



The Head Start Roadmap to Excellence: The Training and Technical Assistance System



The Office of Head Start (OHS) has redesigned its Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) system in order to better support program staff in their delivery of quality services to children and families. The new system, to be implemented in the fall of 2010, consists of three components: National Centers; State, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) Centers; and direct funding to grantees.

National Centers

Six National Centers will function as a team that provides Head Start grantees with consistent information from OHS across all service areas. Centers will communicate “best practices” and provide content-rich, usable, and practical resources and information to grantees. Additionally, they will provide training at State, regional, and national meetings and institutes; support State, MSHS, and AI/AN T/TA Center staff and consultants; communicate with local program staff through online discussion boards, conference calls, and other forms of technology; and develop and distribute lists of highly qualified consultants who are available to local programs.

Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHSNRC)

The EHSNRC provides information on best practices to Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs through Webinars and Webcasts; conferences; newsletters; an annual Birth to Three Institute; and training and technical assistance.

National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

This new Center’s focus will include ongoing child assessment linked to teaching and learning; curriculum selection and implementation; mentoring and supervision; measurement and use of aggregate child outcome data for program improvement and professional development; and family engagement in children’s education. An important component/feature of this Center will be the provision of ongoing technical assistance and guidance to State, MSHS, and AI/AN T/TA Early Childhood Specialists and Early Learning Mentor Coaches as they support local grantees in establishing quality teaching and early learning practices.

National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

This new Center will focus on increasing the cultural and linguistic competence of programs and staff across service areas; first and second language development for children birth-to-five, including home language and English language

acquisition; strategies for assessing the progress of children who are dual language learners; and strategies and approaches for language revitalization, preservation, and maintenance.

National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations

This new Center’s focus will include risk management; internal controls; ongoing monitoring; human resources management; governance; data collection and analysis; budgeting and cost allocation; managing multiple funding sources; and property acquisition and facilities management. Staff from this Center will also provide ongoing technical assistance and guidance to State, MSHS, and AI/AN T/TA Grantee Specialists.

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

This new Center will develop and disseminate strategies related to parent, family, and community engagement practices that are positively associated with the development and learning of children birth-to-five. Strategies will focus on family support services; positive parent-child relationships; parents as first and lifelong educators; parent connections to peers and community; intentional transitions; and parent leadership and advocacy, as well as professional development for Head Start staff who work with families.

National Center on Health, Oral Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition

This new Center will focus on strategies for promoting children's healthy development so that they are ready for school. It will expand ongoing work in the areas of health, nutrition, health

promotion, and disease prevention; access to care; mental wellness for staff, children, and families; safe environments; health literacy; emergency preparedness; oral health; and obesity prevention.

Centers of Excellence

This initiative recognizes Head Start and Early Head Start grantees that are performing at the highest level of quality. These grantees are producing positive, measurable outcomes related to school readiness for children; supporting families; and increasing staff competence. In this fiscal year, ten grantees will be recognized as the *2010 Head Start Centers of Excellence* and will disseminate information about their approaches and models of service to other Head Start and early childhood programs across the country and share practices that can guide other grantees on a path to excellence.

Early Learning Mentor Coaches

This 17-month pilot will explore the core elements or attributes critical to the successful implementation of mentoring programs. Grantees selected will reflect the diversity and uniqueness of local Head Start programs to include rural and urban; large and small; and monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual programs. Selected grantees will include center-based Early Head Start and Head Start programs, home-based programs, and child care partners. Grantees have proposed a variety of models that include on-site mentoring and distance mentoring through the use of technology. Some will use traditional approaches to mentoring while others propose to develop new mentoring strategies specifically tailored to their teaching staff. Information gathered from these grantees will be evaluated and used to inform future T/TA.

State, MSHS, and AI/AN Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Centers

The State, MSHS, and AI/AN T/TA Centers will include two categories of specialists: Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialists and Grantee Specialists. ECE Specialists will support local programs in their work to develop supportive environments for infants, toddlers, and their families and improve school readiness outcomes for Head Start children. A small cadre of Grantee Specialists will be assigned to Regional Offices who will deploy them to work with grantees with needs identified through monitoring, PIR results, Risk Management Meetings, or other data reviewed by OHS. T/TA contracts for MSHS and AI/AN will also include some specialists with expertise in other service areas.

Direct Funding to Grantees

Each year grantees receive direct TA funding to use in accord with their own TA plan. Additionally, supplemental grants may be awarded for initiatives such as Early Learning Mentor Coaches, Centers of Excellence, and CLASS training. OHS encourages grantees to use their own funds to purchase services and materials that are not available to them through the National Centers or the State, MSHS, and AI/AN T/TA Centers. For example, State, MSHS, and AI/AN T/TA Center Early Childhood Specialists will provide CLASS and IMIL training to grantees at no charge while National Centers will provide materials and training designs. As a result, grantees may choose to reserve their own funds for other kinds of resources and materials. In order to help grantees make these decisions, specific information about the services to be provided by the National Centers will be made available over the next few months.

*For more information, log onto the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center:
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>*