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Appendices

- Governor’s Letter
- Organizational Charts*

*Additional organizational charts of partners as well as interagency agreements on file with ADECE and available upon request.

Project Summary

Project Title: Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education

Applicant Name: Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)

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With the support of a PDG B-5 renewal grant, Alabama will continue longstanding efforts to expand access to high quality early childhood care and education for all children. In December of 2018, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. The vision for the grant, titled Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education, was: “All Alabama children are healthy and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten, particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and strong supports are provided to assist families in making informed choices.” During 2019, ADECE completed a comprehensive assessment of early childcare and education needs in the state of Alabama and constructed a strategic plan to meet these needs. The strategic plan identified four goals for Alabama’s system of early childhood education: 1) Access and Affordability; 2) Family Partnerships and Support; 3) Well-prepared, Well-supported Workforce 4) Quality and Affordability.

The PDG B-5 renewal grant will assist ADECE in meeting these four goals while continuing to deliver high quality early childhood education and while expanding access to programs that support all children, especially low-income, rural, and disadvantaged children. It will also support the scaling of evidence-based supportive programs for children, their families, and their teachers across the entire birth-five continuum to ensure all children—particularly low-income, disadvantaged, and otherwise vulnerable children, including children with, or at risk for, disabilities and delays—enter kindergarten ready for success.

ADECE will continue to execute the work laid out in the initial PDG B-5 grant application—to build a coherent and coordinated system of early care and education—while using the recently completed needs assessment and strategic plan as guides for how to meet the specific and urgent needs of Alabama children and families. These needs include increased professional development for early childcare professionals; coaching and information-sharing to improve parental agency and choice; mental health resources for children and families with trauma-informed interventions; early interventions for children experiencing developmental delays and behavioral challenges; and expanded access to high-quality pre-k.

ADECE’s proposal also aligns with Governor Ivey’s *Strong Start, Strong Finish* initiative, an ambitious preschool to third-grade plan to ensure all third graders are proficient readers by 2022. The governor’s education-to-workforce agenda has placed focus on the B-5 continuum, recognizing a child’s first five years as foundational for lifelong success. The PDG B-5 renewal grant will help ADECE support the goals laid out in the *Strong Start, Strong Finish* initiative while continuing to improve system coordination, conducting a further needs assessment, and meeting the ambitious goals laid out in its strategic plan.

Additional Eligibility Documentation: Alabama was awarded an initial grant for the funding opportunity number HHS2018-ACF-OCC-TP-1379 and is eligible to apply for funding under this announcement. Alabama has submitted a letter on the governor's letterhead (see File 2), designating the ADECE as the designated state agency that has responsibility for execution and administration of this grant. The Governor's Letter includes a description of why the ADECE is best suited to manage the grant, thereby leading to the improvement of an early childhood care and education mixed delivery system serving children from birth through age five.

Expected Outcomes: The expected outcomes of Alabama's PDG B-5 proposal are informed by the strategic planning effort undertaken by ADECE and the multi-stakeholder state PDG B-5 Steering Committee during the 2019 year. The strategic plan identified four major goals to guide the state's ongoing work to meet needs in early childhood care and education and to improve coordination and collaboration across early childcare and education programs and systems. The plan's four goals emphasize rigor, accountability, and high standards for all early childcare and education programs in the state while expanding access to these programs to currently underserved populations, including low-income and disadvantaged children and those living in rural areas. These four goals, detailed with measurable objectives for each in the chart below, will serve as the central aims of the state's PDG B-5 renewal grant project.

Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

Vision

All Alabama children are healthy and emotionally ready to enter Kindergarten, particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and strong supports are provided to assist families in making informed choices

Mission

To inspire, support, and deliver a cohesive, comprehensive, mixed delivery system of high-quality education and care so that all Alabama children thrive and learn

Goals

<i>Access & Affordability</i>	<i>Family Partnerships & Support</i>	<i>Well-Prepared, Well-Supported Workforce</i>	<i>Quality & Accountability</i>
Ensure high-quality early care and education services are accessible and affordable to all	Engage families as partners in early care and education; and provide access to comprehensive support services	Build and retain a highly skilled and well-supported early care and education workforce	Ensure all early care and education programs are of the highest quality; and maintain support for and accountability to rigorous standards

Objectives

A1: Create a sustainable funding system by broadening and blending diverse funding sources and innovative supports A2: Increase service capacity for children ages birth to five, with a focus on birth to three A3: Expand access and strengthen services to vulnerable populations A4: Offer families and providers comprehensive and clear information about programs and services to facilitate informed choices A5: Decrease length of waiting periods for children to access high quality ECCE programs	B1: Promote families as children's first and most important teachers and advocates through increased family engagement B2: Increase family knowledge and choice about services and supports B3: Partner with families to support seamless transitions from ECCE programs to elementary schools B4: Support economic security for families by connecting them with family strengthening services and resources	C1: Strengthen recruitment strategies and offer attractive benefits for ECCE professionals C2: Design and communicate clear pathways from education and training to high demand early care and education jobs C3: Expand evidence-based and interdisciplinary professional development for early care and education professionals	D1: Create, sustain, and expand high quality ECCE programs D2: Address barriers and provide support for childcare centers pursuing licensure D3: Increase provider participation in monitoring systems such as CLASS and STARS/QRIS D4: Develop a coordinated and compatible data system to collect and connect existing data from multiple points and providers D5: Engage in continuous quality improvement to support accountability and data-driven decision-making D6: Collaboratively create unified early childhood standards of quality across state departments D7: Align early childhood policies and define legislative priorities across systems to support and promote building a strong educational foundation from birth to five
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FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE: Collaboration with partners across systems to achieve successful outcomes for children and families

Approach: Activities 1-6 Project Overview In December of 2018, the ADECE was awarded a \$10.6 million PDG B-5 grant to continue to expand access to its high-quality mixed delivery system of early childhood education while engaging in an ambitious strategic planning process to coordinate and align all programs that fall within the state’s early childhood care and education system. ADECE’s vision for the PDG B-5 grant, titled Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education, was and continues to be that: “all Alabama children are healthy and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten, particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and strong supports are provided to assist families in making informed choices.” ADECE’s grant vision aligns with Governor Kay Ivey’s *Strong Start, Strong Finish* education initiative, launched in 2017, to integrate Alabama’s early learning and care, K-12 education, and workforce development efforts into a seamless education-to-workforce “P-20” system for all Alabamians. Through *Strong Start, Strong Finish*, Alabama is implementing its nationally-recognized First Class Pre-K model as a bridge to develop and expand a strong birth to eight continuum, creating an alignment that spans birth to age three and Pre-K to 3rd grade (“P-3”). The *Strong Start, Strong Finish* initiative emphasizes the birth-five continuum as a crucial period of development, which is foundational for a child’s long-term success in school and in the workforce. In June 2019, the Alabama Legislature approved passage of the Alabama Literacy Act which outlines specific requirements and measures. These statewide initiatives place a new emphasis on early childhood intellectual development, with particular emphasis on language development and literacy, to ensure Alabama children are prepared to meet K-3 standards. To provide oversight and accountability for its work, ADECE has engaged a PDG B-5 Steering Committee, which includes a diverse group of state and local representatives of key partner organizations and agencies across the state, to provide oversight of and guidance for PDG B-5 grant activities. The Steering Committee is a subset of the state’s Early

Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and includes members of the Alabama Children’s Policy Council. The Steering Committee was involved in all aspects of the 2019 PDG B-5 efforts, including the design and oversight of the needs assessment and strategic planning processes. The PDG B-5 grant has enabled ADECE to assess the successes as well as the remaining unmet needs of children and families across the state. Currently, Alabama has a coordinated mixed delivery system of pre-k programs and early childhood care programs including those offered by Head Start providers, home visitation programs, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, private entities (including faith- and community-based entities), child care, institutions of higher education, state agencies, local education agencies, and early intervention. For the past thirteen years, Alabama’s state-funded First Class Pre-K has received the highest quality rating by the independent nonpartisan National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). In NIEER’s most recent “The State of Preschool Report 2018,” Alabama was 1 of only 3 states in the nation to meet all of NIEER’s benchmarks for preschool quality standards. Nevertheless, the state has substantial work to do to make quality early care and education programs accessible statewide to all children, particularly low-income and disadvantaged children and those living in rural areas. As a first step towards meeting the initial PDG B-5 grant requirements and towards developing an appropriate and informed strategic plan to meet its grant vision, ADECE and the PDG B-5 Steering Committee performed a comprehensive needs assessment, based on a robust qualitative stakeholder engagement process, which identified strengths and areas in need of improvement in early care and education. Since completing the needs assessment, ADECE has developed a strategic plan guided by a designated, multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, submitted for federal approval in October 2019. This strategic plan has been designed to guide the state’s work to meet the urgent needs identified in the needs

assessment and to improve coordination and collaboration across programs and systems in early childcare and education. The strategic plan's four goals emphasize rigor, accountability, and high standards for all early childcare and education programs in the state while expanding access to these programs to currently underserved populations. The main priority of these efforts is to ensure that all Alabama children enter kindergarten healthy and with a strong foundation that has prepared them for success. ADECE's 2020-2022 strategic plan goals, which will serve as the central aims of the state's PDG B-5 renewal grant project, are: Access and Affordability; Family Partnerships and Support; Well-Prepared, Well-Supported Workforce; and Quality and Affordability (detailed in chart pg. 4). The PDG B-5 renewal grant, submitted by ADECE, will enable the state to continue its efforts to create a systematic approach to early childcare and education and to ensure its governance structure supports the four goals of the strategic plan. It is expected that this intentional alignment of systems will lead to improved program quality while expanding access to services, particularly for vulnerable children and their families; expanding parental choice and knowledge about early childcare and education programs; and ensuring that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn. ADECE is committed to building an effective and efficient mixed delivery system of integrated services that support all children across the birth to five continuum and achieves successful transitions of all children—regardless of family income, place of residence, or ability—from ECCE programs to local educational agencies (LEAs). Specifically, the PDG B-5 renewal grant will support the state in expanding access to quality birth to five resources for families and children by making major investments in creating and sustaining a highly-skilled, well-paid ECCE workforce adequately trained to support all young children and their families—including English language learners, children from low-income households, homeless children, children at risk for disabilities and delays, and otherwise vulnerable children. A significant portion of the work

ADECE proposes, when awarded the PDGB-5 renewal grant, centers on supporting parents, teachers, educators, administrators, mental health service providers, and pediatricians to unify their efforts toward creating safe, healthy, enriching, and intellectually stimulating early childhood environments that will provide the foundation of early learning to support each child's healthy transition from quality birth-to-three childcare settings to pre-k classrooms and from pre-k to kindergarten classrooms with local educational agencies (LEAs). The initial PDG B-5 grant allowed Alabama to begin many of these efforts as pilot programs or regionally-specific services, while beginning the planning process to meet broader needs across the state. The renewal grant will enable the state to scale these programs and initiatives, building a coordinated mixed delivery system that is economically sustainable with strong public and private funding streams and has permanence and longevity, yet preserves the flexibility to meet needs specific to individual children, families, and communities. ADECE continues to build on the model developed by its nationally-recognized successes in First Class Pre-K of gradual expansion of access with sustained high quality, which has been made possible through the blending of federal grant support, private investments, and steady increases in state funding commitments. As ADECE pursues the 4 major goals of the strategic plan, it will continue to work with early childhood educators and LEAs to create common definitions and standards of school readiness. This requires implementation of agreed-upon standards, common assessment strategies, and the creation of developmentally appropriate assessments and practices for the early childhood years. To achieve this, ADECE will use coordination agreements to: 1) support joint professional learning opportunities for elementary teachers, Head Start staff, state-funded First Class Pre-K, and childcare providers; 2) Local Head Start programs will collaborate with LEAs to align school readiness goals with kindergarten entry assessments; and 3) strengthen CPC's messaging. ADECE will work with the state to take a

holistic approach to designing accountability systems that span the continuum of education by aligning childcare licensing, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and school accountability systems. ADECE will further strengthen its efforts by utilizing CPC's to share consistent messages and solicit feedback and support in all 67 Alabama counties. In order to further collaboration and coherence within the state's early childhood care and education system during implementation of the strategic plan, ADECE intends to work closely with the Alabama Children's Cabinet. The Alabama Children's Cabinet was created by the governor in 2015 through Executive Order No. 17 with the express purpose of coordinating the efforts of various state agencies and the services they provide to children. Recognizing that state resources are limited, the Children's Cabinet was initially designed to reduce duplication and increase efficiency in meeting the needs of children and families. The Cabinet is endowed with the following responsibilities: "collaborate and coordinate on issues relating to Alabama's children, to connect and align systems of children's programs and services, creating a unified, cohesive and cross-system delivery of services through a comprehensive approach." The Cabinet plays key role in achieving efficient delivery of services while reducing both fragmentation and overlap of services.

Approach - Activity One: PDG B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment The PDG B-5 Steering Committee was created to provide oversight for the statewide needs assessment and strategic planning processes. This committee met four times during 2019 and received updates from ADECE between meetings on the status of the needs assessment and strategic plan. To meet the requirements of Activity 1 of the PDG B-5 Grant, the Steering Committee and ADECE designed a qualitative stakeholder engagement process to supplement a comprehensive review of 59 existing needs assessments collected from various partners in ECCE across the state. 39 one-on-one and small group interviews were conducted with key individuals representing early care and education,

healthcare, mental health, the business community, and supporters and partners of early childhood education in Alabama. 28 focus groups were convened across the state with families and service providers to gather input on their experiences with childcare, availability of high-quality childcare, and coordination of childcare systems. 12 focus groups were conducted with family representatives such as parents, guardians, foster parents, and grandparents. Focus groups were organized by the Alabama Network of Family Resources Centers. 16 focus groups were comprised of service providers within Alabama’s ECCE system. They were convened through an RFP process, in which ADECE selected community-based organizations to host focus groups in their communities. All conveners were given guidance to recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds to ensure socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and education diversity and participation from typically underrepresented populations, such as families with special needs children or families with children who are English learners. The locations of focus groups were mapped against the Governor’s Regional Workforce Councils with at least one family group and one provider group held in each region (many regions had 3-4 focus groups each). 433 individuals participated in 28 focus groups conducted statewide. The needs assessment identified the strengths and areas in need of improvement in the early care and education (ECCE) system in Alabama. Stakeholders identified the following strengths:

Strengths in Alabama’s ECCE System as Identified in 2019 PDG B-5 Needs Assessment		
Many state and federal childcare programs, such as First Class Pre-K, Head Start, Early Head Start, and local programs set high standards for quality, promote school readiness, and prepare students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.	Many excellent programs and supports complement ECCE programs such as Reach Out and Read, Help Me Grow, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Nurse Family Partnership, and Alabama Coordinated Health Network.	Strong leadership exists within the state’s early childhood care and education system, and ADECE has worked diligently on behalf of children and secured funding to expand and create high-quality programs in the state.

The needs assessment also identified and detailed several important challenges for early childhood care and education in Alabama, in particular to support vulnerable populations, defined as: children in poverty; children in extreme poverty; children experiencing abuse and neglect; children who are English Language Learners or who have limited English proficiency; children who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness; children diagnosed with disability or developmental delay and who are using special education services and Early Intervention services. The needs assessment also emphasized urgent needs of children living in rural areas where poverty is high and access to early childhood resources is limited. Alabama is a largely rural state with 55 of its 67 counties considered rural. Additionally, the following needs emerged from the 2019 needs assessment report and guided the creation of the strategic plan: lack of a consolidated data system to determine number of unduplicated children being served through ECCE programs and unduplicated number of children awaiting service; a need to focus on birth to three ECCE programs; increased availability and access to high-quality, affordable ECCE programs; parent and caregiver inclusion and involvement; increased understanding and use of Alabama STARS/QRIS; needs with buildings and physical structures; need for sustainable funding for ECCE programs, support from the legislature and business community and support for private ECCE facilities; need to improve transitions from ECCE to K-12; increased interagency collaboration; increased number of licensed childcare providers; increased focus on care and service to special populations; and several related needs regarding ECCE workforce development. The Needs Assessment demonstrated that one major data challenge in capturing the number of children served by existing programs was the difficulty of determining the unduplicated counts of children across child and family serving organizations. Many families and children are served in multiple programs and may be counted multiple times. In addition, data gaps also resulted from the lack of consistent data collection across

the early childhood age range and across all early childhood care and education system programs. A central piece of the PDG B-5 Strategic Plan is to address these gaps in reliable data about children—particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and children in rural regions of the state—in order to ensure that Alabama’s early childhood system adequately assesses the urgent needs of these children and their families. ADECE is embarking on several data collection projects, described below, to fill these gaps. When awarded a renewal grant, ADECE will further enhance its birth-5 needs assessment by building upon this initial work. With guidance from the Steering Committee, ADECE will gather additional needs assessments completed across the state after mid-2019, as well as applicable federal needs assessments (including data on childcare deserts) which will be reviewed and analyzed for needs and gaps not previously identified. Results and outcomes from these quantitative needs assessments will be used to update the 2019 comprehensive needs assessment chart which outlines focus, content, priorities and needs for each assessment. A qualitative stakeholder engagement process will expand the 2019 stakeholder engagement to further explore and assess various special populations unreached in 2019. ADECE and the Steering Committee will identify individuals for one-on-one and small group interviews and identify populations for focus groups across the state, planning outreach efforts for populations that are hard to reach to ensure participation from the most vulnerable and underserved groups in the state such as low-income and homeless families, rural families, families with children with special needs, disabilities or developmental delays, and culturally diverse families. Parents will be directly involved in providing information on the availability and quality of early care and education programs in the state, assessing what has been learned through the needs assessments to date and helping to define goals and activities which will further refine and enhance the strategic plan. Recruitment efforts for stakeholder engagement will focus on ECCE teachers and frontline

providers. Data from both the qualitative stakeholder engagement phase and quantitative needs assessment process will be analyzed and synthesized to produce a comprehensive needs assessment report for 2020-2022.

Approach - Activity Two: PDG B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan The strategic planning process was developed and overseen by the steering committee, which is involved in all aspects of the PDG B-5 efforts. Building on the data and momentum generated by the needs assessment, ADECE developed a strategic plan that prioritized creating an ECCE system with strong collaboration, coordination and quality improvement activities while addressing the needs outlined in the needs assessment. The process was guided by the vision that “All Alabama children are healthy and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten, particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and that strong supports are provided to assist families in making informed choices,” and the ADECE mission, “To inspire, support and deliver a cohesive, comprehensive, mixed delivery system of high-quality education and care so that all Alabama children can thrive and learn.”

Three Phases of 2019 PDG B-5 Strategic Planning Process		
Kick Off Meeting: PDG B-5 steering committee reviewed findings from the comprehensive needs assessment and stakeholder engagement process. The committee used emergent needs to identify and create strategic goals. The committee developed preliminary goal statements to guide the objectives and action steps toward achieving each goal.	Strategic Planning Session: ADECE convened a planning session with the steering committee to review strategic goals and goal statements and develop objectives and preliminary action steps. The steering committee proposed timelines for accomplishing each objective and began identifying measurable indicators of progress to track success towards each goal. Coordination and collaboration among programs and systems was a guiding principle for the development of each objective.	Strategic Plan Report: ADECE used the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Report and the framework designed by the Steering Committee at the planning session to finalize its PDGB-5 Strategic Plan. The strategic plan identifies the steps ADECE will take to improve the current ECCE system and better meet the needs of key stakeholders, primarily families with young children, educators, and ECCE providers, including health professionals.

A detailed explanation of the four major goals identified in the strategic plan follows, which will also serve as the major goals for Alabama’s PDG B-5 renewal grant project (see page 4).

<i>GOAL A: Access & Affordability</i>	
Existing Resources	
DHR Quality Contractors First 5 Alabama (Infant/EC Mental Health) Alabama Partnership for Children ALSDE	UAB Research Evaluation Bipartisan Policy Center Maricopa Association of Governments VOICES for Alabama’s Children Federal Technical Assistance

Alabama’s grant proposal is focused on ensuring families are engaged as partners in early care and education and provided access to comprehensive services. These goals will be met by leveraging existing resources while intentionally addressing gaps and inequities. The Steering Committee identified four major objectives for accomplishment of this goal:

<i>GOAL B: Family Partnerships and Support</i>	
Existing Resources	
Alabama Network for Family Resource Centers Alabama Partnership for Children Help Me Grow Alabama Strengthening Families American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)	Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) First Teacher Home Visiting Parent Leadership Network Alabama Coordinated Health Network (ACHN) Care Coordinators

This goal will be met through leveraging existing resources while intentionally addressing gaps and inequities. The PDG B-5 Steering Committee identified three major objectives for accomplishment of this goal:

<i>GOAL C: Well-Prepared, Well-Supported Workforce</i>	
Existing Resources	
Alabama Early Learning Network Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice and Registry Alabama Coaching Competencies T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships Read Right from the Start Alabama Quality Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)	Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) First Teacher Home Visiting Leadership Academies Infant/Toddler Specialist Network The Alabama Office of Apprenticeship

Efficient, valid, and reliable indicators of program quality will support child health and safety and

will be predictive of school readiness. Alabama has systems in place to build upon, supporting program quality and improvement, for leveraging existing resources while intentionally addressing gaps and inequities. The Steering Committee identified 7 major objectives:

<i>GOAL D: Quality and Accountability</i>	
Existing Resources	
ECAC/Children’s Policy Councils Alabama’s Blueprint for Zero to Five Culturally Responsive Leadership Training Opportunity Zones ECEDData (coordinated/compatible data system)	Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children High quality ECCE program accountability UAB Research Evaluation CLASS and STARS/QRIS

The needs assessment will guide and direct further strategic planning efforts for the renewal grant period. Outcomes from the needs assessment will be used to refine and enhance the current strategic plan to improve coordination, program quality and delivery of early care and education services. Progress will also be monitored on the current strategic plan to include milestones reached, challenges faced and strategies to overcome challenges. The Steering Committee will provide ongoing guidance and input on strategic plan implementation, including quarterly meetings to review and monitor progress on outcome indicators. It will also meet semi-annually for a planning session to review updated needs assessment findings and adjust the strategic plan as needed. Work Groups will be established to aid implementation, organized around each of the four goals of the strategic plan (see page 4), and will meet regularly throughout the planning period to: Finalize and prioritize action steps; Review current needs assessment findings and other sources of data; and measure progress towards meeting plan objectives using measurable indicators of progress outlined in the strategic plan. Each Work Group will be chaired by a member of the Steering Committee to ensure strong coordination and consistent communication. The vision laid out in the 4 goals of the strategic plan requires partnerships among Head Start providers, home visitation programs, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, private entities (including faith- and community-based entities), child care providers, institutions of higher

education, state agencies, local educational agencies, and early intervention. Over the next 3 years, ADECE will continue the work laid out in the PDG B-5 to align partners in ECCE around its goals while supporting a coordinated range of initiatives designed to enrich the whole child, empower parents, and support ECCE teachers. To deliver a cohesive system of care and education for children and families across the birth-5 continuum, ADECE will continue improving partnerships. Several projects will receive continued funding with this renewal grant. LETRS teacher and facilitator trainings have been well-attended and are making a difference for teachers and students. Alabama Early Intervention System has seen growth and changes with the routines-based interview and home visiting trainings so they will expand and continue with this funding. DECE will continue to grow additional mentor teachers and expand coaching to include childcare teachers and directors. DECE will also continue to fund foundational programs to set the standard of what quality child care programs and preschool classrooms should look like. The Auburn University/University of Alabama joint tele practice study will be expanded with continued funding. This study is being done in conjunction with Early Intervention staff and will directly impact the future of direct service provision. ADECE is requesting an additional \$25 million in the FY2021 Education Trust Fund budget specifically to continue the expansion of First Class Pre-K, moving it closer to being fully-funded, an additional \$3 million increase for First Teacher to grow the state-wide home visiting program so children and families can receive additional support transitioning into the school system, and an additional \$1 million for the P-3 initiative.

Approach – Activity Three: Maximizing Parent and Family Knowledge, Choice, and Engagement in their Child’s Early Learning and Development The cultivation of parents as partners in the development of a sustainable and successful ECCE system directly correlates with Goal B, “Family Partnerships and Support,” specifically the objectives of “promoting of families

as children’s first and most important teachers and advocates through increased family engagement” and “increasing family knowledge about services and supports” (see page 4). In addition to supporting existing successful home visitation programs for parents, the PDG B-5 facilitated the research, planning, and development of several new programs that incorporate innovative IT/digital communication to inform parents about existing resources by communicating to parents in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways. Dissemination of reliable information to all families—including tribal families, rural families, families with English as a second language, and families of children with disabilities and delays—is a central element of Alabama’s goal to expand access to quality programs for all families. Doing so is essential to building a generation of children healthy, emotionally, and intellectually ready to succeed in kindergarten and early elementary grades. A renewal grant will enable Alabama to build upon and expand several programs with a two-generation approach to ensure family well-being—specifically a variety of home visiting and home enrichment programs—while also engaging parents of young children as advocates for their children, community leaders, and advisors in the development of state policies and programs. The following programs, which are proposed as part of the PDG B-5 renewal, aim to maximize parent knowledge of existing resources; engage families in leadership and public advocacy; support families with mental health, early intervention, and IDEA services; and support parents in cultivating safe, healthy, and enriching, home environments for young children. **3.1 Clearinghouse Website:** In partnership with ADPH, ADMH, ALSDE, ADCANP, ADRS/EI, ADHR, and Medicaid, ADECE and the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) began work, with initial PDGB-5 grant funding, to plan for the launch of a “clearinghouse” website for parents, child caregivers, and other stakeholders seeking information about the number and quality of wraparound services from both state agencies and non-governmental organizations to support

healthy families and children. ADECE conducted focus groups and interviews with stakeholders to develop a strategy of communication between government and citizens that is comprehensive, effective, user-intuitive and valuable. The Alabama site is currently under development, guided by the Children’s Cabinet and led by a steering committee of state agency representatives.

3.2 Quality Early Childhood Multimedia Messaging: ADECE is in the process of developing a comprehensive multimedia messaging project, with a multi-platform approach, to empower parents and programs to facilitate smooth transitions for children birth to preschool and into early elementary school. ADECE released a public RFP to develop a broad public awareness campaign and branding effort to support messaging and dissemination regarding the importance of the birth-5 timeframe and early childhood systems efforts in the state. Following a competitive application process, a contract was awarded to Telegraph Creative, LLC to develop and guide these efforts (see page 4). The project is titled “Born Ready,” and the call-to-action statement is that “95% of the child’s brain develops in the first five years.” Targeted, well-crafted, easily discernable messaging will be developed with traditionally difficult-to-reach and diverse populations in mind, including the families of English language learners, tribal communities, and busy working parents. This messaging will include information about resources, strategies for early intervention, and tips to develop social, emotional, and neurological functioning in young children. The ultimate purpose of the campaign is to cultivate discerning and informed parents as stakeholders with the knowledge to demand the highest quality ECCE for their children and communities.

3.3 Alabama Parent Leadership Network: ADECE is working with APC to further develop a leadership training program for parents of young children called the Alabama Parent Leadership Network (APLN). This new initiative, whose first year of work was funded by the PDG B-5 grant, offers collaborative engagement and learning for parents about parenting best practices. APLN recruits parents who

have already engaged with parent training programs. With the support of the initial PDG B-5 grant, APLN held its inaugural Parent Leadership Conference in 2019. With the renewal grant, ADECE and APC will expand APLN into a statewide resource for parent peer learning and support while also engaging parents in policy and advocacy. APLN groups will meet for sessions on topics including: parenting and child development; social and emotional competence; identifying priority concerns for families and communities; learning best practices and brainstorming solutions; communicating ideas and recommendations effectively and broadly; effectively engaging local leaders; and influencing and participating in state policy work. ADECE envisions parents from the APLN emerging as leaders and policy influencers in ECCE, valuable informants and stakeholders for the future needs assessment, and members of the PDG B-5 Steering Committee.

3.4 Alabama Talks: Alabama Talks will create a network of providers across the state who are engaging with the same program that works with children, birth-3 years old, to help build lifetime literacy and can share successes and opportunities for growth. Research demonstrates that kind of access and iterative program development are particularly important in the rural areas of the state. The Language Environmental Analysis (LENA) approach of “building brains through early talk” is based upon research that demonstrates that talk environments in the first 24-36 months of life are important determinates of language ability, IQ, and school success. This will provide Alabama with the opportunity to begin the process of developing a statewide LENA delivery model to provide parents in the most vulnerable communities with a variety of ways to access coaching to develop an enriching language environment in their home. LENA will support ADECE’s vision of developing a true birth to five continuum of services that enhances early learning and language acquisition, with the goal of reducing the achievement gap for children entering kindergarten.

3.5 First Teacher Home Visiting: A central goal of the strategic plan is to cultivate parents as their

children’s “first teachers” and develop them as partners in early learning and development (B1). This approach informs First Teacher Home Visiting Program, the state’s Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. First Teacher uses three national evidence-based models—Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)—to provide a continuum of voluntary services from prenatal care through kindergarten to improve family health, child development, and school readiness. First Teacher only serves a limited number of families with children birth to pre-K, ending services when children enter kindergarten. Across the state there are an increasing number of children with adverse childhood experiences, resulting in suspensions and expulsions from pre-K and kindergarten classrooms which requires additional Home Visiting support. ***Bonus Points – Infant/Toddler Emphasis:*** The renewal grant will make it possible for ADECE to expand the program to serve children and families from prenatal-5 to provide an additional layer of support as they navigate the transition from ECCE programs to kindergarten classrooms. All First Teacher program staff will have access to trauma-informed coaching.

3.6 Child Find Public Awareness Campaign (Partnership with AEIS): Child Find is Alabama’s statewide effort to locate, identify, and evaluate children who may have developmental delays or diagnosed conditions that may lead to a delay and determine if a child is eligible for services. In 2017 and 2018, the Alabama Early Intervention Service (AEIS) executed a Public Awareness initiative for identifying new children for early intervention services in each of the 7 districts of the Alabama Early Intervention System. These efforts resulted in an increase of 361 referrals made in 2018 and another increase of 726 referrals made in 2019. Through a partnership with ADECE, AEIS will expand these efforts to specifically target counties with a low health index and higher poverty rates and other communities of high need.

3.7 Family Engagement Specialists (Partnership with AEIS and Family Voices

of Alabama): AEIS has assessed a need to provide parents who have children with disability with more knowledge about specific disabilities, available resources, strategies for transition, and connections to other parents experiencing similar challenges. AEIS will partner with the Family Voices group, to hire 2 “Family Engagement Specialists,” one to serve families in the northern portion and the other to serve families in the southern portion of the state. These specialists would provide a peer support system for families, as seasoned parents of children with disabilities guiding and assisting young families as they seek support, training, resources, and information. **3.8 Comprehensive Care Partnerships with ACHIA:** In partnership with the Alabama Child Health Improvement Alliance (ACHIA), ADECE will develop new programs with pediatricians to enable them to develop strategies to deliver “comprehensive” care to young children, refine early interventions and screening for children, and promote general health and well-being. Through a subgrant to the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Alabama expanded the existing Reach Out and Read initiative, in which pediatricians “prescribe” books to children and encourage families to read together. The renewal grant will expand existing partnerships with AEIS to provide 2 learning collaboratives for pediatricians that will build consensus and capacity for sustainability.

<u>3.8a) ACHIA Early Screening and Referral Collaborative (2020)</u>	<u>3.8b) ACHIA Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (2021)</u>
A 9-month learning collaborative called “Best Beginnings: Developmental, Autism, Social-Emotional, Depression Screening” for approximately 50 pediatricians to focus on one of several early screens for developmental, autism, social-emotional and maternal depression and referral completion. It will be conducted in coordination with Help Me Grow, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, Alabama Coordinated Health Networks, Reach Out and Read, and content experts.	A 9-month learning collaborative called “Healthy Active Living for Infants and Toddlers” for approximately 50 pediatricians to focus on healthy active living for infants and toddlers ages 0 to 3 years of age. ACHIA is working with Alabama Medicaid to provide consultation to the 7 Alabama Coordinated Health Networks on developing a Quality Improvement Project on the prevention of childhood obesity. It will be conducted in coordination with Alabama Coordinated Health Networks and content experts.

Approach – Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices among State ECCE Providers As ADECE

continues to build high quality ECCE programs that help all children develop strong foundations to facilitate successful transition into kindergarten classrooms with LEAs and support the Governor’s *Strong Start, Strong Finish* goals for the birth-8 continuum (“P-3”), quality evidence-based professional development remains a high priority (see page 4). This requires ADECE and its partners to develop a coherent system of targeted and deliberate supports for ECCE professionals who work with children across the birth-8 continuum to ensure that nationally-recognized best practices are aligned with statewide practices and that statewide assessment and quality standards are clear and unified. ADECE is committed to supporting its ECCE workforce professionals in gaining credentials, obtaining apprenticeships and developing evidence-based best practice knowledge at all stages of their careers. With existing support from the PDG B-5 grant, ADECE is pursuing a number of initiatives, described below, to ensure teachers and administrators across the birth-8 continuum are professionally prepared and well-supported to teach all children, including low-income, disadvantaged, and otherwise vulnerable children, including children with, or at risk for, disabilities and delays. The following programs approach professional development for ECCE providers, teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals in a variety of ways with particular emphases on childhood early language development and literacy; alignment of instructional practices to achieve overall quality enhancement across the birth-8 continuum; individualized job-embedded coaching and professional development; resources for children with behavioral challenges, mental health challenges, and developmental delays to support teachers in existing classroom settings; and workforce development with increased avenues for educators and administrators to achieve nationally-recognized credentials. ADECE proposes the expansion and strengthening of existing pilot programs that have achieved significant levels of success in

facilitating the transitions of children across schools, programs, and grade levels. **4.1 Pre-K through 3rd Grade Early Learning Continuum:** Alabama is in its third year of the innovative Pre-K – 3rd Grade Integrated Approach to Early Learning (P-3), initially funded by a Kellogg Foundation grant, to improve transitions for children exiting the high-quality First Class Pre-K programs and entering kindergarten. The evidence-based P-3 framework helps kindergarten teachers and administrators develop a P-3 continuum to positively impact child learning outcomes. In qualitative and quantitative assessments conducted by the Research and Evaluation Team, classrooms with P-3 professional development support showed significant gains in student achievement in all domains of math, literacy, cognitive ability, and language; after completing one year, the majority of children (82.0%-98.3%) were meeting or exceeding Widely-Held Expectations for their respective ages based on the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment. Seeing significant gains made through just one year of P-3 instructional support, ADECE has partnered with ALSDE to support P-3 and extend professional development of elementary school principals and administrators through the Pre-K—3rd Leadership Academy, provided by The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS), in collaboration with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). With the renewal grant, the Governor’s Office, and the Alabama Legislature, ADECE will continue to grant funds to provide professional development to Leadership Academy participants, as well as develop and implement a Leadership Academy for birth-5 childcare directors and administrators. ***Bonus Points – Collaborative Transitions and Alignment:*** The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides an opportunity to address the importance of high-quality early learning experiences, and to support the development of a seamless learning continuum providing the fundamental skills needed to succeed in later years. *Strong Start, Strong Finish* calls for a collaborative effort among agencies and LEAs to ensure a

successful transitioning of children from early learning programs from birth-8 by improving coordination and alignment of assessment, instruction, and leadership. In September 2019, ADECE invited participants to a collaborative effort to revise and update *From Many Paths to School* document, Alabama's plan to facilitate transitions in all ECCE settings.

4.2 Alabama Reflective Coaching (ARC): In 2014, the Office of School Readiness (OSR) developed a pilot program to train coaches in the ARC designed to support teachers in First Class Pre-K program to provide a high-quality environment to support school readiness for children. Coaches are trained to provide ECCE teachers at all stages of their careers with individualized, job-embedded professional development. ***Bonus Points – Infant/Toddler Emphasis:*** The success of ARC support in First Class Pre-K led to a statewide expansion of the program to support ECCE professionals working across the birth-8 continuum. ADECE recently partnered with DHR to provide 69 classrooms within the childcare setting with ARC trained coaches to help teachers develop strategies to support children exhibiting challenging behaviors, resulting in a 16% drop in the number of children “needing support” and an 18% increase in the number of children demonstrating strengths in total protective factors. Through a formal partnership (MOU) with DHR and using CCBG funds, ADECE was also able to provide coaching to 19 childcare programs to focus on exceeding expectations in the family engagement section of Alabama Quality Stars (QRIS). After 13 hours of ARC support, these programs improved multiple areas of quality based on the QRIS system, resulting in an average total score of 5.0 STARS. The success of these pilot programs created demand, and with the support of the renewal grant, ADECE plans to subgrant funds to support up to 50 center-based classrooms with ARC trained coaches. Additionally, ADECE has supported teachers in the Mentor Teacher Development Program, including 28 ECCE educators in 14 classrooms. 18 early childhood educators attended the Conscious Discipline

Institute (CDI) in 2018. During fall 2019, all mentor teachers will receive CDI Virtual Coaching Calls to further develop peer coaching skills. ADECE will provide additional training to help educators enhance reflective practices.

4.3 First 5 Alabama: ADECE supports several new projects with the Alabama Association for Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (AAIECMH), also known as First 5 Alabama (F5A). The goal of F5A is to address professional development needs of the early childhood workforce, specifically within the context of infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH). This is accomplished through a series of supports for children, families, and early childhood care providers across the birth-5 continuum. With the PDG B-5 funds, the First 5 Consultation Project was established through collaborations with five founding partners. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is a preventive intervention that promotes healthy social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children, from birth-5, through supporting nurturing relationships between children and the adults who care for them.

Bonus Points – Infant/Toddler Emphasis: Consultants are available to support life transitions prenatally through elementary school with a focus on trauma-informed practices. With the growth in programs serving pregnant women, infants, young children, and their families, the need for professionals competent in the application of IECMH principles is expanding and critical. With renewal PDG B-5 funds, F5A will continue to strengthen and support the IECMH workforce by providing opportunities for licensed mental health clinicians, pediatricians, teachers, home visitors, and early intervention providers to learn evidence-based and trauma-informed practices.

4.4 Care Coordination Training: Initial PDG B-5 funding supported Children’s Rehabilitation Service Alabama Title V Children with Special Health Care Needs Program to develop and host a statewide Care Coordination Training provided by national expert Dr. Richard Antonelli. Care coordinators will be trained in improving comprehensive, family-

centered care through collaboration and consolidation among the medical team, schools, parents, and community providers. **4.5 ADECE and AEIS Partnerships to Support Providers for Children with Delays and Disabilities:** ADECE and AEIS Partner to Support Providers for Children with Delays and Disabilities: In Alabama’s initial PDG B-5, ADECE partnered with AEIS to provide Routines-Based model training for ECE professionals who work with infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families. ADECE and AEIS propose to continue this collaboration and expand access to Routines-Based training for AEIS interventionists. The partnership with the Early Childhood EI Autism Best Practice Workshop, will develop coaching and training opportunities for service providers in Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions (NDBI). ADECE and AEIS will partner with the Childcare Enhancement to provide on-site training for ECCE educators and childcare providers on the use of evidence-based practices that support the inclusion of children with disabilities including children with autism and children who are deaf/hard of hearing, into regular childcare activities. Both agencies will partner with Family Voices of Alabama to hire two “Family Engagement Specialists,” seasoned parents of children with disabilities who can will support young families as they seek training, resources, information, and care for their children. **4.6 Building Qualified Workforce:** ADECE has several strategies underway to meet the goal to create “clear pathways from education and training to high-demand early care and education jobs.” Funding has been extended to institutes of higher education to increase the number and quality of ECCE professionals by offering financial incentives to pursue accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and to provide stipends to attract qualified professors. In addition, the state supports ECCE teachers as they pursue one of two pathways to attaining the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). A scholarship fund, called T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alabama, funds

current childcare workers to receive associates or bachelor's degrees in child development and early care and education in order to develop a credentialed workforce while also enabling individuals to move up the pay ladder. With renewal funds, ADECE will support the expansion of these workforce development programs to reflect continuity across program types and promote easier transitions from one job to another. **4.7 Early English Language and Literacy**

Development: A major emphasis of ADECE's strategic plan is to provide targeted professional development support for ECCE professionals to increase language and literacy development across the birth-5 continuum in a manner that supports the learning of all children, including low-income, disadvantaged, and otherwise vulnerable children, including children with, or at risk for, disabilities and delays. ADECE is partnering with Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) to enable ECCE professionals to complete *The Power of Language* course (either the Infant/Toddler track or the Preschool/Pre-K track). Online modules provided through the Cox Campus and Talk With Me Baby were developed by the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy and the Atlanta Speech School. In 2018, ADECE and ALSDE began implementing Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training for early childhood teachers, which develops their understanding of the science of reading and evidence-based strategies to support all students, including those who experience language and reading challenges. Existing and future PDG B-5 efforts with LETRS and LENA collectively represent a growing, comprehensive effort on the part of ADECE to provide support for professionals across the birth-5 continuum to develop strong language skills in children.

Approach – Activity Five: Improving Overall Quality and Service Integrating, Expanding Access and Developing New Programs The need for high quality ECCE facilities to serve the diversity of families across the state's 15 urbanized centers and its 55 rural counties remains high

and was identified on the Needs Assessment as a crucial challenge for the state to build a truly comprehensive high-quality ECCE system. The PDG B-5 grant has allowed the state to plan for further expansion of quality childcare and pre-k facilities, especially to rural families and families in regions referred to by the Center for American Progress as "child care deserts," which it defines as neighborhoods or communities that lack any child care options or have so few providers that there are more than three children per licensed slot.¹ Many rural communities are also its poorest. ADECE proposes 3 projects designed to expand access to children in vulnerable communities. All project objectives and deliverables are detailed in the PPE and Timeline below.

5.1 Expansion of Family Childcare: Family childcare is an essential childcare option for families, particularly for those living in rural areas, but declining numbers of family care homes is a trend across the state. DHR is proposing to support the supply of family childcare homes in the state through the recruitment of new family childcare providers and the retention of current family childcare providers. ADECE will carry out this support through a contractual relationship with Auburn University's Family Child Care Partnership program. Currently, Auburn University supports family childcare providers through an Accreditation Facilitation Project, which utilizes mentors to help participating family childcare providers obtain accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFFC). ***Bonus Points – Infant/Toddler Emphasis:*** Auburn will help retain and expand existing quality family childcare providers by providing additional coaching particularly in trauma-informed care. PDG B-5 renewal grant funding will provide coaching staff trained in trauma-informed care.

5.2 Foundational Sites: In its long-term project to continue building upon the successful system developed for First Class Pre-K, renewal grant funding will support the development of up to 120 high-quality licensed ECCE sites, serving children from

¹ Malik, Rasheed and Katie Hamm, "Mapping America's Childcare Deserts," *Center for American Progress*, 2017.

birth through pre-k, over the next three years. Initially, all sites will be existing centers with both a First Class Pre-K classroom *and* an infant and toddler program. The pilot will develop sites that offer care and education across the birth-5 continuum. All selected centers for the pilot will have coaches trained in the Devereux strength-based model of support for children experiencing behavioral challenges and will enter QRIS and earn STARS. Developmental screeners will be used at enrollment to assess learning from year one based on the ASQ-3 assessment tool. Year 1 will focus on developmentally appropriate environments with best practices related to infant and toddler interactions. Year 2 will focus on the implementation of developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment. Year 3 will focus on maintenance and sustainability within the programs while building mentorship strategies and support for teachers. ***Bonus Points – Infant/Toddler Emphasis:*** Alabama has contracted with providers across the state; sites will be awarded funding for a variety of purposes including indoor and outdoor improvements, developmentally appropriate curriculum implementation, assessment strategies, and literacy and language development programs for birth-5. The goal of the pilot is to impact infant, toddler, and pre-k programs in areas where access to high quality ECCE programs is either low or non-existent. The sites will be mostly located in rural high-poverty areas, with the goal to recruit 70% of sites outside of the state’s urban regions and with a focus on programs with a high number of families on subsidy support to benefit up to 350 of the state’s most vulnerable children. Teachers will be encouraged with financial incentives and supported to earn relevant professional credentials and all sites will be developed with the goal of improving QRIS/STARS ratings. This plan will serve as a model for adding facilities in areas identified in the mapping project with the greatest need. Unfortunately, approximately 50% of Alabama’s child care facilities are not licensed, and many parents do not have the option for better facilities where they live and work. These low-quality

unregulated facilities will be provided the resources and support needed to become centers of excellence. **5.3 Creative Pathways Homeless Shelter:** Funding will enable ADECE to develop a program uniquely designed to address the needs of families who are not currently served by any existing ECCE program in the state. “Creative Pathways” will provide services tailored to meet the needs of homeless young children and their families including: trauma-informed care; emergency high quality child care; IECMH; parent coaching and home visitation; emphasis on parent leadership; access to Head Start and/or First Class Pre-K classrooms; and, connections to existing programs that provide services like housing, food, training or employment programs, income supports, and health provisions. Further supports will be implemented as families exit homelessness and transition to permanent housing. The goal will be to create a replicable framework to support early childhood safety and development that can be expanded to other existing homeless shelters and serve as a national model. Additional strategies will include the use of portable files that families can take during sudden moves, transition plans for families, and facilitated placement with Head Start or other ECCE programs. **5.4 Increasing Participation in CLASS and QRIS/STARS Assessment:** Alabama is committed to ensuring all ECCE programs are of the highest quality and a primary goal of the PDG B-5 strategic plan is to implement clear accountability and assessment standards across the birth-5 continuum and beyond. Alignment of expectations and emphasis on evidence-based assessment is central to Alabama’s PDG B-5 strategic plan, renewal grant proposal, and to *Strong Start, Strong Finish*. Quality, accountability and assessment standards will be achieved through increased commitment by ECCE educators statewide to QRIS and STARS data assessment strategies, revision of the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children, and a number of proven new programs and activities designed to provide a comprehensive continuum early childhood services. CLASS remains one of the most

effective means of assessing the quality of early education environments. Alabama’s intention is to use CLASS in up to 40 classrooms per year to align expectations for ECCE settings across the age levels with assessment tools to measure the most important aspect of quality in classrooms: the teacher-student interactions. ***Bonus Points – Infant/Toddler Emphasis:*** ADECE is currently updating the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children to fully encompass the birth to age eight continuum. An advisory committee of more than 200 educators, local and state-level administrators, and childcare providers across the state has formed subgroups to address the revision of each standard. A major portion of this revision will include the integration of WIDA Early Language Development Standards as an assessment practice to enable teachers to measure and support language development of English language learners. A working draft of the revised standards is in process, and approval and release of the final version is anticipated in 2020. **5.5**

New Research to Support Access to Early Intervention Resources: ADECE will continue to fund research at Auburn University and the University of Alabama to study telepractice to increase family access to quality support provided through the AEIS. The Needs Assessment identified rural communities, which are often correlated with high poverty rates in the state, as in particular need of access to quality ECCE resources. Telepractice has the potential to overcome barriers to family participation in early intervention and improve the quality of service delivery. Families were provided support according to the routines-based model and training in naturalistic teaching techniques to improve their children’s communication skills via telepractice. The renewal grant will enable ADECE and AEIS to continue working with this pilot program to assess the quality of both routines-based home visits and naturalistic teaching techniques delivered via telepractice. **5.6**

Race Matters Institute: The Steering Committee is working with the Race Matters Institute to facilitate work to address health and educational inequities. The goal of this collaboration is to

better understand the structural drivers that are the root cause of racial disparities and inequities. These systemic factors make structural racism a major challenge in achieving equity in access to early childhood resources. ADECE is working with the Race Matters Institute to help users sort through the drivers of any given inequity by creating a “backmap” that visualizes these drivers and their interactions. The state has used the backmap to address the high infant mortality rate in black families in several counties. The backmap begins with the identification of a racial disparity on a specific indicator (e.g., staff retention rate, program participation, health status, unemployment), and from it, the user can draw upon three key sources of information to identify drivers of inequity on the indicator. The tool creates a visual narrative that will enable ADECE and the Steering Committee to: develop funding strategies around specific disparities; identify strategic leverage/intervention points and be realistic about how much change to expect from any given intervention point; make investments in root causes and advocacy agendas; determine what allies are needed to create collective impact; and, create a fundamental blueprint for long-term efforts to advance racial equity.

Approach – Activity Six: Monitoring, Evaluation, Data Use for Continuous Improvement

Data Integration, Management, and Use The Needs Assessment demonstrated significant needs in the area of data collection and integration for the state to adequately assess how many children are being served and those not being served by ECCE programs. Determining the unduplicated counts of children across organizations has been a data challenge. A central piece of the Strategic Plan is to address these gaps in reliable data about children—particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and children in rural regions of the state—in order to ensure that Alabama’s ECCE system adequately assesses the urgent needs of these children and their families. This has been accomplished in the new system built for First Class Pre-K and will be replicated

across ECCE systems. ADECE is embarking on several data collection projects, described below, to fill these gaps. **6.1 State Longitudinal Data System:** In partnership with ALSDE, ADECE will support the creation of a State Longitudinal Data System (LDS), a cross-agency collaborative effort to complete infrastructure development of the Alabama Terminal for Linking and Analyzing Statistics on Career Pathways (ATLAS). The renewal grant will guide and support these efforts to include ECCE in this data system. ATLAS will merge data from multiple systems across the state, including ECCE, K-12 education, and institutions of higher education, which will then be merged into the state's Workforce LDS. The end goal will be to build state capacity to use data to drive decision making, save taxpayer dollars, improve services and access to services, and facilitate continuous assessment and improvement. MOUs/MOAs regarding data sharing exist between ADECE and the following entities: DHR; Alabama Office of Information Technology; ALSDE; ADPH; Alabama Medicaid; UAB; VOICES; and the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. ADECE will work with other partner agencies in this effort including the ALSDE, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, the Alabama Community College System and the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation. **6.2 Help Me Grow:** Help Me Grow (HMG) is an early intervention screening and referral service designed to identify children at-risk for developmental or behavioral challenges and connect them and their families to community-based programs. HMG is executed statewide through a partnership between ADECE, APC, DHR, and ADMH, and it serves as a resource for parents, First Class Pre-K teachers, pediatricians, First Teacher Home Visiting, Head Start, and other childcare programs. HMG provides a universal, valid, and evidence-based screening tool for use in all early childhood settings for identification of developmental delays and/or behavioral concerns. The initial PDG B-5 grant enabled Alabama to expand access to the system to external providers. ***Bonus Points –***

Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment: The renewal grant will enable expansion of HMG to continue to develop a common intake process with a centralized database in 4 regions of the state. This database will enable the state to track and coordinate new referrals and applications, continuously monitor openings and centralized eligibility requirements, and document admission to various early care programs, including wait list and enrollment systems. ADECE, through HMG, plans to provide support to increase the knowledge of decision makers to use the appropriate state and local data. HMG coordinators will work with local communities and CPC members to establish a local governance structure that empowers local community networks to drive quality improvement and incentivize innovation, which will be accomplished through formalized infrastructure networks in local communities to provide technical assistance and professional development.

6.3 Aggregation of Data: The Needs Assessment report identified that child care, IDEA Part B, section 619, IDEA Part C, Home Visiting, First Class Pre-K, Head Start and Early Head Start and public elementary education collect data individually, but do not integrate data aggregately. Integrated data systems do exist, however, in specific programs housed in ADECE such as First Class Pre-K and First Teacher Home Visiting, successful models that will be expanded and used as foundations for ATLAS. MOUs/MOAs around data sharing exist between state agencies to which these programs belong, which is foundational for progress towards the creation and implementation of ATLAS.

6.4 Comprehensive Census Count: The nonprofit VOICES for Alabama's Children (VOICES) received PDG B-5 funding to support efforts to ensure all of Alabama's young children are identified and counted in the upcoming national census. A comprehensive count will be essential to developing sound policy and oversight of ECCE programs. Of the 83 state agencies and organizations invited, 67 responded to join the Birth-5 Complete Count Committee whose sole focus is addressing the undercount of children under 5,

which is critical data needed to ensure early childhood care and education efforts reach all children birth-5 in the state. **6.5 Childcare Provider Gap Maps:** In addition, ADECE is undergoing a significant effort to map “childcare provider gaps” in the state, which are areas with little or no access to high quality childcare. Alabama is partnering with the Bipartisan Policy Center and the Maricopa Association of Governments to develop interactive maps of the birth-5 system. Data related to capacity will include the availability of Head Start, First Class Pre-K, and other childcare settings. To establish potential need, data includes estimates of the number of children ages birth to five living in single-parent households, where the parent is in the workforce, and children in two-parent households, where both parents are in the workforce. ADECE is collaborating with VOICES, the state’s KidsCount agency, to obtain additional data to finalize these maps (see Activity 2). The maps are essential to coordinating efforts to expand equitable access to ECCE in a way that serves the state’s underserved and vulnerable populations.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement: The Steering Committee provided leadership and accountability for the needs assessment and resultant strategic plan. The steering committee will continue to oversee grant activities, the strategic plan, and all monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement efforts. ADECE created a diverse, external research evaluation team to analyze immediate and longitudinal child outcomes and cost-savings for two of its programs – First Class Pre-K and First Teacher Home Visiting. The research evaluation team has expanded its focus to include special ADECE early childhood/early elementary projects such as P-3 and the LETRS professional development program, which are activities in this grant application. The team will further expand its efforts to include more general monitoring and evaluation for the broader PDG B-5 systems efforts and the strategic plan, presenting regular updates to ADECE and the steering committee to promote accountability. The research team

brings advanced analytical research skills, extensive experience in program and policy analyses, and evaluation and monitoring expertise to support accountability and quality improvement, as well as implementation of an enhanced program performance evaluation plan (PPE). See the Alabama PPE section for more detailed information related to purpose, audience, aims, key personnel, data sources, assessment tools, and metrics to support program implementation, reporting, and accountability for strategic plan activities, additional projects discussed under Activities 3-5 above, and the overall PDG B-5 and birth to early elementary grade systems improvements in the state. The PPE is an enhancement of current research evaluation efforts, including continuation of monthly working team meetings with the addition of other partners in PDG B-5 activities who may provide access to critical data and/or assistance in informing content and interpretation of findings. With renewal funding, several planned activities will support the state in identifying and addressing potential fragmentation or overlap in the state's mixed delivery system, including: unified standards of quality across state agencies and ECCE programs; near-final revisions to the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children that set expectations and measures of assessment for early childhood; and provider participation in monitoring systems. Mapping of child care provider gaps is a crucial way for ADECE to identify unmet needs and where fragmentation of services is occurring. The state will also conduct a funding analysis to identify gaps and opportunities, to ensure fair allocation of resource and reduce duplication of services. Known areas for potential fragmentation were identified during Needs Assessment and stem from data challenges such as the lack of a consolidated data system, which creates barriers to determining unduplicated counts of the number of children being served in existing programs across child- and family-serving organizations. All existing data elements and collection strategies will be expanded to the proposed new activities to support alignment across

evaluation efforts, and though they are not necessarily new data sources they will complement the overall evaluation approach so that consistent information is available. Needs for new data sources will be examined as the PPE is updated. Once finalized with support from federal technical assistance resources and approved by the steering committee, the research evaluation team will implement a timeline of quarterly monitoring reviews and updates of Alabama's PPE (see Timeline). The PPE details the PDG B-5 approach to continuous quality improvement (CQI), including how evaluation metrics and analytical results will inform continuous learning. As part of First Teacher Home Visiting evaluation, specific members of the research evaluation team have built extensive experience in implementing a comprehensive and systematic CQI approach, using an evidence-based approach to change management based on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Breakthrough Series to guide Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles and to facilitate Learning Collaboratives for state leadership, local implementing agencies, home visitors, and families. This experience and expertise will be applied to CQI planning and implementation for the PDG B-5 grant and will include representatives of various stakeholder groups and the steering committee. ADECE will align appropriate strategies with identified areas for improvement based on ongoing monitoring and analyses. This will support buy-in, continuous learning, and improvement efforts as well as overall accountability, quality, and sustainability of efforts beyond the life of the grant. ADECE will continue to grow additional mentor teachers and expand coaching to include childcare teachers and directors. The Auburn University/University of Alabama joint telepractice study will be expanded with continued funding. This study is being done in conjunction with AEIS staff and will directly impact the future of direct service provision.

Meaningful Governance and Stakeholder Engagement: Alabama has an existing governance structure that promotes accountability, coordination, alignment, efficiency, and sustainability.

Alabama Code 26-24-1 created ADECE with the duty of “preparing and submitting to the Governor and the Legislature annual reports on activities and expenditures of state and local agencies related to children; all state, local, and federal funding available for children's programs other than education programs offered by ALSDE for K-12; and recommendations of proposed legislation on the most efficient utilization of resources available in order to maximize services provided to children.” The duties of this office were expanded in 2016 to “develop a cohesive and comprehensive system of high-quality early learning and care.” This governance structure has not changed since the initial PDG B-5 was received. The Steering Committee was created to provide oversight of the initial PDG B-5 grant. The Steering Committee is a subset of the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and includes members of the CPC. Included in the Steering Committee are members of the following: Children’s Policy Councils; DHR; ADECE; ADMH; APC; UAB; ADRS/AEIS; VOICES; ADPH, Title V Maternal and Child Health Program; Alabama Medicaid; Family Resource Centers; SAFE Family Services Center; Community Service Program of West Alabama, Inc; and the Alabama House of Representatives. Key stakeholder agency and organizations interviewed for the needs assessment and strategic plan included: ADECE; DHR; ADMH; ADRS/AEIS; ADPH, ADCANP; ALSDE; MIECHV; ASRA; the Governor’s Office; Alabama Senate and House of Representatives; FOCAL; ACHIA; F5A; APC; PARCA; UAB; AAP; Business Council of Alabama; Reach Out and Read; the Women’s Fund of Birmingham; and pediatricians. 275 participants were included in 16 different provider focus groups, and 158 participants in the 12 family focus groups.

Organizational Capacity and Management: Alabama demonstrates more than sufficient experience and expertise in the program areas of the PDG B-5 grant initiative. Alabama and its partners have the fiscal, administrative, and the performance management capacity to effectively

administer grant funds.

Staff	Credential/Qualifications	Experience
Secretary	B.S. Early Childhood, M.A. Ed Leadership/Admin.	ECE Teacher/Administrator 26 yrs. (public school, Head Start, Even Start, local systems)
Senior Director	B.S., M.A., Ed S. NBCT, Ph.D. Early Childhood	ECE Teacher/Administrator and Director 26 yrs. (public school, child care, MIECHV lead, higher ed)
Senior Accountant	B.A. Business Admin., B.A. Accounting	Accounting and business administration, 14 years
Ed-Admin Professional Development Director	B.A., M.A. Early Childhood	ECE Teacher/Administrator 22 yrs. (public school, Head Start, child care)
Ed Admin – Director Office of School Readiness	B.S. Elementary Ed, M.A. Curriculum, Admin./Supervision, Ph.D. Ed Leadership	ECE Teacher/Administrator and Chief Equity & Engagement Officer 27 yrs. (public school, local and state-level systems, higher ed)
Ed-Admin – Director of Home Visiting and Preschool Special Education Advisor	B.S. Psychology M.Ed. Early Childhood Special Education	Early Intervention Service Provider/State Administrator 15 years, MIECHV lead
Principal Investigator	B.A. Public Health, MSOT, MCH, Ph.D. Public Admin. and Policy	Early Intervention, Physical Therapy, MCH Block Grant, State ECE Research and Evaluation Lead, MIECHV P.I. 27 yrs.

State B-5 Mixed Delivery System: ADECE has the capacity to effectively implement quality activities through a mixed delivery system as informed by the needs assessment within the remaining 4-month timeframe. Alabama’s mixed delivery system is a comprehensive system of ECCE services delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings, including Head Start, licensed family and center-based child care programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations that is supported by a combination of public and private funds. Pursuant to Alabama Code 26-24-1, the duties of ADECE shall include, but are not limited to: Advising the Governor and the Legislature in matters relating to the coordination of services for

children under the age of 19; (2) Serving as a liaison between the Governor and state agencies providing programs or services for children; (3) Educating and informing legislators and other elected officials about issues affecting children; (4) Coordinating local effort by creating a network of existing local and community groups and advocates dedicated to children to enable beneficial organizations throughout the state to assist and educate each other; (5) Actively seeking and applying for federal and private grants to fund children's programs; (6) Establishing a repository for information on programs other than education programs offered by the ALSDE which offer services for, or are for the benefit of, or in any way affect Alabama's children, including, but not limited to, DHR, ADMH, AEIS, ADRS, ADPH, DYS, CFTF, ADECA, ABC Board, ALEA, and CANP; (7) Preparing and submitting to the Governor and the Legislature annual reports on activities and expenditures of state and local agencies related to children; all state, local, and federal funding available for children's programs other than education programs offered by the Department of Education for K-12; and recommendations of proposed legislation on the most efficient utilization of resources available in order to maximize services provided to children; (8) Preparing or causing to be prepared, and submitting for approval and adoption by the Children's Policy Council, legislation required to meet the unmet needs of children by further development and improvement of children's services; (9) Review the budget requests for children's services of any state agency that administers children's programs other than education programs offered by ALSDE; (10) Develop a cohesive and comprehensive system of high quality early learning and care. Alignment with other Federal, State, and local early childhood care and education initiatives that impact the implementation of a B-5 mixed delivery system by taking to scale the structures, processes, and functions of the successful pre-k system will include recommendations from the statewide needs assessment to inform a continuum of evidence-based activities through key

agencies that provide the resources and services for Alabama children and families. This system will involve the implementation of the strategic plan which will encompass data management, continuous improvement, quality professional learning, and guidelines for effective, efficient, accountable programmatic functions. This funding opportunity is consistent with the goals set out in current legislation and the history of collaborative work in Alabama to improve health and educational outcomes for young children with ECCE partners. ADECE is administratively responsible for the State's Head Start Collaborative Office; the nationally-recognized high quality First Class Pre-K program; First Teacher Home Visiting, Alabama's state and federally-funded home visiting system; First 5 Alabama and IECMH; and provides leadership and oversight for the statewide CPC and local CPC's in each of the 67 counties. In addition to these foundational programs, ADECE has a long history of partnership with other early childhood agencies and initiatives in the state. The Office of Early Childhood Development and Professional Support within ADECE promotes high-quality early learning for all children, birth-5 through professional development opportunities for those adults working with children and families. The Office of Early Childhood Development and Professional Support encourages inter-agency collaboration with specialized staff to provide technical assistance to licensed childcare programs including family child care. ADECE has developed a strong collaborative partnership with DHR to support children ages birth-5 in a variety of childcare settings. Moving in partnership with DHR, this innovative initiative allows ADECE to effectively reach more children and utilize federal grant dollars awarded to DHR more efficiently within the state, specifically focused on quality ECCE for infants and toddlers. The First Teacher Home Visiting program utilizes evidence-based home visiting curricula to assist families in meeting goals pertaining including: preparing their children for school; searching for jobs; accessing healthcare and appropriate social services; and improving the

overall lives of young children in our state. Programs may enroll women prenatally and continue to stay involved with the family until the child enters Kindergarten. The Alabama Head Start State Collaboration Office (AHSSCO) is located within ADECE and ensures a unified early care and education system that supports low-income families. AHSSCO represents Head Start children and families in Alabama's policy and decision-making process. The Office of School Readiness, housed within ADECE, is charged with administering First Class Pre-K. ADECE administers and oversees the Children's First Trust Fund (CFTF). Each state agency submits a Plan of Investment of funds from the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The CFTF uses funds from the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement to address unmet needs of children in the State of Alabama. Multiple state agencies receive CFTF funds. The Secretary of Early Childhood Education chairs the state's CPC and provides support for CPCs in every county in the state. The role of the Alabama CPC is to review local county needs assessments for children from birth through age 19. Based on identified needs, the State CPC recommends and develops strategies for administrative, executive, and legislative policy. The state CPC has been designated as the Early Childhood Advisory Council by securing CPC appointments with those required by the Head Start Act (Executive Order #49). The reformation of the CPC/ECAC as a unified group improves coordination, collaboration, and oversight of services and programs that serve children from birth-5.

Timeline: The Strategic Plan spans 3-years, 2020-2022. During this time, the objectives will be planned, implemented or expanded upon, and evaluated. The pace of achieving each objective during the three years will vary depending on the finalization of the preliminary action steps under each objective. ADECE and the Steering Committee will measure progress towards meeting the objectives using its measurable indicators of progress outlined below, which will serve as a check-balance system to ensure the work is on track for completion at the end of three years (measured quarterly).

Activity		Measurable Indicators of Progress												Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11	Q 12
Activity 1: PDG B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment		Continuous	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Activity 2: PDG B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan		Continuous	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Activity 3: Parent Choice & Knowledge																									
3.1: Clearinghouse Website	Increased access to ECCE programs		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.2: Quality Early Childhood Multimedia Messaging	Increased access to ECCE programs; Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.3: Alabama Parent Leadership Network	Increased number of parents participating in the APLN; Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.4: Alabama Talks	Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools; Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.5: First Teacher Home Visiting	Increased number of home-based care providers; Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources; Increased number of high quality ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.6: Child Find Public Awareness Campaign	Increased number of high quality ECCE programs	x	x	x	x																				
3.7: Family Engagement Specialist	Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources	x	x	x	x																				
3.8: Comprehensive Care																									

ACHIA 3.8.a: ACHIA Early Screening and Referral Collab. 3.8.b: ACHIA Nutrition and Physical Activity Collab.													
	Increased number of pediatricians participating in system efforts to disseminate information		X	X	X								
	Increased number of pediatricians participating in system efforts to disseminate information						X	X	X				
Activity 4: Sharing Best Practice among State ECCE Providers													
4.1: Pre-K through 3 rd Grade early learning Continuum	Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools; Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities; Increased access to ECCE programs; Increased number of high quality ECCE programs			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.2: Alabama Reflective Coaching	Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities; Increased retention rates for ECCE professionals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3: First 5 Alabama	Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities; Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.4: Care Coordination Training	Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities	X	X	X	X								
4.5: ADECE and AEIS Partnership	Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities; Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.6: Building Qualified Workforce	Increased number of apprenticeship opportunities; Increased pay for ECCE professionals; Increased retention rates for ECCE professionals; Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.7: Early English	Increased number of programs reporting successful	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Language and Literacy Development	transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools; Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities												
Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality and Service Integrating, Expanding Access and Developing New Programs													
5.1: Expansion of Family Childcare	Increased number of families receiving childcare subsidies; Increased number of licensed providers; Increased retention rates for ECCE professionals; Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities; Increased number of home-based care providers; Increased number of high quality ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.2: Foundational Sites	Increased enrollment in CLASS and QRIS/STARS; Increased number of program achieving QRIS/STARS; Increased number of families receiving childcare subsidies; Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities; Increased number of high quality ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.3: Creative Pathways Homeless Shelter	Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources; Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools; Increased access to ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.4: Increasing Participation in CLASS and QRIS/STARS Assessment	Increased enrollment in CLASS and QRIS/STARS; Increased number of program achieving QRIS/STARS; Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.5: New Research to Support Access to Early Intervention Resources	Increased access to ECCE programs; Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources	x	x	x	x								
5.6: Race Matters Institute	Increased number of high quality ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Activity 6: Data Evaluation, Governance & Stakeholder Engagement													
6.1: State Longitudinal Data System	Increased access to ECCE programs; Increased number of high quality ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

6.2: Help Me Grow	Increased number of families utilizing 2-gen approach to family strengthening service and resources; Increased number of pediatricians participating in system efforts to disseminate information; Increased access to ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.3: Aggregation of Data	Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools; Increased access to ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.4: Comprehensive Census Count	Increased number of ECCE birth to five partners participating in the development of the annual early childhood legislative policy agenda; Increased access to ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.5: Childcare Desert Maps	Increased access to ECCE programs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
*See Program Performance Evaluation Plan (PPE) for how project milestones will be documented in a manner that is thorough, reasonable, and references data management: Alignment of Alabama Connections for Early Care Educations, Goals, Objectives, Indicators/Measures, Data Sources, Methods/Analytical Approaches, and Outcomes.													

Program Performance Evaluation Plan (PPE): The PPE is informed by the needs assessment and aligned with the revised logic model, current strategic plan, and mission, vision, and activities of the PDG B-5 grant application. Though this represents our proposed evaluation plan, we recognize the opportunity to revise and finalize the PPE with the support of federal technical assistance providers during the first year of the grant. This plan has been structured according to the steps of PPE planning presented in the Getting Ready for Program Performance Evaluation: Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Tip Sheet. **Step 1. Engage Internal and External Partners:** The work of the B-5 grant was guided by the Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education Steering Committee, a diverse group of key internal and external partners convened from across the state, including members from the State’s federally designated Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC).

In addition, the comprehensive needs assessment included focus groups and key informant interviews with state and local stakeholders, representing families, providers, policymakers, and ECCE leaders. (See Activity 6 for lists of partners, steering committee members, and needs assessment stakeholder participants.) The PDG B-5 steering committee will continue its leadership role as the project moves into implementation and evaluation phases, providing guidance and review of progress so that the PPE plan, goals, and objectives may be refined as needed to assure alignment with ongoing needs assessment and strategic plan revisions, as well as to support accountability, continuous quality improvement, and dissemination of information to key stakeholders and partners. **Step 2. Identify PPE Goals and Objectives:** The PPE will provide an opportunity for ongoing self-examination of the ECCE mixed delivery system accomplishments, particularly toward goals and objectives established in the PDG B-5 strategic plan. Further, the PPE plan will support assessment of efforts to coordinate and build the capacity of ECCE mixed delivery system so that findings can be used to support continuous quality improvement. The intended audience is broad – encompassing the diverse groups of stakeholders involved in previous and ongoing PDG B-5 activities. These include the ECAC, PDG B-5 steering committee, state and local leaders, policymakers, providers, and families. The PPE is expected to evolve as refinements are made, guided by oversight from the PDG B-5 steering committee, in response to strategic plan progress and lessons learned through ongoing research evaluation. The PPE will be updated at least annually to support alignment across all B-5 systems improvement efforts. The PPE aligns with the vision established for the project and strategic plan and is also guided by the project mission statement. All goals, objectives, preliminary action steps, measurable indicators, and evaluation strategies are therefore aligned to support this foundational guidance. The aims of the proposed PPE include: To describe the extent to which the program is implemented as planned;

To describe the extent to which resources are adequate to implement the program as designed and efficiently used to support progress; To describe the extent to which progress is made on strategic plan goals and objectives; To describe the extent to which the program supports measurable quality improvements in the ECCE mixed delivery system; and To describe the extent to which the program supports strong families and positive health, school readiness, and educational outcomes for children. As the strategic plan spans 3-years (2020-2022), so does the proposed PPE, recognizing that both are expected to evolve and be refined based on project efforts and progress. During this time, the goals, objectives, action steps and strategies will be implemented, expanded upon, and evaluated, with ongoing planning occurring to support new efforts and continuous improvement. ADECE and the Steering Committee, with the support of external partners including a research evaluation team, will measure progress towards meeting the goals and objectives using its measurable indicators of progress outlined in the table presented under step 3 below.

Key personnel involved in the proposed evaluation are identified below, along with descriptions of responsibilities. Other personnel and expertise will be added as needed.

PDG B-5 Steering Committee: Overall guidance; data access; interpretation; dissemination
<p>ADECE staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary Jeana Ross: Overall project leadership and vision; stakeholder accountability • Dr. Tracye Strichik: Senior Director for research evaluation; data-sharing oversight • Katrina Bowling: Internal central database design and management • Departmental project management and accounting staff: Budget and expenditure analyses
<p>External Research Evaluation Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAB School of Public Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Julie Preskitt: Lead evaluator; liaison to ADECE and PDG B-5 steering committee • Dr. Pia Sen: Economist; advanced empirical methods analytical design • Dr. David Becker: Economist; cost-benefit analyses • Dr. Matt Fifolt: Continuous quality improvement lead; survey design • Heather Johnson: Project manager; continuous quality improvement analyses • UAB School of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. James Ernest: Early childhood education/early childhood special education expertise • Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Joe Adams: Policy expertise; liaison to ALSDE for K-12 data access

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ThinkData Solutions• Robin Hunt: Data linkage and dataset preparation |
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The external research evaluation team is currently focused on supporting ADECE's analyses of immediate and longitudinal family and child outcomes and cost-savings for two of its programs – First Class Pre-K and First Teacher. During the current PDG B-5 systems grant, the team has expanded its focus to include special ADECE and early childhood/early elementary projects such as the Preschool to 3rd Grade learning continuum and LETRS professional development program, which are activities related to this grant application. The team will further expand its efforts to include more general monitoring and evaluation for the broader PDG B-5 systems efforts and the strategic plan, presenting regular updates to ADECE and the steering committee. In general, the PPE is an enhancement of current research evaluation efforts, including continuation of monthly working team meetings with the addition of other partners in PDG B-5 activities who may provide access to critical data and/or assistance in informing content and interpretation of findings. With the receipt of new PDG B-5 funding, ADECE and the research evaluation team will work with federal technical assistance resources to finalize the PPE and to establish a timeline to expand research evaluation efforts and presentations to the steering committee.

Step 3. Plan for Gathering, Preparing and Analyzing Data: The overall evaluation plan includes both formative and summative components. Formative evaluation occurs throughout the grant to support project leadership in determining progress toward achieving goals and objectives, identifying whether adjustments need to be made to the project plan, and recognizing quality improvement opportunities. Summative evaluation occurs at the end of each year and at the conclusion of the project to support project leadership in determining the overall impact of the program. Formative evaluation will support measurement of project efficiency through process evaluation, which appraises of the gap between actual and expected levels of achievement and

alerts program planners to changes or corrective actions that may be needed. Process evaluation measures will assist the implementation team to: (1) determine if the project is being implemented as planned and according to the established timeline; (2) identify implementation problems as they occur and assure prompt feedback to project staff so that adjustments can be made; (3) determine the type, quality, and quantity of services/activities provided and to whom they were provided; and (4) provide a record of project inputs, methods, and outputs/deliverables. Summative evaluation will measure overall project effectiveness through outcome evaluation. Finally, ongoing feedback throughout the project through quarterly progress updates will support continuous quality improvement efforts. ADECE has identified data sources for each measurable indicator of progress as aligned to specific goals and objectives (see table below). These data sources vary from in-house ADECE administrative data sources to data sources from existing partners who will report the measurement of the indicator. In addition, it is possible that VOICES for Alabama's Children, the state's Kids Count agency and a key partner on the PDG B-5 steering committee, could assume a central role for data access and reporting as they have data-sharing/research agreements with many of the state agency partners and these currently include or could be expanded to include needed indicators. Existing administrative data are stored in the ECEData Central Database, including extensive program implementation information for ADECE projects; pre/post and average scores on validated assessment and screening tools for child and family outcomes for ADECE projects, classroom environment and quality of teacher-child interaction pre/post and average scores for ADECE and DHR partnership projects; and geographic site information to support data visualization and mapping of current ECCE capacity. Specific K-12 outcome data (absenteeism, special education, retention, standardized statewide assessments of reading and math proficiency) are also available through linkage with Alabama State Department

of Education. These existing data elements and collection strategies will be expanded to the proposed new activities to support alignment across evaluation efforts. Needs to new data sources will be examined as the PPE is updated. These are anticipated to include centralized intake pilots in selected areas via an expansion of Help Me Grow; a program and/or caregiver survey related to successful transition to elementary school; word count and conversational turn data from LENA recording devices; utility information from a clearinghouse website of ECCE resources and from a public awareness and knowledge of value of quality in ECCE initiative; and an in-process comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system. Further, the existing ECEDData central database will be expanded to include historical information and to link across ADECE projects (i.e. First Class Pre-K, Head Start, First Teacher Home Visiting).

Step 4. Plan for Using and Sharing Findings: Findings from analyses conducted throughout the proposed PPE will be presented quarterly to the PDG B-5 steering committee. Also, consistent with current practice for ACECE projects, the external research evaluation team will develop presentations and easy to understand issue briefs of findings to be shared broadly with stakeholders, including policymakers, partners, and families. In addition to sharing findings with stakeholders, results will also be leveraged to support continuous quality improvement (CQI). Progress toward goals and objectives of the strategic plan and implementation of project activities/action steps will be reviewed quarterly. This most basic process evaluation of formative data will be applied to ongoing CQI efforts, identifying areas where program implementation may not be proceeding as planned so they may be targeted for corrective actions. Beyond simple CQI efforts aligned with process evaluation, the PDG B-5 CQI plan will involve more comprehensive strategies to inform continuous learning by building on the experience of the research evaluation team's implementation of a rigorous CQI approach in the First Teacher home visiting program.

This comprehensive and systematic approach has included starting small, building knowledge and capacity over time, using increasingly more sophisticated methods of conducting CQI as members of the team gained a deeper understanding of the methods and tools, and establishing and maintaining a culture of quality at all levels and across all stakeholders.² The team has applied an evidence-based approach to change management, including use of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Breakthrough Series to guide Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles and facilitate Learning Collaboratives for state leadership, local implementing agencies, home visitors, and families. This experience and expertise will be applied to CQI planning and implementation for the PDG B-5 grant. A critical component to the success of the PDG B-5 grant and CQI efforts will be establishing and promoting a culture of quality at all levels and among partners, stakeholders, and the steering committee. This will begin with cultivating commitment and buy-in by connecting change management to the vision and mission of the project and ADECE. This essential connection, along with transparency and ongoing monitoring and analyses, will support buy-in, continuous learning, and improvement efforts as well as overall accountability, quality, and sustainability of efforts beyond the life of the grant.

² Fifolt M, Arbour M, Johnson H, Zeribi K, Preskitt J. Advancing Quality Improvement in Public Health A Critical Reflection of CQI in Home Visiting. (Journal of Public Health Management & Practice, August 2019 [In Press])

Alignment of Alabama Connections for Early Care Education Goals, Objectives, Indicators/Measures, Data Sources, Methods/Analytical Approaches, and Outcomes				
Goals and Objectives	Indicators/Measures (Outputs)	Data Sources*	Methods/Analytic Approaches	Outcomes
<i>From Strategic Plan</i>				
Goal A Obj. A1-A5	Increased access to early care and education programs	<i>ADECE, ADRS-EI/Part C, ALSDE/Part B, DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Capacity to serve, numbers served, waiting lists, demographics, geographic location	Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban, race, ethnicity, age, poverty status, special needs status; geographic mapping/data visualization	<i>Short-Term:</i> Expanded access and strengthened services for all, and especially for vulnerable populations <i>Long-Term:</i> High quality ECCE services are accessible and affordable to all
	Increased number of providers offering extended operating hours	<i>DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Capacity to serve, geographic location	Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban; geographic mapping/data visualization	
	Increased number of home-based care providers (private, Home Visiting, etc.)	<i>ADECE, ADRS-EI/Part C, DHR/Childcare, ADCANP, private home visiting</i> Programmatic Data – Capacity to serve, numbers served, waiting lists, demographics, geographic location	Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban, race, ethnicity, age, poverty status, special needs status; geographic mapping/data visualization	
	Increased childcare subsidy amount	<i>DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Subsidy dollar amount	Baseline and annual dollar amount for subsidy	
	Increased number of families receiving childcare subsidies	<i>DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Number families receiving subsidies	Baseline and annual counts	

Goal B Obj. B1-B4	Increased number of pediatricians participating in system efforts to disseminate information	<i>ACHIA, AAP:</i> Programmatic Data – Number pediatricians participating in learning collaboratives	Counts at baseline and at each learning collaborative cycle end	<i>Short-Term:</i> Families promoted as children's first and most important teachers and advocates through increased family engagement <i>Long-Term:</i> Families are engaged as partners in ECCE, and access to comprehensive support services is expanded
	Increased number of parents participating in the Alabama Parent Leadership Network	<i>APC:</i> Programmatic Data – Number of participating parents	Baseline and annual counts	
	Increased number of programs reporting successful transitions for children from ECCE programs to elementary schools	<i>ADECE, ADRS-EI/Part C, ALSDE-Part B for 3-4-year olds, DHR-Childcare:</i> NEW: Programmatic Data – Number programs reporting successful transitions – consider program survey or family survey at exit	NEW: Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban, race, ethnicity, age, poverty status, special needs status	
	Increased number of families utilizing two-generation approach family strengthening services and resources	<i>ADECE-First Teacher, ADCANP, private home visiting, APC, Help Me Grow:</i> Programmatic Data – Number families in home visiting programs, number families in Strengthening Families program, number families referred for and receiving services and resources	Baseline and annual counts by service and resource, geographic location	
Goal C Obj. C1-C3	Increased number of apprenticeship opportunities	<i>Apprenticeship Alabama (Made in Alabama, Alabama Department of Commerce):</i> NEW: Programmatic Data – Number of ECCE apprenticeships	NEW: Baseline and annual counts	<i>Short-Term:</i> Strengthened recruitment strategies and attractive benefits offered for ECCE

				professionals
	Increased pay for ECCE professionals	<i>ADECE, ADRS-EI/Part C, ALSDE-Part B for 3-4-year olds, DHR/Childcare, ADCANP, private home visiting:</i> Programmatic Data – Annual average salary amount	Baseline and annual average salary by ECCE professional type (i.e. childcare teacher, FCPK teacher, Head Start teacher, home visitor)	<i>Long-Term:</i> A highly skilled and well-supported ECCE workforce is being built and retained
	Increased retention rates for ECCE professionals	<i>ADECE, ADRS-EI/Part C, ALSDE-Part B for 3-4-year olds, DHR/Childcare, ADCANP, private home visiting:</i> Programmatic Data – Turnover rates	Baseline and annual turnover rates by ECCE professional type	
	Increased number of ECCE professionals participating in professional development activities	<i>ADECE, ALSDE, DHR/Childcare:</i> Professional Development registry – Number of hours, course types	Baseline and annual hours overall and by course listing by ECCE professional type; assure specific trainings linked to PDG B-5 activities are monitored (Read Right from the Start/The Power of Language), LENA training, LETRS training	
Goal D Obj. D1-D7	Increased number of licensed providers	<i>DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Number of licensed providers/sites, geographic location	Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban; geographic mapping/data visualization	<i>Short-Term:</i> Created, sustained, and expanded high quality ECCE programs
	Increased enrollment in CLASS and STARS/QRIS	<i>ADECE, DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Number of providers/sites enrolled in quality assessments CLASS and STARS/QRIS	Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban	<i>Long-Term:</i> All ECCE programs are of the highest quality and

	Increased number of programs achieving STARS/QRIS	<i>DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Number of providers/sites achieving STARS/QRIS by star level, geographic location	Baseline and annual counts, by star level, aggregated by rural/urban; geographic mapping/data visualization	accountable to rigorous standards.
	Increased number of high-quality ECCE programs	<i>ADECE, DHR/Childcare:</i> Programmatic Data – Number and geographic location of First Class Pre-K classrooms/programs, STARS/QRIS rated programs	Baseline and annual counts, aggregated by rural/urban; geographic mapping/data visualization	
	Increased number of ECCE birth to five partners participating in the development of the annual early childhood legislative policy agenda	<i>Governor's Children's Cabinet, ECAC, VOICES for Alabama's Children, APC:</i> Participant counts	Baseline and annual counts	

*Blue shaded cells indicate data that could potentially be provided for VOICES for Alabama's Children instead of individual agencies listed as VOICES currently has research and data-sharing agreements with each agency listed in the cell and they currently include or could be expanded to include the data elements presented.

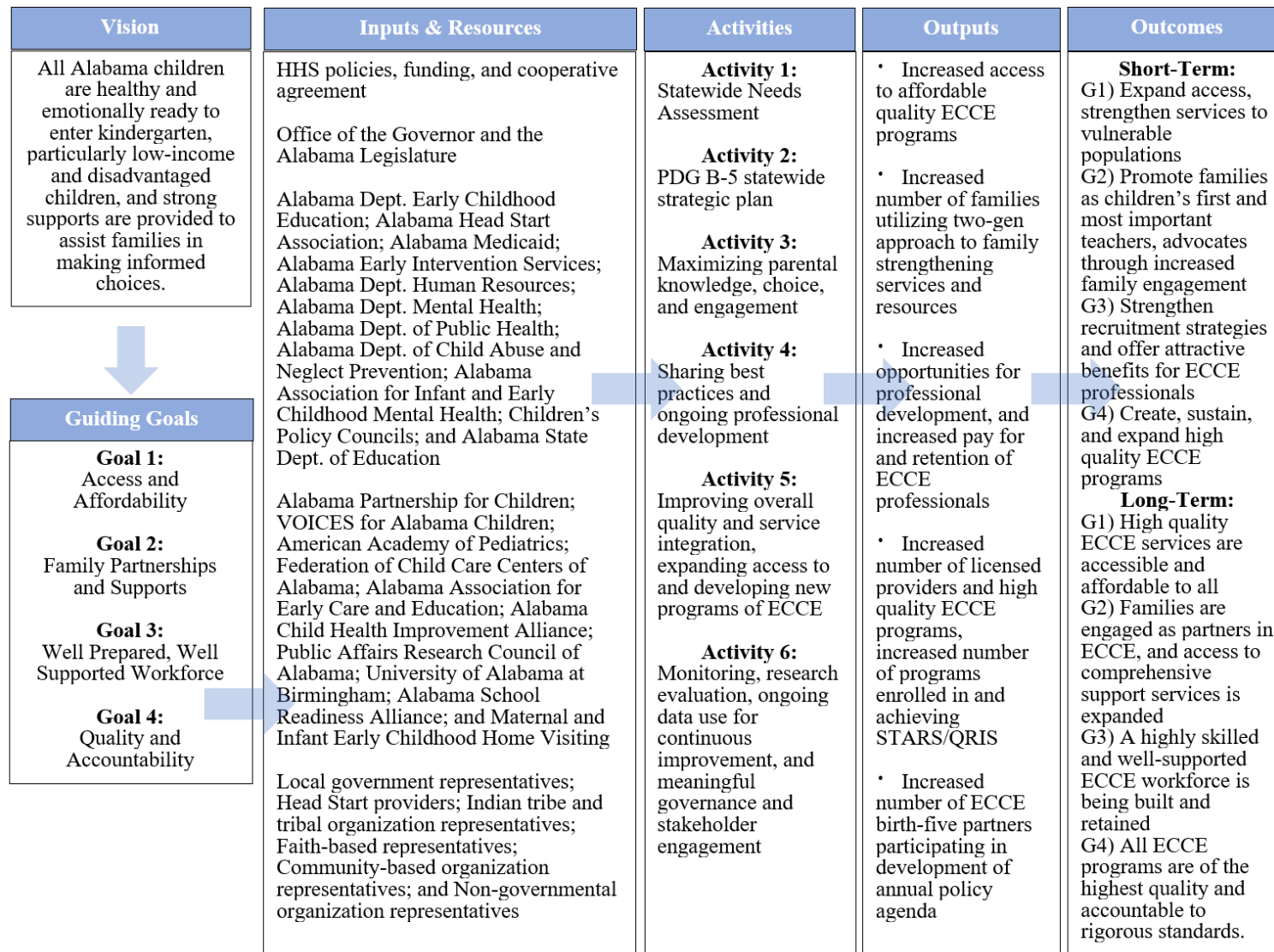
Additional measures and data sources related to overall PDG B-5 project implementation and performance			
Indicators/Measures (Outputs)	Data Sources	Methods/Analytic Approaches	Outcomes
Progress on strategic plan	<i>ADECE, Clarus, Research Evaluation Team</i>	Action steps completed, action steps in progress, actions steps not started, action steps added/modified	<i>Short-Term:</i> Process Evaluation – Project efficiency <i>Long-Term:</i> Outcome Evaluation – Project effectiveness
Cost	<i>ADECE:</i> Financial data	Budget and expenditures by activity and for overall grant	<i>Short-Term:</i> Process Evaluation – Project efficiency

			<i>Long-Term:</i> Outcome Evaluation – Project effectiveness; cost effectiveness
Specific Professional Development activities	<i>ADECE:</i> Professional development registry	Training hours, course specifics by ECCE professional; counts of participants; stipends provided – LETRS, Read Right from the Start/The Power of Language, LENA, Conscious Discipline	<i>Long-Term:</i> A highly skilled and well-supported ECCE workforce is being built and retained All ECCE programs are of the highest quality and accountable to rigorous standards.
Quality of Teacher-Child Interactions; Environmental Quality	<i>ADECE:</i> Programmatic data – included for all activities that have a classroom component (examples: First Class Pre-K, DHR childcare partnerships, P-3 pilot, Foundational Sites, Creative Pathways Homeless Shelters program); CLASS, CLASS- IT, ECERS	ECERS: Average total score (pre/post/average) by classroom CLASS: Average score by dimension and domain (pre/post/average) by classrooms Bivariate and multivariate analyses to identify associations between quality indicator scores and child outcomes	<i>Short-Term:</i> Expanded access and strengthened services for all, and especially for vulnerable populations Created, sustained, and expanded high quality ECCE programs <i>Long-Term:</i> High quality ECCE services are accessible and affordable to all All ECCE programs are of the highest quality and accountable to rigorous standards.
Child outcomes	<i>ADECE, ALSDE:</i> Programmatic Data – Teaching Strategies GOLD, Devereux	Baseline/pre (Fall) and post (Spring) – % meeting/exceeding widely held	<i>Long-Term:</i> High quality ECCE services are accessible

	Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3rd edition (ASQ3), Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE2), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) maternal depression symptoms and referrals, K-12 data (absenteeism, special education, retention, standardized statewide assessments of reading and math proficiency)	expectations, % kindergarten ready, growth by domain % testing with concerns/need referral, referrals received % chronic absent, retained in grade, special education by exceptionality, proficient in reading and math at 3 rd grade Bivariate and multivariate analyses to identify associations among child outcomes, quality indicator scores, and specific project interventions – fixed effects linear probability model analyses to control for additional unable to be measured by available demographics	and affordable to all All ECCE programs are of the highest quality and accountable to rigorous standards.
Clearing house website of ECCE resources Public awareness and knowledge of value of quality in ECCE initiative	<i>IO Studios, Telegraph Creative:</i> TBD	TBD	<i>Short-Term:</i> Families promoted as children's first and most important teachers and advocates through increased family engagement <i>Long-Term:</i> Families are engaged as partners in ECCE, and access to comprehensive support services
Other specific grant activities (detailed in Activities 3, 4, & 5 of grant application)	<i>ADECE in partnership with activity leads:</i> Research evaluation team to work with ADECE and activity leads to determine data elements and sources	TBD	All above

Logic Model

PDG B-5 Renewal: Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education



Project Sustainability Plan Alabama has a history of strong investment in early childhood education through the Pre-K, Head Start, Home Visiting, and P-3. The broad base of support from the public, private and non-profit sectors mobilized to advocate for quality early childhood programs, and as a result, the Governor and Legislature have worked together to increase ADECE funding by nearly \$130 million since 2011. These state funds provide the foundation for the programs and have been complemented by PDG funds that have helped investments in the establishment of new programs. ADECE has a history of ensuring that federal funds are used to make one-time investments to establish programs which can then be sustained with State funds. Additionally, ADECE has a history of partnerships with the DHR Childcare Division (i.e. CCDF, EHS/CCP grants) to improve the quality of and support childcare throughout the State. Such partnerships will be enhanced by the PDG B-5 funds as the partnership continues. The plan of ADECE is to enhance, establish or revise efforts of cooperation and collaboration. Coordinated funds will support enhanced ECCE systems by continued growth in such funds to sustain all efforts of the PDG B-5. The statewide collaborative efforts and partnerships support ongoing efforts through direct intervention and policy development that promote sustainability of system improvements. ADECE is a cabinet-level agency and is assigned administrative responsibility for leadership, coordination, and implementation of state and local initiatives related to the early childhood system. This structure supports financial and programmatic sustainability and leadership continuity beyond the period of federal funding. Further, the expertise gained in facilitating collaborative initiatives and implementing continuous quality improvement exercises will support the spread of lessons learned beyond the communities of focus for this project. The establishment of a set of common measurable indicators, with integration into the under-development SLDS, will provide an opportunity to measure the outcomes of collective impact over

time. The innovative mixed delivery system will promote adaptation and adoption more broadly throughout the state to improve children's health and family well-being and will support the sustainability of PDG B-5. Additionally, subgrants to local programs will require grantees to increase quality through training, pay parity and to build stronger community collaborations. Programs will also be asked to provide a plan to sustain their initiatives after the grant period. The subgrantees will be required to participate in Alabama Quality STARS. ADECE has a strong coaching network and staff to support these entities in reaching higher levels on the Alabama QRIS Stars Program. Once higher levels are achieved, funding through CCBG increases. An Alabama Quality STARS Bonus is awarded to centers for their initial STAR Rating. The bonus amount depends on the STAR Level achieved and the licensed child capacity of the center or max number of children allowed if the center cannot be licensed. Centers that increase their STAR Rating will receive an Alabama Quality STARS Bonus for the higher STAR Level they achieve. An Alabama Quality STARS Bonus is also awarded to STAR Rated centers upon successful completion of their Annual Review that occurs each year on or near their STAR rating anniversary. Centers that participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program will receive a 2% to 10% increase in their reimbursement rate based on the STAR Level achieved. Centers that increase their STAR Rating will receive an increased reimbursement rate for the higher STAR level achieved.

Dissemination Plan

The dissemination plan will be guided by ADECE leadership and the ECAC/PDG B-5 Committee. Activities will tie closely with both project implementation and overall evaluation efforts.

The overall goal for the dissemination plan is to provide timely information about the Alabama PDG B-5 grant, early childhood system expansion, and child outcomes to key audiences, including families, system providers, higher education representatives, state and local leaders, policy-

makers, and other stakeholders. Four objectives with associated strategies and evaluation methods are presented below. The plan will be finalized with input from federal technical assistance and the ECAC.

Dissemination Plan Objective 1: By the end of the first quarter of the first year of the grant, utilize the ECAC/PDG B-5 Committee to guide grant activities and support dissemination.

Strategy	Evaluation Method/Measure
ECAC, will guide grant activities in addressing needs and gaps identified through the needs assessment.	Compliance group established; Membership list
Quarterly meetings of ECAC, with at least one agenda item related to dissemination (target audience identification, input on methods/materials, response to dissemination materials)	Meeting agenda and minutes

Dissemination Plan Objective 2: Annually, disseminate project information and updates via at least 3 methods.

Strategy	Evaluation Method/Measure
An annual evaluation report (and final summative report) will be completed each year to supplement required federal reporting. In addition to B-5 system changes, numbers and demographics, and overall outcomes, this report will include lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations to inform the overall grant project strategic plan.	Evaluation reports (Internal use and posted on DECE website)
Based on ongoing evaluation, a slide presentation will be developed and will be shared with the stakeholder advisory group and the broader partner list, as well as incorporated into the Secretary's legislative presentation to be delivered to state policy-makers and the Governor.	# and copies of presentations
The Research Evaluation Team will prepare a white paper or series of stand-alone issue briefs that present key findings from the PDG B-5 grant in digestible portions. This strategy has been implemented with other findings related to the FCPK program and the format has been well-received as a way to present and share scholarly findings in easy-to-understand short reports for use with external stakeholders, including state and community partners and state legislators. These issue briefs will also be posted on the DECE website.	# of issue briefs posted on DECE website
The baseline B5 system has been visually depicted via Arc GIS mapping as a part of the project needs assessment. These maps, along with baseline maps from the annual FCPK maps establish a baseline view of the B5 early childhood system in Alabama. These maps will be updated annually, with previous iterations archived, to visually depict system	Baseline and annual Arc GIS B5 system maps; Current maps posted on DECE

expansion as well as to support stakeholder use in locating programs. Current maps will be posted on the DECE website.	website
The Research Evaluation team will prepare and submit abstracts for consideration as poster or oral sessions at relevant conferences. These will be co-presented by DECE leadership and Research Evaluation team members. Posters will be posted on the DECE website.	# and copies of posters posted on DECE website # presentation sessions
The Research Evaluation team will prepare articles for consideration for publication in relevant peer-reviewed journals to add to the body of literature related to B5 systems. These articles will be co-authored by DECE leadership. Articles will be posted on the DECE website.	# and copies of articles posted on DECE website

Dissemination Plan Objective 3: During each year of the grant, evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended.

Strategy	Evaluation Method/Measure
Solicit feedback on dissemination materials and use from ECAC members. This may be done more informally as a meeting agenda item with the feedback recorded in the minutes or through a brief electronic survey.	Meeting minutes; Brief member survey results
Develop, implement, and analyze an annual electronic survey of B5 early childhood stakeholders, including ECAC members, and representatives from the target audience list and broader interested persons/partners list (see objective 2 strategies). To support triangulation of findings and minimize duplication, select questions from this survey will also be used in other relevant surveys fielded by DECE and partner organizations as appropriate. The purpose of the annual surveys is to capture input on the project, dissemination products, and use of findings. Findings will guide strategic planning and project implementation.	Survey results and report
Monitor available metrics on audience engagement, product usage, and evaluation of presentations/sessions.	DECE website related page views; # cross-postings or link to B5 materials on partner websites; # of members on lists to receive updates; # of product downloads (issue briefs, papers); Conference session presentation evaluations

Third-Party Agreements: Other interagency agreements are on file with ADECE.

**INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
AND
THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
AGREEMENT NUMBER: 1930**

Whereas, the Alabama Department of Human Resources (hereinafter referred to as DHR), has a need to provide technical assistance and support in the area of family engagement to child care providers participating in Alabama Quality Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

Whereas, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (hereinafter referred to as DECE), possesses the requisite expertise to administer all aspects of a technical assistance and support plan in the area of family engagement; and

Whereas, DHR and DECE have a desire to cooperate to implement a technical assistance and support plan in the area of family engagement for participants in Alabama Quality Stars.

Now therefore, in consideration of the above premises and mutual promises contained herein, DHR and DECE agree as follows:

I. PERIOD OF AGREEMENT

This agreement shall become effective on July 1, 2018, and shall remain in effect through September 30, 2020, unless otherwise terminated earlier in accordance with its terms and conditions.

The Agreement may be renewed or extended by letter, or other written instrument, duly executed by the parties hereto.


II. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

A. DECE shall:

1. Develop and implement a family engagement plan for participants in Alabama Quality Stars in order to work with families to engage, support, and improve the learning and development of children and help programs earn higher STAR levels.
2. Provide reports to DHR at agreed upon intervals concerning the implementation and effectiveness of the family engagement plan.
3. Provide assessment tools to assess the needs of families, family demographics, community service resources, and build individualized program plans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed by their officials thereunto duly authorized.

FOR THE DEPARTMENT:


Nancy T. Buckner, Commissioner
Alabama Department of Human Resources

FOR THE CONTRACTOR:


Jean Ross, Secretary
Alabama Department of Early Childhood
Education

REVIEWED FOR LEGAL FORM:


Kimberly Dobbs
DHR Legal Counsel

APPROVED AS TO PROGRAM CONTENT:


Jeanetta E. Green, Director
Child Care Services Division

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds

ADECE employs a full-time Education Systems Administrator (ESA), Education Systems Specialist (ESS), and a full-time Technology Assistant (TA). These employees directly oversee the organization's data collection and management. The ESA has early childhood teaching and administrative experience, certifications, and degrees as well as a CompTia Network+ certification and experience as an educational technology director. In addition, ADECE contracts with PARCA and UAB for support in conducting formalized research, data analysis, and data-based action planning. This team and ADECE administrators have regular Research and Evaluation Meetings for data review, disaggregation, analysis, and both short- and long-range planning. Student assessment data is collected from multiple sources including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

(PPVT) and Teaching Strategies GOLD. Classroom observation data is collected through the CLASS tool. Phase II of the development of the ECEDData central database is centered around the integration of the data from the PPVT, GOLD, and CLASS tools into the ADECE central database. ADECE has developed and maintains a comprehensive statewide data collection and management system. Student and parent data is captured electronically through the ASAP online registration system. Teacher and classroom data is also captured digitally through electronic forms which are compiled into a comprehensive dataset. All this data is fed directly through nightly digital transfers into the ADECE central database, ECEDData, which is housed at the datacenter belonging to the state of Alabama's Office of Information Technology. The ECEDData central database makes all student, parent, teacher, and classroom data available to all ADECE administrators, monitors, and coaches from anywhere at any time via any internet-connected device through a credential-protected web interface. For the purposes of longitudinal data analysis, the ADECE central database is linked with the student information management system utilized by the ALSDE. This platform, iNow by PowerSchool, allows pre-k students to be assigned unique State Student Identification Numbers (SSIDs) which remain the same as students enter public school in the state. Through capture of the SSIDs, ADECE is able to follow the data of students who participated in the department's program all the way through high school graduation. The current ADECE implementation model will be used to develop additional ECCE programs as a result of the renewal grant. ADECE will contact representatives of ECCE programs, including LEAs, child care, Head Start, and community partners within the high need communities to notify them of eligibility to apply for subgrants from the agency. From that point, the following implementation model will be used: (1) ADECE will receive applications for funding applications to be completed by potential subgrantees online using the Foundant Grant Management system; (2) ADECE staff will provide

assistance to potential subgrantees; (3) Applications received are scored and ranked by both external readers and reviewed by internal field staff; (4) ADECE will award grants based on scores, and other measures of successful program implementation, and identified needs of communities; and (5) ADECE will ensure all documents, assurances, grant agreements and financial information is signed by subgrantee and received by ADECE. Once the awards are made and publicized by ADECE, each subgrantee will be assigned to an ADECE region which will provide the support to set up the ECCE facilities, ensure budgets are completed, and fiscal management procedures are in place. From the time the awards are announced, each subgrantee will receive support from ADECE through their coach, monitor and quality contractors. The coaching and monitoring processes are well-defined through historical practice and research. Since 2001 ECCE professionals from across the state have worked to develop and refine what is now the Alabama First Class Pre-K Framework. This framework incorporates program guidelines, classroom guidelines, early learning standards, professional development, coaching methods and monitoring practices that will be replicated across the birth-8 continuum.

Project Budget and Budget Justification

Alabama PDG B-5 Renewal Budget Justification and Narrative- Year 1

Object Class Categories	Federal	Non-federal Match	Total
a. Personnel	\$ 1,465,441.00	\$ 7,419,637.00	\$ 8,885,078.00
b. Fringe Benefits	\$ 606,835.00	\$ 2,582,677.00	\$ 3,189,512.00
c. Travel	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
d. Equipment	\$ 51,000.00		\$ 51,000.00
e. Supplies	\$ 151,000.00		\$ 151,000.00
f. Contractual	\$ 9,745,679.00	\$ 106,606,835.00	\$ 116,352,514.00
g. Construction	\$ -		\$ -
h. Other	\$ 160,235.00		\$ 160,225.00
i. Total Direct Charges	\$ 12,230,190.00	\$ 116,609,149.00	\$ 128,839,339.00
j. Indirect Charges	\$ 269,810.00		
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ 12,500,000.00	\$ 116,609,149.00	\$ 128,839,339.00

Budget Category- Personnel \$1,465,441

Position/ Title	Months	% Effort	Annual Salary	Wage Rate Per Month	Amount Requested from Grant
Senior Director - Project Director	12	0.25	\$ 110,738.40	\$ 9,228.20	\$ 27,685.00
Education Administrator - Project	12	1	\$ 92,340.00	\$ 7,695.00	\$ 92,340.00
Secretary of Early Childhood Educ	12	0.25	\$ 160,341.60	\$ 13,361.80	\$ 40,085.00
OSR Director	12	0.29	\$ 102,712.80	\$ 8,559.40	\$ 29,787.00
Region 1 Director	12	0.29	\$ 62,042.40	\$ 5,170.20	\$ 17,992.00
Region 2 Director	12	0.29	\$ 75,103.20	\$ 6,258.60	\$ 21,780.00
Region 3 Director	12	0.29	\$ 67,025.80	\$ 5,585.48	\$ 19,437.00
Region 4 Director	12	0.29	\$ 72,628.80	\$ 6,052.40	\$ 21,062.00
Region 5 Director	12	0.29	\$ 69,917.40	\$ 5,826.45	\$ 20,276.00
Region 7 Director	12	0.29	\$ 72,628.80	\$ 6,052.40	\$ 21,062.00
Region 8 Director	12	0.29	\$ 76,360.80	\$ 6,363.40	\$ 22,145.00
Education Administrator - Early Childhood Systems Administrator	12	0.5	\$ 85,043.20	\$ 7,086.93	\$ 42,522.00
New Data Person	12	100	\$ 56,980.00	\$ 4,748.33	\$ 56,980.00
Data and Analytics Manager	12	0.3	\$ 55,327.20	\$ 4,610.60	\$ 16,598.00
Grants Manager	12	0.29	\$ 43,171.40	\$ 3,597.62	\$ 12,520.00
Education Administrator	12	0.29	\$ 71,678.40	\$ 5,973.20	\$ 20,787.00
Education Specialist	12	100	\$ 69,014.00	\$ 5,751.17	\$ 69,014.00

8 Education Specialists	12	100	\$ 442,808.00	\$ 36,901.00	\$ 442,808.00
Executive Secretary	12	0.29	\$ 49,581.00	\$ 4,131.75	\$ 14,378.00
Education Administrator - Professional Development Manager	12	0.29	\$ 83,315.40	\$ 6,942.95	\$ 24,161.00
Director Early Learning	12	0.29	\$ 81,273.00	\$ 6,772.75	\$ 23,569.00
16 Retired State Teachers ECE Coaches	12	0.5	\$ 496,000.00	\$ 4,133.00	\$ 248,000.00
Human Services Program Manager - Administrative Services	12	0.3	\$ 53,767.60	\$ 4,480.63	\$ 16,130.00
Human Services Program Manager - Children's Policy Council Mgr	12	0.3	\$ 61,279.20	\$ 5,106.60	\$ 18,384.00
Senior Accountant	12	0.3	\$ 64,888.20	\$ 5,407.35	\$ 19,466.00
Staff Accountant	12	0.3	\$ 48,470.40	\$ 4,039.20	\$ 14,541.00
Accountant	12	0.3	\$ 48,200.40	\$ 4,016.70	\$ 14,460.00
Accountant	12	1	\$ 46,286.80	\$ 3,857.23	\$ 42,287.00
Retired State Employee - Accountant (.5 FTE, part-time)	12	0.3	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 833.33	\$ 2,900.00
ASA III	12	0.29	\$ 36,645.60	\$ 3,053.80	\$ 10,627.00
ASA II	12	0.29	\$ 26,806.80	\$ 2,233.90	\$ 7,774.00
Education Administrator - Budget and Grants Analyst (.5 FTE, part-time)	12	0.29	\$ 47,874.90	\$ 3,989.58	\$ 13,884.00

Budget Category- Fringe Benefits \$606,835 Required contributions for employees include FICA (7.65%), retirement (15.24%), and health insurance (\$930 per month).

Budget Category- Travel \$50,000 Travel costs include one trip to the ACF Sponsored Grantee meeting for 4 participants at \$2,500 each (\$10,000 annually) and 16 trips to attend national meetings and conferences such as Zero to Three, NAEYC, Council for Exceptional Children for staff members at \$2,500 per trip (\$40,000 annually.)

Budget Category- Equipment \$51,000 Equipment funds will allow for the purchase of iPhones, iPhone cases, iPhone screen protectors, laptops, portable scanners and printers for staff members.

Budget Category- Supplies \$151,000 Supply funds will be used for consumable supplies for regional and statewide meetings (\$10/person per meeting, 600 people, \$6,000 annually), fuel for travel state-wide (\$3,000/car for 20 cars, \$60,000 annually) car repairs and maintenance (\$2,000/car for 20 cars, \$40,000 annually) and books and manuals for programs and classrooms such as GOLD ODL books and NAEYC DAP books (\$45,000).

Budget Category- Contractual \$9,745,679

Contracts and sub grants support the following:

Activity 1: PDG B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment \$178,415 Clarus will refine and enhance the statewide, birth through five needs assessment by ensuring it is updated periodically, not less than once during the renewal grant period and explore additional elements not previously assessed by

or identified as initial gaps related to the availability and quality of existing programs in the state, including programs serving the most vulnerable or underserved populations and children in rural areas and implementation collaborative state data system to strengthen and enhance information on children and family needs.

Activity 2: PDG B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan \$69,618 Clarus will refine enhance and/or implement statewide birth through five strategic plans, based on the most current needs assessment findings. The strategic plan shall include information that further describes how accomplishing the specific activities within the plan will better serve children and families in existing programs and recommend partnership opportunities that go beyond those previously identified that would improve coordination, program quality and delivery of services.

Activity 3: Maximizing Parent and Family Knowledge, Choice and Engagement in the Child's Early Learning and Development \$1,809,650

Project 3a: Alabama Child Health Improvement Alliance (ACHIA) \$27,000 ACHIA will receive funds to administer a 9-month learning collaborative for 50 pediatricians to focus on one of several early screens for development, autism, social emotional and maternal depression and referral completion.

Project 3b: CLAS Leadership Trainings \$200,000 Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools will be sub-granted funds to provide leadership trainings and professional development for teachers and childcare providers.

Project 3c: Alabama Partnership for Children \$256,000 APC will receive funds to host parent leadership conferences in all 8 regions.

Project 3d: Alabama chapter of the American Pediatric Association \$25,000 AAP will receive funds to purchase books for pediatricians to give to children through Reach Out and Read Alabama.

Project 3e: Alabama Talks \$132,150 Alabama Talks will receive funding to implement LENA Home, Start and Grow programs to coach parents on meaningful interactions that will maximize quality conversations and interactive talking with their child.

Project 3f: First Teacher Home Visiting Expansion \$500,000 Existing home visiting programs will be given funds to increase their capacity to provide services to children through Kindergarten and help transition them into their local school systems.

Project 3g: ADRS \$69,500 ADRS will provide trainings focused on Child Find and public awareness. They will also host family leadership and engagement seminars.

Project 3h: Telegraph, LLC \$500,000 Telegraph will continue the media campaign that was begun with the initial PDG grant.

Project 3i: Mobile County Health Department STAAND Program \$50,000 MCHD will receive funds to support their existing teen parenting program that includes utilization of the Parents as Teachers home visiting model.

Project 3j: Gift of Life Foundation \$50,000 GOL will receive funds to support their existing teen parenting program that includes utilization of the Parents as Teachers home visiting model and the 24/7 Dads curriculum.

Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices and Professional Development for the Early Childhood Workforce \$3,225,500

Project 4a: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling Teacher Training \$101,000 200 teachers will receive two days of training. They will also be reimbursed for travel.

Project 4b: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling Facilitator Training \$28,000 One facilitator training will take place in 2020. Travel reimbursement will be provided.

Project 4c: TEACH Scholarship Expansion \$100,000 Funds will be sub-granted to Alabama Partnership for Children to distribute to qualified TEACH scholarship recipients.

Project 4d: Higher Education NAEYC \$20,000 Funds will be sub-granted to institutes of higher education to cover the costs of assisting early childhood programs to receive NAEYC accreditation.

Project 4e: Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services \$390,000 ADRS will receive funds through an interagency agreement to continue routines-based interview and routines-based home visiting professional development. ADRS will fund professional development targeted toward children with Autism, children who are deaf and hard of hearing. ADRS will also provide professional development and technical support for childcare centers on how to include children with special needs. The Children with Special Health Care Needs program will fund care coordinator trainings.

Project 4f: Data Systems Management \$500,000 Funds will be used to support DECE data systems such as ASAP, LaserFiche, EC Data, Teaching Strategies GOLD

Project 4g: University of Kansas- Institute for Family Support Professionals \$50,000 Funds will be sub-granted to continue services with the University of Kansas to build out the website to include specific courses for Alabama professionals including courses to attain Infant Early Childhood Mental Health endorsement through First 5 Alabama.

Project 4h: Early Education Transition Planning \$200,000 Funds will be sub-granted to school systems to assist in transitioning children into local school systems.

Project 4i: Children First Foundation \$50,000 Children First Foundation will be sub-granted funds to enhance the annual Children's Policy Council state-wide conference and to maintain web-based resources for all 67 counties in Alabama.

Project 4j: Mentor Teachers \$100,000 Funds will be sub granted to programs to provide training and professional development for mentor teachers for childcares, preschool classrooms and pre-K classrooms.

Project 4k: Troy University \$160,000 Troy University will receive a sub-grant to provide undergraduate and graduate scholarships for IECMH students. Funds will also support the ongoing development and implementation of undergraduate and graduate courses designed in 2019.

Project 4l: First 5 Alabama \$176,500 Funds will be sub-granted to First 5 Alabama for reflective supervision expansion, IECMH endorsement promotion and implementation, IECMH consultant training, rapid response backpacks for mental health workers, crisis comfort kits for families experiencing disasters and professional development for leadership.

Project 4m: Alabama Partnership for Children \$50,000 Funds will be sub-granted and used to pay \$100 stipends to educators and childcare providers who complete Cox Campus online modules regarding communication and early literacy.

Project 4n: Teaching Strategies GOLD \$300,000 Teaching Strategies GOLD will be paid for providing year 2 of the GOLD Infant Toddler training for staff who completed year 1. GOLD Train the Trainer will be provided to 22 higher education staff members as well as additional Office of School Readiness pre-K teachers.

Project 4o: Leading for Children \$1,000,000 Leading for Children will receive funds to certify coaches, provide a Director's Learning Network and an Ecosystem Learning Network that will bring together diverse populations of early childhood professionals.

Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality and Service Integration, Expanding Access and Developing New Programs \$3,227,496

Project 5a: Foundational Sites \$2,760,496 Through a competitive subgrant process multiple entities around the state will receive funding to increase the quality of childcare programs (including in-home providers), Head Start programs, preschool programs and pre-K programs. Eligible programs will also go through and improve their licensed quality ratings. Programs will be chosen through a competitive process to receive funds to enhance the quality of preschool special education classrooms. The Department of Human Resources will sub-grant funds to Auburn University Family Child Care Partnership Program to use mentors to help participating child care providers obtain accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care. Programs in child care deserts in Alabama would be recruited for this program.

Project 5b: Early Childhood Developmental Standards \$120,000 Funds will be sub-granted to Sue Mitchell and Longleaf to finalize the standards, design a printed version, print copies for dissemination and provide training to teachers.

Project 5c: Auburn University \$237,000 Funds will be subgrants to Auburn University for the “Routines Based Home Visits Using Telepractice and Naturalistic Teaching Techniques for Families and Children with Developmental Delays” project in collaboration with Alabama Early Intervention System.

Project 5d: Parents as Teachers \$110,000 DECE will contract with Parents as Teachers to come to Alabama to provide trainings for home visitors. The trainings will focus on working with children with challenging behaviors and working with parenting teenagers.

Activity 6: Monitoring Evaluation Data Use for Continuous Improvement, Meaningful Governance and Stakeholder Engagement \$1,235,000

Project 6a: University of Alabama at Birmingham (\$875,000) UAB will conduct the program performance evaluation (PPE) to monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project. This will include continuous improvement efforts.

Project 6b: Alabama Partnership for Children (\$360,000) APC will be sub-granted funds to expand the Help Me Grow system of developmental monitoring and referral to services.

Budget Category- Other \$160,225 Other funds will be spent for in state travel daily per diem (\$12.75/day, 500 days \$6,375 annually) and in state overnight travel per diem (\$100 per day, 300 days, \$30,000 annually). Funds will be paid for 20% of the annual building lease (\$72,400).

Budget Category- Indirect \$269,810 The state of Alabama has an approved indirect cost rate of 13.02% of salaries and benefits.

Budget Category- State Match \$116,609,149 State funds in the amount of \$116,609,149 appropriated in SFY2020 to provide access to the state-wide Office of School Readiness Preschool classrooms which benefit children and families in local communities. These classrooms focus on school readiness and help prepare four-year-old children for their transition into their local school systems. Matching funds at this level will be provided for each of the three years of this grant.