



Cluster Investments 2018

Child Care

Child care is one of the cross-cutting priorities in the Alliance Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework. During the first five years of life, more children are in some form of child care than are at home full time. When they are in high quality settings, research shows they have the academic, social, and emotional skills they need to succeed. Unfortunately, this is not the case for most children, especially those living in deep poverty. The preponderance of child care deserts and low subsidy reimbursement rates for infant care also underscores the importance of access to affordable and high quality child care.

Seventeen states identified child care as a priority in coming year. Changes in federal administration and state budgetary constraints have halted progress on implementing the recently reauthorized child care development block grant (CCDBG). However, advocates continue to push on how the new rules can be integrated into current child care policies. We will support reports and briefs that highlight progress as states meet the goals in their CCDBG state plans. Given recent data on racial disparities in access to high quality child care, we will support the Migration Policy Institute to work on child care policies for immigrant and refugee children, they will coordinate with the Center for Law and Social Policy, who is also working on child care for immigrant families.

The Committee for Economic Development will help states working on child care tax credits and those who want to engage more business champions. BUILD will work on quality child care, with a focus on integrating family child care into quality rating systems.

State Partners

Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, DC, Washington, and Wisconsin.

National Partners

BUILD, CCA, CED, CLASP, CT, MPI, NGA, NWLC

Mimi is leading this Cluster.

Governor Strategy

Governors and legislators will have even greater discretion over how to allocate resources if federal funding to states comes in the form of tax credits, block grants, waivers, and

vouchers. Their decisions will either support or harm young children, and either help or prevent their families from becoming independent, successful, and secure. On November 6, 2018, voters will cast ballots to select 36 governors and over 6,000 state legislators. Now is the time to educate candidates about the importance of prioritizing young children and holding them accountable for effective early childhood policies and funding to implement them.

The goal is to increase advocacy capacity to educate and inform candidates for governor so they prioritize and support state policies and funding for early childhood. We will:

1. Invest in Frontera Strategy to do a research scan that identifies states where advocates can be effective and where candidates are most likely to prioritize early childhood policies.
2. Create and oversee an Advisory Group of 8-10 key advisors with expertise in bi-partisan state campaigns to provide guidance and consultation.
3. Facilitate peer and expert learning and information sharing:
 - Host webinars on effective campaign strategies e.g. polling, candidate forums, effective communications, making the most of social media, holding site visits that attract media, informing transitions teams, etc.
 - Create an intranet site and library of materials where advocates can easily share messages, surveys, polls, briefs, transition memos, e-blasts, so there is a library of materials for immediate access.
 - Sponsor and facilitate a mix of virtual and an in-person meeting(s) so advocates can share insights about what is working and what they need help with e.g. innovative advocacy strategies, effectively media strategies, innovative candidate education activities.
4. Invest in research, communications, and legal supports so states can learn from one another and from outside experts.
 - Share polling data from state and national organizations.
 - Support communication and media (traditional and social) strategies to collect, synthesize, and disseminate tools and state stories through our own and our partners' networks.
 - Make access available to legal counsel so states are confident their activities are bipartisan and follow not-for-profit rules and regulations.
5. Make advocacy cash grants in select states to educate and inform candidates and to track results after elections.
 - Identify states where candidate education could help prioritize early childhood policies and funding
 - Support state and national advocacy partners in our National TA Network who can educate and inform candidates.
 - Support NGA, NCSL, and state advocates to monitor State of the State addresses, bills, and budget actions for their impact on early childhood.

State Partners with Gubernatorial Elections

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

National Partners

Center for American Progress, Council for a Strong America, Frontera Strategy, Georgetown Center on Children and Families, First Five Years Fund, Save the Children Action Network, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, ZERO TO THREE

Lisa is leading this cluster.

Infants and Toddlers

Infant and toddler (IT) advocacy and policy is one of the cross-cutting priorities in the Alliance Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework. Brain research and developmental science identify birth through age three as the time period that has the greatest impact on whether young children are on a path to success, or one that hinders later health, growth, and learning. Momentum for IT advocacy and state policy has been building. But there are plenty of challenges, including the fact that high quality, comprehensive IT child care is one of the most costly investments in early childhood.

This year 19 of our state partners identified priorities in IT policy advocacy across a range of areas: addressing the unmet need for high quality IT child care, increasing child care subsidy reimbursement rates for infants, expanding access to evidence-based home visiting programs, promoting developmental screening, improving child care standards on nutrition and infant feeding, increasing awareness and supports for infant-early childhood mental health, and linking early education and health beginning prenatally through age three.

We will continue to build and/or strengthen IT advocacy skills and strategies through advocacy grants and peer learning opportunities. Last year ZTT and Frontera Strategy co-lead a Home Visiting Advocacy Communities of Practice (CoP). Participating states found this to be so useful that they asked for it to continue this year. Based on demand, we are supporting ZTT to launch a second CoP in 5-7 states to advance an overall IT policy agenda.

We will support partners in our National TA Network to provide TA and RR to: identify IT policy priorities, develop policy recommendations, form IT coalitions, provide political strategy and messaging supports, and cultivate new champions for ITs. CLASP will identify promising state examples of policies that advance IT well-being. NASHP will address how knowledge about early brain development can inform better health care policies for ITs and their families. NWLC will write an issue brief focused on the adequacy of payment rates for covering the cost of infant care and financing infant and early childhood mental health services.

State Partners

California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Washington DC, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Jersey, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin

National Partners

CLASP, Frontera Strategy, NASHP, NWLC, ZTT

Mimi is leading this cluster of investments.

Early Childhood Mental Health

Early childhood mental health (ECMH) is one of the cross-cutting priorities in the Alliance Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework. Mental and behavioral health can be thorny issues, especially when it comes to young children. But there is increasing momentum to identify and understand the social and environmental factors that shape young children's development. The Affordable Care Act offers new opportunities to address unmet health needs through prevention, home visiting, and state innovation models. Medicaid is a foundational source of health coverage for low-income families.

Last year, we leveraged funding from the Harris and Robert Wood Johnson Foundations to support ZERO TO THREE to convene a meeting on using Medicaid for funding ECMH. In the coming year, we will co-host a second meeting and provide follow-up TA in states as requested. We will continue funding NCCP to maintain their 50-state database of how states are accessing Medicaid for ECMH, and they will add a policy database of exemplar policies as examples that can be referenced.

In the FY17 legislative session, a different and disturbing pattern was seen in Illinois, Colorado, Maine, Tennessee, and Texas. These states passed bills to address a rampant use of expulsions and suspensions of young children from early learning programs after evidence pointed to racial and ethnic disparities among these children. This issue has gained visibility in recent years and many states are reaching for quick fixes. Several states developed policies that prevent suspensions/expulsions, but failed to address the underlying conditions that led to the poor behavior. In the coming year, BUILD will lead a learning community of state and national partners focused on developing new policies and investments designed to respond to the range of issues that could prevent what ultimately results in suspensions and expulsions.

State Partners Requesting Support

Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, New Mexico, Texas, Wisconsin

National Partners

BUILD, GCCF, MPI, NASHP, NBCDI, NCCP, NCSL, ZTT

Helene is leading this cluster.

PreK

PreK is one of the early learning priorities in the Alliance Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework. In most cases, the challenge is less about making the case to support preschool, and more about increasing political will for sustainable funding so more high quality programs can be implemented.

This year will be our second year with the Gates-funded initiative as their lead partner for advocacy to improve policies that support high quality preK in 4 targeted states. We will continue to support advocacy for effective professional development, instructional leadership, quality improvement systems, and decreasing suspension and expulsion rates. In keeping with the Alliance model, we will facilitate the exchange of lessons and strategies in these demonstration states and share them with all states in the Alliance network.

This year there are 11 states in the Alliance network that are prioritizing preK. Last year we created the preK Advocacy Learning Community to share strategies, challenges, and lessons learned to improve preK quality. We will continue to support Rhode Island KIDS COUNT to facilitate this group. All 11 states will participate in monthly virtual calls/webinars and in an annual in-person meeting during the Alliance Partner Summit.

Partners in the Alliance National TA Network with expertise in teacher preparation, compensation, and diversity are helping states advance quality preK and workforce development policies. They will also support effective communications, track promising preK legislation, and help identify sustainable financing strategies.

State Partners

Arkansas, Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Washington

National Partners

CEELO, CT, CSA, CSCCE, NCSL, NA, TEACH

Albert is leading this cluster.

Workforce

Workforce is one of the cross-cutting priorities in the Alliance Birth Through Eight State Policy Framework. Professional competency has emerged as the linchpin of high-quality early learning. The number of researchers, advocates, policymakers, funders, and media outlets interested and working on this issue continues to grow. While this can help advance better policies, it can be challenging to manage multiple projects, goals, and messages in the same states as well as across states. Media attention can elevate awareness in a positive way, but also highlight controversies, disagreements, and seemingly intractable challenges that discourage policy action.

Last year we led quarterly meetings to keep national TA providers informed about each other's projects. We will continue to convene national partners and add a few new ones so

they can build on each other's work, coordinate efforts especially when working in the same states, give each other input, and maximize the collective impact of Alliance-funded projects in this area. We will also identify ways to do similar coordination among state partners and between state and national partners focused on the workforce.

This year we are focusing on: compensation, workforce diversity, education/credential requirements, and pathways for professional preparation and advancement. National partners will create policy briefs, communications tools, organize expert panels and discussions, and provide direct TA in states. Together, this work will highlight the rationale and need for higher standards for early childhood educators, shine a light on promising policies that support professionals' growth and advancement, and support state-level advocacy. It will raise concerns about maintaining the diversity of the workforce, equitable access to higher education and other professional support programs, and professionals' capacity for culturally-sensitive interactions and instructions. These themes will be integrated throughout the work at both the national and state levels.

State Partners

CO, LA, MA, NY, OR, WA, WI

National Partners

BUILD, CCAoA, CSCCE, CED, CEELO, New America, NAEYC, NBCDI, NGA, TEACH

Albert is leading this cluster.