

A Tribal Guide to the
Good Start, Grow Smart
Early Learning Initiative



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CHILD CARE BUREAU



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Early Childhood Education Reform Timeline

2001

July First Lady Laura Bush hosts Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development in Washington, D.C.

2002

January President Bush signs the *No Child Left Behind Act* into law.

April The Bush Administration introduces the *Good Start, Grow Smart* Early Learning Initiative.

Summer The Head Start Bureau introduces the Early Learning and Literacy Effort (referred to as the “STEP Training”).

Summer/Fall The Child Care Bureau hosts annual Tribal Cluster Trainings across the country titled “Working with Providers to Enhance the Quality of Tribal Child Care Programs.” The focus was literacy.

Fall 2002 thru Spring 2003 The Child Care Bureau, State Child Care Administrators and the Tribal Child Care Technical Assistance Center (TriTAC) participate in the U.S. Department of Education’s Early Childhood Educators Academies, which were conducted regionally across the country.

2003

May The Child Care Bureau presents the *Good Start, Grow Smart* Initiative to Tribes at the 9th National American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Spring The Child Care Bureau adds a new section to the State CCDF two-year plan requesting State progress and planning on the key *GSGS* components (Early Learning Guidelines, Professional Development, and Coordination).

**Spring/
Summer**

ACF Regional Offices hold tribal child care meetings that include presentations and discussions around *Good Start, Grow Smart*.

July

States submit new CCDF two-year plans — including the new GSGS section — to ACF Regional Offices and the Child Care Bureau.

Summer/Fall

The Child Care Bureau hosts annual Tribal Cluster Trainings across the country titled “Creating a Locally Designed Professional Development System to Support School Readiness and Retention.” The focus was professional development, school age care and collaboration.

2004

February

The Child Care Bureau holds a special Tribal Cluster Training in Albuquerque, New Mexico titled “Leading Together through Collaboration and Coordination.” Topics included building skills for collaboration/coordination with school districts, State government leaders, and other Tribal and local early childhood programs.

April

The Child Care Bureau hosts the 10th National American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference in Phoenix, Arizona that includes sessions on the three primary *Good Start, Grow Smart* components — Early Learning Guidelines, Professional Development, and Coordination — and their applicability in tribal communities.

**Spring/
Summer**

ACF Regional Offices hold tribal child care meetings that include presentations and discussions on *Good Start, Grow Smart*.

Summer

The Child Care Bureau hosts Tribal Cluster Trainings across the country that focus on building collaboration/coordination skills similar to the Tribal Cluster Training held in February 2004.

Good Start, Grow Smart Summary

BACKGROUND

In 2001 Congress passed the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the Bush Administration's Education Reform Bill. This Act drew attention to the need for young children to be given the opportunity to learn fundamental skills that will prepare them for success in school.

The *Good Start, Grow Smart (GSGS)* Initiative was introduced by the Bush Administration in April 2002 as the next step in education reform. The goal of the Initiative is to ensure that young children are equipped with the skills they will need to start school ready to learn. The Initiative focuses on strengthening Head Start; partnering with States to improve early learning; and providing parents, teachers, and caregivers with information on early learning.

The Child Care Bureau (CCB) has been focusing on three key areas within the *Good Start, Grow Smart* Initiative:

- **Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs):** States are asked to develop guidelines — or content standards — on early literacy, language, pre-reading and mathematics for children ages 3 to 5 that align with State K-12 standards and describe what children need to know and be able to do to succeed in kindergarten. The Early Learning Guidelines are voluntary at the program level, unless required by the State.
- **Professional Development Plans:** State plans for the professional development and training of child care teachers, providers and administrators to enable them to support the school readiness of young children, and are linked to the Early Learning Guidelines.
- **Program Coordination:** State plans for coordination across early childhood programs and funding streams to expand the availability and affordability of high-quality early care and education programs.

Although these are not legislative mandates, States are strongly encouraged to address all three areas. A new section was added to the FY 2004-2005 State Plan Preprint requesting information on State progress and planning in each of these three key areas.

THE CHILD CARE BUREAU'S APPROACH TO GSGS

The Child Care Bureau's approach to working with Tribes on *Good Start, Grow Smart* has been an intentionally slower process to ensure that tribal differences (such as size, geography, culture and language) are taken into account. Through discussion groups and conference sessions, the Child Care Bureau is encouraging input from Tribes on the best ways to adapt *Good Start, Grow Smart* in tribal communities.

The Child Care Bureau's current strategies include:

- Encouraging State/Tribal collaboration on the development of State ELGs;
- Developing Tribal Cluster Trainings that address the three key areas in the *Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative*;
- Encouraging collaboration between tribal child care programs and Head Start, local school systems, Johnson-O'Malley, Family and Child Education (FACE), Even Start, and other early childhood education programs; and
- Promoting early language development, math concepts, and basic skill building activities through training sessions at the annual American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference, ACF Regional Office tribal child care meetings, and Tribal Cluster Trainings.

As a component of the *Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative*, the Head Start Bureau introduced the Early Learning and Literacy Effort ("STEP Training") in the Summer of 2002. Several of the key elements of this training have been incorporated into the literacy trainings presented to tribal CCDF grantees at the annual American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference and Tribal Cluster Trainings.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM TRIBES

Discussions regarding the CCB's approach to *GSGS* in tribal communities were held at the 2003 American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference, with the CCB's Tribal Work Group and as part of the 2003 CCDF Tribal Cluster Trainings. The overarching comment from Tribes has been that the CCB approach to tribal *GSGS* should respect sovereignty and take into account cultural and linguistic differences.

Other comments include:

Early Learning Guidelines

- Tribes should be involved in the development of their State's ELGs.
- Tribal Early Learning Guidelines should be optional.
- Funding for implementation must be made available.

Professional Development

- Access to training opportunities and qualified trainers can be challenging.
- Culturally-based curricula should be valued.
- Funding is needed to support professional development activities.

Program Coordination

- Tribal service areas sometimes encompass large geographic areas and multiple jurisdictions making it difficult to obtain consensus.
- Tribes should encourage increased coordination/collaboration at the tribal level.
- Barriers to collaboration exist based on regulations and attitudes.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF TRIBES

Tribes are encouraged to continue working with the Child Care Bureau and ACF Regional Offices on the applicability of *Good Start, Grow Smart* in their tribal communities. Most importantly, Tribes are encouraged to move forward with their efforts in building and enhancing quality tribal child care environments that prepare children to enter school ready to learn and provide school-aged children with the necessary supports to succeed in school.

The following chart summarizes what is specifically expected of Tribes.

EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES

- Tribes are encouraged to work with their State Lead Agencies around the development of ELGs. (See pages 11-16 of this Guide for State Contact Information.) States, in turn, are expected to include tribal representatives in the development of State ELGs.
- Tribes are encouraged to participate in State efforts to implement the early learning guidelines, particularly specific training or other technical assistance resources that the State may make available. Tribes could take the lead in developing culturally relevant implementation strategies and tools for tribal child care programs.

Reminder:

Tribes are not required to develop ELGs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Tribes are encouraged to plan professional development strategies that take into consideration the full range of child care provider settings.
- Tribes should consider aligning their professional development activities with their State's Early Learning Guidelines to ensure that tribal child care providers have the skills necessary to prepare children for school.
- In many tribal communities, Tribal Colleges and Universities are a valuable resource for professional development opportunities, including distance learning. Tribes are encouraged to consult with Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other local higher education institutions, as appropriate, as they design their professional development strategies. (See www.aihec.org for a list of Tribal Colleges and Universities)

Reminders:

Tribes are not required to develop a comprehensive professional development plan.

Non-Exempt Tribes (those with annual CCDF grant awards of \$500,000 or more) are reminded that no less than 4 percent of their funds must be spent on "quality" activities, which may include professional development activities.

COORDINATION

- Tribes have requirements in their two-year CCDF plans to coordinate the delivery of services with other tribal, Federal, State, and local child care, early childhood development programs, and before and after-school care services.
- For example, Tribes could coordinate with Head Start and Early Head Start programs; TANF; 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs; Bureau of Indian Affairs school programs; and the local school systems' before and after-school program(s) in their efforts to offer professional development opportunities to the full range of providers.

Reminder:

Indian children are dually eligible to receive CCDF services from the Tribe or State. Tribes should coordinate with their State CCDF program to maximize services available to all eligible Indian families. (See pages 11-16 of this Guide for State Contact Information.)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do Tribal CCDF grantees have to implement *Good Start, Grow Smart*?

No. The Child Care Bureau's *Good Start, Grow Smart* (GSGS) priorities — Early Learning Guidelines, Professional Development, and Program Coordination — are not currently required. However, many tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grantees are very involved in planning and carrying out GSGS strategies as a part of providing and helping parents access quality and affordable child care services. The two-year Tribal CCDF Preprint Plan submitted on July 1, 2003 did not require grantees to respond to the GSGS Initiative.

2. Do States have to implement GSGS?

Although State CCDF grantees are not mandated to implement the GSGS priorities, they did have to describe their progress and planning in developing Early Learning Guidelines in their last CCDF plan submission. States also had to address if and how they are creating a professional development plan and coordinating with other early childhood programs.

3. How does GSGS impact Tribes?

Many tribal CCDF leaders have noted that the Early Learning Guidelines developed and implemented by the States will impact their Tribes' children if and when they enter the public schools. In light of this, some Tribes have asked the Child Care Bureau to encourage States to reach out to tribal CCDF administrators to ensure that there is tribal input into the development and implementation of the Early Learning Guidelines. Some Tribes have seen the GSGS Professional Development priority as opening the way for more collaboration with the States around provider and early educator training. Most Tribes are already addressing the GSGS Program Coordination priority, as a way to leverage resources and carry out a quality CCDF program.

4. What are Early Learning Guidelines?

Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs), or content standards, describe what children should know, understand, and be able to do in a variety of learning domains. *GSGS* asked States to specifically address language, literacy, and mathematical skills of children ages 3-5 but many States have developed guidelines that address other domains of development, such as social-emotional development and physical development. Some States have also developed guidelines that address children birth to age 5.

5. Are ELGs Voluntary?

All States have been asked to develop ELGs for children ages 3-5, but the use of ELGs at the program level is voluntary, unless required by the State.

6. Should Tribes develop their own Early Learning Guidelines or use their States' guidelines?

Tribes can choose to do either. However, Tribes may want to take an active role in the development of their State's ELGs if they are now being developed or revised so that the needs and perspective of tribal children and families are met. If a State has already developed guidelines, Tribes can participate in planning strategies to implement the ELGs in the full range of early care and education settings.

7. Are any Tribes involved in developing their States' ELGs?

Yes. Tribes in Idaho, Oklahoma and Washington have representatives on their States' Early Learning Guidelines development committees or task forces.

8. How can our Tribe get involved in developing the State's ELGs?

Contact your State's Early Learning Guidelines contact person listed in the State Contact Information on pages 11-16 of this Guide.

9. What if our State's ELGs are already developed and don't reflect our Tribe's culture or language?

Many States that have existing ELGs are currently revising or updating them. It's a good idea to contact your State's ELGs contact person (see pages 11-16 of this Guide for State Contact Information), to explore ways that the Guidelines can be more relevant to your Tribe. As stated in question 6, Tribes could take an active role in the planning of strategies to implement the Guidelines (Oklahoma Tribal Child Care programs are an example of this approach), or some Tribes may develop their own culturally relevant approaches to the implementation of the State's ELGs.

10. How are tribal Head Start programs involved with GSGS?

GSGS has some specific goals for all Head Start programs that relate to strengthening Head Start, especially around early literacy and program accountability. GSGS provides a good opportunity for tribal CCDF grantees to collaborate with Head Start around early literacy and training efforts.

11. With which programs should our tribal CCDF coordinate, and how should we coordinate?

It is really up to your Tribe to think through what will be most beneficial for your tribal community. As a start, GSGS calls for coordinating at least four early childhood programs, such as CCDF, Head Start, TANF, programs in the public schools, and others. The tribal CCDF plan preprint already requires coordination with other tribal, federal, State, and local child care, early childhood development, and before and after-school programs.

12. What is the *GSGS* definition of a professional development plan?

Professional development is defined as systems of training and instruction developed for the purpose of improving the preparation and ongoing development of child care providers. States are encouraged to develop systems of professional development that are comprehensive and aligned with the ELGs. The plan can also include those training activities offered through the federal government, such as the CCDF Tribal Cluster Trainings and National American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference, and ACF Regional Office tribal child care meetings.

13. Do we need to develop our own professional development plan, or can we be a part of the State's system?

Many tribal grantees have professional development plans in place that take advantage of training opportunities available through the States. It is up to each tribal grantee to decide how to approach professional development based upon the types of care they provide, the needs of the providers, available resources, and the goals of the grantee. Tribes should consider aligning their professional development activities with their State's ELGs to ensure that tribal child care providers have the skills necessary to prepare children for school.

14. What future *GSGS* technical assistance is available to our Tribe?

ACF's annual American Indian and Alaska Native Child Care Conference will continue to focus on the *GSGS* priorities. The 2004 CCDF Tribal Cluster Trainings will provide support in the area of program coordination and collaboration. ACF Regional Office tribal child care meetings will also include technical assistance on the *GSGS* Initiative. Some States may also provide technical assistance around their *GSGS* efforts. Tribal grantees can also call the Tribal Child Care Technical Assistance Center's (TriTAC) Resource and Referral line (800-388-7670) for individual technical assistance.

State Contact Information

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Early learning guidelines available on the Web at <http://www.ade.az.gov/adult-ed/eces-standards.asp>

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Desired Results Developmental Profiles

(DRDPs for Children and Families)
Introductory Chapter and Table of Contents
available at:
http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/child_development/prek.htm

COLORADO

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Building Blocks to Colorado's Content Standards

are available on the Web at
http://www.cde.state.co.us/download/pdf/building_blocks4-26.pdf
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/docs/pdf/MathBB.pdf>

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Florida Partnership for School Readiness
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Performance Standards are available on the Web at
http://schoolreadiness.org/lc/lc_performance.asp

HAWAII

Contact

GoodBeginningsAlliance@readiness.goodbeginnings.org

Hawaii Preschool Content Standards for Center Based Programs are available through <http://www.goodbeginnings.org>

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Idaho's Early Learning Standards is available on the Web at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/content/early.asp>

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Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children is available on the Web at <http://www.doe.state.la.us/DOE/assessment/standards/PDFs/PrekStandards6-02-02.pdf>

MAINE

Early Childhood Learning Standards

Maine's *Learning Results: High Standards for All Students* is available on the Web at <http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/lres.htm>

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Early Childhood Program Standards/Massachusetts Curriculum Framework Pre-K-12 (draft)

is available on the Web at
http://www.doe.mass.edu/els/rfp_2001/71301.pdf

MICHIGAN

Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten through Second Grade

Michigan Department of Education
Office of School Excellence
Early Childhood and Parenting Program
608 W. Allegan
Lansing, MI 48933
http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6525_6530_6568-19459,00.html

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***Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of
Progress: A Resource Guide*** (ECIP) is avail-
able on the Web at
[http://www.education.state.mn.us/con-
tent/010859.pdf](http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/010859.pdf)

MISSISSIPPI

Laura Beth Hebler

Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum (2001)

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Reading, Early Childhood &
Language Arts
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PO Box 77
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Phone: 601-395-5798
[http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/ID/curricu-
lum/LAER/index.html](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/ID/curriculum/LAER/index.html)

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Missouri PreK Standards are available on
the Web at [http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fed-
prog/earlychild/PreK_Standards.html](http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fed-prog/earlychild/PreK_Standards.html)

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Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards Draft is available on the Web at <http://www.nevaeyc.org>

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Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality (University of New Mexico, Early Childhood Network) is available on the Web at <http://www.gisd.k12.nm.us/standards/preK/intro.htm>

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North Carolina Early Learning Standards Draft Document is available on the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/success/standards/fullstandards.pdf>

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Rhode Island Early Learning Standards is available on the Web at http://www.ridoe.net/child_family/earlychild/RI_Standards_Complete_Document.pdf

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South Carolina Curriculum Standards is available on the Web at http://www.mysc-schools.com/offices/cso/english_la/standards.cfm

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Texas Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines is available on the Web at www.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/early/prekguide.html

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Utah Early Childhood Standards is available on the Web at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/early/standards.htm>

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A Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Reading Writing Communication (Birth to 5 years) (OSP1) is available on the Web at <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/pubdocs/birth-to-5.pdf>

WISCONSIN

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Wyoming's Early Childhood Readiness Standards is available on the Web at <http://www.k12.wy.us/eqa/nca/pubs/standards/earlychild.pdf>

NOTE: Only those States with Tribal CCDF grantees are included. For a list of Tribal CCDF grantees, see <http://nccic.org/tribal/grantees.html>.

**This Guide was developed under PSC Contract Number 233-03-0021,
Task Order Number 2 for the U.S. Department of Health & Human
Services/Administration for Children and Families Child Care Bureau.**

March 2004

