

Project Summary

Project Title: Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education

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The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) presents a plan that builds upon the previous work to implement a unified Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system. This work will maximize our previously coordinated efforts to better connect and leverage early learning and care opportunities through the blending and braiding of existing federal, state, local and non-governmental resources. Efforts will be aimed at increasing efficiencies that reduce cost, time, and duplication by focusing on resource-driven approaches that are informed by data. Through this much needed system, Alabama will intentionally review, update, and consolidate our strategic plan and needs assessment to support our efforts in efficiently providing effective services that meet the needs of children and families. Further, this work will allow us to build upon previous success with programs that address the activities in the PDG B-5 funding opportunity. The updated PDG B-5 strategic plan and needs assessment efforts will be deeply rooted in the ADECE strategic plan which captures efforts that ensure sustainability for parent and family engagement activities, support for the B-5 workforce and the dissemination of best practices. Educating our youngest learners requires a unique set of skills that includes foundational knowledge about how to teach and support young children using developmentally appropriate pedagogy that captures the natural curiosity of children. Key Staff are designated to support these priorities through alignment of our work across the Birth to age 5 continuum. Efforts realized under this proposal will provide the necessary structures and strong foundations for the early learning and care system that prepares children for a successful transition to school.

In 2016 the duties of the ADECE were expanded to “develop a cohesive and comprehensive system of high-quality early learning and care.” The Department has maintained its focus on continuous improvement as it works to meet these responsibilities. The long-term goals of these projects are that all children are healthy and emotionally ready, supports are provided to families, ensuring successful transitions to school and that Alabama has both a stable, highly qualified ECE workforce and fully engaged and informed families. Short-term goals include increased access to and participation in a mixed delivery system of high-quality ECCE programs, an increased number of parents engaged in decision-making for ECE system, an increased number of qualified ECCE professionals and enhanced school readiness for children, especially those from vulnerable and underserved populations.

With PDG B-5 planning grant support, Alabama can meet our responsibilities and use existing resources to improve overall support of children. We already have a successful partnership model among Head Start providers, Home Visiting programs, state and local governments, Native Americans and tribal organizations, private entities (including faith and community-based entities), childcare centers, institutes of higher education, and local educational agencies to improve coordination, program quality, and service delivery for young children. This grant will support the scaling of the state’s high-quality pre-k model to include the entire Birth to age 5 system of early childhood care and education.

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Project Description

Expected Outcomes/PDG B-5 Goals

The purpose of this PDG B-5 Planning grant is to strengthen Alabama's integrated early childhood system by investing in the early childhood workforce by better preparing them to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds in being kindergarten ready; identifying opportunities to expand access to high-quality early care and education programs; and supporting a comprehensive and mixed delivery system. Alabama will update the state-wide needs assessment across the ECCE mixed delivery system; and update a strategic plan that recommends evidence-based strategies to address those identified needs. Since Alabama was a PDG B-5 Initial and Renewal grantee this is an opportunity to expand and build upon prior grant work. In particular, the needs assessment update will take into consideration the gaps in the early childhood system exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the strategic plan will include ways to support the ECCE workforce. This strategic plan will inform, change, and guide the further development of a system designed to coordinate existing programs, intentionally engage parents and providers in programs and policy, prepare all children, in particular, children from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds to enter kindergarten, and to improve the transitions of children from this system into the local education agency (LEA) or other elementary schools within the mixed delivery system. The system design will align and streamline the structures and functions that will create more effective uses of existing federal, state, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs; the coordination of delivery models and funding streams existing in the state's mixed delivery system; and provide recommendations to better use current resources to improve the overall participation of children in a mixed delivery system. This intentional alignment of systems will lead to improved program quality while maintaining

availability of services, expanding parental choice and knowledge about existing programs, and enhancing school readiness.

The program design will include: (1) approaches to leverage funding to enhance partnerships among Head Start providers, child care providers, Home Visiting programs, preschool programs, early intervention services, preschool special education services, health and public health programs and systems, state and local governments, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, private entities (including faith- and community-based entities, community-based organizations, foundations, other non-profit entities, and schools) and local educational agencies; (2) strengthen our models to ensure equitable access for children, intentionally focusing on vulnerable, underserved, or unserved children, including children who are dual language learners, and children with, or at risk for, disabilities; (3) improve program quality across participating programs by aligning program standards and coordinating professional development activities across programs serving children from birth through 8 years, while maintaining access and availability of services, including through investments in the ECCE workforce compensation and professional development; (4) maximize family and parental choice, and knowledge of and engagement with existing programs in the state's mixed delivery system, easing access to services; (5) invest in and support the early childhood workforce, including compensation initiatives and developing pathways to licensure, credentialing and degrees; (6) help ECCE programs identify and access resources that can support long-term stability; (7) improve school readiness for groups of children who experience the largest achievement gaps including children of color who live in poverty, children with or at risk for developmental delays or disabilities, dual/multi-language learners, and children who are eligible for or receive social services; and (8) elevate and support efforts to

coordinate instructional alignment and developmentally appropriate learning experiences from birth through third grade.

The following overarching priorities and approaches will be considered in all projects receiving grant funds: (1) supporting the early childhood workforce through compensation initiatives, ongoing practice-based mentoring, coaching and professional development, access to scholarships and other resources to help access credentials and degrees, consider how to best support the career development and improve the training and experience of providers across the mixed delivery system, including those serving infants and toddlers and the provision of health supports, including mental health, for the early childhood workforce; (2) promote an integrated B-5 ECCE system that reflects a mix of programs and services across the state B-5 ECCE system including addressing cliff effects of losing public assistance benefits; (3) promote ECCE program sustainability to maximize the supply of high quality ECCE programs and services; (4) expand meaningful community and family engagement leadership by a variety of ECCE and school partners including parents, providers, community leaders, and faith-based partners including those for diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; (5) ensure inclusion of children with, or at risk of, disabilities including infants and toddlers so families can access ECCE programs that support their full participation in the least restrictive environment; (6) address suspensions, expulsions and other exclusions to meet the needs of all children, including their social-emotional and behavioral needs; (7) incorporate trauma-informed approaches to buffer the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences increasing the child's chances for success; (8) develop and implement coordinated application, eligibility and enrollment systems to help families apply for and receive benefits and services across a range of programs and identify the programs and services that best meet their needs; (9) align with CCDF activities to stabilize the child care sector; (10) support effective and

appropriate transition between and across programs; (11) build infant-toddler care capacity to meet the need for high-quality infant/toddler services across the mixed-delivery system; and (12) provide services to underserved children to eliminate inequities in rigorous, culturally and linguistically responsive and engaging ECCE programs.

Approach: Activities 1-5

Approach-Activity One: Conduct or Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment

Alabama will update and build upon its most recent needs assessment conducted in 2021, which included information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the early care and education needs of children and their families and on early childcare providers. This needs assessment was conducted at the mid-point of implementation of Alabama's PDG B-5 strategic plan and informed the Department's final year of implementation. Now, in an expansion and enhancement of the 2021 needs assessment, Alabama will further focus on family engagement, workforce support and improving overall quality. Specifically, Alabama will broaden its stakeholder engagement from the 2021 needs assessment to include parents and caregivers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as educators to better understand family engagement needs, and include numerous higher education partners to better understand early childhood workforce needs. In addition to further identifying any emerging or previously unidentified needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, this approach will assess the availability and quality of existing programs with an emphasis on equity for traditionally underserved communities and assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the capacity, health, financial status, and well-being of the early childhood workforce.

Alabama will identify gaps and collect quantitative data from several sources for its updated needs assessment, including existing data from EHS-CCP, First Class Pre-K and Home Visiting

programs, IECHMH supports. Additionally, the ADECE will collaboratively partner with the Alabama Department of Human Resources through a data sharing agreement to gather information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from early childhood service providers across the state. Alabama will also conduct focus groups of educators and focus groups of parents and caregivers across the state to better understand the specific needs of these groups and to identify opportunities to engage families in maximizing parent choice and engagement across the mixed delivery system. These will be coordinated through existing partner relationships so that parents, caregivers, and educators are represented across the state. Similarly, Alabama will review quantitative workforce data collected since the COVID-19 pandemic and collaborate with its statewide higher education partners to conduct interviews and focus groups to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the early childhood workforce. This will include identifying what information is currently available related to degree/credential attainment, years of experience, and salary and benefits of the workforce, and will identify where and how this data is stored, accessed, and shared collaboratively across the state. Alabama will also address barriers that makes it challenging for the workforce to progress through the early learning pathway.

It can be quite challenging for parents and caregivers of young children to find time to complete surveys and participate in focus groups. It can be equally challenging to find time for educators to participate in surveys and focus groups given the time they are needed in classrooms and the resources needed for substitutes. To address these challenges and encourage participation in the stakeholder engagement process, Alabama will offer incentives for participation and will schedule focus groups at convenient times for parents/caregivers of young children and educators (outside of normal business hours if needed).

Timeline	Milestone for Needs Assessment
January 2023	-Collect and analyze data from various parent/caregiver surveys (EHS-CCP, Pre-K, Home Visiting) and educator surveys (ADECE Conference Survey & DHR Survey) -Identify stakeholders; design interview and focus group questions; coordinate and schedule interviews and focus groups
February 2023	-Conduct interviews and focus groups with parents, educators and higher-education partners
March 2023	-Analyze data from interviews and focus groups
April 2023	-Present findings; develop and submit updated needs assessment

Approach-Activity Two: Develop of Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan

In late summer 2022, the ADECE completed development of and adopted a comprehensive 2023-2025 strategic plan for the Department, which was informed by a robust stakeholder engagement process with numerous ADECE employees and local, state, and national partners outside of the ADECE which included 25 interviews and two focus groups with 17 individuals. Stakeholders were asked about the vision, strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the Department. They were also asked about early care and education needs of children and families, early care and education workforce needs, and about strengthening partnerships and collaborations to achieve goals. The plan includes a long-term vision, short-term mission and overarching values that guide the Department’s implementation of the plan. The ADECE identified five priorities for its 2023-2025 strategic plan, which are well-aligned with the PDG B-5 planning grant focus areas: Organizational Health, Family Engagement, High-Quality Programs and Services, Workforce and Partnerships. Given that the ADECE has just very recently completed its Departmental strategic plan, it will be reviewed and updated to ensure coordination and quality improvement based on the needs assessment findings outlined in Activity One of the PDG B-5 grant.

After the results of the updated PDG B-5 needs assessment are reviewed, the ADECE will make any additional updates to its existing Departmental strategic plan to address the unmet needs and ensure we are building capacity to sustain all goals. Specifically, it is anticipated that updates

may be needed in the Family Engagement, Workforce and High-Quality Programs and Services priorities based on the needs assessment results, but the entire existing strategic plan will be reviewed and cross-walked against the needs assessment to ensure the priorities outlined in the needs assessment results are adequately addressed in the strategic plan. This includes potentially updating the strategic plan to address access and participation of all children in high quality, inclusive ECCE programs, identifying how other state and federal funds will be used to help support the activities of the plan, ensuring improvements in equity and quality are identified across the early care and education systems, and identifying new partnership opportunities to improve coordination, alignment, program quality and delivery of services for children and families.

While overall implementation of the Department strategic plan will officially begin in January 2023, an updated strategic plan is expected to be completed by the end of May 2023, thereby leaving well over two and a half years of implementation using the updated strategic plan. As Family Engagement and Partnerships are two of the five priorities across the plan, parents/families and partners of all kinds (CCDF, DHR, Part C, State Advisory Council, Head Start, etc.) are critically important and will have essential roles in collaboration, coordination and implementation of the strategic plan. Once any changes have been made parents/families and partners will be engaged to provide insights and input in developing action steps to achieve the objectives in the plan. There are currently no obstacles anticipated to updating the strategic plan.

Timeline	Milestone for Strategic Plan
May 2023	Update existing strategic plan using results and findings from needs assessment; develop strategic plan report

Approach-Activity Three: Maximize Parent and Family Engagement in B-5 Systems

Maximizing parent and family choice and knowledge about the state's mixed delivery system of programs and providers by establishing consistent parent engagement expectations and expanding the state's efforts to support family choice is important. This will be accomplished by

ensuring families are provided information in ways that are accessible to them (e.g., primary language, clear language, accessible format, digital and hard copy, and through outreach partnerships to include all communities) about the variety and locations of ECCE programs and services that are available, as well as promoting and increasing efforts to involve parents and family members in policy decisions, and programmatic activities to support children's development and their transitions from ECCE into elementary school and continued engagement through the early grades to build strong partnerships and connections between parents and teachers to support learning at school and home. Alabama's approaches below are based on past needs assessments and include: (1) including family voice in program decisions to improve or develop practices that drive the early childhood system and providing opportunities for state leaders to learn from parents; (2) sharing information with families about program quality (QRIS); (3) promoting nurturing parent-child interactions and family and community protective factors; and (4) increasing parent and family engagement in all aspects of their children's care and education including facilitating transitions which support school connections between the program, child family and community, all critical components of the Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Framework.

Alabama Family Central Website

Since the creation of the Department of Children's Affairs in 2001, which later became the Department of Early Childhood Education, and through the priorities of the Governor's Children's Cabinet in recent years, a goal has been to create the Alabama Family Central clearinghouse website. With 2019 PDG B-5 Initial year funding, the Alabama Family Central website was developed and formally launched in 2020. The Alabama Family Central website simplifies the online search for resources that are available in our state. Families can confidently search Alabama

Family Central, access vetted resources, programs, and services, and quickly find answers that will connect them directly to service providers. State agency partners include Departments of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Early Childhood Education, Education, Human Resources, Medicaid, Mental Health, Public Health, Rehabilitation Services/Early Intervention, and technical support from the Office of Information Technology. We were intentional in ensuring information is provided in culturally and linguistically responsive ways through a language conversion button located on the Home page that will translate site information into Spanish or Korean, currently the two most popular non-native languages in Alabama.

The Alabama Partnership for Children (APC), a statewide public/private partnership, manages Alabama Family Central on a day-to-day basis. A steering committee, which guided its development, continues to oversee the administration of the project. Additional funding is not requested for this project since it is now funded annually as a line item in the State Education Trust Fund budget. However, the efforts put forth through the projects outlined in the grant proposal will continue to enhance the information and support for parents that can be provided through this website.

Alabama Early Intervention System (AEIS-Part C) / Auburn University (AU) Autism Initiative

Ensuring children with disabilities and their families have access to inclusive, high quality ECCE programs is an important goal of the ADECE. One way the ADECE focuses these efforts is through partnerships with agencies and institutions of higher education. The AEIS (Part C) and Auburn University are two partner organizations that facilitate specialized professional development, including training for providers working with infants and toddlers with disabilities,

and supported practices that enable children with disabilities and their families to access ECCE programs that support their full participation in the least restrictive environment.

Current PDG B-5 Renewal funds have been used by the AEIS (Part C) for an Autism Initiative focused on training staff in childcare centers on how to support children with an Autism spectrum diagnosis. To date, two cohorts of 13 childcare providers have been participating in intensive Autism specific training, which includes a fidelity component. The AEIS has also hosted statewide learning collaboratives with AEIS and childcare providers. These collaboratives, led by mentors, are designed to assist in building provider capacity in understanding the 5 core strategies of intervention for working with children with Autism and their families.

An additional part of the Autism initiative centers on adding a “priority referral” component when sending referrals for further testing to Autism diagnostic clinics for children who have failed an MCHAT screener. This has emerged as a significant need. A total of 341 children have been screened with the MCHAT and 118 were sent with “priority referrals.” Staff has received 40 diagnostic reports and 32 of the 40 children referred received an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis after further evaluation.

The continuation of this initiative would allow for training of additional service providers in implementation of best practices for working with families of young children with an ASD diagnosis. The initiative will include intensive trainings four to five times per quarter followed by fidelity checks. Sixteen to eighteen Learning Collaboratives will be conducted across the state and led by the ASD providers to provide training to childcare/preschool teachers as well as EI providers who provide EI in a childcare/preschool. These learning collaboratives will cover ASD strategies of intervention and mentors will lead group discussions focused on the effectiveness of current

interventions for children diagnosed with ASD (and families), as well as identification of and solutions offered around any issues or needs.

Dr. Vanessa Hinton will oversee project implementation and assist Dr. Yusuf Akemoglu in creating up to six online learning modules that can be implemented in future trainings. This will provide long-term sustainability. Culturally and linguistically responsible handbooks will be developed to guide the usage of the modules. Dr. Angie Barber will conduct and facilitate training for liaisons who will participate in training, video themselves implementing best practices for module development and fidelity checks, and mentor fellow early intervention providers statewide.

Alabama Early Intervention System (AEIS) Hands & Voices Project for Parents

Maximizing parent and family choice and knowledge about programs and services available to families by expanding the state's efforts to support family choice is important, especially for families of children who are diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH). The Hands and Voices Project through the Alabama Early Intervention System (Part C) is a parent-led, professional collaborative organization infused with the life experiences of adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH). The program is dedicated to serving families with children who are D/HH without a bias around communication modes or methodology. Hands and Voices leverages the extensive experience and knowledge of parents of children with disabilities and feeds off their willingness to help other families. Hands and Voices has been funded with PDG B-5 funds for the past three years and its growth and success have solidified it as a program that needs continuation. Children of all ages are diagnosed with hearing loss daily so the program has grown to the point that it can no longer be facilitated solely by a volunteer director. AEIS has requested funding to support a part-time staff member to manage the website and social media. This person will also continue to receive assistance from other full-time AEIS staff members. We know that screening

and responding to children at the earliest stages possible is critical for the developing child. In addition to connecting families and hosting parent cafes, Hands and Voices sends culturally and linguistically responsive welcome packets to parents, helps parents build IFSP and IEP teams for support, distributes newsletters, cultivates family participation in EHDI Advisory Board, AEIS District Councils and the Special Education Advisory Panel. They also plan family retreats and attend the Hands and Voices annual leadership conference.

Alabama Parent Leadership Network (APLN)

Including parent voice and family participation in state level decision-making is paramount to maximizing parent engagement. Effectively doing this can be challenging for programs who rely solely on volunteer opportunities offered to parents. The APLN, led by the Alabama Partnership for Children, recruit parents who have already received some parent training through programs such as: Smart and Secure Children (SSC), Parent Leadership Project, Parent Leadership 101, Parent Ambassador Training, home visiting through a Parents as Teachers/Nurse Family Partnership/HIPPY program, and parent workshops. These parents, including those from vulnerable communities throughout the state, are invited to participate in a culturally and linguistically responsive leadership curriculum that will help empower them to contribute their voices to decisions that affect their children, families, and community. While exploring the curriculum, members are given opportunities to engage collaboratively to discover each other's strengths and skills and help develop them in a way that affects change in their community and in the state. Participants receive a \$50 stipend for completion but may also proceed through additional levels of membership including Parent Mentor, Parent Leader, and Parent Peer Learner. Each of these levels come with progressive stipend levels.

The leadership network curriculum consists of (9) sections centering on topics including: Introduction to the Alabama Parent Leadership Network; What does parent leadership look like?; Benefits of parent involvement that establishes a pathway to parent engagement; Building social connections; Knowledge of parenting and child development and social and emotional competence of children; Nurturing parent leadership through learning best practices (what has worked) and brainstorming solutions; Action Planning that provides experience in learning how to influence and participate in local, state, and national policy work; Cultural Competence and Communication which involves communicating ideas and recommendations effectively and broadly; and Harvest and Cultivation which is a step in identifying priority concerns about their families and communities to effectively engage local leaders to produce stronger communities for all families.

Upon completion of this program, parents are invited to exchange contact information and remain connected through a network that includes regular meetings (online and through social media) as often as they determine is feasible and in ways that allow their full participation as leaders and policy influencers. Contact information is maintained by APC who communicates with each local group to connect them together in a statewide Network. Funds to continue to support implementation of the APLN are requested in this proposal.

Birmingham Talks/LENA

Babies need to hear approximately 21,000 words a day for optimal brain development – and researchers estimate that lower income children are exposed to millions fewer words than their more affluent peers. This “word gap” leads to disparities in kindergarten readiness, literacy, and economic mobility. Birmingham Talks closes this gap by empowering caregivers to increase interactive conversation, so that the babies in their lives are ready for kindergarten, college, and beyond. Birmingham Talks uses Language Environment Analysis (LENA) and its innovative

technology: a “LENA device” that counts the number of words children hear (a “Fitbit for words”) to increase caregivers’ knowledge, skills, and resources and promote healthy child development. LENA has two program models.

The LENA professional development model (“LENA Grow”) focuses on early care and education teachers as the lever for impact. Teachers learn best practices, including cultural and linguistically responsive practices, from weekly sessions on increasing the conversational rigor of their classrooms. The children in the classroom wear LENA devices throughout the school day and a customized report is captured, analyzing the number of words heard. Coaches use this report to provide impactful coaching to teachers.

LENA Grow is widely recognized as a premiere *job-embedded professional development* approach. Teachers who finish the program can obtain a LENA Grow credential. 90% of teachers who participate in LENA Grow report feeling more confident in their teaching abilities and higher levels of overall job satisfaction. All of these variables support higher quality early learning environments for young children.

The LENA family program (“LENA Start”) focuses on the parent as the lever for impact. Each week parents attend a small group class focused on a strategy for increasing interactive conversation. During the week the family records a “LENA day” with our talk pedometer. Families receive a report that provides data on the talk their child was exposed to, as well as high quality books and educational toys. They have a weekly conversation with a trained coach to celebrate wins and set goals for the next week.

Family engagement is core to both LENA Grow, and LENA Start. LENA Start directly engages families in a 10 week program. LENA Grow provides a plethora of options for family connection, including weekly reports and conference opportunities for parents regarding their

child's language skills. While most children impacted by LENA Grow and LENA Start are under age 4, this two generation approach empowers families to encourage others in their community to talk to children.

Third party evaluation indicates that these programs make a significant, positive impact on school readiness and early literacy. Funding from this PDG B-5 planning grant will allow Birmingham Talks to serve approximately 250 additional children through both programs over the next year. This funding will also support expansion of the program into under-served sectors, such as Spanish speaking communities and family childcare homes. All programs selected to participate in LENA Grow will serve predominantly lower income children. LENA Start will also be executed in Spanish to provide an inclusive experience for bilingual families. Non-parental caregivers will be invited to participate in LENA Start groups (grandparents, aunts, etc.). Early care and education centers and home providers that specifically seek to serve children with disabilities will be given priority acceptance to LENA Grow. Additionally, Birmingham Talks seeks to work with early care and education teachers serving children birth – 3 years of age to ensure high quality interactions are occurring with the centers' youngest children.

First 10 Transition Community Planning

The transition to kindergarten is an important developmental milestone for children and their families which can be both an exciting and sometimes challenging experience. Transitions require that children and families make some significant adjustments—psychologically, socially, and academically. Early childhood providers, schools, and community agencies can work together to ease these challenges and create seamless kindergarten transitions by sharing culturally and linguistically responsive information with families, helping them build relationships of support throughout the transition, and aligning the experiences children and families have before and after

the transition. The research case for investing in children's transition to kindergarten is clear: (1) Kindergarten teachers report that almost 50% of children have difficulty adjusting to kindergarten; (2) many communities do not have transition to kindergarten plans, and those that do often focus on low-intensity, more superficial activities; (3) the more transition activities prekindergarten teachers implement, the better prepared children are at the beginning of kindergarten; (4) the more transition activities kindergarten teachers implement, the higher student achievement by the end of kindergarten; (5) these benefits are strongest for children in low- and middle-income families.

Over the past 3 years, the ADECE and many other state departments and community agencies have worked to create the Alabama's transition to kindergarten framework. As part of this process state leaders consulted extensively with a wide variety of stakeholders through focus groups, surveys, and interviews. The consensus among stakeholders was the need to support communities in "bridging," "connecting," and "meshing" the transition work of early childhood providers and elementary schools. Additionally, Alabama's state Transitions Team embraced a uniform understanding that school readiness included ready children, ready families, ready early childhood care and education (ECCE) environments, ready schools, and ready communities. The goal is that children are ready for school, families are ready to support children's learning, schools and ECCE programs are ready for children, and communities are ready to support the care and learning of *all* children. Improving the transition to kindergarten requires that early childhood programs and elementary schools work together to coordinate information-sharing and align experiences so that each year builds on the learning and care of the previous year and prepares students for the next.

The aforementioned information served as the foundation for the development and subsequent launch in the fall of 2021, of the Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit (ATKT).

The ATKT provides stakeholders with guiding principles of transition, key connections that support the transition to kindergarten framework, and a six-step planning process for systematic, cross-sector development of a community-wide transition plan. Originally, the launch was divided into three phases. Phase one of the ATKT launch involved sharing the information within the ECCE community including childcare centers, home visiting programs, state-funded pre-k grantees, local departments of education, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, etc. The goal of phase one was to ensure as many stakeholders as possible received an overview of the ATKT, had the toolkit in their possession, and could begin the work of developing their community transition plan. This included all 138 school districts, 321 state-funded pre-k grantees (across a mixed delivery system), 29 Head Start and Early Head Start programs, 75 statewide home visiting supervisors, and hundreds of childcare centers and family home providers. In the summer of 2022, ATKT phase 2 rolled out. This phase focused on implementation processes. During this phase, feedback from stakeholders indicated a need for individualized support in making and establishing joint community-level transition plans. To address this identified need, the ADECE proposes to facilitate up to six Transition to Kindergarten (TK) Cohorts. Cohort participants would attend 6 group convenings as well as receive direct support from a TK Coach. Participants will develop and implement strategies that guide formation of community transition teams who will work together to create a written, actionable transition to kindergarten plan. The TK 10 Cohorts would consist of members from the entire ECCE continuum including public schools. At the conclusion of the cohort convening, the developed transition to kindergarten plans would be made available statewide as examples for other stakeholders to review. In order to build capacity with this model, individuals who are chosen to participate in the TK Cohort convenings will serve as TK mentors and provide support to other peers who may need assistance. The TK Cohorts will represent phase

three. Phase four will consist of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the ATKT towards meeting stated goals. This evaluation will be facilitated and conducted in collaboration with the ADECE's external research and evaluation team.

The ADECE transition to kindergarten work represents one component of a larger initiative, First 10 Communities. Since Fall of 2021, the ADECE, in partnership with the Education Development Center (EDC), has worked in tangent with two communities focused on building families' strengths and improving outcomes for children. With the First 10 Initiative, these two communities, one urban and one rural, have engaged a number of vested stakeholders (district leaders, elementary schools, early childhood programs, community agencies, etc.) to collaborate around 3 target areas: improving teaching and learning, coordinating comprehensive services, and developing partnerships with families. Activities involved an assessment of the communities' assets and need, partnering together to design plans around the three target areas, building community capacity for continuous improvement, and facilitating peer learning. To date, the communities have been able to establish connections between the early years and primary grade partners, meaningfully engage families through play and learn groups, and begin to develop strategic plans to help guide the work. The goal is to use a comprehensive approach to develop strong communities, so all children learn and thrive. With this funding proposal, the ADECE proposes to recruit two additional First 10 Communities. The targets for these 2 community partners are areas with higher levels of poverty and limited resources.

Approach-Activity Four: Support the B-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices

This approach includes sharing best practices and identifying workforce supports and trainings among ECCE providers (including family childcare providers) to leverage funding and other resources; increase collaboration, coordination, and alignment; and improve transitions that

happen across all age spans in early childhood from birth through third grade. Alabama's strategies below focus on: (1) improving collaborative, cross-sector professional development for early childhood providers and connections with early grade teachers, including practice-based coaching, mentoring, using data to plan classroom activities, cross-sector professional development opportunities, and other needed professional development for the early childhood workforce; (2) Providing interdisciplinary professional development to build shared understanding and connections across ECCE and health and human service providers that serve families with young children, as well as with education providers that will continue to support children and families as they progress into the early grades; (3) providing resources and technical assistance to ECCE providers and directors to support program sustainability, reduce administrative burden, and promote shared learning; (4) developing initiatives, studies, or analyses to support the recruitment into and retention of individuals into the ECCE workforce including increasing compensation for ECCE workers to align with educational and quality standards for teachers and paraprofessionals across early childhood settings to reach pay parity with elementary school educators with similar experience and credentials, and a living wage for all staff; (5) building a statewide ECCE workforce infrastructure that ensures providers are professionally prepared and well-supported by strengthening career pathways and professional development opportunities to build a pipeline of effective early educators (including those who serve infants and toddlers), maintain the diversity of the workforce, and provide more equitable access to qualified teachers for children across settings and ages by offering scholarships and financial support to address barriers to credential and degree attainment, partnering with IHE to develop articulation agreements, aligned credentials and degree programs, building innovative pathways for non-traditional students and incumbent early educators that consider practical skill and knowledge gained in the field, and allows for

coursework to be completed on the job site, Registered Apprenticeship programs; (6) expanding supports for providers and educators to enable sharing of best practices and professional development to implement inclusive and high-quality programming; and (7) supports the development of strong early childhood systems to facilitate transitions and referrals across programs including social services home visiting and other early childhood programs.

The Alabama Children’s Policy Council (CPC) is a statewide system organized through the Alabama Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils. CPCs operate locally in all 67 counties and are charged with addressing community needs by facilitating children and family service provider collaborations to develop a comprehensive service plan that focuses on health, ECCE, parent/family engagement, safety, education (K-12) and economic security needs of children from birth to 19. Each year local CPCs conduct a needs assessment of their counties and those needs assessments inform the work of the state’s CPC which also serves as the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council. Data from the 2022 Needs Assessment which included submissions from 61 of the 67 counties, indicated mental health (categorically children ages birth to 8, youth ages 9 to 17, and adults ages 18 to 54), parental involvement/family engagement, and substance abuse as the three most urgent needs in our state. Much of this work helps to inform priorities for the ADECE and supports mental health as one of our key focus areas for this funding application including the expansion of Conscious Discipline and the Challenging Behaviors Project.

Conscious Discipline Expansion

The Conscious Discipline (CD) approach is a nationally recognized and evidence-directed program that provides structures and strategies to support children and adults using a trauma-informed lens. This approach facilitates the social emotional learning for children, provides classroom management support for teachers and offers problem-solving strategies for families. In

a 2017 Harvard Graduate School of Education study of 33 Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, CD was noted as one of only three programs with at least 75% of its content focused on emotional processes, specifically Emotion/Behavior Regulation and Emotion Knowledge/Expression. This report indicated sufficient evidence of CD's impact on SEL, alignment with theory and practice, and reliance on developmentally appropriate instructional methods to reach identified goals. In 2017, CD was introduced to 300 early childhood teachers with a 40-day book study and evolved in 2018 as all ADECE coaches in our state-funded pre-k system, also known as First Class Pre-K (FCPK), received comprehensive professional development in this framework and many teachers, on a voluntary basis, also received this professional learning. Since that time, interest in CD has increased and Conscious Discipline Action Teams (CDAT) were formed with FCPK teachers who received additional coaching to become mentor teachers. The CD framework is also embedded in the coaching model and curricula support the ADECE coaches provide to its EHS-CCP (Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership) teachers and administrators. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 Pandemic significantly slowed progress and momentum, while intensifying the need across the ECCE for additional support through the CD framework.

With a need to pivot because of COVID, in 2021 CD professional development was delivered virtually (with a few limited in-person sessions), to Alabama teachers, administrators, coaches, and families across the mixed ECCE delivery system. Of the 1,388 FCPK classrooms, 450 classrooms actively implemented CD strategies in their classrooms. 47 of these classrooms deepened their knowledge and joined CDAT. CD was also an active component in 77 EHS-CCP classrooms. In addition, Early Head Start teachers from 20 classrooms participated in CDAT. While these numbers are promising, the demand for CD training and support has grown

exponentially as many ECCE professionals are faced with the mental health challenges of both children and adults exacerbated by and through impacts from COVID-19. As a result, the need now far outweighs availability due to the limited number of coaches and educators who are trained under the CD framework.

With this funding, the ADECE proposes to build capacity to significantly increase opportunities for the ECCE community and Pre-K – 3rd Grade Integrated Approach to Early Learning (P-3) to receive CD training and implementation support. Funds are requested to provide two week-long CD Academies. Each CD Academy will support 100 participants that will include ADECE coaching team members who have not previously been trained in CD as well as teachers, administrators, and other representatives from the ECCE field. Funds will also be used to provide virtual, trauma-informed social and emotional learning, and technical assistance to four statewide cluster groups. Each group will consist of up to 25 participants who will receive training on how to effectively coach and mentor others using the CD framework. Finally, funds will be used to facilitate four, one-day professional learning seminars. These seminars will provide opportunities for up to 25 participants, with prior CD knowledge and experience, to dive deeper into the CD approach and reflect on their practices. Attendees will benefit by developing an action plan to guide further implementation of strategies into their classrooms. For sustainability purposes, state funds have been requested to continue to host at least one CD Academy and four statewide cluster groups annually. This will continue to allow new educators to learn about CD and increase the number of CDATs who serve as mentors throughout the state.

Challenging Behaviors Project Expansion

The ECCE community in Alabama was drastically impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Most ECCE facilities closed operations for more than a year while others made the hard decision

to not reopen at all. As ECCE service delivery slowly started to resume, the impact on children, families, and educators became evident. Statewide data, compiled from the ADECE Challenging Behavior Support Program (CBSP), indicated a 200% increase in requests from ECCE providers seeking assistance for staff and children around challenging behaviors and mental health. The CBSP is a collaborative partnership between the ADECE and the Department of Human Resources (DHR), to provide prevention and intervention professional learning support around challenging behaviors for programs serving children birth through age 5. The model focuses heavily on social and emotional wellness and uses the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) system, along with Conscious Discipline, as resources of support for program participants. The goal is to increase protective factors, in both children and adults, as an avenue toward building resiliency. A Mentor Coach conducts a minimum of 2 monthly site visits over a 6-month coaching cycle. The coach and teacher work to develop an action plan and spend time each month implementing identified strategies, reflecting on effectiveness, and making modifications as needed. From October 2020 through September 2021, the CBSP worked with 100 childcare centers and family home providers across 20 of Alabama's 67 counties. In addition to the monthly visits, mentor coaches facilitated 3,412 non-visit consultations (e-mail, phone call, text message, virtual call). Thirteen 2-hour, professional development seminars were also conducted providing information for 133 attendees including 14 program directors.

Although 100 programs received services during the 2020-2021 program year, there is currently a one-year waitlist and programs that have previously received support are not eligible to reapply. This is an issue of great challenge because many of the programs that may have received prior support have undergone staff turnover, some facilities as high as 50%. This leaves these early care providers without an existing opportunity for support during a time when support is needed

the most. With this funding opportunity, the ADECE is proposing an expansion of the CBSP to implement CBSP-2. CBSP-2 is a 6-month, professional learning opportunity for all new staff of previously served facilities. The CBSP-2 consists of monthly 3-hour sessions around trauma informed approaches to learning and the Conscious Discipline model. These sessions, 2 held each month, are facilitated by CBSP mentor coaches who assist participants, up to 30 in each session, in developing their own individualized action plans. Participants implement the strategies in-between professional learning sessions and a CBSP mentor coach facilitates a monthly non-visit consultation with the participant to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies and discuss any possible modifications. Expansion of CBSP into CBSP-2 will provide an annual increase of at least 120 ECCE caregivers who have professional knowledge of trauma informed approaches to learning and are, therefore, better equipped to work with the children and provide support to parents during a time when it is most needed. Funding to sustain implementation of the CBSP-2 model beyond this application, and for program growth, is requested in the ADECE state budget request for fiscal year 2024.

Pre-K through 3rd Grade Learning Initiative (P-3) Leadership Academy

To expand supports for providers and educators to enable sharing of best practices and professional development to implement inclusive and high-quality programming, funds will be used to continue to support the NAESP Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy™. This academy is a year-long program designed to promote and build the capacity of principals and program directors to effectively lead Pre-K-3 communities through an early childhood development lens. Through a series of highly engaging professional learning experiences, NAESP's Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy™ provides a high-quality professional learning and resource program to meet the needs of elementary principals and Pre-K program directors serving children from age three to eight or

Pre-K-Grade 3. Participants explore student and adult learning aligned to the NAESP research and foundational competency publication, *Leading Pre-K-3 Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice through six main topics*: Embracing the Pre-K-3 Early Learning Continuum, Ensuring Developmentally Appropriate Teaching, Providing Personalized, Blending Learning Environments, Using Multiple Measures to Guide Growth in Student Learning, Building Professional Capacity Across the Learning Community, and Making Your School a Hub of Pre-K-3 Learning for Families and Communities. Advisors provide guidance and support, and participants use the information they learn towards development of a Capstone Project. With this project, participants identify an important area of focus, identify how the focus area links to developmentally appropriate leadership practices, and align the activities and experiences across the pre-k and primary grades continuum.

The Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy™ is designed for those currently serving as principal, director, or leader of a Pre-K-3 program, school, childcare center or agency, and desire to further their skills as a leader. In previous years, participation in the academy has primarily consisted of school administrators. With this funding opportunity, the ADECE plans to support the enrollment of 30 early childcare and education directors in Cohort 7 of the Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy™. Recognizing strong, appropriately prepared leadership is essential to a highly qualified ECCE workforce, the ADECE also proposes to launch an annual campaign to encourage early childcare and education program directors to continue to apply for participation in the Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy™ at no cost to the attendee. Funding from this grant will support the 7th cohort of leaders in 2023.

Growing the Alabama ECE Workforce: Recruitment, Retention Efforts

The COVID-19 Pandemic put a spotlight on the challenge that has long existed in the ECCE community – a lack of qualified teachers to support the growth and development of the nation’s youngest learners. Prior to the pandemic, the Alabama Department of Education released data on statewide teacher shortages indicating special education, math, and science teachers were at the highest deficit. In October of 2022, the state superintendent indicated for the first time, special education, elementary, and early childhood teachers are the three categories with the highest teacher shortages in Alabama. Data also indicated shortages in rural areas were significantly higher than in other geographic locations. Information gathered from childcare centers across the state also suggests educator shortages as programs are unable to reach full enrollment due to a lack of staff. Additionally, grantees operating state-funded pre-k classrooms are applying for teacher credential waivers, requesting time to allow a potential candidate to complete the necessary coursework to meet state requirements. In 2022, the First-Class Pre-k teacher credential waiver requests have been higher than ever before in the history of state-funded pre-k. The challenges that must be addressed are recruiting individuals into the ECE field, ensuring supports are available for candidates to obtain the necessary educator credentials, and developing pathways of support that lead to higher compensation all while taking into consideration any barriers that may exist such as lack of transportation.

With this data in mind, the ADECE, in conjunction with program partners, has developed a clear pathway that will allow the state to grow its own early childhood educators through the ECE-Works Alabama. The ECE-Works Alabama initiative focuses on the challenges facing the ECCE labor force in Alabama. These barriers include subject-area and geographic teacher shortages, lack of clearly identified pathways for continued education, lack of access to higher

education, especially for those with limited income and transportation challenges, and low wages. ECE-Works Alabama has a strong focus on recruiting, retaining, and supporting community-based teachers to grow the early learning and education workforce. The initiative proposes to do this by placing more focus on career and technical education and mentorship. In Alabama, there are currently 26 school systems that offer child development as part of their career technical education (CTE) programs. Students who complete a CTE certification in child development graduate with a Child Development Credential (CDA). This credential qualifies the student to work as an auxiliary or support teacher in state-funded pre-k and as a lead teacher in many ECCE classrooms. The ECE-Works Alabama Initiative seeks to actively engage students and encourage their enrollment in a child development CTE program. This recruitment will start with visits to middle schools and junior high schools. Potential candidates will be given information about ECCE as a career with opportunities for Alabama's Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship (AECEA) program. Candidates who are part of the AECEA and complete at level 3 are guaranteed wages on par with the Alabama State Department of Education's K-12 system. To support the goal of having a well-prepared and educated ECE workforce, ECE – Works Alabama will specifically target teachers who are already in the profession and provide support for them to attain higher credentials. This includes (1) educators who are working to complete a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, (2) educators who have completed at least 9 hours of ECE or CD coursework, and (3) educators who have completed a 2-year degree in ECE, CD, or a related field. To support this goal, the ECE – Works Alabama team will begin by working within the teacher pool in the state-funded pre-k database. The most recent data reveals there are 137 teachers who are working towards a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, 630 teachers who have at least 9 hours of college coursework in ECE or CD, and another 266 teachers with a two-year degree in CE or Child Development (CD).

Funds requested from this application will be used to fast-track the CDA candidates to completion using a 6-month model developed within the ADECE's EHS-CCP program. With this process, a mentor coach is assigned to a CDA candidate and provides guidance to help keep them on track during the 6-month period. Successful candidates will have their credentialing cost paid so lack of funds will not be a barrier to completion. Funds will also be used to offset the cost of

the minimum 9-hour college ECE coursework requirement for individuals who work in a First-Class Pre-K classroom. For educators with a minimum of 9 hours of college coursework, opportunities for them to return to college to complete their next terminal degree will exist with priority consideration granted to individuals who are nearing completion of the next highest credential. Candidates will be able to register for classes and apply for funds to cover any costs not covered through other means, such as Pell Grant or TEACH Scholarships, Funds will be granted directly to the institution of higher learning. Based on an analysis of existing data, the ADECE anticipates this framework will enable 100 candidates to enroll in the CDA program and another 60 to enroll in an associate degree program or higher between June and December of 2023. These numbers will contribute to the number of qualified ECCE professionals in Alabama.

Mentorship and Workforce Development

Research has shown that mentorship plays an integral role in developing a quality workforce and promoting employee retention. Funds requested from this application will be used to provide stipends to mentors who support registered apprentices who are participating in the Alabama Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship (AECEA) program. Mentors will work with apprentices to support them as they complete their related technical instruction (RTI) and on-the-job-learning (OJL) requirements.

Apprenticeship

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) is the sponsor of the Alabama Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship (AECEA). The ADECE worked closely with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA) for the successful launch of this program in June of 2022. The AECEA program design is modeled after the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) ECE Unifying Framework and incorporates the most current NAEYC standards and competencies.

One of the goals of the AECEA is to ensure qualified educators are available to facilitate high-quality early learning environments in infant/toddler and preschool classrooms across the mixed delivery system. This can happen when ECCE teachers receive on-the-job learning (OJL) from a teacher and/or mentor coach combined with related technical instruction (RTI) through higher education coursework. A second goal of the AECEA is to establish a framework for aligning coursework that will transfer and articulate seamlessly between institutions of higher learning. This ensures participants do not lose any credit hours as they transition from one institution to another.

Using NAEYC's Unifying Framework as a guide, Alabama's ECE apprenticeship program is structured to stack three apprenticeships, designated as ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III. All apprenticeships involve two types of learning—on-the-job learning (OJL) with a mentor and related technical instruction (RTI) with a teacher. The OJL competencies for each level are taken directly from the NAEYC competencies. The RTI for Level I includes three Child Development (CHD) courses at the community college level and earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The RTI for Level II ends with an associate degree in General Studies, including 18 hours of CHD electives that articulate to the 4-year institution. The RTI for Level III ends with a bachelor's degree in ECE or Child Development.

There is no cost for apprentices to participate and they earn progressive wages as they reach pre-identified OJL and RTI levels within each ECE designation. To offset the cost of the apprenticeship for the employer, all apprentices apply for FAFSA, TEACH scholarships, Leadership in Childcare Scholarships, and C3 Scholarships. They also work with the Business Service Representative at the local career center to seek additional funding through WIOA and other grants. If there is any remaining cost due, these are covered by the employer. For the initial launch of the AECEA, the ADECE allocated \$123,000 of PDG B-5 funds to assist with the payment of any residual RTI fees an apprentice may have. This was a huge incentive for employers and proved helpful especially as childcare center directors were trying to manage and develop budgets that could support the required increase in employee wages as apprentices progressed through their program. With this funding application, the ADECE proposes to continue to set aside a limited amount of funds, \$150,000, to reduce the potential RTI and OJL financial costs employers and apprentices may experience. For sustainability purposes, the ADECE is working with our childcare employers so they can apply for advanced Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) levels. As rating levels increase, employers receive higher incentive bonuses. These funds can then be used to help offset the funds previously received from the ADECE and to assist with paying the required higher salaries to apprentices.

At the onset of the planning grant, Alabama had two fully executed apprenticeships with a goal to triple this number by December 2023. For this to happen, the ADECE plans to promote all funding opportunities that exist for ECCE employers. This would include the availability of funds through this application as well as the availability of funds through our partnership with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA). For fiscal year 2023, the AOA has funds to support 50% wage reimbursements for an apprentice's first 480 hours of employment. This level of financial incentive will fully fund an ECE I teacher and provide a substantial funding impact for apprentices exploring ECE II and ECE III designations.

Auburn University Online Bachelor's Completer Degree Program

Building a statewide ECCE workforce infrastructure that ensures providers are professionally prepared and well-supported by strengthening career pathways to build a pipeline of effective early educators and ultimately provide more equitable access to qualified teachers for children across settings and ages is an important investment in the ECCE workforce. Innovative pathways, such as online course availability, for non-traditional students and incumbent early educators allows for flexibility in how teachers move through the pipeline to obtain higher degrees and qualifications.

PDG B-5 Renewal grant funds were used to enhance the College of Human Sciences at Auburn University, Human Development and Family Science department's fully online completer degree program in Early Childhood Development. They are working to support the ECCE workforce by offering the opportunity to be professionally prepared, while maintaining current employment, through a fully online coursework. The goal is to support expansion and professionalization of the early childhood workforce through an online bachelor's degree program in early child development, with the option of also obtaining Pre-K teacher certification through the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) upon degree completion. The department hired an Early Child Development online completer degree coordinator who is responsible for forming articulation agreements with 2-year programs in Alabama, navigating admissions processes, academic advising, and connecting students with Auburn University resources that provide academic and financial support. The level of support offered to online students has resulted in high student interest and retention. The addition of scholarship funds using PDG B-5 funding is needed to offer this opportunity to students and to expand the capacity of the program coordinator.

Upon admission to the online completter degree program, students will be immediately counseled into seeking opportunities to work in the field of ECCE, if not already doing so. Across the program, students will be expected to apply their coursework to field placement sites in multiple experiential learning components that are embedded into the program. While some of the current students are eligible for TEACH scholarships or veterans' benefits, many are utilizing student loans. The department's inability to offer scholarships has resulted in students being unable to enroll in the program.

The department anticipates that the ability to financially support incoming students will reduce financial barriers to career development as they seek continued education and additional scholarship opportunities. An experienced consultant who is seeking relevant scholarships for our students who do not currently qualify for TEACH scholarships has already been hired. Departmental staff are also actively seeking partnerships with other existing workforce development programs, to be able to offer more scholarship opportunities in the future.

Auburn's HDFS department is committed to assuring students' successful completion of a bachelor's degree through a dedicated student success coordinator, course offerings specifically targeting the needs of our online completter students, and faculty support for students.

Troy University IECMHC Certificate Scholarships

Another important way to support the ECCE workforce is to expand supports for providers and educators to enable sharing of best practices and professional development to successfully implement inclusive and high-quality programming that addresses trauma and supports children's behavioral health needs. The ADECE has been partnering with an institute of higher education, Troy University, to develop courses for both undergraduate and graduate students to obtain a certification in Infant Early Childhood Mental Health and to offer scholarships to students seeking

this certification. In addition, reflective supervision is also a component of this certification, and this promotes student wellness.

Troy University will continue to offer 18 scholarships for the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Counseling (IECMH) Certificate Program. The fourth cohort of students will be at capacity with 18 students. As with past cohorts, these funds will provide pay for full tuition, books, and supplies. The scholarships will be open to applicants with a clinical and non-clinical background, such as students who are currently enrolled or graduated from a master's clinical or approved non-clinical program (i.e. psychology, social work, mental health counseling, marriage and family therapists, early childhood education, special education, etc.). The program will continue to offer Reflective Supervision with Samantha Booker, Ph.D., IMH-E®, the Program Coordinator. Statewide infrastructure will be increased through the ability to sponsor DC:0-5 trainings. The objectives of this program are to increase the number of trainers in the state as well as the number of qualified graduates from our program to develop the clinical and nonclinical infrastructure in Alabama that serves infants, young children, and their families.

Components of this project that will be covered by this PDG B-5 Planning grant are:

- 1.) Training:** As professors leave Troy University and new professors are interested in being part of the Troy University Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program, additional training is required. To this end, travel is budgeted for 5 faculty to attend the following trainings: DC:0-5 training, Reflective Supervision Training, Challenging Behaviors Training, Alliance Core Curriculum Training, Tenets Training, FAN Training, and Child-Parent Psychotherapy Training.
- 2.) Reflective Supervision:** Reflective supervision will be provided by levels 2, 3 and 4 endorsed, or vetted, IMH-E® clinicians for students in the cohort program and the instructor(s) of record for all 5 courses for the year long program (i.e., terms 1 through 5). The goal is that this supervision

will count towards possible level one or two endorsement for all students and Instructor(s) of record for one year and to provide Reflective Supervision for those instructors who are already endorsed. **3.) Scholarships:** The largest portion of the grant will be used to fund scholarships for interested students. The scholarship program will cover all tuition and associated university fees to take the fifteen hours of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Counseling Certificate Program. These scholarships will also provide a flat rate for all students for textbooks and supplies awarded prior to the first term. The ADECE will have the option to earmark 50% of the scholarships to their chosen recipients and the balance of scholarships will proceed through an application process. The applicants will need to be currently enrolled in a master's clinical or approved non-clinical (i.e. psychology, social work, mental health counseling, marriage and family therapists, *early childhood education, *special education, etc.) program or have graduated from such a Master's program. The goal is to provide 18 scholarships for a maximum of 18 students which is the cap for this certificate cohort, thus all students admitted to the certificate program will receive scholarships. (*= approved non-clinical)

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) Scholarships

Unfortunately, for many teachers who would like to obtain credentials or higher degrees to seek higher paying positions and additional responsibility, financial support continues to be an obstacle. The ADECE plans to continue its partnership with the Alabama Partnership for Children so T.E.A.C.H. scholarships can continue to be offered with these PDG B-5 grant funds.

T.E.A.C.H. is a scholarship program that helps early learning professionals increase their level of education and effectiveness in the classroom by making the educational process more attainable and affordable, and by increasing their potential to earn higher wages and reduce staff turnover. The program works step by step with early childhood educators and childcare workers

who wish to increase their level of education and effectiveness in the classroom. T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships, one-on-one counseling and connections with the best available resources to help remove any barriers to finishing their education. The current scholarships available include: CDA Assessment fee, associate degree and bachelor's degree.

The goals of T.E.A.C.H. include increasing the education and effectiveness of early learning professionals, increasing compensation, enhancing the quality of early learning settings throughout Alabama, promoting professionalism and ongoing professional development, and decreasing the turnover rate in early learning settings.

Through funding from the PDG B-5 Renewal grants in 2020 through 2022, the Alabama Partnership for Children has continued to administer the T.E.A.C.H. program in Alabama. So far, in calendar year 2022, scholarships have been provided to 35 teachers working toward an associate or bachelor's degree. With continued funding in 2023, the ADECE hopes to grant even more scholarships to help combat the shortage and high turnover rate of ECCE program staff by offering the opportunity for career growth and development.

Approach-Activity Five: Support Program Quality Improvement

The ADECE understands that we may not commence work on projects in Activity 5 until Activities 1 and 2 are complete. Teacher and childcare provider voice will be included in the needs assessment update, so the intent is to clarify and/or provide a snapshot of the current early childhood workforce, including credentials, professional development, years of experience and demographics of the workforce throughout the whole B-5 system. The plan also includes assessing needs for developing and implementing integrated or collaborative state data systems and support data sharing to strengthen and enhance information on needs of providers and the workforce.

ADECE Workforce Data and Analytics Project

The ADECE utilizes a variety of tools to collect and store data related to workforce credentials, professional development, years of experience, and demographics of the early childhood workforce spanning the B-5 system. As more data are generated through new workforce and development efforts, the ADECE will need greater analytics capacity for the workforce data. The first need will be a more effective, structured framework for collecting, organizing, communicating, using, and analyzing data regarding workforce needs and how programs are addressing such needs.

Currently, data are housed separately by program and are collected and stored in multiple systems across multiple agencies including the ADECE, local education agencies (LEAs) that receive grant funds from the ADECE, local non-LEA grantees and state partner agencies such as the Alabama Department of Human Resources, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, and the Alabama State Department of Education. Additionally, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center, manages the data for all home visiting programs including the staffing and workforce data for such programs.

The state pre-kindergarten program is the largest of the ADECE programs. Throughout its growth, the state pre-kindergarten program has incrementally developed a data system for ensuring that teaching staff meet the qualifications and requirements of the high-quality tenants of the state program. To accomplish the purpose of ensuring qualified teachers are in the pre-kindergarten classrooms, multiple forms are used to report and verify teacher credentials and to then attach the teachers to the appropriate classroom. While these data assure that the teacher related quality standards are met, the data do not meet the need of being able to analyze workforce turnover, retention, and change. Additionally, the data do not allow for a year over year study of the

relationships between teacher credentials and years of experience and student outcomes in the early grades.

The workforce is the cornerstone of the ability of the department to provide high quality early learning experiences that successfully prepare children for kindergarten and later school success. This workforce data and analytics project will allow the department to study the links between workforce characteristics/ churn and student outcomes.

The ADECE will develop a Request for Proposals in accordance with legal purchasing requirements of the State of Alabama to identify and contract with a provider that has the knowledge and capacity to examine existing data from disparate sources and make recommendations for tools to structure and automate the data collection and storage processes that provide the capability for the ADECE to analyze the data. The resource identified to provide the services will be one that has expertise in building advanced analytics systems and solutions that enable in-house research staff and external research partners to conduct the necessary analytics on the data to inform decisions, policies, and programs.

The goal of the data analytics will be to answer the following research questions related to the programs funded by the ADECE. These questions are relevant to the overall state early childhood workforce which includes more than 2,500 pre-kindergarten teachers as well as hundreds of home-visiting and childcare professionals.

1. What is the retention rate of early learning professional staff in the various ADECE program funding recipients?
2. What factors contribute to early learning professional staff turnover/ retention?
3. What characteristics of early learning professional staff are correlated with better student outcomes?

4. What is the impact of staff turnover on student outcomes during the program as well as throughout the early years of children's school careers?

5. What are the trends in retention, turnover, and churn in the early learning workforce?

Having the capacity to answer these questions, among others, will allow the ADECE to have a more focused understanding of the workforce development needs and how best to target resources toward addressing the workforce issues. This project will lay the foundation for future workforce development policies and programs for the early learning workforce in Alabama.

ADECE Comprehensive Evaluation Project

The ADECE recognizes the need to strengthen data systems that allow us, in real time, to efficiently use and share data, perform monitoring and quality improvement, ensure accountability, provide effective governance, promote communication and transparency, and support decision-making.

The ADECE has focused its evaluation efforts at the program level with an eye toward a coordinated and deliberate utilization of data to examine the combination of programs on child outcomes. As with teacher data, the program evaluation data are stored in disparate systems. There is not currently a clear path for bringing together child, classroom, program, or geographical data spanning multiple programs together to determine what services or combination of services work for which children in which settings. This project will begin the process of bringing together child, teacher, classroom, and local program data in such a manner as to allow for advanced analytics to determine linkages between child and family outcomes and program components.

This project will first conduct an inventory and assessment of the current data systems and content among the various ADECE programs. Once this assessment is complete, this project will then provide recommendations for a comprehensive plan for the ADECE to utilize its own internal

data in a manner that is less ad hoc and more systematic and integrated with the research and evaluation functions. The comprehensive plan will map out the existing disparate data sources, and their relationships to each other, and make recommendations for connecting the individual pieces using technological solutions that are specially designed for this purpose. As programs continue to grow, this project will support the scaling of efforts in the state using data to inform decisions and policies.

In addition to technical recommendations, this project will conduct a needs assessment of data and capacity for external evaluation. Programs in the Birth to 5 system include EHS-CCP, QRIS, Behavior Supports, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC), Head Start Collaboration Office, First Class Pre-K, Alabama Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Initiative, and Born Ready University. Currently, each program is using its own tools for assessment of child and family outcomes. The needs assessment portion of this project will identify areas where assessments and outcomes may overlap and how to assess progress and impact. The department currently uses more than 50 different measures at the child, family, classroom, and program level. This project will be crucial in aligning and streamlining evaluation efforts among the individual programs. Both the technical assessment of data analytics capacity and the needs assessment of existing data are the pillars of ensuring that all departmental data may be used collectively for reporting on the state, regional, and individual impact of the ADECE and its collective programs.

Early Childhood Workforce TA and Peer Learning Initiative

Alabama is interested in participating in the *Early Childhood Workforce TA and Peer Learning Initiative*. A full-time Workforce Development/Apprenticeship staff member and a full-time Parent Engagement staff member who will support this work are included in the line-item budget

and narrative. Their salaries and benefits will be paid with both Federal PDG B-5 funds and State Education Trust Fund dollars.

Project Timelines and Milestones

Activity 1	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<i>Update Needs Assessment</i>	Collect & analyze data from parent/caregiver surveys and educator surveys, conduct interviews and focus groups, analyze focus group data	Present findings, develop and submit updated needs assessment (April)		
Activity 2	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<i>Update Department Strategic Plan</i>		Update Department Strategic Plan & report (May)		
Activity 3	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<i>AL Family Central</i>	Update site information and accessibility	Update site information and accessibility	Update site information and accessibility	Update site information and accessibility
<i>AEIS/AU Autism Initiative</i>	4-5 Trainings 4 Learning Collaboratives Fidelity Checks Online Module Creation Module Handbook Development	4-5 Trainings 4 Learning Collaboratives Fidelity Checks Online Module Creation Module Handbook Development	4-5 Trainings 4 Learning Collaboratives Fidelity Checks Online Module Use Module Handbook Use	4-5 Trainings 4 Learning Collaboratives Fidelity Checks Online Module Use Module Handbook Use
<i>AEIS Hands & Voices</i>	Welcome packet distribution Build IFSP/IEP Teams Distribute Newsletters Parent participation in boards & advisory panels	Welcome packet distribution Build IFSP/IEP Teams Distribute Newsletters Parent participation in boards & advisory panels	Welcome packet distribution Build IFSP/IEP Teams Distribute Newsletters Parent participation in boards & advisory panels	Welcome packet distribution Build IFSP/IEP Teams Distribute Newsletters Parent participation in boards & advisory panels

	Plan family retreats	Plan family retreats	Plan family retreats	Plan family retreats
<i>AL Parent Leadership Network</i>	Parents participate in leadership curriculum Attend regular meetings with other parents	Parents participate in leadership curriculum Attend regular meetings with other parents	Parents participate in leadership curriculum Attend regular meetings with other parents	Parents participate in leadership curriculum Attend regular meetings with other parents Parents participate as leaders and policy influencers
<i>Birmingham Talks</i>	LENA Grow for childcare LENA Start for families	LENA Grow for childcare LENA Start for families	LENA Grow for childcare LENA Start for families 3 rd party evaluation	LENA Grow for childcare LENA Start for families 3 rd party evaluation
<i>First 10 Transition Community Planning</i>	Phase 3: 6 new cohorts	Phase 3: 6 new cohorts	Phase 3: 6 new cohorts	Phase 3: 6 new cohorts Phase 4: Effectiveness evaluation
Activity 4	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<i>Conscious Discipline (CD) Expansion</i>	Train 100 staff and teachers in CD Academy	Train 25 CD coaches and mentors	Train 100 staff and teachers in CD Academy	Train 25 CD coaches and mentors
<i>Challenging Behaviors Project Expansion</i>	CBSP-2 Coaching	CBSP-2 Coaching	CBSP-2 Coaching	CBSP-2 Coaching
<i>P-3 Leadership Training</i>		Cohort 7	Cohort 7	Cohort 7
<i>Growing the Alabama ECE Workforce</i>		CDA Completion		CDA Completion
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	Related Technical Instruction (RTI) funds granted to ECE employers	Related Technical Instruction (RTI) funds granted to ECE employers	Related Technical Instruction (RTI) funds granted to ECE employers	Related Technical Instruction (RTI) funds granted to ECE employers
<i>Auburn Completer</i>	Fund staff member	Fund staff member	Fund staff member	Fund staff member

<i>Degree Program</i>		Fund 5 Scholarships	Fund 5 additional scholarships	
<i>Troy University IECMH Certification Scholarships</i>	Train current professors Provide Reflective Supervision Grant 18 scholarships	Train current professors Provide Reflective Supervision Grant 18 scholarships	Train current professors Provide Reflective Supervision Grant 18 scholarships	Train current professors Provide Reflective Supervision Grant 18 scholarships
<i>T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships</i>	Grant 10 scholarships	Grant additional 10 scholarships	Grant additional 10 scholarships	Grant additional 10 scholarships
Activity 5	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<i>ADECE Workforce Data and Analytics Project</i>	Release RFP Award Contract	Contractor will study the ADECE systems and data collection	Contractor will propose changes, additions to ADECE systems and data collection	ADECE will implement changes based on contractor's recommendations
<i>ADECE Comprehensive Evaluation Project</i>		Inventory and assess current data systems among ADECE programs.	Conduct needs assessment of data and capacity for external evaluation.	Provide recommendations for comprehensive plan to utilize internal ADECE data in a more systematic and integrated way
PPEP	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<i>UAB-AEAC Evaluation</i>	Assist with 1 st quarter report	Assist with 2 nd quarter report	Assist with 3 rd quarter report	Prepare final report for submission

Organizational Capacity

In addition to the staff at the ADECE, the organizations we will partner with on the proposed PDG B-5 grant projects also possess the expertise and experience to ensure success and sustainability. Our partners will include staff from partners such as: Alabama Department of Human Resources, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education Early Intervention-Part C, Institutes of Higher Education including both Community Colleges and 4-year colleges, childcare centers, high school career tech programs, and the

Alabama Office of Apprenticeship. These partners have been involved with PDG B-5 projects over the past 3 years and will continue to oversee projects with this funding.

The State of Alabama has a history of strong investments in early childhood education through the state’s nationally recognized state funded voluntary pre-k program, First Class Pre-K, Head Start, First Teacher Home Visiting, and Alabama’s Integrated Approach to Early Learning. 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 the ADECE’s funding by over \$100 million since 2011. These state funds provide the foundation for programs and have been complemented by Preschool Development Grant B-5 funds that have been invested in strengthening current systems and programs and the establishment of new programs.

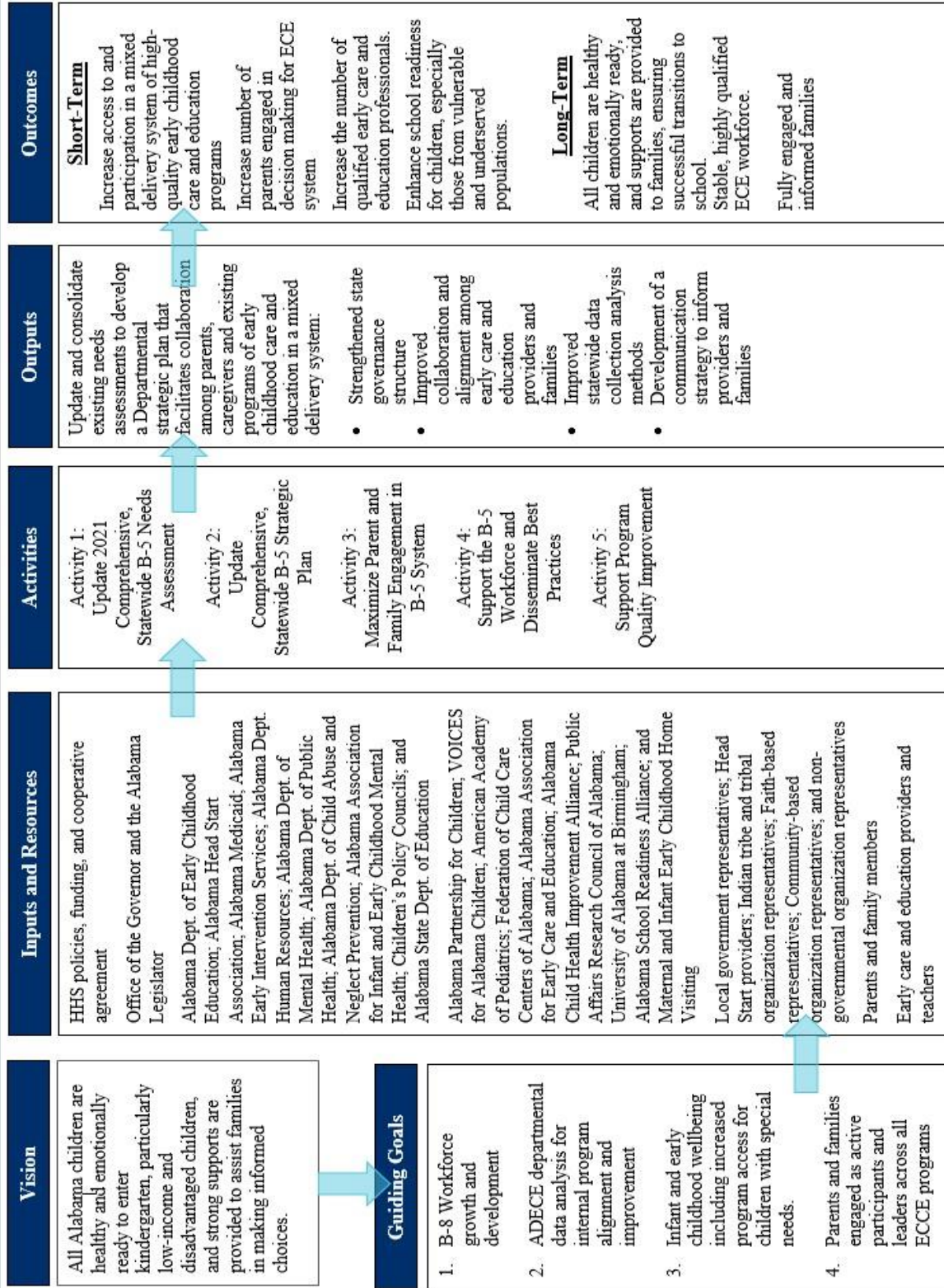
The ADECE has a reputation for ensuring that federal funds are used to make one-time investments that establish programs that are then sustained with State funds. Additionally, the ADECE has a history of partnerships with the DHR Childcare Division (i.e. CCDF, EHS/CCP grants) to support and improve the quality of childcare throughout the State. Such partnerships will be enhanced by the PDG B-5 funds as the partnership continues.

Grant Staff	Credential/Qualifications	Experience
ADECE Secretary	B.S., Elementary Ed, M.A. Curriculum, Administration, Supervision, Ph.D. Ed Leadership and Innovation, Harvard Certificate in Early Education Leadership	ECE teacher/administrator and Chief Equity & Engagement Officer, 30 years (public school, local & state level systems, higher ed)
Senior Director for Business Operations and Grants Management	B.S. Psychology, M.Ed. Early Childhood Special Education, Harvard Certificate in Early Education Leadership	Early Intervention- 20 years, Pre-K & Home Visiting at ADECE, MIECHV Project Director, PDG B-5 Project Director- 10 years (local and state level systems)
Senior Director for Early Learning	B.S. Psychology M.S. Human Development and Family Studies, M.S. Early Childhood Education,	ECE administrator- 25 years (childcare, Head Start, Early Head Start, faith-based and

	Ed.D. Curriculum & Instruction P-12, Harvard Certificate in Early Education Leadership	university-based preschool, state-funded pre-k)
Accounting Manager	B.S. Accounting	State agency accounting, federal grants management- 21 years
Ed Admin-Office of Early Childhood Development and Professional Support	B.S. Early Childhood Education, M.A. Curriculum and Instruction with English as Second Language focus	Childcare (private & licensed), Head Start, Migrant Head Start, teacher & administrator, QRIS Administrator- 25 years
Ed Admin- Data, Research and Evaluation	B.A. Communications, M.P.A, Ph.D. Public Policy & Public Administration	Public policy, research and evaluation, leadership development, state agency administration, non-profit management (local & state level systems, higher ed) -32 years
Principal Investigator	B.A. Public Health, MSOT, MCH, PH.D. Public Admin and Policy	Early Intervention, Physical Therapy, MCH Block Grant, State ECE Research & Eval Lead, MIECHV P.I.- 30 years

Stakeholder Engagement and Sustainability

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



Alabama has an existing governance structure that promotes accountability, coordination, alignment, efficiency, and sustainability. Alabama Code created the 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 the 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.” With the previous PDG B-5R grant, Alabama developed a steering/ECAC committee (PDG B-5 Steering Committee) of key partners across the state that has guided and directed the work of the needs assessment and strategic plan initial development and update.

The ADECE is a governor’s cabinet-level agency and the ADECE Secretary is a member of the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet. This body is assigned administrative responsibility for leadership, coordination, and implementation of state and local initiatives related to the early childhood system. This structure supports fiscal and programmatic sustainability and leadership continuity beyond the period of federal funding. In Alabama, this Council is known as the Children’s Policy Council and includes: Three appointees from business and industry made by the Governor; Lieutenant Governor; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Two members of the Alabama Senate, one appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and one appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama; Legal advisor to the Governor; Attorney General; President of the Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Association; Commissioner of the Department of Corrections; President of the District Attorneys' Association; President of the Chief Juvenile Probation Officers' Association; Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources;

Administrative Director of Courts; Secretary of the Department of Early Childhood Education; Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Executive Director of the Department of Youth Services; State Superintendent of Education; State Health Officer; Executive Director of the Alabama Children's Trust Fund; President of the Alabama Parent-Teachers Association; Director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs; Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitation Services; Commissioner of the Alabama Medicaid Agency; Commissioner of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency' Administrator of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board; Director of the Office of School Readiness; Director of VOICES for Alabama's Children; Director of A Journey to Manhood; President of A Coalition of 100 Black Women; President of 21st Century Youth Leadership Program; Director of the Children First Foundation; Director of the Multiple Needs Child Office; five persons appointed by the Alabama Children's Policy Council reflecting the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural and economic diversity of the state.

The work of the ADECE includes enhancing, establishing, or revising efforts of cooperation and collaboration. It also includes the inclusion of both family and provider voice. The PDG B-5 funds will be used only for those costs associated with the one-time expenditures required to accomplish or enhance these tasks. Currently, less than two percent of State funds are used for the ADECE's administration, with over 85% of funds providing programs and services that support children and families.

In summary, ADECE's statewide collaborative efforts and partnerships support ongoing efforts through direct intervention and policy development that promote sustainability of system improvements. 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.

Program Performance Evaluation Plan (PPEP)

The ADECE will partner with the Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center (AEAC) in the University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Public Health to coordinate research evaluation activities and implementation of the dissemination plan for the PDG B-5 grant. This team has successfully worked with the ADECE as a part of the current PDG grant, supporting overall project evaluation and research related to First Class Pre-K, First Teacher Home Visiting, the Alabama Integrated Approach to Early Learning, the Alabama Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and other early childhood systems initiatives. As a result of this ongoing partnership, the team and the ADECE have publicly released issue briefs, white papers, working summary papers, multiple system survey reports, evaluation reports, and participated in various presentations. This will support increasing the quality, coordination, dissemination, alignment, and efficiency of programs and services. As part of our continuous quality improvement efforts, this team meets monthly to review current data and identify new areas of focus.

The UAB AEAC will continue to lead and facilitate the multi-disciplinary Research Evaluation team, which includes the UAB School of Education and the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA). The team includes members with extensive expertise in early childhood education and health, mixed method program evaluation, research design, advanced analytical methods, econometrics, data visualization/mapping, policy evaluation, birth to 5 systems, and data-matching and database preparation.

The Research Evaluation team will support grant activities in the following general areas:

Evaluation/Reporting and Dissemination for Preschool Development Birth-5 Systems Grant which includes:

- Evaluating of program to support grant activities, measure progress toward meeting goals and objectives, visually depict the birth-5 system as it expands over time, and support dissemination
- Finalizing and implementing a dissemination plan in collaboration with the ADECE and other state partners

Birth to 5 Systems Evaluation Research (including First Class Pre-K, First Teacher Home Visiting, Integrated Approach to Early Learning, and other Birth-5 systems initiatives) which includes:

- Supporting ongoing, comprehensive evaluation research through a mixed methods approach implemented by a multi-disciplinary Research Evaluation Team
- Preparing and disseminating findings through various methods that target specific audiences and stakeholders, including families, state and local leaders, providers, and policymakers

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

The ADECE Senior Director for Business Operations and Grants Management will serve as the overall Project Director. This individual has been the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Project Director for the past three years. The Accounting Manager will have oversight of all fiscal operations and will ensure that all activities are in accordance with 45 CFR 75 Part D including: record keeping, financial management, risk assessment and mitigation. The Secretary, Project Director, Senior Director for Early Learning and other ADECE staff members, will lead and maintain oversight of program activities, staff and partners including sub-recipients.

The ADECE has a grants management database, ALACEED, where grant applications and approved budgets will be housed. Subrecipients will submit expenditure spreadsheets and backup financial documentation at least annually and upon request to ensure funds are being spent responsibly and in accordance with approved budgets.

The state of Alabama has fiscal policies and procedures as well as an electronic system, Alabama Buys, already in place regarding procurement. An electronic vendor system, STAARS, is used for all payments, including grants to third parties. The ADECE is audited annually by State auditors.

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

The security measures that are employed to protect data belonging to or associated with the ADECE are multi-layered and extensive. Data systems are hosted by the state's Office of Information Technology and are segregated across multiple servers to limit data access and allow for layered security controls. Web application firewalls for data transmissions are deployed as well as intrusion detection systems and security scans for monitoring data.

A state-hosted instance of Laserfiche is used to securely collect information which is then digitally integrated into the agency's state-hosted database. Prior to any exchange of data via electronic file transfer processes, execution of a mutually approved MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) is mandatory and must detail all aspects of the process including security measures and disposition of data. Approved file transfers are accomplished through Secure Shell (SSH) File Transfer Protocol (SFTP). Database backups, files, and folders are encrypted during transfer and at rest.

Server maintenance consisting of patching and security updates is conducted by the state's Office of Information Technology within defined timelines for security vulnerability remediations.

Servers and the network are monitored using security scanning software, and firewalls provide network intrusion detection. Air-gapped backups of servers and databases are maintained at a secure offsite location and transmitted over dark fiber connection.

The security procedures that are in place to protect data apply to user access controls, user training, and security policies. All users are required, prior to being granted access to any data, to read and sign a Data Confidentiality and Use Policy. They are also reminded of this policy on the homepage of the interface that provides access to data. Within 30 days of employment, users are required to complete cybersecurity training. To further mitigate risks associated with user behaviors, completion of cybersecurity training is required on a quarterly basis for all users. All agency employees participate in cybersecurity awareness training through the award-winning provider, Inspired eLearning program. Additionally, sporadic awareness exercises are deployed at random times through simulated cyberattacks sent to users to keep them alert and allow security personnel to identify and address weaknesses. Completion of training and results of simulations are monitored by the agency's Systems Administration team.

User access controls are based on identity management through Active Directory using credentials and authentication key requirements. User credentials (username and password) are controlled at the state level using Active Directory. A potential new user submits an electronic Personnel Profile Form (PPF) which must be verified and approved by the State Monitor overseeing the local program where the user is employed. Upon PPF approval, the new user's information populates in the agency's Active Directory. A strong password, meeting specific complexity requirements must be set upon first login. Additionally, the initial login process walks the user through the process of setting of Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) using Microsoft

Authenticator 2FA which must be used for every access instance. This requires the user to authenticate by entering a one-time passcode “key.”

Dissemination Plan

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, policymakers, 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 stakeholder advisory group.

Dissemination Plan Objective 1: By the end of the first quarter of the grant, we will re-engage the PDG B-5 Steering Committee stakeholder advisory group to guide grant activities and support dissemination.

Strategy	Evaluation Method/Measure
Alabama will re-engage the PDG B-5 Steering Committee stakeholder advisory group to guide grant activities in addressing needs and gaps identified through the 2021 needs assessment update. The group will respond to progress updates, provide feedback on dissemination materials/strategies, and help facilitate broad dissemination of findings.	Compliance – group re-engaged Membership list
Hold quarterly meetings of PDG B-5 Steering Committee, assuring that at least one agenda item for each meeting is related to dissemination (target audience identification, input on methods/materials, response to dissemination materials)	Meeting agenda and minutes, including attendees and recommendations

Dissemination Plan Objective 2: During the planning year, 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 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,	Evaluation reports

and recommendations to inform the overall grant project strategic plan.	(Internal use and posted on ADECE website as appropriate)
Based on ongoing evaluation, a slide presentation will be developed and will be shared with the PDG B-5 Steering Committee advisory group and the broader partner list, as well as incorporated into Secretary Cooper’s legislative presentation/testimony to be delivered to state policymakers and the Governor.	number and copies of presentations
The Research Evaluation Team will prepare a white paper and/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 First Class Pre-K 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 ADECE website.	Number of issue briefs posted on ADECE 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 ADECE Leadership and Research Evaluation Team members. Posters will be posted on the ADECE website.	number and copies of posters posted on ADECE website number of 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 ADECE Leadership. Articles will be posted on the ADECE website.	number and copies of articles posted on ADECE website

Dissemination Plan Objective 3: During the planning grant year, 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 PDG B-5 Steering Committee advisory group 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 PDG B-5 Steering Committee advisory group 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 ADECE and partner organizations as appropriate. The purpose of the annual surveys is to	Survey results and report

<p>capture input on the project, dissemination products, and use of findings. Findings will guide strategic planning and project implementation.</p>	
<p>Monitor available metrics on audience engagement, product usage, and evaluation of presentations/sessions.</p>	<p>ADECE website related page views</p> <p>number of cross-postings or link to B5 materials on partner websites</p> <p>number of members on lists to receive updates</p> <p>number of product downloads (issue briefs, papers)</p> <p>Conference session presentation evaluations</p>

Third-Party Agreements

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between
The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
And
Clarus Consulting Group

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and Clarus Consulting Group for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

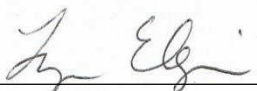
This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022 to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Enter into a contract for approximately \$100,000 with the Clarus Consulting Group for the purpose of completing projects for Activities 1 & 2 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.


Clarus Consulting Group agrees to:

1. Complete an update of the statewide Needs Assessment that was completed in 2021.
2. Complete an updated Strategic Plan based on the 2023 Needs Assessment findings.



Lynn Elgin, Clarus CEO

October 27, 2022
Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 27, 2022
Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between
The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
And
Auburn University-College of Human Sciences (AU)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and AU for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

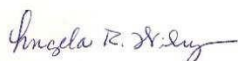
This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022 to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Grant up to 72,000 to AU for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 4 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.

AU agrees to:

1. Offer scholarships to students choosing to enroll in the online completer degree.
2. Provide partial funding for a staff member to support the online completer degree program.



Dr. Angela Wiley

10-27-2022

Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 27, 2022

Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)

AND

The Education Development Center (EDC)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and the Education Development Center (“EDC”) for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant.

The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is anticipated to be December 30, 2022, to December 29, 2023.

If ADECE’s 2022 PDG B-5 Planning Grant proposal is funded, ADECE and EDC will negotiate actively and in good faith to reach a mutually acceptable fixed price Subcontract.

The ADECE agrees to:

- 7. Contract funds to the Education Development Center up to \$233,000 for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 3 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
- 8. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
- 9. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
- 10. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
- 11. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
- 12. Remit timely payments to grantee.

The EDC agrees to:

- 3. Facilitate development of six Transition to Kindergarten Teams (TKT), composed of a diverse group of early care and education stakeholders, to collaborate on development of a comprehensive TKT Plan. TKTs will be located throughout the state.
- 4. Provide a Mentor Coach for each TKT. The Coach will conduct monthly meetings and guide development of the team’s community wide TKT Plan.
- 5. Ensure each TKT has a well-defined TKT Plan at the conclusion of the project period.
- 6. Facilitate pathways for three First 10 community workgroups in two communities: TKTs, School-Connected Play and Learns, and The Basics programming.
- 7. Participate in reporting and project evaluation activities as prescribed



Michael Pelletier, Director Office of Sponsored Programs

Nov.3, 2022

Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 31, 2022

Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)

And

Troy University-Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation & Interpreter Training (Troy)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and Troy for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

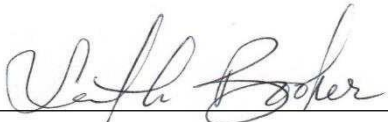
This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022 to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Grant up to \$236,130 to Troy for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 4 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.


Troy agrees to:

1. Offer up to 18 scholarships to students choosing to enroll in the Infant Early Childhood Mental Health undergraduate and graduate certificate programs.
2. Provide training for current staff members to support the certificate programs.



Dr. Samantha Booker

October 27, 2022
Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 27, 2022
Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between
The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
And
Birmingham Talks

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and Birmingham Talks for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.


This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022 to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Grant up to \$200,000 to Birmingham Talks for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 3 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.


Birmingham Talks agrees to:

1. Continue empowering caregivers and childcare providers to increase interactive conversation in children to improve Kindergarten readiness.
2. Expand services into under-served sectors such as Spanish speaking communities and Family childcare homes.
3. Give priority to childcare centers who seek to serve children with disabilities.



Ruth Ann Moss, Executive Director

October 27, 2022
Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 27, 2022
Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between
The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
And
Alabama Early Intervention Program-Part C (AEIS)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and the Alabama Early Intervention Program-Part C (AEIS) for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022 to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Grant up to \$419,500 to the AEIS for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 3 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.

AEIS agrees to:

1. Continue work on the Autism Initiative that is focused on training childcare centers statewide to include children with an Autism spectrum diagnosis.
2. Expand the priority referral component of the Autism Initiative.
3. Partner with Auburn University to create online learning modules for sustainability.
4. Expand staff capacity for the Hans & VOICES Project for Parents.

Amy Blakeney
Amy Blakeney, AEIS Coordinator

October 28, 2022
Date

Barbara J. Cooper
Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 27, 2022
Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between
The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
And
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022 to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Grant up to \$113,425 to the APC for the purpose of completing projects for Activities 3 & 4 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.


APC agrees to:

1. Continue work with the Alabama Parent Leadership Network that is focused on training parents statewide in a leadership curriculum.
2. Administer the TEACH scholarship program statewide.



Gail Piggott, Executive Director

October 27, 2022
Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

October 27, 2022
Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)

AND

The Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and the AOA, for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022, to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Contract funds to identified grantees for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 4 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
2. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantee.

The AOA agrees to:

1. Assist with expansion of the registered apprenticeship in order to provide high-quality career training which will enable workers and employers to prosper in pursuit of the continued economic development of our state.
2. Provide technical assistance for the creation of new programs
3. Provide support for accessing state and federal assistance with programs
4. Conduct ongoing monitoring of program quality and compliance with state and federal law.



Joshua Laney, AOA Director

11/02/2022

Date



Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

November 2, 2022

Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)

AND

Loving Guidance, LLC.

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and Loving Guidance, LLC., for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant.

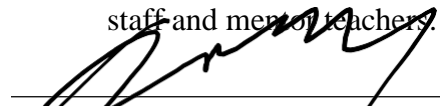
This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 Planning grant is December 30, 2022, to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

- 13. Contract funds to Loving Guidance, LLC., up to \$405,600 for the purpose of completing projects for Activity 4 of the PDG B-5 Planning Grant.
- 14. Have regular communication with grantee to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
- 15. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
- 16. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
- 17. Ensure grantee adheres to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
- 18. Remit timely payments to grantee.


Loving Guidance, LLC. agrees to:

- 1. Provide virtual, trauma-informed social and emotional learning, technical assistance to four statewide cluster groups, as planned, from June 2023 – December 2023. Participants include ADECE staff and mentor teachers.
- 2. Facilitate 2, week-long Conscious Discipline professional development trainings in June and December of 2023 for up to 100 participants at each session. Attendees include ADECE staff and representatives from the early care and education field (i.e. childcare, Head Start, home visiting, etc.).
- 3. Facilitate 4, one-day professional learning seminars to deepen participants’ capacity to effectively implement the Conscious Discipline framework. Attendees include ADECE staff and mentor teachers. Sessions would occur September 2023 - December 2023.



 Lindsey Merrick, Loving Guidance, LLC. Representative

11/3/22
 Date



 Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

10/31/2022
 Date

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)

AND

The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR)

This MOU is entered into by and between the ADECE and the DHR, for the purpose of obtaining funds for a project that will be funded with the 2022 Preschool Development Birth through Five Planning grant. This MOU is contingent upon the ADECE being awarded the grant. This agreement shall become effective when the grant is awarded to the ADECE, after all information is completed in the ADECE grants management database and a formal MOU is signed by both parties. The project period for the 2022 PDG B-5 planning grant is December 30, 2022, to December 29, 2023.

The ADECE agrees to:

1. Hire an Education Specialist to support expansion of the Challenging Behavior Project by:
 - a. Facilitating trauma informed professional development for early care and education staff who has not received on-site coaching support; educators will be able to attend a series of 3-hour seminars for information on how to support children who exhibit challenging behaviors in the early learning environment.
2. Have regular communication with grantees to ensure all stakeholders are informed to provide seamless services.
3. Conduct regular meetings to share information and address project progress.
4. Provide ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring.
5. Ensure all grantees adhere to the ADECE Standard Contract Conditions and Assurances.
6. Remit timely payments to grantees.

The DHR agrees to:

1. Continue partnership as identified in Interagency Agreement 1929.
2. Disseminate information to childcare providers regarding workforce development opportunities including availability of funds to support attainment of higher credentials including the CDA, Associate Degree, or B.S. degree in ECE or Child Development and opportunities to participate in Alabama's ECE Apprenticeship Program.
3. Participate in bi-monthly collaboration meetings to share project progress.

FOR DHR:


Nancy A. Buckner, DHR Commissioner

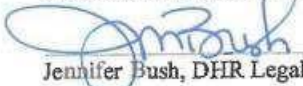
FOR ADECE:


Dr. Barbara Cooper, ADECE Secretary

APPROVED AS TO PROGRAM CONTENT:


Bernard Houston, Director
Child Care Services Division

REVIEWED FOR LEGAL FORM:


Jennifer Bush, DHR Legal Counsel


Elizabeth Huntley, ADECE Legal Counsel

Project Budget and Budget Justification

2022 Alabama PDG B-5 Planning Grant Budget Justification and Narrative

Object Class Categories	Federal	Non-federal Match	Total
a. Personnel	\$503,798.00		\$503,798.00
b. Fringe Benefits	\$182,123.00		\$182,123.00
c. Travel	\$52,000.00		\$52,000.00
d. Equipment	\$0.00		\$0.00
e. Supplies	\$17,900.00		\$17,900.00
f. Contractual	\$3,088,164.00	\$1,200,000.00	\$4,288,164.00
g. Construction	\$0.00		\$0.00
h. Other	\$32,550.00		\$32,550.00
i. Total Direct Charges	\$3,876,535.00	\$1,200,000.00	\$5,076,535.00
j. Indirect Charges (18%)	\$123,465.00		\$123,465.00
k. TOTALS	\$4,000,000.00	\$1,200,000.00	\$5,200,000.00

Budget Category- Personnel \$685,921.00

Salaries \$503,798.00 The Family Engagement staff member and the Workforce Development/Apprenticeship staff member below will participate in the Early Childhood Workforce TA Peer Learning Initiative and Community of Practice. Their salaries will be paid with Federal PDG B-5 funds and State Education Trust Fund dollars.

Position/Title	Months	% Effort	Annual Salary	Wage Rate Per Month	Amount Requested from Grant
Early Childhood Education Director Barbara Cooper	12	25	\$170,688	\$14,224	\$42,672
Senior Director/PDG Project Director Dianna Tullier	12	25	\$112,372	\$9,364	\$28,093
Senior Director Pamela Truelove-Walker	12	25	\$118,152	\$9,846	\$29,538
Personnel Manager Tammy Gibson	12	29	\$75,696	\$6,308	\$21,952
Government Relations Specialist Samuel Adams	12	29	\$96,288	\$8,024	\$27,924
Accounting Manager Brandi Rice	12	25	\$90,742	\$7,562	\$22,686
Education Administrator Jan Hume	12	39	\$114,320	\$9,527	\$44,585
Education Administrator Joy Winchester	12	29	\$101,712	\$8,476	\$29,496

Education Administrator Katrina Bowling	12	50	\$106,442	\$8,870	\$53,221
Education Administrator- Family Engagement Staff- To Be Hired	12	50	\$83,004	\$6,917	\$41,502
Education Administrator- Workforce Development/Apprenticeship Staff To Be Hired	12	50	\$83,004	\$6,917	\$41,502
Education Administrator Jeannie Allen	12	54%	\$112,272	\$9,356	\$60,627
Education Specialist- Conscious Discipline Trainer	12	100%	\$60,000	\$5,000	\$60,000

Budget Category- Fringe Benefits \$182,123 Required contributions for employees include FICA (7.65%), retirement (14.82% for Tier 1 January '23 - Sept '23 and 16% Oct '23 - Dec '23 & Tier 2 14.44% Jan '23 - Sept '23 and 15.76% Oct '23 - Dec '23), and health insurance (\$930 per month Jan '23-Sept '23 and \$1,155 per month Oct '23 - Dec '23).

Budget Category- Travel \$52,000.00 Travel costs include one trip to the ACF Sponsored Grantee meeting for 4 participants at \$3,000 each (\$12,000 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 \$0.00

Budget Category- Supplies \$17,900.00 Fuel for travel state-wide (\$500.00/month for 12 months, \$6,000 annually) car repairs and maintenance (\$200.00/month for 12 months, \$2,400.00 annually) Professional Development for new Conscious Discipline staff member \$3,500. Consumables, laptop, desktop, phone, printer for new Conscious Discipline staff member \$6,000.

Budget Category- Contractual \$3,088,164.00

Contracts and sub grants will support the following:

Activity 1: PDG B-5 Statewide Needs Assessment \$70,000 Clarus Consulting Group will update the 2021 Needs Assessment to include both parent and educator voice. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted, and an updated Needs Assessment report will be completed.

Activity 2: PDG B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan \$30,000 Clarus will refine enhance and/or implement statewide birth through five strategic plans, based on the updated 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, especially in relation to COVID.

Activity 3: Maximizing Parent and Family Engagement in B-5 System: \$865,925.00

Project 3.1: Alabama Family Central: No funding requested.

Project 3.2: AEIS/AU Autism Initiative \$399,500 ADECE will grant funds to Auburn University to conduct trainings on including children with Autism in childcare centers statewide.

Project 3.3: AEIS/Hands & Voices Project for Parents \$20,000 AEIS will use funds to help pay a staff member to manage this project.

Project 3.4: Alabama Parent Leadership Network \$13,425 Alabama Partnership for Children will receive funds to host parent leadership network trainings in all 8 regions statewide. Parents, Parent Leaders and Parent Mentors will receive stipends for their participation.

Project 3.5: Birmingham Talks \$200,000 Birmingham Talks will receive funding to implement LENA Home, Start and Grow programs to coach parents and childcare providers on meaningful interactions that will maximize quality conversations and interactive talking with their child.

Project 3.6: First 10 Transition Community Planning: \$233,000. Funds will be granted to EDC and used to support communities use of the Transition to Kindergarten toolkit that provides resources for transitioning children from ECCE programs into local school systems.

Activity 4: Support the B-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices \$1,597,239

Project 4.1: Conscious Discipline Expansion \$405,000 ADECE will contract with Conscious Discipline to train more CD trainers statewide. Staff will also be trained in implementation support.

Project 4.2: Challenging Behaviors Project Expansion- costs for this project are included in other lines of the budget since it is funding a staff member.

Project 4.3: Pre-K through 3rd Grade Early Learning Continuum /CLAS Leadership Trainings \$150,000. Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) will be granted funds to provide a P-3 Leadership Academy and professional development for teachers and childcare providers.

Project 4.4: Growing the Alabama ECE Workforce \$484,109 ADECE will grant funds to institutes of higher education to cover costs associated with obtaining a CDA or higher education credential, that are not covered through other funding sources.

Project 4.5: Apprenticeship \$150,000 ADECE will grant funds to employers for costs of related technical instruction (RTI) for apprentices that are not covered through other funding sources.

Project 4.6: Auburn University Completer Degree Program \$72,000 Funds will be sub granted to Auburn University to provide a total of 10 scholarships for students seeking to complete a bachelor's degree online while continuing to work in the early childhood education field.

Project 4.7: IECMH Certification Scholarships \$236,130 Funds will be sub-granted to Troy University to provide 18 undergraduate and graduate scholarships for IECMH students.

Project 4.8: TEACH Scholarships \$100,000 Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) will receive funds to distribute to qualified TEACH scholarship recipients.

Activity 5: Support Program Quality Improvement \$525,000

Project 5.1: ADECE Workforce Data and Analytics Project \$150,000 ADECE will issue an RFP and select an entity who can examine existing data and make recommendations for tools to structure and automate the data collection and storage processes that provide the capability for the ADECE to analyze the data.

Project 5.2 ADECE Comprehensive Evaluation Project: \$375,000 ADECE will contract with UAB Applied Evaluation and Assessment Collaborative to strengthen systems needed for data sharing and use, monitoring and quality improvement, accountability, effective governance, communication, and decision-making.

Budget Category- Other \$32,550 Other funds will be spent for in state travel daily per diem (\$12.75/day, 500 days \$2,550 annually) and in state overnight travel per diem (\$100 per day, 300 days, \$30,000 annually).

Budget Category- Indirect \$123,465.00 The state of Alabama has a federally approved indirect cost rate of 18% of salaries and benefits.

Budget Category- State Match \$1,200,000.00 State funds in the amount of \$1,200,000.00 appropriated in SFY2023 to provide access to the state-wide Office of School Readiness First Class 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.