's high-quality plan includes creating a long-term plan for a comprehensive statewide system of care that includes a stronger system of referral once the screening tool has identified a potential delay, and determining and implementing the best methods to ensure effective follow-up services for children who receive a referral. The state has already created a Statewide Screening Task Force, led by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. The project proposed as part of this application will include researching and developing guidelines for a referral and follow-up process for families. The outcomes will include: 1) the pursuit of buy-in from stakeholders to endorse and participate in a comprehensive, coordinated system, and, (2) the production of a final report that reflects a review of national research to seek effective approaches to the referral process in Florida and includes any Task Force recommendations.

Component 2: Ongoing, observation-based assessment used for formative purposes and to inform instruction

On-going, observation-based assessment is a key component to quality early care and education, and serves a number of important purposes. At the most basic level, early childhood assessment reinforces good early childhood practice. The act of assessing, for example, reinforces for teachers the key elements of school readiness. In addition, good observation-based

assessment tools provide research-based progressions of child development so teachers know what they are seeing and what to expect next. Most importantly, these assessments give a good indication of the developmental level of children, so teachers can tailor instruction to a child's particular areas of need. This use of observation-based assessments is critical to improving the outcomes of high-need children who may enter early childhood programs at vastly different levels than same-aged peers who are not high need.

Programs receiving School Readiness funding in Florida are required by law to conduct a pre- and post-test of children. Accordingly, most early childhood programs in Florida administer one of a number of observation-based early childhood assessment instruments, including the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile or E-LAP (48.5 percent), Teaching Strategies GOLD (6.1 percent), the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum (18.2 percent), the Child Observation Record (3 percent), or Galileo, Work Sampling, or something else (39.4 percent).⁴

Currently, assessment practices across the state are determined independently by each of Florida's 31 Early Learning Coalitions. Therefore, the first goal of the state's high-quality plan related to observation-based assessment is to streamline the use of different observation-based assessments and improve formative assessment practices. The state will create a list of approved observation-based early childhood assessments that have been vetted to ensure that they are designed for formative assessment, have strong psychometric properties, align to the state's early learning standards, and have web-based data reporting capabilities.

In addition, the assessment tools will be vetted to ensure that they can meet the standards and reporting requirements of multiple public programs. For example, approved assessment instruments must align to the Florida early learning standards and Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, as well as be able to produce reports that meet the requirements of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), satisfy Head Start program monitors, as well as any relevant School Readiness and VPK regulations. Recently, the Association of Early Learning Coalitions (an association of the Executive Directors of all 31 early learning coalitions) issued a statement of commitment to adopt Teaching Strategies GOLD statewide, which means that the Coalitions will begin moving toward the use of one assessment system that will feed data

⁴ Results are from a recent survey of early childhood programs. Note that percentages do not sum to 100 because providers may be using different tools for infant and toddler and preschool children.

into the state's data system (see section E-2). This assessment tool aligns to the multiple standards discussed above and has the capability to generate reports that meet the reporting requirements of federal and state early childhood programs. Having the progress of children measured by one assessment system will significantly streamline assessment system, decrease the probability of redundancy, and make the interpretation of the results easier for the state.

The second goal is to ensure that every early childhood educator is appropriately trained in observation-based assessment to enable to use the assessments results to inform their classroom practices. This is discussed in section (d) below.

Component 3: Program assessment, including classroom-level measures of environmental quality and teacher-child interactions

Program assessment, including classroom-level measures of environmental quality and teacher-child interactions, is an essential component of ensuring high-need children are in high-quality care. Currently, Florida state statute defines broad parameters with regard to early childhood program assessment. For example, statute requires that Early Learning Coalitions define the conditions under which an early learning program can receive funding from the School Readiness program, but does not specify the program assessment tool to be used or the score to be achieved. Accordingly, the state's Early Learning Coalitions have developed a variety of program assessment processes.

The Environmental Rating Scales developed by Harms, Clifford & Cryer are the most frequently used program assessment tools. Implementation of the tool varies, with some coalitions utilizing coalition staff (trained by the developers), others contracting with a vendor trained in use of the instrument, and still others encouraging providers to self-evaluate using the tool.

Given the current context, the state has two goals regarding program assessment. The first is working with the Association of Early Learning Coalitions to develop consistency in the reliability and validity of ERS scores across the state, and the scores on the ERS that would disqualify a program from being a school readiness provider. Prior to the RTT-ELC announcement, Florida had moved to build its existing ERS assessor capacity. By the end of 2012, there will be ERS assessor training for approximately 75 additional assessors to reliability on the different ERS tools, and a Train the Trainer system in place in Florida. As part of the

pilot and validation study of the TQRIS, the state will assess the effectiveness of the subscales in predicting positive child outcomes in order to minimize assessment of inputs and maximize assessments leading to the greatest child outcomes.

The second goal involves the introduction of the CLASS as a technical assistance tool for early learning programs. As discussed in Section B of this application, the state will use CLASS as part of its Tier Quality Rating and Improvement System. To complement this work, the state will provide CLASS assessment and training to the Early Learning Coalitions to use with their programs to help them improve their TQRIS rating. A number of coalitions have begun to use CLASS as an additional program assessment tool, and this will be a welcome addition for the coalitions.

Component 4: A kindergarten readiness assessment

Florida has a well-developed early kindergarten readiness assessment system. This assessment is discussed in detail in Section E-1 of this proposal.

Component 5: System Monitoring and Evaluation

The purpose of system monitoring and evaluation is to answer big picture questions about the system that guide both short- and long-term system planning. System monitoring refers to a process of on-going data analysis to ensure that program elements are operating correctly and working together so that children meet the expectations set forth in the early learning standards. System evaluation, on the other hand, allows for the independent review of the system by a third-party evaluator using sophisticated methods that allow the state to understand the impact of its approach, and validate the data collected by the various pieces of the assessment system.

As part of Florida's high-quality plan, the state will create the Florida Early Childhood Research and Evaluation Committee consisting of the best researchers in Florida and nation, the Florida State Board of Education, and well as representatives from each program area including, Head Start, Migrant Head Start and Indian Head Start; the Florida School Readiness Program; the Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program; the Maternal, Infant, and Preschool Home Visitation Program; IDEA Parts B and C; and Title I. The committee of the whole will meet every six months to determine the direction of the state's early childhood research agenda, but will also be organized into subcommittees based on the system components that will meet monthly and carry on the substantive work of the committee.

The research committee and its staff will have three roles. The first is to develop a monitoring system to analyze data and publish a “state of the system” report to the governor and the legislature based on the data collected by the new data system (described in section E-2). The reporting will provide both process and outcome analysis of the reforms articulated in this plan. The second is to develop a simple reporting dash board that will give communities easy access to information about program quality and school readiness information in their area. The third is to oversee and broader impact evaluation of the system to determine the impact that the system is having on children. This will involve a quasi-experimental design and an independent review team.

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators’ understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

The state has, and will continue, to dedicate significant resources to working with early childhood programs to strengthen their understanding of the purposes and uses of different types of assessment. Beginning in 1986 with the implementation of IDEA, Florida has invested in a variety of education and training in this regard. Extensive statewide and local training and technical assistance has been provided over the years and will continue to be provided. Webinars, online courses, college courses and conference presentations have been offered in numerous venues including the Head Start Annual Conference, the Florida Early Childhood Association and the Summer Early Learning Conference.

In 2008 the Florida Children’s Forum conducted a statewide training conference on screening and assessment, and developed training materials for early intervention and child care providers, the *Making a Difference* series. The statewide system of training will be strengthened under this high-quality proposal, relying on the dissemination of existing assessment materials.

The Florida Children’s Forum has previously developed a comprehensive training program, *Making a Difference: Best Practices in Screening, Assessment and Curriculum Mean Quality Outcomes for Children* to equip leaders in the field with the basic terms and types of evaluation in early childhood programs, and how these are used in daily practice. These include the evaluation of child development (screening, observational assessment, and norm-based

assessments), the link between child assessment and curriculum usage, and overall evaluation of early childhood programs.

In addition, in order to help programs make informed choices in their selection of assessment tools, the Florida Partnership on School Readiness commissioned the *Birth to Three Screening and Assessment Resource Guide 2004* which lists the psychometric properties and other important considerations of the available instruments. Information in the report included the reliability and validity of the instruments, the developmental appropriateness of administration formats, and the amount of training necessary to achieve reliable and valid results.

We also propose a strengthening of the statewide system of laboratory and demonstration preschools, identifying them as major partners in the use of assessment to improve classroom teaching and school readiness.

In sum, in addition to the support that has been provided, the fact that the state has purchased and provided training on one screening tool has highlighted both the importance and purpose of early childhood screening and referral among early childhood educators. In addition, the planned approval process for a limited number of observation-based assessments and the ELC Association's commitment to go with GOLD will allow the state to target resources on appropriately administering this tool across the state. Perhaps most importantly, early childhood programs in the state will be held accountable for training program staff on the different types of assessment. This area has been included as part of the rating system of the state's proposed TQRIS. Accordingly, the state will provide support and hold programs accountable for the assessment practices taking place within the system.

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs

Florida has made significant progress in reducing duplication and coordinating services for children with high needs who are served by multiple programs. Florida's Transition Project has provided technical assistance for more than a decade to ensure sharing assessment information across programs, particularly at age 3 when children move out of the Part C system.

Although programs don't all use the same screening and assessment tools, interagency agreements have allowed Head Start, VPK, School Readiness and Part C programs to share assessment results across programs, eliminating the cumbersome and costly process of re-screening and re-assessment. Many programs have also worked out agreements with pediatricians to receive screening information so there is alignment with overall health care.

Healthy Start has a state-of-the-art data system called the Well Family System, a maternal child and family health program and case management system designed to allow multiple agencies to manage services and activities in complex family situations with common family support plans. The web-based system reduces duplication or the chance of clients "falling through the cracks" and streamlines the process of delivering services.

Moreover, each component of Florida's comprehensive assessment system has a distinct purpose and provides information that either directly or indirectly affects the quality of care received by children with high needs. The implementation of the ASQ-3 as the state's screening tool allows for a uniformity of screening that is collected and reported. All early educators in the state will be familiar with the reporting format of the tool and how to interpret the results. Results will be housed in the state's data system so they can be accessed by authorized personnel to avoid duplicating the screening process. Also, the plan to limit the number of assessment systems (and the ELC's choice to use GOLD) will streamline the number of observation-based tool used in the state to those that can be used across program contexts and meeting multiple reporting requirements.

Recently, the Florida State Board of Education mandated that some VPK programs implement a pre- and post-test for their children, making the assessment requirements the same for the VPK and School Readiness Programs. This action further aligns the assessment processes in the state.

Finally, the Early Learning Data System and PLATIUM represent to two data systems that will be used to coordinate data and share assessment results. These systems are discussed in section E-2.

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services

Florida has significantly invested in training and will continue to do so. In terms of child screening, statewide trainings have been provided on Bright Futures, DECA, ASQ, ASQ-SE, and others to help programs administer the tools effectively. As noted, extensive training has been and continues to be provided on the ASQ by the Early Learning Coalitions. In terms of child assessment, the state will be providing additional training through this grant. In terms of program assessment, authors of the Environmental Rating Scales have trained numerous teams to achieve reliability in utilizing the scales. Head Start has received extensive training and technical assistance on the Galileo Assessment Technology and Galileo K-12 Online systems.

Assessment is a critical part of Florida's early childhood system and the reform agenda outlined in this proposal. Given this fact and that programs will be held accountable for their assessment practices through the TQRIS, training the states early childhood workforce on the different components of the comprehensive assessment system will be critical. Accordingly, the state will offer a combination of state-developed training on assessment complimented by training offered by the assessment publishers. For example, the state will work with vendors to develop training modules related to properly administering observation assessments and will focus on five different areas of assessment:

1. Understanding the constructs to be measured as defined by the state early learning standards
2. Conducting good observations of children
3. Connecting observations to the constructs
4. How to use the body of evidence collected through the observations to make a determination of where the child is on the rating scale
5. How to use the child's rating to plan instruction.

These modules will be compliments by assessment training on the specific observation-based assessment tool.

In summary, Florida is well poised to successfully improve its comprehensive assessment system to enhance screening and assessment so that children with high needs don't fall through

the cracks; to better use technology to create efficiencies and better data sharing; to train teachers to observe and assess children's abilities to inform and individualize curriculum and instruction; to implement a more consistent system of program assessment and teacher-child interactions to be used for continuous quality improvement; and to conduct overall monitoring and evaluation to inform and improve the system so that all children achieve their highest potential.

(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;

(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;

(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and

(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--

(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, States must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (C)(3)(d).

Evidence for (C)(3)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of health standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(3)(a), submit--
 - The progression of health standards used in the Program Standards and the State's plans for improvement over time, including documentation demonstrating that this progression of standards appropriately addresses health and safety standards; developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up; health promotion including healthy eating habits, improved nutrition, and increased physical activity; oral health; and social and emotional development; and health literacy among parents and children;

Evidence for (C)(3)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support in meeting the health standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(3)(d):

- Documentation of the State's existing and future resources that are or will be used to address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs. At a minimum, documentation must address the screening, referral, and follow-up of all Children with High Needs; how the State will promote the participation of Children with High Needs in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care; how the State will promote healthy eating habits and improved nutrition as well as increased physical activity for Children with High Needs; and how the State will promote health literacy for children and parents.

(Not Applicable)

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

(a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;

(b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and

(c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (C)(4)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of family engagement standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(4)(a), submit--
 - The progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate family engagement standards used in the Program Standards that includes strategies successfully used to engage families in supporting their children's development and learning. A State's family engagement standards must address, but need not be limited to: parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages

- with community supports and adult and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development;
- Documentation that this progression of standards includes activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children’s education and development.

Evidence for (C)(4)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support on the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(4)(c):

- Documentation of the State’s existing resources that are or will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide, including through home visiting programs and other family-serving agencies and the identification of new resources that will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide.

(Not applicable)

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D).

(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;

(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (D)(1):

- To the extent the State has developed a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that meets the elements in criterion (D)(1), submit:
 - The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
 - Documentation that the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework addresses the elements outlined in the definition of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework in Definitions (section III) and is

designed to promote children's learning and development and improve outcomes.

Overview of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials

Florida has intentionally and methodically built a comprehensive professional development system, *Steps to Success*, with one major objective: make accessible high quality professional development for every early childhood educator statewide to facilitate optimal child learning and developmental outcomes. *The foundation and framework of this state-of-the-art professional development system, the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and a progression of credentials is fully implemented.* With RTT-ELC investment, Florida is poised to launch the nation's foremost professional development system that will serve as a model for improving the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of early childhood educator professional development while advancing student learning and healthy child development outcomes. Florida's Plan for Transformative Reform includes: *1) embedding Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners (hereafter referred to as Core Competencies) into Florida's entire early childhood educator training and education offerings to develop a common, statewide knowledge and use of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; 2) building a robust quality assurance system to ensure the Framework promotes children's learning and development; 3) evaluating Florida's professional development system for linkage to child outcomes; 4) expanding Florida's Steps to Success Career Pathway to ensure each step's alignment with the Core Competencies, its appropriateness for serving children with high needs, and its availability in English and Spanish; and 5) continuing Florida's successful stakeholder engagement strategies.*

Steps to Success, currently being piloted by 7 early learning coalitions (Miami-Dade/Monroe, Pinellas, Palm Beach, Southwest Florida, Brevard, Sarasota, and Escambia, a mix of large, medium, small, urban, and rural counties) with statewide implementation anticipated to be completed by 2013. It has the following components to support a high quality early childhood educator workforce:

- *Core Competencies* for every role in the field: Florida is a national leader in developing workforce knowledge and skill competencies for Practitioners, ECE Directors, Trainers,

Technical Assistance Specialists, Career Advisors, Targeted Competencies for Inclusion, Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialists, and Afterschool Practitioners (available at www.flstepstosuccess.com).

- ***The Steps to Success Career Pathway***: Florida’s pathway (see Appendix (D)(1)-1) provides a coordinated, sequential, and articulated route that leads to qualifications, credentials, or college degrees for the early childhood educator workforce through three pathway options: formal (college credit coursework), informal (non-college credit coursework) and hybrid (a combination of coursework designed to assist practitioners with moving from the informal to the formal pathway).
- ***Career Pathway Training (CPT)***: Comprehensive, evidence-based training standards ensure a robust quality assurance framework that uses the Outcome-Driven Training framework and CPT to make sure training builds not only knowledge but a transference of skills into the early childhood educator workplace.
- ***Career Pathway Training Modules***: These modules, 315 hours of training in the competencies (45 hours in each of the 7 core knowledge areas), ensure high quality instruction, intentionality in the use and understanding of the Core Competencies for Practitioners, and form the foundation for further pathway articulation.
- ***Job-embedded Communities of Practice***: Classroom practice improvement is supported through job-embedded exchanges involving coaches, directors, and peers with the goal of working together to enhance child outcomes.
- ***Steps to Success Registry***: The REGISTRY on-line information application, enhanced in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families as part of their current Child Care and Training Application (CCTA) and developed to the rigorous data standard specifications of the National Registry Alliance, supports professional development of early childhood educators, houses workforce data, guides career pathway options, and provides validation of professional development records.

Steps to Success is Florida’s initiative to promote, standardize, document, and validate gains in workforce knowledge within a competency framework. With RTT-ELC support, Florida will enhance these efforts, develop a fully realized progression of credentials along the career pathway, and serve as a national model.

Florida's Workforce and Competency Framework, Core Competencies, is a comprehensive framework that defines standards for high-quality early education practices. Developed collaboratively by the Early Care and Education Professional Development Initiative (PDI) Steering Committee (formed in 2007), the Core Competencies define the knowledge and skill standards early childhood educators should know and be able to do to facilitate child growth and development and partner effectively with families. Committee members include: Office of Early Learning, Department of Education's Part B and Early Learning Offices, Department of Health's Part C (Early Steps Office), and Department of Children and Families' Child Care Program Office; Head Start/Early Head Start; higher education state colleges and universities; private-for-profit, faith-based and family child care provider associations; state NAEYC affiliate organizations; early learning coalitions; children's services councils, and training and technical assistance organizations. The group garnered broad-scale input from workgroups and focus groups of teachers, directors, administrators, trainers, and other stakeholders; the Florida Early Childhood Framework; and Expanding Opportunities (an initiative focused on professional development system building to promote inclusion of children with disabilities into high quality early childhood environments facilitated by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center).

The competencies address expectations across a continuum of training, education, and experience, ranging from entry-level early childhood educators to those with extensive experience, and/or certifications, and degrees. Each subject area describes the knowledge and skills necessary to work with children birth through age five as well as their families. The information provides practical application for a wide variety of settings and programs. Core Competencies are aligned with the Early Learning and Developmental Standards (see Appendix (D)(1)-2); see Section C for more details on the Standards), and provide specific guidance for early childhood educators working with children with disabilities and English-language learners.

Review of the Core Competencies included incorporating several state and national standards.^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8} Similarly comprehensive processes, engaging subject matter experts on

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth through Age 8. Washington, DC: author.

² National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2007). NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria. Washington, DC: author.

³ Council for Professional Recognition. (2007). Preschool Competency Standards. Washington, DC: author.

⁴ Council for Professional Recognition. (2010). Infant/toddler Competency Standards. Washington, DC: author.

⁵ Zero to Three. (2010). National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative: Core Knowledge and Competencies. Washington, DC: author.

each topic while pulling from national research and best practices, were used to develop Core Competencies for ECE Directors, Trainer/Training Qualifications and Standards, Technical Assistance Specialists, Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialists, Career Advisors, and Afterschool Practitioners.

The Core Competencies for early childhood educators include:

- Culturally, linguistically, and ability-based appropriate strategies in:
 - Health, Safety, and Nutrition
 - Child Development and Learning
 - Curriculum Building Family and Community Relationships
- Teaching and Learning Environments and Interactions, including effective use of data to guide instruction, practices to support literacy and mathematics development, and behavior guidance strategies to reduce challenging behaviors and promote positive social development
- Observing, Documenting, Screening, and Assessing to Support Young Children and their Families, including comprehensive assessment systems
- Professionalism

Goal 1 for (D)(1)(a): *Embedding Core Competencies into Florida’s entire early childhood educator training and education offerings to develop a common, statewide knowledge and use of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.*

Research findings underscore the link between practitioner skill/effectiveness and specialized training based on a set of core competencies providing knowledge and skill standards, which facilitate child growth and development.^{9 10 11 12} Florida aligned its Core Competencies with existing training completion points (e.g., child care licensure training

⁶ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2001). *Early Childhood/Generalist Standards*. Arlington, VA: author.

⁷ National Association for Family Child Care. (2006). *NAFCC Accreditation Standards*. Salt Lake City, UT: author.

⁸ Division for Early Childhood of Council for Exceptional Children. (1993). *Personnel Standards for Early Education and Early Intervention*. Missoula, MT: author.

⁹ Burchinal, P. et al. (2009). Early Care and Education Quality and Child Outcomes. *OPRE Research to Policy Brief #1*.

¹⁰ Fukkink, R.G. & Lont, A. (2007). Does Training Matter? A Meta-analysis and Review of Caregiver Training Studies. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 22(3): 294-311.

¹¹ National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Council*. Washington, DC: National Reading Panel.

¹² Clements, D.H. & Sarama, J. (2008). Experimental Evaluation of the Effects of a Research-based Preschool Mathematics Curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal* 45: 443-494.

modules, National CDA, Associate and Bachelor Early Childhood Educator degree standards) during development (see Appendix (D)(1)-3).

Moving this alignment to embedded use of the competencies is the next goal. Activities will include revision of training opportunities on the informal career pathway, serving as a catalyst to implement the recommendations of the Florida Child Care Standards and Improvements Workgroup (see Appendix (D)(1)-4). To ensure child care providers have access to a qualified, ready workforce, state-mandated training for child care licensure be revised.

Changes will include:

Current Child Care Licensure Training Requirements	Anticipated Modifications
40 clock hours of training	40 clock hours of training aligned to Core Competencies, Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and TQRIS using Teaching Excellence Strategy
5 clock hours of Early Literacy training	5 clock hours of Early Literacy training aligned to Core Competencies, Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and TQRIS using Teaching Excellence Strategy
Florida Staff Credential – 1 staff with Credential for every 20 children	Credential alignment to Core Competencies, Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and TQRIS using Teaching Excellence Strategy
10 clock hours annually	10 clock hours annually aligned with Core Competencies

The revisions, planned during 2012-13, will utilize the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* (see (D)(2)); a series of short, high quality, web-based tutorials and technical assistance to support established training entities, such as early childhood educator associations, early learning coalitions, and other training entities. Revisions to the informal career pathway will significantly enhance content and integrate cutting edge technology.

Florida has a strong State College System with 27 of the 28 state community colleges providing some type of Associate’s degree in ECE and 13 providing some type of Bachelor’s degrees in ECE; however 12 have no articulation agreements in place to move early childhood educators from Associate’s to Bachelor’s degrees. Through RTT-ELC funding, Florida will create a universal course catalog across all higher education institutions and degrees to ensure

comprehensive alignment between degree programs, early childhood education coursework, Core Competencies, and the Early Learning and Developmental Standards. Through partnerships to include Palm Beach State College, University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, and the FCCECEN, technical assistance (via webinars, web-based tutorials, document development, data warehousing, and peer-to-peer exchange) will be available during 2012-13.

Goal 2 for (D)(1)(a): *Build a robust quality assurance system to ensure the Framework promotes children's learning and development.*

Outcome-Driven Training (ODT) design affords Florida the opportunity to assess the linkage between Core Competency training and the promotion of children's learning and development (ODT and Florida's Training/Trainer Approval System, see Appendix (D)(1)-5). ODT is supported by backward design theory.¹³ The success of the backward design method has been cited in studies and used in university-level research on teacher education.^{14 15} Unlike traditional training design, which focuses on content delivery, ODT addresses observable and influential behavior changes that impact classroom practices and creates meaningful results for children. The ODT framework will be utilized in efficacy testing of the training modules, and an evaluation of its effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development will be completed in 2013.

To date, 100 facilitators have been trained in the delivery of ODT, providing a strong foundation for Florida's training/trainer quality assurance series. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC includes 3 full-time trainers to build a cadre of 1,500 ODT train-the-trainers by 2014, ensuring sustainability of the quality assurance system.

Goal 3 for (D)(1)(a): *Evaluate Florida's professional development system for linkage to child outcomes.*

An overall evaluation of the linkage between professional development and children's outcomes will be completed by Florida's high-quality plan for system evaluation, as part of the

¹³ Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design*. Expanded 2nd Ed. USA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

¹⁴ Rose, D.H., & Meyer, A. (2002). *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

¹⁵ Rose, D.H., & Meyer, A. (2002). *Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

work of the Florida Early Childhood Research and Evaluation Committee (see Core Focus Area (C)(2)). The REGISTRY application database will assist in evaluating the professional development system for linkage to child outcomes. It will allow early childhood educators and trainers the ability to build a detailed list of professional accomplishments including educational and work history (See Core Focus Area E-2 for further information on the REGISTRY application).

Goal 4 for (D)(1)(b): *Expand Florida's Steps to Success Career Pathway to ensure each step's alignment with the Core Competencies, its appropriateness for serving children with high needs, and its availability in English and Spanish.*

Florida has a robust and inclusive Career Pathway. With RTT-ELC support, additional steps and opportunities for pathway advancement will be developed. Although there is not definitive evidence to define the optimal education and training levels required to impact child outcomes in early care and education settings, it is clear that early childhood educators with specialized training and education are more effective in enhancing children's learning and development.¹⁶ Of the 55,000+ early childhood educators in the approximately 23,000 child care programs (including licensed centers, licensed-exempt, licensed and registered family child care homes) across Florida, less than 4% report college degrees (303 with Bachelor's degrees and 1,748 with Associate's degrees according to the Department of Children and Families' Child Care Program Office training database). In the nation's largest Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK), with more than 165,000 children participating during 2010-11, 29% of Florida's VPK early childhood educators held a Bachelor's degree and 9% had an Associate's degree.¹⁷ And although Florida's Head Start grantees are making good progress on meeting professional development/college degree goals (30% with Bachelor's or graduate ECE degrees and 17% with Associate ECE degrees),¹⁸ many continue to struggle with access to and completion of degree programs. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC Funds includes building a strong and robust career pathway that supports all early childhood educators, most of whom enter the

¹⁶ Whitebook, M. & Ryan, S. (2011). Degrees in Context: Asking the Right Questions about Preparing Skilled and Effective Teachers of Young Children. National Institute for Early Education Research, 22.

¹⁷ Children's Movement. (2011). Voluntary prekindergarten program. Miami, FL; author.

¹⁸ Center for Law and Social Policy. (2010). Florida Head Start by the Numbers. Washington, DC: author.

profession on the informal pathway, in advancing their skills and knowledge through both informal and formal training and education opportunities.

Activities to support this goal include creation of an Advanced Professional Certificate (APC) with an Infant/Toddler and a Preschool Specialization appropriate for center-based and family early childhood educators by 2013. The new certificate will utilize recently developed *Career Pathway Training Modules*, aligned to *Core Competencies*, and delivered using the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* (see D(2)). The APC will be available on both the informal and formal career pathways (providing options for college credit and meeting the requirements for PELL grant scholarships), and training modules will be available in both English and Spanish. Movement to the advanced credential will be voluntary, but incentives will be provided via provision of 2,000 scholarships and incentive payments (\$300 per person) for credential completion.

To support the increasing number of early childhood educators in the formal pathway and provide additional recognition points on the career pathway, the Florida Plan for RTT-ELC includes expansion of the certificate option (with a range of 9 to 15 credit hours depending on the specialty area) in Florida's state colleges. Currently 7 colleges use this option, providing a certificate in preschool, infant/toddler, child care management, and/or special needs. With RTT-ELC support, the certificate option will be available in at least two-thirds of Florida's ECE degree-granting state colleges by the end of 2013. Special attention will be directed to embedding supports into all certificate coursework for serving children with high needs.

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) recently launched a new degree, the Bachelor in Early Care and Education (BECE), a multi-disciplinary degree designed specifically for early childhood educators, aligned with Core Competencies, and infused with courses to support serving children with high needs. The degree was designed, in partnership with Palm Beach State College, for early childhood educators whose goal is to remain in the field as early learning classroom teachers, early learning coaches, career advisors, technical assistance specialists, infant and toddler developmental specialists, and directors. As a Capstone Degree, the BECE allows the student to transfer all 60 credits of their Associate's ECE degree and complete the remainder of their general education degree requirements the last two years of the program, while working in the field. Two state colleges, Miami-Dade College and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSC), are offering the BECE, mirroring the FAU program. To encourage other

colleges to offer the BECE, experts in the degree development will assist other colleges in replicating the program during 2012-14. Additional on-line coursework and learning objectives will be developed for on-line delivery.

Florida has long been recognized nationally as the leader in articulation. The State's Common Course numbering system, statewide 2 + 2 articulation agreement, standardized prerequisites, and mutually supportive on-line student advising system (FACTS.org) have been the models that other states have adopted. As an example, there is clarity throughout the state as to the courses needed at both state colleges and universities to enter traditional teacher certification programs. With the development of the new BECE, commonality in the credentials and degrees that articulate into that degree must be addressed, as it has for other fields. Work will be completed during 2012-13 to reach an agreement on a common core of seven early childhood education courses, supportive of the seven core knowledge domains in the Core Competencies, to be offered in the lower level.

Goal 5 for (D)(1)(c): *Continue Florida's successful stakeholder engagement strategies.*

The PDI Steering Committee has been successful in engaging postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers to align professional development opportunities with the Core Competencies. The committee will continue to serve in an advisory capacity for Florida's *Steps to Success*. With RTT-ELC support, broader stakeholder engagement will be accomplished with specific targeting to engage those with expertise and knowledge in serving families with high needs. Florida's success in using social media will be expanded as a simple, cost-effective way to engage and inform early childhood educators in both English and Spanish throughout the project time period.

(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career

pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (D)(2)(c)(1) and (D)(2)(c)(2).

Overview of Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Drawing from the most effective practices in the field, research on adult learning and the latest technology advances, Florida has substantially implemented an infrastructure to build **high quality Early Childhood Educators** by improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities through **Steps to Success**. This emerging professional development system was conceptualized and built through a collaborative process engaging Florida's key early learning stakeholders detailed in

Section D1. Through this process, Florida ensured stakeholders worked together to design and build a system in which they have ownership, investment, and a commitment to implementation.

With RTT-ELC funding, Florida will be able to complete its system design and fully launch what has the potential to be the nation's most effective and far-reaching professional development system for early childhood educators. ***Florida's vision is the creation of a revolutionary, comprehensive, sustainable, cost-effective, high quality professional development system that is available, accessible, and affordable to all early childhood educators. Florida will use this vision to further develop our Plan for Transformative Reform – the Teaching Excellence Strategy.*** This strategy includes cutting-edge and interactive on-line learning, accessible to all, and developed specifically for early childhood educators with standards-based content, job-embedded communities of practice involving coaches and peer-to-peer exchange, and a learning management system. Part of this strategy includes the development of Early Learning On-line Training Modules by the University of Florida (UF). The on-line modules are stored in what is referred to as the LEAF system. The next step in the project is to integrate the LEAF system with the REGISTRY application. This and other strategies will make training widely available for early childhood educators in Florida, build strong supports for children with high needs, providing dynamic, new ways for higher education to partner with early learning coalitions, Head Start/Early Head Start grantees, and other professional development organizations. Florida's Plan for Transformative Reform includes the following goals: ***1) providing statewide access to Steps to Success professional development opportunities through the Teaching Excellence Strategy, delivering Core Competencies content through in-person courses, on-line courses, and communities of practices; 2) building upon existing director/administrator support efforts to create the Florida Directors' Leadership Institute; 3) enhancing state technical assistance services through the development of a Technical Assistance Specialist Credential; 4) expanding incentives and supports that promote professional improvement, advancement, and retention; and 5) building participation in the Registry to ensure comprehensive workforce data and reporting.***

There is not definitive evidence to identify the optimal education and training levels required to impact child outcomes in early care and education settings. Whitebook and Ryan (2011) note in their meta-analysis that to understand the relationship between early childhood educator's specialized education and child outcomes, several pieces of evidence need to be

further developed. Florida will actively assess these relationships to inform our statewide professional development system and make contributions nationally for the understanding of teaching and caring skill development of early childhood educators. First, research shows alignment is needed between early childhood educator competencies and adult learning principles with informal and formal specialized ECE training, education curricula, and course requirements. Evaluations of the content and quality of preparation programs need to provide evidence of effectiveness and place more attention on the adult work environment and adult well-being in the workplace. An additional area for focus relates to the ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity of the workforce.

As recommended by national experts, Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC:

- Supports research and policy to connect what we expect in terms of early childhood educator competencies with credentials and the quality of the work environment *via linkage between the Core Competencies, Career Pathway, Training Modules, ODT, and Florida’s TQRIS,*
- Revamps the content and structure of early childhood educator higher education and professional development to include more practice-based opportunities and identify issues of equity *via the combination of content instruction and job-embedded communities of practice methodology in the Teaching Excellence Strategy*
- Strengthens the requirements for higher education coursework to ensure attainment of the necessary knowledge and skills as identified in the Core Competencies *via alignment supports and resources*
- Helps Florida continue to build a robust new longitudinal data system to track workforce demographics and educational characteristics *via the **Steps to Success Registry** and supported by the statewide REGISTRY application with a goal of linking the REGISTRY application with Department of Education’s State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)*
- Expands workforce research focused on the effectiveness of informal and formal higher education programs *via ODT quality assurance and the Florida Early Learning Research and Evaluation Committee*

Goal 1 for (D)(2): Statewide implementation of the Teaching Excellence Strategy

Florida's Early Learning *Teaching Excellence Strategy* includes the coordinated delivery of the following core components: *Career Pathway Training* (CPT) both online and classroom college coursework provided, job-embedded communities of practice, smart technology and distance learning supports, and career advising, linked through the *Career Hub*, a learning management system. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC includes moving beyond the pilot in 2012 of the CPT to statewide implementation of *Steps to Success* through a partnership with Palm Beach State College, the UF Lastinger Center for Learning, and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium and the FCCECEN. Because the research indicates that communities of practice strengthen the transfer of learning to the workplace,¹⁹ Florida has made a commitment to infuse this approach into non-credit trainings and identified college credit coursework.

A community of practice consists of a group of teachers and administrators who agree to routinely work together to produce improved student outcomes in the field. Florida's model, which includes job-embedded communities of practice, is based on the state and nationally recognized (e.g., 2011 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education from the Association of Teacher Educators; 2004 and 2011 outstanding Staff Development Practices by the Florida Association for Staff Development; Nate Gage Award from Teaching and Teacher Education Journal) work at the UF Lastinger Center for Learning. A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of the model with findings specific to its positive impact on children with high needs.^{20 21} Through job-embedded professional development, teachers and center directors, with outside expertise and facilitation, learn new knowledge and skills as it relates to the children and context in their own programs. Unlike traditional professional preparation programs, early childhood educators learn to teach within the early learning classroom context. Group members establish and publicly state learning goals, help each other think about better teaching practices, look closely at curriculum and student work, identify issues that affect student learning and healthy child development, and collaboratively assess student work. A job-embedded

¹⁹ Pianta, Robert C., Andrew J. Mashburn, Jason T. Downer, Bridget K. Hamre, and Laura Justice. (2008). Effects of Web-mediated Professional Development Resources on Teacher-child Interactions in Pre-kindergarten Classrooms. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 23:431-451.

²⁰ Adams, A. & Dana, N. (Eds.) (2005). *Actualizing Job Embedded/Teacher Professional Development and Teacher Inquiry in High Poverty/High Need Schools in the State of Florida: A Report on the Impact of Year One of the Lastinger Center Teacher Fellows Project*. Gainesville, FL: Lastinger Center Clearinghouse.

²¹ Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A Review of Research on the Impact of Professional Learning Communities on Teaching Practice and Student Learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 80-91.

community of practice is facilitated by a coach who helps the group build a sense of trust to learn and master techniques that sharpen self-insight, promote creativity and rigor, support improvements in pedagogy and content knowledge, and exert positive pressure and candid, usable peer feedback.

Comprehensive one-stop on-line Career Advising will be included in the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* to guide users through the selection of career goals and pathways for obtaining them. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC will build upon FACTS.org, a college advising website in use statewide developed by Florida Department of Education. Other existing career advising resources developed specifically for early childhood educators, including the Core Competencies for Career Advisors and Career Compass (an on-line career advising process), will be integrated into the system. A universal registration process for distance learning courses among Florida state colleges and universities—the first of its kind in the country—is currently under development. Early childhood educators statewide will be able access the website and successfully:

- submit a registry practitioner or trainer application
- find and register for career pathway trainings
- apply for different academic scholarship and financial awards opportunities
- search available career opportunities through the jobs listing board
- explore membership and leadership in various local, state and national early childhood and afterschool professional associations
- access and download the *Florida Career Compass*, a guide for career pathway self-advisement, for a concise explanation of how to complete key professional milestones.

Also integral to career advising is the *Career Hub*, an on-line mechanism for the coordination of professional development planning among faculty, coaches, career advisors, other technical assistance specialists, directors, and early childhood educators. Cloud and smart technology supports will be provided via an in-kind donation (estimated at \$5 per early childhood educator per month) from Microsoft Live@edu hosted, co-branded communication and collaboration services including email, email storage, calendars, document sharing, instant messaging, video chat, and mobile email. This service will continue after RTT-ELC at no charge to Florida's early childhood educators.

Coordination of these state-of-art supports, Microsoft Live@edu, the Career Advising website, the Career Hub, and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, with *Steps to Success Registry*, *Early Learning Data System*, and *Platinum* (see Focus Area (E)(2) for additional information) will be accomplished through an interface that allows coordinated enrollment and data transfer. All participants in the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* will be enrolled in the *Steps to Success Registry*, quickly building a robust, real-time, workforce data system.

To ensure a successful implementation of the *Teaching Excellence Strategy*, the *National Research Implementation Network at the University of North Carolina* will be consulted. Florida's high-quality plan for system evaluation through statewide integration and implementation of the Early Learning Data System, PLATINUM, and the Registry (see Section (E)(2)) and the work of the Florida Early Childhood Research and Evaluation Committee (see Section (C)(2)) will also provide essential information regarding the impact of Florida's professional development strategies on classroom practices and children's outcomes, identifying needed changes in investments and approaches.

Goal 2 of (D)(2): Creation of the Directors' Leadership Institute

Because directors drive the success of any quality enhancement effort,²² the *Steps to Success Teaching Excellence Strategy* includes the development of a Directors' Leadership Institute. These efforts will include a strong component focused on relationship building based on the Theory of Emotional Intelligence.²³ The role of leaders as facilitators of relationships is also supported by work done at the Wellesley Center for Women.²⁴ Florida's current Level 1 Director Credential for licensure provides a common knowledge base but leaves many directors and family child care providers unprepared for managing the complex needs of an early learning program. The Institute will incorporate similar efforts in Miami-Dade (The Early Childhood Administrators Institute) and Hillsborough Counties (Early Childhood Leadership Center) and build upon their partnerships to provide:

- Alignment of Levels 1, 2, and 3 of the Florida Director Credential with the Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Directors; and development of additional options and improved access to ECE Director College-credit Certificates by 2013

²² McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership. (2008). *Who's Caring for the Kids?* Wheelings, IL: author.

²³ Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

²⁴ Wellesley Center for Women. (2008). *Gen Y Goes to School*. Research & Action Report. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College.

- Web-based tutorials on staff development, including *Steps to Success*, Core Competencies for Practitioners, Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, Quality Counts, Florida’s Comprehensive Assessment System; Florida’s Focus on Five Protective Factors; Florida’s “Everybody’s a Teacher” Initiative; accreditation options; and a variety of business topics (e.g., budgeting, human resources, technology skills, legal issues, team building, wage scales, working with high need children and families)
- Leadership, mentoring and coaching, and program assessment training
- Access to leadership retreats, cloud and smart technology applications developed to maximize coaching and mentoring opportunities
- Connection to a clearinghouse of resource, the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, a repository of professional development resources

Special attention will be directed to including opportunities and resources for family child care providers to participate in the Institute and gain access to advanced credential options. This work will be coordinated through partnerships with those that have strong connections with early learning directors and administrators such as provider associations, the Florida Head Start Association, and early learning coalitions. The Directors’ Institute will also be coordinated in conjunction with leadership training for Public School Principals through Florida’s RTT for K-12.

Goal 3 of (D)(2): Creation of Technical Assistance Specialist Credential

Technical Assistance Specialists are essential to Florida’s *Steps to Success*. The Office of Early Learning houses state-level technical assistance specialists who specialize in infant/toddler, preschool, inclusion, and school-age issues, and support early learning coalition staff providing technical assistance to early childhood educators at the local level. Greater formalization of these roles will maximize their impact on increasing student learning, development, and outcomes. Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC includes development of a Technical Assistance Specialist Credential. The credential will include training on *Florida Core Competencies for Technical Assistance Specialists*, *Targeted Competencies for Specialists Supporting Inclusion*, *Early Learning and Developmental Standards*, *Steps to Success*, *TQRIS*, *Florida’s Comprehensive Assessment System*, *Florida’s Focus on the Five Protective Factors*, *Florida’s “Everybody’s a Teacher” Initiative*, web-based system resources (e.g., *Career Hub*,

PLATINUM, The Early Learning Data System), mentoring and coaching. Special attention will ensure the credential prepares recipients to provide support in family child care settings, center-based settings, and facilitate improvements targeting children with high needs.

To ensure a strength-based approach to diversity and inclusiveness, the credential will also include *Leading for Racial Equity* training, a research and outcomes-based model for heightening awareness and skills of professionals. The National Equity Project has demonstrated success in improving early childhood educator effectiveness and student achievement among populations of vulnerable children, dramatically reducing achievement gaps in partners schools with high rates of children living in poverty and English-language learners.²⁵ Specialists will have access to cloud and smart phone applications developed to maximize coaching and mentoring opportunities and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, a repository of professional development resources. Scholarships and incentive payments for credential completion (\$300 per person) will be provided for 500 participants to build a sustainable foundation of specialists. The Technical Assistance Specialist Credential will be developed in the framework of *Teaching Excellence Strategy* and be available in 2013. An evaluation of the efficacy of the credential will be conducted and reported by 2015.

Goal 4 for (D)(2): Expansion of incentives and supports for professional development

Florida invests \$3 million of its annual budget, matched by local dollars, to fund the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood ® Scholarship program. There were approximately 3,500 participants during 2009-10 with 42% working toward an Associate's degree and 34% working toward a Florida Staff Credential.²⁶ Scholarships (approximately \$2.9 million in supports) are also provided through partnerships between early learning coalitions and other local organizations. Children's Services Councils (CSC), local tax-supported agencies, are major partners in 8 counties in providing scholarships and professional development supports through local QRIS pilot systems. Overwhelmingly, early childhood educators enrolled in college credit coursework as part of these partnerships report that the scholarships were a primary reason that they enrolled in and continued their education.

To meet Goal 4 of (D)(2) by expanding incentives and support for professional development, Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC focuses on the expansion of scholarships. The

²⁵ National Equity Project. (2010). *Partner Schools Closing Gaps*. Oakland, CA: author.

²⁶ The Children's Forum. (2010). *T.E.A.C.H. annual report*. Tallahassee, FL: author.

availability of scholarships will increase the number of highly-skilled early childhood educators (including child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, VPK, and other public school programs) with advanced credentials on the informal career pathway, and Associate's and Bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education on the formal career pathway. An infusion of scholarships and incentive payments will also build sustainability for *Steps for Success* through the creation of mentors, coaches, and Technical Assistance Specialists among practitioners working in the field. Scholarships and incentive payments for credential completion will be awarded to 2,000 Advanced Certificate Program participants, 500 Director Credential participants, 500 Technical Assistance Specialists Credential participants, and a minimum of 300 Associate or Bachelor degree seekers. Scholarship recipients will be required to commit to serve as a mentor or coach for a minimum of 3 years.

Florida recognizes the need to sustain and expand the availability of scholarships beyond their current availability through T.E.A.C.H. and local partnerships. Each public college and university in Florida has an independent Foundation, with a major focus on raising funds for scholarships. These foundations take advantage of state policy for legislatively appropriated matching funds designed to encourage private donations for scholarships. Budget considerations have put most matching programs on hold but the Florida Legislature continues to support matching funds for "first generation in college" students (endowments of \$16 million are currently available), benefiting many early childhood educators. Even without the matching funds, the individual College and University foundations have significant scholarship funds that can be tapped locally when other funds are not available. In addition, the Florida College System State-level Foundation and the Board of Governors for the State University System Foundation leaders are supportive of building early learning scholarships.

Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC will also utilize the statewide implementation of Florida's TQRIS, to systematically implement policies and incentives to promote professional improvement and career advancement. Florida's TQRIS increases accountability by linking tiered program funding and other incentives to improvements in quality, including advances on the Career Pathway (see Core Focus Area B).

Goal 5 for (D)(2): Publicly reporting aggregated workforce data

Workforce data and reporting is essential to understanding the ability of the workforce to meet the needs of children, particularly those with high needs, as well as determining which policies and investments lead to a skilled and stable early childhood educator workforce.²⁷ There are several local efforts, often associated with local QRIS programs, which develop and release workforce reports (e.g., Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties). A statewide workforce study is currently under development through the State Early Childhood Advisory Council with an expected release date in 2012. The *Steps to Success Registry* provides a mechanism to collect statewide workforce data. This data will be collected via the REGISTRY application which will enable early childhood educators within Florida to submit their professional accomplishments including educational and work accomplishments. The REGISTRY application will adhere to the National Registry Alliance standards, ensuring that Florida can collect, analyze, and report aggregated data of the early learning workforce and participate in other national data collaborative initiatives. Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC includes moving to statewide implementation of the Registry; linking the Registry to the *Career Hub*, the *Teaching Excellence Strategy*, and TQRIS, building incentives for statewide participation; and building additional linkages with other partners, including Head Start/Early Head Start, public schools, migrant programs, tribal child care, and Part B and Part C providers to ensure broad scale participation. Once operational, Florida will release an annual Early Learning Workforce Report, and data important to making policy and funding decisions will be available in real time for easy access by state leaders and early learning coalitions.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework					
	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	9	20	30	50	70

²⁷ Kipnis, F. & Whitebook, M. (2011). Workforce Information: A Critical Component of Coordinated State Early Care and Education Data Systems. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider	980	1200	1600	3,000	5,000
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Although all Florida credentials have been aligned to Florida’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, the alignment (see Attachment (D)(1)-3) is to course standards, and the competencies have yet to be embedded within the coursework. RTT-ELC work focuses on embedding the competencies in all informal and formal pathway options resulting in a comprehensive alignment, and the numbers above reflect that goal. There are 28 State Colleges, 11 State Universities, 31 early learning coalitions, and 35 other training entities in Florida. Baseline data reflects the actual number of training and education entities – one State College, one University program, and seven Early Learning Coalitions – that have aligned training, education, and credentials to the Core Competencies.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
From lowest to highest										
Florida Staff Credential	56,177 ^a	Not available ^b	56,250	Not available ¹	56,500	Not available ^b	56,750	Not available ^b	57,000	Not available ^b
Advanced Professional Certificate – Preschool (to be developed)	0	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Advanced Professional Certificate – Infant/Toddler (to be developed)	0	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
College Certificates in Preschool, Infant-Toddler, Child Care Management, Inclusion	235 ^c	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Technical Assistance Specialist Credential (to be developed)	0	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Director Credential - Level I	9,328	Not available ^b			9,328	Not available ^b	9,328	Not available ^b	9,328	Not available ^b
Director Credential - Level II	5,161	Not available ^b			5,161	Not available ^b	5,161	Not available ^b	5,161	Not available ^b
Director Credential – Advanced	3,656	Not available ^b			4,000	Not available ^b	4,500	Not available ^b	5,000	Not available ^b

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
From lowest to highest										
AA\AS in field	938	Not available ^b			1,000	Not available ^b	1,250	Not available ^b	1,500	Not available ^b
AA\AS out of field +480 of ECE	810	Not available ^b			810	Not available ^b	810	Not available ^b	810	Not available ^b
BA/BS in field	303	Not available ^b			400	Not available ^b	450	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
College Education^d	1,199	Not available ^b				Not available ^b		Not available ^b		Not available ^b
BECE	164	Not available ^b			300	Not available ^b	450	Not available ^b	600	Not available ^b
Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialist	366	Not available ^b			400	Not available ^b	450	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Master Degree ECE/CD^e	Not available	Not available			100	Not available ^b	200	Not available ^b	300	Not available ^b
Ph.D. ECE/CD^e	Not available	Not available			75	Not available ^b	100	Not available ^b	150	Not available ^b

*Data available:
Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.*

Early Steps State Office Infant Toddler Developmental Specialist database

^a *Florida Staff Credential requirements can be met via several options, including completion of the National Child Development Associate (CDA), several approved Florida equivalencies to the CDA, or ECE college Associate or Bachelor degrees/coursework. The number of degreed practitioners are also included in the total number of Florida Staff Credentials – as degrees are one option for recognition as having a Florida Staff Credential. The number listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.*

^b *Percentages were not available because the number of early childhood educators listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.*

^c *The baseline number of college certificates reflects the actual number of certificates awarded by the one State College that has integrated Core Competencies into all coursework. Six additional State Colleges award certificates. During RTT-ELC, efforts will be made to encourage all State Colleges to utilize the certificate options and to integrate Core*

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	From lowest to highest	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#

Competencies into coursework.

^d*Data collected prior to system enhancements categorized all degrees as 'Education' and did not differentiate between degrees*

^e*Data on graduate degrees is not currently collected and tracked; Steps to Success Registry will collect this information.*

Additional notes:
Baseline data are actual, data available in the Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Note: The total available points for (E)(1) and (E)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E).

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under Section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry

Florida has a fully implemented system that measures the status of children’s readiness to begin kindergarten. Each year over 180,000 children in Florida are assessed for kindergarten readiness through the administration of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). The FLKRS is mandated by Section 1002.69, Florida Statutes, and requires that each school district “administer the statewide kindergarten screening to each kindergarten student within the first 30 instructional days of each school year.” Nonpublic schools may also administer the statewide kindergarten screener to students who were enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

Florida’s system to measure learning and development at kindergarten entry consists of two measures administered by the kindergarten teacher. The observation-based measure is The Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS™), which contains 19 items that measure all of the Essential Domains of School Readiness including language and literacy, cognition, mathematics, science, approaches to learning, physical development, and social and emotional development. The FLKRS also includes the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR). In kindergarten the first administration measures alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, listening comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge.

The results from these assessments are shared with kindergarten teachers to inform their instruction and with parents to inform them of their child’s readiness for kindergarten. In addition, the results of ECHOS and the first two measures of FAIR are used to generate a Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Provider Readiness Rate, which is used to evaluate the performance of state funded VPK providers.

Since the VPK program was established in 2005, the Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate has been calculated as the percentage of children who are deemed ready on either one or both of the measures of the kindergarten entry assessment system. VPK providers with the lowest percentage of children deemed ready for kindergarten (those falling in the bottom 15 percent of providers) are considered “Low Performing Providers” and put on probation. During the probationary period, providers are required to engage in a state-monitored improvement plan that includes purchase and use of a Florida Department of Education-approved curriculum and

pre- and post- assessment. If after two consecutive years the VPK provider still falls in the Low Performing Provider category, the provider becomes ineligible to receive VPK funding.

Policies passed by the legislature in the spring of 2011 and put into effect by the Florida State Board of Education in the fall of 2011 have made the calculation of Kindergarten Readiness Rates more rigorous. First, rather than look at whether the child was deemed school ready “on one or both” of the measures (ECHOS and FAIR), the child will have to be deemed proficient on **both** to be considered ready for kindergarten. In addition, the legislation removed the 15 percent cap on low performing providers. In other words, rather than simply looking at an arbitrary point at the lower end of the distribution of providers to determine low performing, the legislation asks the State Board of Education to set criteria on the percentage of children that a provider must ensure is school ready. On September 20, 2011 the State Board of Education set the percentage at 70 percent to determine low performing status. Under the new criteria, identification of a low performing provider no longer depends on where the provider ranks on the distribution of providers, but on the percentage of children served by a VPK provider that have achieved kindergarten readiness.

The State Board of Education will adopt new rules that ensure that a low-performing provider will administer a pre- and post-assessment to all children served. The purpose of the administration of the assessment is to ensure that instruction is differentiated for each student. The Board will also adopt rules regarding the criteria for a VPK provider to claim a “good cause exemption” for failing to meet the state’s Kindergarten Readiness Rate.

Next Steps for Florida’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessment System

Florida is proud of the kindergarten readiness assessment system it has built in the state, and has targeted critical parts of its early childhood reform strategy to the continuous improvement of the system. The importance of the kindergarten readiness data to improving the school readiness of high-need children in the state cannot be overstated, so the goals moving forward involve the continued improvement of the quality of data that is collected, particularly for high-need children, as well as improvements in how the data are used to assess program effectiveness.

The first goal in the state’s high-quality plan around kindergarten assessment is to draw upon the latest research in assessment practices, psychometrics, as well as the latest innovations

in technology, to ensure alignment to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds. A goal of the state is to obtain more predictive assessment of later school success, particularly for high needs children. This goal will be accomplished by issuing an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for a new assessment instrument that is developed specifically for the purpose of measuring the extent to which Florida's children have met the expectations set forth in the standards upon entering kindergarten. The new tool will be developed and tested in the state, and its success as an instrument will be measured based on its alignment to the standards, as well as whether it has good assessment properties for all children especially those with high-needs, and its predictive validity.

Under the current system the data is not connected well between programs serving children birth through four and those attending the public K-20 education system. One of the stated goals is to have a universal student identification number that follows children from the onset of services (VPK or earlier) through their experience in the PK-20 system. The reason this is a goal is the aim of policy makers to have accurate longitudinal data to show the outcomes of various services provided to children.

As discussed in Section A of this proposal, Florida has the strongest commitment to prekindergarten education of any state in the country. The state spends approximately \$400 million each year to allow every child in the state to attend prekindergarten if desired by his or her family, and has more four year old children in its prekindergarten system than any other state in the country according to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). As such, the state places a high priority on ensuring that the money it spends on its prekindergarten program produces school-ready children.

(a) The kindergarten readiness assessment is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

Florida's current kindergarten readiness assessment system uses both a comprehensive, observation-based assessment, as well as a direct assessment of key early literacy skills. These two measures address all of Essential Domains of School Readiness and align to the state's early learning and development standards. For example, the Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS™), measures the following constructs:

- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics
- Social and Personal Skills, including Approaches to Learning
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Development and Fitness
- Creative Arts

As discussed above, the FAIR provides more in-depth measures of a child's early literacy skills including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and comprehension.

As evidence for this section, Appendix (C)(1)-2 provides an alignment of the assessment items to the State Early Learning and Developmental Standards, as well as the Essential Domains of School readiness as defined in this application.

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities

Both the FAIR and the ECHO have sound assessment properties.

FAIR

The FAIR was developed by the Florida Center for Reading Research. As part of the development and field test of items, the components of FAIR underwent significant psychometric testing using a statewide representative sample of over 1,900 children that included subgroups representing the diversity of Florida's student enrollment. This sample included children who were English Language Learners and children with disabilities. The technical report of the FAIR is included as Appendix (E)(1)-1 as evidence of the tool's strong psychometric properties.

The technical report indicates strong content, criterion, and construct validity. With regard to content validity, the assessment measures those early literacy skills that are most predictive of later reading success, including letter-name knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, and phonological awareness. The specific items used to measure these areas of early literacy have strong criterion (predictive validity). For example, 17% of the variance on the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT) Word Reading in Kindergarten scores was explained by the joint probability performance on the Letter Name and Phonological Awareness tasks of

the FAIR at kindergarten entry. In addition, 85 per cent of those classified as “at-risk” at kindergarten entry using the FAIR were classified as at-risk using the SESAT.

With regard to reliability, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. The alpha coefficient ranges from 0.0 to 1.0 where values of 0.00-0.39 were deemed poor; 0.40-0.59 was adequate; 0.60-0.79 was good; and 0.80-1.00 was excellent. Cronbach’s alpha was 0.92 for the Letter Name Knowledge – Upper Case task. Across all subtests, at least 75% of students “met expectations” in 7 out of the 10 tasks, indicating that students correctly responded to at least 80% of items within the task. Only Phoneme Deletion (48%), Phoneme Blending (54%), and the optional task Print Awareness (50%) had fewer students meeting expectations. Test/retest correlations were in moderate range for the measure at .45.

With regard to appropriateness for different target populations, psychometric test indicate that the assessment items included in the FAIR measure the constructs accurately for different types of children. Tables 32-35 of the technical report provide evidence of no significant interactions between risk status on and selected demographic characteristics including race, poverty status and ELL status at Kindergarten entry.

ECHOS

Appendix (E)(1)-2 provides the technical report for the ECHOS. With regard to predictive validity, ECHOS kindergarten entry scores were compared to SAT 10 subtest scores. The correlations for kindergarten were good for the language and literacy mathematics domains but are moderate for the science and social studies domains (Table 21).

Like the FAIR, ECHO’s internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. The scores across the domains (reported in Table 18) ranged from .84 to .98 indicating excellent reliability. Finally, ECHOS assessment scores possessed excellent test-retest reliability with the scores remaining stable across time for kindergarten students (Table 15).

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation

The Florida kindergarten readiness assessment system is currently being administered to all children entering public kindergarten in the state and those students enrolled in private

kindergarten who attended the state-funded VPK Education Program. The implementation plan discussed below focuses on significant enhancements to the system over the grant period.

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the State Longitudinal Data System, as permitted and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and,

Currently, both ECHOs and FAIR data are recorded in the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN). PMRN is an online database system that is not connected to the statewide longitudinal data system. At this time students must be matched with Office of Early Learning VPK student information in order to report results by student. The Florida Department of Education then matches the Voluntary Prekindergarten Student data to Survey 2 data and the results of the Florida Kindergarten readiness assessment data. After the data are matched the Florida Department of Education stores the data in the Florida Department of Education's Data warehouse and sends an electronic file back to the Office of Early Learning for storage in its consolidated database (Please see AWI-DOE Data Sharing Agreement Appendix (E)(1)-3). A major goal in Florida's high-quality plan is to ensure through a unique student identifier that early learning data would integrate directly into the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Please see section E.2 for more information.

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under Section 6111 or 6112 of ESEA)

Florida funds the kindergarten readiness assessment system out of an assessment line item in Florida's General Revenue Fund. There is a strong commitment among policymakers and the Florida State Board of Education to continue to monitor the school readiness of Florida's children. Money used under this grant will be used to meet the goals discussed above and outlined in the implementation plan below.

Florida's High Quality Plan for its Kindergarten Entry Assessment System

Florida's High Quality Plan for its kindergarten entry assessment system includes three goals. The first goal is to replace the ECHOS with an observation-based assessment instrument that is directly aligned to the 4-year-old standards, possesses strong psychometric properties particularly for high need subgroups including ELL children and children with disabilities, and is

predictive of later outcomes. This goal will be accomplished through an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) issued in year one of the grant. The new tool will be developed in September of 2012, tested in 2013-14 and implemented in 2014-15. Existing state resources will be used to fund this effort because the State has already allocated general revenue funding for kindergarten readiness assessments.

The second goal of Florida's High Quality Plan for its Kindergarten entry assessment is to create a data bridge between Florida's early learning coalitions (ELCs) and local school districts to allow ELCs to generate a 10 digit student identifier. This would allow kindergarten readiness data to be reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and allow children in the early childhood system to be tracked into the PK-20 system. This will be developed concurrently with the new observation-based assessment and be ready for implementation in 2014-15.

The third goal of Florida's High Quality Plan for its Kindergarten entry assessment is to improve the method by which VPK programs are deemed low-performing, as well as the improved dissemination of information about VPK providers. This would be done using a combination of pre- and post- observation-based assessment scores and results of a valid teacher-child interaction assessment tool. The new system will incorporate a "valued-added" methodology and rely on progress made during the program year and program quality measures to create a more well-rounded assessment of a provider's success in delivering VPK services. As part of this goal, the Department of Education's required VPK provider kindergarten readiness rate website will be enhanced with particular focus on the parent resource page and the provider resource page. Enhancements will include enhanced search capabilities focusing on the characteristics of VPK providers such as curriculum. The main focus would be to develop a taxonomy which would allow parents of high needs children the ability to find available resources.

(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. (20 points)

Why Florida Selected This Area for a Focused Investment

A high quality early childhood longitudinal data system allows parents, programs, and policymakers to answer key questions about the overall quality and functioning of a state early childhood system, as well as the outcomes that are achieved at the child, program, and system levels. In order to truly move the needle on child outcomes, it is critical to be able to understand all of the factors acting on a child in the early childhood system, the quality of those factors, and the impact they are having on child outcomes. Florida's high-quality plan will allow the state to

complete an already initiated data system that consolidates program administration and data collection into one system, and allows flexible, understandable, real-time reporting on both process and outcome measures. These reports are designed for multiple audiences including parents, programs, and state administrators, and will allow those working with the children in the state to make informed, data-driven decisions about how best to improve outcomes.

For the past four years, Florida has been working towards building a data system that combines state-of-the-art information technology with rigorous data collection methods that will ensure valid and reliable data reporting on key aspects of the early childhood system. The system simultaneously streamlines application, reimbursement, and other administrative functions, while providing information on the quality of programs and the progress of children. This effort has been broad-based and enjoys the full support and participation of Florida's Primary State Agencies, coalitions, providers, State colleges and universities, professional associations, parents, and community stakeholders.

Florida's early learning data system consists of three primary elements. The first is the Early Learning Data System. The Early Learning Data System will exchange data with five different Florida State agencies. It will then use that data to perform core early learning program business functions; including: determining child and provider eligibility, Child Care Resource and Referral services, provider payment processing, and general case management. A primary objective of the Early Learning Data System project is the replacement of the Enhanced Field System, a 20-year-old legacy system that currently resides on 34 stove-piped, non-integrated, client/server platforms throughout the state. This arrangement means that OEL can only obtain a statewide view of early learning program data through great difficulty and expense. The Early Learning Data System will change that by providing an authorized user with unlimited access to all early learning data from anywhere using a web browser and Internet access. Web portals will be created for The Early Learning Data System that grant appropriate secure access to OEL staff, early learning coalition staff and their support contractors, parents and guardians, providers, and other state agencies. This will not only revolutionize the way subsidized child care and voluntary prekindergarten business is conducted in Florida but will also provide an unprecedented amount of high quality, relevant, and current early care and education data.

The second element in Florida's early learning system is called PLATINUM, which employs technology by purchasing software as a service (SaaS). This operating model allows

the State to purchase the technical support it needs for its T-QRIS business processes without undertaking the risk and expense of developing and operating system hardware and software. Instead, the State will focus its attention on performing on-site program assessment and quality improvement functions at state childcare providers. Surveys and inspections may be performed using both the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) childcare program assessment tools (see Section B for more information). Data is captured using Tablet PCs and uploaded to a central repository for analysis. A second application grades the inspection and survey results and then generates a comprehensive recommendation for program quality improvement. The PLATINUM program is the cornerstone for Florida's tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS).

The third element is the early care and education (ECE) practitioner professional development program and registry. The professional development program establishes a career pathway for child care teachers, identifies training requirements – the completion of which allow practitioners to make progress along the career pathway, and manages the quality and content of the training developed and delivered to practitioners. Together, these program activities support the establishment of a professional ECE workforce in Florida. The professional development registry is an online, web-based application that was expanded from the Department of Children and families Child Care Training Application and will serve as a repository for practitioner's professional achievements and facilitates their registration and attendance at approved training opportunities and events. The registry data will offer program managers and analysts unprecedented visibility into the status and professional development of Florida's ECE workforce.

Over the next four years, Florida will use RTT-ELC funds to complete the deployment of these systems, which will capture the essential data elements defined in the criteria (and more) and connect that data to the Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Single Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

Once these essential data elements begin streaming into the SLDS, Florida will have unprecedented visibility into a child's education outcomes and progress of a child from birth through high school graduation. In addition, Florida will be able to extensively and successfully deliver critical reports and information to education stakeholders including teachers, students,

parents, principals, guidance counselors, LEA leaders, unions, researchers, policy makers, education community members, and the public.

How Florida Captures the Essential Data Elements Today – And Our Plans for the Future

Most of the Essential Data Elements listed in the criteria are already being collected in Florida.

The following table lists the current and future status of the Essential Data Elements:

Section (E)(2)(a) - Required Essential Data Elements for a Coordinated Early Learning Data System			
Item#	Data Element	Existing Data Y/N?	Current State and Future State
A	Unique Statewide Child Identifier	Y	As part of the Design Phase of the Early Learning Data System the Department of Education has approached the Office of Early Learning in ensuring a unique identifier can be generated through the Early Learning Data System by the Department of Education. The Department of Education received a grant to begin this work and the state will utilize RTT-ELC funding to complete it. Once this occurs, and the Early Learning Data System has been deployed, a Statewide Unique Child Identifier will be assigned to children when they first begin to participate in early learning programs. This greatly simplifies the ability to capture early learning data and include it with their school-age data in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).
	1. Method to link data to child	Y	Assignment of the unique Child identifier will link early learning and school-age data to each child.
	2. Include Kindergarten Entry Assessment Data	Y	Florida uses the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Survey (FLKRS) to assess children upon entry into kindergarten. Like all other data related to the child, FLKRS results will be linked using the unique Child identifier.
	3. Linked to/from Statewide Longitudinal Data System	N	The use of the unique statewide Child identifier ensures that all relevant education data will be appropriately linked to a specific child in the FDOE SLDS.
	4. Linked to/from Coordinated the Early Learning Data System	N	All of the subsystems that make up the Coordinated Early Learning Data System will use the statewide Unique Child identifier.

Section (E)(2)(a) - Required Essential Data Elements for a Coordinated Early Learning Data System			
Item#	Data Element	Existing Data Y/N?	Current State and Future State
B	Unique Statewide Early Childhood Educator Identifier	Y	The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Care Training Application (CCTA) assigns a unique identifier to every early childhood educator in Florida when they first apply for State certification. The CCTA data system is being enhanced with additional functionality so that it can also serve as the OEL Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Professional Development REGISTRY application.
C	Unique Program Site Identifier	Y	The Florida DCF Childcare Licensing Application (CCLA) assigns a unique Program Site ID to every Child Care Center licensed in Florida. A requirement of the Early Learning Data System is to exchange data with CCLA and CCTA. The Program Site Identifier will be used to link all data associated with a specific Childcare Center.
D	Child and Family Demographic Information	Y	Child and Family demographic information on children enrolled in subsidized child care and Voluntary Prekindergarten services is currently collected and stored at each Early Learning Coalition in the Enhanced Field System (EFS). The Early Learning Data System, currently under development, will replace the EFS.
E	Early Childhood Educator demographic information		
	1. Data on educational attainment	Y	The Florida DCF CCTA currently records educational attainment data for all early learning educators during their initial State certification. Thereafter, CCTA records continuing education credits. Enhancements to CCTA are under development which will establish a professional development registry of early learning educators in Florida. The registry will record a broad range of educational achievements throughout the educator's career and measure and report progress along a career pathway defined by specific professional achievements.
	2. State Credential	Y	The Florida DCF CCTA currently records State credentials for early childhood educators.
	3. Licenses held	Y	The Florida DCF CCTA currently records all required licensing and state standards as required by Florida Statutes.
	4. Professional Development Information	N	OEL is currently enhancing the Florida DCF CCTA to create professional development information system which will facilitate and record the professional achievements of early childhood educators in Florida.

Section (E)(2)(a) - Required Essential Data Elements for a Coordinated Early Learning Data System			
Item#	Data Element	Existing Data Y/N?	Current State and Future State
F	Program Level Data		
	1. On Program's Structure	Y	The Early Learning Data System will provide a portal through which child care providers can create and update their profiles whenever they wish. This will allow them to publish their services provided, hours and dates of operation, contact information, special needs supports, quality ratings, etc. Coalition staff will routinely monitor and validate provider profile descriptions. Today, provider information is manually maintained and posted by coalition staff.
	2. Quality	Y	Quality data is rigorously collected in eight counties as a result of local QRIS initiatives, which also includes data system support. Lessons learned from their experience are being incorporated in the establishment of a statewide TQRIS, which will be supported by data generated, analyze, and maintain in the PLATINUM application.
	3. Child Suspension and Expulsion Rates	N	This information is collected only sporadically today but will be incorporated in the Early Learning Data System.
	4. Staff Retention	N	This information is collected only sporadically today but will be incorporated in the Early Learning Data System.
	5. Staff Compensation	N	Staff compensation data is not readily available throughout the state. The future vision is to collect compensation data on staff via the REGISTRY application.
	6. Work Environment	Y	Future vision is to automate collection of work environment data through the PLATINUM application.
	7. Data reported as part of the State's tiered QRIS	N	Quality data is rigorously collected in eight counties as a result of local QRIS initiatives, which also includes data system support. Lessons learned from their experience are being incorporated in the establishment of a statewide TQRIS, which will be supported by data generated, analyze, and maintain in the PLATINUM application.
G	Child-Level data		
	1. Program Participation data	Y	Child eligibility and enrollment data for early learning programs is currently maintained in the Enhanced Field System (EFS). The Early Learning Data System will maintain this data once it replaces EFS.

Section (E)(2)(a) - Required Essential Data Elements for a Coordinated Early Learning Data System			
Item#	Data Element	Existing Data Y/N?	Current State and Future State
	2. Attendance Data	Y	For the most part, child attendance data is collected and analyzed through a cumbersome, labor-intensive, manual process. Attendance results are then manually entered into the Enhanced Field System. A requirement of the Early Learning Data System is to enable each provider to enter and submit their attendance data online through the provider portal. This will greatly reduce the amount of labor that coalition staff must provide to track and report child attendance. Furthermore, this will greatly reduce the speed and accuracy with which this information is collected.

Current Early Learning Data System Projects in Florida

The following tables describe the High-Quality Plans, as defined on pages 16-17 of the criteria, for Florida's three current data system projects that will collect all remaining Essential Data Elements and connect them to the DOE SLDS.

The Early Learning Data System

High-Quality Plan for: The Early Learning Data System		
a.	Key goals	<p>Replacement of the aging Enhanced Field System (EFS).</p> <p>Consolidation of all early learning program data into a single integrated data store for the entire statewide enterprise. Automation of essential business processes that are currently performed manually and require considerable time and expense to perform.</p> <p>Increased functionality, particularly in the areas of case management, data accuracy and validation, rapid data exchange with other primary state agency data systems, remote auditing, automated attendance management, all hour access by authorized users, self-service features for Child Care Resource and Referral and provider profile management, and many others.</p>

High-Quality Plan for: The Early Learning Data System

b.	Key activities and rationale for each	<p>Business process and functional requirements gathering (complete): This was a two-year undertaking for the purpose of documenting and improving OEL service delivery before investing in the building of the Early Learning Information System.</p> <p>Procurement of a system integrator (complete): This was a one-year process devoted to soliciting a system integrator to design, develop, and implement the Early Learning Data System in accordance with OEL's functional specifications.</p> <p>Requirements validation by the system integrator (complete): This was a six-month period during which a detailed review of the Early Learning Data System requirements was conducted with the system integrator vendor to ensure understanding of what is to be built.</p> <p>The Early Learning Data System prototype (complete): This was a four-month period during which design drawings for 550 screens were jointly reviewed with the system integrator and OEL subject matter experts to confirm that required functionality had been accurately captured in the screen designs.</p>
c.	A realistic timeline and key milestones for each activity	<p>The Early Learning Data System design (in progress): Currently this a period where the system integrator is completing the technical design necessary to build and implement the Early Learning Data System business functions.</p> <p>Early Learning Data System build and test (scheduled): This period will be where the system integrator will construct Early Learning Data System and then subject it to a series of system and user tests during which OEL will confirm that the system performs satisfactorily and approve it for deployment. This phase of the Early Learning Data System project is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2012.</p> <p>Early Learning Data System deployment (scheduled): While the Early Learning Data System is being built and tested, training will be conducted throughout the state in order to prepare users to be successful with the new system. OEL will also provide organizational change management and staff planning assistance to the coalitions. Once the system has been satisfactorily tested, and the users are trained and ready, Early Learning Data System will be deployed – in phases – statewide. The Early Learning Data System is scheduled to deploy in June 2013.</p>

High-Quality Plan for: The Early Learning Data System		
d.	Parties responsible for implementation	<p>The development of the Early Learning Data System is sponsored and managed by OEL, with the support of contract staff and the system integrator vendor.</p> <p>The coalitions are responsible for providing subject matter experts to review and comment on the Early Learning Data System project work products and designs, and to prepare themselves for the Early Learning Data System deployment.</p>
e.	Appropriate financial resources	At present the Early Learning Data System project is authorized and funded by an appropriation from the Florida legislature and, previously, received supplemental funding from the American Recovery and Restoration Act (ARRA).
f.	Other supporting evidence	
g.	Performance measures	<p>Performance measures for the status and progress of the Early Learning Data System project are being collected and reported by the Project Management Office and by a project Independent Verification and Validation vendor.</p> <p>Performance measures for early learning programs are being reviewed and updated as part of the Early Learning Data System development project.</p>
h.	How this project addresses different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	The Early Learning Data System will support and enhance the operations and management of all early education programs under the direction of OEL. This includes the delivery of a broad spectrum of early care and education services, including: subsidized child care, voluntary prekindergarten, and services to high need children.
i.	How this project will meet the needs of Children with High Needs	The Early Learning Data System will provide eligibility and case management support for subsidized child care and the Voluntary Prekindergarten programs. This ensures high need children have efficient access to high-quality child care while the state maintains real time data.

The Early Learning Data System will enable vast improvements in the management and reporting of early learning programs, including the following additional features:

- A system that records the results of developmental screenings and child assessments administered to children participating in early learning programs;
- An accessible and robust reporting system that allows early learning administrators, managers and staff to track and report process and performance status and outcomes in real time.
- Creating important data security and user safeguards against fraudulent actions;
- An enhanced information system, including the ability to track child eligibility participation, demographics, attendance and payment processing for Early Learning Coalitions and child care providers;
- An enhanced information and referral system, including the ability to record and maintain family and provider information, generate referrals to early learning programs and/or resources and provide complete local/state/Federal reporting capabilities;
- Optimizing the use of funds and services provided to Florida's children by facilitating fiscal management and providing timely data for utilization forecasting;
- Creating a single point of entry for eligibility data for all Voluntary Prekindergarten and subsidized child care programs;
- Improving access to the early learning services and customer service to parents, providers and other stakeholders;
- Establishing a centralized and consolidated information system that provides consistent, uniform information across the entire state that each coalition will use to manage its programs;
- A centralized database or a data warehouse that accurately and consistently maintains current and historical early learning program information;
- A system that collects child, staff and financial data to support the analyses of a child's short-term and long-term developmental, academic growth and the return on investment for early learning programs;

- A system that integrates data from partner databases such as those housed in the Department of Education, Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Financial Services, Department of Economic Opportunity and Department of Health (see the early learning data system provided at the end of this section);
- A system that measures the educational impact and overall quality of early learning programs and makes the information accessible through the internet for parents; and
- A system that uses the most current and effective safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of a child’s personal information and detects and prevents payment errors and fraud.

The Early Learning Data System Project – Phase 2: Increased Core Functions

High-Quality Plan for the Early Learning Data System Phase 2 Implementation

High-Quality Plan for: The Early Learning Information System – Phase 2 Functionality		
a.	Key goals	Extend core the Early Learning Data System capability to deliver critical business functions that were deferred to Phase 2 in order to reduce the scope and functionality of the initial Early Learning Data System development project
b.	Key activities and rationale for each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business process analysis and requirements gathering; to confirm – with stakeholder involvement – what business functions and capabilities are required • Solicitation of a System Developer/Integrator vendor to build the required Early Learning Data System enhancement functionality • Design, build the system – with stakeholder involvement – and complete user acceptance testing to confirm that all functional requirements have been satisfied • Conduct user training and deploy the new Early Learning Data System functionality statewide.
c.	A realistic timeline and key milestones for each activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business process documentation and analysis; functional requirements gathering; vendor solicitation (12 months) 2. Design, build and test the Early Learning Data System Phase 2 functions (12 months) 3. User (ELC/Provider) Training and Deployment (12 months)
d.	Parties responsible for implementation	<p>OEL (Staff Project Leaders)</p> <p>RTT-ELC Grant Project Management Office (Contractor)</p> <p>System Developer and Integrator (Contractor)</p>

High-Quality Plan for: The Early Learning Information System – Phase 2 Functionality		
e.	Appropriate financial resources	\$10 million in RTT-ELC funds
f.	Other supporting evidence	Early Learning Data System Software Requirements Development documentation Early Learning Data System Use Cases OEL and ELC To-Be Business Process documentation Early Learning Data System Phasing Strategy Planning documentation
g.	Performance measures	Early Learning Data System Phase 2 Project Monitoring and Controlling of Schedule, Scope, Resources, Staffing, and Quality of Deliverables. Satisfactory user acceptance testing and successful statewide deployment.
h.	How this project addresses different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	All seven of the functional enhancements included in the Early Learning Data System – Phase 2 will benefit every early care and education program in the State.
i.	How this project will meet the needs of Children with High Needs	Children with High-Needs are served, in particular, by Florida’s subsidized child care and Head Start services. Both of these programs will benefit from the enhanced functionality that will be available, statewide, as a result of the enhancements provided by the Early Learning Data System - Phase 2.

In order to reduce the scope and lower the cost of the initial development of the Early Learning Data System, the decision was made in 2008 to defer some of the identified functional requirements to a subsequent project (Early Learning Data System – Phase 2). OEL intends to use \$10,000,000 or RTT-ELC funds to accelerate Early Learning Data System Phase 2 development to complete within 2 years of the deployment of the core Early Learning Data System.

Early Learning Data System – Phase 2 will implement the following core business functions:

1. **Swipe Card Attendance Management:** Early Learning Data System will be modified to receive, record, analyze, and report data received from swipe-card devices at up to 15,000 child care centers throughout the state. Cards with prepared data strips will be swiped through a reader by parents/guardians whenever they check their children in and out of the child care center. This data will be transmitted directly to Early Learning Data System, and to the center's own attendance management system, if any. This will eliminate entire categories of attendance errors – and the resulting billing errors (including fraud).
2. **Interactive Voice Response (IVR):** Similarly, parents/guardians will be able to call a toll-free number, enter a code that identifies their child, and – through a series of guided instructions – use their touch-tone phone to enter the child's attendance/absence data directly into Early Learning Data System.
3. **Cell Broadcast Technology:** OEL and Early Learning Coalitions will each have the capability to send text message notifications to individuals and groups of parents/guardians, providers, and other designated stakeholders. This service-proven technology is an excellent way to reach high-need families; many times these families are transient with a cell phone number being the only constant variable. This technology will allow these families to have instant notification of upcoming appointments, approaching due dates, the status and results of pending actions, and child screening and assessment results.
4. **CCR&R Smart Phone Application:** The implementation of an online system and corresponding smart phone application that will enable families to obtain answers to questions about family values, individual temperament and learning styles of their children, preferred curriculum and various other personalized supports to assist parents with the selection of a quality early learning programs that meets their child and family's needs.
5. **Single-Sign-On Data System Access for Providers:** Child Care providers will be able to perform a number of core business functions by means of secure web portal access to the Early Learning Data System. They will also need to interact with both the Professional

Development Registry Application and the PLATINUM System. The Early Learning Data System Phase 2 will add the system security features that will enable providers to access their data in all three of these systems by signing on to the Early Learning Data System Provider Portal.

6. **Programmatic Oversight of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R):** This enhancement of Early Learning Data System business functionality will enable OEL staff to develop and electronically disseminate CCR&R procedures and standards, deliver technical assistance, collect relevant data from all 31 coalitions, transmit public education and outreach materials, and perform statewide reporting and administrative services. CCR&R services are provided broadly to all parents/guardians and for all child care services provided in the state, whether their programs are subsidized or not.
7. **Child Assessments Data and Reporting:** Florida state law requires that pre/post assessments be performed on children receiving subsidized child care. Various tools and methods are used to assess children in their child care classroom setting in order to determine the effectiveness of both the curriculum and the educational environment. This new Early Learning Data System functionality will provide a repository for child assessment results – instead of relying on dozens of locally developed solutions – and provide a wealth of child development information to parents.
8. **Complaints and Appeals Processing:** The business function enhancement will enable local action by the coalition, and central oversight and review by OEL, for resolving complaints and appeals from various sources, including parents/guardians and providers. Subjects for such complaints and appeals may include: services received from providers or coalition staff, rulings on eligibility or co-payments, or actions taken in accordance with policy or rule. Typically, complaints are handled by ELC or service provider staff. Appeals are available for complainants to escalate a complaint resolution for a formal review. The new functionality will record, track, analyze and report on complaints and their resolution.

**The Early Care and Education Professional Development Program and Registry
Application**

High-Quality Plan for: Professional Development Registry Application		
a.	Key goals	The Professional Development Registry will be supported by the REGISTRY application which will provide information to support the provision of career options, training and education opportunities, and a personal record of professional development and achievements. In addition, the database will include a practitioner Registry, a training Registry, an online training calendar, a training registration system, as well as a training/trainer approval system.
b.	Key activities and rationale for each	Key activities include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data elements which meet the National Registry Alliance data elements will be built by 6/30/2012 within the current DCF owned CCTA database. 2. Further enhancements which incorporate workflows and processes within the REGISTRY application will occur from 10/30/2012 to 3/2012. 3. Full implementation of the statewide Registry is scheduled by the end of 2012. 4. Ongoing enhancements are planned through 2014 to support interfaces for online trainings and logic which will automatically place Practitioners on a career pathway.
c.	A realistic timeline and key milestones for each activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data elements will be built by end of 6/30/2012. 2. Training and development of training guides will occur from 10/2011-1/2012. 3. A pilot will be conducted from 2/2012-5/2012. 4. Data will be evaluated and analyzed from 6/2012-7/2012. 5. Necessary changes based on lessons learned will occur from 8/2012-9/2012. 6. Statewide implementation is planned for yearend 2012. 7. Enhancements will occur in a test environment throughout the pilot and incorporated at phased implementations. 8. Online trainings will be interfaced with the REGISTRY during 2012. 9. For years 2013-2014 more enhancements are planned including adding logic to the application which will automatically calculate the career pathway based on formal and information education.
d.	Parties responsible for implementation	DCF works with a vendor who is responsible for build of the REGISTRY application and implementation of the application. This is in collaboration between DCF and OEL. Palm Beach College has

High-Quality Plan for: Professional Development Registry Application		
		been contracted to provide subject matter expertise as well as building trainings, delivering trainings, etc. OEL has also contracted with support staff to provide project management activities.
e.	Appropriate financial resources	\$4 million; RTT-ELC Grant funds for statewide training, early care and education marketing, expansion of pathway training opportunities, and post-deployment enhancements.
f.	Other supporting evidence	Professional Development Registry Application: Use Case documentation (approved) Functional Requirements documentation (approved) Policies and Procedures Manual (Draft) Data Dictionary (Draft)
g.	Performance measures	Registry Application Development Project: Monitoring and controlling of schedule, scope, resources, staffing, and quality of deliverables. Satisfactory user acceptance testing and successful deployment statewide.
h.	How this project addresses different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	The Professional Development Registry wraps quality early learning experiences and early learning and development standards around three key areas: professional development, child progress and program assessment. Within these three key areas; Florida currently has 4 projects underway: Early Learning Data System, the Registry program, PLATINUM and the development of a statewide QRIS. The ultimate goal is to have all of these systems to collaborate with one another with the ultimate vision being collaboration with DOE's SLDS.
i.	How this project will meet the needs of Children with High Needs	The REGISTRY application supports Florida's State Professional Development System for Early Care & Education which is designed to ensure that Florida's Early Care workforce is provided with the knowledge and skills needed to create high-quality learning environments for young children and those children with high needs.

Further details on the Professional Development Registry

Florida's vision is to create a statewide system which will attract, retain and develop a well-qualified early care and education workforce. OEL is committed to this vision and is currently establishing a comprehensive statewide professional development system called "Steps to Success." This system is built upon the professional development systems already fully implemented within Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties in Florida. Florida is taking lessons learned from these initiatives to build a statewide Registry. The statewide Registry is being built with the help of Palm Beach College and the Registry is currently moving into a pilot stage. This pilot will then move towards a statewide implementation by year end in 2012.

The Florida Steps to Success is part of OEL's "big picture" to provide sustainable programs within the early learning programs. This big picture includes wrapping quality early learning experiences and early learning and development standards around three key areas: professional development, child progress and program assessment.

The focus of this section is the area of Professional Development. Professional Development in Florida focuses on 3 areas: The development of a career pathway which defines competencies for ECE Practitioners, the development of a Network of Trainers and the Professional Development Registry (Registry Program). A key component of the Registry program is the development of the REGISTRY application which is an information and technology solution that will facilitate and record the business activities of the Registry program and will support the Career Pathway and Networks of Trainers mentioned above.

Florida has been working towards a comprehensive professional development system for the last several years. With or without grant funding, Florida will continue to move towards this goal, but, grant funding will allow Florida to meet this goal in a more expedited manner. If awarded, Florida will be able to meet the ultimate vision of allowing Practitioner's and Trainers the ability to build a detailed list of professional accomplishments including educational and work accomplishments in an efficient manner. This would include the use of scanning and uploading of documentations, providing on line training, and enhancing the application to support career progression.

Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC includes linking the Registry to the Learning Management System in Steps to Success Teaching Excellence Strategy, and building additional linkages with

other partners, including Head Start/Early Head Start, public schools, migrant programs, tribal child care, and Part B and Part C providers.

Once the Registry is up and operational, Florida will release an annual Early Learning Workforce Report. Florida would also like to move towards completing validations through random quality reviews of records by staff at each coalition. This would build on best practices from other states where individual validation of each provider's education record in detail is not financially feasible or sustainable. If providers or programs do not have access to computers or scanners to upload information received from Practitioner's and Trainers, the option will be given to either come to a local early learning coalition office to upload documents on computers reserved for provider use and assistance will be received from Registry Advisor's located within the Early Learning Coalitions, who will assist in creating individual's files.

Currently, successful protocol for this process exists in a number of large Florida counties and will be generalized as the state implements its QRIS and Registry practices. When provider and program summary information in the REGISTRY is not reflected in the documentation that is in the provider's electronic files, a more thorough quality review of the provider's file will occur. This method has proven highly reliable in the states that use this process and is highly cost effective, allowing more funding to be dedicated to supports that directly improve young children's outcomes and the quality of care they experience. The aim of Florida's initiatives for the future is to successfully guide learning and development of all of the Florida's children by the establishment and promotion of a professional Early Care and Education (ECE) workforce. This will be accomplished by ensuring the workforce is provided with the knowledge and skills needed to create healthy learning environments for young children.

Currently, OEL is working in partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to create the Professional Development Registry. This partnership was created because DCF already has some of the functionalities needed to move towards a more comprehensive Professional Development system. This includes the use of a statewide early childhood educator identifier, a unique program site identifier and early childhood educator demographic information such as state credential's and licenses held. (Refer to Table (E)(2)(a), Item # E in this section). DCF uses a comprehensive training system, referred to as the Child Care Training Application (CCTA) to track Practitioner's required trainings and credentials within Florida. The CCTA supports, via the web, child care training which includes, but is not

limited to, the following functionality: on-line registration, training and scheduling and credential verification for child care workers (Practitioners) and facility directors.

In 2011, OEL collaborated with DCF to enhance the CCTA to support OEL's efforts towards Professional Development which is referred to as the Registry program. While the CCTA is the system of record, for the purposes of the OEL initiative, the term for the application is being referred to as the REGISTRY application. The REGISTRY application will enable professional's within Florida to submit their professional accomplishments including educational and work accomplishments. Practitioners and Trainer's will have the ability to submit professional achievements and register employment within the REGISTRY. Practitioners will have the ability to register to participate in training events while trainers can schedule training events and document training event results. Registry Coaches will have the ability to randomly validate achievements based on defined quality methodologies while Registry Advisors will provide both career advice and counseling to both Practitioners and Trainers. The ultimate goal is to help Practitioner's move along a career pathway, based on developed core competencies and standards and help trainers develop rigor within their training based on the standards of Outcomes Driven Training (ODT).

To date, the REGISTRY application is currently being enhanced to contain all of the data elements required by the National Registry Alliance. Adhering to the National Registry Alliance standards will ensure that Florida can collect, analyze, and report aggregated data of the early learning workforce. All data elements were to be included within the REGISTRY application by 9/30/2011. Moving forward, OEL will continue to collaborate with DCF to enhance the REGISTRY application with the ultimate goal of implementing the REGISTRY application statewide by the end of 2012. Activities are currently underway which will support the pilot implementation of the REGISTRY application. This includes development of user guides, creation of training and training guides and conducting trainings with Registry staff (10/2011–1/2012). The current plan is to pilot the Registry implementation with several coalitions throughout Florida (2/2012-5/2012), evaluate and analyze data from the pilot (6/2012-7/2012), make necessary changes based on lessons learned (8/2012-9/2012) and move towards statewide implementation by the end of 2012. Resources for this initiative include DCF staff and DCF's contracted vendor, OEL staff along with a contracted project manager, Palm Beach College staff

and stakeholders throughout Florida. The current goal is to meet the aggressive timelines above and funding from the RTT-ELC would allow Florida to move quickly in meeting these goals.

Furthermore, as part of the collaboration with DCF, OEL’s goal is to provide further funding to DCF to create an interface between their Child Care Training Application (CCTA), which is also the REGISTRY application) and licensing which is supported by the Child Care Licensing Application (CCLA). This interface would further the ultimate goal of data collaboration between all partners which would improve data collection capabilities relating to Early Learning Providers. Currently, CCTA has been enhanced by DCF in preparation to allow data sharing with CCLA by utilizing the last 4 digits of the Social Security Number with the Date of Birth which will support the use of a unique identifier among Practitioner’s. Also, the interface will support the initiative to provide a unique program site identifier. The overall goal is to share data among the two data systems utilizing the source data within each application and to avoid data duplication with the ultimate goal of sharing both CCTA and CCLA data with Early Learning Data System. By avoiding duplication and sharing workforce data with licensing data, Florida will be able to efficiently and effectively look at the impacts of licensing data against professional development data and how this affects quality. This in turn will provide data that can be analyzed to show how these initiatives ultimately affect outcomes on children.

The PLATINUM Project – Foundation for a Statewide Tiered QRIS

High-Quality Plan for: Expansion of Program Assessment Data System (PLATINUM)		
a.	Key goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardize statewide approach to program assessment 2. Ensure uniform data collection through statewide training and systematized approach 3. Leverage software as a service (SaaS) technology solutions to program assessment (capture, analysis and reporting) creating cost efficiencies while increasing capacity to capture and store quality data. 4. Establish a statewide baseline of program quality in the Florida’s early learning system 5. Support and enhance quality improvement work at the state, local and family level 6. Generate actionable data useful across state systems through standardized and ad hoc reporting 7. Provide useful data to our partners through reporting and data

High-Quality Plan for: Expansion of Program Assessment Data System (PLATINUM)		
		<p>system interfaces</p> <p>8. Interface with Early Learning Data System and the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) at the FDOE</p>
b.	Key activities and rationale for each	<p>Completed</p> <p>1. Design phase for statewide program assessment technology system (PLATINUM)</p> <p>In process</p> <p>2. Procure PLATINUM data system through competitive solicitation.</p> <p>To be Completed</p> <p>3. Pilot PLATINUM system in 5 coalitions</p> <p>4. Production Phase 1-Deploy PLATINUM statewide (following validation assessment of Pilot phase);</p> <p>5. Establish baseline of program assessment for entire state.</p> <p>6. Production Phase 2-Establish interfaces with other Agency data systems</p> <p>7. Reassess valid sample of programs and analyze results</p> <p>8. Establish continuous system improvement processes policies based on available data</p>
c.	A realistic timeline and key milestones for each activity	<p>Completion of project: June 2014</p> <p>Key milestones:</p> <p>1. Procurement Phase - Contract to technology vendor(s) awarded by December 2011</p> <p>2. Pilot phase begin – Five (5) early learning coalitions begin pilot phase by January 2012</p> <p>3. Pilot phase end – June 2012</p> <p>4. Analysis of pilot data to verify efficacy of the system, consistency of measures and overall system performance by August 2012</p> <p>5. Production phase 1 begin – August 2012. Estimate January 2013 for full statewide implementation.</p> <p>6. Interface with Early Learning Data System and FDOE SLDW –Complete by January 2014</p> <p>7. Sharing of program assessment data with other state agencies and partners – Complete by January 2014</p>

High-Quality Plan for: Expansion of Program Assessment Data System (PLATINUM)		
d.	Parties responsible for implementation	<p>OEL-Development and deployment planning of PLATINUM</p> <p>OEL-Development of interface with Early Learning Data System</p> <p>OEL-Coordination of PLATINUM interface with DCF data system (including the REGISTRY)</p> <p>OEL-Coordination of PLATINUM interface with DOE SLDW</p> <p>DOE</p> <p>Contractor- Develop and deploy PLATINUM</p> <p>Contractor-Develop interface with Early Learning Data System</p> <p>Contractor-Develop interface with DCF/REGISTRY</p> <p>Contractor-Develop interface with DOE SLDW</p>
e.	Appropriate financial resources	<p>PLATINUM Development OEL-\$400,000</p> <p>Interface with Early Learning Data System OEL\$50,000</p> <p>Interface with DCF-OEL \$50,000/DCF \$50,000</p> <p>Interface with DOE SLDW-OEL \$100,000 / DOE \$100,000</p> <p>Contractor-Develop interface with Early Learning Data System \$100,000</p> <p>Contractor-Develop interface with DCF/REGISTRY \$100,000</p> <p>Contractor-Develop interface with DOE SLDW \$100,000</p>
f.	Other supporting evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PLATINUM schematics 2. PLATINUM charter 3. PLATINUM business case 4. PLATINUM status reports (last months) 5. See Early Learning Data Network diagram at the end of this section.
g.	Performance measures	<p>Completed PLATINUM Data system</p> <p>Completed Interface with Early Learning Data System</p> <p>Completed Interface with DCF</p>

High-Quality Plan for: Expansion of Program Assessment Data System (PLATINUM)		
		Completed Interface with DOE SLDW
h.	How this project addresses different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The program profile includes a feedback mechanism allowing input from providers, directors, technical assistance providers and other local quality improvement teams. This allows the individual profile to be customized and adapted to the individual provider. 2. The state is implementing two program assessment instruments, ERS and CLASS: The ERS is designed to measure the quality of the program environment in the variety of program settings including center based, family child care homes and school age settings. The state is purchasing materials in both English and Spanish. The CLASS is designed to measure the quality of the teacher child interaction and is valid in all settings including classrooms with diverse populations: Dual Language Learners (DLL), children from migrant families, tribal populations, and children with special needs and diverse cultural backgrounds. Florida has already purchased Pre-K CLASS materials in English and Spanish to support the implementation of CLASS assessor training statewide.
i	How this project will meet the needs of Children with High Needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the capacity of trained ERS and CLASS program assessors will allow the state to increase the scale and frequency of program assessments. 2. By using both the ERS and the CLASS program assessment instruments, the state will have a better total picture of what is going on at the classroom level. 3. CLASS is designed to measure the quality of the teacher child interactions in a variety of high needs settings. 4. The feedback loop of the program profile in PLATINUM allows providers, directors, technical assistance providers and other local quality improvement teams to provide additional information in the program profile including accommodations for children with high needs or special needs.

Additional details on the Program Assessment Analysis System (PLATINUM)

As part of Florida’s strategy toward expanding the current TQRIS pilot into a statewide system, the PLATINUM (Program Leveraging Assessment Technology through Integrated, Networked, Uniform Measures) project will standardize early learning program assessment throughout the state system. Planning for PLATINUM began in 2009 when the state recognized

the need to leverage technology to create a system for continuous program quality improvement that is reliable, efficient and sustainable. PLATINUM is a web based service that will enhance Florida's ability to efficiently capture valid and reliable program assessment data, combine that data with data from other state and local systems and create individual program profiles. These program profiles will give a summary picture of the key data pieces of the individual program that can be shared with providers, directors, technical assistance providers and other local quality improvement teams who may also add information to the profile through their own secure portal. This ensures that program profiles can be customized to meet the needs of all types of program providers. A complete provider profile is used to create individual improvements plans, which are the real value of the PLATINUM system. Individual improvement plans identify next steps for quality improvements as a menu of options that local early learning coalitions, providers and community partners can implement based on priorities and available resources. Additional goals of the PLATINUM project are to interface with the statewide Early Learning Data System at OEL and the Statewide Longitudinal Data Warehouse at the FLDOE. This will completely transform Florida's ability to link early learning data to the Prek-12 system and look at program and child data longitudinally.

The PLATINUM data system will generate robust standardized and ad hoc reports containing information on program quality at the local and State level. Combined with the implementation of statewide training on the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) already set to deploy in fall 2011, this will ensure the collection of uniform program assessment data and the ability to provide effective and efficient targeted quality supports to early learning providers and teachers. Florida has already committed \$2.1 million in FY 2011-12 to building up its program assessment system through statewide training and technology.

The PLATINUM system is in reality the expansion of the TQRIS system already underway in Florida. Analysis of core system functions of the TQRIS pilot and other state systems, stakeholder surveys and formal requirements sessions led to the creation of the PLATINUM system design as a blueprint to improve and expand the scale of the TQRIS system statewide. The PLATINUM Executive Advisory Team made up of state and local TQRIS experts is establishing statewide TQRIS quality standards and system policies based on validation of measures in the TQRIS pilot.

One of the most beneficial and effective administrative features of the PLATINUM system design is the ability to record and report on quality supports being delivered within the system down to the provider and teacher level. This allows administrators to look at their quality investments including staff time, training costs, materials, scholarships, wage incentives, and analyze their impact over time. Deployed statewide, this will help Florida determine what investments it makes in quality improvements and what impact those investments are having on the quality of programs.

The PLATINUM pilot system is set to deploy in January 2012. Following a 6-month pilot phase to ensure system functionality is meeting expected results, PLATINUM will be implemented across the rest of the state during the third and fourth quarter of 2012. The state will then focus on expanding the collection of baseline program assessment data to the statewide level. Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funding would support an accelerated timeline for establishing an expanded statewide assessment baseline through the training and development of additional assessors and assessments. This would allow the state to assess more providers and teachers more often than the state's current budget allows.

The next phase of PLATINUM after statewide deployment will include the development of data interfaces and data sharing agreements with other state agencies, partners and OEL's Early Learning Data System currently under development. Once those interfaces are in place, the PLATINUM system will be capable of generating program profiles based on an exceptional amount of quality indicators generated in the early learning system including developmental screening data, child progress data, Head Start data, child care licensing and additional quality measures as they are identified and become available and deployable. PLATINUM will also interface with the Florida's professional development REGISTRY set to deploy in late 2011, providing data on teacher credentials and education. The design of PLATINUM will be flexible enough for customization to meet local needs without compromising overall system integrity. This will allow the 31 early learning coalitions in Florida the ability to enter local program data important to their individual communities. This ability to customize locally is key to the state meeting the needs of Children with High Needs and their families. RTT-ELC funding would enhance the ability of the state to add additional functionality including interfaces to the PLATINUM system sooner than the state can on its own. This will in turn provide Florida the

information needed to improve the quality of early learning programs statewide resulting in an increase in the number of children in quality early learning settings.

SLDS Connectivity Project: Connecting the Early Learning Data Network to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System

High-Quality Plan for: SLDS Connectivity Project		
a.	Key goals	<p>This project establishes data exchange interfaces between the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the three primary systems that make up the Early Learning Data Network:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Early Learning Data System 2. The Professional Development Registry Application (PD) 3. The Program Assessment Analysis (Tiered QRIS) (PLATINUM)
b.	Key activities and rationale for each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business process documentation and functional requirements gathering – to properly identify all relevant business needs and to define the interfaces to be built • Interface Design Specifications; middleware selection – to address technical requirements • Build, test, accept and deploy SLDS data exchange interface
c.	A realistic timeline and key milestones for each activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document business processes and gather functional requirements (6 months) • Solicit system integration vendor services (six months) • Build, test, accept, and deploy SLDS data exchange interfaces (1 year)
d.	Parties responsible for implementation	<p>OEL – Early Learning Data Network</p> <p>FDOE – Statewide Longitudinal Data System</p> <p>RTT-ELC Grant Project Management Office (Contractor)</p> <p>System Integration Services Vendor (Contractor)</p>
e.	Appropriate financial resources	\$1 million - RTT-ELC Grant Funds
f.	Other supporting evidence	

High-Quality Plan for: SLDS Connectivity Project		
g.	Performance measures	SLDS Connectivity Project: Monitoring and controlling of schedule, scope, resources, staffing, and quality of deliverables. Satisfactory user acceptance testing and successful deployment of the interfaces
h.	How this project addresses different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	This project provides the critical connection between early learning data and K through 12 data. It is essential to achieving this long-standing goal of educators everywhere. All types of Early Learning Developments Programs will benefit for the ability to do longitudinal analysis of their effectiveness.
i.	How this project will meet the needs of Children with High Needs	The ability to perform longitudinal analysis of all education programs in the state will benefit from this project. Children with High Needs will, perhaps, benefit the most because their needs are the greatest.

This SLDS Connectivity Project will forge the link between early learning and school-age data.

How Florida Intends to Use RTT-ELC Funds to Accelerate the Establishment of a Quality SLDS

All of early learning data system projects described in this section are already underway. RRT-ELC funds will be used to purchase additional contract services to 1) accelerate development, 2) work through problems that may arise during design, build, test, or deployment, and 3) provide additional training to ELC front-line service delivery staff and providers in the local communities to promote readiness to employ these new systems to the greatest effect.

In addition, RTT-ELC funds will be invested in completing the data exchanges interfaces between OEL's early learning data systems and the FDOE Statewide Longitudinal Data System, thereby forging the final link between child early learning and school age data in Florida.

RTT-ELC funds will be carefully invested in non-recurring activities in order to ensure that no sustainability issues arise in operations of the enhanced early education service delivery after the four-year term of the grant ends.

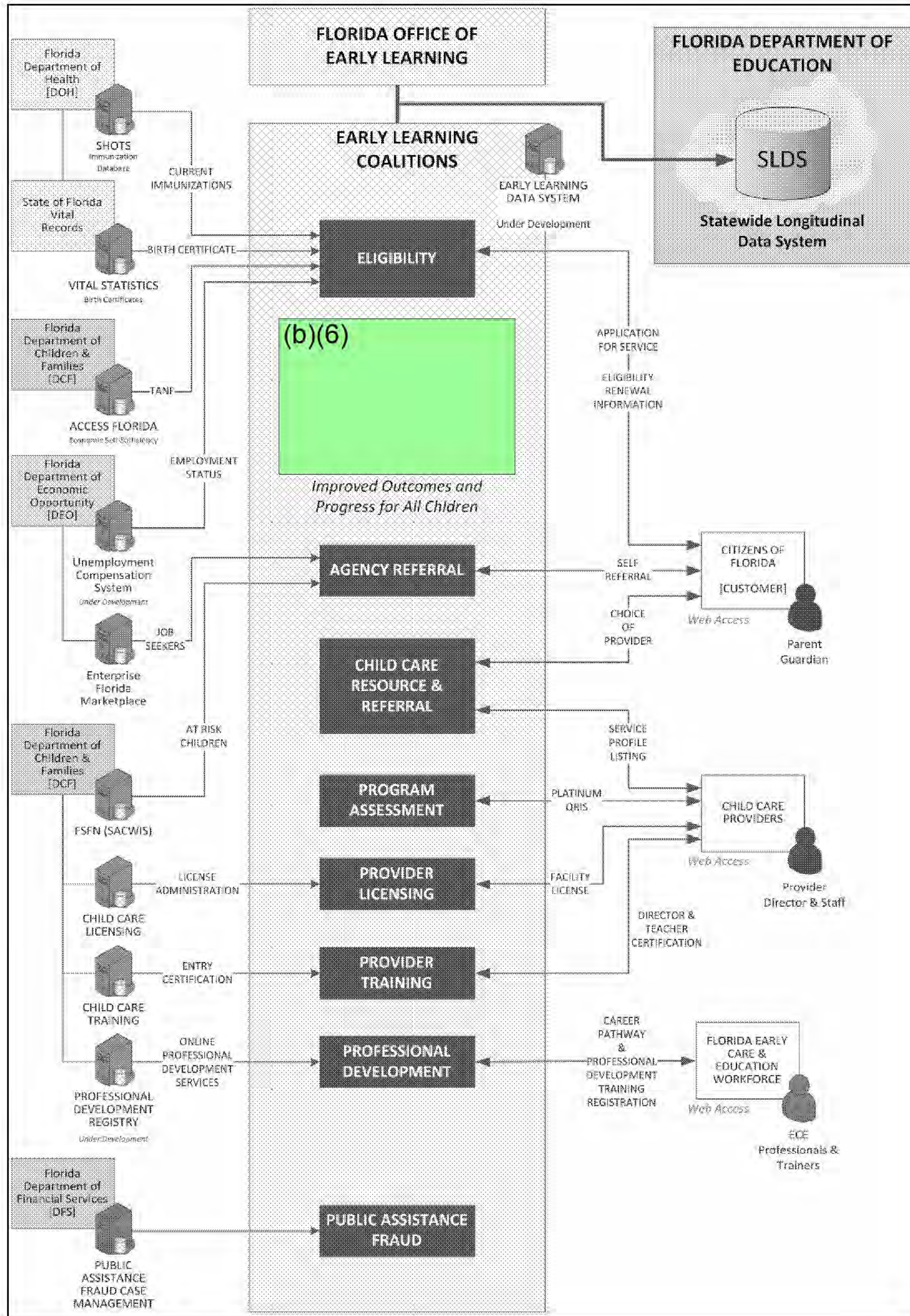
What Florida's Early Learning Data Network will Look Like in 2016

The figure on the following page depicts the future state of Florida's early learning data systems. The organizations on the left side of figure are the various Florida state government agencies, along with their data systems that deliver early learning services and/or provide data to OEL and the Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs) to the eligibility determination, case management, referrals, educator and child care center data, and other functions, as indicated.

The center section of the figure shows OEL (at the top), the coalitions (middle), and the linkages between the Early Learning Data System and the various external data systems and users.

On the lower right are the external stakeholders that are served and supported by Early Learning Data System. They are: 1) Parents/Guardians and their children, 2) child care centers and related providers, and 3) the early learning educators/practitioners.

In the upper right is the FDOE Statewide Longitudinal Data system, the ultimate repository of all essential data elements from the early learning data systems.



VIII. BUDGET

AWARD INFORMATION

Budget Requirements: To support States in planning their budgets, the Departments have developed the following budget caps for each State. The Secretaries will not consider for funding an application from a State that proposes a budget that exceeds the applicable cap set for that State. The Departments developed the following categories by ranking every State according to its share of the national population of children ages birth through five years old from Low-Income families and identifying the natural breaks in the rank order. Then, based on population, budget caps were developed for each category¹.

Category 1--Up to \$100 million--California, Florida, New York, Texas.

Category 2--Up to \$70 million--Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania.

Category 3--Up to \$60 million--Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin.

Category 4--Up to \$50 million--Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming.

In addition to considering other relevant factors (see 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3)), the selection of grantees may consider the need to ensure that early learning and development systems are developed in States with large, high-poverty, rural communities (including States with high percentages of high-poverty populations in rural areas and States with high absolute numbers of high-poverty individuals in rural areas). Awards may be granted to high-quality applications out of rank order to meet this need.

Grant Period: The grant period for this award is December 31, 2011 through December 31, 2015.

¹ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2009. American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

In the following budget section, the State is responding to selection criterion (A)(4)(b). The State should use its budgets and budget narratives to provide a detailed description of how it plans to use Federal RTT-ELC grant funds and funds from other sources (Federal, State, private, and local) to support projects under the State Plan. States' budget tables and narratives, when taken together, should also address the specific elements of selection criterion (A)(4)(b), including by describing how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan and do so in a manner that

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan

The budget narratives should be of sufficient scope and detail for the Departments to determine if the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable. For further guidance on Federal cost principles, an applicant may wish to consult OMB Circular A-87. (See www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars).

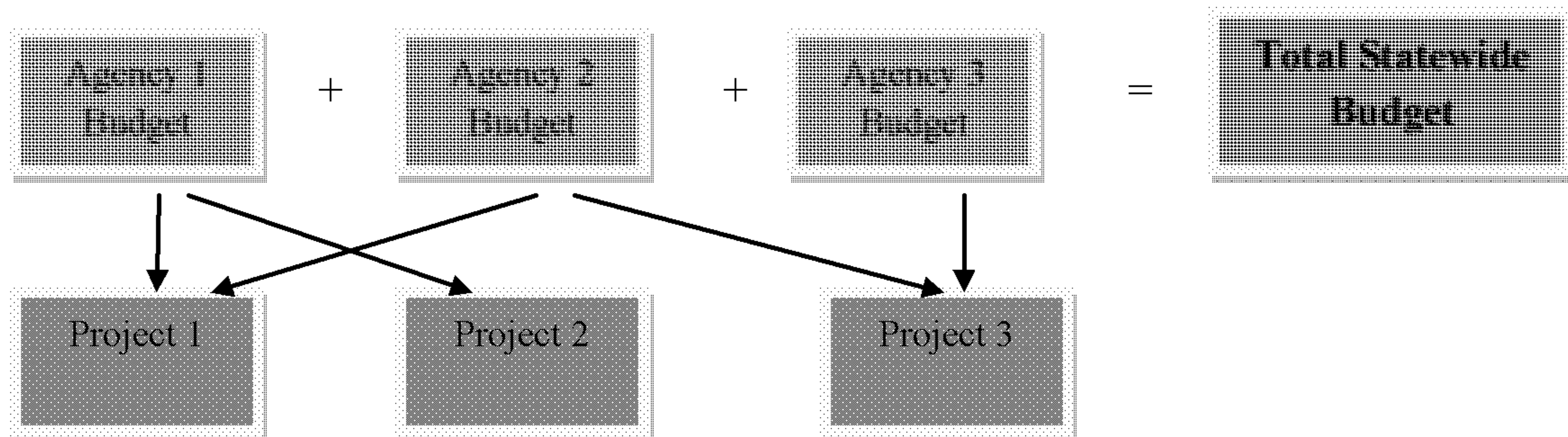
We expect the State to provide a detailed budget by category for each Participating State Agency that rolls up into the total statewide budget. We further expect that the budgets of each Participating State Agency reflect the work associated with fully implementing the High-Quality Plans described under the selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 and describe each Participating State Agency's budgetary role² in carrying out the State Plan.

For purposes of the budget, we expect that the State will link its proposed High-Quality Plans to "projects" that the State believes are necessary in order to implement its plans. The State might choose to design some projects that address only one criterion's High-Quality Plan, while other projects might address several similarly-focused criteria as one group. For example, the State might choose to have one "management project" focused on criterion (A)(3), organizing and aligning the early learning and development system to achieve success. It might have another "workforce project" that addresses criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) under the Great Early Childhood Education Workforce section.

Some projects may be done entirely by one Participating State Agency, while others may be done by multiple agencies in collaboration with one another. The State, together with its

² Participating State Agency's budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency's MOU or other binding agreement.

Participating State Agencies, will define the projects required to implement the State Plan and will determine which Participating State Agencies will be involved in each project, as shown below.



To support the budgeting process, we strongly suggest that applicants use the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets prepared by the Departments to build their budgets. These spreadsheets must be submitted together with, but in a file separate from, the application.³ These spreadsheets have formulas built into them that are intended to help States produce the budget tables required within this section.

The following information must be included in the State's budget:

- I. **Budget Summaries:** In this section, the State provides overall budget summary information by budget category, Participating State Agency, and project.
 - a. **Budget Summary by Budget Category.** This is the cover sheet for the budget. (See Budget Table I-1.) States should complete this table as the final step in their budgeting process, and include this table as the first page of the State's budget. (Note: Each row in this table is calculated by adding together the corresponding rows in each of the Participating State Agency Budget by Category tables. If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically.)
 - b. **Budget Summary by Participating State Agency.** This summary lists the total annual budget for each Participating State Agency. (See Budget Table I-2.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-1 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II: Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically for the State.
 - c. **Budget Summary by Project.** This summary lists the total annual budget for each of the projects. (See Budget Table I-3.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-2 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II:

³ See Application Submission Procedures, section XV. Please note that the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets will not be used by the reviewers to judge or score the State's application. However, these spreadsheets do produce tables that States may use in completing the budget tables that the State submits as part of its application. In addition, the budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these “roll-up” calculations are done automatically for the State.

- d. Budget Summary Narrative. This budget narrative accompanies the three Budget Summary Tables and provides the rationale for the budget. The narrative should include, for example, an overview of each Participating State Agency’s budgetary responsibilities and descriptions of each project that the State has included in its budget.

II. Budgets for Each Participating State Agency. In this section, the State describes each Participating State Agency’s budgetary responsibilities.⁴ The State should replicate this section for each Participating State Agency and for each Participating State Agency complete the following:

- a. Participating State Agency By Budget Category. This is the budget for each Participating State Agency by budget category for each year for which funding is requested. (See Budget Table II-1.)
- b. Participating State Agency By Project. This table lists the Participating State Agency’s proposed budget for each project in which it is involved. (See Budget Table II-2.)
- c. Participating State Agency Budget Narrative. This budget narrative describes the Participating State Agency’s budget category line items and addresses how the Participating State Agency’s budget will support the implementation of each project in which it is involved.

The State should replicate Budget Part II for each Participating State Agency as follows:

- For Participating State Agency 1: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative
- For Participating State Agency 2: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative

⁴ Participating State Agency’s budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency’s MOU or other binding agreement.

BUDGET PART I: SUMMARY

BUDGET PART I -TABLES

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category--The State must include the budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant. These line items are derived by adding together the corresponding line items from each of the Participating State Agency Budget Tables.

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	702,498	702,498	702,498	496,800	2,604,294
2. Fringe Benefits	106,424	106,424	106,424	38,544	357,816
3. Travel	19,365	87,435	20,940	17,850	145,590
4. Equipment	46,400	0	0	0	46,400
5. Supplies	14,826	14,824	14,824	4,583	49,057
6. Contractual	12,702,690	24,655,400	27,408,485	12,175,000	76,941,575
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	2,600	2,600	2,600	0	7,800
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	13,594,803	25,569,181	28,255,771	12,732,777	80,152,532
10. Indirect Costs*	6,250	0	0	0	6,250
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	8,499,995	18,999,995
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	17,301,053	29,269,181	31,955,771	21,432,772	99,958,777
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	17,301,053	29,269,181	31,955,771	21,432,772	99,958,777

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.
 Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.
 Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.
 Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.
 Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p>procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency--*The State must include the budget totals for each Participating State Agency for each year of the grant. These line items should be consistent with the totals of each of the Participating State Agency Budgets provided in Budget Tables II-1.*

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

Participating State Agency	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Office of Early Learning	14,799,202	24,231,202	27,081,202	21,231,197	87,342,803
Department of Children and Families	1,987,225	3,378,028	2,764,618	0	8,129,871
Department of Health	514,626	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,531,378
Department of Education	0	651,575	1,101,575	201,575	1,954,725
Total Statewide Budget	17,301,053	29,269,181	31,955,771	21,432,772	99,958,777

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project--*The State must include the proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant. These line items are the totals, for each project, across all of the Participating State Agencies' project budgets, as provided in Budget Tables II-2.*

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Projects	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Project Management Office	1,574,202	1,556,202	1,556,202	1,556,202	6,242,808
Evaluation, Development and Training of Quality Alignment	2,350,000	4,150,000	3,775,000	5,774,995	16,049,995
Public Awareness of High Quality Learning	682,690	1,675,290	1,968,790	1,750,000	6,076,770
Implementation of High Quality Assessments	3,900,000	4,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	19,900,000
Development and Use of Statewide High Quality Early Learning Standards	1,700,000	3,400,000	1,900,000	0	7,000,000
Development and Training of Observation-Based assessments	800,000	1,800,000	1,300,000	0	3,900,000
Development of Long Term plan to improve Statewide screening and assessments	514,626	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,531,378
Continuation and Enhancement of Professional Development System	975,000	1,225,000	600,000	150,000	2,950,000
Deployment of High Quality Professional Development Initiatives	3,000,000	5,200,000	5,000,000	3,400,000	16,600,000
Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems	1,604,535	4,804,313	8,397,403	2,601,575	17,407,826
VPK Readiness Website	0	250,000	250,000	0	500,000
RTT-ELC Grantee TA Travel	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
	0	0	0	0	0
Total Statewide Budget	17,301,053	29,269,181	31,955,771	21,432,772	99,958,777

BUDGET PART I-NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the overall structure of the State's budget for implementing the State Plan, including

- *A list of each Participating State Agency, together with a description of its budgetary and project responsibilities;*
- *A list of projects and a description of how these projects taken together will result in full implementation of the State Plan;*
- *For each project:*
 - *The designation of the selection criterion or competitive preference priority the project addresses;*
 - *An explanation of how the project will be organized and managed in order to ensure the implementation of the High-Quality Plans described in the selection criteria or competitive preference priorities; and*
- *Any information pertinent to understanding the proposed budget for each project.*

Florida is requesting \$99,958,777 from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge fund (RTT-ELC). All participating state agencies and collaboration partners have signed MOU's to fully participate in the success of these projects outlined in Florida's proposal. Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) has ensured a collaborative planning approach to appropriately capture each participating agencies vision, goal and intended purpose in making application. In this way, Florida is poised to meet the Race to Top Early Learning Challenge by aligning existing efforts and outlining a comprehensive plan for improvement to propel Florida's early learning system and better meet the needs of High Need Children.

Florida's Office of Early Learning will serve as the Lead Agency on this grant and will oversee the collaborative efforts of each participating state agency. Each participating state agency will be responsible for the budget and the completion of each project assigned. OEL will work in partnership with agency staff to ensure a cohesive approach to successful completion. OEL will provide strong leadership throughout the four year grant, led by the Director of the Office of Early Learning and the Deputy Director of Early Learning Initiatives, ensuring the successful, coordinated completion of all projects outlined in Florida's proposal.

The projects included within this proposal each have subcomponents. Many projects are shared between agencies to maximize cross-agency collaboration and partnerships. We have indicated below where other Agencies or entities are responsible for a subcomponent.

Florida's Office of Early Learning - Responsible for Overall Coordination of Projects and Budget for implementation of High Quality Plans to support Florida's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant. OEL will also be directly responsible for the following projects:

- RTT-ELC Project Management (A)(3)
- Evaluation, Development and Training of Quality Alignment
 - Evaluation and documentation (B)(5)
 - Establishing Statewide Baseline of Program Quality (B)(3) and (B)(3)(a) *[included in this subcomponent is an Assessment that encompasses every early learning program type which will be conducted by the Early Learning Coalitions \$4,999,995]*
 - TQRIS Provider Orientation Materials (B)(1)(a)
- Public Awareness of High Quality Learning
 - Public Outreach Program of Early Years (B)(3)(b) *[DCF]*
 - Public Awareness Outreach on High Quality Early Learning Environments (B)(3)(b) *[Included in this subcomponent is collaboration with DCF]*
- Implementation of High Quality Assessments (B)(4)(a) *[included in this project is Targeted accreditation and quality improvement supports which will be conducted by the Early Learning Coalitions \$14,000,000]*
- Development and Use of Statewide High Quality Early Learning Standards
 - Outcome Based Training Modules (C)(1)(a)
 - Revision of the Birth to Five Early Learning and Developmental Standards (C)(1)
 - Statewide adoption of observation-based child assessment models (C)(2)(b)
- Development and Training of Observation-Based Assessment Instrument (C)(2)
- Continuation and Enhancement of Professional Development System
 - Core Competency Alignment (D)(1)(a)
 - Quality Assurance System (D)(1)(a)
 - Develop Advanced Professional Certificate (D)(1)(a)
 - Enhance Career Pathway (D)(1)(a)

- Expand Capstone Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education (BECE) (D)(1)(a)
- Deployment of High Quality Professional Development Initiatives
 - Steps to Success Outreach (D)(1)(a)
 - Teaching Excellence (D)(1)(b)
 - Director's Institute (D)(1)(b)
 - Technical Assistance Credential (D)(1)(b)
 - Scholarships for Early Childhood Workforce (D)(1)(b)
- Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems
 - Create a Data Bridge for Unique Child/Student Identifier (E)(1)(d) *[included in this subcomponent is collaboration with DOE]*
 - SLDS Connectivity with Early Learning Data Network (E)(2) *[included in this subcomponent is collaboration with DOE]*
 - Early Learning Data System Core Functions (E)(2)
 - Enhancement of Professional Development Registry (E)(2) *[DCF]*
 - PLATINUM Expansion and Enhancement (E)(2) *[Included in the subcomponent is collaboration with DCF and DOE]*
 - Interface between Child Care Licensing Application (CCLA) and Child Care Training Application (CCTA) (E)(2) *[DCF]*

Additional information on the scope of work for OEL is provided in the individual agency and project Budgets. A total of \$87,342,803 of the RTT-ELC funding will be implemented by OEL and its contractors, in partnership with DCF, DOE and DOH and the Early Learning Coalitions.

Department of Children and Families – DCF will be directly responsible for the following projects:

- Public Awareness of High Quality Learning
 - Public Outreach Program of Early Years (B)(3)(b)

- **Public Awareness Outreach on High Quality Early Learning Environments (B)(3)(b)** *[Included in this subcomponent is collaboration with OEL]*
- Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems
 - Create a Data Bridge for Unique Child/Student Identifier (E)(1)(d) *[OEL and DOE]*
 - SLDS Connectivity with Early Learning Data Network (E)(2) *[OEL and DOE]*
 - Early Learning Data System Core Functions (E)(2) *[OEL]*
 - **Enhancement of Professional Development Registry (E)(2)**
 - **PLATINUM Expansion and Enhancement (E)(2)** *[Included in the subcomponent is collaboration with OEL and DOE]*
 - Interface between CCLA and CCTA (E)(2)

The Scope of Work for DCF is further defined in MOU and individual project budgets. A total of \$8,129,871 of the RTT-ELC funding will be implemented by DCF and its contractors, in partnership with OEL.

Department of Education – DOE will be directly responsible for the following projects:

- Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems
 - **Modify Statewide Longitudinal Data System (E)(1)(d)** *[included in this subcomponent is collaboration with OEL]*
 - **SLDS Connectivity with Early Learning Data Network (E)(2)** *[included in this subcomponent is collaboration with OEL]*
 - Early Learning Data System Core Functions (E)(2) *[OEL]*
 - Enhancement of Professional Development Registry (E)(2) *[DCF]*
 - **PLATINUM Expansion and Enhancement (E)(2)** *[Included in the subcomponent is collaboration with OEL and DCF]*
 - Interface between CCLA and CCTA (E)(2) *[DCF]*
- **VPK Readiness Rate Website (E)(2)**

The Scope of Work for DOE is further defined in MOU and individual project budgets. A total of \$1,954,725 of the RTT-ELC funding will be implemented by DOE and its contractors, in partnership with OEL.

Department of Health – DOH will be directly responsible for the following projects:

- Development of Long Term Plan to Improve Statewide Screening and Assessments (C)(2)

The Scope of Work for DOH is further defined in MOU and individual project budgets. A total of \$2,531,378 of the RTT-ELC funding will be implemented by DOH and its contractors, in partnership with OEL.

The projects and initiatives outlined in Florida’s RTT-ELC application align to comprehensively support a seamless, cohesive and effective early learning system for Florida’s youngest, most vulnerable children and their families. Taken as a whole, Florida’s plan to implement infrastructure improvements results in a well-designed system focused on improving health and developmental outcomes for children. By planning for supports in the areas of technology solutions, professional development of early childhood educators and offering a validated TQRIS that will scale first in programs serving High Need Children, Florida is poised to significantly strengthen its early learning system and better support child care businesses.

Florida’s strategy heavily relies upon capitalizing on existing efforts across partner agencies to ensure full realization of shared goal for the State’s youngest children. From this foundation, Florida’s plan includes ground-breaking efforts to make available supports and resources to those programs serving High Need Children and their families. With a targeted focus on Florida’s Highest Need Children, the RTT-ELC application is an unprecedented opportunity for Florida to strategically and collaboratively address challenges across agencies and throughout our extremely diverse state. With firm commitments from partner agencies, local stakeholder groups and private entities, Florida is poised to serve as the national model for research-based initiatives collectively aimed at improving child outcomes, supporting early childhood educators’ career pathways, creating technology solutions and implementing a model TQRIS that will elevate quality across all program types.

The Florida Office of Early Learning (OEL) will lead the implementation of RTT-ELC funding in Florida. The OEL was established as a Division of the Department of Education, however the Office is a separate budget entity and is not subject to control, supervision, or direction by the Department of Education or the State Board of Education. The OEL Director is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. As directed by statute the OEL has entered into a service agreement with the department for professional, technological, and administrative support services. The office shall be subject to review and oversight by the Chief Inspector General or his or her designee. The OEL is designated as the lead agency for administration of the federal Child Care and Development Fund, and serves as the pass through entity for this funding to 31 Local Early Learning Coalitions and multiple statewide contractors. The Office has successfully managed many large grant agreements and contracts spanning separate funding streams.

The RTT-ELC projects will be integrated into the existing Lead Agency (Office of Early Learning) infrastructure to ensure future sustainability. The OEL will augment the existing structure by extending the existing Quality Initiative unit. This will be accomplished by adding six additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and contracting with one or more consulting firm(s) to establish additional project and grant support, through a contract, for the duration of the grant. The OEL currently relies on its staff and contractors to manage projects and initiatives. This process includes creating project teams, project charters, project plans, statements of work, detail work breakdown structures, deliverables, stakeholders, documentation, timelines for projects and online project management tools. Projects are then managed on a weekly basis through status reports and team meetings led by the project managers and sponsors. RTT-ELC initiatives will be incorporated into this project management system and the RTT-ELC infrastructure will be institutionalized within the OEL organization to support future sustainability. The Director of the Office will ensure that the project teams are held accountable for implementation of the RTT-ELC projects by holding regular meetings, reviewing status reports and progress against benchmarks annually. Additionally the Director meets weekly with the Governor's Office and will provide status updates to ensure continued support of the Governor and other Agency heads involved in successful implementation of the State Plan.

Project monitoring will be an integral part of the project plans. Detailed scopes of work included in the contracts will establish appropriate benchmarks and deliverables. The results of

the monitoring will assist in identifying situations where early intervention may be required. Project monitoring staff will work together with Office leadership to identify strategies to steer projects back on course for successful and timely implementation.

The existing OEL staff within the Quality Initiative unit are specialists in the each of the areas of the RTT-ELC program areas and will serve in the following capacities:

- Program Director
- TQRIS Director
 - TQRIS ERS/CLASS Specialist
 - TQRIS Outreach and Awareness Specialist
- Child Outcomes - Screening and Assessment/Inclusion Director
 - Screening and Assessment Specialist
- Professional Development Director
 - Professional Development Specialist (2)
- Early Learning Data System Integrator Director
- Training Coordinator

*Salaries and related expenditures for existing OEL staff will only be partially charged to the RTT-ELC grant, as their current salaries are funded through the School Readiness Program (CCDF), which has currently supports the same goals and initiatives. **These staff members are included as part of the Program Management Project, they will be providing direct programmatic/initiative support.***

Additional Staff employed for the duration of the grant:

- Contract Manager – Internal management of contracts
- Legal Consultant – Advise on all legal issues related to the RTT-ELC grant, will report directly to the OEL General Counsel
- Monitoring Specialist – Augment for existing Accountability Unit within OEL
- Grants/Procurement Specialist (2)– Will provide support for contract manager and grant administration.
- Data Systems Analyst – Ensure seamless integration with existing systems.

Florida's Office of Early Learning intends to contract with one or more consulting firms to ensure accountability and provide subject matter expertise and technical support for the RTT-ELC initiatives.

- Project Management- provide additional support for scope and deliverable management
- Project Support – TQRIS Analyst, Assessment Analyst, Professional Development Lead and Data Systems Lead

Consultants to support initiative expertise:

- Subject Matter Experts (3)– Program Assessment (TQRIS), Child Outcomes and Assessment, Professional Development

As the entity submitting the RTT-ELC grant application, the Office of Early Learning will be responsible for all expenditures. All grants/contracts would be accounted for in a statewide accounting system, the Florida Accounting Information Resource (FLAIR). All grants can be monitored and tracked through this system. Each grant or contract can be identified with a unique number and a budget can be created to ensure it is not over spent. Reports are run monthly to ensure funds are spent timely and recorded to the proper accounting cost centers.

The expenditures will be monitored by the Office staff on a monthly and annual basis, and must pass an audit by the Florida Chief Financial Officer (staff) prior to issuing payment. All federal and state expenditures are subject to financial and A-133 audits by the State Auditor General.

All procurement is conducted within the comprehensive state procurement requirements found under (Chapter 287, Florida Statutes). The state requirements exceed federal procurement regulations, requiring formal and competitive procurement for purchases of \$35,000 or more. Most contracted services within this application are required to be procured through the use of Request for Proposal (RFP) or an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN). Specific partners have not been identified within this application. The state procurement requirements include exemptions from the competitive procurement processes. These, exemptions include procurement of services from governmental agencies and state universities and colleges, and situations in which goods or services are only available from a single source.

Throughout this budget many cost estimates are based on prior experience with similar procurements, and the actual cost may vary depending on the results of the procurement process.

Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan are included in Table A-4(1). They were not specific to individual projects within the budget, they support multiple projects, therefore are not included in the budget tables.

BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY

The State must complete Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, and a narrative for each Participating State Agency with budgetary responsibilities. Therefore, the State should replicate the Budget Part II tables and narrative for each Participating State Agency, and include them in this section as follows:

- *Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*
- *Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*

BUDGET PART II -TABLES

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency Budget By Budget Category--*The State must include the Participating State Agency’s budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Florida Office of Early Learning</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	496,800	496,800	496,800	496,800	1,987,200
2. Fringe Benefits	38,544	38,544	38,544	38,544	154,176
3. Travel	16,275	16,275	16,275	16,275	65,100
4. Equipment	18,000	0	0	0	18,000
5. Supplies	4,583	4,583	4,583	4,583	18,332
6. Contractual	10,525,000	19,975,000	22,825,000	11,975,000	65,300,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	11,099,407	20,531,407	23,381,407	12,531,407	67,543,628
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	8,499,995	18,999,995
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	14,799,202	24,231,202	27,081,202	21,231,197	87,342,803
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	14,799,202	24,231,202	27,081,202	21,231,197	87,342,803

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Office of Early Learning

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p><u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p><u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Health

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	6,298	6,298	6,298	0	18,894
2. Fringe Benefits	2,078	2,078	2,078	0	6,234
3. Travel	0	0	0	0	0
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
5. Supplies	0	0	0	0	0
6. Contractual	500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	2,500,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	508,376	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,525,128
10. Indirect Costs*	6,250	0	0	0	6,250
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs	0	0	0	0	0

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Health

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
and other partners.					
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	514,626	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,531,378
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	514,626	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,531,378

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Line 14: Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Education

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	0	0	0	0	0
2. Fringe Benefits	0	0	0	0	0
3. Travel	0	1,575	1,575	1,575	4,725
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
5. Supplies	0	0	0	0	0
6. Contractual	0	650,000	1,100,000	200,000	1,950,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Education

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	0	651,575	1,101,575	201,575	1,954,725
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	0	651,575	1,101,575	201,575	1,954,725
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	0	651,575	1,101,575	201,575	1,954,725

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Line 14: Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Children and Families

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	199,400	199,400	199,400	0	598,200
2. Fringe Benefits	65,802	65,802	65,802	0	197,406

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Children and Families

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
3. Travel	3,090	69,585	3,090		75,765
4. Equipment	28,400	0	0	0	28,400
5. Supplies	10,243	10,241	10,241	0	30,725
6. Contractual	1,677,690	3,030,400	2,483,485	0	7,191,575
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	2,600	2,600	2,600	0	7,800
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,987,225	3,378,028	2,764,618	0	8,129,871
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	1,987,225	3,378,028	2,764,618	0	8,129,871
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	1,987,225	3,378,028	2,764,618	0	8,129,871

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Line 14: Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Florida Office of Early Learning</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Project Management Office	1,574,202	1,556,202	1,556,202	1,556,202	6,242,808
Evaluation, Development and Training of Quality Alignment	2,350,000	4,150,000	3,775,000	5,774,995	16,049,995
Public Awareness of High Quality Learning	0	500,000	250,000	1,750,000	2,500,000
Implementation of High Quality Assessments	3,900,000	4,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	19,900,000
Development and Use of Statewide High Quality Early Learning Standards	1,700,000	3,400,000	1,900,000	0	7,000,000
Development and Training of Observation-Based assessments	800,000	1,800,000	1,300,000	0	3,900,000
Continuation and Enhancement of Professional Development System	975,000	1,225,000	600,000	150,000	2,950,000
Deployment of High Quality Professional Development Initiatives	3,000,000	5,200,000	5,000,000	3,400,000	16,600,000
Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems	300,000	2,200,000	6,500,000	2,400,000	11,400,000
RTT-ELC Grantee TA Travel	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
Total Budget	14,799,202	24,231,202	27,081,202	21,231,197	87,342,803

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Florida Department of Health</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Development of long term plan to improve statewide screening and assessments	514,626	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,531,378

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Florida Department of Health</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Total Budget	514,626	1,008,376	1,008,376	0	2,531,378

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Florida Department of Education</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Enhancement and implementation of early learning data system	0	401,575	851,575	201,575	1,454,725
VPK readiness website	0	250,000	250,000	0	500,000
Total Budget	0	651,575	1,101,575	201,575	1,954,725

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>Florida Department of Children and Families</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Public Awareness of High Quality Learning	682,690	1,175,290	1,718,790	0	3,576,770

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Florida Department of Children and Families

Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems	1,304,535	2,202,738	1,045,828	0	4,553,101
Total Budget	1,987,225	3,378,028	2,764,618	0	8,129,871

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the Participating State Agency’s budget, including--

- *How the Participating State Agency plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work;*
- *For each project in which the Participating State Agency is involved, and consistent with the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:*
 - *An explanation of the Participating State Agency’s roles and responsibilities*
 - *An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived*
- *A detailed explanation of each budget category line item, including the information below.*

1) Personnel

Provide:

- The title and role of each position to be compensated under this grant.
- The salary for each position.

- The amount of time, such as hours or percentage of time, to be expended by each position.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The importance of each position to the success of specific. If curriculum vitae, an organizational chart, or other supporting information will be helpful to reviewers, attach in the Appendix and describe its location.

2) Fringe Benefits

Provide:

- The fringe benefit percentages for all personnel.
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

3) Travel

Provide:

- An estimate of the number of trips.
- An estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs for each trip.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the travel, how it relates to project goals, and how it will contribute to project success.

4) Equipment

Provide:

- The type of equipment to be purchased.
- The estimated unit cost for each item to be purchased.
- The definition of equipment used by the State.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The justification of the need for the items of equipment to be purchased.

5) Supplies

Provide:

- An estimate of materials and supplies needed, by nature of expense or general category (*e.g.*, instructional materials, office supplies).
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

6) Contractual

Provide:

- The products to be acquired and/or the professional services to be provided.
- The estimated cost per expected procurement.

- For professional services contracts, the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to this proposed grant award.
- A brief statement that the State has followed the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose and relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

7) Training Stipends

Note:

- The training stipend line item only pertains to costs associated with long-term training programs and college or university coursework that results in a credential or degree, not workshops or short-term training supported by this program.
- Salary stipends paid to teachers and other early learning personnel for participating in short-term professional development should be reported in Personnel (line 1).

Provide:

- Descriptions of training stipends to be provided, consistent with the “note” above.
- The cost estimates and basis for these estimates.

Explain:

- The purpose of the training.

8) Other

Provide:

- Other items by major type or category.
- The cost per item (printing = \$500, postage = \$750).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the expenditures.

9) Total Direct Costs

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures, across all budget categories in lines 1-8, for each year of the budget.

10) Indirect Costs

Provide:

- Identify and apply the indirect cost rate. (See the section that follows, Budget: Indirect Cost Information.)

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Provide:

- The specific activities to be done by localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners.
- The estimated cost of each activity.
- The approximate number of localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners involved in each activity.
- The total cost of each activity (across all localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of each activity and its relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Department expects that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Provide:

- The amount per year set aside for this Participating State Agency.

Note: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

13) Total Funds Requested

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 9-12, for each year of the budget.

13) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

Provide:

- A description of the sources of other funds the State is using to support the projects in the State Plan.

- A description of how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used for activities and services described in the State Plan, if applicable.
- Any financial contributions being made by private entities such as foundations.

Explain:

- Each funding source, the activities being funded and their relation to the State Plan or specific project, and any requirements placed on the use of funds or timing of the activity.

14) Total Budget

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 13 and 14, for each year of the budget

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

The below describes how Florida will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant, including details of those amounts budgeted with Participating State Agencies.

How Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:

As the OEL will primarily manage the RTT-ELC funds for the projects as explained the Part I Budget Narrative, by utilizing existing staff, adding additional temporary staff and through contracted service providers. The OEL will also utilize a small portion of existing staff positions and expenses to support the RTT-ELC funds.

An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities:

The OEL is responsible as the Lead Agency to ensure successful completion of the RTT-ELC State Plan, by adhering to High Quality Plans established throughout the application. Coordination and collaboration with other participating agencies and partners is a key area of responsibility.

An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived:

The OEL in tandem with its partners, utilized expertise knowledge to project and plan for costs associated with these multiple projects and project management. The OEL drew upon existing costs of current projects and made realistic projections based on the budget categories below.

BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

PERSONNEL

The existing OEL staff within the Quality Initiative unit are specialists in each of the areas of the RTT-ELC program areas and will serve in the following capacities:

- Program Director (1) to support entire project- \$70,000 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$14,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$56,000 charged to the grant.
- TQRIS Director (1) to support all sections - \$55,000 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$11,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$44,000 charged to the grant.
- TQRIS ERS/CLASS Specialist (1) - \$49,000 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$9,800 annually x 4 years for a total of \$39,200 charged to the grant.
- TQRIS Outreach and Awareness Specialist (1) - \$50,000 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$10,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$40,000 charged to the grant.
- Screening and Assessment/Inclusion Director (2) \$48,500 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$9,700 annually x 4 years x 2 positions for a total of \$77,600 charged to the grant.
- Professional Development Director (1) \$59,500 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$11,900 annually x 4 years x 3 positions for a total of \$47,600 charged to the grant.
- Professional Development Specialists (2) \$59,500 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$11,900 annually x 4 years x 2 positions for a total of \$95,200 charged to the grant.
- Early Learning Data System Integrator Director (1) \$50,000 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$10,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$40,000 charged to the grant.
- Training Coordinator (1) \$34,500 annual salary @ 20% on project = \$6,900 annually x 4 years for a total of \$27,600 charged to the grant.
- Additional OPS Staff employed for the duration of the grant

- Contract Manager – Internal management of contracts (1) OPS position: \$70,000 annual salary @ 100% on project = \$70,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$280,000 charged to the grant.
- Legal Consultant– Advise on all legal issues related to the RTT-ELC grant, will report directly to the OEL General Counsel (1): \$75,000 annual salary @ 100% on project = \$75,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$300,000 charged to the grant.
- Monitoring Specialist – Augment for existing Accountability Unit within OEL (1) OPS position: \$60,000 annual salary @ 100% on project = \$60,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$240,000 charged to the grant.
- Grants/Procurement Specialist (2)– Will provide support for contract manager and grant administration with focus on procurement in the first 2 years. \$50,000 annual salary @ 100% on project = \$50,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$200,000 charged to the grant. Total amount charged to the grant =\$400,000.
- Data Systems Analyst – Ensure seamless integration with existing systems. (1) OPS position: \$75,000 annual salary @ 100% on project = \$75,000 annually x 4 years for a total of \$300,000 charged to the grant.

Total estimated personnel includes a four year total of \$467,200 for existing state staff time 20% on project and \$1,520,000 for OPS staff 100% time on project.

TOTAL PERSONNEL: \$1,987,200

FRINGE BENEFITS:

Fringe benefits for state personnel are calculated at an average of 33% of the annual employee salary and include FICA, MICA, retirement, health and life insurance. Fringe benefits for the grant period are calculated at 33% of the \$467,200 total four year salaries charged to the grant for an estimated total of \$154,176 charged to the grant. OPS staff are not paid fringe benefits.

TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS: \$154,176

TRAVEL

Existing OEL staff assigned to each of the program areas will travel to various sites through the project. We have estimated the average cost of each trip to be \$525; an average of 2 staff will travel to 31 sites in each of the four years. Total costs of these trips will be \$16,275 per year. All travel will be reimbursed at the authorized state rates of \$36 per day for meals or \$80 per diem (including meals and lodging). Lodging costs will be at the prevailing government rates for the geographic areas. Typically travelers will use rental cars for transportation at the rate of \$25.75 per day (unlimited mileage). On occasion, when the destination is too far away the traveler to drive, air transportation may be authorized.

TOTAL TRAVEL: \$65,100

EQUIPMENT

Supplies for additional contracted staff for voice and data, office equipment is estimated at \$3,000 per individual, this is a onetime expenditures.

TOTAL EQUIPMENT: \$18,000

SUPPLIES

Supplies are estimated at \$4,483 per year

TOTAL SUPPLIES: \$18,332

CONTRACTUAL

Nine (9) projects will be funded through contractual agreements.

Section A

Project 1: Project Management Office

- Project Management Office(A)(3): Contractual Grant Management and Project Support will be funded at an estimated \$1,000,000 for Years 1-4.

Section B

Project 2: Evaluation, Development and Training of Quality Alignment

- Subject Matter Expert Initiative Expertise: Contract for consultant to ensure system wide quality alignment \$100,000 a year for years 1 – 4.
- Pilot Study(B)(5): The pilot study outlined in Section B will assess program quality at the beginning and end of the school year to determine if the quality levels of the TQRIS meaningfully differentiate program quality; child assessments at the beginning and end of the school year will also be completed (see Section C). The pilot study will be completed by an independent assessor selected through competitive procurement. The scope of work will include program selection based on stratified random sampling, securing of appropriate consents, pre- and post-testing of program, data analysis, report writing, and final report writing based on feedback. This will be completed in grant years 1-2. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$3,000,000 over Years 1-2.
- Validation Study (B)(5): Following refinement of the standards based on the pilot study, a Validation study will assess program quality at the beginning and end of the school year to determine if the quality levels of the TQRIS meaningfully differentiate program quality; child assessments at the beginning and end of the school year will also be completed (see Section C). The validation study will be completed by an independent assessor selected through competitive procurement. The scope of work will include program selection based on stratified random sampling, securing of appropriate consents, pre- and post-testing of program, data analysis, report writing, and final report writing based on feedback. This will be completed in grant years 2-3. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$3,000,000 over Years 2-3.
- Overall planning/coordination of research (B)(5) : In preparation of the pilot and validation studies, planning and coordination of the research will be required. The scope of work will include: refining the TQRIS pilot standards based on best practices in the field and the results of research; organizing program characteristics, such as information on programs such as geographic location, program type, program size, funding, families and children served and other characteristics to inform the sampling plan; developing and implementing a stratified random sampling plan. This scope of work will be completed

by an independent entity that specializes in this work; the entity will be selected by competitive procurement. This will be completed in grant years 1-3. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$2,000,000 over Years 1-3.

- Case study documentation of system evolution (B)(5): The evolution of Florida's system for early learning and development programs will be documented through a case study in all four years of the grant. The purpose of this case study will be to document Florida's work and to share lessons learned with other state. The selection of the entity to complete the case study will be determined through competitive procurement. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$250,000 over Years 1-4.
- Train assessors in targeted areas of state (B)(3)(a): To ensure adequate program assessor capacity and ongoing sustainability of program assessors, additional assessors will be trained to reliability on the ERS and the CLASS. Existing contracts with ERS and CLASS trainers will be expanded to include this additional scope of work. Average cost per trained assessor is \$2,000/assessor; 300 assessors will complete the assessor training (including 50 assessors trained on family child care tools). Assessors trained through this training will agree to be TQRIS assessors in year 4 of the grant to ensure adequate supply of program assessors. This work will occur in Years 2-3 of the grant. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$600,000 over Years 2-3.
- Training for assessors in TQRIS standards/PLATINUM (B)(3): All TQRIS assessors will be trained on the TQRIS assessment standards in year 3 of the grant. Assessors trained to reliability on the CLASS and ERS will receive training on the overall TQRIS standards and PLATINUM so they are fully prepared to complete program assessments and upload them into PLATINUM. Up to 500 people will be trained on the TQRIS standards, including up to 400 assessors and appropriate early learning coalition, Children's Services Council and other staff. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$500,000 in Year 3.
- Recertification of assessors (B)(3)(a): Trained assessors that are not reliable will receive additional training to improve reliability of program assessments in year 4 of the grant. This additional training will be on an as needed basis based on reliability of assessments. This scope of work will be completed by an independent entity that specializes in this

work; the entity will be selected by competitive procurement. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$350,000 in Year 4.

- Purchasing materials for programs (B)(1)(a): Appropriate program assessment material (e.g., ERS tools, supporting book such as the All About ERS books, CLASS tools, CLASS supporting materials) will be purchased for programs to support their participation in the TQRIS. Based on previous support provided by coalitions, not all programs will need copies of these materials. Estimated cost per 7,500 programs that will need resources is \$100/program. The materials will be purchased and distributed in Year 3 of the grant; additional materials will be purchased and distributed to meet unmet needs in Year 4 of the grant. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$750,000 over Years 3-4.
- Developing standardized training and orientation materials for provider, printing, shipping (B)(1)(a): Training and orientation materials for providers will be created and provided to the early learning coalitions. These materials would be designed to give providers a full orientation to the TQRIS standards. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$200,000 in Year 3.

Section B

Project 3: Public Awareness of High Quality Learning

- Public awareness outreach (B)(3)(b): Materials for comprehensive public awareness outreach on the TQRIS will be developed in year 4 of the grant and then provided to early learning coalitions, Children's Services Councils, United Ways and other partners for statewide use. The materials will include flyers, marketing materials for programs to personalize, billboards, radio spots, PSAs, and other materials to make families aware of the TQRIS. The materials will be drafted, focus grouped and refined based on respondents' reactions. Materials will be available in multiple languages. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$1,500,000 in Year 4.
- Develop and deploy website/system designed to educate families and help them select programs that meet their needs (B)(3)(b): A vendor will be hired through competitive procurement to develop and deploy a website/system designed to educate families on

child development and quality settings and TQRIS, help families identify and prioritize their child's needs and help connect families with providers who can meet their needs. This will include a smart phone app to provide regular information to families on their children's development. The cost of this system and tools is based on the development of similar systems in Florida and in other states. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$1,000,000 over Years 2-4.

Section B

Project 4: Implementation of High Quality Assessments

- Access to CLASS resources for providers (B)(4)(a): Subscription(s) to online professional development tools at various ranges of intensity and made available at no cost to teachers. Tools range in intensity from introducing teachers to the CLASS, its structure, uses and connections to children's learning to research based programs proven to boost effective classroom interactions. In addition, a one on one coaching model to provide targeted support to teachers identified as needing additional individualized CLASS support. Estimated subscription costs are \$800,000 annually for 5,000 teachers. Estimated one-on-one coaching model cost is \$1,200,000 a year for 100 coaches to support 1,500 teachers. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$4,000,000 over Years 3-4.
- Access to CLASS resources for assessors/TA providers (B)(4)(a): Subscriptions to facilitated online CLASS calibration services and training webinars that support accurate use of the CLASS tools. Estimated cost is \$400,000 a year to support 300 assessors. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$1,600,000 over Years 1-4.
- Access to shared services website (B)(4)(a): The shared services website will be available to early learning and development programs to support their business operations. This website was developed through extensive provider input about what matters most to them. Provider feedback will be gathered throughout the period of the grant and the website will be modified and expanded as needed to ensure the website meets provider needs. Funding will be used to provide subscriptions to the website free of charge during the grant period. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$300,000 over Years 2-4.

Section C

Project 5: Development of High Quality Early Learning Standards

- Subject matter Expert Initiative Expertise: Contract for consultant to ensure system wide success in creating a meaningful child assessment model \$100,000 a year for years 1 – 3.
- Outcomes-based Training (C)(1)(a): Contractors will be hired to facilitate web-based training on the standards. Estimated cost of contractors for this purpose is \$1000 per day to facilitate the training. This would allow for 100 days per year of additional training is planned to support proper implementation of the standards in years 1-3 of the grant. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$300,000 over Years 1-3.
- Revision of Standards (C)(1) : Experts in the various domains of child development and learning, as well experts in early childhood standards and high-risk populations will be hired to assist on the revision of the B-5 standards. The budget also allows for a peer review process, stakeholder meetings to ensure buy-in to the new standards, and training on the new standards. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$400,000 over Years 2-3.
- Pilot Study to Inform Child Assessment (C)(2)(b): While the aspects of the pilot study outlined in the Section B narrative focus on the determining the appropriate levels of the TQRIS, this part of the study will assess the impact of different quality ratings on child outcomes. Children will be assessed at the beginning and end of the school year to determine if higher quality levels on TQRIS have strong impacts on outcomes; child assessments at the beginning and end of the school year will also be completed. The pilot study will be completed by an independent assessor selected through competitive procurement. The scope of work will include program selection based on stratified random sampling, securing of appropriate consents, pre- and post-testing of program, data analysis, report writing, and final report writing based on feedback. This will be completed in grant years 1-2. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$3,000,000 over Years 1-2.

- Validation Study of Child Assessment Results (C)(2)(b): As discussed in the Section B narrative, following refinement of the method to assess the impact of the TQRIS ratings on child outcomes, a Validation study will assess if the quality levels of the TQRIS have a differential impact on child outcomes; child assessments at the beginning and end of the school year will also be completed. This will be completed in grant years 2-3. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$3,000,000 over Years 2-3.

Section C

Project 6: Development of Training of Observation-Based assessments

- Formative Assessment Adoption and Training(C)(2): The state will vet, adopt, purchase, and provide training on a small set of observation-based assessment instruments to be used by early childhood educators in the state. Cost for this project include contractors to assist with the adoption process, the purchase of up to 4 assessment instruments as well as their on-line reporting tools, training of trainers by the assessment developers, and training of providers by the in-state trainers. The grant will be funding an estimated total \$3,900,000 across two line items over Years 1-3.

Section D

Project 7: Continuation and Enhancement of Professional Development System

- Core Competency Alignment (D)(1)(a): A contractor will be secured to analyze recommendations for improving child care training requirements reported in the Child Care Licensing Taskforce Report and develop a plan to align and revise informal pathway options with the Core Competencies. A training plan will be developed and revisions made to training standards, including standards for child care licensure training and Staff Credential training. Web-based tutorials, support materials and training will be provided to training agencies (provider associations, early learning coalitions, other training entities). The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$400,000 over Years 1-2.
- Quality Assurance System for training (D)(1)(a): Three trainers will be contracted to deliver train-the-trainer sessions in the State's training quality assurance system

Outcomes Driven Training. A total of 1,500 trainers will participate in the train-the-trainer sessions over a series of training sessions delivered in strategic geographical regions across Florida. Based on previous roll out of ODT training, the grant will be funding an estimated total of \$1,000,000 over Years 1-2 to include trainer fees, training materials, training location fees and scholarships for attendees.

- Advanced Professional Certificate (D)(1)(a): A contractor will be secured to develop the training standards for an Advanced Professional Certificate in line with the Informal Career Pathway and aligned to the Core Competencies. The training standards will be made available to additional training agencies to create multiple routes to the APC credential. Under funding through the RTT-ELC, existing training modules created to support the Core Competencies will be used to develop the first full curriculum for the APC and made available to all early learning program types. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$500,000 over Years 2-3.
- Enhance Career Pathway (D)(1)(a): Develop additional formal pathway options building on the work of recommendations for a Universal Course Catalog for ECE. Contractor will be hired to identify and review seven core courses for Associate degree program and seven core courses for Bachelor degree program. Scope and sequences will be developed infusing Communities of Practice and Online Course options. Based on past experience with similar projects, the grant will be funding an estimated total of \$1,000,000 over Years 1-4.
- Expand Capstone Degree in ECE (BECE (D)(1)(a)): A contractor will be secured to expand the access to high quality formal early childhood education programs in ECE. The required scope of work will include: developing technical assistance plan and process for expansion of BECE to other colleges; developing technical assistance materials and resources; and providing technical assistance services to colleges for adoption of BECE. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$50,000 in Year 3.

Section D

Project 8: Deployment of High Quality Professional Development Initiatives

- Subject matter Expert Initiative Expertise: Contract for consultant to ensure cohesive professional development initiatives: \$100,000 a year for years 1 – 4.
- Steps to Success Outreach (D)(1)(a): OEL will contract with one or more vendor(s) to increase knowledge and awareness regarding Steps to Success and other professional development resources/activities. The contractor will develop communications and marketing plan in English and Spanish, and implement plan utilizing social media, smart phone technology, and other resources. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$300,000 in Year 1.
- Teaching Excellence Strategy (D)(1)(b): OEL will contract with one or more vendor(s) to develop and implement the Teaching Excellence Strategy which will provide access to high quality training and education to all EL Programs and Practitioners statewide. The required scope of work will include: development of an on-line technology plan with alignment of coursework options; development and implementation of Communities of Practice Plan, including use of coaches/mentors through coordination with directors, coordination with informal and formal instructors, and technical assistance staff; development of an online Career Advising website to facilitate success of Teaching Excellence Strategy; development of a Career Hub for coordinating Communities of Practice, utilizing cloud and smart phone technology. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$7,000,000 over Years 1-3.
- Directors' Institute (D)(1)(b): OEL will contract with one or more vendor(s) to develop and implement the Directors' Institute. The required scope of work will include identification of training resources and partners; development of Institute Implementation and Sustainability Plan; development of clearinghouse of resources; alignment of training options with Core Competencies; translation of Core Competencies for Directors into Spanish; coordination of web-based tutorials, training options, and Director Credential options; coordination with cloud and smart phone technology developments through Teaching Excellence Strategy; increase knowledge and skill of EL directors, thus

enhancing overall program quality. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$300,000 over Years 3-4.

- Technical Assistance Credential (D)(1)(b): OEL will contract with one or more vendor(s) to develop and implement Technical Assistance Credential. The required scope of work will include: review resources and courses, including alignment with Core Competencies for ECE Technical Assistance Specialists; development of an implementation plan, including credential standards and coursework plan; coordination of credential with Colleges and training entities; providing scholarships and incentive payments for completion of credential. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$300,000 over Years 1-3.
- Scholarships for Early Childhood Workforce. Scholarship Management, Scholarships (D)(1)(b): OEL will contract with one or more vendor(s) to manage and administer the \$8,000,000 scholarship program. The required scope of work will include coordination and support from college foundations; coordination and support from private foundations; and scholarship administration and management over years 1-4. An estimated total of \$300,000 over years 3-4 will be used for scholarship management.

Section E

Project 9: Enhancement and Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems

- Implementation of a Unique Child Identifier and Data Bridge (E)(1)(d): A vendor will be secured to complete implementation and training on a system to be created by DOE which will contain a data bridge between Florida's early learning coalitions (ELCs) and local school districts to allow ELCs to generate a 10 digit student identifier. This would allow kindergarten readiness data to be reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and allow children in the early childhood system to be tracked into the PK-20 system. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$200,000 in Year 4 for the implementation and training on the system.
- SLDS interfaces(E)(2): This project establishes data exchange interfaces between the SLDS and the three primary systems that make up the early learning data network: the REGISTRY, PLATINUM, and the early learning data system. The goal of this project is

to ensure that all early learning data systems have full connectivity to the state's PK-20 SLDS. The grant will be funding an estimated of \$500,000 over Years 3-4 through OEL contractors.

- Early Learning data system enhancement (E)(2): Extend capability of the early learning data system to deliver critical business functions including swipe card attendance management, cell broadcast technology and child screening and assessment functionality. Based on initial development of the early learning data system, the grant will be funding an estimated total of \$10,000,000 over Years 2-4.
- PLATINUM enhancement and expansion (E)(2): Florida's data solution to support efficient implementation of the TQRIS is called PLATINUM. Funding under the RTT-ELC grant will be used to develop, pilot and deploy the system which serve as the data hub for TQRIS. OEL budget for PLATINUM includes construction of interfaces to connect TQRIS data to the early learning data system. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$700,000 over Years 1-3.

TOTAL CONTRACTUAL: \$69,992,600

CONSTRUCTION - No construction will be funded through this grant.

OTHER

N/A

TOTAL OTHER: \$

INDIRECT CHARGES

N/A

TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES: \$

FUNDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCALITIES, EARLY LEARNING INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS AND OTHER PARTNERS

Section B

Evaluation, Development and Training of Quality Alignment

- ELCs: Assessment of early learning programs (B)(2)(a): The early learning coalitions will receive funding to complete TQRIS assessments on all programs that serve children who receive child care subsidies in year 4. Based on the average size of early learning programs in Florida, 65% of centers will receive one infant/toddler assessment and one preschool assessment; 35% of programs will receive two infant/toddler assessments or one infant/toddler assessment and one school age assessment (depending on ages of children served) and two preschool assessments. The smaller program assessments (estimated at 3,838 statewide) are estimated to cost \$500/program for the program assessment and report; the larger program assessments (estimated at 2,066 statewide) are estimated to cost \$750/program; family child care assessments (estimated at 2,775 statewide) are estimated to cost \$355/family child care home for a total cost of \$4,442,995). These costs are based on average program assessment costs throughout the state. \$557,000 is reserved for additional assessments for reliability checks on a regular basis to ensure assessments are reliable and consistent statewide. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$4,999,995 in Year 4.

Section B

Implementation of High Quality Assessments

- ELCs: Targeted accreditation and quality improvement supports (B)(4)(a): The early learning coalitions will receive funding to complete accreditation and quality improvement support activities throughout the grant period. The grant will be funding an estimated total of \$14,000,000 over Years 1-4.

TOTAL FUNDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCALITIES, EARLY LEARNING INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS AND OTHER PARTNERS: \$18,999, 995

TOTAL FUNDS SET ASIDE FOR PARTICIPATION IN GRANTEE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: \$800,000

\$400,000 was suggested for travel to participate in grantee technical assistance, however larger States were encouraged to budget additional funds.

TOTAL: \$87,342,803

How the Department of Health plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:

The DOH will work within their established operational structure to manage the RTT-ELC funds for the project set forth in the MOU.

An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities:

The DOH will be responsible for implementing the scope of work and adhering to the participating state agency responsibilities as defined in the MOU. DOH will work closely with the OEL to ensure the project stays on target with timelines and within budget. DOH will create and implement a long-term plan for a comprehensive statewide system of care that outlines a stronger system of referral, as well as best practices for effective follow-up services for children who receive a referral.

An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived:

The DOH in tandem with OEL utilized expertise knowledge in the areas of screening and assessment to project and plan for the costs associated with the project to improve statewide screening and assessment processes. The DOH drew upon existing costs of current projects and made realistic projections based on budget categories below.

Budget and Justification

Personnel:

The following existing positions will support this grant:

- GOVERNMENT ANALYST II: \$47,430 annual salary @ 10% = \$4,743
- OPERATIONS ANALYST II: \$31,108 annual salary @ 5% = 1,555

The total for these positions for 12 months is \$6,298 with a total for 3 years = \$18,894.

TOTAL PERSONNEL: \$ 25,194

Fringe Benefits:

Fringe benefits are estimated @ 33% on the personnel salary, annual amount = \$2,078, for 3 years = \$6,234

TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS: \$8,314

Travel:

Travel will be incorporated in the contract as a cost reimbursement line and will be determined upon finalization of contract deliverables and project activities.

TOTAL TRAVEL: \$0.00

Equipment:

N/A

TOTAL EQUIPMENT: \$0.00

Supplies:

N/A

TOTAL SUPPLIES: \$0.00

Contractual

Development of Long Term Plan to Improve Statewide Screening and Assessment (C)(2)

This project will be completed by procuring through one or more contractor(s) with state and federal procurement laws to ensure fair and open competition and that all costs are reasonable, allowable and necessary. The scope of work will include researching best practices

in screening and referral and follow-up services, and publishing findings in a report for the Governor. The grant will be funding in Years 1 -3 with the final report being submitted in early 2014.

TOTAL CONTRACTUAL: \$2,500,000

Construction: No construction will be funded through this grant.

Other

N/A

TOTAL OTHER: \$0.00

Indirect Charges:

Indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services for DOH contracts is 25%.

TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES: \$6,250

Funds to be distributed to localities, early learning intermediary organizations, participating programs and other partners:

N/A

TOTAL: \$2,539,758.00

How the Department of Education plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:

The Department will work within their established operational structure to manage the RTT-ELC funds for the project set forth in the MOU.

An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities:

The DOE will be responsible for implementing the scope of work and adhering to the participating state agency responsibilities as defined in the MOU. DOE will work closely with the OEL to ensure the project stays on target with timelines and within budget. DOE will oversee the development of a data bridge and unique child identifier process, interfaces to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), expansion of PLATINUM software solution and enhancement of the VPK Readiness Rate website.

An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived:

The DOE, in tandem with OEL, utilized expertise knowledge and drew upon existing costs of current projects in order to plan and project for the costs associated with these projects.

Budget and Justification

Personnel:

TOTAL PERSONNEL: \$ 0

Fringe Benefits:

TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS: \$0

Travel:

Two people will need to travel to various sites around the state to implement these projects. We have estimated the average cost of each trip to be \$525, they will travel to 3 sites in years 2, 3, and 4. Total costs of these trips will be \$1,575 per person for a total of \$4,725.

TOTAL TRAVEL: \$4,725

Equipment:

TOTAL EQUIPMENT: \$0

Supplies:

TOTAL SUPPLIES: \$0

Contractual:

Enhancement of Early Implementation of Early Learning Data Systems

- Unique Child Identifier and Data Bridge(E)(1)(d): A vendor will be secured to create a data bridge between Florida's early learning coalitions (ELCs) and local school districts to allow ELCs to generate a 10 digit student identifier. This would allow kindergarten readiness data to be reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and allow children in the early childhood system to be tracked into the PK-20 system. Budget for this project includes the cost of the development of the bridge system for \$800,000.
- SLDS interfaces (E)(2): This project establishes data exchange interfaces between the SLDS and the three primary systems that make up the early learning data network: the REGISTRY, PLATINUM, and the early learning data system. The goal of this project is to ensure that all early learning data systems have full connectivity to the state's PK-20 SLDS. The total budget for DOE for this project is \$500,000 over the final two years of the grant.
- PLATINUM enhancement and expansion(E)(2): Florida's data solution to support efficient implementation of the TQRIS is called PLATINUM. Funding under the RTT-ELC grant will be used to develop, pilot and deploy the system which serve as the data hub for TQRIS. Budget for PLATINUM includes construction of interfaces to connect TQRIS data to the early learning data system, the state child care licensing data systems, the REGISTRY and the SLDS. A total of \$150,000 is allocated to DOE for this project in the 3rd year of the grant.
- VPK Readiness Website (E)(1): The Department of Education's required VPK provider kindergarten readiness rate website will be enhanced with particular focus on the parent resource page and the provider resource page. Enhancements will include enhanced search capabilities focusing on the characteristics of VPK providers such as curriculum. The main focus would be to develop a structure which would allow parents of high needs children the ability to find available resources. Budget for this project, based on past experience developing similar systems, is estimated at \$250,000 per year for two years. The system will be completed and ready for implementation in 2014.

TOTAL CONTRACTUAL: \$1,950,000

Construction: - No construction will be funded through this grant.

Other:

TOTAL OTHER: \$0

Indirect Charges:

Indirect charges must be in line with approved indirect cost rate – need to specify federal cognizant agency.

TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES: \$0

Funds to be distributed to localities, early learning intermediary organizations, participating programs and other partners

N/A

TOTAL: \$1,954,725

How the Department of Children and Families plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:

The DCF will work within their established operational structure to manage the RTT-ELC funds for the project set forth in the MOU.

An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities:

The DCF will be responsible for implementing the scope of work and adhering to the participating state agency responsibilities as defined in the MOU. DCF will work closely with the OEL to ensure the project stays on target with timelines and within budget.

An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived:

The DCF in tandem with OEL utilized expertise knowledge to project and plan for the costs associated with the individual projects. The DCF expert staff drew upon existing costs of current projects and made realistic projections based on budget categories below.

BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

PERSONNEL

Project 1 – total personnel \$360,000

The following existing positions will support Project 1:

- Curriculum Specialist: \$60,000 annual salary
- Program Coordinator: \$60,000 annual salary
- Fiscal Specialist: In-Kind position

The total for these existing positions for 12 months is \$120,000 with a total for 3 years = \$360,000

Project 2 – total personnel \$238,200

- Project Lead: \$60,000 annual salary @ 100%

The total for this position for 12 months is \$60,000 with a total for 3 years for \$180,000.

The following existing positions will support Project 2:

- 2- GOVERNMENT ANALYST I: \$ 40,000 annual salary @10% = \$4,000 each
- OMC MANAGER: \$ 62,000 annual salary @10% = \$6,200
- OPERATION REVIEW SPECIALIST: \$52,000 annual salary @10% = \$5,200

The total for these existing positions for 12 months is \$19,400 with a total for 3 years = 58,200.

TOTAL PERSONNEL: \$598,200

FRINGE BENEFITS:

Fringe benefits are estimated @ 33% on the personnel salary

Project 1: Fringe benefits are estimated @ 33% of \$360,000 = \$118,800

Project 2: Fringe benefits are estimated @ 33% of \$238,200 = \$78,606

TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS: \$197,406

TRAVEL

Project 1: Total travel \$9,270

Two people will need to travel to various sites around the state to implement Everybody's a Teacher. We have estimated the average cost of each trip to be \$515; they will travel to 3 sites each year of the project period. Total annual costs of these trips will be \$1,545 per person for a total of \$3,090.

Project 2: Total travel \$66,495

Three staff will need to travel to various sites around the state to implement the other the projects. We have estimated the average cost of each trip to be \$715; they will travel to 31 sites in year 2. Total costs of these trips will be \$22,165 per person for a total of \$66,495. All travel will be reimbursed at the authorized state rates of \$36 per day for meals or \$80 per diem (includes meals and lodging). Lodging costs will be at the prevailing government rates for the geographic areas. Typically travelers will use rental cars for transportation at the rate of \$25.75 per day (unlimited mileage). On occasion, when the destination is too far away for the traveler to drive, air transportation may be authorized.

TOTAL TRAVEL: \$75,765

EQUIPMENT

Project 1 – total \$7,400:

2 Laptops and desktop printers \$3,000

2 Cell phones \$200

2 Projectors \$4,200

Project 2 - total \$21,000:

2 Projectors \$5,000

3 Laptops \$6,000

2 Servers \$10,000

TOTAL EQUIPMENT: \$28,400

SUPPLIES

Project 1 – total \$30,000:

Estimated print materials, training supplies, postage, office supplies, etc. @ 10,000 per year

Project 2 - miscellaneous supplies totaling \$725.

TOTAL SUPPLIES: \$30,725

CONTRACTUAL

Project 1: Public Awareness of High Quality Early Learning

B(3)(b): Expand Everybody's a Teacher multi-media outreach:

A vendor or vendors will be hired through competitive procurement to develop and deploy a website/system designed to educate families, especially families of high needs children, on child development and quality child care settings and TQRIS, help families identify and prioritize their child's needs and help connect families with providers who can meet their needs. A child can achieve competency in essential school readiness skills— such as language and early literacy— only when he/she has begun to experience and master all the domains of development. These include: cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, as well as non-cognitive areas such as motivation to read and persistence in learning.

The website/system will contain easily accessible materials that address all of the essential school readiness skills in each domain in user friendly formats. These “tools” for parents (and others working with children) will include a smart phone application and computer feed in order to provide regular information to families on child development and school

readiness. The tools will encourage and engage the user in implementation in the home thereby reinforcing learning in the child care setting. The platform for the website will include the ability to easily play instructional videos. As part of the main vendor contract or by separate contract the multimedia outreach shall include the creation of videos on school readiness topics, parent engagement, and ideas for parents to use at home to enhance the learning occurring in the child care setting. The videos for enhanced learning will be supplemented by material that can be used in the child care or early learning centers and at home. Examples of enhanced learning will include replication of Leon County, Florida's Every Child Counts which teaches parents and caregivers of pre-school age children how to help their children learn math concepts and Backyard Science which teaches science in the home and Everybody is a Reader encouraging reading in the home.

All materials will be developed to prepare the child to achieve the Common Core Standards. The vendor for the videos will be required to develop a minimum of three 90 second public service announcements usable for television and radio across the state to market the website. The cost of this system and the associated tools is based on the development of similar systems in Florida and in other states, and is for \$500,000 Year 1 \$1,000,000 Year 2 and \$1,500,000 Year 3. Total \$3,000,000.

B(3)(b): Report Card used by DCF, CCR&R, website, (ratings from PLATINUM)

DCF will develop a new web page that can be viewed and printed in the DCF Public Web Portal to help inform parents about quality programming and improve communication between a provider and the parent. All provider types can be accessed in the public portal and will utilize the report card. The cost is estimated at 40 hours for requirements, analysis and design, 240 development and testing and 20 project management at a rate of \$145.00 an hour. \$43,500 Year 3.

Project 2: Enhancement of Implementation of Early Learning Systems

E(2): Enhancement of Professional Development Registry Program:

The Professional Development Registry will be supported by the REGISTRY application, already under development. In year 1, the REGISTRY will include the design and

development of a practitioner and training Registry (estimated 6,571 hours at a rate of \$145 per hour). \$952,795

In year 2, the Department will contract for the design and development of an online training calendar, a training registration system, and will start implementation of statewide training (online and instructor lead sessions) and early care and education marketing campaign. The estimated cost for the year two activities include the design and development of the online training calendar and training registration system (estimated 10,934 hours at a rate of \$145 per hour, \$185,000 for the development and deployment of an online training course(s) and onsite instructor lead training throughout the state, and \$175,000 to initiate an early care and education marketing campaign). \$1,945,430

In year 3, the Department will contract for the continuation of the early care and education marketing campaign, design and development of a training/trainer approval system, enhancements to the REGISTRY application through to incorporate workflows and processes, interfaces for seamless integration of online course delivery and logic models for automatic placement of early learning practitioners on the Career Pathway(\$100,000 for marketing campaign, estimated 5,793 hours at a rate of \$145 per hour). \$939,985

E(2): PLATINUM Expansion and Enhancement:

The Department will contract for the interface between the PLATINUM system and the DCF CCTA/Registry application (estimated 586 hours at a rate of \$145 per hour). \$84,970 Year 2.

E(2): Develop Interface between CCLA and CCTA: The project will be completed through DCF for an estimated contractual services rate of \$145 per hour for 1,551 hours for the creation of an interface between the two system applications. The hourly rate will include the development of an interface between the licensing and training applications, which includes the Registry module which is contained in the training application, design, development, testing, and deployment. \$224,895 Year 1

TOTAL CONTRACTUAL: \$7,191,575

CONSTRUCTION - No construction will be funded through this grant.

OTHER

Project 1: Cell phone usage charges at \$2,600 per year for three years.

TOTAL OTHER: \$7,800

INDIRECT CHARGES

N/A

TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES: \$

FUNDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCALITIES, EARLY LEARNING INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICIPATING PROGRAMS AND OTHER PARTNERS

N/A

TOTAL: \$8,129,871

BUDGET: INDIRECT COST INFORMATION

To request reimbursement for indirect costs, please answer the following questions:

<p>Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?</p> <p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/></p> <p>NO <input type="radio"/></p> <p>If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:</p> <p>Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (mm/dd/yyyy):</p> <p>From: <u> 7 </u> / <u> 1 </u> / <u>2010</u> To: <u> </u> / <u> </u> / <u> </u> (Until Amended)</p> <p>Approving Federal agency: <u> </u>ED <u> X </u>HHS <u> </u>Other</p> <p><i>(Please specify agency):</i> _____</p>

Directions for this form:

1. Indicate whether or not the State has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that was approved by the Federal government.
2. If "No" is checked, the Departments generally will authorize grantees to use a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted salaries and wages subject to the following limitations:
 - (a) The grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency within 90 days after the grant award notification is issued; and
 - (b) If after the 90-day period, the grantee has not submitted an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency, the grantee may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant agency.

If "Yes" is checked, indicate the beginning and ending dates covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. In addition, indicate whether ED, HHS, or another Federal agency (Other) issued the approved agreement. If "Other" was checked, specify the name of the agency that issued the approved agreement.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Program Support Center
Financial Management Service
Division of Cost Allocation

Cohen Building-Room 1067
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
PHONE: (202)-401-2808
FAX: (202)-619-3379

July 01, 2010

Mr. Gary Mahoney
Director, Div of Administration
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way BIN B00
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1728

Dear Mr. Mahoney:

A copy of an indirect cost Rate Agreement is being faxed to you for signature. This Agreement reflects an understanding reached between your organization and a member of my staff concerning the rate(s) that may be used to support your claim for indirect costs on grants and contracts with the Federal Government.

Please have the original signed by an authorized representative of your organization and fax it to me, retaining the copy for your files. Our fax number is (202) 619-3379. We will reproduce and distribute the Agreement to the appropriate awarding organizations of the Federal Government for their use.

An indirect cost proposal, together with the supporting information, are required to substantiate your claim for indirect costs under grants and contracts awarded by the Federal Government. Thus, your next proposal based on actual costs for the fiscal year ending 06/30/2011, is due in our office by 12/31/2011.

Sincerely,

Darryl W. Mayes
Director, Mid-Atlantic Field Office
Division of Cost Allocation

Enclosures

PLEASE SIGN AND FAX A COPY OF THE RATE AGREEMENT

ORIGINAL

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RATE AGREEMENT

EIN:

DATE: 07/01/2010

ORGANIZATION:

FILING REF.: The preceding agreement was dated 07/01/2008

Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way BIN B00
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1728

The rates approved in this agreement are for use on grants, contracts and other agreements with the Federal Government, subject to the conditions in Section III.

SECTION I: INDIRECT COST RATES

RATE TYPES:	FIXED	FINAL	PROV. (PROVISIONAL)	PRED. (PREDETERMINED)	
	<u>EFFECTIVE PERIOD</u>				
<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>RATE (%)</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>APPLICABLE TO</u>
FINAL	07/01/2008	06/30/2010	25.00	All	State Health Services
FINAL	07/01/2008	06/30/2010	7.50	All	Children's Medical Services
FINAL	07/01/2008	06/30/2010	7.30	All (1)	A.G. Holley Hospital
FINAL	07/01/2008	06/30/2010	6.90	All	Disability Determination
PROV.	07/01/2010	Until Amended			Use same rates and conditions as those cited for fiscal year ending June 30, 2010.

*BASE

Direct salaries and wages including all fringe benefits.

ORGANIZATION: Florida Department of Health
AGREEMENT DATE: 07/01/2010

SECTION II: SPECIAL REMARKS

TREATMENT OF FRINGE BENEFITS:

Fringe benefits are specifically identified to each employee and are charged individually as direct costs. The directly claimed fringe benefits are listed below.

TREATMENT OF PAID ABSENCES

Vacation, holiday, sick leave pay and other paid absences are included in salaries and wages and are claimed on grants, contracts and other agreements as part of the normal cost for salaries and wages. Separate claims are not made for the cost of these paid absences.

Fringe benefits include: FICA, retirement, disability insurance, life insurance and health insurance.

(1) Indirect costs include statewide central service cost allocations and headquarters costs. They do not include any administrative costs at the institution level.

ORGANIZATION: Florida Department of Health

AGREEMENT DATE: 07/01/2010

SECTION III: GENERAL

A. LIMITATIONS:

The rates in this Agreement are subject to any statutory or administrative limitations and apply to a given grant, contract or other agreement only to the extent that funds are available. Acceptance of the rates is subject to the following conditions: (1) Only costs incurred by the organization were included in its indirect cost pool as finally accepted; such costs are legal obligations of the organization and are allowable under the governing cost principles; (2) The same costs that have been treated as indirect costs are not claimed as direct costs; (3) Similar types of costs have been accorded consistent accounting treatment; and (4) The information provided by the organization which was used to establish the rates is not later found to be materially incomplete or inaccurate by the Federal Government. In such situations the rate(s) would be subject to renegotiation at the discretion of the Federal Government.

B. ACCOUNTING CHANGES:

This Agreement is based on the accounting system purported by the organization to be in effect during the Agreement period. Changes to the method of accounting for costs which affect the amount of reimbursement resulting from the use of this Agreement require prior approval of the authorized representative of the cognizant agency. Such changes include, but are not limited to, changes in the charging of a particular type of cost from indirect to direct. Failure to obtain approval may result in cost disallowances.

C. FIXED RATES:

If a fixed rate is in this Agreement, it is based on an estimate of the costs for the period covered by the rate. When the actual costs for this period are determined, an adjustment will be made to a rate of a future year(s) to compensate for the difference between the costs used to establish the fixed rate and actual costs.

D. USE BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES:

The rates in this Agreement were approved in accordance with the authority in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87 Circular, and should be applied to grants, contracts and other agreements covered by this Circular, subject to any limitations in A above. The organization may provide copies of the Agreement to other Federal Agencies to give them early notification of the Agreement.

E. OTHER:

If any Federal contract, grant or other agreement is reimbursing indirect costs by a means other than the approved rate(s) in this Agreement, the organization should (1) credit such costs to the affected programs, and (2) apply the approved rate(s) to the appropriate base to identify the proper amount of indirect costs allocable to these programs.

BY THE INSTITUTION:

Florida Department of Health

(INSTITUTION)

(SIGNATURE)

Gary J. Mahoney

(NAME)

Director, Division of Administration

(TITLE)

7/15/2010

(DATE)

ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

(AGENCY)

(SIGNATURE)

Darryl W. Mayes

(NAME)

Director, Mid-Atlantic Field Office

(TITLE)

7/1/2010

(DATE) 1042

HHS REPRESENTATIVE: June Talbert

Telephone: (202) 401-2808