

Southern Early Childhood Association

Public Policy Notes

Four SECA States Selected to Participate in the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy

Harvard University will host a National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy on June 26-27, 2008. The Symposium will be presented by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Selected from a highly competitive field of applications, fourteen states were invited to participate and, of the 14, the SECA region has four states invited to the Symposium. Those states are **Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee and Virginia**

The selections were based on the following:

- The clarity of the goals outlined in the application
- The capacity of the team members to advance state policy and systems.
- The potential for new policies or investments to move forward in a collaborative, bipartisan manner with public-private support.

The eight-member state bipartisan teams include Lieutenant Governors and chief gubernatorial policy advisors, state Senate Presidents and House Speakers,

key legislative committee chairs, early childhood cabinet and council members, business executives and foundation leaders.

“The Symposium will bring together information about recent advances in the science of early childhood and early brain development with the best understanding of what works in early care and education programs. By using this knowledge and working together, state leaders can develop policies that enhance children’s well-being and long-term outcomes, laying a strong foundation for economic prosperity, healthy lives and strong communities.”

Source: Harvard University News Release, April 4, 2008

National Women’s Law Center Schedules Call on Child Care Centers with Pre-K Programs

The National Women’s Law Center is hosting a conference call entitled, *Workforce Issues Facing Child Care Centers Operating State Prekindergarten Programs*, on Thursday, May 22, 2008 at 2:00 pm Eastern.

The call is interactive and will allow for participant discussion with presenters.

Phil Acord, CEO of the Children’s Home/Chambliss Shelter in Chattanooga, TN and a former President of the Southern

Early Childhood Association is one of the presenters featured on the call.

To sign up for the call, go to <http://action.nwlc.org>. Registration is open to any interested professional.

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Special points of interest:

- Pre-K Funding
- Family Friendly Work Policies
- National Symposium
- CCDBG

Funding the Future

Have you wondered how your state funds pre-K, and what policy choices were being made as budgets were deliberated?

Pre-K Now, the national advocacy group, has released a report, *Funding the Future: States' Approaches to Pre-K Finance, 2008 Update*. (February 2008)

This report provides an overview of the current funding strategies throughout the states. Information about the type and source of those funds and the pros and cons of each are listed.

Funding for Pre-K in the Southern states is primarily through state general revenue; however, states use a

variety of funding sources to support the program.

- The states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia provide state general revenue.
- The states of Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee generate pre-K funding through a state lottery.
- In South Carolina and North Carolina, public private partnerships provide funding.
- In Texas, West Virginia, and Oklahoma, the Pre-K funding flows through the School Funding Formula.

- Mississippi has no pre-K program.

Most of the Southern states have a targeted group of children that are eligible for pre-K. The states of Oklahoma and West Virginia have unrestricted eligibility to participate, and West Virginia has a law in place that will fully fund pre-K for all four-year-olds through its school funding formula by 2012.

For more information on this report, go to www.preknow.org. You will find a wealth of resources about pre-K with state specific information that will be useful in your advocacy efforts.

Tennessee's Governor "Trims His Sails"

The state of Tennessee is facing a shortfall in revenue of over \$400 million dollars in the next budget cycle. Governor Bredesen had proposed an additional \$25 million investment in pre-K programs for the next fiscal year; however, the budget situation will impact the amount of state money that Tennessee can commit to pre-K.

Governor Bredesen was recognized by

Pre-K Now in their annual *Leadership Matters* report for his commitment to maintaining and expanding the state pre-K program in spite of the dire fiscal situation in his state. Tennessee's pro-

"I'm going to have to trim my sails a little bit...in a lot of places, but I'm going to figure out how to grow the pre-K program."

Governor Phil Bredesen of Tennessee

gram meets 9 of the 10 quality standards set by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), and Governor Bredesen is committed to finding a way to expand the program.

Collectively, the nation's Governors have proposed an increase of \$281 million to establish pre-K programs.

Source: Kingsport TimesNews, April 23, 2008

Governor Jindal of Louisiana Proposes Additional Pre-K Funding



Governor Bobby Jindal, the newly elected Governor of Louisiana, proposed a \$2.5 million increase in the budget for LA4, Louisiana's nationally recognized pre-K program.

Governor Jindal made the proposal in his opening speech on March 31, 2008,

to the Louisiana legislature and included pre-K as one of the vital programs for the development of Louisiana.

In his speech, Governor Jindal said, "The vital foundation for workforce training is, of course, a great education. It is critically important that we continue to support early childhood education to prepare our children for a life-

time of success."

The South's Governors are being recognized for leading the way in establishing early childhood education opportunities for young children, and Governor Jindal has maintained that commitment.

Source: Governor Jindal's Opening Speech to the Louisiana Legislature

Report on the Child Care & Development Block Grant Released

The U.S. Child Care Bureau routinely collects reporting data on expenditures and programs funded by the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The *Report to Congress for FY 2004 and 2005* has just been released.



CCDBG has been for many years the major funding source of quality improvements for child care, as well as the main funding source for child care subsidies to low-income families. In many states, it works in concert with state and federal funding to expand its scope and impact on the early childhood field. Some states have partnered it with pre-K funding to provide a more comprehensive program for working

families.

Following are some highlights from the current report:

- Spending on child care is historically high but has been declining in recent years.

- A total of 2.35 million children received child care assistance through all funding sources in 2004 and 2005.
- The number of children receiving assistance is declining over time.

As state and federal budgets tighten, the pressure to reduce the number of children receiving subsidies will increase. The state of Arkansas is currently considering reducing eligibility because of a funding shortfall.

For a copy of the report, go to www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/ccdf/rtc/rtc20...

Starting Early, Starting Right Act Introduced

Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) has introduced the *Starting Early, Starting Right Act*.

This act amends the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and includes the following:

- An increase of \$50 billion over 50 years.
- Investments in improving quality, including professional develop-

ment for caregivers, regulation of child care, and support of QRS (Quality Rating Systems).

- Higher reimbursement rates for providers.

Affordable, high-quality child care helps children develop the skills they need to be ready for school.

National Women's Law Center

- Greater access to quality infant/toddler care.
- Creation of a Federal Office of Child Care.

A full analysis of the bill is available at www.nwlc.org. **If you support this bill, the National Women's Law Center urges you to call your Senators at 202-224-3121 and ask them to sign-on as a co-sponsor of this bill.**

How to "Make Work Work"

The Families and Work Institute has released their *2008 Guide to Bold New Ideas for Making Work Work*.

This report details the latest and most innovative trends in effective and flexible workplace practices. The initiatives highlighted were selected from the Sloan Award-winning organizations located in 24 communities.

The Institute presents the *Alfred P.*

Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility each year, and these communities in the SECA region have been selected to recognize their employers for 2008:

Atlanta, GA; Birmingham, AL; Charleston, SC; Dallas, TX; Richmond, VA; Houston, TX; Lexington, KY; Louisville, KY; Melbourne-Palm Bay, FL; and Savannah, GA.

For more information on the awards and a copy of the report, go to www.whenworkworks.org. You'll find a list of the 2007 award winners and a list of the local contacts in the 2008 communities. Local and state affiliates should use this opportunity to recognize their local award winners for their "family-friendly" worksites. The business community can be a strong ally for early childhood advocates.

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Public Policy Resources from SECA

- **Position Statements** on issues that are pertinent to the field of Early Childhood Education.
- **Summaries of reports and data** for the SECA states.

Check out the Public Policy and Position Statement pages. This information is not copyrighted and is available for your use. You'll also find links to the public policy pages of your state affiliate websites. (Just click on **The SECA States** button at the top of the SECA homepage.) Be an informed and prepared advocate for children!

We're on the Web
www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org

Partnering for Preschool—What We Can Learn from the Abbott Centers

The Abbott Preschool Program was created 9 years ago to fulfill the mandates of a New Jersey Supreme Court order. The Supreme Court ordered that preschool high-quality education be provided to all 3 and 4-year-olds in the state's poorest school districts. The program is currently educating about 40,000 children per year, and is doing so in a mix of public school and private centers.

Researchers were interested in identifying ingredients of success others can use in developing programs with mixed delivery systems and interviewed 98 directors of Abbott centers. In the process, they identified policy goals for mixed delivery sys-

tems—goals that had contributed to the success of the Abbott Preschool Program. States striving for mixed delivery systems should:

Goal #1: Enhance collaboration among state agencies.

Goal #2: Enhance collaboration between school districts and state agencies.

Goal #3: Enhance collaboration between school districts and private centers.

Goal #4: Develop policies to minimize the difficulties of blending preschool and wrap-around services.

Goal #5: Minimize inequalities among teaching staff within and

across preschool centers.

Goal #6: Provide ongoing mentoring and support for center directors regarding staff development and equity issues within centers.

Goal #7: Provide training and professional development that is accessible to teaching staff in private child care programs, and

Goal #8: Provide ongoing leadership development for publicly funded, mixed delivery preschool services.

The report is available at http://www.iir.berkeley.edu.edu/cscee/pdf/partnering_preschool_highlights08.pdf