

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D).

(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;

(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (D)(1):

- To the extent the State has developed a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that meets the elements in criterion (D)(1), submit:
 - The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
 - Documentation that the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework addresses the elements outlined in the definition of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework in Definitions (section III) and is

designed to promote children's learning and development and improve outcomes.

Overview of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials

Florida has intentionally and methodically built a comprehensive professional development system, *Steps to Success*, with one major objective: make accessible high quality professional development for every early childhood educator statewide to facilitate optimal child learning and developmental outcomes. *The foundation and framework of this state-of-the-art professional development system, the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and a progression of credentials is fully implemented.* With RTT-ELC investment, Florida is poised to launch the nation's foremost professional development system that will serve as a model for improving the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of early childhood educator professional development while advancing student learning and healthy child development outcomes. Florida's Plan for Transformative Reform includes: *1) embedding Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners (hereafter referred to as Core Competencies) into Florida's entire early childhood educator training and education offerings to develop a common, statewide knowledge and use of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; 2) building a robust quality assurance system to ensure the Framework promotes children's learning and development; 3) evaluating Florida's professional development system for linkage to child outcomes; 4) expanding Florida's Steps to Success Career Pathway to ensure each step's alignment with the Core Competencies, its appropriateness for serving children with high needs, and its availability in English and Spanish; and 5) continuing Florida's successful stakeholder engagement strategies.*

Steps to Success, currently being piloted by 7 early learning coalitions (Miami-Dade/Monroe, Pinellas, Palm Beach, Southwest Florida, Brevard, Sarasota, and Escambia, a mix of large, medium, small, urban, and rural counties) with statewide implementation anticipated to be completed by 2013. It has the following components to support a high quality early childhood educator workforce:

- *Core Competencies* for every role in the field: Florida is a national leader in developing workforce knowledge and skill competencies for Practitioners, ECE Directors, Trainers, Technical Assistance Specialists, Career Advisors, Targeted Competencies for Inclusion,

Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialists, and Afterschool Practitioners (available at www.flstepstosuccess.com).

- ***The Steps to Success Career Pathway***: Florida’s pathway (see Appendix (D)(1)-1) provides a coordinated, sequential, and articulated route that leads to qualifications, credentials, or college degrees for the early childhood educator workforce through three pathway options: formal (college credit coursework), informal (non-college credit coursework) and hybrid (a combination of coursework designed to assist practitioners with moving from the informal to the formal pathway).
- ***Career Pathway Training (CPT)***: Comprehensive, evidence-based training standards ensure a robust quality assurance framework that uses the Outcome-Driven Training framework and CPT to make sure training builds not only knowledge but a transference of skills into the early childhood educator workplace.
- ***Career Pathway Training Modules***: These modules, 315 hours of training in the competencies (45 hours in each of the 7 core knowledge areas), ensure high quality instruction, intentionality in the use and understanding of the Core Competencies for Practitioners, and form the foundation for further pathway articulation.
- ***Job-embedded Communities of Practice***: Classroom practice improvement is supported through job-embedded exchanges involving coaches, directors, and peers with the goal of working together to enhance child outcomes.
- ***Steps to Success Registry***: The REGISTRY on-line information application, enhanced in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families as part of their current Child Care and Training Application (CCTA) and developed to the rigorous data standard specifications of the National Registry Alliance, supports professional development of early childhood educators, houses workforce data, guides career pathway options, and provides validation of professional development records.

Steps to Success is Florida’s initiative to promote, standardize, document, and validate gains in workforce knowledge within a competency framework. With RTT-ELC support, Florida will enhance these efforts, develop a fully realized progression of credentials along the career pathway, and serve as a national model.

Florida’s Workforce and Competency Framework, Core Competencies, is a comprehensive framework that defines standards for high-quality early education practices. Developed collaboratively by the Early Care and Education Professional Development Initiative (PDI) Steering Committee (formed in 2007), the Core Competencies define the knowledge and skill standards early childhood educators should know and be able to do to facilitate child growth and development and partner effectively with families. Committee members include: Office of Early Learning, Department of Education’s Part B and Early Learning Offices, Department of Health’s Part C (Early Steps Office), and Department of Children and Families’ Child Care Program Office; Head Start/Early Head Start; higher education state colleges and universities;

private-for-profit, faith-based and family child care provider associations; state NAEYC affiliate organizations; early learning coalitions; children's services councils, and training and technical assistance organizations. The group garnered broad-scale input from workgroups and focus groups of teachers, directors, administrators, trainers, and other stakeholders; the Florida Early Childhood Framework; and Expanding Opportunities (an initiative focused on professional development system building to promote inclusion of children with disabilities into high quality early childhood environments facilitated by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center).

The competencies address expectations across a continuum of training, education, and experience, ranging from entry-level early childhood educators to those with extensive experience, and/or certifications, and degrees. Each subject area describes the knowledge and skills necessary to work with children birth through age five as well as their families. The information provides practical application for a wide variety of settings and programs. Core Competencies are aligned with the Early Learning and Developmental Standards (see Appendix (D)(1)-2; see Section C for more details on the Standards), and provide specific guidance for early childhood educators working with children with disabilities and English-language learners.

Review of the Core Competencies included incorporating several state and national standards.^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8} Similarly comprehensive processes, engaging subject matter experts on each

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth through Age 8. Washington, DC: author.

² National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2007). NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria. Washington, DC: author.

³ Council for Professional Recognition. (2007). Preschool Competency Standards. Washington, DC: author.

⁴ Council for Professional Recognition. (2010). Infant/toddler Competency Standards. Washington, DC: author.

⁵ Zero to Three. (2010). National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative: Core Knowledge and Competencies. Washington, DC: author.

⁶ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2001). Early Childhood/Generalist Standards. Arlington, VA: author.

⁷ National Association for Family Child Care. (2006). NAFCC Accreditation Standards. Salt Lake City, UT: author.

⁸ Division for Early Childhood of Council for Exceptional Children. (1993). Personnel Standards for Early Education and Early Intervention. Missoula, MT: author.

topic while pulling from national research and best practices, were used to develop Core Competencies for ECE Directors, Trainer/Training Qualifications and Standards, Technical Assistance Specialists, Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialists, Career Advisors, and Afterschool Practitioners.

The Core Competencies for early childhood educators include:

- Culturally, linguistically, and ability-based appropriate strategies in:
 - Health, Safety, and Nutrition
 - Child Development and Learning
 - Curriculum Building Family and Community Relationships
- Teaching and Learning Environments and Interactions, including effective use of data to guide instruction, practices to support literacy and mathematics development, and behavior guidance strategies to reduce challenging behaviors and promote positive social development
- Observing, Documenting, Screening, and Assessing to Support Young Children and their Families, including comprehensive assessment systems
- Professionalism

Goal 1 for (D)(1)(a): *Embedding Core Competencies into Florida’s entire early childhood educator training and education offerings to develop a common, statewide knowledge and use of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.*

Research findings underscore the link between practitioner skill/effectiveness and specialized training based on a set of core competencies providing knowledge and skill standards, which facilitate child growth and development.^{9 10 11 12} Florida aligned its Core Competencies with existing training completion points (e.g., child care licensure training modules, National CDA, Associate and Bachelor Early Childhood Educator degree standards) during development (see Appendix (D)(1)-3).

Moving this alignment to embedded use of the competencies is the next goal. Activities

⁹ Burchinal, P. et al. (2009). Early Care and Education Quality and Child Outcomes. OPRE Research to Policy Brief #1.

¹⁰ Fukkink, R.G. & Lont, A. (2007). Does Training Matter? A Meta-analysis and Review of Caregiver Training Studies. Early Childhood Research Quarterly 22(3): 294-311.

¹¹ National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Council. Washington, DC: National Reading Panel.

¹² Clements, D.H. & Sarama, J. (2008). Experimental Evaluation of the Effects of a Research-based Preschool Mathematics Curriculum. American Educational Research Journal 45: 443-494.

will include revision of training opportunities on the informal career pathway, serving as a catalyst to implement the recommendations of the Florida Child Care Standards and Improvements Workgroup (see Appendix (D)(1)-4). To ensure child care providers have access to a qualified, ready workforce, state-mandated training for child care licensure be revised.

Changes will include:

Current Child Care Licensure Training Requirements	Anticipated Modifications
40 clock hours of training	40 clock hours of training aligned to Core Competencies, Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and TQRIS using Teaching Excellence Strategy
5 clock hours of Early Literacy training	5 clock hours of Early Literacy training aligned to Core Competencies, Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and TQRIS using Teaching Excellence Strategy
Florida Staff Credential – 1 staff with Credential for every 20 children	Credential alignment to Core Competencies, Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and TQRIS using Teaching Excellence Strategy
10 clock hours annually	10 clock hours annually aligned with Core Competencies

The revisions, planned during 2012-13, will utilize the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* (see (D)(2)); a series of short, high quality, web-based tutorials and technical assistance to support established training entities, such as early childhood educator associations, early learning coalitions, and other training entities. Revisions to the informal career pathway will significantly enhance content and integrate cutting edge technology.

Florida has a strong State College System with 27 of the 28 state community colleges providing some type of Associate's degree in ECE and 13 providing some type of Bachelor's degrees in ECE; however 12 have no articulation agreements in place to move early childhood educators from Associate's to Bachelor's degrees. Through RTT-ELC funding, Florida will create a universal course catalog across all higher education institutions and degrees to ensure comprehensive alignment between degree programs, early childhood education coursework, Core Competencies, and the Early Learning and Developmental Standards. Through partnerships to include Palm Beach State College, University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, the

Florida Distance Learning Consortium, and the FCCECEN, technical assistance (via webinars, web-based tutorials, document development, data warehousing, and peer-to-peer exchange) will be available during 2012-13.

Goal 2 for (D)(1)(a): *Build a robust quality assurance system to ensure the Framework promotes children’s learning and development.*

Outcome-Driven Training (ODT) design affords Florida the opportunity to assess the linkage between Core Competency training and the promotion of children’s learning and development (ODT and Florida’s Training/Trainer Approval System, see Appendix (D)(1)-5). ODT is supported by backward design theory.¹³ The success of the backward design method has been cited in studies and used in university-level research on teacher education.^{14 15} Unlike traditional training design, which focuses on content delivery, ODT addresses observable and influential behavior changes that impact classroom practices and creates meaningful results for children. The ODT framework will be utilized in efficacy testing of the training modules, and an evaluation of its effectiveness in promoting children’s learning and development will be completed in 2013.

To date, 100 facilitators have been trained in the delivery of ODT, providing a strong foundation for Florida’s training/trainer quality assurance series. Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC includes 3 full-time trainers to build a cadre of 1,500 ODT train-the-trainers by 2014, ensuring sustainability of the quality assurance system.

Goal 3 for (D)(1)(a): *Evaluate Florida’s professional development system for linkage to child outcomes.*

An overall evaluation of the linkage between professional development and children’s outcomes will be completed by third-party evaluation study, as part of the work of the Florida Early Childhood Research and Evaluation Committee (see Core Focus Area (C)(2)). The

¹³ Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). Understanding by Design. Expanded 2nd Ed. USA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

¹⁴ Rose, D.H., & Meyer, A. (2002). Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

¹⁵ Rose, D.H., & Meyer, A. (2002). Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

REGISTRY application database will assist in evaluating the professional development system for linkage to child outcomes. It will allow early childhood educators and trainers the ability to build a detailed list of professional accomplishments including educational and work history (See Core Focus Area E-2 for further information on the REGISTRY application).

Goal 4 for (D)(1)(b): *Expand Florida’s Steps to Success Career Pathway to ensure each step’s alignment with the Core Competencies, its appropriateness for serving children with high needs, and its availability in English and Spanish.*

Florida has a robust and inclusive Career Pathway. With RTT-ELC support, additional steps and opportunities for pathway advancement will be developed. Although there is not definitive evidence to define the optimal education and training levels required to impact child outcomes in early care and education settings, it is clear that early childhood educators with specialized training and education are more effective in enhancing children’s learning and development.¹⁶ Of the 55,000+ early childhood educators in the approximately 23,000 child care programs (including licensed centers, licensed-exempt, licensed and registered family child care homes) across Florida, less than 4% report college degrees (303 with Bachelor’s degrees and 1,748 with Associate’s degrees according to the Department of Children and Families’ Child Care Program Office training database). In the nation’s largest Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK), with more than 165,000 children participating during 2010-11, only 29% of Florida’s VPK early childhood educators held a Bachelor’s degree and 9% had an Associate’s degree.¹⁷ And although Florida’s Head Start grantees are making good progress on meeting professional development/college degree goals (30% with Bachelor’s or graduate ECE degrees and 17% with Associate ECE degrees),¹⁸ many continue to struggle with access to and completion of degree programs. Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC Funds includes building a strong and robust career pathway that supports all early childhood educators, most of whom enter the profession on the informal pathway, in advancing their skills and knowledge through both informal and formal training and education opportunities.

¹⁶ Whitebook, M. & Ryan, S. (2011). Degrees in Context: Asking the Right Questions about Preparing Skilled and Effective Teachers of Young Children. National Institute for Early Education Research, 22.

¹⁷ Children’s Movement. (2011). Voluntary prekindergarten program. Miami, FL; author.

¹⁸ Center for Law and Social Policy. (2010). Florida Head Start by the Numbers. Washington, DC: author.

Activities to support this goal include creation of an Advanced Professional Certificate (APC) with an Infant/Toddler and a Preschool Specialization appropriate for center-based and family early childhood educators by 2013. The new certificate will utilize recently developed *Career Pathway Training Modules*, aligned to *Core Competencies*, and delivered using the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* (see D(2)). The APC will be available on both the informal and formal career pathways (providing options for college credit and meeting the requirements for PELL grant scholarships), and training modules will be available in both English and Spanish. Movement to the advanced credential will be voluntary, but incentives will be provided via provision of 2,000 scholarships and incentive payments (\$300 per person) for credential completion.

To support the increasing number of early childhood educators in the formal pathway and provide additional recognition points on the career pathway, the Florida Plan for RTT-ELC includes expansion of the certificate option (with a range of 9 to 15 credit hours depending on the specialty area) in Florida's state colleges. Currently 7 colleges use this option, providing a certificate in preschool, infant/toddler, child care management, and/or special needs. With RTT-ELC support, the certificate option will be available in at least two-thirds of Florida's ECE degree-granting state colleges by the end of 2013. Special attention will be directed to embedding supports into all certificate coursework for serving children with high needs.

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) recently launched a new degree, the Bachelor in Early Care and Education (BECE), a multi-disciplinary degree designed specifically for early childhood educators, aligned with Core Competencies, and infused with courses to support serving children with high needs. The degree was designed, in partnership with Palm Beach State College, for early childhood educators whose goal is to remain in the field as early learning classroom teachers, early learning coaches, career advisors, technical assistance specialists, infant and toddler developmental specialists, and directors. As a Capstone Degree, the BECE allows the student to transfer all 60 credits of their Associate's ECE degree and complete the remainder of their general education degree requirements the last two years of the program, while working in the field. Two state colleges, Miami-Dade College and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSC), are offering the BECE, mirroring the FAU program. To encourage other colleges to offer the BECE, experts in the degree development will assist other colleges in replicating the program during 2012-14. Additional on-line coursework and learning objectives

will be developed for on-line delivery.

Florida has long been recognized nationally as the leader in articulation. The State's Common Course numbering system, statewide 2 + 2 articulation agreement, standardized prerequisites, and mutually supportive on-line student advising system (FACTS.org) have been the models that other states have adopted. As an example, there is clarity throughout the state as to the courses needed at both state colleges and universities to enter traditional teacher certification programs. With the development of the new BECE, commonality in the credentials and degrees that articulate into that degree must be addressed, as it has for other fields. Work will be completed during 2012-13 to reach an agreement on a common core of seven early childhood education courses, supportive of the seven core knowledge domains in the Core Competencies, to be offered in the lower level.

Goal 5 for (D)(1)(c): *Continue Florida's successful stakeholder engagement strategies.*

The PDI Steering Committee has been successful in engaging postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers to align professional development opportunities with the Core Competencies. The committee will continue to serve in an advisory capacity for Florida's *Steps to Success*. With RTT-ELC support, broader stakeholder engagement will be accomplished with specific targeting to engage those with expertise and knowledge in serving families with high needs. Florida's success in using social media will be expanded as a simple, cost-effective way to engage and inform early childhood educators in both English and Spanish throughout the project time period.

(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (*e.g.*, scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (D)(2)(c)(1) and (D)(2)(c)(2).

Overview of Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Drawing from the most effective practices in the field, research on adult learning and the latest technology advances, Florida has substantially implemented an infrastructure to build **high quality Early Childhood Educators** by improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities through **Steps to Success**. This emerging professional development system was conceptualized and built through a collaborative process engaging Florida's key early learning stakeholders detailed in Section D1. Through this process, Florida ensured stakeholders worked together to design and build a system in which they have ownership, investment, and a commitment to implementation.

With RTT-ELC funding, Florida will be able to complete its system design and fully launch what has the potential to be the nation's most effective and far-reaching professional development system for early childhood educators. ***Florida's vision is the creation of a revolutionary, comprehensive, sustainable, cost-effective, high quality professional development system that is available, accessible, and affordable to all early childhood educators. Florida will use this vision to further develop our Plan for Transformative Reform – the Teaching Excellence Strategy.*** This strategy includes cutting-edge and interactive on-line learning, accessible to all, and developed specifically for early childhood educators with standards-based content, job-embedded communities of practice involving coaches and peer-to-peer exchange, and a learning management system. Part of this strategy includes the development of Early Learning On-line Training Modules by the University of Florida (UF). The on-line modules are stored in what is referred to as the LEAF system. The next step in the project is to integrate the LEAF system with the REGISTRY application. This and other strategies will make training widely available for early childhood educators in Florida, build strong supports for children with high needs, providing dynamic, new ways for higher education to partner with early learning coalitions, Head Start/Early Head Start grantees, and other professional development organizations. Florida's Plan for Transformative Reform includes the following goals: ***1) providing statewide access to Steps to Success professional development opportunities through the Teaching Excellence Strategy, delivering Core Competencies content through in-person courses, on-line courses, and communities of practices; 2) building upon existing director/administrator support efforts to create the Florida Directors' Leadership Institute; 3) enhancing state technical assistance services through the development of a Technical Assistance Specialist Credential; 4) expanding incentives and supports that promote professional improvement, advancement, and retention; and 5) building participation in the Registry to ensure comprehensive workforce data and reporting.***

There is not definitive evidence to identify the optimal education and training levels required to impact child outcomes in early care and education settings. Whitebook and Ryan (2011) note in their meta-analysis that to understand the relationship between early childhood educator's specialized education and child outcomes, several pieces of evidence need to be further developed. Florida will actively assess these relationships to inform our statewide

professional development system and make contributions nationally for the understanding of teaching and caring skill development of early childhood educators. First, research shows alignment is needed between early childhood educator competencies and adult learning principles with informal and formal specialized ECE training, education curricula, and course requirements. Evaluations of the content and quality of preparation programs need to provide evidence of effectiveness and place more attention on the adult work environment and adult well-being in the workplace. An additional area for focus relates to the ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity of the workforce. **As recommended by national experts, Florida's Plan**

for RTT-ELC:

- Supports research and policy to connect what we expect in terms of early childhood educator competencies with credentials and the quality of the work environment *via linkage between the Core Competencies, Career Pathway, Training Modules, ODT, and Florida's TQRIS,*
- Revamps the content and structure of early childhood educator higher education and professional development to include more practice-based opportunities and identify issues of equity *via the combination of content instruction and job-embedded communities of practice methodology in the Teaching Excellence Strategy*
- Strengthens the requirements for higher education coursework to ensure attainment of the necessary knowledge and skills as identified in the Core Competencies *via alignment supports and resources*
- Helps Florida continue to build a robust new longitudinal data system to track workforce demographics and educational characteristics *via the Steps to Success Registry and supported by the statewide REGISTRY application with a goal of linking the REGISTRY application with Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)*
- Expands workforce research focused on the effectiveness of informal and formal higher education programs *via ODT quality assurance and the Florida Early Learning Research and Evaluation Committee*

Goal 1 for (D)(2): Statewide implementation of the Teaching Excellence Strategy

Florida's Early Learning *Teaching Excellence Strategy* includes the coordinated delivery of the following core components: *Career Pathway Training* (CPT) both online and classroom college coursework provided, job-embedded communities of practice, smart technology and distance learning supports, and career advising, linked through the *Career Hub*, a learning management system. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC includes moving beyond the pilot in 2012 of the CPT to statewide implementation of *Steps to Success* through a partnership with Palm Beach State College, the UF Lastinger Center for Learning, and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium and the FCCECEN. Because the research indicates that communities of practice

strengthen the transfer of learning to the workplace,¹⁹ Florida has made a commitment to infuse this approach into non-credit trainings and identified college credit coursework.

A community of practice consists of a group of teachers and administrators who agree to routinely work together to produce improved student outcomes in the field. Florida's model, which includes job-embedded communities of practice, is based on the state and nationally recognized (e.g., 2011 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education from the Association of Teacher Educators; 2004 and 2011 outstanding Staff Development Practices by the Florida Association for Staff Development; Nate Gage Award from Teaching and Teacher Education Journal) work at the UF Lastinger Center for Learning. A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of the model with findings specific to its positive impact on children with high needs.^{20 21} Through job-embedded professional development, teachers and center directors, with outside expertise and facilitation, learn new knowledge and skills as it relates to the children and context in their own programs. Unlike traditional professional preparation programs, early childhood educators learn to teach within the early learning classroom context. Group members establish and publicly state learning goals, help each other think about better teaching practices, look closely at curriculum and student work, identify issues that affect student learning and healthy child development, and collaboratively assess student work. A job-embedded community of practice is facilitated by a coach who helps the group build a sense of trust to learn and master techniques that sharpen self-insight, promote creativity and rigor, support improvements in pedagogy and content knowledge, and exert positive pressure and candid, usable peer feedback.

Comprehensive one-stop on-line Career Advising will be included in the ***Teaching Excellence Strategy*** to guide users through the selection of career goals and pathways for obtaining them. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC will build upon FACTS.org, a college advising website in use statewide developed by Florida Department of Education. Other existing career

¹⁹ Pianta, Robert C., Andrew J. Mashburn, Jason T. Downer, Bridget K. Hamre, and Laura Justice. (2008). Effects of Web-mediated Professional Development Resources on Teacher-child Interactions in Pre-kindergarten Classrooms. Early Childhood Research Quarterly 23:431-451.

²⁰ Adams, A. & Dana, N. (Eds.) (2005). Actualizing Job Embedded/Teacher Professional Development and Teacher Inquiry in High Poverty/High Need Schools in the State of Florida: A Report on the Impact of Year One of the Lastinger Center Teacher Fellows Project. Gainesville, FL: Lastinger Center Clearinghouse.

²¹ Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A Review of Research on the Impact of Professional Learning Communities on Teaching Practice and Student Learning. Teaching and Teacher Education, 24, 80-91.

advising resources developed specifically for early childhood educators, including the Core Competencies for Career Advisors and Career Compass (an on-line career advising process), will be integrated into the system. A universal registration process for distance learning courses among Florida state colleges and universities—the first of its kind in the country—is currently under development. Early childhood educators statewide will be able access the website and successfully:

- submit a registry practitioner or trainer application
- find and register for career pathway trainings
- apply for different academic scholarship and financial awards opportunities
- search available career opportunities through the jobs listing board
- explore membership and leadership in various local, state and national early childhood and afterschool professional associations
- access and download the *Florida Career Compass*, a guide for career pathway self-advisement, for a concise explanation of how to complete key professional milestones.

Also integral to career advising is the *Career Hub*, an on-line mechanism for the coordination of professional development planning among faculty, coaches, career advisors, other technical assistance specialists, directors, and early childhood educators. Cloud and smart technology supports will be provided via an in-kind donation (estimated at \$5 per early childhood educator per month) from Microsoft Live@edu hosted, co-branded communication and collaboration services including email, email storage, calendars, document sharing, instant messaging, video chat, and mobile email. This service will continue after RTT-ELC at no charge to Florida's early childhood educators.

Coordination of these state-of-art supports, Microsoft Live@edu, the Career Advising website, the Career Hub, and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, with *Steps to Success Registry*, *Early Learning Information System*, and *Platinum* (see Focus Area (E)(2) for additional information) will be accomplished through an interface that allows coordinated enrollment and data transfer. All participants in the *Teaching Excellence Strategy* will be enrolled in the *Steps to Success Registry*, quickly building a robust, real-time, workforce data system.

To ensure a successful implementation of the *Teaching Excellence Strategy*, the *National Research Implementation Network at the University of North Carolina* will be consulted. Florida's third-party evaluation (see Section E) will also provide essential

information regarding the impact of Florida's professional development strategies on classroom practices and children's outcomes, identifying needed changes in investments and approaches.

Goal 2 of (D)(2): Creation of the Directors' Leadership Institute

Because directors drive the success of any quality enhancement effort,²² the *Steps to Success Teaching Excellence Strategy* includes the development of a Directors' Leadership Institute. These efforts will include a strong component focused on relationship building based on the Theory of Emotional Intelligence.²³ The role of leaders as facilitators of relationships is also supported by work done at the Wellesley Center for Women.²⁴ Florida's current Level 1 Director Credential for licensure provides a common knowledge base but leaves many directors and family child care providers unprepared for managing the complex needs of an early learning program. The Institute will incorporate similar efforts in Miami-Dade (The Early Childhood Administrators Institute) and Hillsborough Counties (Early Childhood Leadership Center) and build upon their partnerships to provide:

- Alignment of Levels 1, 2, and 3 of the Florida Director Credential with the Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Directors; and development of additional options and improved access to ECE Director College-credit Certificates by 2013
- Web-based tutorials on staff development, including *Steps to Success*, Core Competencies for Practitioners, Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, Quality Counts, Florida's Comprehensive Assessment System; Florida's Focus on Five Protective Factors; Florida's "Everybody's a Teacher" Initiative; accreditation options; and a variety of business topics (e.g., budgeting, human resources, technology skills, legal issues, team building, wage scales, working with high need children and families)
- Leadership, mentoring and coaching, and program assessment training
- Access to leadership retreats, cloud and smart technology applications developed to maximize coaching and mentoring opportunities
- Connection to a clearinghouse of resource, the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, a repository of professional development resources

Special attention will be directed to including opportunities and resources for family child care providers to participate in the Institute and gain access to advanced credential options. This work will be coordinated through partnerships with those that have strong connections with early learning directors and administrators such as provider associations, the Florida Head Start Association, and early learning coalitions. The Directors' Institute will also be coordinated in

²² McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership. (2008). *Who's Caring for the Kids?* Wheelings, IL: author.

²³ Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

²⁴ Wellesley Center for Women. (2008). *Gen Y Goes to School*. Research & Action Report. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College.

conjunction with leadership training for Public School Principals through Florida's RTT for K-12.

Goal 3 of (D)(2): Creation of Technical Assistance Specialist Credential

Technical Assistance Specialists are essential to Florida's *Steps to Success*. The Office of Early Learning houses state-level technical assistance specialists who specialize in infant/toddler, preschool, inclusion, and school-age issues, and support early learning coalition staff providing technical assistance to early childhood educators at the local level. Greater formalization of these roles will maximize their impact on increasing student learning, development, and outcomes. Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC includes development of a Technical Assistance Specialist Credential. The credential will include training on *Florida Core Competencies for Technical Assistance Specialists*, *Targeted Competencies for Specialists Supporting Inclusion, Early Learning and Developmental Standards*, *Steps to Success*, *TQRIS*, *Florida's Comprehensive Assessment System*, *Florida's Focus on the Five Protective Factors*, *Florida's "Everybody's a Teacher" Initiative*, web-based system resources (e.g., *Career Hub*, *PLATINUM*, *THE EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM*), mentoring and coaching. Special attention will ensure the credential prepares recipients to provide support in family child care settings, center-based settings, and facilitate improvements targeting children with high needs.

To ensure a strength-based approach to diversity and inclusiveness, the credential will also include *Leading for Racial Equity* training, a research and outcomes-based model for heightening awareness and skills of professionals. The National Equity Project has demonstrated success in improving early childhood educator effectiveness and student achievement among populations of vulnerable children, dramatically reducing achievement gaps in partner schools with high rates of children living in poverty and English-language learners.²⁵ Specialists will have access to cloud and smart phone applications developed to maximize coaching and mentoring opportunities and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, a repository of professional development resources. Scholarships and incentive payments for credential completion (\$300 per person) will be provided for 500 participants to build a sustainable foundation of specialists. The Technical Assistance Specialist Credential will be developed in the framework of *Teaching Excellence Strategy* and be available in 2013. An evaluation of the

²⁵ National Equity Project. (2010). *Partner Schools Closing Gaps*. Oakland, CA: author.

efficacy of the credential will be conducted and reported by 2015.

Goal 4 for (D)(2): Expansion of incentives and supports for professional development

Florida invests \$3 million of its annual budget, matched by local dollars, to fund the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood ® Scholarship program. There were approximately 3,500 participants during 2009-10 with 42% working toward an Associate's degree and 34% working toward a Florida Staff Credential.²⁶ Scholarships (approximately \$2.9 million in supports) are also provided through partnerships between early learning coalitions and other local organizations. Children's Services Councils (CSC), local tax-supported agencies, are major partners in 8 counties in providing scholarships and professional development supports through local QRIS pilot systems. Overwhelmingly, early childhood educators enrolled in college credit coursework as part of these partnerships report that the scholarships were a primary reason that they enrolled in and continued their education.

To meet Goal 4 of (D)(2) by expanding incentives and support for professional development, Florida's Plan for RTT-ELC focuses on the expansion of scholarships. The availability of scholarships will increase the number of highly-skilled early childhood educators (including child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, VPK, and other public school programs) with advanced credentials on the informal career pathway, and Associate's and Bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education on the formal career pathway. An infusion of scholarships and incentive payments will also build sustainability for *Steps for Success* through the creation of mentors, coaches, and Technical Assistance Specialists among practitioners working in the field. Scholarships and incentive payments for credential completion will be awarded to 2,000 Advanced Certificate Program participants, 500 Director Credential participants, 500 Technical Assistance Specialists Credential participants, and a minimum of 300 Associate or Bachelor degree seekers. Scholarship recipients will be required to commit to serve as a mentor or coach for a minimum of 3 years.

Florida recognizes the need to sustain and expand the availability of scholarships beyond their current availability through T.E.A.C.H. and local partnerships. Each public college and university in Florida has an independent Foundation, with a major focus on raising funds for scholarships. These foundations take advantage of state policy for legislatively appropriated

²⁶ The Children's Forum. (2010). T.E.A.C.H. annual report. Tallahassee, FL: author.

matching funds designed to encourage private donations for scholarships. Budget considerations have put most matching programs on hold but the Florida Legislature continues to support matching funds for “first generation in college” students (endowments of \$16 million are currently available), benefiting many early childhood educators. Even without the matching funds, the individual College and University foundations have significant scholarship funds that can be tapped locally when other funds are not available. In addition, the Florida College System State-level Foundation and the Board of Governors for the State University System Foundation leaders are supportive of building early learning scholarships.

Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC will also utilize the statewide implementation of Florida’s TQRIS, to systematically implement policies and incentives to promote professional improvement and career advancement. Florida’s TQRIS increases accountability by linking tiered program funding and other incentives to improvements in quality, including advances on the Career Pathway (see Core Focus Area B).

Goal 5 for (D)(2): Publicly reporting aggregated workforce data

Workforce data and reporting is essential to understanding the ability of the workforce to meet the needs of children, particularly those with high needs, as well as determining which policies and investments lead to a skilled and stable early childhood educator workforce.²⁷ There are several local efforts, often associated with local QRIS programs, which develop and release workforce reports (e.g., Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties). A statewide workforce study is currently under development through the State Early Childhood Advisory Council with an expected release date in 2012. The *Steps to Success Registry* provides a mechanism to collect statewide workforce data. This data will be collected via the REGISTRY application which will enable early childhood educators within Florida to submit their professional accomplishments including educational and work accomplishments. The REGISTRY application will adhere to the National Registry Alliance standards, ensuring that Florida can collect, analyze, and report aggregated data of the early learning workforce and participate in other national data collaborative initiatives. Florida’s Plan for RTT-ELC includes moving to statewide implementation of the Registry; linking the Registry to the *Career Hub*, the *Teaching Excellence Strategy*, and TQRIS, building incentives for statewide participation; and building

²⁷ Kipnis, F. & Whitebook, M. (2011). Workforce Information: A Critical Component of Coordinated State Early Care and Education Data Systems. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

additional linkages with other partners, including Head Start/Early Head Start, public schools, migrant programs, tribal child care, and Part B and Part C providers to ensure broad scale participation. Once operational, Florida will release an annual Early Learning Workforce Report, and data important to making policy and funding decisions will be available in real time for easy access by state leaders and early learning coalitions.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework

	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	9	20	30	50	70
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider	980	1200	1600	3,000	5,000

[Please indicate whether baseline data are actual or estimated and describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information; and please include any definitions you used that are not defined in the notice. If baseline data are not currently available please describe in your High-Quality Plan in your narrative how and when you will have baseline data available.]

Although all Florida credentials have been aligned to Florida’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, the alignment (see Attachment (D)(1)-3) is to course standards, and the competencies have yet to be embedded within the coursework. RTT-ELC work focuses on embedding the competencies in all informal and formal pathway options resulting in a comprehensive alignment, and the numbers above reflect that goal. There are 28 State Colleges, 11 State Universities, 31 early learning coalitions, and 35 other training entities in Florida. Baseline data reflects the actual number of training and education entities – one State College, one University program, and seven Early Learning Coalitions – that have aligned training, education, and credentials to the Core Competencies.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.										
Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
From lowest to highest	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Florida Staff Credential	56,177 ^a	Not available ^b	56,250	Not available ¹	56,500	Not available ^b	56,750	Not available ^b	57,000	Not available ^b
Advanced Professional Certificate – Preschool (to be developed)	0	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Advanced Professional Certificate – Infant/Toddler (to be developed)	0	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
College Certificates in Preschool, Infant-Toddler, Child Care Management, Inclusion	235 ^c	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Technical Assistance Specialist Credential (to be developed)	0	Not available ^b			100	Not available ^b	250	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b

Director Credential - Level I	9,328	Not available ^b			9,328	Not available ^b	9,328	Not available ^b	9,328	Not available ^b
Director Credential - Level II	5,161	Not available ^b			5,161	Not available ^b	5,161	Not available ^b	5,161	Not available ^b
Director Credential – Advanced	3,656	Not available ^b			4,000	Not available ^b	4,500	Not available ^b	5,000	Not available ^b
AA\AS in field	938	Not available ^b			1,000	Not available ^b	1,250	Not available ^b	1,500	Not available ^b
AA\AS out of field +480 of ECE	810	Not available ^b			810	Not available ^b	810	Not available ^b	810	Not available ^b
BA/BS in field	303	Not available ^b			400	Not available ^b	450	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
College Education^d	1,199	Not available ^b				Not available ^b		Not available ^b		Not available ^b
BECE	164	Not available ^b			300	Not available ^b	450	Not available ^b	600	Not available ^b
Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialist	366	Not available ^b			400	Not available ^b	450	Not available ^b	500	Not available ^b
Master Degree ECE/CD^e	Not available	Not available			100	Not available ^b	200	Not available ^b	300	Not available ^b
Ph.D. ECE/CD^e	Not available	Not available			75	Not available ^b	100	Not available ^b	150	Not available ^b

Include a row for each credential in the State's proposed progression of credentials, customize the labeling of the credentials, and indicate the highest and lowest credential.

[Please indicate if baseline data are actual or estimated; describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information.]

Data available:

Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.

Early Steps State Office Infant Toddler Developmental Specialist database

^a Florida Staff Credential requirements can be met via several options, including completion of the National Child Development Associate (CDA), several approved Florida equivalencies to the CDA, or ECE college Associate or Bachelor degrees/coursework. The number of degreed practitioners are also included in the total number of Florida Staff Credentials – as degrees are one option for recognition as having a Florida Staff Credential. The number listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.

^bPercentages were not available because the number of early childhood educators listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.

^cThe baseline number of college certificates reflects the actual number of certificates awarded by the one State College that has integrated Core Competencies into all coursework. Six additional State Colleges award certificates. During RTT-ELC, efforts will be made to encourage all State Colleges to utilize the certificate options and to integrate Core Competencies into coursework.

^dData collected prior to system enhancements categorized all degrees as 'Education' and did not differentiate between degrees

^eData on graduate degrees is not currently collected and tracked; Steps to Success Registry will collect this information.

Additional notes:

Baseline data are actual, data available in the Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.