



STATE GRANTEE PARTNERS FY18

Arizona

Arizona Early Childhood Alliance

Primary Contacts: Kelley Murphy, Ginger Ward

Arizona's Early Childhood Alliance (AZECA) is a coalition of more than three dozen early childhood organization dedicated to collaborating on public policy solutions to help young children be prepared for kindergarten and educational success.

AZECA will create policy recommendations (local, state or organizational) and advocate for policy implementation to create a better aligned child care system. In the coming year, AZECA will focus on mapping out which agencies and organizations are already doing alignment work within the system, identify the gaps that exist, identify which of those gaps are most appropriate for AZECA to take the lead on, and prioritize the tasks to begin the work.

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, ForwARd Arkansas

Primary Contacts: Rich Huddleston, Susan Harriman

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families works to ensure that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential through data analysis, public policy development, and coalition building. ForwARd Arkansas is a partnership of parents, educators, civic leaders, business professionals and policymakers promoting a PreK-12 policy agenda that will help Arkansas dramatically improve student achievement, close the achievement gap and become a leading state in education.

Arkansas partners are focusing on quality preK and other early learning policies. Their priorities include developing a viable funding strategy for pre-k that meets the cost of quality and unmet need; enhancing their messaging strategies; strengthening support from the business community as well as grassroots (especially teachers and early education providers); and increasing political support, especially among conservative policymakers. Arkansas Advocates will receive TA from the Center on Early Education Learning Outcomes on estimating the true cost of prek.

California

Children Now, Advancement Project

Primary Contacts: Stacy Hae Lim Lee, Karla Pleitez Howell

Children Now (CN) is a leading non-partisan research, policy development, and advocacy organization dedicated to improving children's overall well-being in California. Advancement Project (AP) champions the struggle for greater equity and opportunity for all, fostering upward mobility in communities most impacted by economic and racial injustice with a focus on health, education, and early care and education.

AP is leveraging data mapping work they did with 5 strategically-selected counties in California to help other counties develop a more consistent way of understanding the supply of child care, especially for infants and toddlers; help local leaders use the data to educate and inform policymakers; and highlight the need for infant-toddler care among candidates for governor and state superintendent. CN will continue to lead a stakeholder engagement process to develop a statewide early childhood policy agenda, with an emphasis on infants and toddlers; educate policymakers and gubernatorial candidates so that new political leadership in 2019 will have a more comprehensive, birth-to-five vision for the state's early; and engage in budget and legislative advocacy to protect and increase early care and education investments.

Colorado

Clayton Early Learning, EPIC, Colorado Children's Campaign

Primary Contacts: Charlotte Brantley, Bill Jaeger,

Clayton Early Learning focuses on family-centered classroom and home-based practices through their schools, research and program evaluation, and professional development of teachers and leaders to prepare young children for school. The Colorado Children's Campaign is the state's leading child advocacy organization, using data and research to organize an extensive statewide network of child advocates across the state. EPIC is a membership organization of business leaders, nonprofits and foundations committed to making early child care, education, health and parenting among Colorado's highest priorities for public and private investments.

Our Colorado partners will be both responsive to immediate policy opportunities this grant cycle as well as spend time creating a policy agenda for early childhood to guide their long-term work. Colorado will elect a new governor in 2018, and the Colorado partners will dedicate time to develop a coordinated, coherent policy agenda for the next administration.

In the coming year, they will work on:

- Advancing new policy change and supporting implementation of recent legislation to reduce suspension/expulsion in early learning settings, and continued work on ensuring all kids get a healthy start;
- Advocating for critical early childhood tax credits and financing for the systems that support young children;
- Building state capacity around preK funding; and
- Supporting the early childhood workforce.

Florida

United Way of Miami-Dade, Children's Movement of Florida, Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions

Primary Contacts: Jessica Scher, Vance Aloupis, Carol Brady

A coalition of organizations in Florida work to raise the standards of, and increase access to, early childhood education in Florida. They build strategic partnerships and a spirit of collaboration among business leaders, policymakers, early learning professionals, advocates and parents to increase awareness and public support for high quality early learning.

The Florida coalition of partners will focus on four policy goals:

- Increase access to quality early learning programs by aligning higher provider reimbursement rates with quality benchmarks and standards.
- Develop a comprehensive system of accountability birth through kindergarten that includes School Readiness, VPK, and Kindergarten assessment policies and protocols.
- Improve cross-sector collaboration and public awareness of the needs of vulnerable young children and their families through the First 1000 Days Coalition.
- Raise awareness of and increase state support for home visiting as an effective service delivery strategy for providing education and support to vulnerable families and their young children.

The Children's Movement of Florida will receive TA from the Committee for Economic Development on business engagement; the Children's Trust requested and will receive TA from ZERO TO THREE on home visiting and infant mental health; the Florida Children's Council requested and will receive TA from Child Trends on improving accountability systems.

Georgia

Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students

Primary Contact: Mindy Binderman

The Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) is a statewide advocacy organization that focuses on bridging the gap between Georgia's families, business community, and policy leaders as it promotes school readiness for young children. GEEARS works closely with state agencies to implement policy change, advocate for early learning in the General Assembly, and engage civic leaders.

GEEARS will host a site visit showcasing early childhood advocacy for preK in Georgia. Patterned after the 2016 North Carolina site visit, these visits offer a unique view into a leading advocacy state while also giving the host state an opportunity to talk about shared challenges with their peers. The site visit takes 15 state advocates around the state and to see how advocates embed advocacy into multiple dimensions of early childhood policy.

In the coming year, GEEARS will also focus on:

- Candidate education for the November 2018 election, when Georgia will elect a new Governor;

- Celebrating the 25th anniversary of Georgia Pre-K, and ensuring state leaders continue to appreciate its value and;
- Communications, both building new champions for young children, and leading a working group of advocacy organizations to ensure a coordinated message on child care quality and affordability.

GEEARS will receive TA from CSA (Mission: Readiness) to cultivate new messengers for infant and toddler care.

Illinois

Ounce of Prevention Fund, Illinois Action for Children, Voices for Illinois Children, Latino Policy Forum, Council for A Strong America

Primary Contact: Gail Nourse

In order to improve opportunities for young children and families, especially those with the highest needs, Illinois early childhood advocates will drive positive policy change with a unified voice, which focuses on early care and education at the state level, with city and federal attention as circumstances demand. In particular, they will focus on the following core components of early childhood care and education: preschool and Head Start/Early Head Start, child care, home visiting, Early Intervention and early childhood special education.

In the coming year, Illinois partners will:

- Develop an early childhood vision for gubernatorial and other candidates in order to educate and inform campaigns;
- Improve access to quality for the highest need children in early learning programs through improved funding and policies;
- Advocate for increased federal funding for early learning programs, reauthorization of MIECHV and protecting ACA.

Kansas

Kansas Action for Children

Primary Contact: Annie McKay

Kansas Action for Children (KAC) shapes health, education and economic policy on behalf of all children in Kansas. They conduct research, analysis, communications, and outreach to impact public policy for young children and their families, with a plan that prioritizes opportunities to impact children birth through 8 and mitigate, prevent, or reduce childhood poverty.

KAC is a multi-issue organization with a significant focus on expanding policies and public/private investments in early childhood. KAC has a history of, and will continue to, protect children's programs. This year's political landscape is more favorable and they will also be working to:

- Monitor enrollment trends, determine opportunities to improve access to safety net programs, and preserve the state's Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Use strategic communications to reshape the public dialogue around childhood poverty in Kansas; and

- Explore public-private partnerships supporting expanded early childhood services in other states to determine how to maximize investments in Kansas' youngest children.

Louisiana

Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

Primary Contact: Melanie Bronfin

The Louisiana Policy Institute (Policy Institute) is a source of nonpartisan, independent information on issues concerning children birth through 4. They develop policy proposals and provide educational and outreach activities to ensure Louisiana's youngest citizens are on a path to success.

The Policy Institute will advocate for policy improvements in 4 key areas:

- Increasing public funding for high-quality ECE;
- providing recommendations to improve the implementation of coordinated enrollment, assessment and improvement efforts through the ongoing implementation of Act 3;
- Expanding the engagement of business leaders in early childhood issues through the Early Childhood Business Roundtable and the launch of Louisiana Early Care and Education Week and;
- Working with the Louisiana Board of Regents and higher education partners to develop improved career pathways for ECE educators

The Policy Institute receives technical assistance from Council for a Strong America, Child Trends, CEELO, Child Care Aware of America, and Louise Stoney.

Maine

Maine Children's Alliance

Primary Contact: Rita Furlow

The Maine Children's Alliance (MCA) provides nonpartisan leadership by promoting and advocating for sound public policies that benefit Maine's children. They provide comprehensive data and information about the status and well-being of Maine's children and have become a valuable resource for state policymakers.

MCA will engage in 4 key activities this year:

- Continue to advocate for implementation of recommendations from their Social Emotional Learning and Development report;
- Engage home visitors as part of an advocacy strategy to increase awareness of and support for Maine Families Home Visiting;
- Continue to support the co-chairs of the bipartisan, bicameral early childhood caucus to educate and engage lawmakers around the value of investing early in Maine's children; and
- Continue to monitor child care rulemaking, including the proposed family child care rules, and provide information to partners, legislators, and the public about the status of the rules.

MCA will use the information gathered at the 2014 and 2016 Children's Conventions to craft an early childhood policy platform with a broader coalition of state partners that can inform

gubernatorial candidates in 2018. They will receive TA from: Center on Law and Social Policy, Child Trends, Committee for Economic Development, National Center on Children in Poverty, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Women's Law Center, and ZERO TO THREE.

Massachusetts

Strategies for Children, Inc.

Primary Contact: Amy O'Leary

Strategies for Children (SFC) works to ensure that Massachusetts' children have the support they need in the early childhood years to be ready to succeed in school and life. They inform legislation, do budget advocacy, raise awareness with the media, and provide local TA to improve early learning systems, kindergarten readiness, and third grade reading proficiency outcomes.

SFC is advocating for the expansion of preK funding, partly by leveraging their recent work supporting local communities to expand preK through state and federal grants. Through this work, SFC can help policymakers understand local demand, what communities need to implement preK effectively, and grassroots and grasstops support for early education. They will continue to advocate for general early care and education investments, especially supports for the workforce, and educate gubernatorial candidates on these issues in 2018.

Michigan

The Center for Michigan

Primary Contact: John Bebow

The Center for Michigan (CFM) is a business coalition with the goal of making Michigan a better place by encouraging greater understanding and involvement in policy issues among the state's citizens, and making sure their voices are regularly heard. They do this by calling forth citizen views, amplifying those views, and projecting them into the halls of power.

CFM, together with Public Sector Consultants, will continue to focus on two areas: preservation and expansion of the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) preK program, and continued education to boost investment in child care. These Michigan partners are experts at mobilizing business leaders for early childhood. They will continue to convene the business-led Children's Leadership Council of Michigan (CLCM) to refine policy priorities based on new research and the perspectives of key lawmakers and senior administration officials, and to develop strategies and tactics for moving policy priorities forward. Once the plan for CLCM members' activities has been decided, staff will help the CLCM carry out the plan. As the November 2018 gubernatorial election nears, they will use their Bridge Magazine to focus most stories on the importance of early childhood to ensure a strong future of Michigan.

Mississippi

Mississippi First

Primary Contact: Rachel Canter

The mission of Mississippi First (MSF) is to champion transformative policy solutions ensuring educational excellence for every Mississippi child. MSF is the leading advocate for the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013, Mississippi's state-funded preK law, which is based on an MSF issue brief. They conduct research, advocacy, and implementation efforts for the state program, including supporting the Mississippi Department of Education, funded preK programs, and applicant communities.

Mississippi First is creating and implementing advocacy trainings to help communities increase access to quality preK. These trainings will use community-level data to describe current access to quality programs, present options for expansion, and help communities understand and develop an advocacy strategy for expanding access. Mississippi First will provide three toolkits to communities that explain options including: Title I preK, blended Head Start, and state collaborative preK.

Nebraska

First Five Nebraska

Primary Contact: Becky Veak

The vision of Nebraska First Five (FFN) is that all Nebraska children begin kindergarten with the experience they need to become successful students and productive citizens. Working with state partners in the legislature and government agencies, they seek to create effective early childhood policies that promote accountable early childhood investments with outcomes that eliminate the achievement gap for Nebraska's youngest learners.

First Five Nebraska will attend the Alliance Partner Summit and has full access to all our state and national partners. They will work to:

- Expand access to high-quality child care for at-risk infants and toddlers;
- Strengthen policies that support the early childhood workforce;
- Refine the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Step Up to Quality, by incorporating the results of evaluation data; and
- Improve early childhood data collection and use.

New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Primary Contact: Cecilia Zalkind

Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) works for a future where all children in the state grow up healthy, safe and educated. They improve high quality early education policies and programs for children from infancy to age 8 and their families by educating, informing and engaging leaders and the public on children's needs, and by conducting independent research, data, and policy analysis.

In the coming year ACNJ will:

- Address chronic absenteeism in preschool and kindergarten by working collaboratively with school districts to educate and engage parents about the importance of daily attendance and its link to grade-level reading;
- Make preschool expansion a priority issue for the 2017 gubernatorial and legislative elections; and
- Increase the child care subsidy reimbursement rate for infants.

ACNJ will continue to partner with RIKC to co-facilitate the State Based Advocates for Early Learning work group where state advocates inform federal policy developments and states devote some time to engage in advocacy to support federal action. ACNJ will receive TA from the Center on Law and Social Policy to identify states that are effectively addressing the subsidy reimbursement rate for infants.

New Mexico

New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership, ~~UNM Center for Education Policy Research~~, Envision NM and Pegasus Legal Services for Children

Primary Contacts: Claire Dudley Chavez, Tara Ford

The mission of the New Mexico Early Childhood Partnership (NMECDP) is to create the public awareness and political will for investments in early childhood care and education in New Mexico. Envision NM improves healthcare quality for children and adolescents by providing quality improvement and coaching to help pediatric and primary care providers make sustainable positive changes in their practices. Pegasus Legal Services for Children is a private, non-profit agency that serves the civil legal needs of New Mexico's vulnerable children and youth by promoting and defending the rights of children and youth to safe and stable homes, quality education and healthcare, and a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership (NMECDP) will partner with Pegasus Legal Services for Children to investigate and develop policy recommendations on the practice of suspension and expulsion of children in child care and preK.

Envision NM and Pegasus Legal Services for Children will continue to work towards increasing social emotional developmental screenings in NM. Envision NM will work with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems stakeholder group (convened by the NM Department of Health) to endorse a set of evidence-based screening tools, identify ways to increase awareness among the medical community on the importance of S-E screening, build consensus around financing of S-E screening, and develop provider S-E screening workflow models, inclusive of resources and referrals. Pegasus will focus on legislative advocacy and develop policy recommendations to improve access to S-E screening and appropriate follow up.

NMECDP will receive TA from the National Center on Children in Poverty on suspension and expulsion of young children and to develop policy recommendations that best address the impact of deep poverty on children and families in New Mexico. Envision NM and Pegasus Legal

Services for Children will receive TA to learn how other states have improved comprehensive screening and social-emotional well-being.

New York

Center for Children's Initiatives/Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Primary Contact: Betty Holcomb

The Center for Children's Initiatives (CCI) works under the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, a well-respected policy organization based in Albany. CCI works to assure every child in New York starts life with a foundation of health, care and learning to succeed in life. CCI serves in leadership roles in state and local coalitions to secure funding, resources and policies across ages prenatal to third grade. CCI also partners with the Campaign for Educational Equity to advance preK financing and serves on several leadership bodies including the state Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Early education in New York continues to enjoy political momentum, both in Albany and New York City. CCI will be working to guide this momentum so that it produces policies that are beneficial to the larger early learning system. They will continue the work of streamlining the state's multiple funding streams for preK, while pushing for greater access outside of the city; support expanding preK access to 3-year-olds in a way that protects the system for infants and toddlers; and advance policies on compensation issues, especially for educators in community-based settings. CCI will receive TA from Center for Law and Social Policy, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Center for Early Education Learning Outcomes, Committee for Economic Development, Migration Policy Institute, and National Women's Law Center.

Oklahoma

Smart Start Oklahoma

Primary Contact: Debra Andersen

Smart Start Oklahoma seeks to provide better opportunities to the children and families in the state by engaging businesses and the public in supporting and investing in early childhood in a coordinated early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children.

The Department of Human Services made significant cuts to the Smart Start initiative, forcing them to close most of their local offices in FY18. The state office will remain open, and will continue to focus efforts on:

- Increasing the family voice in the design and improvements of early childhood programs and services;
- Developing an integrated early childhood data system;
- Piloting a kindergarten assessment, in partnership with the department of education and;
- Creating messages and public awareness around early childhood in light of severe budget reductions in the state.

Smart Start Oklahoma will receive TA from the Committee for Economic Development to rebuild the network of business champions for young children in the state.

Oregon

Children's Institute

Primary Contact: Swati Adarkar

The mission of the Children's Institute (CI) is to move research to action by promoting cost-effective public and private investments in young children birth through third grade to increase the number of Oregon's children who are developmentally on track, arrive at kindergarten prepared for success, and meet third grade benchmarks.

The Children's Institute works to strengthen leadership inside and outside government to advance policies that build a prenatal-to-age-eight system. They are working with the Early Learning Division and policymakers to articulate and pursue a 0-8 agenda that addresses statewide priorities, including workforce supports, infants and toddlers, early health outcomes, high-quality pre-k, and alignment with K-3 improvement strategies. They are also building a more diverse coalition (issue areas, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, rural and urban, etc.) that supports a cohesive agenda for 2018 and 2019. CI will receive TA from BUILD, Migration Policy Institute, and ZERO TO THREE.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

Primary Contact: Joan Benso

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) is a statewide, independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit advocacy group working to improve the health, education and well being of the Commonwealth's children. PPC's core strategies include research and analysis, strategic communications, mobilization, and government affairs.

In the coming year they will:

- Preserve and reauthorize state Medicaid and CHIP programs;
- Expand the availability of evidence-based home visiting strategies;
- Assure the availability of high-quality child care for low-income families; and
- Expand the number of children enrolled in high-quality pre-kindergarten.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Primary Contacts: Elizabeth Burke Bryant and Leanne Barrett

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide policy organization that works to improve the health, safety, education, economic well-being, and development of Rhode Island's children. They provide independent, credible, and comprehensive information on Rhode Island's children and bring individuals and organizations together to change or influence programs and public policies that improve children's lives.

In the coming year Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will:

- Lead advocacy to increase access to quality child care by establishing tiered child care

- quality rates of reimbursement tied to BrightStars QRIS;
- Advocate for increased state investments in Pre-K;
- Continue to ensure high quality health and mental health care including a policy roundtable on maternal depression;
- Focus on improving developmental screening/referral/treatment, and increasing access to Early Intervention and early childhood IDEA services;
- Continue efforts to promote evidence-based home visiting and cross-system work to ensure access to high quality early learning and development programs for young children in the child welfare system.
- Coordinate/Co-Chair the RI Early Learning Council

Tennessee

Tennesseans for Quality Early Education

Primary Contacts: Mike Carpenter

Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE) was established two years ago to advance high-quality early care and education through policy development and advocacy and to be recognized as a thought-leader on those issues across the state.

TQEE is working to re-activate the state's early learning advocacy to improve the state's preK program and advance other early learning policies., including child assessments and professional development. To support this effort, they will invest in communications strategies (e.g., polling, social media), media relations, coalition building, and press events. TQEE will also engage candidates for elected office, including the governorship, to promote early learning as a major issue during the 2018 election season.

Texas

Children at Risk, Texans Care for Children

Primary Contacts: Bob Sanborn and Mandi Kimball, Stephanie Rubin

Children at Risk serves as a catalyst for change and educates policymakers to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration and advocacy. Texans Care for Children is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan, multi-issue children's policy organization that develops policy solutions, produces research, and engages Texas community leaders to educate policymakers, the media, and the public about what works to improve the well-being of Texas children and families.

Texans Care is working to strengthen advocacy coalitions, engage and educate policymakers, and highlight research and data that make the case for investments and policy action in early childhood health and preK. These activities will lay the groundwork for advancing priorities in the 2019 legislative session, including developmental screenings, early intervention, child care standards on nutrition and physical activity, preK financing, and dual language learners. Texans Care is also collaborating with Children at Risk on increasing access to high-quality early learning opportunities, including pre-k and child care.

Washington DC

DC Action for Children

Primary Contact: Shana Bartley

DC Action for Children (DC Action) provides data analysis and policy leadership on critical issues facing children and youth in the District of Columbia. They promote policies and actions that optimize child and family well-being.

DC Action will work to improve the health and development of infants and toddlers in low-income families by:

- Leading and coordinating the efforts of the DC Home Visiting Council, a group of home visiting providers, advocates and government agencies working to build and sustain the home visiting system in DC. To better facilitate communication and interagency collaboration around home visiting, their work will include ongoing communications through blogs, tweets, infographics, and testimonies to the Council of the District of Columbia; and
- Increasing access to high quality care for infants and toddlers. Activities include scaling Shared Services networks developed through the Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships, and laying the groundwork for an integrated data system to know which children are served, how, and where.

DC Action will receive TA from Jason Sabo, who is advising them on how to run an effective Home Visiting Council; Harriet Dichter, who will provide ongoing consultation to their Executive Director Shana Bartley; and the Early Childhood Data Collaborative, who will support their integrated data systems work.

Washington State

Children's Alliance

Primary Contact: Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer

The Children's Alliance (CA) is a multi-issue advocacy organization that works to ensure that laws, policies and programs work for kids. With a coalition of 125 organizational members across the state, they work toward a common goal of improving policies for Washington's children and hold state leaders accountable until they secure the resources required to make all children in the state safe and healthy.

CA leads the Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA), a diverse coalition of 125 advocacy organizations working to ensure that advocacy activities and goals reflect the interests and needs of children, families, and providers from traditionally underserved communities. Collectively, they hold state leaders accountable until they secure the resources required to make all children safe and healthy. CA is working to sustain and improve the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); secure resources to sustain continuous improvement of and expand access to the state pre-k program; protect and expand access to high-quality child care; and develop and implement strategies to build a diverse, competent, and well-compensated early learning workforce. CA will receive TA from BUILD, CLASP, and CSCCE.

Wisconsin

Kids Forward

Primary Contact: David Edie

Kids Forward provides research, public education, and advocacy for the development and implementation of public policy that improves child and family well being in health, economic security, safety and education. They work to ensure every child in Wisconsin can grow up in a just and nurturing family and community by focusing on early learning, health, and family support.

For the past two years, Kids Forward has been promoting racial and ethnic equity in early care and education programs by highlighting trends of disparate access in 5 programs: subsidized child care, 4-year old Kindergarten, Early/Head Start, B-3 Intervention, and home visiting. This year they will:

- Encourage healthy eating and active living for young children;
- Strengthen support for infant and early childhood mental health consultation;
- Track trends over time for 5 early care and education programs, focusing on barriers leading to racial disparities in high quality child care programs in select communities; and
- Engage key community leaders to develop recommendations for improvement.

Kids Forward will also build a more robust advocacy coalition by enhancing their business engagement strategy focused on the economics of child care.