



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # OH-5028

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support 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, 17. Includes detailed text about Ohio's investment in early learning and development programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

According to the documentation the state of Ohio has consistently shown care and interest in the learning and development of their young children. They report that they have 720,856 children under age 6, and 55 percent of those children, or 401,444, are considered Children with High Needs, based on their parent's economic status, the family's native language, or an identified delay or disability. Over the past five years they have invested nearly \$3.2 billion on early learning and development programs, an increased investment of State General Revenue Funds (GRF) each year. More than \$1 billion was invested to serve 202,601 children, roughly 50 percent of the State's Children with High Needs from birth through kindergarten entry. This shows that they are committed to investing in their young learners and dedicated to creating quality programs. However, there was a discrepancy in the number of children reported with high needs. The document reports that of the above mentioned funds, a spending amount of \$1,387 was for each child under the age of 6 and \$2,268 for each of the 440,771 considered Children with High Needs in the same age category. --The number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development programs has consistently increased over the past five years. The Child Care program has increased enrollment for infant, toddlers, and preschoolers by 11,418 children or an increase of 18 percent. Additionally, there was a steady increase in the number of Children with High Needs served in all their Early Learning systems. The Home Visiting program was redesigned to provide better services to fewer children and their families with evidence-based programming, so for that reason the numbers decreased. In addition to an increase in enrollment, in the past 2 years, the State of Ohio increased the number of high quality settings by 45 percent which resulted in an additional 4,475 Children with High Needs who have benefitted from high-quality services. --In Ohio's recent legislation, a bill was passed to create an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) that partners with the Governor, no matter who is in office. Ohio has developed a comprehensive Early Learning System that has all the necessary components for implementing a high-quality program for Children with High Needs entering Kindergarten ready. The state has a set of standards and guidelines that support the development of children birth - five, with all the Essential Domains of School Readiness. The infant and toddler guidelines were written by a team of experts, led by the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies. The Center developed the Program for Infant and Toddler Care (PITC), which is one of the leading evidence-based programs for infant and

toddler care. The state is using the PITC approach for its infant and toddler training and guidelines. The Infant and Toddler training comes with the possibility of a recognized credential. – Both the Infant & Toddler Guidelines and the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards (which include math, science, social studies, English language arts) reflect the continuum of development and the age-appropriate content that a child should be able to demonstrate throughout the early childhood years, beginning at infancy. Also, to further extend standards across the system, they have integrated them into the state's TORIS, Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) which is required as a condition of funding for the State Pre-kindergarten school program and for Preschool Special Education sites. – The rated programs in SUTQ, State Funded Preschool, Preschool Special Education programs, Part C, home visiting and early childhood mental health consultation programs are required to screen children using developmental, and social/emotional measures, such as, Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE). The State has chosen a highly recommended, evidence-based developmental screener that helps teachers and parents identify strengths and areas that may need additional support. This particular screening requires that parents and teachers are partners in the process. Parents learn about child developmental milestones and share with the teacher what they observe about their child. In addition to screening, State Funded Preschool and Preschool Special Education Programs are evaluated using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO). Programs rated through SUTQ use the environment rating scales Infant and Toddler Environmental Ratings Scale (ITERS), Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) and/or the ELLCO to assess classroom quality. The State of Ohio has chosen evaluation tools that are probably the most widely used tools for evaluating a learning environment. They are research based and have proven validity and reliability. The scales are suitable for use in evaluating inclusive and culturally diverse programs. They are based on process quality, which consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions.– Although all programs use some form of assessment not all programs are using a Comprehensive Assessment System.– The Workforce Professional Development is an intricate part of the Early Learning System. There are 26 credentials available to Ohio's early childhood workforce, all but four are provided by Ohio's postsecondary institutions or State agencies. Three of the Ohio certificates in Early Intervention address the birth to kindergarten entry age span. Postsecondary programs are aligned primarily with Early Childhood Teacher License with more than 24,000 individuals holding this license. The State currently has a defined core body of knowledge and competencies, a career lattice that defines levels of training and education, Professional Registry that enables verification of qualifications, specialized credentials and certificates, such as Infant/Toddler, Director, and School Age Professional and compensation and benefit initiatives that are linked to education and training accomplishments. – The Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) for Ohio are in alignment with two leading national organizations in the early childhood profession, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Council for Exceptional Children/ Division of Early Childhood. Using these Early Learning organizations standards and practices as a guide and link to their own CKC provides a foundation of support for recognizing that there are basic accepted concepts within the profession. This is a significant message about aligning standards with practice. In order for the CKC and standards to be recognized and implemented, Ohio's career lattice ensures that the Early Learning professionals all have a shared basic understanding of the various areas of early learning. What really strengthens this system is the ability to compensate and provide benefits to the staff, as well as, provide financial assistance to families. This is the hallmark of being able to provide and sustain high-quality care and programming for all children, especially Children with High Needs. When programs, teachers and providers can receive financial support for their programs, they do not have to pass the cost of supplies, equipment, furniture or other program needs on to the parents. Parents can feel confident about taking their child to a high-quality program at an affordable cost. – Seven of the twelve Ohio Early Learning Programs meet all the elements of high-quality health promotion practices; Health and safety requirements; Developmental, behavioral and sensory screening, referral and follow-up; Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits and Health literacy. – Family Involvement, at a minimum within the State, requires that parents receive accurate, timely, and comprehensive information about their child's routines, development and learning. Across the board the programs are providing this information. It appears that Ohio does view the parents as active partners in the development and support of their child's learning. This supports the research of parent involvement being a proven outcome of success for a child's learning. The State currently assesses children's literacy level for Kindergarten Entry. The State is currently capturing data from each of the Early Learning programs or systems. However, no one program is capturing all essential data and cross information is not accessible.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	18

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 plans to increase access to high quality early education experiences for more than 37,000 Children with High Needs by 2015. This includes increasing the number of highly rated TQRIS programs by nearly 1,300. As a result, the state will improve school readiness outcomes (literacy) by 5% for Children with High Needs. -- The milestones for increased access are (1)By 2013, every early learning and development program type will be eligible to participate in SUTQ, the TQRIS. (2)By 2014, an additional 22,000 Children with High Needs will have access to high quality experiences. (3)By 2015, the State will require all licensed and publicly funded programs to be rated. (4)By 2020, the State will require any program receiving State funds to be rated at the SUTQ highest tiers, which currently consists of three tiers.-- The milestones to increase quality are (1)By 2014, increase the number of highly rated programs available to Children with High Needs by more than 500.(2)By 2014, increase the number of rated programs available to Children with High Needs by 900.-- The milestones to close the readiness gap are (1)By 2014, improve school readiness outcomes by 3.0% (reduce the readiness gap on the KRA-L from 25% to 22%). (2)By 2014, launch statewide, the new kindergarten entry readiness assessment. (3)By 2015, improve school readiness outcomes by 5% (reduce the readiness gap on the KRA-L to 20%). (4)By 2015, include the kindergarten entry assessment results on the annual public school district report cards. The State of Ohio has identified ambitious goals that will significantly increase access to high-quality experiences for the children needing them the most. They have outlined goals and strategies that are ambitious, realistic yet achievable according to the projected timelines. Having all Early Learning programs licensed, monitored and given incentives will support the sustainment of high-quality programming. Teachers and providers who are serious about the work of Early Learning will take advantage of the professional development support needed to participate in the TQRIS, therefore increasing the quality of care based on knowledge, skills and abilities. A comprehensive definition of kindergarten readiness and measures of readiness across the domains of Early Learning, along with a comprehensive assessment system will provide an organized competent and cohesive approach to how young learners are viewed and supported in their development, thus decreasing the readiness gap. Providing the transparency will create a system of integrity and honesty that will encourage parents to seek quality care and promote the important work being done in Early Learning. Given their current status and credible path in Early Learning and Development they have a great foundation on which to build. Realizing that they have not in the past measured the other Essential Domains of School Readiness, the concern is their improvement seems to focus primarily on literacy. The State has a TQRIS system called Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) with a three tiered rating system. The system begins with the minimum State standards to operate a child care program and climbs to a higher standard of care and operation with the next two levels. This rating system requires smaller ratios, higher education, and more workforce benefits as the program increases in the system. The State provides incentives to support the rating system. This system ensures high quality programming. An effective TQRIS unifies the distinct sectors of the early care and education market into a coherent system; it provides a single mechanism to assess, improve, and communicate about the quality of services delivered for young children and their families. They will align their core competencies and knowledge framework with postsecondary coursework and degrees; distribute and provide training on a competency instructor guide; and develop recommendations for a streamlined progression of credentials and degrees for early childhood educators. The State also plans to expand its KRA-L to include the other essential domains of school readiness by collaborating with the State of Maryland to develop a comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment. In addition to developing this joint data system, they will build upon several existing data integration projects to build a strong early learning data system infrastructure that allows the State to track children in publicly funded early childhood programs, collect and report program quality data on all types of early learning and development programs, and to collect and report on child progress in publicly funded programs participating in Ohio's TQRIS. Being able to go to one place in a data system to acquire relevant information about program status, staff credentials, child progress and family information is an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving goals of tracking children readiness for Kindergarten entry. The State has chosen to respond to: (C)(1), Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. The State selected(C)(1) because they have progress on which to build and they understand that a set of fully aligned comprehensive standards are foundational to the accountable programs and assessment systems they seek to develop. (C)(2), Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessments Systems (CAS) The State's rationale is educators, policymakers, parents and the public need to know whether children are ready to fully engage in "formal learning". The State of Ohio chose (D)(1), Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and a progression of credentials. The State selected this focused investment area because they have a strong foundation to build on through their Core Knowledge and Competency framework. However, the system must be fully integrated and aligned with all professional development for the field, including teacher preparation opportunities. Promoting a competency framework throughout all systems and settings will drive all early learning and development programs to have a better understanding of what is needed to help families and support the development and learning of young children. (E)(1), Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. Although they use their 6 years of KRA-L assessment experience as part of their rationale, the KRA-L did not produce impressive results. Partnering with the State of Maryland, who apparently has had 10 years of success, and expanding the kindergarten entry assessment to reflect all domains of readiness will provide a more stable and comprehensive approach to Early Learning assessment. The new assessment will give teachers better information to develop instructional practices and more information to help understand the performance of early childhood programs. (E)(2), Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. The State will develop a coordinated early learning data system that is interoperable with Ohio's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), facilitate the exchange of data by using standard data formats and definitions, and provide the information necessary to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. All programs and systems are currently capturing some data or information for Children with High Needs.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

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 State of Ohio has developed a strong organizational structure with the Ohio Department of Education taking the lead and an Early Education and Development Officer functioning as the single point of accountability for early learning in the state. The Officer will have the authority to issue directives and make requests of participating agencies, as necessary, to accomplish reform agenda goals. There are 4 project teams and managers, made up from the 8 Participating Agencies, who will be responsible for ensuring that the State adheres to the timelines set forth in their reform agenda and that Participating Agencies fulfill individual scopes of work as described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The State has included an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and Early Education Development Innovation Committee (EEDIC) who will provide values and guidance from the private sector's perspective. The organization of the project seems strong in that it has included all stakeholders involved in the life of Children with High Needs. The ODE has appointed someone to serve on the project management team with an Educational Psychology degree. This individual currently serves as the Director of the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness. She has 17 years of experience in the field of pre-kindergarten through grade 12 education and has 15 years of experience managing projects. The ODJFS has appointed someone to serve on the project management team. This individual currently serves as Deputy Director of Child Care, and has more than 16 years of public policy and project management experience and holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations. She currently is responsible for setting early learning and development policy priorities for ODJFS, in implementing strategic investments to increase quality and promoting efficiencies through a data and payment system that improves performance and accountability. A senior staff member from each additional Participating Agency will be appointed to oversee implementation of his or her agency's scope of work. Progress toward intended outcomes will be reported to the Early Education and Development Officer. The Early Education and Development Officer will use the interagency project teams to process operational and policy decisions

impacting multiple agencies. These teams will use a consensus process to develop a recommended course of action on issues brought before them. The Officer will consider these recommendations when making final policy or operational decisions. Disputes among agencies concerning early learning policy or practice will be resolved by the Early Education and Development Officer. In the event that a Participating Agency disputes a decision made by the Officer, the dispute will be taken to the Director of the Governor's Office of 21st Century Education for final disposition. The Early Education and Development Officer will convene the the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), a geographically and ethnically diverse membership that represents the perspectives of foundations, early childhood advocacy groups, providers, parent and family groups, state and local school board representatives, county human service agencies, health care providers, and higher education, quarterly to share progress on the reform agenda, vet policy and operational considerations, and discuss issues brought forward by ECAC members. Members will lend their expertise to the four project teams focused on (1) assessment and standards; (2) professional development; (3) quality, access, and financing; and (4) family support and engagement. The Early Education and Development Innovation Committee comprised of two prominent Ohio businesses will (1) Mobilize business partnerships at the local level to achieve community and statewide kindergarten readiness goals, and (2) Bring private-sector tools and resources to early learning policies and practices to advance the goals outlined in the grant. Each participating agency has signed an MOU committing to agency participation and adherence to the governance structure outlined in the application. They have committed to additional agency-specific roles and resources needed, related to the implementation of grant activities. The State has 57 Letters of Support from Elected Officials, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Early Education Development and Business Stakeholders throughout the state. The State has secured a diverse group of stakeholders who are committed to the learning of young children and are who going to be very instrumental in helping to implement this statewide agenda.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	14

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 vast amount of funds totaling \$96,835,430 have been allocated already for the reform agenda that Ohio has proposed. Eight major funding sites have been identified. The State has provided an overall statewide budget through tables and narratives, that reflect total direct costs to include personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies contractual, training stipends, and other costs. The Funds are to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners. The mandatory participation amount for grantee technical assistance has been included. The total grant funds requested is \$69,993,362. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan are \$96,835,430. The total statewide budget is \$166,828,792. The State has also provided a further breakdown of the Budget Summary for each Participating Partner (PP) and Project that reflects the \$166,828,792 budget. Given the information for each PP and their responsibility, it appears that the budget is adequate and reflects the necessary activities needed to implement their High-Quality Plan. The areas allocated the most funds are the strength of the reform agenda; Professional Development Coordination which will align standards and curricula, evaluate the system and expenses associated with the English Language Learner Advisory Council implementation plan; the Ohio/Maryland joint assessment data system to support Pre-Kindergarten Formative Assessments and the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and the Re-engineering of the State's Licensing Database and TQRS; Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rating system, which will go from a three tiered system to a five tiered system. The request and allocations include 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. Many of the projects pertaining to the development of program and educational standards, assessments, professional development modules, formative instruction modules, and

data systems are one-time costs. The investment in these one-time tools and systems, and the activities associated with moving systems and processes online, will make ongoing maintenance and operation of systems more efficient and less expensive, enabling the State to sustain this work in the future. Participating agencies are committed to the reallocation and repurposing of existing resources to continue the early childhood education and development work outlined in this grant. Existing resources that will be leveraged for projects related to the RTT-ELC grant will continue both for RTT-ELC purposes and to support their related goals. For projects which require a new infusion of resources, demonstration projects and better data collection for making decisions will assist the State in making future decisions about how to target resources to ensure that Children with High Needs are receiving high-quality care and education. Seeing the level of commitment from past years and existing commitment, it seems reasonable that Ohio would continue to allocate funds for the maintenance and upkeep of their systems that drive the reform for Kindergarten Readiness Entry of Children with High Needs. Overall it appears that Ohio has thoughtfully considered the cost of establishing a bold and radical support system for the high-quality education of Children with High Needs. This system will solidify their current infrastructure and allow for the way Early Learning is conducted to be radically reformed.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9
<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"> (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; <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: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)
<p>The State's current TQRIS, called Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) is a statewide, three-tiered quality rating and improvement system. Currently, early learning and development programs that are eligible for participation include for-profit, nonprofit, Head Start and Early Head Start, faith-based, full-day, part-day, and large family child care homes, called Type-A homes, that are licensed to serve up to 12 children in the providers home. To date, 1,074 early learning and development programs have earned a SUTQ rating. This represents 25 percent of ODJFS eligible programs. SUTQ-rated programs serve nearly 28 percent of children that are enrolled in eligible programs. Of the 81,000 children (infant through school age) enrolled in SUTQ rated programs, nearly 36 percent (29,045 children) are Children with High Needs, with their enrollment supported in part by Ohio's publicly funded child care assistance program. The State of Ohio imbeds two early learning and development standards documents within SUTQ's Early Learning indicators. The documents are Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards. The Pre-kindergarten Content Standards (children age 3 years to kindergarten entry) are currently undergoing revisions to incorporate all domains of school readiness, (they currently only include Language and Cognitive). Along with the Early Learning and Development Standards, SUTQ incorporates the elements of a CAS as programs move to higher tiers and their Early Childhood Educators expand their knowledge and skills. The SUTQ Program Standards for administrator and teacher education qualifications demonstrate the progression of higher education requirements as programs advance to higher tier levels. The Family engagement strategies are currently embedded in two of the current SUTQ categories. Indicators in the Administrative Practices category require programs to conduct self-assessments using the Program Administration Scale (PAS). This provides a measure of overall program quality. Family Communication and Family Support and Involvement are two areas addressed in the PAS. Programs are required to complete a Quality Improvement Plan using the results of the annual self-assessment. Also, Health promotion practices are included in ODJFS licensing regulations. Programs must demonstrate compliance with these regulations in order to participate in SUTQ. These regulations include nutrition requirements, physical safety in the environment, medication administration, physical activity, prevention of communicable disease, first aid knowledge, child abuse recognition and prevention, and completion of an annual child medical by a health professional. And finally, the collection of data, both program level and child level, is required throughout the CAS. The SUTQ database and management system holds information about individual programs. This includes the program's current rating, rating history and provides information about attainment of indicators that are required in the next highest tier. This</p>

information assists the program in quality improvement planning. It provides a guide for identifying professional development and technical assistance needs that would help the program achieve the next higher tier. The SUTQ Program Standards are organized in clearly defined tiers of increasing quality based on nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children. The indicators at Tier 3 are aligned in essential areas with nationally recognized standards of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Head Start, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). SUTQ Program Standards are built on the foundation of ODJFS licensing requirements. The licensing requirements include environments and practices that promote health and safety and assure children are protected from harm. The SUTQ data base and management system are linked to the licensing data base. Violations of Serious Risk Non-Compliance rules of tier-rated programs are automatically provided to SUTQ staff so that appropriate sanctions can be immediately applied. The State has a High-Quality TQRIS in place with the intention to expand its excellence. This expansion plan will require all Early Learning programs participation in the SUTQ rating system, and provide access to 37,000 Children with High Needs. The current system is a great incentive for programs, teachers and providers. However, there isn't much difference between Tier 1 and 2. I believe the new TQRIS with the additional two tiers will provide a more differentiated rating system with higher standards.

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

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 State's 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 are two financial incentives available to programs participating in SUTQ to offset the higher costs associated with higher quality standards. All SUTQ rated programs receive an annual financial incentive for achieving or maintaining a Tier 1, 2, or 3 rating. This incentive, a Quality Achievement Award (QAA), helps to offset the cost of meeting the SUTQ program standards. The QAA is based on the program's tier level, total enrollment and the number of Children with High Needs. High needs are defined as children participating through CCDF funding. For example, the higher the rating, the larger the enrollment and the higher number of CCDF funded children; the greater the monetary incentive through QAA. The other incentive, monthly market-based reimbursements for CCDF-funded children are enhanced when programs achieve a SUTQ rating. The enhancement increases to a maximum of 19 percent at the Tier 3 level. The QAA, when coupled with the reimbursement enhancement, encourages programs serving CCDF-funded children to participate in SUTQ and achieve higher Tiers without passing on costs of higher quality care to families. ODE-funded programs targeting Children with High Needs do not require a family co-payment. The State will test the effectiveness of eliminating family co-payments for CCDF-funded children that enroll in the highest rated programs. The State provides care and learning to nearly 30,000 high-needs children in SUTQ-rated programs every day. This accomplishment is a result of focusing efforts on programs serving children through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). By expanding SUTQ to all programs, the State will increase the number of rated programs to 2,528 in 4 years, an increase of 1,454 programs. There are 1,074 currently rated ODJFS licensed programs, 1,010 of them enroll Children with High Needs children either through CCDF or Head Start funding streams. The State has appeared to set ambitious yet achievable targets for the programs that will participate in SUTQ. According to the baseline and annual targets along with the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs targets are realistic based on timing and phase-in process.

	Available	Score
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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 current SUTQ Rating and Monitoring System on-site verification process is based on the Federal Head Start Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM). The applicant does not specify that they are using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring. They have twelve monitoring staff that are experienced in licensing regulation and possess background in early childhood education and child development and conduct annual on-site verification visits. The applicant does not address their inter-rater reliability. The verification visits incorporate a three-pronged approach. (1) Direct observation of each classroom - monitors record observations of child/teacher interaction, teacher practices, materials in the classroom, and overall physical environment. The length of time spent in each classroom and the depth to which observations are recorded increases as the tier level increases. At Tier 1, the observation lasts approximately 15 minutes per classroom, and at Tier 3, it is a minimum of 30 minutes. Given the time of observations it does not seem that the monitor visits are happening at an appropriate amount of time for basic health and safety observation of the children. (2) Administrator and teacher interviews - the teacher interview is to provide monitoring staff with information about the teacher's curriculum planning and ongoing assessment process. Interview questions increase in detail as the tier level increases. The purpose of the administrator interview is to provide a clear understanding of the programs policies and systems that enable the program to meet and maintain the indicators in the SUTQ Program Standards. (3) Review of the written documentation - Programs are required to compile all written documentation needed for verification in an Evidence Portfolio. Once monitoring staff review and verify all required documentation and complete all classroom observations and interviews, they complete the SUTQ Verification Summary Report. This report is reviewed with the administrator during an exit interview and a copy of the report is provided. The time restraints based on tiers is not supported in any observation or monitoring assessment. Assessment rationale would be to observe longer in a less quality program for health and safety factors alone. While the State currently provides information to parents through various mediums, i.e., website, brochures, fact sheets from different agencies, they will revise its rating and monitoring system to make meaningful information about the progress of children available to parents. In addition, the State will create a single licensing system to ensure that all parents have consistent information across settings. The State has admittedly shared their own shortcomings concerning a system of rating and monitoring. The plan to improve should provide better practices.

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

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 State of Ohio provides currently rated programs with financial incentives and performance payments, professional development opportunities, scholarships and technical assistance to support each program's continuous improvement process. Ohio will maintain or increase the existing supports and target-specific supports to focus on increasing access to programs that have already met high-quality standards in SUTQ. Web-based professional development will be created to make training more readily available. To assist Tier 1 programs, for small family child care home providers and programs that are interested in becoming rated the availability of associate degree scholarships will be increased so that teachers and administrators can meet educational qualifications for highly rated programs. Technical assistance will be targeted to programs serving high concentrations of Children with High Needs in an effort to support achievement of higher tiers. Health promotion and early childhood mental health consultants will be available to support programs with their ability to meet revised SUTQ program standards and to facilitate the use of expanded early learning and development content standards for physical well being and health, social-emotional development and approaches to learning. Currently, rated programs offer families high-quality care in a variety of settings. Program types include full- and part-time programs operating both year round and partial year. Care also is available to families that work non-traditional hours, including evening and weekend hours. As small family child care homes are included in SUTQ, more nontraditional hour high-quality care will be available for working families. Many rated Head Start programs provide transportation to and from the facility, especially in rural areas, and additional family supports. Head Start programs often provide full-day or extended hours of care through CCDF for working families. Participation in Child and Adult Food Care Program (CAFPC) ensure that meals and snacks meet appropriate nutritional standards. Also, the State will create a pilot to encourage more families with Children with High Needs to choose high-quality care. The pilot will eliminate co-payments for CCDF funded child care when families choose a Tier 2 or Tier 3 program. The pilot will include families with low-incomes. The results will inform future co-payment policies. By 2015, the State plans to move 1,257 programs to the highest levels within the revised SUTQ tiers. As a result an additional 37,000 Children with High Needs will participate in high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for a total of 49,000 children. Over the course of this grant period, the state will be moving from a three-tier to a five-tier system. High-quality programs are currently defined as Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs. Once the five-tier system is implemented, Tiers 3, 4, and 5 will be considered high-quality. The current total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the Target-end of calendar the following years: Baseline - 1,074; (YR 2012 - 1,358)(YR 2013 - 1,643); (YR 2014 - 1,986) ; (YR 2015 - 2,528). 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 range between 4,711 and 7369 with a percentage of 12%-15%. Ohio's current system and plans for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the TQRIS is definitely a High-Quality Plan. The plan provides for financial assistance and performance payments that will encourage many to pursue a rated status. Not only are there funding incentives, but the overall program supports the workforce. The plan provides supportive services that will basically allow for all Early Learning programs to succeed and provide high-quality care using best practices. This plan can help to develop teachers, providers, administrators, parents and policymakers into effective advocates for all children, especially Children with High Needs.

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

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 State of Ohio engaged researchers at the Ohio Collaborative at OSU to provide an independent evaluation that began in 2005 and has included three separate reviews. The Ohio Collaborative is a research and policy analysis center committed to conducting and disseminating research that can improve schools and the lives of children and families. The first independent evaluation examined the following questions: "Is there a relationship between a SUTQ quality rating and quality as measured by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), and is there any relationship between the ECERS-R Subscales and differentiated SUTQ rating settings?" The ECERS-R data were gathered by external evaluators within the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system who were trained to reliability by the authors of the ECERS-R and their team. The CCR&R system maintained an inter-rater reliability system with guidelines for the frequency of checks after the completion of every 15 visits. The evaluation studied programs at all three levels of the rating system and programs that were in a "Getting Ready" category. Getting Ready programs could not be rated because of their licensing compliance history or because they were unable to meet all of the standards at Tier 1. The evaluation found significant differences between those achieving a tier level (1, 2, and 3) and those not achieving a tier level. Additionally at each increased tier level, higher ECERS-R scores were earned by the participating programs, thereby validating the appropriate graduation of Ohio's standards across tier levels. As SUTQ expanded statewide, the focus of the second external evaluation was to begin examining the relationship between child outcomes and star ratings. The Ohio Collaborative research team used questionnaires to gather information on

the characteristics of participating administrators, teachers, and children (via parent reports). A small subset of classrooms (28) were assessed by the research team using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tool and a small subset of children in those classrooms (138) were assessed using Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)-PreK; Test of Early Mathematics Ability-Third Edition (TEMA-3); Test of Language Development, Fourth Edition (TOLD-4); and Get It, Got It, Go! (GGG). Children in these programs with tier ratings of 2 and 3 scored higher on the various outcome measures than children in Tier 1 programs. These findings were consistent across literacy and social/emotional development with scores on some measures reaching statistical significance. In the subsample of observed programs, Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs had consistently higher ELLCO classroom environment scores than programs with Tier 1 ratings. The third independent evaluation of SUTQ was completed in 2011. The primary question was, "To what extent are SUTQ ratings associated with teacher instructional practices and children's social, behavioral, and pre-academic skills?" Two teachers and five children from each classroom in 36 randomly selected SUTQ rated programs (12 at each of the three quality rating tiers) were assessed by researchers from the Ohio Collaborative, controlling for family characteristics and children's age, gender, and race. Children in Tier 3 Programs performed better on measures of literacy and math based on standardized tools and exhibited fewer problem behaviors based on teacher reports. After reviewing the State's TQRIS, tier 3 programs have a smaller teacher: child ratio than tier one. Based on this alone, research supports that children perform better in smaller group sizes. Therefore, the findings would be consistent with current research. Data collected through these evaluations indicates that the trajectory of child outcomes are consistent with nationally recognized standards for school readiness.

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
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	25
<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>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)
<p>Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards are incorporated into Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. The State of Ohio High-Quality Plan to improve child outcomes for all children, especially Children with High Needs is developing and implementing early learning and development standards in the Essential Domains of school readiness which are not addressed in their current State system. The Infant and Toddler Guidelines address all essential domains of school readiness and the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards address English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. As a whole, the Early Learning and Development Standards reflect broad, developmentally appropriate learning goals for children from birth to kindergarten entry. According to the State, the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards and Infant and Toddler Guidelines reflected in these documents</p>

encompass concepts and skills that may be achieved by all children with a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with disabilities. Therefore, each standard statement is flexible enough that teachers and caregivers may adjust the curriculum to include culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate experiences that support learning for all children. The Infant and Toddler Guidelines are incorporated into the Standards of Care and Teaching for Ohio's Infants and Toddlers. In addition, Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards are incorporated into program standards for preschool and child care programs, including the Ohio Early Learning Program Guidelines (ELPG) and the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ: Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System) standards. Programs are required to adopt an evidence-and research-based, comprehensive curriculum that includes goals for motor, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development and general knowledge and skills development, and is aligned to the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards. Alignment at the local level is demonstrated by programs' completion and submission of the Standards-Curriculum-Assessment-Alignment Tool. In order to support alignment and implementation of the adopted curriculum, Ohio's Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards in all content areas are accompanied by a Model Curriculum. The Model Curriculum is a Web-based tool that will be revised as new research and resources become available to ensure that early childhood teachers provide high quality instruction for all children. The State's existing Comprehensive Assessment System includes screening measures, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality, and measures of the quality of adult-child interactions. All publicly funded and SUTQ three-star-rated programs must demonstrate alignment to the content standards and assess children systematically using both formal and informal methods to inform intentional instruction and monitor progress in all developmental domains. Teachers and caregivers in publicly funded and SUTQ star-rated programs are currently required to participate in approved professional development of the Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards geared toward the ages of the children they serve. The State has regional providers who offer a number of existing professional development opportunities that are aligned with the standards, including child care resource and referral agencies and State Support Team early childhood personnel. State-funded prekindergarten and SUTQ-rated program teachers are required to participate in 20 hours, every 2 years, of approved professional development that focuses on the content standards. The overall plan addresses each of the criteria and provides a plan for extending the Standards across the state. However, the standards to address the culturally and linguistically appropriate practices are vague. The Standards must acknowledge the importance of diverse cultures and languages in order for the Workforce to provide high-quality care for Children with High Needs. Providing a blanket statement that the Standards are flexible enough that each Early Childhood Educator can adapt their program to meet the requirement is not enough. Many Early Childhood Educators don't know what developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate means.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	30	25

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

- (a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;
- (b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;
- (c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and
- (d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

The State will build upon their existing Comprehensive Assessment System for Early Learning and Development programs for Children with High Needs, ages birth to kindergarten entry, by collaborating with the State of Maryland on the development of: 1. A new Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessment System. 2. A Kindergarten Entry Assessment. 3. A technology framework to provide online supports and tools to teachers. 4. Professional development to support the administration and use of assessment tools. The cross-State collaboration for formative assessments will be required for all publicly funded programs participating in SUTQ in order to ensure that Ohio collects comprehensive child assessment information for Children with High Needs 36 to 60 months and can examine the relationship between quality of programs and child outcomes. The formative assessment will extend beyond early learning from age 60 to 72 months and can be used by teachers of kindergarten students throughout the kindergarten year. By 2014-2015, the newly developed Kindergarten Entry Assessment will be required by all public districts and community schools and will replace the existing Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. The State will develop formative instruction modules to promote data-driven instruction of children from birth to kindergarten entry, as well as establish a comprehensive State-level Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development System for Early Childhood Educators that supports and promotes data-driven instruction. Most of Ohio's Early Learning and Development programs, birth to kindergarten entry, are required to screen children in health and developmental areas within 45 to 60 days of entering the programs. Health screening requirements include height, weight, vision, hearing, dental, lead, and hemoglobin. Developmental screening requirements include speech/language, cognitive, gross/fine motor, and social/emotional/behavioral areas. At kindergarten entry, Ohio requires that children be screened in health and

developmental areas, including the recently mandated Body Mass Index (BMI) screening. State-funded public district preschool programs and home visiting programs are required to use the Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) each year, and up to twice yearly for children with disabilities, ages birth to 5 years. ASQ:SE results are reported to the State, allowing analysis of results at the district and State levels. Most programs are required to refer children for additional assessment or services by appropriate professionals in health and developmental areas based on the screening results within 45 to 90 days of the screening. Formative Assessments State-funded programs in public district preschools are required to use and report the results of the Get It, Got It, Go (language and literacy progress monitoring tool) twice yearly, while Early Intervention Part C IDEA programs are required to use the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, Battelle Developmental Inventory, Early Learning Accomplishment Profile, Hawaii Early Learning Profile, and Assessment Evaluation and Programming System tools for initial and ongoing assessment of children's development. SUTQ, Head Start, and Early Head Start, are required to use research-based formal and informal assessment tools, but programs have the option to select which tools to use. Ohio's Part B and C of IDEA programs (preschool special education and early intervention) are required to use the Early Childhood Outcomes Summary Form (ECOSF) twice yearly (fall and spring) to document the progress of children with disabilities in each of three categories (Positive Social and Emotional Skills, Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills, and Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs). The ECOSF results for children in Parts B and C of IDEA are reported to the state. Curriculum-embedded performance measures are required to be used in an ongoing fashion for most Early Learning and Development programs. Curriculum embedded performance measures must be aligned with the Early Learning and Development standards, research-based, and comprehensive. Finally, the KRA-L is required to be administered to all kindergarten students annually and informs teachers of the status of children's language and literacy skills at kindergarten entry. Measures of Environmental Quality State funded programs in public district preschools are required to conduct annual teacher observations, which may include the use of Measures of Environmental Quality, such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). In addition, Step 2 and Step 3 programs in SUTQ are required to complete a self-assessment using the Environmental Rating Scale appropriate to the age groups addressed. Home visiting programs also use the Home Observation Measure of the Environment and Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training Checklist. Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions State-funded programs in public district preschools and SUTQ Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs are required to engage in an annual self-assessment process. This includes use of tools such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation tool (ELLCO), where programs are required to observe early childhood educators within their own programs.

1. The State of Ohio will collaborate with the State of Maryland on: a. Development of a Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessment for children 36 to 72 months of age, and a new Kindergarten Entry Assessment that will include all essential domains of school readiness (includes social-emotional development, approaches to learning, physical development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts). b. Development and implementation of professional development on the administration and use of the assessment. c. Development of a technology framework and infrastructure to support the ongoing tools and supports for the Formative Assessments and Kindergarten Entry Assessment.
2. Research and recommend the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and the CLASS for measures of environmental quality and quality of adult-child interactions respectively as part of SUTQ verification process for determining quality ratings.
3. Expand and refine formative instruction modules for early childhood educators of children, birth to kindergarten entry, to promote use of data-driven instruction.
4. Create a Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development Support System (BKPDS) to build the capacity of early childhood educators in the areas of standards, assessment, and formative instruction.
5. Create an early childhood ELL advisory group to research and make recommendations particularly around assessment and use of assessment to inform instruction for ELL students, and create professional development through the BKPDS that addresses the needs of young ELL students. Modifications to the CAS will include the requirement that all publicly funded early learning and development programs participating in SUTQ will use the formative assessment developed in collaboration with Maryland for ages 36 to 60 months. The State of Ohio will provide professional development that will include assistance for educators in using the following criteria to select tools: understanding of assessment purposes matched to intended use; identification of the population for which the assessment is specified (addressing the State's Children with High Needs children in particular); assessing technical adequacy to ensure that results are reliable, valid, and fair; and understanding the administration, scoring, and use of results. To address this area of professional development along with support for standards and effective use of assessment, there will also be a focus on the Birth-Kindergarten Professional Development System (BKPDS) to build the capacity of early childhood educators. Mental Health Consultants, to promote social-emotional development through standards and assessment from birth to kindergarten entry as well as, Health Promotion Consultants (to promote physical well-being and health through standards and assessment from birth to kindergarten entry). In addition, the ELL advisory group would make recommendations to the State of Ohio regarding appropriate tools and approaches for assessment of ELL children. These recommendations would be incorporated into professional development programs that would be developed and delivered by a small group of State experts in instruction for young ELL children. For screening measures, the BKPDS will provide information and training on the purposes and uses of screening tools in the required domains for health and developmental areas within the first 45 to 60 days of entrance into the program. For the formative assessments being developed in collaboration with Maryland, both States will collaborate to develop professional development for understanding and using the new Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessments and the Kindergarten Entry Assessments. Both States will work together to develop the professional development that certifies the reliability of educators' administration of the assessments. Training on the use of the new formative assessments will begin in spring of 2014 for early childhood educators of publicly funded programs in SUTQ. For measures of environmental quality and quality of adult-child interactions as part of the SUTQ protocol for verification, Ohio's High-Quality Plan for Supporting Comprehensive Standards and Assessments includes a component to provide training for state staff and regional professional development providers on the use of ERS and CLASS for verification, validation, and technical assistance. Throughout its professional development system, Ohio will incorporate face-to-face training, as well as a flexible assortment of technology-supported, Web-accessible tools to support training. Key components of the professional development and training system are as follows: Use of train-the-trainers model, Development of Web-based training, Development and distribution of online information resources (and/or DVD resources for rural areas with limited broadband access), Implementation of ongoing coaching and technical assistance. An early childhood ELL advisory group will be convened beginning in Year 1 of the grant and continue to Year 4 to particularly focus on assessment of and use of assessments for support of young ELL students in the classroom. The BKPDS will use the recommendations to develop professional development focused on assessment to address the needs of ELL students. The formative assessments for 36 to 60 months will be

required of all programs participating in SUTQ. The BKPDS will facilitate the coordination and alignment of a seamless professional development and support network that promotes vertical alignment from birth to kindergarten entry. Data systems linked to their State Longitudinal Data System will facilitate the collection and reporting of formative assessment results across all types of Early Learning and Development programs. The ability to assign a unique identifier through their new Child Link System will allow State agencies to determine where children received high-quality services and how those services related to child outcomes, as well as performance on the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. It will also capture duplication of services, and recommend a process for sharing assessment and screening results across programs. The ability to link child-level information across State agencies, as well as to the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, as part of its State Longitudinal Data System will assist Ohio in targeting supports for Children with High Needs.

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
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	30

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)

Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) meet the required elements for Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; It is evidence-based, incorporates knowledge and application of Early Learning & Development Standards(Birth-K), is appropriate for each age group, ELL and children with disabilities or delays. It contains all essential domains of school readiness, and universally designed and developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate. It also incorporates child development, child health, early math and literacy, effective use of data to guide instruction and program improvement, and behavior management strategies that promote positive social emotional development and reduce challenging behaviors. It incorporates feedback from experts at the State's postsecondary institutions as well as feedback from other early learning and development experts and early childhood educators. It is the State's foundation for the preparation and ongoing professional development of Ohio's early childhood educators, designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes. It is a collaborative framework, developed under the leadership of the Division of Child Care, ODJFS, Ohio Head Start Collaboration Project in the ODE and the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association. Writing teams were comprised of teachers and administrators from all types of early childhood settings including home visiting programs, postsecondary education representatives, varied health and mental health professionals, community-based professional development providers and state agencies. The CKC supports Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Ohio's Pre-kindergarten Content Standards. There are 6 content areas with specific competencies listed in three progressive levels of mastery. The content areas are: (1) child growth and development; (2) family and community relations; (3) health, safety, and nutrition; (4) child observation and assessment; (5) professional development; and (6) learning experiences and environments. It is closely aligned to three primary source documents: 1. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria 2. Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC's Standards for Initial Licensure, Advanced, and Associate Degree Programs 3. Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education -- Development of a Common, Statewide Progression of Credentials and Degrees Aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Ohio will create a streamlined statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with Ohio CKC for the birth to age 5 education workforce. Ohio will undertake this work through a collaborative process led by the Division of Child Care ODJFS in partnership with the Ohio Board of Regents and the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness ODE. A private contractor will be selected to manage and implement the activities. Additional partners will include the Ohio Departments of Health, Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health. Key stakeholders will include but not be limited to 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education, the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc., Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children, and Ohio's funded providers of ongoing professional development. National experts will be incorporated in the review and broad early childhood stakeholder input will be included through opportunities for comment posted on the Build-Ohio website. Work plans will be developed based on adopted recommendations with implementation by 2015. Ohio's Professional Development Network (OPDN.org) houses Ohio's Web-based center

for professional development aligned with Ohio CKC. Through OPDN.org, professionals can search for and register for professional development opportunities that designate the primary Ohio CKC area that is addressed in the professional development opportunity. Ohio's state-funded professional development providers currently use the site. Additional professional development opportunities include, 1. State-funded, Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) and regional agencies create and provide standardized professional development on all Ohio CKC content areas Child care and preschool programs licensed by ODJFS and family child care providers. 2. State-funded, Quality Network at The Ohio State University create and deliver professional development on Pre-kindergarten Content Standards Preschool programs licensed by ODE. 3. State-funded Regional State Support Teams create and deliver professional development on Pre-kindergarten Content Standards and special education Preschool programs licensed by ODE and special education teacher under IDEA. 4. Ohio Head Start Association, Inc. which is not state-funded facilitate the delivery of professional development Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. 5. Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC), which is not state-funded, facilitate the delivery of professional development to OAEYC members. The State of Ohio has a complex system of early childhood educator preparation. There are 22 state-level credentials and 68 postsecondary institutions that impact the early childhood education workforce. However, only some of the postsecondary institutions align with Ohio CKC, for which the extent of alignment, especially with bachelor's degree programs, is not clear. The State will focus its work on aligning degrees and credentials with Ohio CKC and imbedding this foundation in postsecondary institutions. A Professional Development Project Team, led by the Early Education and Development Officer, will work with a core team of state agency representatives and key stakeholders to: 1. Examine the alignment of existing credentials and degrees with Ohio CKC. 2. Conduct research on systems in other states. 3. Draft recommendations. 4. Secure review by national experts. 5. Gather input from stakeholders. 6. Make final recommendations to be implemented over the final 2 years of the grant. A contractor with expertise in Ohio CKC and cross-sector knowledge of the birth to kindergarten education field will manage this project in conjunction with the Division of Child Care, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Activities will include: 1. Promoting and distributing copies of Ohio CKC. 2. Convening postsecondary early childhood education faculty and statewide professional development providers. 3. Developing bridging documents. 4. Increasing the number of professional development providers by posting opportunities on OPDN.org. 5. Providing training on The Ohio CKC Instructor Guide. Ohio CKC will function as the common base of early childhood education professional preparation in Ohio. Although, Representatives of both 2 and 4 year postsecondary institutions participated in the development of Ohio CKC. A survey of all appropriate postsecondary institutions was conducted by OCCRRA in 2007 to assess initial alignment of their programs with the completed Ohio CKC. Few responses were received. The State believes that this grant will provide an opportunity to re-visit and engage both types of postsecondary institutions.

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
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	20
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant. (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (E)(1)		

The new Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) that Ohio will develop in collaboration with Maryland will be administered for all of Ohio's kindergarten students beginning in fall 2014. Immediately following the RTT-ELC grant award, Ohio and Maryland will initiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of each state, contribution of funding, and formal procurement arrangements. Each state has requested the full amount of funding needed to implement the CAS including the KEA. However, should both states receive the RTT-ELC grant, each state commits to renegotiating and redirecting the funding for the CAS to support expanded professional development, technology infrastructure, and expansion to other states to participate in the collaboration. Ohio currently has early learning and development standards for pre-kindergarten in four core academic content areas: English language arts; mathematics; social studies; and science. The State plans to expand the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten through grade 3 academic content standards during fall 2011 and winter 2012 to include approaches to learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being and health. The new KEA will be developed based on Ohio's and Maryland's standards in these areas. During year one of the grant, the State of Ohio will collaborate with the State of Maryland to develop the assessment framework, item prototypes, test items and performance tasks, and scoring guides based on the pre-kindergarten content standards within each state. The two states will identify content standards and indicators that are common and most related to later academic success. Each state will convene teacher committees and content experts within their respective states to provide input on the selections and priorities related to items and performance tasks. National subject matter experts, psychometricians, and early childhood assessment experts will be part of the process for item selection, benchmarking, and validation of the assessments, for the purpose of establishing reliability and validity evidence for the new KEA for its population of kindergarten students, including ELL and students with disabilities. Ohio will follow its standard process for engaging a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Fairness and Sensitivity Committee and ad hoc committees. ODE and Maryland early childhood and assessment leaders, as well as the assessment contractor, will engage their respective states' TAC to discuss the assessment development project and the needs for assessment of young and diverse learners. Ohio and the assessment contractor representing Ohio and Maryland will meet with the TAC to present assessment forms, approaches to development, and results of pilot studies to receive feedback. The fairness and sensitivity review uses procedures and processes that provide evidence to build a case that the assessments are fair and valid for their intended purpose and populations including young children, ELL, and students with disabilities. The fairness and sensitivity committee is a representative group of stakeholders and in the case of the KEA, the group of stakeholders will include early childhood representatives and early childhood content experts in the essential domains of school readiness. The ad hoc committees will be convened and used to provide input on the assessment as needed. During years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, Ohio will continue statewide administration of the KRA-L during the development phase of the KEA. During 2013-2014, there will not be a statewide administration of the KRA-L and the new KEA will be administered as part of a field test to a stratified random sample of Ohio kindergarten students. Kindergarten teachers selected for the sample will receive professional development on the administration procedures for the assessment. The sample will be designed to be sufficiently powerful for establishing benchmarks and a year 1 baseline before statewide administration to all entering kindergarten students during fall 2014. The State of Ohio will work with the State of Maryland to establish a certification process as part of the assessment training to ensure that teachers are prepared to reliably administer the assessment. By connecting the KEA to formative assessments from pre-kindergarten through kindergarten teachers will be able to see developmental progression of children to best identify instructional needs for children at, below and above age-expectations. The new technology framework will facilitate kindergarten teachers being able to report results of the KEA to families and will include a set of strategies that families can use to support their child's learning experiences based on the individual results of the child. New KEA and Reporting to State Longitudinal Data System All individual students' scores in the new KEA will be submitted to ODE via Ohio's EMIS and associated with the student's SSID which is assigned to and follows all students in public and community (i.e., charter schools) schools from prekindergarten through grade 12. The SSID is also linked and assigned to students in public postsecondary institutions and children participating in early intervention or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The KEA results will also be linked to children in publicly funded programs, as well as those children participating in programs rated as part of Ohio's SUTQ System. This will include programs funded through subsidized child care, family child care programs participating in SUTQ, preschool special education programs, Early Childhood Education program (Ohio's pre-kindergarten program), Head Start and Early Head Start programs participating in SUTQ, and Part C Early Intervention programs. In Year 1 of the RTT-ELC, the State of Ohio will develop legislation with the support of the Governor's office, ODE and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to permit children in publicly funded early childhood programs to access the SSID. The ability to link children's KEA scores to the experiences children had prior to kindergarten entry will permit Ohio's programs to target and focus on Children with High Needs by analyzing results based on demographic characteristics, location of the state, and prior early childhood program experiences. A majority of the funding for the development of the new KEA in Ohio will come from the \$1 million in existing Race to the Top funds. The State of Maryland plans to commit \$500,000 per year of the grant from its Hoyer grant funding to the development of the KEA. Both States of Ohio and Maryland commit to involving representatives in their respective early childhood offices from their state departments of education, business communities, and Governor's offices in the collaboration. Ohio will continue to support the assessment through its annual General Revenue Funds. Ohio will leverage the technology of the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) that is being developed through existing Race to the Top funding. The IIS includes technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement. The Ohio-developed IIS will be leveraged to provide tools, strategies, and professional development in support of the implementation of the KEA.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	20

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 existing SLDS has enabled the creation of interactive report cards and customizable reports on local education agencies and school buildings. The existence of a unique statewide student identifier has allowed Ohio to calculate longitudinal graduation rates, develop student growth measures, and produce teacher-level value-added reports. Ohio already has the funding over the next 3 years to enhance its SLDS with the following: 1. The implementation of nationally recognized data structures, data formats and data definitions to electronically share data between public educational entities. 2. The expansion of the P-12 unique student identifier to Higher Education. The creation of a P-20 repository-access governance structure 3. The consolidation of data tools and access through a streamlined portal. 4. The development of an Education Research Center. 5. The development of an Instructional Improvement System (IIS). Early learning and development programs and services are administered by multiple state agencies in Ohio, and each of these agencies manages its own set of related data systems for workforce, program, and child-level data. The State collects and maintains all of the essential data elements, which they will build upon to ensure a coordinated early childhood data system. Ohio has a unique identifier that enables the linkage of publicly funded preschool programs in public districts and Help Me Grow (Part C IDEA) program children to the SLDS. Ohio does not have a method to link child data on the other programs serving children ages 0 to 5 in publicly funded non-public school settings (i.e., child care, family child care, Head Start). However, other State agency systems maintain their own unique child identifiers for children in their funded programs. Ohio maintains a unique identifier for all teachers licensed in Ohio and working in public school districts. In addition, the Ohio Professional Development Registry maintains a separate unique identifier for early childhood education professionals registered in the system. They also maintain unique site identifiers within separate State agencies, particularly the systems that license public district preschools and child care providers in the State. All State agencies maintain child and family demographic information in their separate systems. Early Childhood Educator demographic information (including data on educational attainment, state credential or licenses held, professional development). Ohio maintains this information in separate state agencies by programs including public district preschool teachers and early childhood educators in all types of programs. Program-level data on program's structure, quality, child suspension and expulsion rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, TQRIS data Ohio maintains some of this information separately by State agency including the Education Management Information System (EMIS) for preschool to grade 12, as well as the Ohio Educational Directory System. Program level information for child care programs is maintained in the SUTQ data system, CCIDS, and Ohio Professional Development registry. Child-level program participation and attendance Ohio maintains this information in EMIS for P-12 students, child care information is maintained through a new swipe card system, and child information for Help Me Grow and Part C Early Intervention is maintained through the Early Track System. As part of an existing project funded by Ohio's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 SLDS Grant, Ohio will engage a vendor by December 2011 to develop a plan and set of recommendations for the development of a coordinated early childhood data system enabling data linkages and sharing across the six state agencies identified as providing early childhood programs and services (Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Department of Developmental Disabilities, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services). Although, Ohio has a unique identifier for publicly funded preschool programs, the Help Me Grow Program (Part C IDEA), K-12, and higher education, currently there is not a method or unique identifier to link these data to child data from other programs in other State agencies, such as child care and family child care. The State agencies maintain all of the essential data elements, but not in a uniform way across agencies. Additionally, there is a lack of common data standards and definitions for exchanging information between agencies. However, two existing initiatives in Ohio have begun to address these deficiencies and to start building the foundation for a coordinated early childhood data system that will be interoperable with Ohio's SLDS. These initiatives facilitate the exchange of data among State agencies and promote standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions. The project includes \$1.1 million total in the ARRA SLDS grant for Early Childhood Data Systems. Approximately \$500,000 of that will be spent to develop the early childhood data integration plan and the remaining funding will be available for implementation of the plan upon approval by the USDOE. There are three projects designed to generate 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; the first is the Child Link System. Ohio has prioritized the need to identify and link all children participating in publicly funded early learning and development programs to children taking the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. This linkage will facilitate the ability for early learning data systems housed in State agencies to be linked to the SLDS. The goal of the Child Link System will be to enable each State agency to engage in data sharing via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to share child-level data. The second project will expand and

re-engineer its current Access database to make it Web-based and accessible to ODE and family child care programs. The modification will include a Web portal for ODE to enter information and includes a reporting mechanism to include all types of early learning and development programs. The goal of this system will be to have a public reporting mechanism that reports on the licensing and quality of all types of programs, and that links child assessment information to both early learning and development programs, as well as data from the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The third plan is to develop a Web-based application to collect child-level formative assessment data for early learning and development programs rated in SUTQ. The Early Learning Child Assessment System will be used to capture the child-level assessment data for programs rated in SUTQ that are licensed by ODJFS. Using the Child Link System, individual child assessment results will be linked across ODE and ODJFS to establish a common report that can also be linked to the SLDS. Each of the individual Ohio agencies have data governance policies in place. However, an enterprise data governance policy will be implemented for the coordinated early childhood data systems as part of this project in collaboration with the OEDS project. Section 1347.15 of the Ohio Revised Code requires each State agency to adopt rules related to accessing confidential personal information and mandates the following: the director of the State agency will designate an employee of the State agency to serve as the data privacy point of contact within the State agency to work with the chief privacy officer within the OIT to ensure that confidential personal information is properly protected and that the state agency complies with this section and rules adopted thereunder. The State submitted a copy of Section 1347 of the Ohio Revised Code.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	247

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

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

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)
Ohio does not currently require licensing for settings that provide care and learning to six or fewer children. However, there is a certification process for family child care homes that are interested in providing services to children participating in the publicly funded child care program. The certification records and compliance histories are held at the local level by the agencies, county Departments of Job and Family Services, that issue the certification and complete the onsite monitoring. Finally, by pursuing licensing for these providers the State of Ohio will have information on the quality of these family child care homes. Over the next year, Ohio will pursue a statutory change that will bring more than 6,600 small family child care homes into the licensing system. These small family child care homes, which serve publicly funded children, will move from a certification to a licensing system and will be monitored by county Departments of Job and Family Services. A position will be created within the ODJFS to provide quality assurance that licensing is implemented consistently. This person will be responsible for assuring that a high level of inter-rater reliability is maintained among the county staff in charge of monitoring for licensing compliance. SUTQ will also be expanded within 2 years to include newly licensed small family child care homes. The SUTQ standards will be revised to include program standards inclusive of both small and large family child care programs.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (F)(3)

Ohio addressed E1 receiving a score of at least 70 percent.

Absolute Priority

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

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

Ohio has demonstrated how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by developing a comprehensive and coherent program designed for Children with High Needs to enter Kindergarten ready. They have joined together several public and private entities to support the effort, to include state collaboration with Maryland. By bringing in Participating State Agencies they will be able to garner resources and information needed to create a successful Kindergarten Entry Assessment program. The major components of Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and Measuring Outcomes and Progress were effectively addressed with realistic plans. The State will develop and implement early learning and development standards in three Essential Domains of School Readiness not currently addressed by their Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards birth through kindergarten entry and grades kindergarten through 3: (1) social-emotional development; (2) physical well-being and health; and (3) approaches toward learning, and to provide Professional Development to support all standards from Birth to Kindergarten Entry. Their collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education will expand and refine its formative assessment system so that it (1) generates regular, reliable and valid information on all domains of school readiness for ages 36 to 72 months, and (2) produces reports that are useful to families, early childhood educators, and policy makers for supporting the development and progress of children, especially Children with High Needs. They will train state staff and professional development providers on the use of measures of environmental quality and measures of the quality of adult-child interactions as part of the Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) verification and validation system. And lastly, they will provide critical supports through the creation of a Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development System (BKPDS) for Early Childhood Educators to focus on improving school readiness in all essential domains of readiness by focusing on standards and use of assessment. The plan to create a streamlined progression of credentials and degrees aligned with Ohio Core Knowledge Competencies will ensure that the birth to kindergarten entry education workforce has the core knowledge and competencies necessary to support young children's growth, development, and learning and to improve child outcomes. The expansion of their SUTQ will also, support the professional development of the workforce. A huge financial burden will be lifted and allow for teachers and providers to re-invest in themselves without having to raise the cost of fees for parents. Parents can feel secure in knowing that their child will be receiving high-quality care at an affordable rate. Creating an authentic assessment system where teachers will be trained on how to use the tools will provide valid and reliable data that can be used for preparation of intentional instruction for Children with High Needs. This documentation will help to scaffold their learning with more accuracy and result in better child outcomes as they are aligned with standards. Also, the plan to provide a common database to track the early learning experiences for Kindergarten Entry is huge. Creating a system of accountability from early care educators will support families in receiving pertinent information about their child's growth and development. Kindergarten teachers will have a full understanding of the status of the child's learning and development. All agencies that have anything to do with the child will be able to have access of relevant information that will provide a snapshot for best practices and care of the child.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OH-5028

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: **Reviewed**
Date/Time: 11/15/2011 - 12:37 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
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	19
<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)

Ohio's past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs from 2007 - 2011 include: -- • Financial - The State's financial investment in Early Learning and Development flowed and ebbed between 2007 and 2011. State funding peaked in 2009 with a substantial increase of more than \$164,000,000 compared to the 2007 funding level. However, in 2010 the State's contribution to Early Learning and Development was reduced by more than \$236,000,000 as a result of limited State and Federal resources and the loss of revenues. The 2011 funding level is slightly more than 5 percent higher than the funding level in 2007. According to the Ohio Business Council's report Talent Challenge2: Ensuring Kindergarten Readiness by 2020 which is included in the application's Appendix, "Ohio led the nation with the largest percentage decrease in investments for early childhood initiatives." This was for the year 2010. Examples of the reduction in funding included eliminating the Early Learning Initiative (ELI), which funded full- and part-day services for approximately 12,000 three- and four-year-old children, cutting \$11 million from the public preschool program, reducing funding by 20 percent for Help Me Grow, the state's birth-to-three program that provides home visiting and parent education services to at-risk children and their families; and reducing reimbursement rates for child care providers that serve low-income families and lowers the income level at which families can qualify for subsidies (from 200 percent of the federal poverty level to 150 percent of the federal poverty level). -- • Increasing the number of Children - It is difficult to determine whether the number of children in Early Learning Programs increased between 2007 and 2011 because children can be enrolled in several programs at the same time however some information can be obtained from Table (A)(1)-5. This Table shows an increase of children enrolled in all programs except for the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) and the Home Visiting Program. The Home Visiting Program decreased enrollment from 18,240 to 7,881 children to focus on improving outcomes for children with the highest needs. Funding for ELI was completely eliminated; 13,454 children were enrolled in the program in 2009 and 9,655 children in 2010. The plan did not explain why this program's funding was cut and whether the children, who were identified as "at risk for school failure", were eligible to participate in other programs. -- • Legislation, policies, or practices - Ohio's application documented a significant commitment to passing legislation that laid a firm foundation for supporting high-quality early learning programs. Some examples

are: mandating kindergarten readiness assessments statewide, differentiating payments within the State's Tier Quality Rating System, and measuring teacher effectiveness. -- Current status in key areas -- Ohio has formed important building blocks for Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices. --

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	18

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)

Ohio's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda is ambitious. It builds on policies and practices the State has been implementing for many years and has a clearly articulated, coordinated plan to increase 37,000 children's access to licensed early learning programs, increase the number of high-quality programs by 1,300, and improve school readiness outcomes by 5 percent. These goals are measurable and have the potential to be achieved based on the key activities defined and the amount of funds budgeted. -- The State chose to address Focused Investment Area (C) as a way to concentrate efforts on increasing the number of high-quality programs and on improving school readiness outcomes. By developing Early Learning and Development Standards that are aligned with the State's Kindergarten - 3 Standards and the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, Early Childhood Educators (ECE) will have a clear, consistent message of what high quality care consists of and what is expected of them in terms of working with young children. The State's focus on developing a Comprehensive Assessment System will provide ECEs with tools to assess the children's development and information to enhance their learning opportunities. Together, these improvements have the potential to improve the quality of teaching in Early Learning and Development classrooms throughout the state.-- The rationale for requiring small family child care home to be licensed is clearly articulated however, the Plan does not provide a "clear and credible" path that provides a summary of how these homes will become licensed. Information is provided on the support the providers will receive to move up the "steps" in the State's Tier Rating and Improvement System but not on how the small family child care homes will move from being regulated to meeting licensing requirements. This is a substantial undertaking for 6,600 small family child care homes and was not addressed in the plan.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

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 Participating Agencies' strong commitment to aligning and coordinating Early Learning and Development was documented in the State Plan. Each Participating Agency's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) cross-references each section of the plan where responsibilities have been assigned. This provides very specific assurances the agencies are aware of and have agreed to the scope of work. -- The governance structure described in the plan was based on a proven model the State used to successfully coordinate Medicaid policy and budgeting across 11 state agencies. The plan does not address whether the Participating Agencies were involved in the development of the governance structure but does describe a clear process for decision making and resolving disputes that has been agreed to by the Participating State Agencies. -- The criterion for (A)(3) makes a distinction between the letters of support obtained from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, which are required to be detailed and persuasive, and letters of support from other stakeholders. However the letters of support from the Early Learning Intermediary Organizations are not more detailed or persuasive; they are similar to the letters of support provided by other stakeholders.

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

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 State plan identified a significant amount of existing funds that will be used to achieve the desired outcomes of this project. These funds, along with the funding provided by the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant, appear to be adequate to support the activities described in the plan. Since a number of the activities are one-time expenditures and existing staff from the Participating Agencies are likely to be able to continue their work, the project has a high probability of being able to be sustained after RTT-ELC funding ends.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	10
<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">(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; <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: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

Ohio began planning its common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), named Step Up To Quality (SUTQ), in 1999, initiated it on a pilot basis in 2005, and began a statewide implementation in 2006. Presently, SUTQ does not meet all the criterion for (B)(1) but the State Plan identifies strategies to improve upon its current system. These strategies include: ensuring the tiered Program Standards address the inclusion of regulated small family child care providers and school-based programs, changing the three-tiered system to a five-tiered system to provide more gradual and realistic steps for programs to achieve, and strengthening its standards related to family engagement practices and health promotion strategies. The applicant has a reasonable plan for implementing its SUTQ system on a statewide basis which is likely to be achieved.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	14
<p>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--</p> <p>(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--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(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 State's plan to increase participation in its Step Up To Quality tiered rating system is to require Early Learning State-Funded Prekindergarten and Preschool Special Education programs to participate as a condition of funding. In addition, Ohio proposes to allow small Family Child Care Providers to participate for the first time in SUTQ. Incentives already exist for publicly-funded programs that enroll Children with High Needs to participate in SUTQ and these incentives will continue and be enhanced by changing the three-tiered system to a five-tiered system. It is a reasonable plan that will significantly increase the numbers of programs participating in the State's TQIRS. -- However, the plan states State-funded preschool programs and programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619 will be required to participate in SUTQ by July 2014 as a condition of State funding. The targeted number of State-funded preschool programs participating in SUTQ is 90 percent. The targeted number of programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619 is 50 percent. More information is needed to understand why the projection for Part B programs is 50 percent to determine whether this figure is ambitious yet achievable.

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

Ohio's current system for rating and monitoring the quality of programs that participate in their Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) does not include using a valid and reliable tool or having monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. The current practice for monitoring compliance with TQRIS includes an annual, on-site verification visit and observations in each classroom using an observation tool that is aligned with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The verification reports are reviewed by supervisors and are available electronically to licensing staff. -- Ohio proposes to use this existing system until it identifies a standardized and reliable tool for rating and monitoring programs and determines the frequency it should be used. The intent to identify a standardized and reliable tool for rating and monitoring programs is presented in the narrative section however the key goals, key activities, milestones and financial resources are not addressed in the High Quality Plan for VI(B)(A); VI(B)(3); and VI(B)(4) or elsewhere in the application. The proposal lacked information on what activities will take place, who will be involved, and what financial resources will be needed to identify a valid and reliable tool for rating and monitoring programs participating in the State's Tier Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). -- In response to providing quality rating and licensing information to parents, Ohio proposes to create a single licensing system which will necessitate developing a common data system. The licensing data system will include information on licensing compliance and demographic information. It will also have a link to the State's TQRIS data system where information is available on programs' quality ratings. This will provide parents with a central location and uniform format to make more informed decisions about the care and education of their children. This is an ambitious undertaking that is already underway and appears to be well thought out and supported by the State agencies involved.

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

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)
Ohio has set ambitious targets for increasing the number of Early Learning Programs in the top tiers of their State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The targets are realistic because state-funded preschool programs, which already meet high standards of quality, will be required, as a condition of their funding, to participate in TQRIS. Other programs will also be likely to move toward higher quality ratings because of the strong system of supports that are currently in place and are proposed to be enhanced, such as Quality Achievement Awards, teacher scholarships, and the development of web-based learning modules to help speed up the process of obtaining TQRIS status.--

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	13
<p>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--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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)
Ohio has worked with a research center since 2005 to evaluate and validate its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). Three evaluations were conducted. The results of each evaluation validated there was a relationship between the State's TQRIS quality rating and child outcomes. As the State makes changes to its TQRIS from a three-tiered system to a five-tiered system, it will release a Request for Proposals to re-validate the levels and standards across all Early Learning and Development program types. This will also result in tracking children from the TQRIS evaluations to the Kindergarten readiness assessments. -- The State Plan described in detail the three independent evaluations that were performed on its existing three-tiered TQRIS. However, the State Plan did not provide detailed information about the proposed evaluation of the TQRIS after it changes from a three-tiered system to a five-tiered system and includes standards related to family engagement practices and health promotion strategies. It is unknown whether the same three evaluations will be conducted on the revised system or whether a different evaluation model will be used.

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
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	28
<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: Quality and Implementation</p>		
Comments on (C)(1)		
<p>The State presented a comprehensive plan for developing Early Learning and Development Standards that will be used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs. The approach is reasonable and has the likelihood of being achievable based on the description of the goals, activities, timelines and budget. -- However, more detailed information is needed to assess "the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed". The application made a commitment to consider Children with High Needs many times in the application in statements such as "The standards will be crafted to be flexible and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate" and "Implementation will address differentiation strategies so learning experiences related to standards are challenging, yet achievable, for all children, including children with high needs, disabilities, and English language learners." This demonstrated a consideration of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs but the Plan did not provide sufficient detail on how their unique needs would be addressed.</p>		

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	30	28
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--</p> <p>(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;</p> <p>(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;</p> <p>(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and</p> <p>(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.</p> <p>Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation</p>		
Comments on (C)(2)		

Currently, Ohio requires and collects assessment information from Early Learning and Development programs but the information is collected separately by the funding sources and is not reported in a coordinated system. The State's approach for aligning and integrating assessment information is to require all programs participating in the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) tiered-rating system to use the formative assessments developed by Ohio, in conjunction with the State of Maryland, for children ages 36 to 60 months. -- The State has a well-thought-out plan for how to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the different types of assessments, how to appropriately administer the assessments, and how to use the information to improve instructions. Formative instruction modules will be developed, assessment materials will be available via technology platforms, training of teachers will be tested on a pilot basis, and State Support Team personnel, Resource and Referral Providers, Infant Toddler Specialists, and the 12 Birth to Kindergarten Professional Development System Coordinators will be available to work directly with Early Childhood Educators. -- The role of the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants and Health Promotion Consultants was also described but it was not clear how their work will be coordinated with the other supports being offered to Early Childhood Educators and what their specific roles will be regarding facilitating the use of assessments. The impact of this \$8,000,000 effort could not be assessed because specific information was not provided, such as the estimated number of consultants that would be deployed and what plans, if any, will be put in place to continue to support Early Learning programs in the areas of social-emotional development and approaches toward learning physical well being and health when funding for this project ends.

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
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	35
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--</p> <p>(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;</p> <p>(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and</p> <p>(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (D)(1)		
<p>The State has developed Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) which will be used as a common base of knowledge and skills for preparing the early childhood education workforce. Currently the primary providers of ongoing professional development are aligned, to some extent, with the CKC. With RTT-ELC funds, the State plans to align degrees and credentials with Ohio's CKC and imbed this foundation in post-secondary institutions. This is a very ambitious goal considering there are currently no post-secondary degrees in Ohio that lead to a teaching license for children ages birth to 3 or birth to 5 and there are 22 state-level credentials and 68 postsecondary institutions in Ohio that impact the early childhood education workforce. -- The State Plan does not provide sufficient information on how Ohio's post-secondary institutions will be engaged in aligning degrees and credentials to Ohio's CKC. The "Responsible Party" identified for all seven activities consists of a State Agency in conjunction with the Professional Development Project Team. The composition of the Professional Development Project Team was not presented so it is unknown to what extent there is representation from postsecondary institutions. Four meetings are planned during the first two years of the grant with early childhood faculty from postsecondary institutions along with statewide professional development providers for an in-depth examination of Ohio's CKC. These activities represent a good beginning to engage post-secondary institutions but do not describe the level of engagement that would be needed to achieve the goal of aligning degrees and credentials to Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies.</p>		

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
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	18
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)		
<p>Ohio has partially implemented a common, statewide, Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). For the past six years, Kindergarten Readiness Assessments have been conducted on all Kindergarten students in the State, however, the assessments focused only on language and literacy readiness. The assessment results were reported to the State Longitudinal Data System and used to identify high-need populations and interventions. -- Ohio proposes to work with the State of Maryland to develop Early Learning and Development Standards in learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being and health and then, together, to develop a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that includes and is aligned with all the required standards (i.e. not just language and literacy). Ohio's Race to the Top Grant and Maryland's Hoyer Foundation Grant will cover a significant part of the cost of implementing a statewide KEA. The KEA plan specifically addresses test administration skills for English Language Learners and Children with Disabilities and the role of the Fairness and Sensitivity Committee in assessing the unique needs of special populations. It is planned to be piloted in 2013 and implemented statewide in 2014. -- Ohio still has much to do in terms of developing standards (learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being and health) and aligning them with a valid, reliable, assessment that covers all domains (cognition and general knowledge, learning, physical well being and motor development, and social-emotional development). However, the detailed strategies that have been proposed, along with the existing infrastructure, make this ambitious plan likely to be achievable.</p>		

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	18
<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: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(2)

Ohio plans to develop a coordinated early learning data system that is interoperable with Ohio's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The State has received funding from three other sources to enhance its SLDS and, as a result, has substantially implemented a system that includes most of the Essential Data Requirements. Ohio proposes to use the RTT-ELC funds to connect Early Learning Data systems to the SLDS by identifying common data structures, data formats, and data definitions among various agencies. The plan also proposes to re-engineer the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) data system to be web-based and to collect child-level assessment data for programs participating in SUTQ. These enhancements are important and timely because the number of early learning programs participating in SUTQ will increase substantially when it becomes a condition of their funding. -- The proposal did a good job of explaining how the enhanced early learning data system will involve publicly funded child care programs, small family child care homes, and early learning programs funded by the Department of Education. -- However, the narrative referred twice to Table (A)(1)-13 which listed 45 early learning data systems currently in use in Ohio. It was not clear to what extent some of these systems would be involved or impacted by the proposed plans.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	258

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9

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)

Ohio has presented a detailed plan for increasing the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who will be participating in Early Learning programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards. At present, family child care providers who care for six or fewer children are certified, but not licensed. Through a statutory change, 6,600 small family child care providers will be required to be licensed and will then be required to participate in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Information System (TQRIS). The plan also presents detailed information about the supports and rewards that will be made available to these providers to assist them in complying with new requirements and to assist them in participating in the TQRIS. Ohio will also require the state-funded preschool programs and the programs funded by IDEA part C and part B to participate in the SUTQ system. -- However, it is uncertain whether the statutory change Ohio is pursuing will be accomplished. The Plan did not provide sufficient information to assess whether this is likely to be achieved.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

Ohio addressed selection criterion (E)(1) and earned a score greater than 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	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>	
Comments on Absolute Priority	
<p>Ohio's plan has met the Absolute Priority for Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs. By defining common goals and working together with the agencies that currently fund and regulate early learning programs, the State will be changing a fragmented system into a coordinated system. The State proposes to create a single licensing system and develop common Early Learning and Development Standards and data elements. These actions along with information obtained from the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System will, for the first time, provide a uniform "language" in which to compare programs and develop strategies for improving instruction, practices, services, and policies. The State's plan to increase program access, improve program quality, and provide comprehensive reporting will enhance the services provided to all young children in Ohio but will be especially targeted to Child with High Needs. -- There were several areas of the application that would benefit from more information. One area was engaging the post-secondary institutions in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Another one was licensing the small Family Child Care homes. If the statutory change is enacted, activities and resources needed to license the home were not identified.-- Ohio has been working on promoting school readiness for children for many years. The State has developed a plan that is built on its past experiences and is an effort to make more significant changes.</p>	



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OH-5028

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 12:40 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
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	17
<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)

Ohio's RTTT application documents the state's strong commitment over the past five years to investing in programs and services for young children and families, especially for Children with High Needs, to close the kindergarten readiness gap. --Ohio's spending priorities show a strong commitment to improving the quality and accountability of Early Learning and Development Programs and some commitment to expanding access for High Needs Children. The State increased funding for early learning by 5% in the past five years but the number of High Needs Children increased 18% and the number of ELL children increased by 35%. The State spent an average of \$1,387 per child under 6 and \$2,268 per child for Children with High Needs, or 61% more. Their investment enabled more High-Needs Children to participate in child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, state funded preschool, and early childhood health and mental health programs. --The state has already begun an ambitious reform agenda to re-focus and align all of it's early learning and development components with comprehensive quality standards and assessment aligned with K-12, including standards for children, programs, practitioners, services, professional development, and funding. Ohio's strategic development of a QRIS, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ), leverages the capacity of both the private and public sectors to increase quality program options to improve outcomes for High Needs Children. Starting in 2009 - 2011, the state's investments in SUTQ increased the number of high quality settings by 45%, resulting in an additional 4,475 high-needs children benefiting from high-quality programs. --In 2009, reflecting the state's commitment to early learning and development from the governor and bi-partisan leadership despite challenging economic times, Ohio increased state General Revenue Funds for early learning by \$316 million and added \$170 million in TANF surplus. Their investments exemplify their embrace of the nationally accepted "4 Ovals" framework for effective early learning and development systems, including Early Care and Education, Family Support, Special Needs Early Intervention, and Health/Mental Health/Nutrition. They also invested in the key areas that form the building blocks of a quality early learning and development system: 1) Mandated a statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for early literacy; 2) Expanded support for the TQRIS, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ); 3) Expanded T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships; 4) Increased the number of Infant and Toddler Specialists through the CCR&R system; 5) Increased availability of professional development opportunities to assist programs with meeting standards; 6)

Increased provider reimbursement rates based on Step Up To Quality levels; 7) Expanded Title I funded preschool; 8) Included school district preschool teachers in performance evaluations that include measures of student growth; 9) Instituted the Healthy Choices for Healthy Children Act to combat childhood obesity; 10) Redesigned Ohio's home visiting program Help Me Grow to focus on children with high needs; 11) Expanded the state's Children's Health Insurance Program; 12) Developed early childhood mental health treatment grants; 13) Developed building blocks of a professional development system including the Core Knowledge and Competencies, a Training Registry, specialized credentials, mentoring and leadership development, and compensation and benefits initiatives linked to education; 14) Instituted use of a unique child identifier (SSID) to children eligible for Part C services. --It is clear from their discussion of a Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) that Ohio's early learning leadership understands the necessity and protocols for conducting valid and reliable formative assessments to inform practice and policy. --The state's formative assessments of children attending programs participating in SUTQ validate the need for comprehensive standards and assessment measures that address all the domains of children's learning and development. Ohio's Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers and Content Standards provide strong evidence of the state's comprehensive approach to early learning standards and assessment measures. They see the need to revise their Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-L to incorporate all early learning and development domains. --Ohio's strategic policies shift the focus from the old paradigm of investing in siloed programs and services for specific populations with program-specific standards, funding streams and input evaluations to a standards-based approach focused on accountability for school readiness outcomes. However, while Ohio has identified needing to expand the TQIS to all providers including small family child care homes, they do not allocate money in their State Plan budget to license an additional 6,600 providers. It's not clear how counties would be able to achieve this large increase in their caseloads without additional resources. Also, the state identifies increasing High Needs Children's access to quality Early Learning and Development Programs, but their strategies don't include how they will reach out to providers serving hard-to-reach families (homeless, migrant, ELL) to recruit them for participation in SUTQ. Accordingly, 2 points were deducted from their score.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	17
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)
<p>Ohio's State Plan clearly lays out the building blocks for a comprehensive reform agenda that is ambitious but achievable. Ambitious based on Ohio's large school readiness gap (75% of High Need Children are not prepared for kindergarten) and large number of High Needs Children who have limited access to quality programming. Yet achievable because their collaborative structure and coherent, aligned, and focused path will leverage and build the capacity of both the public and private sectors to achieve the following goals: 1) Increase access to high-quality experiences for more than 37,000 High Needs Children; 2) Increase the number of highly rated programs available to high-needs children by nearly 1,300; 3) Improve results on Ohio's current kindergarten readiness assessment (literacy) for high-needs children by 5 percent. -- The following Key Activities, taken together, present an effective reform agenda with a clear and credible path toward achieving their goals: - Successful State Systems with a coordinated focus and a single point of accountability, strong project management and inter-agency coordination and alignment on kindergarten readiness results, and strong partnerships with Ohio's business community and early learning stakeholders - High Quality, Accountable Programs through the TQRIS to provide a well-defined pathway for improving quality and to unify the distinct sectors of the field into a coherent system focused on quality - Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children by developing standards for all essential domains of school readiness and a comprehensive assessment system through a partnership with Maryland - Great Workforce through aligning the professional development system, streamlining credentials and linking investment in compensation and benefits to educational attainment - Measuring Outcomes and Progress by building on the current KRA_L to include all domains of early development and building a strong early learning data system infrastructure Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, Step Up To Quality, has been validated as an effective strategy for improving and evaluating program quality and boosting children's kindergarten readiness. Independent evaluations of the SUTQ levels show that the tiers correspond with increasingly higher program quality and with higher scores of children on standardized tests with the top tier producing the strongest results. Nearly 30,000 High Needs Children are served by programs participating in SUTQ. Ohio's reform agenda will build on SUTQ's success and expand it to all program types to serve more High Needs Children. The state's sound approach to the governance of their State Plan recognizes the importance of focused, collaborative and accountable leadership to realize their goals. The Early Education and Development Officer in the Governor's office will provide a single point of accountability and has authority to coordinate policy, spending, and administration across the multiple</p>

agencies serving young children. The authority invested in the Early Education and Development Officer to convene senior-level staff from each of the participating agencies, retain consultants, and coordinate with the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) provides a streamlined and transparent approach capable of getting things done. The prospects for the success of Ohio's State Plan are also enhanced by capitalizing on a history of strong state partnerships with the private sector. The governor created an Early Education and Development Innovation Committee composed of leaders from business, philanthropy, research and children's health organizations to leverage expertise and resources and promote support from the private sector. Ohio's experience with using assessment to inform their reform agenda adds to the credibility of their plans for a Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS). They currently use a valid and reliable KRA-L tool to assess the pre-literacy of 125,000 entering kindergarteners each year. The assessment results are tabulated and used by kindergarten teachers to adjust their curriculum and individualize instruction. The state's well thought out plan to develop a CAS is strengthened through a formal collaboration with Maryland. Ohio's proposal details a sophisticated understanding of the project and how it will build on their current assessment strengths, i.e., Maryland's 10 years of experience with formative assessments and Ohio's record with the KRA-L. Combining both states' technical and financial resources increases the likelihood of the project's success. Ohio's choices of focused investment areas build on their strengths and fit with their strategies to achieve their goals. They also determined that the other focused investment areas would be addressed through other priorities and activities in the grant. C(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards, and C(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems, build on existing standards and infrastructure and are foundational to the comprehensive accountability system Ohio proposes to develop with Maryland. Focused investment area D(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency framework and a progression of credentials, builds on Ohio's evidence-based Core Knowledge and Competencies and would ensure that it is fully aligned and integrated with all professional development for the field, including post secondary institutions. This focus would address the gaps in Ohio's credentials for educators working with the 0-5 age span, and particularly the lack of any license for working with children 0 - 3. Choosing E(1) Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry, and E (2) Building or Enhancing an Early Learning Data System, also build on Ohio's High Quality Plan strategies. E(1) leverages the combined experience, infrastructure and data from both Ohio and Maryland to develop a comprehensive assessment system. E(2) provides critical child and program level data to inform instruction, practices and policies, building on Ohio's Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Ohio's plan doesn't adequately address the needs of 4 groups of children: children who are homeless, children migrant families, children in low income families above 125% of FPG, and English Language Learners who speak languages other than Spanish. Ohio's plan doesn't detail specific outreach and/or programming for hard-to-reach homeless children or the special programming needs of children in migrant families. The threshold for "low income" in Race To The Top is 200% of FPG. High Needs Children in Ohio whose family income is just over the entry threshold for Head Start and for Ohio's child care subsidies are not addressed in their plan. Ohio's policy is that a family's income to start receiving child care tuition subsidies must be below 125% of FPG. Families, once they're on the subsidy program, can continue to receive subsidies until their income is above 200% of FPG. But families won't ever receive subsidies if their income when they apply is above 125% of FPG. This policy leaves thousands of High Needs Children unable to access quality Early Learning and Development Programs. The number of High Needs Children in Ohio has risen 18% in the past 5 years. Meanwhile, the lowest score on the assessment of the state's pre-kindergarten and special education classroom elements was "Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom." In their plan for developing a CAS, Ohio proposes establishing a committee to research and make recommendations on appropriate assessment of young ELL children. However, Ohio's plan doesn't include strategies for increasing early childhood educators' knowledge, skills and abilities for working with ELL children. Also, their plan for outreach materials for families and providers only references English and Spanish language versions. Three points were deducted from their score.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

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)

Ohio has already begun work on creating a clear and accountable cross agency and multisector organizational structure to facilitate inter-agency coordination, streamlining decision making, and effectively allocating resources. The Governor established an Early Education and Development Officer as a single point of accountability in the Governor's Office for early learning services. Ohio's Key Activities, Timelines, and Budget constitute a well thought out and reasonable plan for alignment and coordination of Participating State Agencies and Community Partners to manage the RTTT Grant and to design and carry out their reform agenda. Their plan clearly defines: - the governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Inter- agency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and key private sector partners. - the method and process for decision making (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes - 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 Ohio's State Agency MOU reflects strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency. Additional "Scope-of-work" documents provide detailed and reasonable descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of each Participating State Agency. To demonstrate the commitment of a broad group of stakeholders to the State's Plan, Ohio collected detailed and persuasive letters of support from business stakeholders, 72 Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, elected officials, and early learning and development stakeholders. There is clear evidence of broad and critical support and commitment for Ohio's State Plan. One point was deducted because it is unclear whether Ohio received input and commitment from providers and parents for the State Plan.

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

The budget for Ohio's State Plan provides a clearly shows how existing early learning and development funds from Federal, State, private, and local sources will be used for each project. The State's budget narratives and tables clearly outline the levels of financial support for the Project Key Activities described in the State Plan. The costs budgeted appear to be reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities and the number of children to be served with the exception of increasing the licensing of 6,600 new providers. Budgeted amounts are consistent with the Key Activities in the State Plan and clearly delineate the specific activities to be implemented with these funds by each Participating State Agency. A significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan. However, the budget does not provide funding for one of the Key Activities, i.e., to extend licensing to small family child care homes. This proposed statutory change would result in an additional 6,600 licensed programs. The plan notes that the costs for increasing the licensing caseload by 6,600 new providers will be born by local entities (counties). Assuming that local county dollars will be enough to support this significant increase in the licensing caseload seems unrealistic. Ohio makes a strong case for sustainability of the activities supported by the budget. Many of the projects have one-time up-front costs, including development of programs and educational standards, the comprehensive assessment system, professional development modules, formative instruction modules, and data systems. Ohio asserts that they will be able to sustain this work because these one-time tools and systems will reduce the costs for ongoing maintenance and make operation of systems more efficient and less expensive. However, while the assessment system and increased capacity of quality programs will allow them to target future investments, it is not reasonable to project being able to increase the number of Children with High Needs served by High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs without ongoing funding. Based on 2 weak areas of the budget, two points were deducted from their score.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8
<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"> (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; <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: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

Ohio's Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) TQRIS is an effectively designed and implemented statewide system incorporating: 1) Comprehensive and measurable common Program Standards, 2) program ratings based on meaningfully differentiated levels of program quality, 3) valid and reliable ratings and monitoring, 4) progressively more rigorous Early Childhood Educator qualifications, 5) incentives for providers, 5) consumer information and incentives for parents, and 6) effective data collection and ongoing system evaluation. Assessment of the SUTQ provides strong validation for Ohio's TQRIS strategy. SUTQ incorporates valid and reliable nationally recognized tools of structural quality, the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS), and teacher/child interactions, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to validate the alignment between the progressively higher rating tiers and increased program quality linked to better child outcomes. The ERS and CLASS are also used in technical assistance with programs but are not included in programs' rating scores. Ohio's success with provider recruitment is partially due to the critical steps they've taken towards building a seamless link between licensing and SUTQ. SUTQ rated programs must attain full compliance with licensing requirements known as Serious Risk

Non-Compliance (SRNC) rules. Also, the SUTQ and licensing data bases are linked and programs that maintain a tiered rating and compliance with SRNC rules are only required to have one licensing visit annually. An outside evaluation of Ohio's SUTQ tiers using the valid and reliable Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Observation and Assessment tool (CLASS), found the tiers to be valid measures of progressively rigorous program quality linked to child outcomes on formative assessments of children conducted by Ohio State University. The ERS and CLASS tools, which provide information on programs' structural quality and teacher/child interactions, are used in technical assistance but not for program ratings. Ohio's plans for improving the SUTQ address critical areas for growth and ensuring positive child outcomes. To ensure that more High Needs Children can participate in high quality programs that prepare them for kindergarten, Ohio will: - revise the Program Standards to include family engagement practices and health promotion strategies - reflect proposed revisions to include all domains of early development and learning in Ohio's Prekindergarten Content Standards - expand SUTQ to a five tier continuum - perform an evaluation and validation of the expanded SUTQ Program - promote participation by state-funded programs and enable participation by small licensed family child care homes A strong, evidence based process will be used to ensure the validity of adding two tiers to the SUTQ. They will also identify standardized and reliable tools for program assessment that align with their revised SUTQ Program Standards. They plan on researching frequency of monitoring visits and will adopt schedules based on best practice. This substantially implemented high quality plan receives a score of 8.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	13

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)

Ohio's voluntary TQRIS provides well thought out and effective market incentives to increase program participation. Incentives and supports include Quality Assurance awards, technical assistance, higher education scholarships, and tiered reimbursement. These market strategies are working to increase the number of High Needs Children in quality rated programs. Of the 1,074 licensed settings in Ohio with SUTQ ratings, 1,010 enroll High Needs Children either through CCDF subsidies or Head Start funding. SUTQ is successfully reaching a large number of children and rated programs provide care and early learning to 30,000 High-Needs Children every day. Currently, the over 1,200 participating programs include Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program and Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Ohio has some robust strategies to maximize program participation in SUTQ. They plan to: - Make SUTQ available to regulated small family child care homes - Require State-funded preschool, Title I and IDEA special education classrooms to participate as a condition of funding - Continue financial incentive policies and expanding them to small family child care homes - Set program-based targets that double the number of rated programs to 2,528 in 4 years Ohio's SUTQ plans for expanding provider participation do not address how they will reach underrepresented groups and need to develop specific strategies. Ohio's plans for SUTQ show deep understanding of the market-based policies and practices that can help more families afford high-quality child care, for example: SUTQ provides Quality Achievement Awards and tiered CCDF reimbursement that allows providers to cover increased costs of quality without raising their fees to parents. SUTQ provides support for programs moving through the tiers which also increases the number of High Needs Children in high quality settings; and continuing TEACH scholarships for college coursework reduces providers' tuition costs. The state proposes several promising strategies to increase High Needs Children's participation in SUTQ rated programs. SUTQ technical assistance will be targeted to centers serving 50% or more High Needs Children and providers serving 5 or more High Needs Children. To "test" another promising strategy, Ohio proposes to pilot the elimination of co-payments for families under the Federal Poverty Guidelines that enroll in higher quality settings. Work on critical reform of the licensing system to create a seamless connection with SUTQ is in progress. This will connect parents to information and support regardless of their child's care and early learning setting. Ohio's Regulatory Reform committee convened

in 2010 will make recommendations on licensing regulations to be incorporated in a single licensing system. To increase the demand for high quality programs, SUTQ has a well-designed marketing strategy to provide parents with information about licensing and the quality ratings including marketing materials for programs, print media in Spanish and English and a comprehensive website. As parents demand grows, more programs will seek SUTQ ratings. The targets set by Ohio for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in SUTQ are ambitious yet achievable. The 90% target for State-funded preschool reflects the conditional funding requirement. The much more modest 2% of CCDF small family child care homes participating is a realistic goal based on the challenges of reaching and recruiting a new sector of the provider market. The jump from 39% to 51% for centers is ambitious but achievable based on the SUTQ's growth in the past 4 years and the visibility and intense competition among centers. The budget for Ohio's State Plan must include adequate funding for the dramatic 6,600 increase in the licensing caseload. This substantially implemented high quality plan is scored 13.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	14

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)

Ohio uses an expert monitoring team trained to conduct annual on-site verification visits, based on the Federal Head Start Review, PRISM. Visits include direct observation in each classroom, administer and teacher interviews, and review of written documents. While the team approach has merit, it's not clear how the members are monitored for inter-rater reliability. In their external evaluation of the SUTQ Program, Ohio will continue to use staff deemed valid and reliable on the ERS and CLASS tools to provide information on programs' structural quality and teacher/child interactions for the different tiers. These assessment tools will also be used for technical assistance but not for provider ratings. They have chosen a strong, evidence based process to ensure the validity of adding two tiers to the SUTQ. They will also identify standardized and reliable tools for program assessment that align with their revised SUTQ Program Standards. They will research frequency of monitoring visits and adopt schedules based on reasonable best practice. SUTQ has good marketing tools for rated programs to advertise their status to parents and the public. The provider's marketing kit includes a large outside banner, framed poster, a SUTQ certificate, and media kit. The state's ODJFS website provides program profiles and information on licensing inspections, complaints and violations. The agency website also includes detailed information about SUTQ in a variety of formats in both English and Spanish. They don't mention using social media or working with community and neighborhood organizations, for instance, to reach parents, Ohio's marketing of SUTQ to parents will require both CCR&R and CCDF staff to provide SUTQ ratings and information to parents over the phone, online and in print marketing materials. A promising strategy from a market effect viewpoint, is to create a new "report card" targeted to parents with information about the progress of the system in improving children's kindergarten readiness.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	18

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)

Programs in SUTQ receive annual performance payments, or QAA, based on their tier level that act as an incentive for continuous quality improvement. The state's CCDF tiered reimbursement policy for programs serving High Needs Children also serves as an incentive for improvement. As a program's quality tier improves, reimbursement payments increase. The SUTQ also provides no cost technical assistance to programs at tier 1 seeking to increase their quality. Professional development is provided free of charge to SUTQ participating teachers, providers and directors. Teachers in SUTQ programs are also eligible for T.E.A.C.H. – Teacher Education and Compensation Helps - scholarships and bonuses. In their High Quality Plan, Ohio proposes to expand T.E.A.C.H scholarships for tier 1 providers and develop web based training modules, making training more accessible to rural programs and to family child care providers. Early childhood mental health and general health promotion consultants will also be provided at no charge. The tiered CCDF reimbursements mentioned above help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that are full-day, full-year programs. Expanding the SUTQ to state pre-k and special needs classrooms and to small licensed family child care homes gives families the full range of choices of program hours, etc. Also, the SUTQ's progressively higher QAAs are awarded to programs based partly on the number of High Needs Children they serve. Revising the SUTQ Program Standards to include health and mental health promotion and family engagement strategies will expand the choices of appropriate programs for Children with High Needs. Also, Ohio plans to add to their Early Track System identification of the setting where children birth to five are served. Expanding SUTQ to small family child care homes will broaden the quality rated non-traditional hour choices for families with High Needs Children. This requires a change in statute and the State didn't discuss whether this is likely to be a difficult challenge and, if so, how they will mobilize support to get it passed. -- The CCDF subsidy pilot Ohio proposes in their High Quality Plan will test eliminating parent copayments linked to parents' choice of high quality programs to increase families with High Needs Children choosing quality programs. If the pilot shows that eliminating co-payments does influence parents' choices of higher quality programs for their High Needs Children, Ohio will face the challenge of finding additional revenues to cover the loss of co-payment revenue in order to serve the same number of High Needs Children. -- Ohio has set ambitious but achievable targets in Performance Measure (B)(4)(c)(1) for increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Top Tiers of SUTQ. These projections are based on the state's experience with SUTQ and their plans for increasing incentives to programs and parents of High Needs Children.

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

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)

Ohio has a strong program evaluation in place that ensures the ongoing validity and reliability of SUTQ. Ohio has conducted external evaluations using the research-based Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). These tools provide information on the structural quality and teacher/child interactions at different tiers. The State has a High Quality Plan to expand the current SUTQ's 3 tiers to five and conduct an evaluation of the expanded SUTQ to determine if the tiers reflect a graduation of quality. Ohio also has a bold proposal to build on it's current early childhood assessment system through an innovative partnership with Maryland. The new system will include a system-wide pre-kindergarten and kindergarten formative assessment and a benchmark Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The new system's learning progressions and formative assessments will be validated in conjunction with a panel of state and national experts. This high quality response receives a score of 14.

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
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	26
<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>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)
<p>Ohio's Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards and Infant and Toddler Guidelines meet the RTTT requirement for comprehensive, research validated standards specific for each age group. They are also flexible enough for teachers and parents to use with children with disabilities and children from a broad range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They also cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness. The State also provides evidence that their Pre-kindergarten Content Standards in English language arts and mathematics are aligned with Ohio's Common Core State Standards for kindergarten through grade 12. Ohio's State Plan adequately addresses how they will revise their Early Learning and Development Standards in several developmental domains to ensure that they cover all early development and learning domains including approaches to learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being for children from age 3 to grade 3. The State Plan provides clear evidence of the current alignment of their Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Content Standards which are incorporated in: SUTQ Program Standards, child assessment, the Core Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals, and professional development activities. Through utilizing the SUTQ, Ohio's proposal to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards by Early Learning and Development Programs is strategic and cost effective. Professional development modules on the new content areas (approaches to learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being), will be created in a variety of formats including web based. A Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development Support System (BKPDS) will be developed to provide statewide training on standards, assessment and formative instruction in all settings. SUTQ's sound approach to expansion of SUTQ includes licensing small family child care providers and tying funding to SUTQ participation for state-funded preschool programs. Through participation in SUTQ, these programs will receive training in understanding and incorporating the Early Learning and Development Standards. Programs participating in SUTQ will also get assessment results to adapt curriculum, activities and teaching practice to better meet the needs of High Needs Children. Ohio also has a promising plan to collect data on appropriate practice for meeting the needs of English Language Learners through an English Language Learner advisory group to their Comprehensive Assessment System. In addition to researching and recommending appropriate assessments and methods for ELL, the committee will link the results from appropriate ELL assessment to instructional strategies and evidence-based practice. The planned BKPDS mentioned above would create professional development based on the ELL advisory group's recommendations in order to embed it in program practice. Based on the substantially implemented high quality response to this criteria they receive a score of 26.</p>

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	30	22

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

- (a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;
- (b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;
- (c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and
- (d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

Ohio has an ambitious and achievable collaboration plan to develop and implement a Comprehensive Assessment System. Through a collaboration with Maryland, they will develop a Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessment which will involve curriculum specialists, teachers, and instructional leaders from Head Start and child care programs. The collaboration will ensure that common and comprehensive formative assessments are used across all programs. Ohio's new Child Link System also creates a unique child identifier that will facilitate sharing assessment and screening results across programs. Ohio's plan includes developing a Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development Support System to provide professional development on standards, assessment, and formative instruction. An ELL advisory group will focus on appropriate assessment of English Language Learners, assessment driven improvements for classroom support, and recommendations for professional development through the BKPDS to meet the needs of ELL children. Together, these strategies will support Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data to inform and improve instruction, programs and services. This impartially implemented high quality plan receives a score of 22.

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
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	34

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)

Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) provides an excellent, comprehensive framework for the preparation of early childhood educators. The CKC complements the state's Standards for Ohio Educators for school-based educators through grade 12. Ohio's State Plan demonstrates that the CKC addresses the required elements of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The CKC covers six broad content areas with specific competencies at three progressive levels of mastery. The CKC which Ohio already developed will be the central document to drive this systems reform. The web-based professional development registry, OPDN.org, has more than 50,000 early childhood professionals registered and provides a hub for information on training aligned with the CKC. However, the state's current professional development system is complex, confusing and alignment of credentialing and degree programs with the CKC is not clear. To address this, the Governor's Early Learning and Development Officer is authorized to convene the key stakeholders necessary to complete alignment of credentials, degrees and SUTQ professional development with the CKC. As they work on aligning credentials and training with Ohio's CKC, they recognize that post-secondary institutions and community based training delivery have different cultures, scope and missions. Ohio's plan calls for creating bridge documents between the various sectors of the field to increase understanding and build buy-in. They will also develop and promote training for post secondary faculty and other training providers on the CKC Instructor Guide. Despite the complexities of this Key Activity, the transparency and clear authority from "the top" add to the credibility of it's successful completion. This response receives a partially implemented, high quality score.

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
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	16

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;
- (d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and
- (e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)
Ohio has a High Quality Plan for expanding it's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy to encompass all Essential Domains of School Readiness. The state also plans to collaborate with Maryland in developing and launching a comprehensive KEA statewide in 2014-2015. The collaboration includes plans to ensure reliability and validity for the target populations through involving national and local experts, Technical Advisory Committees in both states, and a Fairness and Sensitivity Committee. An ELL Committee will research appropriate assessment for ELL children. Individual children's scores on the Kindergarten Entry Assessment with their individual SSID will be submitted to Ohio's Department of Education through the SLDS. The collaboration will utilize private grant funding from Maryland (\$500,000) and \$1 million in Ohio's existing Rate to The Top funds. They will also leverage technology tools, strategies and professional development being developed for the Instructional Improvement System of Ohio's current RTTT initiative.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	16

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)

Ohio and Maryland's track records in assessment and data systems and their detailed, well-thought through plan builds credibility for their Comprehensive Assessment System collaboration. All of the Essential Data Elements are incorporated in their plan. They will meet all 12 of the America Competes Act Elements of a P-16 education data system by the end of 2012. The state will enhance its State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) with expansion of the P-12 unique child identifier to higher education, a P-20 data governance structure, a consolidation of data tools through a streamlined portal, development of an Education Research Center and an Instructional Improvement System. Ohio has begun building the foundation to link child, program and workforce data with assessment data across agencies. Plans to develop common data standards and definitions will enable agencies to exchange information. Ohio will develop the Child Link System, the expanded SUTQ Data System, and the Early Learning Data System to inform instruction for children and inform policies across the range of programs. They also plan to provide timely, relevant, and accessible results in formats that are easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making. The collaboration will institute data governance policies to meet the Data System Oversight Requirements and comply with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws. This scores a Partially Implemented High Quality response.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	237

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

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

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)

Ohio's State Plan includes pursuing a statutory change to extend licensing to family child care providers that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting. This would bring an additional 6,600 small family child care providers into the licensed system. The State's Plan includes revising the SUTQ Standards to include these small family child care homes. The budgeted amount for this Key Activity seems weak as it relies on counties to increase their licensing caseloads with no additional revenue from the State Plan. Also, the budget amount is unrealistic to mount an outreach campaign to reach and recruit thousands of small family child care providers. The SUTQ will also be extended to state pre-kindergarten programs, special education classrooms and other publicly delivered programs, requiring participation as a condition of funding. Together, these policies will extend the SUTQ to all Early Learning and Development Programs. This partially implemented medium quality response receives a score of 6.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

- (a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or
- (b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

Ohio earned a score above 70% on selection criteria (E)(1). Ohio's High Quality Plan for developing a Comprehensive Assessment System to understand the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry was scored 75% for their high quality response partially implemented. Ohio's CAS includes implementing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets Ohio's Content Standards which will be revised, (also in the State's Plan), to cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness. The state has a High Quality Plan to ensure that the CAS will be valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population. Their plans also include researching appropriate assessment and methods for ELL children. CAS data will be reported to the SLDS and to the early learning data system.

Absolute Priority

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

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

Ohio's State Plan describes a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda to increase the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The state's ambitious but achievable goals to reduce the kindergarten readiness gap between High Needs Children and their peers are to: - Increase access to high-quality experiences for more than 37,000 High Needs Children - Increase the number of highly rated programs available to High Needs Children by nearly 1,300 - Improve school readiness outcomes for High Needs Children by 5 percent Ohio's focus on clear, cross-cutting goals, robust governance plan, structure for interagency cooperation and a single point of accountability in the Early Education and Development Officer in the Governor's office create a strong foundation for transparency, collaboration and accountability to ensure implementation. Strategic private sector leadership from the Early Education and Development Innovation Committee and enthusiastic commitment from a broad group of stakeholders add to the likelihood of success in promoting school readiness for Children with High Needs. Ohio determined the specific reform areas where leveraging efforts across agencies and making strategic systems improvements would provide the biggest impact. Building on reforms already begun, their State Plan continues the work of aligning expectations for all sectors of the system with comprehensive quality standards, including

standards for children, programs, practitioners, services, professional development, and funding. Step Up To Quality, Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, strategically leverages and builds the capacity of both private and public programs through common standards, program supports and incentives for quality performance. SUTQ's comprehensive program standards are aligned with the state's early learning and development guidelines. Increasing the likelihood of success, Ohio's reform agenda builds on SUTQ's track record for increasing the number of high quality programs, encouraging programs to serve more High Needs Children, and increasing the number of parents of High Needs Children choosing high quality programs. Key activities include: 1) Adding 2 tiers to the rating scale, 2) Continuing tiered reimbursement rates linked to quality levels, 3) QAA incentive awards, 4) Free training and T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships for staff in participating programs, and 5) Targeted technical assistance for programs serving High Needs Children, and 6) Studying eliminating parent co-payments for CCDF subsidies. The state's choices of Focused Investment Areas propose significant improvements for increasing program quality and outcomes for High Needs Children through strategic enhancements and additions to existing programs, policies, infrastructure and financial resources. For "Developing and Using Statewide, High Quality Early Learning and Development Standards," (C)(1), Ohio will revise the state's standards to incorporate health and mental health promotion and family engagement. Their participation in SUTQ will promote Early Learning and Development Programs' understanding and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across all sectors. A proposed change in statute to license small family child care homes, revisions in SUTQ to include these providers, and moving all state funded programs to SUTQ will significantly increase the number of programs exposed to the Early Learning and Development Standards through participation in SUTQ. Their ambitious and well-developed plan for Supporting Effective Uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems, (C)(2), involves a collaboration with Maryland to develop a Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS). All programs receiving public funding will be required to use formative assessments and enter child data into the system. The CAS will include: 1) a new Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessment System, 2) a Kindergarten Entry Assessment to inform practice in K-3 and policies for systemic improvements, 3) a technology framework to provide online supports and tools for teachers, and 4) professional development to support the administration and uses of the assessment tools. A particular focus will be on appropriate assessment to support ELL children. For "Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a Progression of Credentials" (D)(1), Ohio has a credible plan to engage post secondary institutions, faculty and other professional development providers in aligning credentials, degrees and hourly training in a coherent progression based on Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competency Framework (CKC). Ohio responded to both (E)(1) Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry, and (E)(2) Building or Enhancing an Early Learning Data System to Improve Instruction, Practices, Services and Policies. Ohio has a well-developed, credible plan to collaborate with and Maryland on developing a CAS. The system includes formative assessments for pre-kindergarten through kindergarten and a comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Ohio's State Plan provides credible details on how they will meet the Essential Data Elements. Revisions to the SUTQ data system and the Early Learning Data System will make it possible to collect child-level assessment data for programs participating in SUTQ through a web-based system. Using this data, State Agencies, Early Learning and Development Programs and early childhood educators will have information on child progress on a timely basis to improve care and instruction. The CAS will also focus on appropriate assessment and methods for children with disabilities and English Language Learners. The state's comprehensive reform agenda capitalizes on this Race to the Top opportunity to build a coherent, comprehensive early childhood system accountable for ensuring that all children, including High Needs Children, enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Ohio meets the RTTT Absolute Priority.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OH-5028

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
 Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
 Support Monitor: [Redacted]
 Application Status: Reviewed
 Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 10:05 AM

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
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	19
<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> <p>Scoring Rubric Used: Quality</p> <p>Comments on (A)(1)</p> <p>As described in the narrative, Ohio has a history of serving high needs preschool children and has increased its funding in the programs that serve this target population. In reviewing the pattern of funding there are inconsistencies in many programs. While funding peaked in 2009, it decreased 30% in 2010 and then decreased again in 2011 another 19%, returning funding allocations for early childhood programs at 5% higher than in 2007. Mental health consultation is a program that has suffered a major cut to its budget by seeing a drop of allocations of 80% from 2009 to 2010, while enrollment increased 44% that year and, while maintaining the 2010 budget, the program experienced another 7% increase in enrollment in 2011. There is no explanation regarding why or how these funding allocations fluctuated over the past five years and how some budgets were cut while others maintained. Additionally there are fluctuations in the enrollment of programs, some showing a drop in enrollment. These drops are not discussed. Without additional information it is difficult to ascertain what Ohio's commitment is to early learning and development programs and how decisions are made regarding the yearly budgets of each type of program. Ohio has demonstrated a high commitment to early learning and development through its legislation, policies and practices. Ohio's strength is evident in the diverse legislation in education, data practices, health promotion practices, and kindergarten entry assessments. This strong record and history to early childhood has established for Ohio a strong foundation to make progress on proposed activities. Ohio has sufficiently described its current status in key areas of Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment systems, health promotion and practices, family engagement practices, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p>		
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	20

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)

Ohio has listed achievable and ambitious goals for improving quality of early childhood programs. Ohio has directly linked this to improving outcomes for children. The reforms listed are substantial and provide a vision for Ohio's future direction in the its development of Early Childhood. Ohio's summary articulates all goals and systems to meet goals by each section of the application. Side-bars provide additional information that is helpful to understanding the overall plan. The rationale for selection of criteria is sound. Ohio has indicated that it will work on refining structures that are already in place while simultaneously working on an assessment tool and measuring outcomes and a data system infrastructure. The goals/ key activities are linked together in a way that complement each other and will support the work that needs to be completed. Ohio has selected and justified the appropriate areas of the Focused Investment Area. Having identified gaps in its current system, such as the alignment of standards to all domains of development and readiness, Ohio has demonstrated that its plan is to move its current system to a more coordinated and comprehensive system.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

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)

Ohio has presented a clear structure to the governance of the activities it has proposed in the application. Unlike all other areas of roles and responsibilities, the leaders of the Early Education and Development Innovation Committee were not identified. This indicates that Ohio has not proceeded to identify and engage such leads. This could be time consuming in finding senior leaders in business and in philanthropic sectors and set back the governance structure of the application. There was no discussion of why these leaders have not been identified or what the current status is on securing leaders for this position. Momentum in moving forward on key activities may be lost. Ohio has presented an adequate and appropriate outline for the process of decision-making. The High Quality Plan provides more information on the teams that will be created. Ohio has developed a sound plan for involving key stakeholders. The quarterly meetings of the full advisory council, specific project teams, and assurance that the private sector will be involved. This is a strength of this proposal. Ohio has clearly stated that all groups, including parents will be included in the governance of the early childhood system. The MOU's are clearly presented from each partnering agency/ office. The roles and responsibilities indicate that each agency will participate, on assessment and standards, professional development, quality, access and financing, and family support engagement. This is expected, yet, each MOU is similar to all departments suggesting that other than Ohio's Department of Education and Jobs and Family Services, the remaining departments/ offices will not take a lead in any particular key activity – thereby concentrating all activities within the two departments of ODE and ODJFS. This lack of specificity suggests that each agency has not been encouraged to identify key activities in which they are expert. Signatures from each Representing State Agency has been submitted. A substantial number of letters of support and intent have been submitted to Ohio, representing various types of organizations, institutions, foundations, and non-profits. Ohio has a solid network of providers that are knowledgeable and aware and supportive of this project. This is a strength to Ohio's overall plan and a foundation to meeting the goals of this proposal.

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

Ohio has presented a detailed budget that addresses all components of this application and totals \$166,828,792 over the four project years. Ohio indicates that 42%, \$69,993,362 of the budget will be RTTT-ECC funds, should the grant be awarded. The remaining 58% will be from other sources that Ohio has identified. The funds budgeted for individual activities are not unreasonable. However, because of the leadership and responsibilities as outlined in the State Plan and High Quality Plan, most of the funds, 53% of the requested RTTT funds are concentrated at the Department of Jobs and Families for a wide range of activities. The Department of Education receives 34% of the funds for its activities. While these costs are expected and reasonable for the tasks, this budget clearly underscores that Ohio's collaboration in this project reflects a two State Agency partnership with two additional agencies (Departments of Health and Mental Health) as supports to the project. Additionally, there is little clarity regarding the requested funds for the Department of Mental Health and Department of Health. The RTTT-ECC funds requested total approximately \$8,000,000 or 12%. For both departments, this amount is requested for the support of the consultants (home visitors.) According to the budget summary narrative, the consultants from both departments will facilitate the use of standards and assessments by early childhood educators. There is no indication in either department budget the approximate number of consultants that would be contracted within each department. There are no costs identified in how these consultants will be managed within the department or how these consultants will work with other departments. Additionally, mental health consultants/ health consultants are expendable budget items. The history of the commitment to mental health consultants does not reflect a high quality effort to improve services for children enrolled in this program. As noted in the commitment section, Ohio decreased its budget 80% in a year when mental health services increased their enrollment 44% (2010), followed by an additional increase of 7% in 2011. More details are needed in the budget and in other areas of this application that indicate the role of mental health program and how it will be integrated into the overall project, including how these consultants will be sustained. Without further explanation, the budget for mental health (\$1,000,000 per year) will re-establish the severely cut program to its original budget. The Department of Health budget is not specified in Part A and there is no direct evidence provided in Table A 1-4 of A 1-5 that identifies the historical funding or number of high needs children served of and by this department. The summary presented also lacks clarity in how these consultants will be integrated into the system, work with other State Agencies and how this will be sustained after the final year of the project.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(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)

Ohio is clearly experienced in the development and implementation of the TQRIS. Ohio has presented an excellent background to its plan to reform early childhood practices as discussed in Part A. Currently, Ohio has in place a three-tiered rating system that meets the definition of the early learning and development standards, family engagement practices, and early childhood educator qualifications. Health promotion practices are at baseline using health licensing practices as an indicator. Evidence is provided in the appendix of the current tiered rating system. The current system of the 3 tiered TQRIS is clearly presented in both the discussion and appendix. Ohio states that it will expand its program to five levels and revise the distinction between Tier 1 and Tier 2 to encourage more programs to participate as Tier 2 will become more achievable. Ohio has clearly addressed this need, but does not discuss how these standards are measurable or will be developed as measurable so that a meaningful distinction between programs scoring at selected tiers can be clearly determined. Ohio indicates that the SUTQ data base and management system are linked to licensing. Ohio discusses that programs who lose a tiered rating are also at risk of sanctions from SUTQ. This communication system provides evidence of a sound basis for promoting licensing to the TQRIS.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	12

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)

Ohio has a developed plan to increase the number of participating programs. Current policies and practices are in place as described in other sections of this proposal. Each type of Early Childhood Development Program is addressed in the table, but there is no corresponding discussion regarding how these numbers were determined. There is a wide range of percents of expected participation among the types of programs. There is no discussion of how these numbers or percents were arrived at for each program. For example, the family child care centers participation shows in Table B2c shows that of the 6600 small family child care homes, 2220 programs receiving fund from CCDF, and programs funded by IDEA none are currently participating in the SUTQ tiered rating system. Yet there is neither discussion nor key activities in the High Quality Plan that outline how these sites will be encouraged to participate and why there is no expectation for their participate until 2013. These programs represent a substantial portion of the early childhood care and education programs in Ohio and yet the plan does not include the development and their participation in any distinct way. It is not clear how Ohio arrived at 2% of these family child care homes will be participating by the end of the project. An overall discussion of how all numbers and percents were determined is lacking. All other programs have ambitious goals for increased participation in the TQRIS. Ohio describes two financial incentives to offset higher costs associated with the higher quality standards. This includes an annual financial incentive for programs achieving a Tier 1-3 rating and a market based reimbursement when a program reaches a Tier 3+ rating. The discussion of these two strategies does not provide any detail as to how this incentive will promote participation in the State's TQRIS.

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

Ohio has indicated that it will identify standardized and reliable tools that align with the revised SUTQ Programs' Standards. Already in place is a three-pronged approach to rating and monitoring programs. This included direct observation of each classroom, interviews, and written documentation. Although there is description of monitoring staff reports through supervisory review and a supervisor accompanies a monitoring staff on each verification visit, there is no description of what these reviews and verification visits are validating. There are no results reported on how well these reliability measures are currently working. Although Ohio has indicated that it will include reliable tools it has not discussed in detail how the other, current practices might change to be more robust. Ohio has described clearly both its plans to develop a single licensing system for programs and a transparency policy for parents to access information regarding SUTQ information. Many avenues of disseminating information are described and are sound in reaching the diverse population. A strength is that program information will also be dispersed by child care referral specialists. Ohio describes in detail that its current licensing system and information of programs is readily available to parents. There are many strategies employed to distribute this information to parents in a friendly manner. Ohio also indicates that it will create a new report targeted to parents and that this will be coordinated with the updated SUTQ system. There is a lack of specificity of how this will be completed as there is no goal, key activity or timeline in the High Quality Plan that is related to this activity of creating a new report. In leaving this out of the plan, Ohio is at risk of overlooking this important activity.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	15

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)

Ohio has described that it is fully implemented in the supports of professional development, financial incentives, scholarships, and technical assistance to programs. There are a clear set of opportunities for programs, day care providers, and for professionals to select from in developing higher level programs, centers, and/ or instructional strategies. Ohio also has identified that early childhood mental health consultants will also have access to these opportunities. This support system is an excellent model for other states. However, the description to pilot the elimination of family co-pay and is unclear as to what types/ categories of programs will be included in this pilot. The overarching questions of the pilot study were not identified and it is unclear what the pilot study hopes to achieve once results have been reported. Given that there are categories of programs that will not be rated until 2013 nor is there a description in the high quality plan that identifies how this pilot will progress; it cannot be assumed that all categories of programs will be represented in the pilot. Further, Ohio has indicated that there will be an increase in programs and high needs children participating in programs that are rated as tier 3-5 by 2015. Yet, when reviewing the table that presents the numbers of children to increase, there are wide discrepancies in the expectations of numbers of children participating. In looking more closely at the numbers: • Ohio is aggressively seeking to have 90% of the children enrolled in state-funded programs in Tier 3+ classrooms by 2015; while the small family child care program, (serving almost 3 times the number of children in these settings than state funded programs), is expected to have only 6% of the children in tier 3+ settings. • Early Head Start and Head Start program and ELDP/IDEA/B which expect 55% and 50%, respectively, of the children to be placed in tier 3+ programs by 2015; while ELDP/CCDF expects on 20% of the children to be placed the same. ELDP/CCDF serves 8,537 more children than Early Head Start and Head Start and 24,584 more children than ELDP IDEA/B. Ohio provides no explanation as to how and why these numbers were arrived at. There is nothing in the plan that suggests the programs that have low to no participation in the SUTQ system will be considered in a separate goal to increase these numbers in an efficient and productive way. There is not enough adequate information in the narrative nor does the high quality plan provide strategies on how each of these program types will be considered.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	8

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)

This narrative overviews Ohio's efforts to validate its past system and reports extensively on the results of each of three validation studies. Ohio did not provide these evaluation reports in the appendices nor detailed information regarding the three studies. Missing information that would help to determine the quality of the studies include: number of programs in the study, standard deviations, the statistics used to compare data, the probability level used to determine significance and effect size results. Ohio provides little information regarding Ohio's efforts to validate the state's improved and expanded TQRIS and improvement system with accuracy. While there is a great deal of experience on validation studies reported throughout this section, there is no discussion of a plan to validate the expanded system other than that the state will continue its independent evaluation and re-validate SUTQ's new standards and tiers. Ohio's past experience is clearly described but its future direction and how the state will approach the design is not given enough attention in the narrative.

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
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	28
<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>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (C)(1)		

There is clear evidence that there are standards in place for Pre-kindergarten and infant/ toddler guidelines. These standards/ guidelines are well devised and have been supported by scientifically based research practices. Figure VI C – 1 does a nice job of illustrating Ohio's coherent and Integrated Education System. Ohio has clearly demonstrated that the available standards are included in the high quality plan to align with standards in approaches to learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being for children from pre-kindergarten to grade 3. Ohio has clearly demonstrated that there are supports in place to promote the current standards and guidelines. Expansion of standards and guidelines will include professional development activities to ensure they are applied appropriately to early childhood settings. Ohio has completed a substantial amount of work in the area of standards for preschool and guidelines for infant/ toddlers. These standards/ guidelines have been applied to Ohio's TQRI system and have corresponding supports to maintain these standards/ guidelines in early childhood settings/ classrooms. Ohio does not meet the definition of Essential Domains but has clearly outlined how the state will approach expanding and refining the current document to meet the definition. This section was clearly presented with substantial supporting information presented in the appendices.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	30	29

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

- (a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;
- (b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;
- (c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and
- (d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)
Ohio has clearly identified steps to selecting appropriate instruments for its expanded tiered quality system. The instruments identified are valid and reliable. Ohio indicates that it will work with Maryland on developing a formative assessment. Ohio provides assurances that it will create a Birth to Three Professional Development System to abuild capacity of early childhood educators. All target populations in the birth through kindergarten groups have been addressed. The assessment will consider cultural differences. Ohio indicates that in collaborating with Maryland, there will a development to ensure reliabilty of educators' administration of the assessments. A certification of these professionals will be developed for the assessment tool and for the reviews of the classrooms (ECERS-R, CLASS, etc.) This is well discussed. The formative assessment tool is designed to be used across all types of Early Learning and Development Programs, a promising practice for the overall project and is inclusive in the birth to three professionals. Ohio's High Quality Plan includes the use of professional development modules for early childhood professionals. These modules may be completed online or in face-to-face instructional settings. This discussion is well conceived and provides detailed description of the overall plan for supporting effective uses of the Comprehensive Assessment System. Ohio did not discuss how these professionals, once they have received training, completed modules.

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
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	25

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 plan has presented a complete working document (Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies) for the Great Early Childhood Education Workforce that has been in place for several years. This document is presented and covers all areas identified in the definition of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. While the document was offered for review in 2007 by the Ohio Professional Development Network work group to 2 and 4 year credentialing institutions, the success of obtaining feedback to determine alignment with these institutions has been low. The return rate of the survey was described as few (no numeric or percentage with no reflection on why response rate was so low or how the state will change its approach. In the current plan, Ohio has determined that it is necessary to connect with the 2 and 4 year institutions. The plan includes reviewing all higher institution credentials with all 69 higher education institutions that offer programs and degrees or certifications in Early Childhood in early childhood education. The application included only two letters from 4 year institutions that support the development of such credentialing. Past efforts have not been successful in making a connection with the 4 institutions. The description of this strategy to connect is not outlined in a way that demonstrates how Ohio has learned from past mistakes (poor return rate and engagement in the process) and how it will employ new and aggressive strategies that will ensure the overall engagement of postsecondary institutions. An online system announcing professional development opportunities, including presentation of the CKC is discussed in some detail. It is not clear how this online pd system OPDN.org and its members are using site other than to find professional development opportunities. The alignment of the professional development site does not speak to how the site will be used to engage the postsecondary institutions and improve the participation of these institutions in the alignment of the CKC to each institution's credentialing of early childhood providers.

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
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	19

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;
- (d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and
- (e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

Ohio has identified that there is a working assessment screening tool in place in Ohio and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness. The work with Maryland will develop a more comprehensive tool that will provide data that will be essential for kindergarten teachers but also for use in reviewing Early Learning and Development Programs. The High Quality Plan is ambitious and Ohio is capable of reaching these goals through the deadline. Ohio has described how it will establish reliability and validity in detail and will take into account various populations such as ELL. There is little discussion on high needs children and how the results of this group will be reviewed. Student data will be entered into the current Longitudinal Data System. Ohio will continue to support the assessment through its annual General Revenue Funds. Ohio has presented a clear discussion of its efforts to use the KEA to understand the quality of the Early Learning and Development Centers and the readiness skills of the children entering kindergarten. The dual use of the KEA has an ambitious plan and support is in place.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	17

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)

Ohio presents a plan to initiate the development and coordination of a uniform data collection system that includes all Essential Data Elements. It is an aggressive and bold plan to coordinate data across state agencies and link to data of the quality ratings. While there are barriers, Ohio has background and experience in overcoming these barriers and setting for a system that will promote quality among early childhood programs and follow children's progress throughout pre-school through grade 12. Ohio has clearly indicated that a major barrier to the system is that there is a lack of common data standards throughout the state agencies. There are several systems in place in the state and no unique student identifier to link these data systems together. Ohio is further challenged by a lack of common standards and definitions for exchanging information. Through identified and adequate funding sources, ARRA SLDS grant, Ohio will work toward the facilitation of data exchange. Ohio's plan to remove this barrier is clearly described. The use of a vendor who will work with state agencies to develop the appropriate system that incorporates all elements of a comprehensive system. Ohio provides assurances that the system will provide information in a timely manner. Ohio also assures that the system and the management of the system will adhere to all requirements of privacy laws. A full discussion of past efforts indicates that Ohio has a full understanding of each of the laws listed and that these laws will be a guide to the development of the system. There is assurance that Ohio will link the child data system to quality programs' data for the purpose of differentiating quality among programs. This is an ambitious effort for Ohio and with past history of legislation, commitment to early childhood and experience in working with assessments, Ohio's plan should become a model for others states. Ohio focuses on the outcomes of children in the overall system.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	234

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9

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)

Ohio fully presents a process by which all small family child care homes are provided for and licensed. This will enable the state through the offices of ODJFS and ODE to monitor a wider range of family child care homes. A statutory change will require licensing and expand this by 6600. Both ODJFS and ODE will coordinate systems of licensing on child care centers that are not currently required to hold a license. All licensed child care and education programs will participate in the SUTQ system. However until the SUTQ system is fully operational, family child care homes will not be participating in the system until the statute is passed. There is no discussion on how the TQRIS will be presented to the family child care homes to promote their participation in SUTQ.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

(a) Ohio does not have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment in place that meets the selection criterion of (E) (1). (b) Ohio did meet a score of 70% or higher on (E) (1).

Absolute Priority

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

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

Ohio has many goals and activities identified to meet their absolute priority. The plan is comprehensive and cohesive in pulling together the many components (Comprehensive Data System, updating and expanding the current TQRIS, developing a formative assessment, etc. What is essential to the success of this plan is Ohio's history of past legislation in early childhood and the current governance to support the goals and activities identified in the High Quality Plan. Areas that are weaker in this plan and need more discussion include: the use of mental health consultants and a better discussion of how these professionals will be integrated into the overall project. This group of professionals has access to high needs children and their contributions are essential to the success of many components of this project (increasing participation of family child care facilities, development of standards, etc.) More information on the management and oversight of this group of professionals is not presented with any specificity in the plan. There is also a lack of discussion on the family child care group. This is historically a group of providers and the children in their care who are not generally participants in such systems other than acquiring basic licensing. This proposal is not specific enough in discussing how these providers will be approached. There are two problems to the plan to work with these groups that was not thoroughly discussed: waiting for a statute to be passed before such centers will be rated in the system; and the low expectation of 6% of the family child care centers to be rated by 2015. While Ohio has demonstrated commitment from various agencies across the state but only two state agencies are assuming leadership on the projects. While other agencies will be participating there is no tasks identified that the Department of Mental Health, Department of Health, etc. are not in leadership roles. Finally, Ohio does not discuss its efforts to work with institutions of higher education in depth. The poor return rate from these institutions regarding the alignment of the curriculum to state standards was not discussed fully discussed. There were no new strategies presented in the discussion that indicated that Ohio is not going to change their strategies to engage four year institutions in the project. Ohio can be a model for other states as it has demonstrated and provided evidence to its proposal. Ohio has in place a strong governance system, a well balanced stakeholder structure, a strong background and strong experience in developing a sound early childhood system that promotes school readiness among children with high needs.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OH-5028

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 1:03 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. Includes detailed text description of the core area requirements.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The State of Ohio evidences strengths in its past commitment to early learning as exemplified by: Leadership and ongoing commitment to local early learning and development initiatives by the business community under the leadership of the Ohio Business Roundtable; Statewide, Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) that provides tiered reimbursement payments and annual performance payments and requires onsite verifications each year. Statewide kindergarten entry assessment that has been administered since 2005. Statistical data provided do not fully support the state's past commitment to increase access to high quality learning programs for children with high-needs. The State reports that approximately 55% of children under age 6, or 401,444, are considered high-needs based on their parent's economic status, the family native language, or an identified delay or disability. Based on the data provided in Table (A)(1)-3 outlining the participation of children with high needs in different types of Early Learning and Development programs by age, there are approximately 202,601 children served. This leaves approximately 198,843 children still in need of services. Future commitment is also in question because if one considers the data reported, 75% of high-needs children in the State of Ohio enter school without the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten. However, the State plans to increase access to only 37,000 more children, therefore it is difficult to see the State's urgency in closing the kindergarten readiness gap as its plan will still leave approximately 161,843 children without high quality services. It should also be noted that the total number of children with high needs reported in the narrative for past commitment (401,444) differs from the one reported in the financial investment section VI(A)(1)(a) (440,771). The data reviewed fully support the State's financial investment in Early Learning and Development programs. Over the past 5 years the State spent nearly \$3.2 billion on early learning development programs. For each child under the age of 6 the State spends \$1,387 and for each child with high needs this amount increases to \$2,268. In Table (A)(1)-5 the historical data provided should one compare the past two years (i.e., 2010 & 2011) show that there is no change and/or decrease in participation of children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State with the exception of programs receiving CCDF funds and Programs funded under Title I of ESEA where no data was available. In regard to the Early Learning Initiative there is a drastic drop from 9,655 to 0. The State attributes the decrease in programs participation such as the State's Home Visiting Program to a conscious decision to serve

fewer children and improve outcomes. There is no rationale provided for the other programs. • Historical data provided fully support an increase over the past two years in the number of high-needs children served in high quality settings • The State of Ohio's commitment to early learning and development is evident in recent legislation and the use of evidence-based early learning and development policies and practices. Evidence of past commitment is substantiated by concrete facts: Since 2007 the State has adopted a nationally developed framework and set a core of elements to describe its comprehensive early learning and development system. Four key service delivery systems have been developed: Early Care and Education; Family Support, Special Needs and Early Intervention; and Health/Mental Health/Nutrition. In addition the State outlined the areas where leveraging efforts across agencies and systems could assist in the creation of a more efficient high-quality system (i.e. accountability, communication, financing, governance, quality standards, regulation, services and workforce development). • The State provides a detailed and well outlined status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system. It is evident that high quality guidelines and standards are in place. A comprehensive assessment system in many early childhood and development programs is implemented. Health promotion practices and a system that includes the use of a common, statewide developmental screening tool by over 700 pediatrics and family practice doctors support the State's efforts in this area. The State outlined some sound family engagement strategies exemplified by various activities conducted by programs. • The State's commitment to workforce development is not strong. Despite the fact that there are approximately 68 postsecondary institutions which issue three credentials for professionals working in Ohio and the flexibility in course design and content, the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have some type of early learning and development workforce credentials in the State is low across all available credentials. The highest percentage (64%) is noted for the Early Childhood Teacher (P-3) License which is not however aligned with the State Workforce and Competency Framework. • The information provided demonstrates that the State Kindergarten Readiness Assessment at present only assists educators in the evaluation of children's literacy (KRA-L). Table (A)(1)-12 evidences that other essential domains of school readiness are not evaluated. The KRA-L is not used to determine entry or placement in kindergarten. While in the State, there are currently over 40 Learning and Development Data Systems used, a system of integration was lacking. It is noted though that a recently awarded State Longitudinal Data Systems grant will be used by ODE to develop an early childhood data system integration plan. • Evidence of assessment was provided: The State of Ohio, in addition to the program quality measures verified through SUTQ (Step Up to Quality), also assesses quality of Preschool Special Education Programs and State Funded Pre-Kindergarten using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (EELCO).

	Available	Score
(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 reform 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)

• Evidence of the State's high needs is substantiated. In 2011, nearly 75 percent of the 50,000 high-needs children screened through the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L) were found to need intense or targeted literacy instruction. During the past five years, high-needs children have continued to perform poorly and the readiness gap remains wide. The State goals focus on increasing access to high quality early education experiences for more than 37,000 high-needs children; increasing quality by increasing the number of highly rated programs available to high-needs children by nearly 1,300; and closing the readiness gap by improving school readiness outcomes (literacy) by 5% for high-needs children. The goals as stated are achievable but not as ambitious as they should be when one takes into account the current status and high needs of disadvantaged children. • It is evident that the State has put in place an infrastructure to support its education agenda. The State intends to use the RTT-ELC grant to expand Step-Up to Quality (SUTQ) to an additional 1,500 early education and development programs by 2015 which represents an increase of more than 140% over the number of programs currently rated. The State plans to include all publicly funded programs in SUTQ, move currently rated programs to higher tiers, and use incentives for programs to maintain and for parents to select high-quality care for their children. The State plans to improve child outcomes by expanding and implementing early learning and development standards in the essential domains of school readiness and by developing a new assessment system that includes learning progressions and benchmarks. The State is also putting in place strategies to better prepare and have available an early childhood workforce. Furthermore, the state plans to join forces with the State of Maryland to develop a new kindergarten entry assessment, as part of the Comprehensive Assessment System for all domains of school readiness. Finally, the State plans to expand its early learning data systems to facilitate the longitudinal analysis of child outcomes tied to the quality of early learning and development programs. However, the narrative lacks information on how the State plans to close the readiness gap between high needs children and their non-disadvantaged peers as a result of the strategies suggested. •The State provides strong

rationales for choosing selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area. The State of Ohio has chosen to address Criteria (C)(1) and (C)(2). The rationale for choosing (C)(1) is because the State believes that early learning and development standards should serve as the foundation for quality standards, professional development and a comprehensive assessment system. The choice of (C)(2) rests on the commitment to share information with educators, policymakers, parents and the public. The State believes that such information is critical to developing and delivering instructional practices that meet children's learning needs, establishing accountability for public investments in early childhood initiatives and to understanding gains over time in the State's kindergarten population. The State of Ohio has chosen focus investment area (D)(1) because it believes that the early childhood workforce must have a consistent set of expectations of what educators of young children should know and be able to do with children in their care. The State of Ohio has chosen Area (E)(1) since it will allow the State to leverage its 6 years experience, the infrastructure and data gathered through the statewide administration of KRA-L and the 10 years experience from the State of Maryland with whom it plans to partner to put in place a very comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment that will give teachers better information to develop instructional practices and more information to understand the performance of early childhood programs. In its response to Area (E)(2) the State plans to develop a coordinated early learning data system that is interoperable with Ohio's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), facilitates exchange of data and provides information needed to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	10

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 State successfully address this criteria. The State of Ohio has established a governance structure that supports effective communication and decision making. In October 2011, the Governor issued an Executive Order establishing an Early Education and Development Officer within the Governor's Office of 21st Century Education. This officer coordinates and manages four distinct project teams: Assessment and Standards, Professional Development, Quality/Access and Financing, and Family Support and Engagement. • The State successfully describes the governance related roles and responsibilities of the lead agency or fiscal agent which is the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) as well as the roles and responsibilities of the State Advisory Council, and other participating agencies. Details were provided on the oversight role played by ODE and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) for the majority of projects outlined in the application. • Methods and processes for decision making, including dispute resolution are clearly stated. • The State effectively demonstrates its plan to involve key stakeholders. Input and guidance are secured through the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). To ensure strong involvement of the private sector, the Governor created the Early Education and Development Innovation Committee. • The information provided demonstrates strong commitment of State Agencies with detailed governance-related roles and responsibilities. • The nine (9) MOUs provided clearly delineate participation of the State Agencies and more specifically demonstrate their commitment to undertake specific tasks and activities related to the grant. • The proposal includes strong Letters of support from: eight Elected Officials, one Business Stakeholder (Ohio Business Roundtable: many Partners), twenty-seven Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, twenty-one Early Education and Development Stakeholders. Detailed scope of work is outlined in the MOUs and the summary table provided in the narrative. • 450 responses and suggestions for inclusion in Ohio's grant application were received from a Web-based survey distributed to early childhood providers, associations and other stakeholders.

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

• The State of Ohio provides in the budget narrative and tables reasonable, necessary and sufficient funds to support the activities described in the application and documents the use of existing funds by project and year. However, the State did not include existing funding from programs such as State Preschool, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, and TANF. Medicaid Earned Federal funds are only projected to be used during fiscal year 2012, thus this makes it difficult to ascertain if those funds will be available for use to sustain activities after this fiscal year. • A plan of sustainability after grant period ends is reassuring as it is proven that the state of Ohio's Executive and Legislative branches have increased the State funds devoted to early learning and development overall from 2007 to present and strongly demonstrates Ohio's financial commitment to the education and development of high needs children. It is also noted that participating agencies are committed to reallocation or repurposing of existing resources to continue the early childhood education and development work outlined in the grant.

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

10

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)

•Ohio presents a high quality response substantially implemented plan.The information provided supports the development and adoption of a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Currently the State has the Step Up to Quality (SUTQ), a statewide, three-tiered quality rating and improvement system available to community-based early learning and development programs and large family childcare homes. • To date 1,074 settings serving more than 81,000 children (infants to school age) in which nearly 36% (29,045 children) are high-needs children, have received a rating. • In order to meet all recommended TQRIS Program Standards and expand all Early Learning and Development Programs, the State plans to: revise the SUTQ program standards to specifically include family engagement practices and health promotion strategies; create a five-tier system by designing a transitional tier between the current first and second-tier levels to create a more gradual pathway and by adding a new top tier to better reflect the continuum of quality across settings; remove structural barriers in the SUTQ Program Standards designed to promote innovation and create standards applicable to all settings including school-based programs and small family childcare homes. • The State demonstrates commitment to imbedding evidence-based Early Learning and Development Standards within SUTQ. At present the State imbeds two early learning and development standards documents within the SUTQ's Early Learning indicators: The Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines and the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards that currently are under revision to incorporate all domains of school readiness. The State SUTQ quality rating system progressively incorporates the elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) as programs move to higher tiers and their Early Childhood Educators expand their knowledge and skills. SUTQ program Standards for administrator and teacher education qualifications demonstrates the progression of higher education requirements as program advance to higher tier levels. SUTQ provides some flexibility in meeting early childhood educator qualifications by using the Ohio's Career Pathways model which uses a point system to advance through six levels of professional recognition from entry level to highly educated and trained professionals with advanced postsecondary degrees. In addition to formal education, 20 hours of ongoing State-approved professional development is required every 2 years regardless of the level of formal education. • It is evident that Family engagement strategies are currently embedded in two of the current SUTQ categories. Indicators in the Administrative Practices category require programs to conduct self-assessments using the Program Administration Scale (PAS). Family Communication and Family Support and Involvement are two areas addressed in the PAS. Programs are required to complete a Quality Improvement Plan using the results of the annual self-assessment. Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) licensing requirements include unlimited parental consent. • Health promotion and practices are included in ODJFS licensing regulations. Programs must demonstrate compliance with these regulations in order to participate in SUTQ. The collection of data, both program level and child level, is required throughout the CAS. The SUTQ database and management system holds information about individual programs and fulfills management and monitoring functions. • Ohio plans to improve SUTQ Program Standards by explicitly adding Family Engagement and Health Promotion categories and the addition of eligibility for participation of small family child care homes.

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

Available

Score

15

13

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)

• Ohio provides a detailed account of its efforts for promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The State plans to expand SUTQ to all programs and by doing so will increase the number of rated programs to 2,528 in 4 years. This represents an increase of 1,454 programs. The State also plans to update funding incentives; provide teacher scholarships; target technical assistance; and pilot family incentives for rated programs. To further maximize participation of programs in SUTQ, the State of Ohio plans to continue its Quality Assurance Award (QAA) for all participating ODJFS-licensed programs and incorporate small family child care outcomes; continue enhanced payments based on tier level for CCDF-funded children; appropriately incorporate small family child care homes; and require State-funded preschool and preschool education programs to participate as a condition of funding • There is no current reliable data regarding the number of ODJFS or ODE licensed programs that support services under Part C of IDEA to infants and toddlers, making it difficult to maximize program participation in the State's TQRIS. It is not evident that the State has put much effort into collecting such data from programs that are mandated to track them. Recognizing this lack of data, the State proposes to enhance its home visiting and early intervention data system (Early Track) to identify any enrolled children who also attend early learning and development programs and provide a baseline for further examination. •The State describes effective policies and incentives to assist programs financially. Because SUTQ for ODJFS-licensed programs is voluntary, two types of financial policies and incentives are in place: QAA or performance payments and enhanced payments for children funded by the CCDF. The State plans to continue these policies for ODJFS-licensed programs, and financial policies will be developed and aligned for new types of settings as they are included in SUTQ. Standards are already required of State-funded preschool programs and preschool special education; however these programs will be required to participate in SUTQ by July 2014 as a condition of State funding. All SUTQ rated programs receive an annual financial incentive for achieving or maintaining a Tier 1, 2, or 3 rating. Monthly market-based reimbursements for CCDF-funded children are enhanced when programs achieve a SUTQ rating. ODE funded programs targeting high-needs children do not require a family co-payment. Ohio will test the effectiveness of eliminating family co-payments for CCDF-funded children that enroll in the highest rated programs, providing thus an incentive for parents to enroll their children in high quality programs.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	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 information reviewed supports the existence of a medium quality substantially implemented rating and monitoring system. Through its SUTQ rating and monitoring system the State of Ohio measures compliance with standards, ensures transparency in licensing and rating and makes information available to all parents. • The State plans to revise its rating and monitoring system to make meaningful information about the progress of children available to parents. • The State outlines some sound strategies it intends to adopt: identify appropriate, standardized, and reliable tools that align with the revised SUTQ Program standards; continue to use Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in the external evaluation to validate the consistency of ratings and for use in technical assistance with programs; align frequency of monitoring visits with evidence of best practices; require ODJFS to provide information on rated programs to families applying for CCDF child care assistance; develop new program reports for parents that provide information on school readiness outcomes; and create a single licensing system. • The evidence presented supports a thoughtful process for monitoring although not using a reliable and valid tool. The SUTQ on-site verification process is based on the Head Start Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring (PRISM). Twelve monitoring staff experienced in licensing and possessing background in early childhood education and child development conduct annual on-site verification visits. Verification visits include a three- step approach: direct observation of each classroom; administrator and teacher interviews; and review of the written documentation. Monitoring staff submit their monitoring reports electronically with a rating recommendation for a supervisory review. As a measure of consistency, all verification reports undergo a supervisory review before a rating is awarded. As an additional measure of reliability, the supervisor accompanies each monitoring staff on a verification visit at least quarterly. However, the length of time (15 minutes) proposed for classroom observation is insufficient for adequate evaluation of teacher-child interactions. In addition, the PRISM instrument currently used is not yet recognized as a valid and reliable tool for monitoring. • The ODJFS website provides readily accessible information about SUTQ and licensing. A program's licensing history, including inspection dates and types (monitoring or complaints), violation and the program's action plan to correct noted violations. • Programs are required to post their license and non-compliance findings in a place readily available to families at the program.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	16

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 State of Ohio has implemented some sound policies and practices in support of promoting access to high quality early learning and development programs for children with high needs. Ohio is one of 11 states that provide program providers with a monetary award and one of 6 states offering the incentive annually. The State is also one of only two states in which the amount of monetary award is aligned with rating level, program type, size of program, and the number of high-needs children, as defined for children receiving CCDF support. The State also provides a high-quality plan to enhance its system of participation by: • Providing performance payments to programs based on the rating level achieved • Increasing teacher qualifications through scholarships for college coursework that lead to degrees • Expanding professional development opportunities through web-based modules • Targeting technical assistance to programs serving high concentrations of high-needs children • Providing access to health promotion and early childhood mental health consultants that support programs with meeting new program quality standards • Piloting the elimination of co-payments for families under the Federal Poverty Guidelines that enroll in Tier 2 or Tier 3 programs • Piloting financial incentives that increase the number of high-needs children being served in programs that are currently rated at a Tier 2 or 3 level. • The applicant's goals are achievable but not as ambitious as they should be for a state with obvious needs to assist high-needs children and too conservative regarding increasing access to high-quality experiences for approximately only 37,000 high-need children.

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

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 State describes a high quality plan to validate the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Since the inception of SUTQ, the State engaged researchers at the Ohio Collaborative at the Ohio State University (OSU) to provide an independent evaluation that began in 2005 and has included three separate reviews focusing on different questions with each review. • The evaluation found significant differences between those achieving a tier level (1, 2, and 3) and those not achieving a tier level. At each increased tier level, higher Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) scores were earned by the participating programs, thereby validating the appropriate progression of Ohio's standards across tier levels. • The analysis also demonstrates that the standards worked as a whole and that no one indicator drove the tier ratings validating that the standards selected by Ohio were meaningful for producing and predicting quality environments • The third independent evaluation of SUTQ was completed in 2011 with the most compelling linkages to child outcomes. The study also included a geographically matched sample of 12 non-rated programs. The Ohio Collaborative found that rated programs scored significantly higher than non-rated programs on many of the teacher quality and child outcome measures. • As part of the third evaluation performed permission was obtained from parents to link the child data gathered in the study to the child's results on Ohio's current kindergarten readiness screen, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L). • Activities, schedules and evidence provided in the High-Quality Plan support the State's commitment to promoting continuous improvement in early learning and development programs.

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
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	26

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)

• The State presents a high quality substantially implemented plan to expand and support early childhood educators' use of early learning and development standards in all school readiness domains. • Ohio State plans to expand its content standards for pre-kindergarten and for kindergarten to grade 3 beyond the four core academic content areas to address missing domains, including approaches toward learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being and health. •As a whole, the early learning and development standards reflect broad, developmentally appropriate learning goals for children birth to kindergarten entry. The Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards and Infant and Toddler Guidelines encompass concepts and skills that may be achieved by all children with a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with disabilities. Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines were completed and released to the field in March 2006. Particular care was put into making this document easily understood by and relevant to parents, providers and policy makers. The pre-Kindergarten Content Standards were revised in 2009. During this process the State reviewed educational policies and practices of 11 countries that scored high on two international standardized assessments, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the Program for International Student Assessment. This process of international benchmarking was done in an effort to identify what these high performing nations did that made them successful. • Part of the State's High-Quality Plan for supporting comprehensive standards and assessments includes the plan to develop new standards in approaches to learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being for children from pre-kindergarten to grade 3. • The Infant and Toddler Guidelines are incorporated into the Standards of Care and Teaching for Ohio's Infants and Toddlers. The Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards are incorporated into program standards for preschool and child care programs including the Ohio Early Learning Program Guidelines (ELPG) and Ohio's Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System: Step Up to Quality (SUTQ). • Programs are required to adopt an evidence and research-based, comprehensive curriculum aligned with the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards. Alignment at the local level is demonstrated by program's completion and submission of the Standards-Curriculum-Assessment-Alignment Tool. • In order to support alignment and implementation of the adopted curriculum, Ohio's Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards in all content areas are accompanied by a Model Curriculum. The Model Curriculum is a dynamic web-based tool that will be revised as new research and resources become available to ensure that early childhood teachers provide high quality instruction for all children. • Ohio's existing Comprehensive Assessment System includes screening measures, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality, and measures of the quality of adult-child interactions. As the State expands its standards and Comprehensive Assessment System, it plans to ensure full alignment between the standards and the Comprehensive Assessment System. • All publicly funded and SUTQ three-star-rated programs must demonstrate alignment to the content standards and assess children systematically using both formal and informal methods to inform intentional instructions and monitor progress in all developmental domains. High quality programs are required to adopt a written, research/evidence-based, comprehensive curriculum and companion assessment and assess child progress two times per year. Currently the State requires programs to use Get It, Got It, Go (GGG) in publicly funded district preschool programs. The GGG is a literacy progress monitoring tool for children ages 3-5 and is aligned with the Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards in English Language Arts. • Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards are incorporated into Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. The Core Knowledge and Competencies framework supports practitioners in understanding the principles of child development necessary for implementation of the Infant and Toddler Guidelines. • Ohio's Assess, Plan, Teach model assists kindergarten through Grade 3 teachers acquire the knowledge and skills they need to provide effective reading instruction. • The State plans to create a Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development Support System (BKPDS) to build the capacity of early childhood educators in the areas of standards, assessment and formative instruction. The BKPDS will ensure support from subject matter experts in all areas some noticeable ones being: Early Childhood Mental Health, Health and young English language learners from birth to kindergarten entry.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	30	30

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

• In this section the State clearly and thoroughly outlines its plan to collaborate with the State of Maryland. Amongst the outcomes sought in this collaboration the State cites: the development of a sophisticated, user-friendly system that can be shared with other states across the country that will maximize resources. • The State of Ohio acknowledges the benefits it will get from improving its current assessment system, including the use of common measures reported consistently to the State, and from focusing particular attention on supporting young English Language Learners (ELL) in the classroom. • The State of Ohio provides a well-thought high quality plan to support modification of its Comprehensive Assessment System in the following key ways: • Development of a pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessment (for children 36 to 72 months of age) and a new Kindergarten Entry Assessment that will include all essential domains of school readiness. • Development and implementation of professional development on the administration and use of the assessment. • Development of a technology framework and infrastructure to support the ongoing tools and supports for the Formative Assessment and Kindergarten Entry Assessment. • Research and recommend the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and the CLASS for measures of environmental quality and quality of adult-child interactions respectively as part of SUTQ verification process for determining quality ratings. • Expand and refine formative instruction modules for early childhood educators of children birth to kindergarten entry, to promote use of data-driven instruction. • Create an early childhood ELL advisory group to research and make recommendations particularly around assessment and use of assessment to inform instruction for ELL students, and create professional development through the Birth to Kindergarten Entry Professional Development Support System (BKPDS) that addresses the needs of young ELL students. • Modifications to the Comprehensive Assessment System include the requirement that all publicly funded early learning and development programs participating in SUTQ will use the formative assessment developed in collaboration with Maryland for ages 36 to 60 months. • SUTQ programs will be required to engage in self-assessment using measures of quality for the environment and adult-child interactions for continuous improvement purposes. • To address the area of professional development along with support for standards and effective use of assessments, the State of Ohio will create the BKPDS to build capacity of early childhood educators in a number of areas including the selection and use of appropriate tools. • For the formative assessments being developed in collaboration with Maryland, both states will collaborate to develop professional development for understanding and using the new Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Formative Assessments and the Kindergarten Entry Assessments. Both States will work together to develop the professional development that certifies the reliability of educators' administration of the assessments. Training on the use of the new formative assessments will begin in spring of 2014 for early childhood educators of publicly funded programs in SUTQ. • Throughout its professional development system, Ohio will incorporate face-to-face training, as well as a flexible assortment of technology-supported, Web-accessible tools to support training. Key components of the professional development and training system comprise the use of train-the-trainers model, development of Web-based training, development and distribution of online information resources (and/or DVD resources for rural areas with limited broadband access) and implementation of ongoing coaching and technical assistance. • An early childhood ELL advisory group will be convened beginning in Year 1 of the grant and continue to Year 4 to particularly focus on assessment of and use of assessments for support of young ELL students in the classroom. • Ohio's new Child Link System will facilitate State agencies in determining where high-needs children are receiving multiple Early Learning and Development programs, in establishing the extent of duplication of services, and in recommending a process for sharing assessment and screening results across programs. The ability to link child-level information across State agencies, as well as to the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, as part of its State Longitudinal Data System will assist Ohio in targeting supports for high-needs children. • Ohio plans to accelerate the use of data to improve instruction by providing timely data through the formative assessment and kindergarten entry technology framework, as well as critical professional development. • The High-Quality Plan includes training of State Support Team early childhood personnel, Resource and Referral providers, and Infant Toddler Specialists to provide training on an introduction to measures of quality tools and on use of results from quality tools including external observations and use of tools for self-assessment purposes. • A significant portion of the costs for Ohio's work in this plan includes funding for development, Ohio will sustain the ongoing costs of the work through the use of existing State General Revenue Funds and federal funds. The participating agencies are committed to reallocation of existing resources to continue the support of early learning and development programs and services.

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
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	30

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 provides medium quality substantially implemented plan to develop a workforce knowledge and competency framework. The Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies (Ohio CKC) provides the foundation for critical knowledge and skills that support and foster a child's development and learning that leads to improved child outcomes. Ohio CKC is a collaborative framework, developed under the leadership of the Division of Child Care, ODJFS, Ohio Head Start Collaboration Project in the ODE and the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association. Ohio CKC complements the Standards for Ohio Educators developed by ODE for school-based educators through grade 12. It also supports Ohio's Infant and Toddler Guidelines and Ohio's Pre-kindergarten Content Standards. The State plans to fully integrate CKC as the common base of knowledge and skills for preparation of the early childhood education workforce. • In its application the State acknowledges that it has a complex system of early childhood educator preparation. Ohio has 22 state-level credentials and 68 postsecondary institutions that impact the early childhood education workforce. Despite this available presence, there is poor evidence of buy-in and engagement of so many institutions. The State reports that only some postsecondary institutions align with Ohio CKC. Furthermore, the extent of alignment, especially with bachelor's degree programs, is not clear. • The State of Ohio clearly outlines its plan to create a streamlined progression of credentials and degrees aligned with Ohio CKC to ensure that the birth to kindergarten entry education workforce has the core knowledge and competencies necessary to support young children's growth, development, and learning and to improve child outcomes. The Professional Development Project Team, led by the Early Education and Development Officer, will work with a core team of state agency representatives and key stakeholders to examine the alignment of existing credentials and degrees with Ohio CKC; conduct research on systems in other states; draft recommendations; secure review by national experts; gather input from stakeholders; and make final recommendations which will be implemented over the final 2 years of the grant. • For the majority of credentials, information is not available about alignment with Ohio CKC. No Ohio teaching license is inclusive of the birth to kindergarten entry age span nor is there any Ohio teaching license related to children birth to age 3. • OPDN.org houses Ohio's Web-based center for professional development aligned with Ohio CKC. • The State of Ohio adequately outlines its plan to engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with Ohio CKC. Representatives of both 2 and 4 year postsecondary institutions participated in the development of Ohio CKC. The State reports that a survey of all appropriate postsecondary institutions was conducted by OCCRR in 2007 to assess initial alignment of their programs with the completed Ohio CKC. Few responses were received. Review of activities, timeline and rationale provided in the High quality Plan for engaging postsecondary institutions does not reassure that this goal will be achievable. It is not evident that the method planned by the State to hire a contractor, provide print copies of the CKC to the institutions and additional copies to students will be an incentive to postsecondary institutions to become familiar with the document and engage in an alignment of their programs with the CKC. The State plans to convene early childhood faculty from postsecondary institutions along with statewide professional development providers twice annually over two years to engage them in an in depth examination of Ohio CKC. This activity does not appear to be a promising way for them to engage into aligning their programs with CKC. Furthermore, there is no budget allocated for this activity and it does not appear that much will be done to maintain the dialogue once this period is over.

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
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	16

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;
- (d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and
- (e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)
<p>• Ohio presents a high quality partially implemented plan. The State does not have at present a comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment but its high quality-plan outlines a comprehensive, well-thought process that supports understanding of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. For example: • Ohio's Comprehensive Assessment System includes the development and implementation of a comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) in collaboration with the State of Maryland. • The new KEA will address the essential domains of school readiness in language and literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, social-emotional development, physical well-being, and approaches to learning. • There is a clear timeline to implement the comprehensive KEA • The new KEA will be aligned with Early Learning Development Standards. • The new KEA will be administered to all Ohio kindergarten students beginning in Fall 2014. • Immediately following the RTT-ELC grant award, Ohio and Maryland will initiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of each state, contribution of funding, and formal procurement arrangements. • During year one of the grant, the State of Ohio will collaborate with the State of Maryland to develop the assessment framework, item prototypes, test items and performance tasks, and scoring guides based on the pre-kindergarten content standards within each state. The two states will identify content standards and indicators that are common and most related to later academic success. • For the purpose of establishing reliability and validity evidence for the new KEA for its population of kindergarten students, including ELL and students with disabilities, Ohio and Maryland will draw upon relevant educational testing standards and guidance. • Ohio will follow its standard process for engaging a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Fairness and Sensitivity Committee and ad hoc committees. • The KEA will provide guidance on test administration procedures for ELL, including guidelines for the following: giving the assessment to a child with limited English; stopping the assessment if the child does not respond to a series of items; communicating appropriately with parents who may need interpretation assistance; and recommending possible further assessment in a native language. • The KEA will provide guidance on test administration procedures for students with disabilities, identify any potential access limitations and guidance on overcoming those access limitations. • A detailed plan of the KEA administration is described in the High-Quality Plan for supporting standards and assessments. • As with the Ohio existing KRA-L all individual students' scores in the new KEA will be submitted to ODE via Ohio's EMIS and associated with the student's SSID which is assigned to and follows all students in public and community schools from prekindergarten through grade 12. The SSID is also linked to students in public post secondary institutions and children participating in early intervention or Part C of IDEA. • The KEA results will be linked to children in publicly funded programs, as well as those children participating in programs rated as part of Ohio's SUTQ System. • In Year 1 of the RTT-ELC, the State will develop legislation with the support of the Governor's office, ODE and ODJFS to permit children in publicly funded early childhood programs to access the SSID. As with Ohio's existing KRA-L, all individual students' scores in the new KEA will be submitted to ODE via Ohio's Educational Management Information System (EMIS) and associated with the student's Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) which is assigned to and follows all students in public and community (i.e. charter schools) schools from pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. • Funding for the development of the new KEA in Ohio will come from the \$1 million in existing Race to the Top funds and the cost savings from the collaboration between Ohio and Maryland. Both States' Superintendents provide letters of commitment to this collaboration. The State of Maryland plans to commit \$500,000 per year of the Judy Hoyer grant to fund the KEA. Ohio will continue to support the assessment through its annual General Revenue Funds. There are reassuring statements made in support of sustainability of this collaboration should either one of the states be successful in getting this grant. The Ohio-developed Instructional Improvement System (IIS) will be leveraged to provide tools, strategies, and professional development in support of the implementation of the KEA.</p>

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	16

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)
<p>• The State has partially implemented and provides a high quality plan to enhance an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. Some of the strategies outlined include: • Enhance Ohio's existing early learning data systems to ensure a unique identifier is used for all children participating in publicly funded early learning and developmental programs. The State will leverage the plan that is currently being developed and the work of the Ohio Education Directory System (OEDS) initiative as the foundation to implement the Child Link System. • Re-engineer the existing SUTQ data system to be web-based and include all types of early learning and development programs. • Collect child-level assessment data for programs rated in SUTQ. The State has been very aggressive in developing and implementing a technology infrastructure that collects and tracks education data and provides essential data tools to educators and stakeholders across the State. Ohio has been awarded three competitive Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grants in addition to Race to the Top funding to enhance and expand its SLDS. Each early learning and development agency in Ohio manages its own set of related data systems for workforce, program and child-level data. Additionally, there is a lack of common data standards and definitions for exchanging information between agencies. The essential data elements currently collected by Ohio will serve as the foundation to ensure a coordinated early childhood data system. The major challenge is the ability to link child, program, and workforce data across State agencies. Two existing initiatives have begun though to address these deficiencies and start building the foundation for a coordinated early childhood data system that will be interoperable with Ohio's SLDS. • The State successfully describes how it will meet data system oversight requirements and Federal, State, and Local Privacy Laws.</p>

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	236

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9

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 has substantially implemented and has a high quality plan to include all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Ohio plans to increase the number of licensed facilities by more than 6,600 by requiring small family child care homes to be licensed. Currently the State has a threshold for licensing settings that provide care and learning to six or fewer children. There is a certification process for family child care homes that are interested in providing services to children participating in the publicly funded child care program. • The State also plans to include all types of early learning and development programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), Step Up to Quality (SUTQ), within the next 2 years. • The State also plans to create a single licensing system to assure that health and safety regulations are developed and monitored consistently regardless of the setting. This work is already in process. Included in the development of the single licensing system will be the creation of a data system to record licensing information, including demographic information, licensing compliance history, and SUTQ participation. This data system will include a link to the SUTQ database and management system, and for the first time ever, will serve as a central location where families can obtain information on the licensing compliance and quality standards across all settings.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p>		
Comments on (H)(3)		
Ohio has earned a score of 80 percent of the maximum points available for criterion (E)(1)		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	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>	
Comments on Absolute Priority	
<p>The State in its application and in particular throughout its High-Quality Plan demonstrates a great understanding of the need to promote school readiness for children with high needs. The State reports some sobering statistics in the current status of Ohio's children. 75% of high needs children in Ohio enter school without the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten. They further acknowledge that these problems persist into the early grades and beyond. The State reports that according to the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress, just 22% of economically disadvantaged Ohio fourth graders were proficient in mathematics, and only 15% were proficient in reading. The State understands that nearly 30% of them will fail to graduate from high school. In addition, in the Governor's Office Executive Order 2011-21K, there is recognition that the state's current approach to early childhood education is fragmented, lacks cohesive leadership, and is not sufficiently accountable. The State satisfactorily demonstrates the existence of high quality plans to build a system that increases the quality of early learning and development programs for children with high needs. However in regard to increased access to high quality experiences for more than 37,000 high needs children the State's plan to reach that goal appears achievable but not ambitious enough. An area of challenge remains in the State's ability to create a Great Early Childhood Education Workforce based on the current status of the credentials. The struggle for development of a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with workforce knowledge and competency framework do not provide assurance of success in this area. The State has many strengths that could support effective implementation of its High-Quality Plans; • Focused, accountable leadership; • Common statewide tiered</p>	

quality rating, and improvement system • Comprehensive Assessment System to measure progress in achieving results • and Strong private sector and community engagement. The collaboration with the State of Maryland to create a new Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) is also commendable.