



Financial Stability for Families with Young Children

Financial Stability for Families with Young Children is a three-year special initiative stressing the importance of family financial stability in the development of young children, and highlighting a key role for the early childhood field, particularly for low-income families.

Through this initiative, ACF seeks to explore new opportunities for ensuring that those involved in early care and education services – providers and families with children – have access to financial education, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and other asset building strategies. The initiative also seeks to develop knowledge about and increase understanding of asset building policies and strategies as they relate to families with children. Asset building strategies include:

- Financial education;
- Consumer counseling, credit and debt counseling;
- Access to mainstream banks and credit unions;
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs);
- Earned Income Credit and other credits; and
- Other federal benefits.

Focus Areas

- Low-Income Families with Young Children, particularly those who participate in Head Start and/or child care. These families need access to financial education and asset building services.
- Staff of Head Start Agencies and Child Care Providers, many of whom are low-income. These staff face many of the same challenges as the families they serve, and they are role models for their clients. Like the families they serve, these staff would benefit from training in financial education and access to asset building services.
- Particular Focus on Family Child Care Providers, a care venue that is well suited for asset building services. These providers are small businesses. The owners are good candidates for support with financial education, business planning and access to financial services.
- Provider Associations and Agencies, such as Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies that support organizations that provide services for families with young. These organizations can assist with sharing information and providing low-income families access to financial supports during this difficult economy.

Phase One of the initiative will take place through fall 2010. It will involve alerting the early childhood field and networks about the role they can have in this important work. This will include gathering information on best practices and working with national associations to inform networks and providers about the role they can have. A centerpiece will be a series of regional conferences and other activities to inform ACF grantees about this topic and ways they can become involved. Regional offices may support pilot projects to demonstrate roles for the early learning field.

Phase Two will involve continued information sharing, developing tools and strategies that the early childhood field can use to support families in this way. It will also feature support for demonstrations of new approaches enabling the field to become involved in this work. Phase Two will start in late fall 2010 or winter 2011.