



HHS Announces Centers of Excellence in Early Childhood



The Centers of Excellence program was established in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, and funds were appropriated in 2009. Ten Centers of Excellence are being designated for up to a five-year project period. Bonus grant awards of \$200,000 per year are being made to Early Head Start and Head Start grantees. Applicants had to be nominated by their Governor and will disseminate best practices to Head Start, Early Head Start and other early education programs.

Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity – Birmingham, AL

The overall goal of this center is improving the quality of early childhood care and education for young children in Alabama through project goals which include dissemination from and about the center's innovations, effectiveness, partnerships, and collaborations through visits, inquiries, requests for assistance or consultation, and through the creation of an Early Childhood Leadership Academy.

Clayton Educare Early Head Start – Denver, CO

Clayton Educare will build on its strengths by deeply embedding evidence-based practices into its programming and by sharing these with other programs. The areas of practice include a coaching model to improve the delivery of instruction and a model for delivering culturally relevant mental health services.

Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. – Owensboro, KY

Audubon will establish a Center of Excellence for Collaborative Practices focused on exemplary practices with 13 local school districts. These practices will result in improved child outcomes leading to school readiness.

YMCA of Central Maryland – Baltimore, MD

The YMCA will use a mentoring training model as well as create a community of practice to address challenges faced by fragile families and poor school readiness outcomes. The approaches include a training lab for teachers, in-house staffing for the Core Knowledge curriculum, and family service worker training leading to the NHSA Family Services Credential.

Baraga-Houghton-Keweenaw Child Development Board, Inc. – Houghton, MI

This center will improve the school readiness of thousands of children across Michigan through two goals: improving the quality of services of Head Start and other early childhood organizations in Michigan and expanding three national demonstration projects focused on family preservation, family wellness, and father involvement.

The Enola Group – Morganton, NC

This center will support other Early Head Start grantees in the implementation of evidence-based, home-based services through dissemination via Web-based learning modules, intensive onsite training at the model program, and follow-up training activities via distance technology.

Youth Development, Inc. – Albuquerque, NM

The center will expand use of the research-based *Tools of the Mind* curriculum to all of the agency's classrooms. The agency will improve opportunities for children who enter the program as monolingual Spanish speakers through a 50/50 model dual language program to a total of 27 classrooms. This will include the provision of *Sembrando Semillas* and *Parents as Partners* programs for parents.

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Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. – Dunkirk, NY

This center will augment current evidence-based approaches and implement culturally appropriate and established measures/assessments as a pathway to improving high-quality data management and analyses strategies.

Knox County Head Start – Mount Vernon, OH

The center will implement a program-wide approach to supporting and building children's social and emotional development through the use of *Conscious Discipline* for staff and families and will use the approaches of *Conscious Discipline* to continue program integration, birth to age eight. The approach will be shared with other early education programs and with school partners to create a community-wide model for serving children and families.

Private Industry Council of Westmoreland & Fayette, Inc. – Greensburg, PA

Using the *Incredible Years* to educate parents and early childhood educators, this center will assist children, parents, and early education programs in preventing, reducing, and treating aggression and other inappropriate behaviors by promoting children's emotional, social, and academic competence.