



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # MO-5021

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
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CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 16. Includes detailed text and a 'Comments on (A)(1)' section. Row 2: (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals, 20, 16.

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(2)**

Missouri submits a medium quality articulation of its comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda. Missouri wisely included all stakeholders, including families, in preliminary meetings to determine the "big ideas" to be included in the RTT-ELC proposal. They continue to emphasize community participation in their plan to request community pilot proposals that meet common goals and integrate innovative concepts predicted to be particularly successful in a given community. However, since none of the community pilot proposals, nor a guideline for the community pilot proposals, was included in the proposal, it is not possible to judge if they will improve outcomes for children with high needs or help close the readiness gap. Missouri has designed a comprehensive roadmap consisting of four infrastructure areas and four program components. They provide tables to demonstrate indicators of progress in each area and for each component. However, neither baseline data nor specific numerical targets are provided for the areas and components. Thus, it is not possible to determine if the indicators of progress will result in guiding Missouri's accomplishment of an "ambitious, yet achievable" reform agenda. While Missouri's plan has many strengths, the proposal's lack of specific information about community pilots, a key method of implementing Missouri's plan, and of measurable targets for progress resulted in the rating of medium quality. The proposal includes a credible rationale to justify its choice of criteria to address in each Focused Investment Area and provides strong evidence that work on each criteria directly connects to their roadmap state plan. Missouri chose to address (C)(1) because the state considers the currently existing Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS) as central to the state plan "to improve instruction, parenting skills and behavior, teacher preparation, public knowledge of children's development, and curriculum." They plan to use RTT-ELC funds to complete the integration of MELS into one document and to provide training on MELS. Missouri chooses to address (C)(3) because it estimates that 20% of all preschool children in Missouri have health and development problems. Missouri has begun to focus on health and development through provision of Special Needs Inclusion Specialists, work on the creation of an effective early childhood health/mental health system and participation in an Early Childhood Mental Health Summit. RTT-ELC funds will be used to further support Missouri's children in meeting their health and developmental needs. Missouri chooses to address (D)(1) and (D)(2) because the states realizes that "Quality early childhood education means having teachers who are trained to understand the needs of children and how they learn." Missouri has completed the important work of creating and revising Core Competencies. The state plans to use RTT-ELC funds to increase access to professional development opportunities aligned to the Core Competencies and to expand TEACH Missouri Scholarship opportunities. Missouri chooses to address (E)(2) because it plans to use RTT-ELC funds to eliminate specified data gaps in the existing Missouri Comprehensive Data System. Missouri has wisely prioritized its work to first collect the data that is most important in answering "key policy, research and practice questions."

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (A)(3)**

Missouri submits a substantially implemented, high quality plan to establish strong participation in and commitment to the state plan by all participating stakeholders. A comprehensive narrative and a detailed organizational chart outline the relationship of the lead agency, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, with all other stakeholders. Missouri's plan will streamline decision making, since one agency is clearly named as the Lead Agency. Table (A) (3) (1) clearly outlines the responsibilities of each agency in implementing the "Show Me" to the Top plan, thus facilitating interagency coordination and effectively allocating resources. Currently existing services provided by each agency are listed in this table. These services provide a strong foundation from which each agency will play a lead role in particular aspects of "Show Me" to the Top. For example, a table states that the Department of Social Services "Will serve a lead role in family support, engagement and parenting education aspects of the State System as well as bring all department resources to bear on helping families and young children be ready for school with programs and services such as Early Childhood, Development, Education and Care Fund, Home Visitation Services (Stay at Home Parent; Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention), Early Head Start Care Partnership Program, MO Health Net (Medicaid), Educare (Supports for Family, Friends and Neighbor Care." Each agency's list of responsibilities ends with the statement that the agency will "provide data to Missouri comprehensive Data System." All agencies currently cooperate in a school readiness collaborative, from which the plans for "Show Me" to the top grew. That cooperation and the fact that each agency currently takes responsibility for all key projects forming the foundation of their aspect of "Show Me" to the Top attest to the decision that Missouri presents a substantially implemented plan. A detailed plan for decision making and conflict resolution is presented. If the lead agency determines that a participating agency is not fulfilling requirements, the lead agency will initiate a collaborative process. This plan wisely states that the collaborative process may not exceed 60 days, without the agreement of all parties, and provides for a resolution, in the event the collaborative process fails. MOUs between the state of Missouri and each participating agency are provided. Strong support for the preliminary involvement of all agencies in formulating the "Show Me" to the Top plan is mentioned in many of the letters of support.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(4)**

Missouri submits a high-quality response to the request for a budget to implement and sustain the work of the grant. The budget includes appropriate allocations for most activities described in the state plan. Missouri clearly recognizes the importance of an educated workforce and provides financial support based upon the significance of improving the education of the workforce, by allocating from all state resources, over the 4 years of the grant, a total of \$14,099,800 to the Project: Early Childhood Educators Professional Development.(Budget Table 1-3) This includes an allocation of \$2,700,000 from RTT-ELC funds for TEACH Missouri Scholarships, to meet the goal of a highly educated workforce.(Section VIII-Department of Elementary and Secondary Project Narrative) Appropriate budget allocations for the innovative plan to provide parent education and a support system for families affected by the justice system are also presented. The budget also provides sufficient funds to double the state's cadre of Inclusion Specialists,( increasing from a staff of 4 to 8), who will help Missouri meet its goal of increasing the number of children with high needs enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs. Missouri also provides sufficient budget to fund a program of mini-grants allowing centers to purchase physical equipment, such as larger tables and serving carts, needed to meet the goal of increasing nutritional value of meals and allowing meals to be served family-style. An adequate budget is also provided to create an electronic time and attendance system, which will streamline the administration of subsidized child care programs. Adequate funds are also budgeted to provide outreach to parents of and consultation services to teachers of children with mental health issues. Altogether, Missouri's budget wisely emphasizes improving direct services to children and families in early learning centers and provides reasonable and necessary funding for these services. Several weaknesses were, however, noted in the budget. Although the budget includes plans for braiding RTT-ELC funds with existing funds, more detail is needed to explain how these plans will be accomplished. Missouri does not include plans for sustainability of all major projects. The amount of funding allocated for the creation of a statewide data system for early childhood does not seem adequate to the complex task of merging a very large number of existing data streams.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	10	8

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 standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and
- (c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(1)**

Missouri presents a substantially implemented, medium quality plan for developing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Missouri has developed the PASS(Program Assessment/Scoring System)that results in a star rating of one to five stars. They have completed pilot and demonstration projects and are now fully implementing the models and awarding star ratings in select communities. This constitutes substantial implementation of the TQRIS system. The PASS is clear and has standards that are measurable, differentiate program levels and reflect high expectations for five stars, commensurate with nationally recognized standards. PASS is wisely anchored by licensing and accreditation. A program cannot receive a star rating unless it is licensed and a program cannot receive a rating of 5 stars unless it is accredited. A weakness of Missouri's plan is the lack of information provided as to the adult: child ratio needed to earn a given star rating. Information provided in the application does not make clear if all programs must meet the ratios specified in the Missouri Early Learning Program Standards in order to be licensed, or to earn a minimum score of one star. The PASS is based on a set of tiered Program Standards for each required area listed 1-6 in (B) (1)(a). Attachment 16 presents an alignment of Missouri Pre-K indicators to Missouri Grade Specific Standards in Reading and Language Arts and to Head Start Standards for Math and many other areas.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(2)**

Missouri presents a partially implemented, medium-quality plan to maximize program participation in the TQRIS. A strength of the plan is the policies in place that will require participation in the TQRIS for all state-funded preschools, Title I Preschools, ECSE programs in Race to the Top communities and programs receiving CCDF funding. Incentives for programs to participate include coaching, technical assistance and scholarships. The plan discusses coordinating, pooling and decategorizing funds as possibilities to help more families afford high-quality child care. More detail is needed to explain how this will be accomplished. Currently, 40% of school districts in Missouri use some Title I dollars for preschool-aged children and 37 of 522 districts invest 50% or more of their Title I dollars for preschoolers. This represents an unusually strong current allocation of Title I funds for preschool. However, no statewide goals or focused plan for increasing the allocation of Title I funding to preschools are included in the proposal. Missouri's goals for increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the TQRIS do not seem sufficiently ambitious to meet the requirements of a high-quality plan. For example, if policies currently mandate participation by all state-funded preschools, it is not clear why the target presented in chart (B)(2)(c) aims at having only 35% of state funded preschools participating in the TQRIS by 2015.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(3)**

Missouri presents a partially implemented, high quality plan to develop and implement the TQRIS. The proposal describes an already-existing, coherent system of assuring the validity and reliability of the PASS. Table 1 clearly describes three levels of advancing skill by assessors. Master assessors assure quality control of the system. Table 2 specifies an environmental rating instrument and an intentional teaching instrument for the classrooms of each age group of children. These two types of instruments meet nationally recognized validity standards. Attachment 25 presents a thoroughly detailed set of instructions provided to raters to assure inter-rater reliability. The PASS rating cycle is 18 months, a cycle of appropriate frequency wisely set to allow programs enough time to make improvements and to allow programs to be assessed at different times of the year. Missouri currently has both a paper certificate system and a fully implemented online system of communicating TQRIS ratings to families. In addition, Child Care Aware of Missouri has launched a web-based feature for programs to further educate parents about programs.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

Missouri describes a partially-implemented, medium quality plan to improve the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the TQRIS. Strengths of the program include the following incentives to continuously improve: technology which currently helps participants track their training needs and opportunities, expansion of the currently existing coaching services provided to programs to help them achieve higher ratings, and expansion of the current TEACH Missouri program by 680 additional scholarships. Missouri presents a number of substantive plans for program incentives and family support to be implemented with RTT-ELC funds, in order to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs. A work group will examine options that will achieve the state's goal of tiered child care assistance payments based on programs' TQRIS scores. Technical assistance "support packages", tailored to the sites' capacity and needs, will be provided. An extensive marketing campaign, assisted by a mobile technology platform, will increase parent awareness of programs' quality. Community Pilots, building upon the current Strengthening Families framework used in PASS (that has resulted in such innovative solutions to practical problems as providing families with weekend backpack meals and carbon monoxide and smoke detectors), will identify and meet early learning gaps for families. Missouri sets achievable goals for increasing the number of programs scoring in the top tiers of the TQRIS, and the number and percentage of children with high needs enrolled in those programs. The top tiers are defined as tiers 3, 4 and 5; requirements for tier 3 do not seem adequately ambitious to meet the definition of high quality programs, particularly in light of the findings

defining high quality as 4 or 5 stars, reported from Missouri's 2009 Child Outcome Study. Table (B)(4)(c)(2) sets achievable yet ambitious goals for increasing the number of children with High Needs enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the TQRIS. For example, the goal for increasing the children enrolled in state-funded preschools is set to increase from a baseline of 0 to 900 at the end of calendar year 2015. It is not possible to determine how many of those children are projected to be enrolled in programs scoring a 3, a problematic score, based on conflicting definitions of the terms "top tier" and "high quality programs". Table (B)(4)(c)(1) sets an achievable and ambitious goal of increasing the number of state-funded [preschool programs receiving a rating of 4 or 5 from a baseline of 16 today to 415 at the end of calendar year 2015.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (B)(5)**

Missouri presents a medium quality plan to design and implement evaluations of the relationship between the state's TQRIS and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development programs. Information from a 2008 psychometric study demonstrates the reliability and validity of the current PASS model. Table 3, Criterion Rated Validity summarizes the correlations of quality indicators such as program level accreditation scores and staff level of education with PASS ratings. The relationship of many of these quality indicators to PASS scores was shown to be statistically significant. Missouri has also completed a study that demonstrated the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development and school readiness. Missouri's TQRIS Child Outcome Study (2009) showed that children in high quality programs (4 or 5 stars) scored significantly higher on a number of measures (positive social and behavioral skills, and, for children in poverty, significant gains in receptive vocabulary) than did their peers attending low quality programs. Missouri presents plans for a PASS Star Level Validation Project and a PASS Child Outcomes Project, funded by RTT-ELC, to assess which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development and school readiness. Many of the details of these plan are not yet developed. Sample sizes for the PASS Child Outcomes Project appear to be too small to achieve the purposes of the study.

**Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)**

Each 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**

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	20	18

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(1)**

Missouri presents a high-quality, substantially-implemented plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs. A table documents the substantial progress that has been made in integrating Missouri's Early Learning and Development Standards (MELS) into each of four target areas. Standards were developed between 2001 and 2003 for preschoolers and between 2010-2011 for children birth to age three. Funds from RTT- ELC will be used to support the completion of an existing effort to reframe standards in an alignment that "illustrates how the foundations of learning are developed in the first years of life". Missouri presents strong evidence that their standards meet the requirements of (C) (1) (a), (b) and (c). Linguistic appropriateness is embedded in the standards. For example, one of the Speaking/Expressive Language Indicators states, "Communicates in home language and is understood by others (examples: English, Spanish, sign, or other native language) for a variety of purposes." Missouri plans to produce Spanish and Bosnian versions of the standards. Families speaking these languages will be consulted to assure the standards are culturally appropriate. MELS have been aligned with the Head Start Outcomes Framework, the Missouri Show Me Standards for K-12, and Missouri's Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals. The three instruments selected for the kindergarten entry assessment pilot were chosen to align with MELS. Missouri has a number of strong supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the standards. Professional Development on MELS has been available to teachers and parent educators since 2009. Missouri's TQRIS, the PASS, includes criteria stressing the importance of incorporating MELS in high-quality programs. RTT-ELC funds will be used to support training 12,000 teachers to use the standards. An implementation timeline for the training is provided. No information is provided to explain how the training on using the standards will be accompanied by coaching or other supports, to assure implementation of new learning.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	20	18
<p>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--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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;</li> <li>(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;</li> <li>(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and</li> <li>(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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);</li> <li>(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and</li> <li>(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.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**



**Comments on (C)(3)**

Missouri submits a substantially-implemented, high quality plan to identify and address the health, behavioral and developmental needs of children with high needs. Charts on page 114 of the application identify all the necessary elements of health as present in the criteria used by Child Care Licensing, Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines, Early Learning Program Standards, Accreditation, MELS and Core Competencies. Missouri currently has in place two innovative partnerships between health professionals and early learning programs. Registered nurses provide training on health, safety and nutrition. The American Academy of Pediatrics provides medication administration training. Missouri currently implements two programs promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity: The Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines and I Am Moving, I AM Learning. Training on these two programs for additional early childhood centers will be funded with RTT-ELC funds. Attachment 28 presents a logic model summarizing needs, target populations, inputs, challenges and barriers, strategies and outcomes to meet the stated goal, "All young children in Missouri are safe, healthy and capable of reaching their full potential." Unfortunately, responsibility for the implementation of each of the strategies is not assigned and an implementation timeline is not provided. Missouri CARES presents outstanding plans to leverage existing resources by building on the existing work of the Missouri Department of Mental Health and the MO HealthNet Division (Medicaid) in supporting social and emotional development. RTT-ELC funds will be wisely used to support improvements in the systems related to early childhood social and emotional issues through a public awareness campaign, training for the early childhood workforce, and a series of webinars for physicians and improvements in the utilization of the results of screening data. These improvements in the use of Early Periodic, Screening and Diagnosis and Treatment Data will allow Missouri to track children's participation in ongoing health care. Ambitious, yet achievable goals of steadily increasing, by 10% and 5% annually, respectively, the unduplicated number of children with high needs screened and served are summarized in chart (C)(3)(d).

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(4)**

Missouri presents a substantially implemented, medium 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. Attachment 1, Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan, includes as one of its major Desired Outcomes for Young Children, the statement that a primary purpose of Missouri's system of early childhood programs is "to promote school readiness among children, families, programs and communities". To accomplish this purpose, Missouri provides a comprehensive summary of desired outcomes, goals, objectives and long-term activities under the headings of, among others, Family Support and Parenting Education. An item representative of the high level of wisdom and comprehensive planning with which this document is written states as a long-term activity under the heading of Parenting Education, " 2. Support an in-depth analysis of existing parent education and home visiting programs to ensure that they employ best practices and are serving families most in need." ( Attachment 1). Attachment 28, Logic Model C/ Theory of Change for Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, includes a lengthy section outlining Target Populations, Inputs, Challenges and Barriers, Strategies, and Outcomes to meet the need, " Not all of Missouri's young children are raised in a safe, stable, supportive and nurturing environment" Strategies for supporting families also accompany each of the other needs identified, as appropriate. Additional strengths of the plan include the integration of nationally expected elements of family engagement in Missouri's Show Me Quality for Kids, and in Missouri's Early Learning Program Standards and Core Competencies. Missouri includes plans to use RTT-ELC funds to strengthen existing support to families of dual language learners, to children of incarcerated parents and to parents after the child's first diagnosis of disability or special health care need. A significant weakness of the plan is lack of specific plans to strengthen the support provided to families whose children have high needs due to the family's experience of economic hardship. Missouri plans to leverage existing resources to promote family support and engagement through Parents as Teachers(serving every school district in the state), Nurse Family Partnerships, Early Head Start, Educare and ParentLink's Warmline (making 4500 referrals, primarily from young mothers, each year). RTT- ELC funds will be used to expand this work and reach additional families.

**D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	20	18

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(1)**

Missouri presents a substantially-implemented, high-quality plan to develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes. Missouri was a national leader, with Kansas, in developing in 1999 the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals. These were revised in 2011 and aligned with major national and state standards. Each of eight competencies is divided into five increasing skill levels. Missouri describes an existing progression of credentials that includes Introductory, Vocational Credentials and Formal Study in the Field Levels. A weakness of the plan noted is that Missouri makes no mention of a credential for educators of children from birth to age three. Missouri currently aligns with nationally recognized standards of best practice by requiring a bachelor's degree as well as a specialization in early childhood for Start-Up and Expansion infant/toddler classrooms and Missouri Preschool Project Classrooms.) Missouri describes the past and current work of The Missouri Access to Early Childhood Education Initiative, which includes postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers, in formulating statewide articulation agreements and designing a plan of common coursework. Attachment 29, Logic Model D1 Theory of Change for Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework identifies a number of Workforce Needs and establishes Target Populations, Inputs, Challenges and Barriers, Strategies and Outcomes related to meeting each Workforce Need. This Logic Model provides the conceptual structure needed for Missouri to complete the work of aligning all professional development opportunities with Missouri's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.</b>	20	16

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(2)**

Missouri presents a substantially implemented, medium-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. Currently, Missouri has in place a data system, the Missouri Workshop Calendar, that allows professionals to search for and register in and track their participation in workshops aligned to the Core Competencies. Missouri will provide professional development on the competency-aligned Basic Knowledge Curriculum to 2,500 early childhood educators during the four years of the grant. Missouri will maximize the effects of these trainings by prioritizing the registration of employees of agencies that serve high needs children. RTT-ELC funds will be innovatively used to expand access to other trainings aligned with Core Competencies through the use of mobile devices and a video library. Unfortunately, no mention of coaching or other in-person follow up to these trainings is mentioned, despite widely accepted research indicating the necessity of coaching for significant rates of implementation of new knowledge. Missouri has implemented a number of policies that promote professional development. TEACH Early Childhood Missouri Scholarship has been active in Missouri since 2000, awarding 1900 scholarships. RTT-ELC will fund an additional 680 scholarships. Providing significant funding for scholarships attests to Missouri's commitment to the importance of an educated workforce in providing stimulating early childhood education during critical periods of brain development. Missouri currently publicly reports aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator Development, advancement and retention, through the Missouri Comprehensive Data System. Missouri sets ambitious, yet achievable goals to increase the number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed through an aligned institution from 100 to 300 during the four years of RTT-ELC. Goals set for 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 do not seem sufficiently ambitious. For example, the goal to increase the number of individuals who hold credential Type 4 (Associate of Arts, Associate of Arts and Science, or Associate of Arts in Teaching) is set to increase only from a baseline of 615 to 700, by the end of calendar year 2015. Attachment 29, Logic Model D/ Theory of Change for Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework identifies a number of Workforce Needs and establishes Target Populations, Inputs, Challenges and Barriers, Strategies and Outcomes related to meeting each Workforce Need. This Logic Model provides the conceptual structure needed for Missouri to complete the work of aligning all professional development opportunities with Missouri's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

**E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.</b>	40	30

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (E)(2)**

Missouri has a partially implemented, high quality plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The table of Essential Data Elements provided on pages 141 and 142 clearly describes the current status of each essential data element and provides detailed plans to improve the elements, as needed. For example, Missouri has several systems of identifiers for educators but is able to use probabilistic matching to link records. Attachment 32, Logic Model E/ Theory of Change for Building or Enhancing an Early Learning Data System lists only one need: "All State data systems are not linked to the Missouri Comprehensive Data System". The logic model identifies Target Populations, Inputs, Challenges and Barriers, Strategies and Outcomes linked to this need. The nine innovative strategies identified meet the criteria listed in (E) (2) (b), (c) and (d). For example, the strategy, " Build a job-embedded professional development platform to allow teachers to find engaging and practical activities for children" will generate information that is timely, relevant, accessible and easy to use for continuous program improvement. Provisions have been made to assure uniform data collection and the exchange of data among participating state agencies. Missouri currently uses the metadata management tool DataSpecs to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data. Attachment 35 lists 19 data systems that house early childhood and after-school data, the administering entity for each system and the types of data and programs. Unfortunately, no information is provided to explain how DataSpecs will merge data from these 19 data systems. No provisions are made to train educators on new data collection systems. Attachment 36, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Data Access and Management Policy defines each of four levels of access to data to facilitate the exchange of data. Attachment 34, Early Childhood/After-School Questions to Support the Comprehensive Data Effort, attests to Missouri's plans to use data in decision making. A total of 22 questions related to Children, Access, Program Funding/Costs, Program Workforce, and Program Quality and Effectiveness are presented. Typical of Missouri's focus on using data in decision making is #11, "To what extent does early childhood dosage (half day, school day, full day) predict school readiness/achievement in early elementary grades?". Missouri's Data Access and Management Policy (Attachment 36) meets and exceeds the oversight requirements listed in the grant.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>221</b>

#### Priorities

##### Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

##### **Comments on (P)(2)**

Missouri presents a partially implemented, medium quality plan to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards. (P)(2)(a) Missouri will use RTT-ELC funds to develop a tiered rating system for programs serving at least two unrelated children. Currently, programs that serve four or fewer children do not have to obtain a license in Missouri. No plan is presented to require licensing for programs serving four or fewer children. A strength of Missouri's plan is the proposed use of RTT-ELC funds to create a tiered rating system for programs serving at least two unrelated children and to provide a coach to help these programs improve their ratings. (P)(2)(b) Missouri has in place a TQRIS system, Show Me Quality. Missouri, RTT-ELC funds will be used to modify Tier 1 of the current TQRIS to meet the needs of faith-based providers and to work with Family Friends and Neighbor providers to finalize a three-tiered system to measure quality in those sites. More detail is needed to evaluate these two plans.

##### Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>Yes</b>

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

#### Comments on Absolute Priority

Missouri's proposal meets the requirements of the Absolute Priority by comprehensively and coherently addressing how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Missouri's "Show Me" to the Top Early Learning Roadmap is well-named. The plan is built on three foundational principles: Capacity Building, Collaboration and Innovation. These principles are evident in each step Missouri presents on the roadmap to improved early learning and development. Missouri wisely began to prepare for the grant application by convening on July 8 and August 5, 2011, over 200 stakeholders (whose signatures of support and collaboration are included in Attachments 2 and 3) to gain their input and assess the current status of Missouri's Early Learning and Development Programs. This outstanding collaboration resulted in the high level of innovation evident in the grant application. Likewise, involving all stakeholders assured that the funds requested through RTT-ELC would be used to build capacity in the areas most critical to early learning: a highly educated staff of early learning teachers, involved and educated families, children who are supported to reach their full potential and a data system, including a Tiered Quality and Rating System built on ambitious yet achievable program standards, that is used to collect and share information needed to continuously improve programs so all children, including Children with High Needs, enter kindergarten ready to succeed.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # MO-5021

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 2:35 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 13

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Missouri's financial investment since 2007 has gone up 10.2 million with some funding categories increasing (e.g., supplemental state funding on Head Start, state special education funding for preschoolers and infants and toddlers) and some remaining level funded or with slight decreases. The one notable exception was significant decreases in Parents as Teachers across the period. The current state investment is \$224,473,517 (2011) and the applicants estimated that the State has invested \$1.1 billion since 2007. With respect to the numbers of high needs families the state reported an estimated 220,000 children living in poverty (200% of federal poverty level) or about 50% of the state population of children from birth to kindergarten. A number of young children were reported receiving early learning services in a variety of programs; nevertheless, the applicants did not report an unduplicated count and the total number of preschoolers is relatively small. Table (A)(1)-5 on historical data was more revealing with more than 5,000 children in Head Start programs and almost 10,000 more children receiving Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF). On the other hand, the Parents as Teachers Program has decreased in funding and the number of young children and families served (about 10,000). Similar to many other states, Missouri's early learning programs are funded primarily through state dollars, federal flow through dollars, and some private initiatives and these funding streams have been affected by the economic downturn. With respect to early childhood legislation, policies, or practices the applicants detailed legislative acts since the 1980s for working with children and families below kindergarten and a collaborative effort between Early Head Start and community childcare programs. In addition, they noted a federal grant Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) that they briefly described. Finally, they reported that they have a Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (CBECC) that functions as their State Advisory Council for Early Childhood (mandated by Head Start legislation). The applicants also reported and appended the development of Early Learning Standards, and Early Learning Program Standards. They suggested that their current infrastructure will "allow Missouri to launch pilots related to the child assessment aspects of the Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment system in 2012." Nevertheless, it appears the assessment system has not gone beyond planning except for a former School Entry Profile that was used until 2009 and for those teachers still using it not reported to the State department of education. The applicants simply noted that they will adopt a "new" Kindergarten Entry Assessment by 2014-15. With respect to

professional development, a strength in this subsection was the beginning use of Ages and Stages Social Emotional Screenings, which is psychometrically known, and the training modules from the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), which are well produced materials and the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). With respect to data systems development the applicants reported 2009 funding from the Institute on Educational Sciences Longitudinal Data System Program and the state has recently upgraded its data practices. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have written a medium-quality response to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 13 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	13

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

#### Comments on (A)(2)

The applicants have articulated a summary for their state plan with four major infrastructure areas and goals: (1) governance and leadership, (2) financial resources, (3) quality assurance and accountability, and (4) public engagement for their reform agenda. The infrastructure goal areas are followed by enumerated indicators of progress that were typically very general in nature (sustainability plan is developed, state and local policies and practices are aligned). The applicants also delineated four major program areas and goals: (1) early learning and development programs, (2) family support, engagement, and parenting education, (3) health, behavioral, and developmental needs, and (4) mental health and social-emotional development. Again, these goal areas were followed by indicators of progress. Through their Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (equivalent to ECAC) the State plans to use a Request for Proposals (RFP) mechanism to fund community pilot programs to address community needs. The applicants also provided sufficient rationale for their selected areas of focus: (a) (C)(1) High Quality Early Learning Standards; (b) (C)(3) Addressing Health, Behavioral, and Developmental Needs of High Needs Children to address School Readiness; (c) (C)(4) Engaging and Supporting Families; (d) (D)(1) Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for Credentials; (e) (D)(2) Improving Early Childhood Educators Knowledge and Skills; (f) (E)(2) Enhancing Early Learning Data System. These focused plans are reasonable and aligned with the state's early learning and development planning. Several concerns relate to the plan as written. First, goals and indicators were not always written as measurable but it does appear that generally they can be modified to be measurable. Second, and more important was that the applicants plan to use an RFP process with community pilot programs but the process is not targeted to well identified reform efforts. They did not address how this major expenditure will link to their early learning enhancement plans and a statewide reform agenda. RFP processes have been used often in many states to distribute funding. Nevertheless, devolution of funding does not necessarily target specific and identified systems change needs relevant to the children and families with high needs. In addition, they did not address a functional mechanism for how they will diffuse local "lessons learned" to other communities in general or the state in particular. Moreover, this devolution of funds to localities without strategic targeting for the use of funds does not constitute a reform agenda for the state. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have written a medium-quality response to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 13 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	10	6

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (A)(5)**

The applicants have provided obligatory Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs), letters of support and intent, a state organizational chart, governance-related roles and responsibilities in Table (A)(3)1a. Although all parties expressed support for the state plan the applicants did not elaborate on how their existing structure in particular will support better alignment of collaborative planning and implementation of a coordinated state plan for early learning and development programs across a number of state agencies. The proposed plan appears to be "business as usual" with the lead agency (i.e., Department of Education) not necessarily having the authority to make key decisions that cross departmental boundaries. For example, the applicants stated, "The timeline for the collaborative process shall not exceed sixty (60) days, unless extended by mutual consent of both agencies. If resolution is not reached through the collaborative process, the Lead Agency is authorized to hold payment of funds under the grant, with Participating State Agency responsible for retiring any unobligated funds." These types of plans do not indicate that the agencies have established or will establish clear collaborative cross section planning and efforts in the state. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have written a partially implemented and medium-quality response to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 6 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(4)**

The applicants applied for \$59,519,885 to support 12 projects and other activities related to their RTT-ELC proposal. The vast majority of those funds in Budget Table 1-3 are allocated to 5 primary projects (a) Early Childhood Educators Professional Development (\$14,099,800); (b) Community Pilot Programs (\$14,096,144); (c) Program Quality (\$9,112,749); (d) Missouri Comprehensive Data System (\$9,318,157); and (e) Health, Behavioral and Developmental Needs (\$5,866,945) with remainder going to smaller projects or projects related to the larger projects (e.g., evaluation of Community Pilot). Table (A)(4)-1 with a listing of a state source of funds (i.e., state agency, local partnerships) across fiscal years was not well linked to specific components, goals, projects, and activities that were delineated in the Missouri plan for early learning and development programs. Indeed, 1 out of 5 allocated dollars go to community programs not well aligned with the state's strategic reform. The applicants provided the obligatory budget tables (comprehensive, by agency, by project) but at times, it was difficult to glean the costs of some projects and activities beyond a general allocation. In particular, the community pilots were not very informative about what kinds of activities will be performed by whom and for what purposes. Essentially an initial planning grant year (\$10,000 on average) will be instituted with a subsequent RFP process to fund larger grants. This approach has been used by other states in the past usually with mixed or unknown results. The applicants failed to discuss how the pilot project process would align work if a local community asks for funds not well linked with the state goals and priorities outlined in this Missouri RTT-ELC proposal. Given the critical and ongoing needs of early learning and programs and systems, the applicants would benefit from strategically focusing funds on relevant projects related to their plan. The applicants did not articulate well-specified plans for sustaining the projects and plan after the RTT-ELC funding period concludes. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have written a medium-quality response to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 10 points.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

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 standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(1)**

Missouri has a TQRIS that uses a Program Assessment/Scoring System (PASS assessment) to rate program quality. They use a 5 level rating system with Level 1 being initial state licensure and the highest level being one of five independent types of program accreditation (e.g., National Association for Educating Young Children). A review of the tiers indicates they do differentiate programs on substantive early childhood quality indicators. The current Missouri TQRIS address early learning standards, early learning program standards, early childhood qualifications, family engagement strategies and health standards. In addition, the TQRIS is linked to the Missouri licensing system and accreditation with nationally known standards. Although the applicants briefly mentioned a Missouri On-Site Assessment system, they did not elaborate in this subsection how it was implemented and more specifically how it addressed a comprehensive assessment system with screenings, formative assessments, and assessments of environmental and teacher child quality. To build on their current TQRIS, the applicants plan to use over \$9,000,000 for quality enhancements but the specific enhancements were not well specified. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have substantially developed a TQRIS and have written a high-quality response to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 8 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	15	5

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

#### Comments on (B)(2)

The applicants presented a general plan for promoting participation in their TQRIS. Specifically, they presented a modest plan to bring in only an anticipated 40% of the licensed and non-licensed programs into their TQRIS by 2015. They presented tabular information on expansion of the system through 2015 (Table (B)(2)(c)). Nevertheless, it is unclear if the applicants have a TQRIS system with its lowest tier as licensure why their baseline number and proportion of early learning programs is so low (i.e., 30 out of 4,971). Indeed, their baseline data indicates only 10 Head Start and 12 other programs not receiving state CCDF funds are presently licensed. The discussion on blending funds and past use of Title I funding for preschool services is not very innovative and not necessarily related to moving early learning programs into the TQRIS, especially if decategorization is required by the legislature. Indeed, decategorization might have an unintended consequence of high needs children not being served with funds dedicated to their education and development. They plan to increase the number of participating programs by having the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education require state funded preschools (172 programs) to enroll. Of those only 35% will be participating by the end of 2015. They also reported that Head Start (352 programs) had a history of participating in Program Assessment/Scoring System (PASS) but again by 2015 anticipate that only 31% will be participating. Similarly, of 317 Title I programs only 32% will be in the system and troubling is the fact even with CCDF funded programs only 23% (1,167 programs of 4,971) will be participating in the TQRIS. Finally, the applicants mentioned that TEACH scholarships and professional training will be an incentive to enroll in the TQRIS but did not explain why. Those incentives have existed before and apparently have not and are not anticipated to enroll most programs in the TQRIS. It is not clear how these policies and practices will promote serving significantly more high needs children and families. The goals for implementation by 2015 were not ambitious and policies and procedures to achieve enrollment not specified. It appears that the Missouri plan to enroll early learning programs in their TQRIS is very modest in nature even with respect to CCDF funded preschools, much less the other early learning programs the RTT-ELC competition wants to enroll in the state's TQRIS. This type of modest movement toward including different early learning programs does not meet the spirit of this subsection with ambitious and achievable targets, especially given that the applicants argued they had most of the components for a TQRIS in this proposal. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have a partially implemented TQRIS system but have not adequately addressed this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 5 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(3)**

The applicants discussed the rating instruments included in their Program Assessment/Scoring System (PASS assessment). These measures include several environmental rating scales (e.g., ITERS, ECERS-R, SACERS), instruments to assess intentional teaching (teacher-child interactions; e.g., Missouri Infant Toddler Responsive Caregiving, ECERS-E), and a professional registry to verify educational attainment or credentials. These environmental rating scales have a long history and sound psychometric information for use in early learning programs. The applicants have planned for a three-tiered rater assessor system (beginner, intermediate, master) that is based on quality of ratings and number of ratings performed. The educational and experiential requirements for assessors, the initial and subsequent training for tiers, and the inter-rater agreement training protocols are a strength of their proposed rating system. The plan for rating is excellent but it is only partially implemented to date. The applicants also provided instrument psychometric data on the environmental rating scales (e.g., ECERS-R, SACERS) and noted that ongoing reliability studies are being conducted for Missouri Infant Toddler Responsive Caregiver, state developed ratings). Finally, the applicants noted that they will diffuse information to parents by (a) providing programs with PASS certificates for posting, and (b) reporting scores to Child Care Aware so information can be part of the referral process and make information available to referral offices. In the reviewer's professional judgment, the applicants have a substantially implemented rating system and have written a high-quality response to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 12 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

The applicants submitted a plan for improving the quality of Missouri's early learning programs by participating in the enhanced TQRIS. The professional development and financial incentives discussed in their plans were very general and do not appear to go beyond those that exist at present in many other states (e.g., TEACH scholarships, financial incentives to higher tiered programs). How professional development is linked to quality improvement was not well specified. For example, they mentioned unifying technical assistance with many early learning programs with "targeted coaching services" but never specified who will do the training, how will training topics be selected (except for accreditation support), and the nature of the training (e.g., follow-up visits, performance assessment, feedback mechanisms). The applicants mentioned 680 TEACH scholarships but it is unclear if those are a continuation or new financial incentives. They also mentioned that Head Start had its own system but never clearly detailed how professional development (including technical assistance), the financial awards in place, or other incentives will enhance quality in early learning programs across the state. The planned new supports for families focus on two dimensions: (a) upgrades in technology about resources, and (b) the community pilot projects facilitating local identification of early learning gaps. These two approaches are not necessarily going to directly assist high needs children and families in accessing enhanced services (e.g., longer hours, family support services). With respect to anticipated performance targets for increasing the number of programs and high needs children in high quality learning programs, the proportion of children seems relatively modest. For example, Missouri Preschool Projects (34.6%), Head Start (31.2%), Title I (31.8%), and CCDF (24%). Hence, the state federally funded programs targeted for children with high needs are moving into the TQRIS system by 2015. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants are partially providing high quality services to children with high needs and have written a medium quality response to this criterion; hence the reviewer awarded 8 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

#### Comments on (B)(5)

The applicants performed preliminary psychometric work on the PASS system performed recently in 2008 and 2009 (e.g., internal consistency of PASS, criterion validity, relationship to child outcomes). In general their efforts supported modest relationships between PASS and program quality indicators. Perhaps more important their child outcome study showed that children with high needs differentially made gains from pre- to post-test on (a) social emotional skills (teacher rated) and (b) receptive vocabulary (PPVT) both outcomes that relate to later school success. They also proposed PASS Star Validation Project a reasonable next step if RTT-ELC funds are awarded. Nevertheless, the applicants failed to specify child assessments or sampling that might be used in the study. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants have been very responsive to this criterion; hence the reviewer awarded 14 points.

### **Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)**

Each 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**

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	20	14

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)
<p>The applicants appended the Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS, Attachment 15). Head Start Learning Framework cross walked with MELS, and Standards Cross walked for English Language Arts K-5 (Attachment 16). MELS is similar to many other states' Early Learning Standards. Although review of MELS indicated that they are developmentally appropriate and aligned with and cross walked with some Head Start and early elementary standards, the applicants' plans for enhancing, aligning, and integrating MELS into Program Standards, professional development activities, a Comprehensive Assessment System were very general (e.g., tabular information referring to some appended material, a sentence saying Missouri Cares will train 12,000 teachers in three years (60% of workforce)). The professional development plan seems overly ambitious and not achievable in any particular depth beyond some workshops, which may not be the best approach to adult learning and effective training. It is simply not clear how such a general plan will promote better understanding of Early Learning Standards for cross sector early learning programs in Missouri and promote an integrated early learning system. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants have substantially implemented early learning standards and have written a medium-quality response to this criterion. Hence, the reviewer awarded 14 points.</p>

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	20	14

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

The Missouri Early Childhood State Plan (Attachment 1) includes health, behavioral and developmental needs in it. The applicants plan to use Parents as Teachers (although funding recently cut), Early Head Start, First Steps, and home visitation services to provide health related services. The applicants plan to have Missouri Cares formalize and cross-reference standards into Unified Health Care Standards. They presented very general plans for training an unspecified number of early childhood practitioners. They noted two modules on young children's social emotional development and recognition of early indicators of mental health needs. They also noted some preliminary planning of mental health services and again focusing on identification of children and training of early learning practitioners and parent training. With respect to nutrition and Physical Activity, similar to many other states they plan to incorporate Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines and I am Moving I am Learning Head Start Initiative into programs. Finally they noted initial work from an Early Childhood Mental Health Summit (2008) that reviewed funding of work with social emotional development, identification of child indicators for positive social emotional development, and establishment of a system of a coaching system for professional development. Basically, the Missouri plan in this subsection was very general and unlikely to significantly affect health and behavioral screenings in a manner that will improve follow-up or the number of early childhood practitioners who will be well trained and supported in high needs children's health and behavioral needs. The leveraging mentioned by the applicants was also general and focused only on social emotional development. The performance measures in Table (C)(3)(d) target 10% increases in screenings with 5% referral and follow-up services. Nevertheless, the numbers of children participating in health care was unspecified and targets not provided. Perhaps some level of targeted response is needed given that this important information is unknown. The applicants provided a very general plan to leverage resources from the Department of Mental Health to continue efforts to provide public awareness about young children's social emotional well being and train pediatricians and practitioners on its importance. What was particularly unclear was what happened to screened children, then what is the plan for high needs children and families that are identified. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewers professional judgment that the applicants have partially implemented addressing health and behavioral needs and have written a medium-quality plan for enhancing those services. Hence the reviewer awarded 14 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(4)**

Similar to many states, Missouri has a number of services and programs that provide some level of family engagement and involvement. They noted a Family Engagement work group as part of their Coordinating Board for Early Childhood and that they plan to use a Strengthening Families Framework and the recent Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCF). They intend for the work group to review Early Learning Standards and QORIS standards, map essential elements into those standards while identifying gaps, and make recommendations to support family engagement. More specifically, they plan to focus on Dual Language Learners (DLL), Children of Families involved with the judicial system, and parents of developmentally delayed or special health care needs. The engaging and supporting families plan is not well specified beyond the two mentioned frameworks and 3-targeted populations. Moreover, the targeted populations, who are obviously deserving of attention, still leave out a majority of children and families with high needs. The types of professional development to enhance family engagement also went unspecified. For example, who will be trained by whom and what "evidence-based strategies" for working with DLL families will be taught. The applicant identify a number of existing resources such as Parents as Trainers (funding decreased in recent years), Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Early Head Start, and ParentLINK's but they how these programs will be better coordinated and integrated with RTT-ELC funding if awarded was not forthcoming in this subsection. The applicants plan to continue their parent engagement activities (e.g., Parents as Teachers, MIECHV) and expand them with RTT-ELC funding (about \$1,270,000). After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants have substantially implemented family engagement and support services and they have written a medium-quality plan for enhancing these services. Hence, the reviewer awarded them 12 points.

**D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

*The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.*

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	20	16

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(1)**

The applicants have a Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals, which is organized into eight competency areas (e.g., interactions with children, growth and development, learning environments and curriculum) with five competency levels (Attachment 30). They also have a Missouri Education Matrix (Attachment 31). They plan to increase workforce knowledge and skills by revision and formalization of a Basic Knowledge Curriculum into a certificate program that will be aligned with Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals. The progression of credentials and educational attainment ranges from introductory training of 42 hours and a high school degree through certification at the birth to pre-kindergarten and pre-kindergarten to 3rd grade credentials. The applicants noted that teachers hired for infant, toddler, and preschool expansion are required to have a bachelor's degree and specialization in early childhood. They also briefly discussed prior articulation agreements among institutions of higher education and some more contemporary work. The applicants noted that in 2011 Missouri implemented a Training Quality Assurance System (TQAS) with standard and enhanced training processes to approve and track training of early childhood practitioners. Although the applicant outlined the current workforce knowledge and competency framework, progression of credentialing, and some past collaborative efforts of institutions of higher education their plans were not well developed. It is unclear how they addressed the criterion in this subsection. Specifically, it was not clear how they will engage 43 institutions across the state. On a positive note, they have recently begun (2011) a Training Quality Assistance System that will afford them the opportunity to better track professional development trainers and their training sessions. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants have substantially implemented a workforce knowledge and competency framework and have a high quality response to the criterion. Hence, the reviewer awarded 16 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.</b>	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(2)**

The applicants chose to provide and expand effective professional development for those who work with high needs children with a goal of improving child outcomes. Their public reporting of professional development information through the Missouri Professional Development Registry is reasonable and should be helpful if professional development is well coordinated. Although they noted training 2,500 practitioners with priority for employees in programs serving high needs children trained across 4 years they only briefly discussed modest increases in "voluntary" training events and training sessions for the Basic Knowledge Curriculum. They also noted that Community Pilot Projects might choose to focus on training of practitioners but given the lack of strategic focus at this time to the RFP Pilot Projects that is very unclear and may not happen. The targeted systems change for supporting early childhood educators professional development may not lead to high quality training for educators if local councils are allocated significant funding. More of their narrative was used to discuss provision of technology (e.g., Missouri Professional Development Registry, job-embedded professional development network for practitioners, video library). They failed to discuss the nature of the professional development activities (i.e., quality and quantity) and how it will be evaluated as effective. For example, social networking discussed might be fashionable but to my knowledge it has not been verified as a mechanism for effective professional development. Also, no plan for quality control was forthcoming in this subsection. The applicants placed too much emphasis on contemporary technology rather than the hard work of planning, implementing, and evaluating effective professional development by ongoing coaching and performance based strategies. Moreover, their brief plan does not explain well why they budgeted \$14,000,000 for professional development and another \$14,000,000 for Community Pilot Programs, which might chose to use those funds for professional development. The applicants' plan is not specific enough to warrant that kind of allocations or expenditures. Their policies and incentives for professional improvement was limited to their TEACH scholarship program, which is not different from many other states' attempts to enhance professional advancement. Moreover, it was not made clear in the narrative or tables (i.e., Table (D)(2)(d)(1) and (D)(2)(d)(2) with 43 institutions of higher education why the baselines are so low for institutions and providers and total number of practitioners credentialed. The projected numbers of Credential 1 and Credential 5 seem too large relative to the three other credentials (Types 2, 3, and 4), especially if TEACH scholarships are being accessed for professional improvement. More emphasis should have been placed on CDA and similar levels versus the lowest level and employees with two and four-year degrees. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants have been partially responsive to this criterion and have presented general plans to support early childhood practitioners knowledge, skills, and abilities; hence, the reviewer awarded 12 points.

**E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

*The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.*

*The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:*

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.</b>	40	20
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;</p> <p>(b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;</p> <p>(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,</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality and Implementation</b>		
<b>Comments on (E)(2)</b>		



The applicants included a general and not very clear description of existing the Missouri Comprehensive Data System and some recent changes with other databases (e.g., Missouri Professional Development Registry, Missouri Training Quality Assurance System). They noted that the present Missouri Comprehensive Data System had all 10 essential elements for creating a Statewide Longitudinal Data System but then only listed 7 elements. After reviewing the narrative and several attachments (Attachment 32 Early Learning Data System Logic Model; a schematic of the Missouri Data Collection and Coordination Efforts; Including Early Childhood and After-school Data in the MO Comprehensive Data System; Attachment 35 Overview of Early Learning-Related Data Systems for Inclusion in MO Comprehensive Data System; Attachment 36 Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Data Access and Management Policy) clarity about the proposed enhancement of an early learning data system and its relationship to a statewide longitudinal database was not forthcoming. Specifically, the multiple attachments did not delineate how the system promotes access to timely information that might be used to improve a state's early learning programs and system in general and practitioners access to information needed at a classroom or program level in particular. It remains less than clear if Missouri Comprehensive Data System is the State Longitudinal Data System (assumption is that it is and governed by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) and how it is related to Bolster Missouri's Comprehensive Data System (bold by applicants, assumption is that this is a general enhancement plan). The discussion of Bolster Missouri's Comprehensive Data System was not a high quality plan, especially given the over \$9,000,000 requested for enhancements. At times the applicants mentioned some specifics about individual enhancements such as development of a social network for parents, a dedicated staff member to oversee linkages of agencies and data across systems, a professional development platform for teachers to find activities for children, and a TQAS notification system. Nevertheless, explanation of how these individual changes improved the overall current system were not readily evident, especially for data exchange and examination for important and timely state policies for young children and their families. Although the applicants mentioned DataSpecs as a management tool they did not explain how it "ensures interoperability" among potential users. The applicants have a statewide data system in operation but it was very unclear how RTT-ELC will promote significant enhancement of the current system and facilitate exchange of relevant data among the many state agencies that serve young children and their families. Given the applicants' narrative, they have partially implemented a data system and have given a medium response. How to integrate multiple data bases and how that will provide timely information for policies and practices was not well elaborated in this section. After reviewing this subsection, it is the reviewer's professional judgment that the applicants have been partially responsive to this criterion; hence, the reviewer awarded 20 points.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>177</b>

**Priorities**

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (P)(2)**

Given the information detailed (B)(2) Promoting Participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in the applicants' response to promoting participation in a TQRIS (only about 40% of licensed and license exemption programs) it is unclear how they could achieve this priority of all programs being in the system by 2015. The lack of a plan to bring all early learning programs into the state's system is shown in Table (B)(2)(c).

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>Yes</b>

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

#### Comments on Absolute Priority

The applicants have a history and commitment to early learning and development programs and they provided a rationale for their reform agenda. They partially addressed many of the criteria in the RTT-ELC application. Hence, they met the Absolute Priority. Nevertheless, the State's plans for those areas were typically of medium quality, sometimes only partially responsive, and general. This lack of clear and well-articulated and well-specified planning was evident for their plans to promote participation of all early learning programs into their TQRIS by 2015 and most of their self-selected focused investment areas (i.e., employment of statewide standards; addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs of high needs children; engaging families; professional development; and enhancing early learning data systems to improve services and policies). In the reviewer's professional judgment, the use of RTT-ELC funds for the general plans written in this proposal might promote future enhancements of their early learning programs and begin to establish components of a statewide system and an enhanced system may promote better child outcomes for children and families with high needs.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # MO-5021

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 10:41 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Criteria, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 15. Includes sub-points (a) through (d) describing investment, participation, and existing practices.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comment on (A)(1)

Missouri has used funds provided by state general revenue, federal dollars, and private initiatives to support Early Learning and Development Programs for young children and their families. The applicant reports a significant investment of over \$1.1 billion towards Early Learning and Development Programs since 2007 Table A(1)-4. Missouri offers a small state-funded preschool program that currently enrolls 2,080 children. Data presented in Table (A)(1)-5 indicates that the majority of Children with High Needs are served by Early Head Start and Head Start (22,203), Parents as Teachers (56,665), and programs receiving CCDF funds (23,331). The funding of Early Learning and Development programs available in Missouri has remained relatively stable or has decreased over the last five years (Table (1)(1)-4). For example, the state preschool program received fewer dollars in 2011 (\$14,314,872) than its funding level in 2008 (\$14,718, 637). The Parents as Teachers program funding has declined since 2009 with a drop from \$34,304,636 to \$13,000,000. The applicant has identified that there are 220,00 children in the state that are from low income families (see Table (A)(1)-1) and identified about 61,000 children as being a part of a special population of Children with High Needs Table (A)(1)-2. The lack of increases in funding for Early Learning and Development Programs that are designed to support Children with High Needs (e.g., Parents as Teachers) is a concern and raises questions about the capacity of state dollars to support program reform and expansion. In examining the enrollment of Children with High Needs over the last five years, there have been small decreases in the number of children served by the State-funded preschool program, growth in Early Head Start and Head Start (in 2011 an additional 4,387 children supported), some growth in the numbers served by Programs receiving CCDF funds (in 2011 an additional 4,579 children), and a large decline in the number served in Parents as Teachers (decline of 15,563). The data on the number of Children with High Needs that are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs does not provide evidence that the state has increased enrollment of Children with High Needs over the past five years. Missouri has a Governor appointed Coordinating Board for Early Childhood that oversees the Early Childhood State Plan. The applicant described some existing state policies and practices that support efforts in providing access to Early Learning and Development Programs and Services such as providing funding from gaming to Early Head Start programs and accountability initiatives that were in place from 1999 -2009 that trained teachers in the use of a Kindergarten

Entry Assessment. The applicant did not reference other existing early learning and development legislation that directly addressed the provision of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs or state policies linked to school readiness initiatives although the state has received a federal Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) grant and used that initiative to "build a statewide early childhood comprehensive system." The details on the outcomes of the ECCS effort were not included in the proposal. Missouri has in place many of the elements that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system. These include basic health and safety rules for child care programs, training opportunities for child care providers on the use of social emotional screening tools, Parents as Teachers programs in every school district and other home visiting programs, family engagement elements integrated into the Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System, a statewide framework of standards for early childhood professionals (i.e., Core Competencies) and credentialing system, a tiered quality rating system (i.e., Show Me Quality for Kids), initial steps towards the development of a coordinated state data system, and state early learning standards. The state has a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and has trained teachers in its use, but those results are no longer required to be reported to the state. Components of a high quality early learning and development system that are not yet in place or that need improvement include the use of a statewide comprehensive assessment system that will include developmental screening and mechanisms for tracking children's learning and development outcomes and program performance, and the use of data to guide instruction. While some early childhood programs offer quality elements (e.g., screening is done within state funded preschool programs, but is not an element in programs receiving CCDF funds), there is not statewide adoption or consistency between programs. The extent to which the state has demonstrated a past commitment to and investment in high quality, accessible programs and services for Children with High Needs was given 15 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

#### Comments on (A)(2)

The state plan includes both infrastructure and programmatic goals that are broadly defined. For example, an infrastructure goal for financial resources is for "adequate and sustainable financial resources support Missouri's State System" and a programmatic goal is for "Missouri's Children with High Needs have their health, behavioral, and developmental needs identified and addressed to improve school readiness". For each of these goals, the state plan has included indicators of progress. For example an indicator of progress for meeting the health, behavioral, and developmental needs is the number of Children with High Needs that are screened and the number who are referred for services that receive follow-up or treatment. The infrastructure and programmatic goals are ambitious, however the broadness of these goals raise questions about whether they are achievable. Logic models for each of the goals are included in the proposal to further explain the path or theory of change to be used to guide activities for achieving the goals. However the logic models are broadly conceptualized as well and do not provide the details needed to establish a clear and credible path for goal achievement. For example, in Logic Model A for a Successful State System, an identified need is to assess all Early Learning and Development Programs with the TQRIS, yet a systematic plan to move towards that goal is not articulated in the strategies. Similarly, in Logic Model B for high quality accountable programs, an outcome is that all Children with High Needs will have access to a 3-star or above rated program, but a clear path to achieving that outcome is not presented. In Logic Model C for promoting early learning and development, the outcomes are ambitious including the outcomes of all children having access to high quality ELDPs and all children entering school ready to succeed. However, the strategies for achieving these outcomes are also broadly stated, for example to "align all programs serving young children with established early learning standards", "ensure state child care assistance policies create the availability of affordable child care throughout the state", and "establish state policies to support a seamless system of early education". The plan lacks the specificity needed to be achievable and fails to meet some of the criteria necessary for a "high quality plan" (e.g., key activities, timeline). Logic Models for health, behavioral, and developmental needs outcomes and workforce knowledge and competency are also broadly stated and lack a link to well defined strategies and activities for achieving those outcomes. An important feature of the state's reform agenda is the funding of community pilots that will compete for funding for the implementation of High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs. In these pilots, communities will develop the strategies for ensuring all children are screened, all children will be assessed using a Child Assessment Tools, using the Missouri Comprehensive Data System, and participation of programs in the TQRIS. What is not provided is how these pilots link to the broader statewide reform agenda. This raises concerns about whether a comprehensive statewide plan can be achieved. The state provides a rationale for each of their focused investment areas, although some seem to be only loosely connected to goals related to improving child outcomes and closing the readiness gap for Children with High Needs. For example, the rationale for C-1, the use

of Missouri Early Learning Standards, discusses the importance of early learning standards to "improve instruction, parenting skills and behavior, teacher preparation, public knowledge of children's development, and curriculum" but does not discuss how work in this area address issues related to improving outcomes for all children or closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers. The score for this section is 10 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

#### Comments on (A)(3)

The applicant has provided a clear organizational structure for managing the grant that builds upon the established Missouri Coordinating Board for Early Childhood. The roles and responsibilities for each key agency including the Lead Agency (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) are articulated in the application and the signed Memorandum of Understanding that has been provided in the proposal. The applicant has articulated how the Lead Agency will resolve disagreements, but does not provide specific information on how decisions will be made. For example, the applicant states that decisions will be made through "Collective empowerment that incorporates synergistic decision making...", but fails to articulate how this process works and guides the implementation of the state plan. A broad group of invested stakeholders have expressed their support for the application and plan as evidenced by their letters of support. However, it is not clear how these stakeholders will continue to be engaged in the implementation of activities carried out under the grant. The

proposal mentions the continued use of workgroups that include a cross-section of representatives from across the State, but does not provide assurances that these workgroups involve or will involve parents and families of Children with High Needs or early childhood educators. The applicant provides clear evidence that each of the participating state agencies are strongly committed to the plan and their MOU's provide clear scope of work descriptions and the intention of leveraging existing funding in the support of the state plan goals. The applicant describes the Missouri Coordinating Board for Early Childhood and its role in coordinating a cohesive system of early childhood programs and services. This Board appears to have been working in this capacity for at least several years (the timeline and history was not included in the proposal) as it provides oversight to the Early Childhood Comprehensive System strategic plan and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Care and Education state plan. Thus, there is some evidence that coordinating between agencies for the goal of improving early childhood systems is currently being implemented by the state. However, the applicant does not provide information on how well these entities have worked together and what has been accomplished. The proposal includes a description of the activities of the State plan and the timeline for when these activities will occur. However, the plan lacks key milestones and does not identify how activities will be scaled up to reach statewide implementation. The score for this section is 6 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used. **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(4)**

The applicant provided a table listing the existing funds that will be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan. Those sources included state general revenue dollars, other grants, community partnership dollars, and private foundations. The list shows substantial and broad support, but there was not an accompanying narrative (A)(4)(a) to explain how these were used for activities or services that help achieve the outcomes of the State Plan or how quality set asides in CCDF will be used for the state plan. In the budget and budget narratives (Section VIII), the applicant provides a detailed budget for each participating agency and the activities the budget will support. The costs appear to be reasonable for the proposed activities. These budgets provide good detail and a thoughtful commitment of funds to projects that comprise the reform agenda and the local implementation of the state plan. The applicant did not include an overall narrative to address the issue of sustainability of funding after the grant (A)(4)(c). Instead, sustainability issues were addressed by each agency in their budget narratives. For some activities, sustainability was implicit when the activity was focused on capacity building or work group efforts for aligning systems and procedures (e.g., the development of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment Pilot and Statewide assessment is funded with the assumption that schools, Head Starts, and community-based programs will purchase the assessments and observations), but other activities appeared to lack a solid plan for sustainability. For example, the budget includes funding T.E.A.C.H. Missouri scholarships to support practitioners of directors in earning credentials or a degree, but plans for sustainability are to work with the State Department to secure ongoing funding. Finally, it was not clear how expenditures ensured that the number of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the state would be maintained or expanded. The score for this section is 10 points.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

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

10

8

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 standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(1)**

Missouri has developed a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) that is based on their early learning and development standards, includes an assessment of early educator qualifications and includes criteria for family engagement strategies and health promotion practices. Notable elements of the system include alignment with state and national standards, the development of three distinct models for different types of programs (e.g., center programs vs. home programs) and the inclusion of intentional teaching as a program element in higher tier ratings. The state plan includes the intention of improving the current TQRIS with the inclusion of a comprehensive assessment system and data systems. Currently, the Missouri TQRIS is being implemented within some selected communities. The state has a high quality plan to expand the TQRIS statewide over years 1-4 (as documented by Attachment 14, Logic Model B) that describes key goals, activities, and timelines and includes developing a tiered rating assessment for family, friends, and neighbors who care for two or more children. There is evidence that the current system provides a meaningful differentiation of quality levels and differences in the measured quality is linked to child outcomes. The applicant refers to a discussion in section B-5 that provides compelling evidence from a psychometric study of the measurement system that the tool used by the system (i.e., PASS) is valid and reliable and differences in quality are linked to differences in child outcomes (Missouri's QRIS Child Outcome Study). The TQRIS is linked to nationally recognized standards and accreditation programs and the state licensing system. The score for this section is 8 points.

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

Available

Score

15

8

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(2)**

The plan to maximize program participation in the states TQRIS is by both requiring program participation for some publicly funded programs and providing incentives for participation (e.g., coaching). The plan is to require state-funded preschools, Title 1 preschools, programs receiving CCDF funds, and ECSE programs in Race to the Top Communities to participate in the TQRIS. There is also an assumption that Head Start and Early Head Start will continue to voluntarily participate. Because the state has designed its plan around community pilots (these are communities the will receive funds to implement the reform agenda), there will be geographic pockets with high levels of participation. The targets for program participation in the system are very modest with numbers ranging from 13% to 35% by the end of the grant period. Such low targets for participation do not seem ambitious and raise questions about the ability to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in the system. In this section, the applicant was to list the policies and practices that would 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. In response to these criteria, the applicant noted the importance of providing high quality programs to Children with High Needs and discussed how the blending and braiding of funds could lead to the expansion of programs. However, the applicant did not describe the state plan for ensuring access to these programs. Because participation in the state's TQRIS is currently partially implemented and there are criteria that have not been adequately addressed, the score for this section is 8 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	15	13

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(3)**

The state has provided notable evidence that the tool used for the TQRIS system is valid and reliable by describing a psychometric study on the tool and the Missouri Child Outcomes study that indicates that quality as measured by the tool links to child outcomes (these studies are described in the narrative response to B-4). The High-Quality Plan for implementation includes a cadre of reliable assessors who complete the on-site assessment and verification process. Reliability and rigor is achieved through standardized training of assessors and the inclusion of three levels of competence for assessors that is based on assessor education level, reliability, quality of assessments, and experience measured by number of observations completed. Programs are rated every 18 months. Information on program ratings is provided to families through the parent referral system on a web site operated by Child Care Aware and through certificates that are displayed publicly by programs. In addition, the Department of Health has a web site that offers the general public the ability to view licensing inspections of programs. The applicant did not adequately address what efforts would be used to help families with Children who have High Needs understand the rating system and how they might use the system for decision-making. The score for this section is 13 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

The Missouri TQRIS system is currently in place with only 52 programs participating. Thus, the system was rated as being partially implemented. The state has many elements in their plan that will build a system for quality improvement. For example, the Missouri workshop calendar displays available trainings in the state by core competency content area including on-demand trainings that are web-based. Programs who participate in the TQRIS systems receive classroom/group feedback to indicate what trainings are needed by staff members. In addition, some programs receive technical assistance or coaching based on their participation in various programs. For example, state-funded preschool programs can access targeted coaching services as they pursue accreditation, coaching is provided to providers who are Family, Friends, and Neighbors providers, and Head Start and Early Head Start have access to coaching services. The state intends to provide coaching services related to TQRIS to those programs that don't currently receive coaching. The state would also like to pursue providing tiered child care assistance payments to programs based on program's scores. Incentives, such as scholarships, will also be offered to providers to pursue educational credentials. Currently, incentives are not in place for programs to pursue continuous improvement. Details on the provision of support to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high quality programs were not adequately addressed in the response to the criteria. The state plans to use a mobile technology platform to expand marketing and referral outreach and will require that each of the community pilots identify the needs of families and address those needs. However, the sufficiency of this strategy to provide supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs was not adequately justified in the narrative. The target set for programs to reach tier 3 or higher by the end of the grant period is 997 programs (from a baseline of 36). This seems to be achievable and ambitious based on the current levels of participation. The state estimates that by the end of the grant period, 17,727 Children with High Needs will be served by those programs in the highest tiers. The score for this section is 12 points.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (B)(5)**

The applicant has provided evidence of a strong plan to validate the TQRIS to determine if the system accurately reflects differential levels of program quality and to assess the extent to which ratings are related to children's outcomes in learning, development and school readiness. In the initial development of their system, Missouri contracted in 2008 with a third party evaluator to establish the internal consistency and evidence for construct, criterion, and consequential validity. Following that study, the University of Missouri conducted a child outcome study in 2009 to examine the relationship between quality ratings and child outcomes using a teacher rating of social and behavioral skills and a direct assessment of children's vocabulary. The study revealed that children in high quality programs scored significantly higher in overall positive social and behavioral skills and children in poverty attending high quality programs made significant gains in receptive vocabulary. In addition to these previous preliminary efforts, the state has included detailed plans to conduct a validation study of the TQRIS rating system to ensure each level reflects differential levels of quality by contracting with an independent evaluator to study the implementation of the system in 328 programs. A Child Outcomes research project is also planned that will use a random sample of 150 programs and 150 child care homes to examine the outcomes for 2250 children and the extent to which star levels are related to all children's learning, development, and school readiness and to determine if there are differential gains for Children with High Needs. An independent evaluator will be identified through a Request for Applications process to conduct the study. These research projects are important elements of the state's plan to ensure the tiered system is valid and effective. A missing element that is a concern is the focus of the validation study on programs serving preschoolers. This will result in a TQRIS system that has not been validated for infants and toddlers. The score for this section is 13 points.

**Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)**

Each 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**

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality and Implementation</b></p> <p><b>Comments on (C)(1)</b></p> <p>The applicant has substantially implemented the use of Early Learning and Development Standards that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, cover all essential domains of school readiness, and address the age groups of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Samples from the standards were provided by the applicant. This evidence provides a good response to criteria a for this section. The application also includes evidence that the standards are directly aligned with the Missouri Show Me Standards for K-12 grades (criteria b). Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS) are addressed in the program standards for the TQRIS system with requirements for training in the standards at lower tiers and lesson planning that address standards at higher tiers. Professional development (training and coaching) provided by the state uses the MELS to inform those topics. A dedicated training on the MELS has been available to teachers and parents since 2009. However, what is not documented in the application and is an important criteria is how the MELS are used within the curriculum and activities provided to children (criteria c). The TQRIS measures of environmental quality and adult-child interactions link to the MELS, however the lack of common screening measures and formative assessment means that MELS are not linked with all aspects of a comprehensive assessment system. Efforts to promote understanding of the MELS include training that has been provided to teachers and parent educators and the intention to translate the standards into Bosnian and Spanish for families and to offer train the trainer events and on-demand training to further promote teachers use and understanding of the MELS. The applicant did not provide evidence of any current or planned activities to support families, in particular families of Children with High Needs, in awareness of and understanding MELS (criteria d). The score for this section is 15 points.</p>		
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(3)**

The applicant has provided evidence that there are multiple elements in program standards and guidelines used by early learning programs that address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of all children. These elements appear in the child care licensing guidelines, MELS, teacher core competencies, the TQRIS system, and the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines. The state presents a general plan to address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs that appears to be more focused on general training and awareness activities to early educators with fewer elements to ensure that supports are provided to Children with High Needs and their families. This is a major concern for the state plan as training efforts are often insufficient for achieving change in practice, especially for changes in practice related to providing effective interventions and supports to Children with High Needs. For example, major activities include providing health consultation services to early childhood teachers, training modules on mental health issues and needs, a child care orientation training on social emotional development, a training conducted in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics for child care providers on medication administration, training and technical assistance on the Eat Smart guidelines, training and implementation support for the "I am Moving, I am Learning" physical activity and nutrition initiative, and the training of physicians on social emotional development. The state plan has set appropriate targets for increasing the number of Children with High Needs that are screened and the number of children referred for services that receive services, but has not articulated a detailed plan of how more Children with High Needs and their families will access those screenings and ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care. The score for this section is 12 points.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	20	16

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(4)**

The applicant will build upon ongoing efforts within Missouri related to family engagement. Currently, the state offers Parents as Teachers within every school district and has home visiting programs offered by Early Head Start and the Nurse Family Partnership. These are strong programs, with an established evidence base, that will serve as an important mechanism for family engagement. Both Early Head Start and the Nurse Family Partnership focus on building the capacity of families to promote their children's development and school readiness with documented results. In addition, the state offers a Parent Link warmline of information and problem solving support. Families of newly diagnosed children with disabilities are connected to other families through the Family to Family Disability and Health Information Center offered by the Division of Developmental Disabilities. In addition, state Early Learning Program Standards and the TQRIS system include elements for family engagement. The state plan includes convening a work group to develop new activities related to systemic change in family engagement using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE) as a guide. Initial activities that are included in the state plan are to map elements of the PFCE framework to program standards (MELS and TQRIS) to identify gaps and to make recommendations that support family engagement strategies. The applicant states that family engagement activities will be planned to address the needs of all families and include specialized training of professionals to provide support to families whose children are dual language learners, children of incarcerated parents, and children with disabilities. This is a notable element of the plan indicating that the applicant is being responsive to the specialized concerns and needs of families who have Children with High Needs. In this response, the applicant has provided an indication that planning will occur through the work group and that professional development of early educators will be a priority. In addition the applicant will leverage current resources for family outreach activities and expand parents as Teachers and Parent Link to support families who have a parent who is incarcerated. What is not clear in this response are the specific actions that will result in increasing the numbers and percentage of early childhood educators who are trained and supported on an ongoing bases to implement family engagement strategies, the key activities that will comprise the family engagement approach, and the milestones for achieving those activities. The score for this section is 16 points.

**D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	20	16

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(1)**

The state has fully developed and implemented a common, statewide workforce knowledge and competency framework. This work began in 1999 and updates were made in 2011 as a result of an extensive two-year revision process that included the alignment of the framework to the state early learning standards and other organizational program and early learning standards (e.g., Head Start, NAEYC). The state has also developed a common, statewide progression of degrees and credentials that align with their workforce knowledge and competency framework. To continue this effort, the state plans to formalize a curriculum into a certificate program that will offer introductory training and a basic knowledge certificate to high school graduates and Level 2 curriculum within vocational training that is linked to college course credit that can be applied to an associate degree program. The state has been actively engaging post-secondary institutions and professional providers in aligning professional development opportunities and early childhood degree programs to the Core Competency Framework. In the response to the criteria for a high quality plan in the area of workforce knowledge and a progression of credentials, the state provides ample evidence that a framework has been established, there is a common statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the framework, and post-secondary programs along with trainers have aligned their training efforts with the framework. What was not clearly articulated was the extent to which the developed framework considers or addresses the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs. The score for this section is 16 points.

	Available	Score
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**(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.**

20

15

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(2)**

The state intends to expand access to professional development opportunities by increasing the number of trainings offered by the Missouri Workshop calendar that are linked to core competencies. The plan has targeted the provision of training in the Basic Knowledge Curriculum to 2500 providers over the grant period. This is an ambitious and achievable target. Notable, high quality elements in the state plan that support effective professional development are the integration of a self-assessment that is linked to the core competencies and available on-line in the Professional Development Registry system. The self-assessment can be used by providers to flag competencies they are working towards and set benchmark activities and timelines. In addition the on-line system offers a professional development planning tool that can be accessed using any mobile device, connect to a social network for professional development that offers real-time answers to questions and a mechanism for master teachers to share activities and materials. The applicant has described a plan for the delivery of thoughtful professional development that is linked to the needs of the learner and uses multiple modes to deliver information that matches need. The state offers scholarships and other support to teachers, directors, and family child care staff to pursue professional training. With the funding of the grant, 680 scholarships and incentives will be offered. Innovative elements of the scholarship program are the provision of compensation bonuses when education and commitment is completed, reimbursement to the employer for release time for recipients to attend classes, and access to support that provides stipends for transportation and internet access. Aggregated data on workforce trends will be offered through the Missouri Comprehensive Data System. It is not clear from the application what elements of workforce trends will be publicly reported. The targets for increasing the number of aligned institutions and providers are quite modest and are a weakness of this proposal. The baseline data reported in the application is difficult to interpret. The state reports a baseline of only 1 aligned institution/provider. This appears to conflict with narrative in other sections that reported alignment between current training systems and the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. It is also not clear from the proposal what the steps will be to increase the number of post-secondary institutions and professional development providers who are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Thus, evidence for a high quality plan to increase alignment is absent. The target for the number of educators that will be credentialed by an "aligned provider" is 300 by the end of the grant period. The state has more ambitious and achievable goals for 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. The score for this section is 15 points.

**E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.</b>	40	24

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (E)(2)**

The state has established a Statewide Longitudinal Data System that has all essential data elements although not all programs participate fully in the system. For example time and attendance data are only collected for children participating in state or federally funded programs or receiving state of federal child care assistance. The state intends to add a time and attendance element for all children with the funding of this grant and will also link the Missouri Professional Development Registry and Workshop calendar to the data system. The state plan includes the development of a standardized Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate data exchange between participating programs. The vision for the system is to provide information on child progress and guidance to support the child's progress to learning goals, offer a social network that can provide families with knowledge and tools, include a professional development platform for teachers, include a mobile platform for the professional development training functions, and ensure the presentation of data to support "real time learning." In writing to the criteria the applicant has described a general vision for the data system, but does not provide a detailed high quality plan of key activities, the timeline and milestones, or how Early Learning and Development programs and Early Childhood Educators will use the data system for continuous improvement and decision making. Thus, the state plan falls short of meeting the needed elements that define a high quality plan. The score for this section is 24 points.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>193</b>

**Priorities**

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

- (a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and
- (b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (P)(2)**

The state proposes to develop a tiered rating system for unlicensed programs that serve at least two unrelated children. The state plan is to develop a three tiered system in year one of the grant and provide coaching and technical assistance to programs that have a low rating. Because state law does not require a license for persons caring for four or fewer children, the state plan does not include bringing those providers into a licensing and inspection system. Thus, the criterion for a licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the state (criteria a) is not met. The applicant provides a general description of the Missouri TQRIS elements, but does not describe the plan for putting the new TQRIS in place. No information was provided on the key activities to develop the system, how they will be implemented, anticipated targets for participating in the TQRIS, and who will be involved in the development of the system. Targets for participation that were provided in Table(B)(2)(c) indicate that only about 30% of programs will be participating in the TQRIS by 2015. The score for this section is 2 points.

**Absolute Priority**

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p>	
<b>Comments on Absolute Priority</b>	
<p>The state has presented a proposal to improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies to implement a statewide TQRIS system, raise the quality of programs, establish a shared, longitudinal data system, develop a great early childhood education work force, and provide specialized supports and services to families and their Children with High Needs. The state plan has been built on multiple foundational building blocks that include a substantial investment in early childhood programs and the essential elements of a comprehensive system. Their goal in this proposal is to enhance and align their system to increase the quality of programs and ensure that Children with High Needs enter Kindergarten with the skills needed to be successful in school.</p>	



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # MO-5021

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 5:00 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 18. Includes detailed text description of the core area and sub-points (a) through (d).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

(a-b)For the past four years Missouri has invested over 1.1 billion dollars in early learning and development programs. There has been a steady increase in the number of children with High Needs served from 2007 to present. There also have been increased complementing funds throughout this same time period for early childhood. The funds appear to contribute to the increase of participation in the programs. There is also statutory gaming revenue dedicated to early learning and Missouri is only one of 8 states with a dedicated funding source of about \$30 million annually. Missouri has a basis for funding and a commitment to providing services to young children with high needs. About half of the children living in Missouri are children identified with high needs based on 200% of the Federal poverty level. One area of concern noted was the significant cut to the Parents As Teachers program, funding decreased by \$19 million dollars. This impacted the number of children being served by this program as well over the five year period. The participation of children with high needs dropped by 16,000 children receiving services in this time frame. (c)Missouri has a 20 year history of working on school improvement. In fact, in 1984 Senate bill 658 was passed into legislation which was the Early Childhood Development act which authorized services for children birth-5. This bold legislation showcases the commitment of Missouri to early childhood. This provided opportunities for children below kindergarten age to access a program of services. HB 1519 created opportunities for partnerships between Early Head Start and community child care homes and centers. The benefits of this partnership allows the state to maximize state funds by drawing down additional federal funds through the Administration for Children and Families. (d)Early learning standards were developed in 2003 and the early learning standards for children birth-3 were developed this past year. The goal is to have all children in various early learning settings to be assessed in social emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, motor, health and physical well being, physical health, etc. The goal covers all the domain areas associated with early learning but fails to document and/or provide how it will achieve participation of all programs. Every school district operates a Parents As Teachers program which provides opportunity for parent engagement. Head Start collaborative activities and a strengthening families initiative was mentioned but more information is required to document the engagement of a greater number of families. Missouri has revised the Core Competencies for professionals and has created a comprehensive data system which is the state's longitudinal data system.



	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	15

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(2)**

(a) The plan presented is thoughtful and aims at improving program quality by creating a system of infrastructure, program components, yet it doesn't portray an ambitious attempt at reform. Infrastructure areas presented are areas and goals that are specific to a successful overall educational program. The information presented in the logic model provides a clear understanding of how the state will improve quality thus promoting positive outcomes for children. The positive outcomes will result in improved school readiness for children with high needs. (b) The overall summary fails to clearly articulate an effective reform agenda and also does not establish a clear path toward achieving the goals. Also not addressed is how the applicant will address the different types of early learning programs and how they will be including them throughout the reform agenda. (Attachment 4) Logic model presents the elements needed to implement the plan, the plan does not present timelines, including key milestones, for each key activity. The absence of a timeline lowers the quality of the response. (c) C1 Missouri Early Learning Standards are central to the state plan and inform all program standards. They are also developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate. Lacking in the narrative is information on how the standards will justify and aid in achieving the goals. C3 It is estimated that approximately 20% of all preschool children in Missouri have health and developmental challenges. The Department of Health and Human Services funds 4 special needs inclusion specialists to help families and professionals with this challenging work, this is a strength for early childhood programs. Much focus was projected on mental health, also another strength because this area often gets missed in the field of early childhood. C4 Missouri is home to the Parents As Teachers model which is being implemented in the 522 school districts throughout the state. A goal of propelling family engagement to the next level is stated by using the Head Start family engagement plan. D1 Specific strategies are required to illustrate how the applicant will develop a work force knowledge with a progression of credentials. Table D(2)(d)(2) documents the attempt at this but more energy is being put toward increasing credential 1 & 5 which is a basic knowledge and bachelors degrees respectively. There is not much energy placed in the middle tiers of credentialing especially in the area of CDAs. The core competencies and the creation of the Basic Knowledge Curriculum (entry certificate program) will help move staff toward a more knowledgeable workforce. D2 New technology will support the focus on teacher quality. Also there will be an expansion of TEACH which will aid in a more educated work force. E2 There is a basic foundation present to begin moving toward an early learning data system. However, the information presented in this question is very general and not specific in articulating the plan.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	10	7

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

#### Comments on (A)(3)

(a 1)The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will serve as the lead agency to manage the grant working with the Departments of Social Services, Health, Mental Health, the CBEC, and a number of key partners. Staff expectations are presented but detailed plans should be included on how facilitation, coordination, streamlining of resources will occur. Having the DESE serve as the lead agency will ensure that the focus will remain on early learning. This will also facilitate inter-agency coordination and alleviate some potential "turf" issues. (2) Other Participating State Agencies/Councils poised to work with DESE for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant include: the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (CBEC), the Head Start-State Collaboration Office and the State Interagency Coordinating Council for Part C of IDEA (SICC). All of these agencies, collectively and individually, are committed to promoting early learning and development outcomes for Missouri's children (birth to kindergarten entry) and to work toward an aligned system from birth to third grade, including before and after school programs for primary-aged children. The agencies have been identified but have not implemented anything yet. Policies and a structure have been put in place to aid in the decision making process. All of the participating agencies are committed to young children which is a wise strategy by the state in including the organizations in the proposal and implementation of the proposed project. (3)The method for how decisions will be made is based on collective empowerment. Work groups will be formed to create this model. This will give ownership of the program to all those involved but can be difficult to manage. There is a clear mention of what will happen in the event there is conflict and/or agency are failing to meet their goals, timelines, etc. The lead agency retains the right to work collaboratively toward agreement and if one cannot be reached, they reserve the right to withhold funds. (4)Table A(3)(1) summarizes the governance roles and responsibilities for agencies involved in the proposed project, also Table A(3)(1a) displays and articulates the roles and responsibilities of the key partners for the proposed project. A broad group of key stakeholders and interagency collaboration are strengths of the plan. (b 1-3)Six MOU's were included detailing the performance requirements of agencies. The MOU's contain, terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan; "Scope-of-work" descriptions for each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan with a description of efforts that maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs; included is also a signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency. (c 1-2) Included in the appendix are Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, local early learning councils; and numerous 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 post-secondary institutions. The applicant provides a diverse number of organizations who are supporting this effort. Collectively there appears to be a commitment to increase the services to high needs children.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	15	13

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(4)**

(a)The state has effectively listed the existing funds and how and where they will be used. There is a combination of state, federal, and foundation dollars being proposed for use to aid in achievement of the outcomes of the plan. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Senior Services, Department of Mental Health, Children's Trust Fund – Jefferson County Community Partnership, Hall Family Foundation – Kansas City are a few of the funding sources noted. A commitment by the state has been documented to illustrate the use of leveraged funds. It was noted that 23% of the grant funds will be used for local implementation, this does not promote an overall state plan if left up to local entities to implement. There was no mention of the quality set asides and how they will be used in implementing the state plan. (b-1)Budget tables and matching narrative demonstrate how the requested funds will be used, which agencies are responsible for implementation and the goal to be achieved. Good detail of the use of funds to achieve the implementation of the state plan. The budget appears to be adequate to support the activities of the state plan with reasonable costs. (b-2)The budget narratives in each category demonstrate how the funds will be used across agencies. Most of the costs appear to be reasonable given the current scope of proposed services to be implemented. The amount of funding placed into the state's professional development plan is a positive. (3)Each of the budgets 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. This current plan is attempting to localize commitment to early learning by providing a significant amount of the grant for local initiatives. (c)The plan mentions system building and reaching a wider range of children with high needs through the funding of this grant along with leveraged funds from other entities. It was noted that by involving a cadre of organizations this will enhance the possibility of sustainability of the state program.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	10	6

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 standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(1)**

(a)The applicant has a QRIS that is, Show Me Quality for Kids, which is designed to inform State policy decisions, investments, and improvement efforts for early education programs for infants, toddlers, and Pre-schoolers (as well as before- and after-school programs). The state differentiates a group home model, home based model, and school aged center model. The system includes all of the following Early Learning and Development Standards; A Comprehensive Assessment System; Early Childhood Educator qualifications; Family engagement strategies; Health promotion practices. Effective data practices are currently not part of the system but are a part of the stated plan. The system is not implemented statewide. (b)The program assessment scoring system (PASS) is used to assess the quality of the early childhood programs. Each of the tiers are differentiated for quality based on national standards used to document learning outcomes for children, the standards are also commensurate with national standards. The QRIS system is linked to the current licensing system with plans of expanding in the next 2 years. The data system and QRIS system are not fully implemented throughout the state. (c)The TQRIS is linked to the current state licensing system but does not include all early learning programs throughout the state. It is anticipated that only 40% of licensed centers will participate in the program.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	15	9

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(2)**

(a)No effective policies and/or practices were presented to achieve the goal of having all public funded programs participate in the quality rating system. By 2015 it is estimated that only 405 will be enrolled in the system. Although this is more than previous years the state needs to be more ambitious to show a stronger commitment to young children. (b)The applicant provides some generalizations on implementing policies and practices that would help more families afford quality child care. Decategorization of funding was noted as an alternative for increasing family involvement but this will require legislative action and the chances of implementation within the grant time frame is doubtful. There are no key activities and/or rationale provided for the activities to aid in helping families afford quality care (e.g., lower subsidies, lower co-pays, etc). Discussion of braiding and blending funds was mentioned as an option, but no plan on how to achieve this goal was presented. (c)Achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of ELDPs participating in the Tiered quality rating system were presented, however the targets are achievable based on the fact that were set low. 40% participation in 4 years is not an overly ambitious plan and not all programs will be required to participate.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	15	9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(3)**

(a) The plan presented for monitoring early learning development programs was missing some of the key components of what defines a high quality plan. The key goals, activities to be undertaken, rationale for the activities, key milestones for implementing key activities were missing from the plan. This narrative spent too much time on the validation of the assessor. Although validation is important, the implementation of the monitoring tool is a little more important. Environmental rating scales with various checklists are used to rate and monitor the quality of programs. These instruments used in concert with other assessments are more productive. Environmental rating scales that are proven valid and reliable are presented for use in the plan. Also noted is the use of an intentional teaching checklist tool for K-5. (b) Quality rating information is available at sites for parents to access. However, licensing information has recently been posted via the world wide web, however, there was no mention of a marketing campaign to inform parents of this option to review licensing reports and lack of education process for the parents to understand the quality ratings. If the parents are not educated on what they are looking at in regard to quality, the posting of information is pointless.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

(a) The applicant provides support for creating practices that support incentives for ELDPs to continuously improve and increase quality in programs. The options presented include training, technical assistance, financial awards, and compensation. Also, a real time notification system is being implemented in order to notify professionals about trainings. This system is not fully implemented yet but will be beneficial as it is implemented. The financial incentive awards compensate programs with the highest star rating. A plan and/or policy was not presented on how the lower star rated programs can access the incentives to improve upon their quality. A tiered reimbursement program has not yet been established and the current discussion is continuing. As the tiered reimbursement program unfolds, more options may be available to centers who want to increase quality. A provision for TEACH scholarships is included in the plan. The specific criteria which will be used to provide access from professionals to the scholarships was not presented. (b) Based on data collected the applicant is currently

investigating the use of mobile technology in an effort to reach parents and link them to ELDPs. Many families may not have mobile technology and these families will surely miss this opportunity. No other strategy was presented to address this need. The second strategy presented was permitting the local pilot programs that will be created to facilitate local planning to identify gaps. By providing local control the opportunity to create a statewide model may be jeopardized. This would create more continuity of programming across the state and allow the local communities capacity to develop it to fit the needs of their specific community. this is a work in progress. (c 1)The applicant has set ambitious goals to increase the number of programs in the top tiers of the quality rating system. The goals are ambitious based on the baseline number of programs currently participating. There was not a specific plan presented on how the state will increase this number in the upper tiers. With such a small baseline presented a detailed plan would need to be presented on how this will be achieved. (2)The state has provided a chart that details the increased number of high needs children who will be participating in ELDPs who are in the top tiers of the quality rating system. Considering the small number currently participating the increased number can be viewed as ambitious. However, where the state has more control and accountability especially with the state funded programs no plan and/or policies were presented to explain why the state programs cannot be mandated to participate as a condition of receiving state funding. It also was not clear from the chart what percentage/number of kids would be in the upper level tiers of the program.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	15	13

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (B)(5)**

(a)The applicant provides a high quality plan that illustrates the future efforts to provide evidence that the chosen quality rating measure used (PASS) accurately reflects differing levels of quality and if changes in quality ratings are related to children’s learning, development and school readiness. Measures are not identified at this time but the plan includes the process of how the measures will be chosen. The plan presented is ambitious and yet achievable following the project presented. The applicant plans to validate the PASS with an independent evaluator. This evaluator will assess if the PASS is measuring accurately and reflects differential levels of program quality. (b)The PASS child outcome project was presented and the primary goals for this project are: (1) To determine the extent to which star levels are related to progress in all children’s learning, development, and school readiness; and (2) To provide evidence that Missouri’s Children with High Needs including those with disabilities, those who are dual-language learners, and those in poverty) also make differential gains based on star level. The design presented will only focus on preschool children and not be inclusive of children from birth to 3. An opportunity will be missed to include critical baseline data on the achievements of these children.

**Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)**

Each 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**

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
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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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(1)**

(a) Early Learning Program Standards, developed in 2007, were crafted to ensure that programs meeting these Standards were addressing Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS) and preparing young children for school. The evidence provided substantiates that the standards are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate and cover all 8 domains of school readiness. The strong evidence substantiated the value of the standards. Zero to Three was also consulted for completion of the birth to three standards. Also noted that the standards will be translated in Spanish and Bosnian languages supporting the need as it relates to a need for these second language learners in the state. (b) MELS are aligned with the Head Start Outcomes Framework and the Missouri Show Me Standards for K-12. Evidence was provided for alignment with early literacy, but not mathematics. Choosing to align with the Head Start Framework shows a commitment with a program that has been tried and tested in the preschool arena since 1965. This along with the work from Zero to Three will provide adequate standards to be implemented across programs. (c) Little evidence provided to ensure that the program standards are incorporated into curricula and activities. Nothing beyond trainings and coaching was presented. No system of checks and balances presented to ensure the alignment is happening. The comprehensive assessment system is critical to the success of the early learning program and PASS includes criteria supporting the importance but no evidence that they are incorporated throughout the assessment system. However the three kindergarten assessments chosen align with MELS. The Core Competencies utilized by the workforce community are also aligned with MELS and staff development opportunities. (d) The applicant eludes to having supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment of early learning and development standards across programs. General comments presented, no specifics of what supports are in place to achieve the understanding. Without the supports in helping facilitate the understanding of the standards, the plan could possibly fail. The applicant is proposing to implement the standards but is unclear on how they will be utilized across programs. No plan was presented that addressed this.

**(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.**

Available

Score

20

16

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(3)**

(a)The home visiting models in the state ensure 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. The logic model presented specifically addressed how this would be implemented throughout the other learning programs. However, cuts to the PAT home visiting model means that many children will be missed in getting these much needed services for them. The plan is not fully implemented. (b)Missouri boasts of several top-notch training programs that support and increase teachers' knowledge and skills related to children's health, behavior and development. The fact that they collaborate with DHSS and public health agencies increases access by ELDPs to services. (c)The state plan includes strategies to promote healthy eating habits, improving nutrition and physical activity to child care centers (ELDPs). Eat smart guidelines are utilized as well as the I am Moving I Am Learning curriculum. Missouri CARES will support the Training and technical assistance teams in providing support. The applicant has taken a proactive stance in identifying and providing supports within the health related area. (d1-2-3)Narrative not clear on the high needs children who are screened, if they are screened using the EPSDT and if the children referred for services were based on the screenings. Data not available for children participating in well child care or who were up to date on a schedule of well child care. A general plan was presented on how that data may be gathered by working with Missouri Health Net. There are many options presented in regard to participation in health programs but the information lacked specificity.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(4)**

(a)The coordinating board for early childhood will provide leadership and guidance to elevate the state to a higher level of family engagement. Also by utilizing the newly released Head Start parent, family and community engagement framework will enable the state to integrate early childhood activities enhancing the capacity of families in their level of engagement. The framework aligns with the state's current vision related to family engagement. The plan has not been incorporated yet but plans are made to move this forward across ELDPs. Using the family and community engagement strategy will provide the opportunity to impact the school readiness of high needs children by including the family engagement piece. (b)The Inclusion of the TEACH scholarship opportunities will aid the state in increasing the number of early childhood educators trained. A more detailed plan was presented that included 5 levels; level 1 introductory, level 2 vocational credentials, level 3-5 formal study AA-BA degrees. However, percentages were not included, but the access to TEACH scholarships will begin to provide program qualities for ELDPs. A strength was the allocation of grant dollars to support TEACH scholarship opportunities for early learning professionals. (c)The state is fortunate to be the headquarters for the Parents As Teachers program and plans to leverage this resource since the program is in every school district throughout the state. Also planning to provide services to children of incarcerated parents is a positive way of engaging a population that numbers approximately 39,000 children younger than four. What was missing from the plan was the actual implementation of promoting family support state wide and how this will be accomplished through a detailed plan. This will provide a great opportunity to provide family support and engagement statewide.

**D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
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**(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.**

20

18

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(1)**

(a)The Core Competencies have been revised to address deficits as formerly identified. Each level identified in the competencies builds upon the previous level related to the workforce knowledge of the individual. Eight content areas are identified to aid in improving outcomes for children. The competencies address the skills required in increasing the workforce knowledge of the early childhood staff. It was noted that there was no mention of an infant/toddler credential being included in the proposed plan (b)The state has created a system that is a common statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned to the framework. The Basic Knowledge Curriculum Framework is a high quality plan addressing this criteria. The competency levels reflect a progression of credentials with the increase of each level. (c)The applicant has engaged higher education institutions as well as 2+2 programs with state community colleges through articulation agreements. Also recently implemented is the Training Quality Assurance System. This system is beneficial for tracking staff development hours and also allowing trainers the opportunity to be approved for training. Trainer authorization ensures that the Core Competencies are used as a guideline for training. Having the support of higher education institutions will ensure access to quality education as well as build capacity of an educated workforce.

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.</b>	20	15

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (D)(2)**

(a)The number of professional opportunities that have been aligned to the core competencies has increased as well as a web based tool to support assessment, evaluation, and planning has been created to increase access. Also, well over one thousand trainings were posted on the Workshop calendar that is a web based program which is assessable by the workforce community. The web based opportunities will certainly increase access. A video library is also planned. Being in-tune with the current use of social media provides another avenue for staff to access and stay connected to the current trends and best practice. Quantity does not always equal quality, a weakness was not providing a plan of follow-up for the web based opportunities in the form of coaching and/or mentoring could limit the quality of the program. (b)The TEACH scholarship program which is part of the state plan will promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and is designed to increase retention. The scholarships will pay for 85-90% of tuition and books. This alone will provide opportunity for many staff to increase

their knowledge as well as their credentials. (c)The Missouri comprehensive data system is the public forum for aggregated data related to early learning programs. No specific data that will be reported was noted. General information was presented not specificity. (d1)Thirteen community colleges and 17 four year colleges currently participate in some type of early childhood credential. The number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from post-secondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework will increase each year. Targets set are reasonable and can be achieved through the support of the grant. (d2)The higher education sector has committed itself to providing service to the early childhood professionals increasing their numbers as well as the opportunities for professionals to provide service to high needs children.

**E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;</p> <p>(b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality and Implementation</b>		
<b>Comments on (E)(2)</b>		
<p>(a-b)The plan has all the essential data elements required and may enable the state to begin to implement uniformed data collection as the plan moves forward. The state has already leveraged other resources to build and upgrade production systems to aid in supporting uniform data entry. There are two state child identifiers which could be problematic for aggregating data. Having the capability of providing one state identifier will enable the state to aggregate data on children so as to drive policy decisions and refine program options and curriculum. It is not currently fully implemented. (c)The state currently utilizes a program called data-specs which manages documentation of each data collection/contributor. The data exchanges between programs will be governed by current MOUs. The MOUs will streamline the data collection process and allow for aggregation of data. This will allow for program assessment and possible refinement. (d)Information will be learner centered, it will flow across institutions, information will be useful to professionals, open systems, and the right data to lead improvement. It will be relevant, and accessible the timeliness will be dictated by the data entry. Timely, relevant, and accessible data will aid in the decision making relative to programs. This will ultimately aid in many program improvements. What was missing in the narrative is how the state will use the data to drive program improvements and impact outcomes related to school readiness. The state provided a good vision but was not clear on how to achieve the desired results. the plan was highly ambitious but the anticipated results will take more time to implement than projected. (e) The current data access and management policy complies with the requirements of federal, state and local entities. The state already has this in place governing current usage.</p>		
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>209</b>

**Priorities**

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--</p> <p>(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and</p> <p>(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.</p> <p>Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality and Implementation</b></p>		
<b>Comments on (P)(2)</b>		
<p>(a)The state has a plan in place that includes the licensing and inspection of the ELDPs who are participating in the Show Me Quality for Kids system. The system will be improved upon to include the child care centers that are currently exempt that include two or more children and provide these centers a coach to enhance service provision. Information provided reinforced the plan to increase the number of participating centers. (b)Show Me Quality for Kids which includes rated licensing voluntary and mandatory rating systems of programs based on indicators of program quality is used for (1) greater consumer awareness of quality programs, (2) increasing resources to help programs improve and sustain higher quality, (3) and lead to system wide improvements in the quality of all programs, including all settings and auspices and ages of children served. The only exceptions will be the centers that are exempt from licensing. The exempt centers and criteria required to meet the exemption are set forth in Missouri statute.</p>		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p>	
<b>Comments on Absolute Priority</b>	
<p>The state has sufficiently demonstrated that it will improve on the quality of early learning programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across stakeholders. All of the state agencies involved have signed MOUs as to be included in the improvement process. All of the agencies have also committed some level of funding to move the project forward. Many of these same agencies will also leverage funding to continue this integrative work. The creation of the state early learning standards and providing for implementation throughout programs was presented throughout the application. The QRIS system is committed to strengthening the quality of ELDPs by creating criteria that promotes quality with some incentives built in. The state has also provided a plan on supporting and strengthening the early childhood workforce. Web based opportunities and access to TEACH scholarships will provide opportunity for an increased educational workforce. The state will also invest significant time and dollars into a data management system in order to increase efficiencies and work across programs and provide opportunities for programs to access the data. By accessing this data programs should be able to modify instruction to enhance the outcomes of children with high needs across programs and the state. Creation of the Standards, core competencies, the QRIS system, Kindergarten entry assessment, address the priority of promoting school readiness.</p>	





Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # MO-5021

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]  
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]  
Support Monitor: [Redacted]  
Application Status: Reviewed  
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 12:47 PM

**CORE AREAS (A) and (B)**

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

**A. Successful State Systems**

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development</b>	20	14
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

**Comments on (A)(1)**

Missouri currently has in place the beginnings of almost all of the elements of a comprehensive early learning assessment system, begun in 2004, all needing more work to be fully implemented and of high quality across the entire state. In the application, Missouri describes how they have been thinking about and working on its early learning system holistically. There are over 442,000 young children in the state (birth to kindergarten age), with about half living in poverty (eligible for free and reduced lunch at school), but poverty in some communities affect about 9% of the population while it can affect 84% in some urban communities (220,033 shown in Table A-1-1). Over 153,000 young children (about 35%) participate in licensed/regulating early learning programs, with only about 5% in school-based programs (Title 1 and early childhood preschool special education programs), and the rest at home or in care by family, friends, or neighbors (FFN) in homes. The application shows that the state has thought systemically about its early learning system, with 7 systemic elements (or subsystems) that need to work together to have a high-quality, coordinated early learning system. The state has begun work on each of the elements. These elements fit well with this grant competition, and map onto the requirements; they are: Standards (for child development, program quality, curriculum, parenting skills, workforce); Workforce (competencies for early learning educators and providers); Programs [with a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) called Show Me Quality for Kids]; Governance and Leadership (having to do with decision making about funds, resources, policies, etc., with consideration of "durability, over time, place, and governmental administration – which sounds like what is meant by sustainability); Financial Resources (multiple funding streams that fund programs and services for children and families); Results (data from a variety of measures to show how children, families, programs, workforce and the system broadly are doing, improving, etc.); and Transitions (refers to alignment efforts that aim to have a seamless progression of concepts, with 3 identified in the application- Pedagogical Alignment of, for instance, learning standards and assessments, curriculum, professional development, etc.); Programmatic Alignment which refers to an entire program, as well as with families and communities; and Policy Alignment which refers to policies about access to programs, financing, workforce compensation and benefits, professional certification, etc. Appropriate program quality measures, indicators, and licensing requirements are included in the state's TQRIS (described under core area B), and as mentioned above,

the state currently does not have a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment, but they have completed a pilot which resulted in not adopting the tool tested as a common statewide measure. The state also has an early childhood credentialing system in place to build and sustain a high-quality workforce, but has very limited information about how many providers have credentials, and many providers have less than a CDA (see section D for more information). Data in Table A-1-10 show that only about 34% of staff working in licensed and license-exempt programs are participating in Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) Registry (8,356 of the estimated workforce of 21,947), and only a few are shown to have credentials or higher degrees. This means that the state has limited information about the workforce currently. Missouri's fiscal investments in early learning and development programs since 2007 are substantial (Table A-1-4), ranging from \$214,2902,656 in 2007 up a small amount to \$224,473,517 in 2011). For most categories, the funding has been pretty stable over this time period, with one exception – a drop for the Parents as Teachers program from over \$32 million in 2007 to only \$13 million in 2011. This drop is a bit worrisome because the state is using this program service with a large percentage of high needs children and their families in their plans to move forward. The application does not explain if this drop in funds and numbers served in PAT is a recent aberration or signals continuing drops in funding for this key program. Table A-1-3 also shows that the state has made quite minimal investments in state-funded preK programs (serving only 2,080 children). Missouri serves many children with high needs in early learning programs. Table A-1-5 shows that the number of high needs children in differing types of early learning programs has increased between 2007 and 2011 for most programs (e.g., Early Head Start went from 16,832 to 22,203; children in programs receiving CCDF funds went from 39,395 to 49,168). Notable exceptions are the low numbers served in state-funded preschool programs (i.e., only 2,308 in 2007, down to 2,080 in 2011) and decreasing numbers in the Parent as Teachers program (from 66,804 in 2007 down to 56,665 in 2011), a program that serves the most high needs children statewide. These numbers suggest that the state has made a good decision to select Focused Investment Area C3 and C4. Missouri has a set of policies and practices for early learning standards, credentialing of providers, a QQRIS to rate program quality in licensed early learning programs, and a parent engagement framework for effective practices with families. However, it appears that all of these standards and practices are not yet widely and comprehensively being implemented across the entire state. One worrisome observation is that there are no family engagement requirements for programs receiving CCDF funds (see Table A-1-9); this is an important omission because these programs serve the second highest number of high needs children based on data in Table A-1-5. If the state can get more of these programs into the QQRIS, that should help to rectify this significant gap. Missouri's state level administrative structure for administering the grant, as laid out in the application, (also in an appendix, Organization Chart in Attachment 6) is somewhat confusing and unclear (described more fully in section A3). In brief, multiple state and other agencies are proposed to coordinate and align work, under the lead of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, but specific details of how the governance and decision-making will actually occur in a collaborative way is not well described. Currently, Missouri does not have a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment. However, the state's education department has piloted an assessment between 1999 and 2009, the School Entry Profile, with over 100,000 children across 900 schools in that 10-year period. In 2009-10, some schools have continued to use the tool, but results are not reported to the state. The tool covers all the Essential Domains of School readiness. Missouri's application described plans for future activities to continue to select and validate a kindergarten entry tool (e.g., looking at 3 standard measures currently available – Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies GOLD, or Brigance Early Childhood System). The state did not choose E-1 as a Focused Investment Area for its application. Rather, this work is included under C1. The plan outlined is overly ambitious to lead to full implementation in 4 years within the budget of about \$2.1 million allocated. For example, the state rightly identified 3 issues that would need to be address to have a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment: validating the tool; developing and providing appropriate professional development for kindergarten teachers to reliably use the tool; and developing the processes for collecting, entering the data into a data system, analyzing and using the data (described on Table A-1-12). Not having a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment is a weakness of Missouri's application because the state currently and in the near future will have no way to see how high needs children are doing as they enter kindergarten compared with their peers. Nor can the state address questions about the participation of children with high needs in early learning programs prior to kindergarten impacts outcomes and how activities being implemented are improving the early learning programs and system.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (A)(2)**

The reform agenda outlined in Missouri's application is a strategic plan that builds on and expands the foundation of early learning system components that Missouri has been developing over nearly a decade since 2004. A diagram shown at the beginning of the application highlights four systemic areas the grant will focus on: Missouri CARES (Children are Ready for Elementary School)- emphasizing the use of early learning standards by providers and parents; expansion of the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), known as the Show me Quality for Kids, (copy in an appendix, Attachment 18); development of workforce by increasing training of providers in the state's newly developed Core Competencies; integrating and coordinating Missouri's Comprehensive Data System, including linking the early childhood databases to the state longitudinal data system for K12. The application contains logic models for each of the Core Areas and Focused Investment areas selected (in appendices). While they lay out quite well the state's needs for each area selected (C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, and E2), the strategies for achieving the broad and laudatory outcomes identified are often quite general and vague, without enough specific descriptions of how activities will be carried out to achieve the outcomes. For instance, under Core Area C1, developing and using standards, the description of how the state plans to achieve its goal of training about 60% of the early childhood workforce by 2015 on the early learning standards is not well described to evaluate if the goal can reasonably be reached (see also section C1). In addition, the details about these training activities are sparse. For each of the Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas, as well as for overarching infrastructure areas described in the application (e.g., Governance and Leadership, Financial Resources, Quality Assurance and Accountability, and Public Engagement), the application contains a table for an achievable number of important "indicators of progress" or descriptions of specific policies to be implemented, showing a thoughtful approach to the state's goals. For example, for Financial Resources, the state identified 4 indicators: plan for blended and braided funds; expanded and diversified funding; development of a sustainability plan; and status and progress of community pilots. For Early Learning and Development Programs, the identified indicators are about the numbers of high-quality programs, children with average or above skill at kindergarten entry, percentages of eligible families accessing Head Start programs, number of quality inclusive programs for children with disabilities and number of providers receiving training to effectively serve children from diverse backgrounds. Each of the tables contains appropriate goals. One concern, however, is that for many aspects of the plans specific details about how or what exactly will be done is missing. For instance, with regards to plans for blending and braiding funds, no real details or even a few examples of how this will be achieved are provided. For each choice, the state picked an area where some progress has been made in the past 3-10 years, but the current status of the area is not fully implemented, nor implemented all over the state. In some cases, pilots have been done in selected areas only, for example (e.g., the TQRIS; any kind of kindergarten entry assessment – only a pilot was done recently, and only some school districts are continuing to use it). One strong feature of Missouri's reform agenda is that the state brought together over 200 stakeholders in August 2011 to get input on the state's application, showing a commitment to a collaborative, and likely a transparent process that is broadly inclusive. The individuals represented a broad range of all the relevant types of stakeholders (e.g., state department administrators; school district personnel; early learning program directors and staff; legislators; parent; business leaders, and representatives from local community early learning agencies (with an appendix with signatures of attendees). This kind of collaborative approach bodes well for the state's continuing support for building a high-quality early learning system. One major concern about whether or not the goals are achievable is that a significant amount of the work of the grant will be done by local entities, local community boards under the Coordinating Board of Early Education (CBEE)(described more in Section A3). The state believes that local planning and responsibility for developing, implementing, and aligning all parts of the early learning system is best achieved at the local level. However, the application does not make it clear how these entities, which will be new pilots, will actually relate to the state agencies, how decisions will be made, and how the state agencies will have the authority to make sure that all local entities across the state will implement many of the common statewide components and activities universally and with fidelity. This is worrisome and raises questions about the chances of successful implementation because the state-local relationships were not spelled out clearly enough. Scopes of Work for key partners and agencies are contained in appendices (Attachments 7-12), again with rather broad descriptions of the work for each partner (e.g., "provide inclusion training to child care providers" for Department of Health and Senior Services; "enhancement of capacity to obtain health tracking through EPSDT/HC&Y" for Department of Mental Health(more details of the specifics are contained in the Budget Narrative. While Missouri chose not to write to the kindergarten entry assessment focused investment area (E-1), the application does contain a plan for a pilot project to design and test out a new kindergarten entry assessment. Overall, the reform agenda pays less attention to measuring child development and progress and tracking children's progress than it should in order to be a high-quality statewide early learning system in the future; this makes the plan fair, but not excellent. By not having a kindergarten entry assessment, the state will not be able to assess the impact of the early learning system on preparing children with high needs for kindergarten. In summary, Missouri's application shows that this state has been thinking about all of the areas addressed in this competition. The state has made some progress over the past decade in developing policies, resources, and parts of an infrastructure. However, many of these developments have only just begun to be implemented or are not at all implemented [e.g., (a) limited participation in the state's TQRIS; (b) implementation of a pilot of a kindergarten entry assessment that has resulted in abandoning the original tool and needing to start over from scratch to pilot and implement this component of the system; and (c) no integrated and coordinated early learning data system that can give statewide unduplicated data about early learning programs, participating children and families, and workforce). The reform agenda aims to build on these efforts and upgrade quality and access for high needs children and their families. As shown in other sections, however, the evidence of progress to date calls into question how achievable the ambitious plan is (e.g., current low rates of participation in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), Show me Quality for Kids; lack of family engagement requirements for programs receiving CCDF funds; very limited state funds for state-funded preschool programs; limited current use of the early learning standards, with little attention to making them available to parents).

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	10	5

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

#### Comments on (A)(3)

The lead agency for Missouri's application is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which administers many of the state's early learning programs [e.g., Missouri Preschool Project, a small state-funded preschool program; Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting programs in all school districts across the state; IDEA-funded programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities; Head Start programs, and 2 state data systems – Office of Data System Management and Missouri Comprehensive Data System (MCDS)]. Other key partners (shown in Table A-3-1), for which Memorandum Of Understanding and Scopes of Work are provided in the application include: the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), which funds and oversees the state Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) grant, Child Care Licensing, the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, and the state's Early Learning Council; the Department of Social Services (DDS – Children's Division, which administers the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership, Medicaid, Child Care Accreditation Facilitation Services, home visiting services, and several child care funds to improve and expand child care facilities; and Department of Mental Health, the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (CBEC), which administers the state Early Learning Council; and the Head Start Collaboration Office. Tables A-3-1a, A-3-2, and A-3-2a also show other key partners who are early learning intermediary organizations, including the local entities described below, who will be involved in the grant (with all support letters contained in an appendix). From the application, it unclear how these various state agencies coordinate to make decisions, set policy, allocate resources, and align the various components of the early learning system. For instance, the status of the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (CBEC) is unclear, and the state Early Learning Council is listed under this body and under the state Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). It appears decision-making authority rests with each of the state level departments, with coordinating and alignment functions not yet in place. The overall grant logic model (Attachment 4) describes governance being coordinated via the CBEC which



includes the Departments of Education, Health, Social Services, and Mental Health. Thus, it is unclear and uncertain how well work will be aligned and coordinated across the state when the work of the grant begins. The organizational chart contained in an appendix (Attachment 6) further supports this lack of clarity about governance and decision-making authority because the proposed grant Director is from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and answers to the Assistant Commissioner, but the relationships to all other participating partner state agencies are shown as "collaborations", including the box showing the CBEC. According to the MOUs and Scopes of Work for the main state agencies and key partners shown in Appendices 7-12, the lead agency Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will have at least some involvement in activities under all Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas, other agencies or partners have more defined and specific roles for specific activities (e.g., Department of Social Services is heavily involved in activities for the TQRIS in Core Area B; Department of Mental Health is heavily involved in activities under Focused Investment Area C3 and certain kinds of support to families under Focused Investment Area C4. These seem to be appropriate roles and responsibilities, but some of the activities described in the Scopes of Work are rather vague, and not well spelled out in the application elsewhere [e.g., the Department of Mental Health will presumably work on one aspect of the data system (E2) by "enhancement of capacity to obtain health tracking data through EPSDT/HC&Y", (i.e., developmental and other health screening programs)]. This example shows a broad and lofty goal, but the evidence that it can be achieved is lacking. Another indication of lack of strong and effective coordination currently is that the application describes 19 different data systems that contain various types of data about early learning programs, participants, and providers (Attachment 35). One major feature of the state of Missouri's plan for implementation of its early learning system across the state are local community boards under the Coordinating Board of Early Education (CBEC). The state believes that local planning and responsibility for developing, implementing, and aligning all parts of the early learning system is best achieved at the local level. In the first 4 months of the grant, local councils will be formed to apply for grants to carry out the work of the grant, with representatives for all types of early learning programs, superintendents and other school personnel, health and social service professionals, families, business leaders, and others. The RFPs that the state will release will require applicants to show how they will meet a variety of activities. This strategy is described in the application as a pilot, so it is unclear what already exists in local communities across the state. It is not clear how much authority the state agencies have to get local entities to implement the components of the early learning agenda across all programs and providers (e.g., get program into the TQRIS, use early learning standards, collect needed data and enter into data systems for all children, programs and providers). Thus the approach to decision-making across state agencies and in local regions is not explicitly described in the application. This vagueness in the state-local entity relationships limits the confidence one can have in predicting successful statewide implementation of all the plans described in this application. The state has a functioning Early Learning Council, and required state agency letters and letters of support from the key early learning intermediary organizations are included in the application.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>The extent to which the State Plan--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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--</p> <p>(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan,</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality</b>		
<b>Comments on (A)(4)</b>		

Missouri is requesting a total of \$59,919,885, distributed across the four years at about \$12.6 million, \$17.5 million, \$16 million, and \$13.6 million in Years 1-4, respectively (Budget Table 1-1). The largest amount of funds are allocated to localities, early learning intermediary organizations, and participating partners (about 58% of the requested funds), with the next largest amount (about 36% of requested funds) going to contractual costs. Existing funds from other sources represent about \$393,000,000 per year; these are substantial and appropriate, demonstrating the state's commitment to leverage all its early learning funding to coordinate work for this grant. Table A-4-1 also shows existing early learning funds (Federal, state, local, private) the state can leverage to support the plans of this grant, totaling about \$393 million per year from 2012-2015. Budget Table 1-3, showing the distribution of funds across the 8 proposed projects, is appropriate and adequate to carry out the proposed plans, and seems to be matched to the narrative descriptions of the proposed work in the application. For example, the local community pilots are slated to receive about 23% of the funds, and they have a major role in implementing the proposed work in local communities. One concern, however, is that because these are pilots there may be delays or difficulties in getting the local budgets developed and funds distributed quickly and efficiently. As described in section A3, how well and consistently the local entities will follow through with the state agenda also is not clear. Therefore, without more details, this amount is worrisome. The activities to promote early childhood educators' professional development also are slated to receive about 23% of the funds, appearing to be well matched to the proposed activities for this component of the state's plan, a positive feature of the budget. Activities to expand the TQRIS are budgeted at approximately 15% of the funds, and activities to develop and coordinate the early learning data system has been budgeted for approximately 15.5% of the funds, also reasonable given the size of the activities to accomplish the ambitious work proposed. The budget narrative provides details that seem appropriate for each project, with the role of each expense cross-walked to the Core Area or Focused Investment Area being addressed. One concern is that the distribution of funds for the data system work is heavily loaded in Years 1 and 2 (of the about \$9.3 million total for this area, about \$8 million is allocated to Years 1 and 2). The concern is raised because data systems development may take longer to design and implement than expected. The narrative did not sufficiently describe the details of the plans for this area as well as they might have, so these funds might be more appropriately distributed a little more evenly across the 4 years. Missouri did not write to the kindergarten entry assessment (focused investment area (E1), but did include funds for a pilot project to develop and implement one statewide (i.e., \$1,415,358). This set of activities is described as matching to C1 because part of the plan is to develop a new kindergarten entry assessment that is well aligned with the early learning standards. Thus, it looks like the state plan sees this work as falling under C1 (use of early learning standards). This was a puzzling feature of Missouri's budget. The application does not provide information about whether or not Missouri will receive any financial support for this work from private sources like foundations or businesses. For instance, there is a letter of support from the Heartland Foundation, but it does not contain information about past financial support or promises of future financial support for the state's early learning activities.

#### B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Early Learning and Development Standards;</li> <li>(2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;</li> <li>(3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;</li> <li>(4) Family engagement strategies;</li> <li>(5) Health promotion practices; and</li> <li>(6) Effective data practices;</li> </ul> <p>(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; and</p> <p>(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality and Implementation</b>		
Comments on (B)(1)		

Missouri has a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), known as the Show me Quality for Kids, (copy in an appendix, Attachment 18) aimed at improving early learning program quality, raising awareness among the public about program quality, promoting access to high-quality programs for children receiving child care assistance, high needs children, and targeting limited resources to assist programs to improve their program quality. The system includes a Program Assessment Scoring System (known as PASS) which enters the program quality rating. The rating system includes 10 areas that are rated, with specific requirements for certifications of levels and monitoring and recertification: Needs Assessment (done by programs every 3 years); Qualifications for Staff (for both supervisors/program directors and teachers that include Bachelor's and Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials); Professional Development (with very general descriptions of training); Staff Evaluation (which state that "Staff performance is evaluated at least annually and results are documented", but details are lacking.); Curriculum and Assessment (selected required evidence-based curriculum are required, but specific examples of curriculum are not named in the application; further for this component, the application also states that the Early Learning Standards should be used, but again no specifics are described in the application; the standards state that "Children are assessed with authentic, reliable, and valid assessments that are used for intended purposes.", but no specific examples of what tools are used, how providers are trained to use them, how often assessments are done, and specifically how the resulting data are used); Interactions and Learning Environment (general descriptions about what constitutes high-quality interactions are described); Health, Safety, and Nutrition (the application described that there are a set of "comprehensive health policies and procedures", with annual inspections of fire and safety and of health and sanitation procedures by authorized inspectors); Child/Adult Ratios (with appropriate ratios and group sizes specified for infants, toddlers, preschooler, and mixed age groups that range with infants through kindergarten entry age children); Program Evaluation (a requirement for an annual evaluation about accreditation status, review of the program's needs assessment and input from families, staff, and community partners); and Partnerships and Collaborations (includes agreements from community partners that they will implement services "in accordance with these standards"). The PASS descriptions (above) demonstrate this is a good comprehensive set of program standards that cover all of the relevant areas of program quality. They seem to cover all relevant areas that are considered to be best practices in nationally recognized standards (e.g., NAEYC, Division for Early Childhood, licensing regulations). However, the description of the specific components in the Show me Quality for Kids ratings system provided in the application and appendix are too general and vague to evaluate fully. For instance, the effective use of data component is particularly weak, with no real specifics given about how data are used at any level (e.g., by educators for instructional and program planning, monitoring children's progress; by program administrators for program planning, professional development, needs assessment, etc.; by the state for monitoring its early learning system statewide, developing professional development activities, making program improvements, or allocating resources). The Show Me Quality for Kids rating system currently rates licensed programs only, so there are no ratings for unlicensed programs. The application described how the PASS System was developed based on existing sets of standards (e.g., from Head Start, Caring For Our Children, and those of national accreditation bodies – National Association for the Education of Young Children) resulting in three ratings models for different program types (i.e., early childhood centers and group homes, home-based programs; school-age center and group home). For family, friend, and neighbor home-based programs, only homes that serve at least 4 children are included in the rating system. The current models were endorsed by the state agencies that regulate early learning programs in 2006. The design of each of the three models is organized in 8 components (described above) across three main categories: Program Personnel; Program Content; and Program Management. However, the application does not provide enough detail about the specific indicators or each component to understand how well the system meets evidence-based standards for high-quality early learning programs. For instance, it is not specified how Interactions and Learning Environment are actually assessed to distinguish between ratings on the 5 tiers. The Show Me Quality for Kids rating system has 5 tiers (levels) of increasing levels of program quality requirements. The lowest level, Tier 1, is for programs that meet basic licensing standards. Tiers 2 to 4 have increasing levels of requirements indicative of higher program quality. Tier 5, the highest rating, requires that programs be accredited by a state-approved accrediting entity and have high-quality standards in all areas of the rating system. The application outlines how the 4 levels indicate increasingly higher levels of program quality. Meaningful levels of quality are differentiated by the 5 tiers (see B-5 for further information on this issue). Program ratings are valid for 18 months, and then they must be reevaluated. This is a good period of time to allow programs to make needed improvements. The rating system is not yet operational statewide; but pilot and demonstration projects of its implementation have been conducted in the past several years. The plan for the next 4 years is to expand its use in other geographic areas across the state in all 4 years of the grant, and begin to upgrade the system to include family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) home-based programs in Years 2-4 of the grant. Also missing from the application are any data to show how the incentives and training and TA provided to help programs improve their program quality actually have resulted in program improvements by showing that tier ratings have improved as a result of these interventions. The state's application describes a well thought of set of strategies used to promote participation in, use of, and how programs can increase levels of quality in the Show me Quality for Kids rating system. These incentives include those in four areas that are described: training; technical assistance (TA); financial incentives and rewards; and compensation. Missouri maintains an online listing of professional development activities, the Missouri Workshop Calendar, and there also is a Training and Quality Assurance System (TQAS) that certifies which trainings are well done and approved by the state to meet their expectations for being high-quality training and TA offerings. It is not clear from the application how well used these tools are by programs and providers.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	15	7

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(2)**

To date, Missouri has had very low participation in its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), known as the Show me Quality for Kids rating system. Table B-2-c shows that currently only 3% of Early Head Start and Head Start programs, 1% of programs receiving CCDF funds, and 2% of other early childhood and afterschool programs are participating in the Show me Quality for Kids rating system. These low rates are rather puzzling since the system has been in place for a while. It also raises concerns about how quickly and comprehensively the state can move to get many more programs participating in the rating system and attaining the top-tier ratings indicative of high-quality programs. The goals for participation by 2015 are to have 1,662 of 4,188 (40%) licensed and license-exempt program participating, and 700 of 3,000 (23%) of family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) home-based programs participating. The state data (Table B-2-c) show that no Part B special education programs currently participate in the Show me Quality for Kids rating system, and the quite modest goal to increase participation to 13% of these programs by 2015 seems rather weak. Likewise, state-funded preK programs are proposed to increase from 0% to 35% participation, Part B IDEA special education preschool programs from 0% to 13%, also very low goals. Overall, these seem like modest targeted goals, and not very high expectations for future participation. The goals are likely achievable, although the current low rate of participation is a concern. The application is clear that their future plans and commitments are to expand the use of the Show me Quality for Kids rating system across all areas of the state, for licensed, license-exempt and FFN programs, by program types (center, home, group home), and settings (community-based, school-based and Head Start programs). The application states these projects participation figures above (Table B-2-c) do not represent all program statewide, and there is not a clear specific plan to implement with all programs statewide. The application stated that to serve more high needs children they plan to do more to coordinate, blend, and braid funding from various sources to increase access to high-quality programs for these children. However, the details of how this might be achieved are too vague to evaluate how successful this strategy/plan will be. Furthermore, if such decisions and activities about blending funds rely on the local entities to reallocate funds and implement such blending, this is also worrisome because (a) it is not clear what incentives there are there for local entities to do this and (b) it is not clear what authority the state has to make ensure that local entities do this.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	15	9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(3)**

Missouri has what appears to be the beginnings of a well designed and well functioning system in place to rate and monitor early learning programs. Data and ratings for Missouri's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), the Show me Quality for Kids rating system, are collected by the Missouri Professional Development Registry (MOPD Registry) and the Missouri On-Site Assessment Project, two statewide databases to collect and verify information about early education staff (i.e., education and training data), and program structure, process, and classroom observation data, respectively. The standard validated Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) are the observation measures used to assess program quality. Missouri's application described that it has a well designed system to train and certify those individuals who make the ratings for the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), the Show me Quality for Kids rating system (with details provided in an appendix, Attachment 23). The state has developed and is implementing a specific project for this purpose, the Missouri On-Site Assessment Project. The application and appendix does a great job of describing how thoughtfully designed this system is. For instance, there are 3 levels of assessor skill, Beginner, Intermediate, and Master level assessors, that include increasingly greater amounts of experience and expertise conducting program quality ratings. Furthermore, assessors must be Bachelor or Master degree individuals with either 15 or 24 early childhood education credits, must pass strict reliability training levels, must use the scoring rubrics with fidelity, and complete ratings for certain numbers of programs to pass muster at each of the competency levels. As another example of this excellent training program for assessors, the Missouri On-Site Assessment Project has developed a training program with 15 modules that assessors must go through and pass quizzes to advance through the required competencies to become an assessor and advance through the 3 levels of expertise. Assessors must become reliable in their observations on the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) used for program observations in the Show me Quality for Kids rating and maintain reliability. An appendix (Attachment 25) shows that appropriate inter-rater reliability procedures that have been put in place (e.g., 85% agreement on ERS scores; maintaining reliability by having checks of scoring every 5th, 10th, or 15th observation by Beginner, Intermediate, or Master assessors, respectively). Programs must renew their designations every 18 months, an important feature of the system that assures continuing attention to program quality. The length of time was chosen to give programs enough time to make improvements and also allows for recertification checks done throughout the year, rather than annually in fall or spring, a feature that shows good attention to burden in implementing the rating system. This is a good length of time between ratings to give programs enough time to make any needed improvements. Missouri has focused on getting ratings out to parents and communities. A strong feature of Missouri's Show me Quality for Kids rating is that the ratings are exported to the Child Care Aware ® of Missouri (the child care referral and resource agency database/web site) so that parents, programs and other community stakeholders can see and use the ratings. Only recently (in September 2011) did this web site have information for the public about licensing inspections of programs around the state. No information is presented in the application to show that parents of children with high needs use these resources effectively or at high rates. Nor are there any plans to learn if and how these parents use these resources to choose programs for their children and families. The application does not provide information about how programs are given the rating data and then supported to understand their quality and engage in activities to improve their program quality. This is an important omission because the applicant does not make explicit its current understanding of how well incentives and supports are used by programs or providers to improve quality. Concerns about the data systems that track information about programs and providers (described in section E2) and the lack of a coordinated data system will likely impact the state's ability to assist them to improve their ratings over time, know how many providers are getting credentials and higher degrees, learn how the TA and training provided is impacting quality of programs for high needs children. While the state has made some good progress in developing the TQRIS, the Show me Quality for Kids rating system, very few programs statewide have actually participated and been rated (see B2 comments; Table B-2-c). This state of affairs calls into question how well they will do in the future to get more programs rated and moving toward higher quality.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

Missouri has given much thought to ways to increase access to high-quality early learning programs for high needs children by developing and implementing a set of incentives for providers and programs to participate in the Show Me Quality for Kids rating system and improve their quality, both for providers and for early learning programs. The state describes a well thought set of strategies to promote participation in the system, and to help programs increase levels of quality. These incentives include strategies in 4 areas: training; technical assistance (TA); financial incentives and rewards; and compensation. However, the application is somewhat vague in defining these incentives and resources more precisely. For example, under TA, the application describes coaching for programs to improve ratings, but more specific information on who does this coaching and what exactly they do is missing. Another example is that higher child care assistance payments are given to program with the highest star ratings, but this is a rare occurrence based on data in Table B-4-c-1 (i.e., only 2% of all programs have the 5 Tier rating, and only 14% have Tier 4 ratings, the next highest quality level, and one that has possible hope of reaching the high Tier 5 level in order to receive such a financial incentive). The application does not state the amount of this increased reimbursement rate, so it is not possible to know if this incentive is sufficient to raise programs to Tier 5 status. Finally, there is no discussion of what incentives there are for the 1- and 2-star rated programs to enter the system and work to increase their star ratings. Since many children with high needs are in these kinds of programs, this issue needs to be addressed to understand how well access by high needs children to top-tier programs is really going to be increasing over time. One nice feature of Missouri's system is that it maintains an online listing of professional development activities, the Missouri Workshop Calendar, and there is a Training and Quality Assurance System (TQAS) that certifies which trainings are well done and approved by the state to meet their expectations for high-quality training and TA offerings. Lacking, however, is a good description of how the state supports programs who do their own self-assessments and then develop training and TA plans for improvement. It appears that the state leaves it to individual programs or school districts to figure out what trainings are needed; such an approach is likely to lead to variable quality in these improvement plans. The data in Tables B-4-c-1 and B-4-c-2 show that the current numbers of programs that are high-quality programs and the numbers of high needs children in them are pretty low, and in need of substantial improvements and increases. For instance, Table B-4-c-2 shows that statewide only children in Early Head Start and Head Start programs and programs receiving CCDF funds have top tier program quality ratings, but extremely low percentages of children represented in them (2.8% and 2.3% respectively). The goals for the future for 2015 seem minimally ambitious, given where the state is at currently (from Table B-4-c-2 – increases in numbers of high need children served in top tier programs to from 12.6% in IDEA preschool programs for children with special needs, to 34.6% for the relatively few children in state-funded preschool programs, to 31.2% for children in Early Head Start and Head Start programs and programs, to 24% for those served in programs receiving CCDF funds (which are programs serving the highest percentages of high needs children)). The application lacks information about how training and technical assistance and other incentives have helped programs participate in the TQRIS and/or improve their quality (e.g., no data are presented about how broadly implemented the training and technical assistance and other incentives have been to date). The application indicates how many providers and programs have used some of the incentives (e.g., trainings, scholarships), but for others, no information is presented (e.g., numbers of higher child care assistance payments). More importantly, there is no information about how the resources or incentives led to higher tier ratings. For example, no information is given about whether those providers who received scholarships actually completed a relevant degree and are still working in the field. As will be described in section E2 (data systems), Missouri does not have an effective, integrated, and coordinated early learning data system> Therefore, it is not possible to examine how technical assistance and training supports and incentives relate to progress in programs getting rated and to improving their quality. To assist parents of children with high needs to access high-quality programs, the state provides Show Me Quality for Kids Tier ratings to the child care resource and referral system. However, few programs have been rated so far or have top ratings, this good feature is hardly implemented to date.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

**Comments on (B)(5)**

Missouri's application describes its commitment to collecting data and conducting studies to validate its Show Me Quality for Kids rating system, which is part of its broader Program Assessment Scoring System (known as PASS). A preliminary psychometric study conducted in 2008 is described in the application, funded by a grant to the Midwest Child Care Research Consortium by the Child Care Bureau (a longstanding multi-state group that has been studying child care in multiple Midwestern states for many years). The results of this study showed the Show Me Quality for Kids rating system had pretty good, but not particularly great, reliability and validity (multiple forms – internal, construct, criterion and predictive validity). For instance, correlations between tier ratings (probably used the total score of points, not just the 5 tiers, but once cannot tell which was analyzed in the application) and Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) scores ranged from .32-.42 for center-based programs and

.35-.43 for home-based programs. These findings suggest that increasing tier ratings are positively associated with increasing levels of program quality. It would have been more helpful to make this argument if the mean ERS ratings for each tier were shown (which they were not in the application), so readers can see if high tier 4 and 5 programs get high scores on the ERS compared with programs with the lower tier levels; one would like to see scores of 5 or higher at those top tier levels of program quality. Nevertheless, the application does provide some initial data to indicate that the items that make up the quality ratings are appropriate, work together like they should to measure quality, and they correlate with validated observational measures of program quality. Of greater significance to demonstrate validity of the tiers, the University of Missouri conducted a convincing study in 2009, the Missouri QRIS Child Outcome Study, looking at relationships between program quality scores and child outcomes. The study included 38 preschool programs (30 center-based, 2 group homes, 6 home-based programs) and 350 children. The design was a pre-post design in which children were assessed with a broad set of measures in fall and again in spring. The notable finding reported in the application was that the children in poverty level households in medium- and high-quality programs (3 tier, and 405 tier programs, respectively) made significant gains on vocabulary on the PPVT-4, a strong measure of early vocabulary that predicts well to last school achievement, including reading skills. This study is promising, but more work needs to be done to further validate Missouri's TQRIS. In the application, Missouri describes plans to continue to do more validation studies with its TQRIS. After preliminary planning in the first 6 months of the grant, Missouri plans to contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a new study of the psychometric properties of the state's TQRIS. The application also describes plans for a new Child Outcomes Project to look at how the quality ratings relate to child outcomes. Again, the application purposes to hire an independent evaluator to conduct this study. Some details are outlined in the application (e.g., a timeline of study activities, statement that a pre-post design will be used, with attention to using the "observation measure that is chosen as the statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment... as outcome variables". Such descriptions are somewhat adequate but too vaguely described to understand the probability of successful implementation. One would want to see a larger more representative sample of programs and/or program types in these newly proposed studies, but this cannot be ascertained from the information provided in the application. The state application also does not mention the possibility of using the CLASS measure in the validation and outcome studies; this might be an important addition since this is a validated, evidence-based measure of the quality of teaching interactions that are most predictive of child school readiness outcomes (and CLASS is being used in Head Start programs across the country as a way to measure and track and improve teaching interactions). Missouri does not provide any information in the application to indicate that the state plans to conduct studies and examine how the training and technical assistance incentives and supports relate to programs' ability to participate in the Show Me Quality for Kids rating system or to improve their ratings as a result of these incentives and supports. It would be helpful to know whether or not the training and technical assistance incentives and supports provided impact program quality.

### **Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)**

*Each 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**

*The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.*

*The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:*

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(1)**

Missouri has a set of early learning standards that spans from infants through preschoolers, divided into age ranges (birth to 8 months; 6-18 months; 16-36 months, and preschoolers). They do cover all of the 5 Essential Domains of School Readiness, but are laid out in 5 main content areas: Language and Literacy; Social and Emotional Development (which included Approaches to Learning); Mathematics; Science; and Physical Development, Health, and Safety). The set for preschoolers were developed in 2001-03 and the infant/toddler set were developed in 2010-11 with input from ZERO TO THREE, the well respected national organizations concerned with babies and toddlers. The 2 sets have not been well integrated and aligned, which is an activity that the state intends to pursue with the 4 years of grant funding. The application says that the early learning standards are aligned with Head Start standards (shown in an appendix – Attachment 17) and with Missouri's Show Me Standards for K12, but no specifics are provided to see how well this has been done (e.g., an addendum, Attachment 16, shows kindergarten and 1st grade standards for language and reading skills, but no suggested links to the early learning standards provided). The plan moving forward is to do more alignment work, but again, specifics are not provided. It is not clear how helpful the standards may be for parents or early educators or providers for instructional or intervention planning due to (a) such broad age spans; and (b) very few items; and (c) they seem to be a list of very specific and non-functional skills with little additional information given about why specific skills are important or the item is very broad (e.g., under "Practices healthy behaviors" for the preschool child, "...manages toileting"; for "Physical science", under "Represents observations through music and movement", for the preschool child, "...pretends to skate on ice"). Another problem with the standards is that they are not universally designed (i.e., appropriate for children with disabilities). For instance, many of the items are written to require specific skills with specific motor, sensory or other behaviors rather than being written to get at functional skills that can be expressed in a variety of alternative ways (e.g., "responds verbally to story or text", "pats the back of another child who is crying", "uses all five senses to explore the environment", "walks with determination"; all of which could have been written in more universal design ways, such as "communicates in response to story or text", "shows awareness that other child is crying", "can move around his/her environment to get from place to place"). Another problem with these standards is that, also unlike early learning standards in other states, Missouri did not present any support documents or describe any specifics about how parents or early educators or providers might actually use the standards as well as activities and interventions with infants, toddlers, or preschoolers. Also, the application narrative and the appendix (Attachment 15) do not have any explicit mention of how the standards have attended to issues about cultural and linguistic appropriateness. Rather, the state proposes that moving forward they plan to print the standards in Spanish and Bosnian in Year 2 of the grant (presumably the 2 largest groups of dual language learners in the state). One concern that can be raised with the standards is that many parents and early childhood providers may be confused by categorizing skills in the infant and toddler range with more academic terms that would not seem appropriate for infants and toddlers (science, mathematics). Many of the items for infants and toddlers for these areas are appropriate (or the standards state that the item is "not applicable to this age"), but the terminology may confuse parents and providers without more explanation about how some early skills form the foundation for later academic learning in areas like science and math. From what can be gleaned in the application, the early learning standards have not really been used in any clear systematic way by programs and providers and teachers. The plan moving forward calls for Missouri to support training on the early learning standards with about 2,000 teachers in Year 2, about 4,000 teachers in Year 3, and about 6,000 teachers in Year 4, for a total of about 12,000 teachers, which the application says is about 60% of the workforce. The ultimate goal is to have them used statewide by all early learning teachers and providers, but the plan is not specific about activities the state will track to know this is occurring. The plan also does not describe how they will train home visitors who serve large numbers of infants and toddlers below age 3, a major omission. The description of the alignment of the early learning standards with the K12 standards is too vague to evaluate the alignment. The application narrative simply says that they "are aligned", and the appendix to show this alignment (Attachment 16) is a very general and nonspecific crosswalk for some but not all of the K-5 standards, many of which note "no alignment". Further, the alignment with the Head Start framework is in a very early draft form and is not at all complete. Finally, the application does not have much information about recommended tools or measures to be used to assess progress on the standards (e.g., some programs use the Ages and Stages screening tool, proposed plans to use Work Sampling, Teaching Strategies GOLD and the Brigance tools are mentioned in an appendix – Attachment 19). Thus, whatever child assessment tools, measures, or procedures that programs and providers may currently be using cannot be evaluated to see their appropriateness.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	20	14

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(3)**

Missouri's application describes that it selected this Focused Investment Area because of the very significant impact of early health, behavioral and mental health problems on later educational success and general well-being of children. The application stated that in the past year, the Department of Mental Health served 1,661 children under age 6 with an identified mental health disorder with an estimated cost of \$3.4 million. Missouri has several "promising programs and practices in place". For instance, the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) funds four special needs inclusion specialists who provide technical assistance to providers, and also to parents with children with special needs. In addition, in 2010, the University of Missouri Psychiatric Center received a federal grant to address needs of young children under age 8 years, and in 2008, the state Department of Mental Health (MDH) held a summit to identify ways to support very young children's social-emotional development and needs. And at this same time, developmental screening became a strong focus of Missouri's Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT), with DMH partnering with Medicaid (that provides health care for many or most children with high needs). These developments show Missouri is leveraging existing resources to meet the plans with children with high needs in this area of the state's planned work, building on current activities in the state. All of the main components of Missouri's early learning system have features to address health, social-emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of high needs children. For instance, health and safety standards are in child care licensing regulation and accreditation, in the state TQRIS, the Show Me Quality for Kids rating system, in the Core Competencies for providers, and in the early learning standards (presented in a table in the application narrative). The home visiting models used in Missouri have strong emphasis on health, social-emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of young children and support around these areas for parents, caregivers, and other providers. This is a strength of Missouri's early learning system. The proposed plan for this area described in the application calls for 3 main approaches: 1) increasing training and support for providers about health, behavioral and development needs of young children; 2) focusing on nutrition and obesity in the health area; and 3) leveraging existing resources. For the first approach, 3 activities are named, but the details about these activities are rather sketchy, making it hard to evaluate how ambitious or achievable they are (e.g., an early childhood teacher/program training mentions a project with DHHS and local public health agencies that provide "health consultation and training services" but it is unclear if this is currently in place, has been working well, etc, and how many teachers and programs will be reached?). Likewise, it is not clear what all the aspects of "leveraging existing resources" look like in practice. For instance, if (3) means leveraging investments in the PAT program, then the declining funds and enrollment in this program (described in section A) raises questions about the successful implementation of activities in this section of the plans. Another aspect of this approach will be to provide Parent As Teachers home visiting to those family members caring for young children who have parents who are in prison/jail, which we know from Table A-1-2 is about 39,000 children statewide, a considerable number and a well justified choice to emphasize. For the second approach, it appears that 2 existing nutrition and physical activity programs will be expanded: the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines that are used as recommendations for child care facilities; and the I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL) initiative that was developed in coordination with the Office of Head Start, likely to be a strong evidence-based intervention. The application describes how these initiatives will be expanded into other program types (other than Head Start programs) and that more training materials will be developed for this area, and a variety of technical assistance activities will be conducted with early learning/child care programs. Finally, for the third approach, the state described plans to build on the work of the Summit mentioned above by carrying out three activities the Summit recommended: mapping out the financing and policies related to early childhood social and emotional issues; identifying some common cross-systems indicators of healthy social-emotional development; and creating a professional development coaching system to help providers better meet young children's social-emotional needs. These are excellent ideas for the future plans, but details and examples are not well specified and are too vague to know how effective they will be to promote child well-being goals. Table C-3-d reports that over 200,000 high needs children are screened currently, with almost 111,000 referred for follow-up or treatment. The goals for the 4 year grant period are to increase the number of children screened by 10% per year and to increase the number of children referred for follow-up or treatment by 5% per year. These goals seem to be reasonable and achievable. This same table shows that data are unavailable about numbers of high needs children who participate in ongoing well baby health care and who are up-to-date on their well baby health care visits. This is a major weakness for the state in understanding the status of high needs children in this area, including those needing screening, and a shortcoming of their early learning data system.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families,	20	16

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(4)**

Missouri's application acknowledges the significant role that families play in young children learning, development and well being, and described a number of its past and current activities that support family engagement. The application clearly demonstrates that Missouri's early learning system has a longstanding and strong commitment to supporting and educating families so they can support their young children, with a central role for families in their logic model for promoting early learning and developmental outcomes for Children (Attachment 1 – the overall early childhood state plan). Compared to some of the other features of Missouri's early learning system, this area of family engagement, particularly for families with children with high needs, is a strength for Missouri. Evidence for this commitment and conclusion comes from the fact that Missouri developed the nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting model, Parents as Teachers (PAT), beginning in 1970, and it is used throughout Missouri and in many other states in the country (PAT is one of the recognized home visiting models in the Federal home visiting initiative). Missouri currently supports families with PAT and 3 other evidence-based home visiting models – Nurse Family Partnership; Early Head Start; and Nurses for Newborns. PAT is currently in place in all 522 school districts in Missouri, with at least 75% of PAT funds used with high needs families (and in some school districts, all 100% of PAT funds are used with high needs families). The application states that Missouri also has Educare programs in 90 of its 115 families (a comprehensive evidence-based program model that provides birth to kindergarten services that combine parent education and support with high-quality center-based child care, home visits, and other referral services for families). Missouri also has a statewide parent warm line, ParentLink, which makes about 4,500 referrals per year. In the application, the state describes that it has been using the evidence-based Strengthening Families Framework (which includes attention to 5 protective factors that are well supported by a large body of research – parental resilience; social connections; knowledge of parenting and child development; concrete support in terms of need; and social and emotional competence). The application further states that the state wants to expand the use of the newly developed Head Start Parent, Family, and Community (PFCE) Framework to further expand family engagement over the 4 years of the grant period, also a strong evidence-based framework. In a table in the application, the state also laid out the multiple elements of family engagement that are included in Strengthening Families and the Head Start framework, and many elements of family engagement are also included in the TQRIS (Show Me Quality for Kids), the states' early learning standards, and the Core Competencies for early childhood educators and providers. While these are excellent frameworks for use in promoting the family engagement agenda, the plans for how they will be used across the state are not described with enough detail or example to know how broadly and effectively they will be implemented. The plans for improvements in family engagement that Missouri proposes, described in the narrative and in an appendix showing the logic model for promoting early learning and development outcomes for children, with a specific family engagement component (Attachment 29) will appropriately target the very programs that are serving the highest numbers of high needs children and their families. Data in Table A-1-3 show that of the about 135,000 high needs children served in the various programs across the state represented in the table, almost 57,000 are served by PAT home visiting programs (42% of the total), with another about 22,000 (16% served in Early Head Start and Head Start programs) and another about 23,000 (17% of the total) served in programs receiving CCDF funds (although these numbers are probably duplicated counts since an unknown number are served in more than one of these programs). One concern about the plans is that currently the programs serving children who receive CCDF funds do not have any required family engagement activities (see Table A-1-9). Unless they get rated by the TQRIS (Show Me Quality for Kids), which does have good family engagement requirements, this represents a huge gap. Another concern is that PAT funds and enrollment has been dropping recently (described in section A) which is a problem since it appears that PAT is a major service for the family engagement work. The application also describes having a dedicated Family Engagement workgroup within the Coordinating Board of Early Education (CBEC) to develop ways to use the new Head Start PFCE Framework to develop and implement parent engagement strategies (the initial workgroup has already been working with Head Start programs and see this as a good framework for all types of early learning programs across the state). Because this new Head Start PFCE Framework is the product of work of one of the new national Head Start quality centers, this should be a strong evidence-based framework. In addition, use of it with the state's plans can allow the state to leverage and use any new products that the national Head Start quality center develops with regards to this new framework. With the grant, the state plans to expand both PAT home visiting and the parent warm line, ParentLink, but no further details are given. The application does not describe if there is a progression of increasing parent engagement; it looks like there is no progression in place yet (i.e., because this is described as a strategy in the logic model (Attachment 28). However, there is a parent engagement component in the TQRIS which represents increasing higher levels of engagement for the 5 quality Tiers. But because the TQRIS has hardly been implemented statewide, this is a significant current gap with regards to parent engagement. Moving forward, as the state wants to implement the TQRIS more fully across the state, it can also implement the parent engagement strategies from these parent engagement frameworks. It is important to note that the success of implementing the family engagement strategies depends, in some part, on the state being successful in getting the TQRIS implemented more fully than is currently the case. Training on these frameworks is proposed in the

application, but specific details of how this will be achieved are not presented in enough depth to know how well this can be implemented. In the application, the state proposes to especially target three specific subgroups of special populations of children with high needs and their families: dual language learners and children of incarcerated parents. The case for focusing on dual language learners seemed a bit weak since Table A-1-2 indicates that they represent about 353 children (

#### D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	20	15

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

#### Comments on (D)(1)

Missouri's application places a strong emphasis on the critical importance of a well qualified early childhood workforce for promoting young children's school readiness, particularly for children with high needs. The state has spent much effort in the past several years in developing newly revised Core Competencies for early educators (which were originally developed in 1999 in a bi-state collaboration with the state of Kansas). In this revision, the efforts had the strong and laudable goal of aligning multiple state and national standards [i.e., Head Start Performance Standards, Missouri Early Learning Standards, the 2010 National Association for the Education of Young Children standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs, Child Development Associate (CDA) Content Areas, Youth Development Associate (YDA) Content Areas, and Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Checklist]. These new core competencies include 8 content areas that are broad, comprehensive, and appropriate, with each sub-content area divided into 5 increasing higher levels of knowledge and skills. The 8 areas include: Child and Youth Growth and Development; Learning Environment and Curriculum; Observations and Assessment; Families and Communities; Health and Safety; Interactions with Children and Youth; Program Planning and Development; and Professional Development and Leadership. This is an excellent and comprehensive framework with all the expected components included to set expectations for a well qualified workforce. The state's statewide professional development system, Training Quality Assurance System (TQAS) uses well trained trainers who organize their trainings by these competence areas and specifically train to these competencies. The entry level 1 is minimal orientation training, while level 2 is the CDA level of knowledge and skills, level 3 is an Associate's degree level, level 4 is a Bachelor's degree level, and the highest level 5 is for knowledge and skills expected at the post-bachelor's degree level. Specific items in the Core Competencies are not well defined and little information is provided about associated resource documents. For instance, the 5 levels for "Protecting Children and Youth" in the appendix are not too clear about what differentiates one level from the next (e.g., Level 2 has "Plans experiences to keep children and youth safe", while level 3 has "Creates safe environments and procedures for children, youth, and adults", and other items also are described quite similarly across the levels). This shows how the state has put good effort into developing a well trained set of individuals to provide technical assistance and training. The state also has been working to align the competencies for early childhood with the entire progression of competencies through K12 (Missouri's Education Matrix). The state also recently has developed the Basic Knowledge Curriculum © in order to 1) create an entry level certificate program, 2) identify the required course work requirements, and 3) develop the implementation of cloud-based technology to help trainers use the Core Competencies in the Training Quality Assurance System. Like many descriptions of alignment activities, more details would have been helpful as the descriptions provided are vague. As also to be described in section D2, Missouri's application shows that the state has a long way to go to upgrade the skills and credentials of the early childhood workforce across the state. Table D-2-d-2 shows that currently very few early childhood providers have any of the credential levels (but only 34% of the licensed workforce is represented in the data that are available, a significant gap in information about the workforce). Thus, the state really knows very little about the credentials of the current workforce, a significant gap. The target goals for increasing credentialing by 2015 seem not very ambitious at all – moving the number with the Type 1 Credential (the lowest level, that is not even a CDA) from 0% currently to 44% by 2015, moving the percentage with the Type 2 Credential (with a CDA) from 1.7% to 2.7%, and the Type 3 Credential (with an Associate's degree) from 3.2% to 3.7%. These projections seem like pretty modest improvements for this very critical component of Missouri's early learning system statewide. Why the state is not aiming for more providers with the

CDAs, a much better goal, is puzzling and not explained in the application. Currently, 43 higher education institutions offer early childhood courses and degree programs, but are not yet aligned with these new Core Competencies. Table D-2-d-1 shows that currently only one of these institutions is aligned with these Core Competencies, with only 100 individuals receiving early childhood credentials that are aligned with the Core Competencies. By 2015, the state proposes to move these numbers to 16 and 300, respectively. These do seem to be achievable goals, but not very ambitious for a 4 year period. Table D-2-d-1 also shows similar kinds of number for the Youth Development Credential (YDC) – 1 institution and 125 early childhood educators currently to 5 and 165, respectively, by 2015. It would have been helpful to know if the state has plans to target specific higher education institutions that train more early childhood educators, since that strategy would yield faster increases in newly trained workforce members, but this was not mentioned in the application. It does look like almost all of the main universities are already aligned with the Core Competencies (as noted in Table A-1-11, all but 2 of 41 institutions are so aligned, and they produced 929 early childhood educators with early learning credentials or degrees). In the application, there is no specific discussion of an infant/toddler credential, which is an important omission in the application.

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.</b>	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

#### Comments on (D)(2)

Missouri has a strong commitment to improving the quality of its early childhood workforce. For example, the state maintains a data system that shows all the professional development opportunities for the early childhood workforce, the Missouri Workshop Calendar. The registry lists approved workshops, has online registration for trainings, and keeps track of participation in those workshops. The application notes that in the past year, 1,123 training events were held across the state, voluntarily posted on the Missouri Workshop Calendar (but the numbers of providers attending is not noted in the proposal; probably not available due to limitations in data systems tracking such information). As another example, the state also provides financial incentives for early education professionals. The state has a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Missouri Scholarship to assist individuals to get early childhood training and degrees, with more than 1,900 early childhood professionals getting scholarships since 2000. This program has widespread support across the state, with 13 community colleges and 17 4-year colleges participating in it. Support for college, paying for substitutes and bonuses upon degree completion are also available from Child Care Aware of Missouri. The state also has a Training Quality and Assurance System (TQAS) implemented in September 2011 that is not well specified in the application. These are all good incentives. The plan for increasing workforce knowledge and skills involves three main strategies that are all reasonable. However, details about some of the specific steps and activities are not well described, which is a weakness of the reform plan. First, the state plans to significantly increase the number of training opportunities available across the state, many more than the 1,123 events held in the past year (e.g., increasing from 32 Basic Knowledge Curriculum trainings in fiscal year 2011 to 52 in fiscal year 2012; reaching 2,500 providers over the 4 year the grant). It is hard to know if these goals are ambitious without knowing the total number of providers statewide and how many attend events annually. Second, the state plans to develop and implement a number of web-based tools to support training of providers. For example, there is a new self-assessment tool that program directors and providers can use to see how well they are doing the Core Competencies and plan professional development activities well matched to needs. The state then proposes to use technology to provide other resources to link programs and providers to training opportunities (e.g. personal growth trajectory tool that individual can manages on a mobile device; job-embedded social networks; video library that will be available on mobile devices). These ideas show how the state is thinking innovatively about using technology to make ongoing learning opportunities available and fun for the early childhood workforce, a positive feature of their reform plan. The application contains a logic model for the state's plan for future work on workforce development (in an appendix – Attachment 29). While the state has been implementing many activities that are aimed at improving its early childhood workforce, the state does not yet have a unified comprehensive career development system, with

a workforce knowledge and competency framework that is intentionally linked to specific activities, training and TA plans that will upgrade the number of high-quality early educators and providers across all the differing early learning programs in the state. In the logic model, the state identified the following needs to be address in the grant: need more outreach to unregulated providers, including strategies to actually identify unregulated providers (a challenge in most states); need for more resources and technical assistance for programs and providers so that practices, policies, materials, and programs are designed in culturally appropriate ways; needs for professional development (PD) for providers who actually provide PD, including new materials to train them, and a need to get all of them listed in the Registry for Professional Development Providers, and a need to develop measures of participant outcomes; need to have a truly statewide PD system that is available to providers across all program types. These are all quite reasonable and necessary needs and goals, showing that the state is thinking about the early learning professional development system systemically and statewide. This is an important first step in creating a high-quality, statewide the early learning professional development system which should improve the early learning workforce and establish the infrastructure that will sustain high-quality PD in the future. While some strategies are described in the narrative and shown in the logic model (Attachment 29), the descriptions are somewhat general indicating early thinking about various issues. For example, under the category of financing, one strategy is "Find financing to equalize fiscal investments between early education and k-12 education", but it is really unclear how this would be done. On the other hand, other strategies that are identified seem more realistic and doable and specific (e.g., under Qualifications, Credentials, and Pathways, "Align pre-service competencies/courses across two- and four-year colleges/universities"). There also is no discussion of how the PD system will use coaches or mentors as an approach to upgrade the skills and knowledge of providers. Because this is one of the most promising evidence-based approaches to in-service PD, this seems like a significant omission. In summary, the proposed planned strategies and activities for workforce development and improvements contains a mixture of really good ideas and approaches with other more vague suggestions that may not lead to achievable improvements that are aimed for by the state. The data presented in Performance Measures Tables D-2-d-1 and D-2-d-2 about numbers of providers with credentials from institutions aligned with the core competencies framework are not very ambitious. As described in D1 earlier, Missouri has a long way to go to upgrade the skills and credentials of the early childhood workforce across the state. The target goals for increasing credentialing by 2015 seems not very ambitious at all – moving the number with the Type 1 Credential (the lowest level, that is not even a CDA) from 0% currently to 44% by 2015, moving the percentage with the Type 2 Credential (with a CDA) from 1.7% to 2.7%, and the Type 3 Credential (with an Associate's degree) from 3.2% to 3.7%. (But again, it should be noted that only 34% of the workforce is listed in the Registry, so the state really has little information on its workforce.) These projections seem like pretty modest improvements for this very critical component of Missouri's early learning system statewide. Why the state is not aiming for developing more providers with CDAs, a much better goal, is not justified or explained in the application. This represents a weakness in the reform plan.

#### E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.</b>	40	20
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;</p> <p>(b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: <b>Quality and Implementation</b>		
Comments on (E)(2)		

Currently, the state of Missouri does not have one coordinated centralized early learning data system. However, the application describes how Missouri has data on all the essential data elements in one or more of 19 different data systems (Attachment 35). What is also clear, however, is that for each database described and each program type described, for those individual databases, not all essential data elements are present. Furthermore, for many data sources, limited data are currently entered into the databases. For instance, data about early childhood educators contained in the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) Registry is a voluntary system with data on only 34% of the workforce for licensed programs only. The application states that individual child identifiers are available in some databases (for children in programs administered by Departments of Education, Social Services, Health and Senior Services or Mental Health, and that they can be match in 92% of cases across these state administrative databases. This is a very good start for coordinating data across the multiple databases housed in different state agencies that serve young children and their families. As for future plans, the application lays out a logic model for how the state is proposing to integrate and coordinate all of these databases (Attachment 33), with a diagram of the plan (Attachment 33). The intention is to work towards having a central data warehouse that would coordinate early learning data about workforce, program quality, child demographic and outcome data, and information about parent education and family support programs. Since the many different programs are administered by different state agencies currently, the proposed plan for creating a unified central statewide early learning data system will be an enormously complicated effort that will depend on strong state leadership and effective and enforceable agreements made over the course of the grant period in order for the plan to be executed effectively and successfully. The plan is quite ambitious, but specific details about how the coordination will actually be achieved over the next 4 years are somewhat vague. The state does propose to develop metadata (i.e., develop a set of common data standards that all state agencies will use in the future, with "standardized data elements, indicators, naming conventions, definitions, codes, and formats for improved data quality"). This is an essential first step on the goal of a statewide early learning data warehouse. The rest of the future plan is described as based on five principles centered on moving the current collection of data merely for meeting compliance requirements to getting data that will be useful for planning for individual children and programs, informing parents about children's progress, and informing improvement activities and decision making (at program, local community, and state levels). The principles identified are strong and should be effective for moving the plan to successful implementation. But here again, specific details about specific activities to be conducted are not well described in the application. There are some specifics in the logic model (Attachment 32). For instance, strategies mentioned include "building a job-embedded professional development platform that will allow teachers to find engaging and practical activities for children" – a feature that should be an incentive for teachers to enter accurate and timely data about child skills so they can effectively use this feature of the data system; "ensure uniform data collection and easy entry of Essential Data Elements by participating state agencies and participating programs" and "facilitating data exchanges..." – both of which are excellent goals; but without specific suggested activities to reach them, it is unclear how achievable these aspects of the data system are in 4 years. Based on experiences of many other states, building such a statewide coordinated data warehouse takes many years, and requires strong state level leadership and authority to require that data be collected universally, consistently, and in a timely manner. It also requires incentives, training, and technical assistance for local programs and providers to enter data correctly and universally, including resources and training for providers about how to use their own data so they both understand its value and use the data locally. These kinds of considerations are missing from the description of plans in the application, making readers wonder how realistic the proposed goals for this area are for the state to achieve in 4 years. The plan shows a broad vision, but without a detailed and credible plan.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>168</b>

#### Priorities

##### Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

The application sections in B show that the TQRIS in Missouri currently is implemented in very few licensed programs (section B2), and the state cannot possibly have all licensed and state-regulated program participating by 2015. The state only proposes to have about 40% of license and license-exempt programs participating by 2015 and 23% of family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) programs. Table B-2-c shows 2015 targets of 35% for state-funded preschool programs, 13% for IDEA special education preschool programs, and 23% for programs receiving CCDF funds. The state does not license programs that serve four or fewer children, but plans to develop a license for these programs that serve at least 2 children.

**Absolute Priority**

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p>	
<b>Comments on Absolute Priority</b>	
<p>Missouri's application clearly meets this absolute priority. Missouri's application lays out three broad foundational principles they use in working on the early learning system: 1) capacity, defined as human, organizational, structural, material, and political capacity; 2) collaboration which involves an integrated approach that is based on "mutual power, respect, and trust"; and 3) innovation which they state is shown in some of the proposed activities (e.g., a "technology-based solution that unifies data systems onto one common platform" (currently not in place at all). As described above for sections B, C, D, and E, the planned activities should result in more high needs children being served in high-quality early learning programs, more providers receiving appropriate training, more programs being rated and being of high-quality using the state's TQRIS. Specifically, for instance: (a) Missouri has a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), known as the Show me Quality for Kids, (copy in an appendix, Attachment 18) aimed at improving early learning program quality, raising awareness among the public about program quality, promoting access to high-quality programs for children receiving child care assistance, high needs children, and targeting limited resources to assist programs to improve their program quality to improve program quality, and plans to expand their use across the state. (b) Missouri has a set of early learning standards that spans from infants through preschoolers, divided into age ranges (birth to 8 months; 6-18 months; 16-36 months; and preschools), and plans to expand their use across the state. (c) Missouri has spent much effort in the past several years in developing newly revised Core Competencies for early educators (which were originally developed in 1999 in a bi-state collaboration with the state of Kansas). The state also has been working to align the competencies for early childhood with the entire progression of competencies through K12 (Missouri's Education Matrix). In the application, Missouri proposes to continue this development and implementation work across the state. (d) The application clearly demonstrates that Missouri's early learning system has a longstanding and strong commitment to supporting and educating families so they can support their young children, with a central role for families in their logic model for promoting early learning and developmental outcomes for Children (Attachment 1 – the overall early childhood state plan). Compared to some of the other features of Missouri's early learning system, this area of family engagement, particularly with families with high needs children, is a strength for Missouri. (e) Currently, the state of Missouri does not have one coordinated centralized early learning data system. However, the application describes how Missouri has data on all the essential data elements in one or more of 19 different data systems (Attachment 35), and has developed plans to develop one central early learning data warehouse, although the plan may not be fully achievable in 4 years.</p>	