

# Louisiana's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care Application

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July 15, 2010

**Abstract:** This application is for funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to improve coordination and collaboration among early childhood education and care programs and services in Louisiana. It will fund the state early childhood advisory council to facilitate the development and enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness.

**Louisiana’s  
State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care  
Application**

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## **I. OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE**

### **A. Need for Assistance**

Louisiana continues to rank near the bottom of the nation in terms of standard measures of child health and well-being. According to the *2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Louisiana ranked 49<sup>th</sup> for overall child health and well-being, continuing thirteen straight years of being ranked 49<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup>. Louisiana ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in six of the ten indicators, including child poverty.<sup>1</sup> Research demonstrates that poverty is the single greatest threat to a child's well-being. The percentage of children in poverty in Louisiana is 27%, which is 50% greater than the national average. In some parishes (counties), the child poverty rate exceeds 50%, in contrast with the national rate of 18%.<sup>2</sup> There are approximately 310,000 children under age 5 in Louisiana and 30% of these young children live below the federal poverty level.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, despite the strides that have been made in our state in building an early childhood comprehensive system, a significant proportion of Louisiana's young children remain at high risk for multiple health, developmental, and social-emotional problems.

Prior to the Maternal and Child Health Bureau's State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (SECCS) grant (known in Louisiana as BrightStart), Louisiana had minimal success in establishing services for the early childhood period, and even less success in providing infrastructure to support those services. Few programs addressed the child and family in a comprehensive manner. Often the focus of an agency or organization was on the primary purpose for which it received funding, such as child care, early

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<sup>1</sup> 2009 The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2009 Kids Count Data Book.

<sup>2</sup> 2009 Louisiana Kids Count Data Book on Louisiana's Children.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2008.

education, health care coverage, medical services, and/or family support services, rather than an integrated approach to service delivery. Also, the state lacked an infrastructure to address the needs of young children and their families due to such factors as limited agency resources; a state budget system's design which often forced agencies to compete against each other for funding; and lack of communication and coordination among agencies and organizations, all resulting in duplication and/or gaps in services across agencies and the state.

### **1. Status of Governance, Coordination of Services, and Collaboration**

BrightStart grew out of the SECCS grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services, which began in Louisiana in 2004. The vision of BrightStart is that Louisiana's young children and their families will be safe, healthy, and reach their full potential, and its mission is that Louisiana will create and sustain a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system that ensures families and communities provide young children with opportunities for optimal emotional, social, physical and cognitive development. The two primary goals of BrightStart are:

- 1) To develop, maintain and strengthen service systems integration and partnerships to enhance children's ability to enter school healthy and ready to learn.
- 2) To build an early childhood system that addresses the following priority areas:
  - Access to Medical Care
  - Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development
  - Early Care and Education
  - Parenting Education/Family Support
  - Child Safety

BrightStart is conducted under the auspices and guidance of the Louisiana Children's Cabinet and its Advisory Board. Additionally, Senate Concurrent Resolution 83

(see Appendix 1), passed in the 2008 Legislative Session, calls upon all the state agencies that serve young children to participate in BrightStart. The work of BrightStart has been guided by the BrightStart Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from all state agencies serving young children, as well as representatives from the Legislature and nongovernmental child-serving organizations. Through new policies and legislation, many of the goals and strategies set forth in the original BrightStart Strategic Plan have now been implemented. Since 2004, BrightStart has been a leader in a number of major accomplishments which will improve the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of Louisiana's young children.

Governor Bobby Jindal has designated BrightStart as Louisiana's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), and Geoffrey Nagle, PhD, the Director of BrightStart, as the Chair of the Council (Appendix 5). The BrightStart Steering Committee has been expanded and reconstituted as the BrightStart Advisory Council, and will serve as our state's ECAC, with the funding to be administered by the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS, formerly the Department of Social Services). As directed by Governor Jindal, BrightStart will provide written updates to the Louisiana's Children Cabinet by January 31<sup>st</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup> of each year on the status and progress of the ECAC. The designation of BrightStart as the ECAC for Louisiana marks a new phase in the work of the initiative. The revision of the current Strategic Plan, the expansion of BrightStart's responsibilities, and the infusion of additional federal support will provide the opportunity for BrightStart to build on its successes.

The following paragraphs detail some of the accomplishments of BrightStart to date.

Additional information is available on the BrightStart website at

<http://www.brightstartla.org>.

Quality Start – BrightStart led the design and implementation of Quality Start, the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for licensed child care centers that was launched in October 2007, making Louisiana the 15<sup>th</sup> state in the nation with a QRIS. It is administered by DCFS, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Incentives for participation include tiered reimbursement bonuses for centers with two or more stars that serve children in the child care assistance program. In addition, participating centers are also eligible for both the School Readiness Tax Credits and the Child Care Mental Health Consultation program described below. Additional information about Quality Start may be found at <http://www.qrslouisiana.org>.

School Readiness Tax Credits<sup>4</sup> – In 2007, the Louisiana Legislature passed the School Readiness Tax Credits. Effective January 1, 2008, these tax credits are a comprehensive effort to support Quality Start, and have been instrumental in incentivizing centers to improve their quality in order to achieve additional stars. The tax credits include:

<p><i>Tax Credit for Parents:</i> A tax credit for parents who choose a center with at least a two-star rating. The amount of the credit increases as the number of stars increases but decreases as parents’ income rises. In 2008, 4,455 parents claimed this credit for a value of \$957,000</p>
<p><i>Tax Credit for Child Care Providers:</i> A tax credit for child care providers with at least two stars based on the number of children enrolled in foster care or the child care assistance program. The amount of the credit increases with a greater number of stars. In 2008, 102 child care providers claimed \$1.3 million in tax credits, with a range of \$750 to \$85,000.</p>
<p><i>Tax Credit for Teachers and/or Directors:</i> A tax credit for teachers and/or directors</p>

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<sup>4</sup> The School Readiness Tax Credits are used as the state match for this grant.

who work in centers that participate in the rating system. The amount of the credit is based on the educational background of the individual. Some 761 teachers and directors received at least \$1500 each in benefits in 2008 for a total of \$1.3 million distributed for this credit. An additional 500 staff who were eligible based on their educational background did not claim the credit due to a lack of awareness or not working at a center participating in the rating system. Increased knowledge of the tax credit may encourage teachers to advocate for their centers to join Quality Start.

*Tax Credit for Businesses:* A tax credit for businesses that support quality child care or make donations to Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Some 150 businesses received a total of \$121,000 in tax credits in 2008.

In 2009, approximately \$3.7 million in tax credits were earned for the 2008 tax year.

Preliminary figures for 2010 show that the tax credits increased to \$5.1 million for the 2009 tax year.

Mental Health Consultation Program – BrightStart worked closely with the DCFS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to develop the Quality Start Mental Health Consultation Program to assist child care centers in improving the quality of care that they provide. The free consultations range from assisting teachers in managing challenging behaviors, to creating supportive environments for children, to assisting providers to more effectively work with families. The consultants work at no cost to the center for six months, spending a day in the center every other week. Across the state, approximately 90 centers are served by 1.5 (FTE) consultants during each six month period. In order to receive this service, centers must be participating in Quality Start.

Louisiana Parenting Education Network (LAPEN) – BrightStart developed a statewide network for parenting education to address the lack of infrastructure and support for parent educators. Although parenting education programs span four different state departments, there was no central office or statewide association to support the profession. An inaugural summit was held in 2008 with over 150 attendees, and this is now an annual

event that includes over 200 people. LAPEN, through a Guidance Team with representatives from many different public and private agencies, has developed core competencies for parent educators, adopted a code of ethics, established a statewide registry for parent educators, and provides statewide and regional trainings. For more information go to <http://www.lapen.org>.

Triple P - Positive Parenting Program – BrightStart is in the process of implementing a Triple P pilot program in the state. BrightStart has brought together state agencies and private funders to meet with representatives of Triple P as part of this public-private collaborative effort to provide a comprehensive system of parenting and family support. Triple P’s multilevel system includes five intervention levels of increasing intensity designed to enhance parental competence and prevent or alter dysfunctional parenting practices that lead to child maltreatment and children’s behavioral and emotional problems. The plan is to pilot the project using Level 3 and Level 4 Triple P in three to four regions of the state in the current fiscal year in a coordinated effort between state government, BrightStart, LAPEN, and three private non-profit agencies. Funding for the pilot has been secured through a foundation serving the Greater New Orleans area, three separate grants from the Children’s Trust Fund, and from the Louisiana Office of Public Health.

Public Pre-Kindergarten – Louisiana’s high quality public pre-k program, LA 4, was limited by statute to serve at no cost only children who qualified for free and reduced lunch. In 2008, the Louisiana Legislature provided for the phase-out of the income eligibility in order to provide the program at no cost to all four years olds by the school year 2013-14.

Unfortunately, to date, the incremental expansion has not been funded. However, deep

cuts to the current LA 4 program have been avoided through collaboration between DCFS and the Department of Education (DoE), with DCFS's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds being used to fill gaps from reduced state general funds allocated to LA 4.

Early Childhood System Integration Budget – Louisiana has had an annual Children's Budget compiled by the State Budget Office since the early 1990s. However, this budget document does not provide specific information related to early childhood. Through BrightStart's efforts, Louisiana now has an Early Childhood System Integration Budget (ECSIB) which is defined by statute. The ECSIB is organized along the original four components of BrightStart (access to medical care, social-emotional development and mental health, early care and education, and family support and parenting education) as opposed to by department, thus detailing the state's allocation of financial resources for children ages birth to five in these areas. Within these four areas, each state department categorizes program specific information, including the lead contact person, a very brief program description (1-3 sentences), the population served, the sources of funding for the program, and the parishes (counties) being served. For each line item, actual state and federal dollars invested in the program are detailed. The first official ECSIB was completed in 2010 and includes both the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 fiscal years (see Appendix 2 for FY 11 ECSIB). The ECSIB is a key policy document that will add critical information to inform the work to build a comprehensive early childhood system.

Child Health Insurance Program – Louisiana has been a leader in enrolling children in LaCHIP, its State Child Health Insurance Program which is a Medicaid expansion for children whose family income is 200% of poverty or less. The initial implementation of the

federal law provided for a phase-in allowing all children up to 133% of poverty to enroll in the first year, eventually moving to 150% of poverty, and then to 200% of poverty. Major efforts were made to reduce the paperwork requirements for enrollment, and outreach efforts were mounted to reach the eligible children. BrightStart participated in the advocacy effort to further expand the program which now allows children between 200 and 250% of poverty to enroll in a low cost health plan administered by the State Group Benefits Program but financed by Medicaid and minimal premiums. This expansion is called the LA Affordable Health Plan. Louisiana has received a Robert Wood Johnson Max Enroll grant to explore new systems-related approaches to reach and enroll the remaining eligible children. BrightStart is a participant in this initiative, called Covering Kids and Families. For the past several years, provider rates have been sufficient to assure reasonable access to care. However, budget cuts for FY 10 and FY 11 fiscal years may create significant access problems for children with public coverage.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) – BrightStart has supported the development and expansion of the NFP program in Louisiana. NFP is now funded through funding streams bridging different state departments, including the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, TANF, Medicaid, and state general funds. This evidence-based program serves first time Medicaid mothers and their children up to age two in 52 of the state's 64 parishes (counties), yet only reaches 15% of the potential eligible population. BrightStart worked with the Pew Home Visiting Campaign to obtain one of four grants provided to states to promote smart investments in quality, home-based programs for new and expectant families in Louisiana. The Louisiana Home Visiting Campaign is led by the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families (a member of the BrightStart Advisory Council), a

private non-profit, and includes a coalition of organizations that are advocating for increased funding to expand access to NFP. The first-year goal of the Louisiana campaign is to increase the capacity of the program to be able to serve 20% of the eligible population.

These many accomplishments of BrightStart could not have been achieved without the coordination and collaboration of the many different state and private agencies that serve young children and families in Louisiana. However, even with BrightStart's progress to ensure that children in Louisiana enter school healthy and ready to learn, there remain significant gaps in early childhood infrastructure and services that impede the progress of the creation of an early childhood comprehensive system. Described below are the current status of key components of that system and the need for assistance.

## **2. Status of Participation in High Quality Early Childhood Education Programs**

As described above, great progress has been made in Louisiana in building the infrastructure to support high quality early care and education in our state, but many children, especially those most at risk for school failure, still do not have access to high quality programs and services. On the positive side, although it is voluntary, the number of centers (including Head Start and Early Head Start programs) participating in Quality Start, Louisiana's quality rating and improvement system, continues to increase at a rapid pace. Less than three years after its inception, Quality Start now has 681 centers (almost 44% of all Class A licensed centers) now participating, with 434 centers achieving their first star, and 247 centers (36%) achieving two or more stars (as of May 12, 2010). The number of centers that now have two or more stars has increased by almost 300 percent since January 1, 2009.

However, under the Quality Start system, the designation for “quality” begins at three stars. As of May 12, 2010, the number and percentage of participating centers with three or more stars was as follows: 18 centers or 2.6% with 3 stars; 23 centers or 3.4% with 4 stars; 5 centers or 0.7% with 5 stars. In other words, 44% of the total number of Class A centers in Louisiana are participating in Quality Start, and of these only 6.7% have achieved at least a three star rating. Clearly there is a great need to increase the number of high quality centers in the state.

There are currently a number of state-funded pre-k initiatives for four year olds in Louisiana. The largest is the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program (LA 4), which was established in 2001. This program is available in nearly all of Louisiana school districts as well as 12 charter schools, and provides 6 hours of regular instruction per day. Four-year-olds who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch are eligible to attend the program, although children from families with higher incomes are also eligible, using local school funds or through tuition payments. This is a high quality program that meets 9 out of the 10 quality benchmarks established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). For the 2008-09 school year, 15,205 students were enrolled in LA 4 at a total cost \$83.5 million. However, for the 2009-10 school year, the appropriation was reduced to \$77.8 million, resulting in a reduction of funding from \$5,000 per student to approximately \$4,600 per student.

Additionally, Louisiana has the Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD), a small scholarship program for at risk students to attend private schools (1,360 students participating in 2008-09). NSECD earned a 10 out of 10 on the NIEER rating scale. Additional information about NSECD can be found at

<http://www.prekla.org>. Another public pre-k program is the 8(g) Student Enhancement Block Grant Program. Children are eligible to participate if they are at risk of being “insufficiently ready for the regular school program,” with priority given to children from low-income families. In 2008-09, there were 3,333 students participating, and this program met 7 out of the 10 quality benchmarks established by NIEER. Additionally, 7,495 children were served in the 2008-09 school year in a pre-k program funded by Title I funds.

One barrier to advancing high quality early care and education in Louisiana has been the lack of diverse delivery of public pre-k. Although nationally over one-third of public pre-k is provided in community settings, in Louisiana less than 1% of LA 4 classes are located on non-public school sites. BrightStart has led an effort to encourage diverse delivery of public pre-k whereby publicly funded pre-k would be offered in community settings, including child care centers and/or Head Start programs. A diverse delivery model is considered best practice across the country, as it provides parents more high quality choices in their local communities, avoids the costs of building new school buildings as pre-k expands, and promotes quality and accountability across early childhood settings.

### **3. Status of Professional Development System**

Louisiana has a child care career development system called Louisiana Pathways (Pathways), funded by DCFS, and housed in the Northwestern State University Child and Family Network. Pathways includes a registry for participants and trainers, career ladders for teachers, administrators, and trainers, and scholarships to support attainment of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and higher education for those in early childhood education. However, core competencies have not been adopted. Advancement on the

career ladders depends on the completion of a certain number of training or course hours, not the attainment of specific knowledge.

A Microsoft Access 2003 database is maintained by Pathways. There are over 17,000 practitioners enrolled in the career development system. The database has the capacity for unlimited expansion. The data captured includes an individual's demographic information, training and educational achievements, place of employment, years of experience in working with young children, professional organization membership, professional activities, and scholarships received for CDA assessment and college tuition.

Additionally, Pathways provides the staff audits needed for Quality Start, as well as the verification of education, experience and participation in professional organizations needed for the Teacher and Director School Readiness Tax Credit. In the 2009 tax year, there were in excess of 2,315 individuals who had achieved a qualifying level to meet the staff qualification requirements for the tax credit. This number has doubled since the 2008 tax year. This increase is a direct result of the number of individuals working at centers who are participating in the Quality Start star rating program.

Training for the CDA credential is provided by the child care resource and referral agencies, Louisiana State University Cooperative Extension, and the Louisiana Technical Colleges. Once certified by the Council for Professional Recognition, a new mechanism allows those with the CDA to enter Louisiana Community Colleges with six to nine credit hours already earned.

Act 356 of the 2009 Legislative Session mandates that the state's college systems and faculties work together to provide a comprehensive system of articulation and transfer credit between and among public schools, technical and community colleges, and public

four-year colleges and universities in Louisiana. The law requires the state's college systems and faculties to work together in forming this transfer process, called articulation, partly based on a "perfect 60" concept in which the first 60 credit hours are taken at a community college and the second 60 credits are completed at a four-year university. This process will lead to a guarantee that students earning an associate degree with no grades below a "C" will be admitted to a university. This effort has the potential to enhance professional development and advancement for early childhood professionals.

DCFS created a Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) that has met several times and begun the work of creating a set of core competencies for early childhood professionals. The PDAC includes representatives from the DoE and DCFS, as well as Head Start, early intervention and nongovernmental participants. A matrix has been developed that shows the diversity of information, format, and approach in five other states. Using the "Goals for Use of Core Competencies" worksheets, members of the Council have begun to narrow their selection. Additional meetings are planned to consider national research on core competencies for child care professionals, their impact on existing systems, online training and licensure standards. DCFS staff recommended that this effort become part of the BrightStart ECAC. The PDAC will become the core of the BrightStart Professional Development Workgroup.

Additionally, DCFS has recently completed, with technical assistance from the National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative at Zero to Three, strategic planning for infant and toddler initiatives. A group of stakeholders from throughout the state participated in the planning process. A final report is being completed that will include both short and long-term objectives to better support infant and toddler caregivers to

provide quality care for Louisiana's children. Professional development was a major component of the planning, and the report will be submitted to the BrightStart Professional Development Workgroup for consideration.

Louisiana is one of six states chosen to participate in the National Governor's Association(NGA) Center for Best Practices Policy Academy project identified as "Ready States: A project to Develop Key Components of State Early Childhood Infrastructure." A team from Louisiana will attend the policy academy and the state will receive technical assistance around building a professional development system. This effort will directly inform the work of the BrightStart Professional Development Workgroup.

Louisiana is also one of ten states selected in 2008 as a participant in the SpecialQuest State Leadership Team, a Head Start/Hilton Foundation initiative. The state team has been working with SpecialQuest to develop and implement a state-level, cross agency plan for coordinated early childhood professional development on inclusion for service providers working with young children, birth-five, with disabilities and their families. The team, representing DoE, DCFS, DHH, public and private early childhood agencies, the Governor's Office of Community Programs, and university training programs and the IDEA\_Part C comprehensive system of personnel development committee. Louisiana has conducted training on the SpecialQuest adult-learning approach and benefitted from the resources and materials available from SpecialQuest.

Louisiana recognizes the clear need to build on these efforts to create a professional development system that encourages employees in early childhood settings to continue their education. The goal is to have an integrated system for early childhood professionals

regardless of setting that is research based, aligned with statewide standards, and incorporates accessible career pathways.

#### **4. Status of Data System for Early Childhood**

Louisiana does not yet have a comprehensive, uniform data system to inform early childhood systems-building efforts or assist in monitoring the success of the programs. Individual programs collect their respective data related to early childhood, such as the national and state performance measures from the Maternal and Child Health Program's Title V Block Grant and data collected by the Nurse-Family Partnership program, both in DHH; Quality Start data and child welfare data collected by DCFS; evaluation data collected by the LA 4 pre-k program in the DoE, etc.

A key barrier to creating a comprehensive early childhood data system is the lack of uniform data collection mechanisms across the multitude of program models in Louisiana. Data collection across programs serving young children reveals a fragmented picture of data elements, which hinders systems-level efforts to improve the quality of services that children receive. Louisiana must develop a comprehensive early childhood data system that provides uniform, consistent information over time on children from birth to age five, families, and early childhood programs and services that follows these children into school.

#### **5. Status of Early Learning Guidelines**

In 2005, DCFS published the Louisiana Early Learning Guidelines Birth through Three following the release of the DoE Standards for Programs Serving Four Year Old Children in 2003. In 2009, a committee was formed to revise the DoE standards at the same time that Louisiana joined with other states to develop a common core of state standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. As a result of the national initiative, the

pre-k revision committee's focus was directed at adding a section on approaches to learning and only modifying the sections on social and emotional development, health and physical development, and creative arts development. Those sections are to be completed in time for the 2010-2011 school year. A future revision will align the pre-k standards with the K-12 common core state standards. The DoE standards are required for all public pre-k and their use is encouraged for non-public pre-k.

DCFS will undertake a revision of the birth through three year old guidelines. The goal of this project will be to create a comprehensive set of early learning guidelines and program standards for children birth to five. Combined, the two sets of standards provide the building blocks for a statewide comprehensive set of standards. The DoE standards for four year olds can be found at <http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/5381.doc>, and the DCFS standards for 0-3 can be found at <http://www.dofs.state.la.us/assets/docs/searchable/OFS/LAEarlyLearningGuide.pdf>.

## **B. Goals and Objectives**

Over the next three years, BrightStart will continue to work towards its ultimate two goals:

- 1) To develop, maintain and strengthen service systems integration and partnerships to enhance children's ability to enter school healthy and ready to learn
- 2) To build an early childhood system that addresses the following priority areas:
  - Access to Medical Care
  - Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development
  - Early Care and Education
  - Parenting Education/Family Support
  - Child Safety

To advance these goals, Louisiana is requesting funding to implement eight priority objectives over the next three years that can further strengthen and build Louisiana's comprehensive early childhood system as follows:

1. To create a **Planning Framework** to address strategic planning, the ongoing needs assessment, barriers to collaboration, outreach, standards and promotion/marketing of the importance of early childhood and to develop recommendations for increasing participation in high quality state and federally funded early childhood programs.
2. To create a **Professional Development Plan for Early Childhood Educators** to include core competencies, articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement, and practice or internships for students to assess higher education capacity to train early childhood educators, and to participate in the revision of the **Early Learning Standards**.
3. To develop a framework for a **Unified Data Collection System** with a focus on school readiness.
4. To address the physical well being of children through **Improving Birth Outcomes** by improving interconception care.
5. To support the **Mental Health and Social Emotional Development** of young children through building infrastructure, including providing training and clinical consultation, for the Early Childhood Supports and Services program, and training for early childhood professionals on infant and early childhood mental health.

6. To support the expansion of high quality early care and education through expanding opportunities for **Diverse Delivery** of pre-k programs and assisting child care centers to improve their quality.
7. To support the **Infrastructure and Training for Parenting Education** through the expansion of the Louisiana Parenting Education Network and Triple P.
8. To improve **Child Safety** through the development of policies, tools, and trainings that standardize and improve data sharing and child safety practices across agencies in selected key risk areas, and through supporting existing initiatives, including Nurse-Family Partnership.

## **II. APPROACH**

### **A. Council Structure**

The BrightStart ECAC is currently composed of 28 members, but the structure is not rigid and more may be added as needed or appropriate. All serve without compensation from BrightStart. In 2010, the Council was reconstituted to meet the membership requirements for the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care as outlined in the Head Start Act of 2007. The members represent a broad range of constituencies, and include:

1. Geoffrey Nagle – Chair, BrightStart and Director, Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
2. Susan Sonnier – Deputy Secretary, DCFS
3. Rhenda Hodnett – Director, Prevention and Protection Services, DCFS
4. Gail Kelso – Interim Child Care Administrator, DCFS
5. Gina Lagarde – Child Health Medical Director, Dept. of Health and Hospitals(DHH)
6. Richard Dalton – Medical Director, Office of Behavioral Health, DHH
7. Brenda Sharp – Coordinator, Part C-Early Steps, DHH
8. Susan Berry – Director, Children’s Special Health Services, DHH
9. Kyle Viator – Deputy Director, Louisiana Medicaid Program, DHH

10. Kerry Laster – Chief of Literacy, Pre-K - 12, DoE
11. Jeanette Vosburg – Executive Director, Board of Elementary & Secondary Education
12. Karen Stubbs – Executive Director, LA Children’s Cabinet
13. Janet Mora – Executive Director, LA Interagency Coordinating Council
14. Kim Dodd – Legislative Senior Analyst, Division of Administration
15. Carey Foy – Chief of Staff, LA Workforce Commission
16. Jerry Pinsel – VP for Academic Affairs, LA Community and Technical College System
17. Vera Triplett – COO, Capital One University of New Orleans Charter School Network
18. Lydia Jackson – LA State Senator
19. Patricia Smith – LA State Representative
20. Kahree Wahid – Director, Head Start Collaboration Project
21. Sondra Myers – Director, Acadia Parish Head Start
22. Pearlie Harris – Owner, Royal Castle Child Development Center
23. Brenda Shelling – Member, Monroe City School Board
24. Lynda Gavioli – Immediate Past Board Chair, LA Partnership for Children and Families and Executive Director of the Children’s Coalition in Monroe, LA
25. Judy Harrison – Executive Director, LA Children’s Trust Fund
26. Adren Wilson – National Director, Equity and Inclusion Campaign
27. Ashley Lucas – Member, LA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
28. Vacant – LA Dept. of Economic Development

As described in the objectives, the Advisory Council will have several workgroups, including, the Early Childhood Data Workgroup; the Professional Development Workgroup, the Birth Outcomes Workgroup, and others. This structure allows for non-Advisory Council members to participate. Additional workgroups may be added as the work evolves. Additionally the Council will have several staff persons (some may be contracted employees), including the Director of BrightStart and Chair of the Advisory Council, Geoffrey Nagle, PhD, the Assistant Director of BrightStart, Melanie Bronfin, JD, a BrightStart coordinator, a professional development coordinator, a data system project manager, a diverse delivery coordinator, an epidemiologist, and a director of LAPEN.

## **B. Priority Objectives, Activities and Timeline**

### **Objective 1: Creating a Planning Framework**

Although Louisiana has been successful at building pieces of its early childhood system through the existing SECCS grant, it welcomes the opportunity to formalize and expand its planning efforts. The newly formed BrightStart Advisory Council will provide this opportunity to invest the additional resources necessary to assure that BrightStart will be a fully functioning and effective systems building effort that can guide this important work.

**Objective:** Develop a Planning Framework to address ongoing needs assessment, barriers to collaboration, strategic planning, outreach, standards and the promotion of the importance of early childhood.

**Rationale:** While Louisiana has been hard at work building pieces of its early childhood system, this objective provides an opportunity to formalize and expand the planning efforts. Resources invested will assure that BrightStart is a fully functioning initiative, with an updated Strategic Plan, and with the capacity to guide these important efforts.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Hire BrightStart (ECAC) coordinator to assist in the coordination of all grant activities (e.g., meetings, workgroups, communications, reports, timelines, etc).	X	X	X	X
2. Convene stakeholders and organize Strategic Planning meetings and update the BrightStart Strategic Plan. This work will be coordinated with the strategic planning for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.		X	X	X
3. Provide agenda time at each meeting (e.g., Advisory Council and workgroups) to identify opportunities for and barriers to interagency collaboration and coordination for early childhood programs and services.	X	X	X	X
4. Begin development of social marketing campaign on the importance of early childhood by examining mass media efforts currently in place.		X	X	X
5. Take steps to expand BrightStart list serve to assure that all early childhood stakeholders are included.	X	X	X	X
6. Expand use of BrightStart website as both communication network and resource for early childhood programs and services.	X	X	X	X
7. Issue electronic invitations for early childhood organizations to send representatives to regional public hearings.			X	X
8. Hold one regional public hearing each quarter of the second half			X	X

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
of the year with an opportunity for public comment on the work of BrightStart.				
9. Hire Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist to manage the Risk and Reach Report.	X			
10. Complete the Risk Report and determine process to develop Reach Report.		X	X	
11. Begin implementation of Reach Report.				X
12. Make reports to the Children's Cabinet every 6 months.		X		X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A coordinator for all BrightStart activities will be hired.</li> <li>▪ BrightStart's Strategic Plan will be updated.</li> <li>▪ The Risk Report will be finalized and distributed.</li> <li>▪ Development and data collection for the Reach component of the Risk and Reach Report will be initiated.</li> <li>▪ Over 300 early childhood organizations, entities and stakeholders will receive electronic notifications about public hearings.</li> <li>▪ Two public hearings and opportunities for public comment will be provided.</li> <li>▪ The BrightStart website will be a valuable communication tool and resource for early childhood programs and services.</li> <li>▪ The Children's Cabinet will be updated on BrightStart's efforts to develop a comprehensive system for early childhood through two reports.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. BrightStart Coordinator assists with all grant activities.	X	X	X	X
2. Finalize Reach Report and merge into Risk and Reach Report.	X	X		
3. Provide agenda time at each meeting to identify opportunities for and barriers to interagency collaboration and coordination for early childhood programs and services.	X	X	X	X
4. Implement early childhood social marketing campaign if funding is available.	X	X	X	X
5. Continue to expand BrightStart list serve to assure that all early childhood stakeholders are members and update website as needed.	X	X	X	X
6. Continue to plan for and hold regional public hearings with an opportunity for public comment on the work of BrightStart.	X	X	X	X

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
7. Make periodic reports to the Children's Cabinet.		X		X
8. Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist responds to routine requests for information from program staff, researchers, or other interested stakeholder groups.	X	X	X	X
9. Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist updates work on Risk and Reach Report.	X	X	X	X
(Note: Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist has additional responsibilities as detailed in Objectives 4.)				
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Reach Report will be completed and integrated into a Risk and Reach Report.</li> <li>▪ An early childhood social marketing campaign will be implemented (if funding is available).</li> <li>▪ BrightStart website will be a valuable resource for early childhood stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ At least two public hearings and opportunities for public comment will be held across Louisiana to assure input in all BrightStart initiatives.</li> <li>▪ The Children's Cabinet will be updated on the progress of BrightStart's efforts to date.</li> </ul>				

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. BrightStart Coordinator assists with all grant activities.	X	X	X	X
2. Explore all opportunities and barriers for interagency collaboration that have been identified in the first two years and not yet acted upon.	X	X	X	X
3. Begin work to develop plan for sustainability of BrightStart after grant expiration.	X	X		
4. Continue to expand BrightStart list serve to facilitate ongoing communication of BrightStart initiatives and activities.	X	X	X	X
5. Implement the next phases of the early childhood social marketing campaign if funding is available.	X	X	X	X
6. Continue to plan for and hold regional public hearing each with an opportunity for public comment on the work of BrightStart.	X	X	X	X
7. Review and update website as needed.	X	X	X	X
8. Make periodic reports to the Children's Cabinet.		X		X
9. Respond to routine requests for early childhood data from program staff, researchers, or other interested stakeholder groups.	X	X	X	X

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
10. Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist annually revises the Risk and Reach Report.			X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunities and barriers for interagency collaboration for early childhood programs and services at the state and local level will be addressed.</li> <li>▪ The next phases of the early childhood social marketing campaign will be implemented (if funding is available).</li> <li>▪ At least two public hearings and opportunities for public comment will be held across Louisiana to assure input in all BrightStart initiatives.</li> <li>▪ BrightStart website will be a valuable resource for early childhood stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Sustainability plan for continuation of BrightStart will be developed.</li> <li>▪ The Children’s Cabinet will be updated on the progress of BrightStart’s efforts to date.</li> </ul>				

Unusual features – As described earlier, when BrightStart was designated as the state’s ECAC, the make-up of the previous steering committee was revised. Having new participants enter after many successes have been achieved presents an unusual challenge that requires a refocusing on the planning process. It is anticipated that a number of previous steering committee members will continue to be involved through participation in workgroups.

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – One of the most pressing concerns is the overall state of Louisiana’s finances. The state has a projected \$2 billion deficit for FY 12 and staff layoffs are anticipated in some departments. In this “crisis management” mode, focusing on planning for new systemic initiatives is often difficult. By the same token, a budget crisis presents an opportunity to reprioritize spending and the current climate could facilitate needed investments in early childhood.

## **Objective 2. Creating a Professional Development Plan and Early Learning Standards**

This objective is to plan for an integrated professional development system for early childhood professionals, regardless of setting (e.g., Head Start, child care, pre-kindergarten, early intervention) that is research based, delineates clear statewide standards, and incorporates accessible career pathways. The plan is to build on the existing work of DCFS, DoE, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Higher Education to identify and create policies needed to support an integrated, cross sector system of professional development beginning with early child care and education. Louisiana is one of six states with a NGA grant to support systems building. The focus of this NGA grant in Louisiana is professional development, and the work will directly inform and influence this objective.

This objective also will encompass the revision of Louisiana’s current Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three. These new standards, and the recently revised Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four Year-Old Children, will serve as a framework for the professional development system.

**Objective:** Create a professional development plan that addresses professional standards, career pathways, articulation, data, and financing that supports a professional development system that trains and prepares early childhood educators and other early childhood professionals. Also, assist in the revision of the Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three and incorporate these standards, and the Standards for Programs Serving Four Year-Old Children, into the professional development system.

**Rationale:** Increasing the quality of Louisiana’s early childhood workforce will enhance early childhood development for children from birth to age five. The activities outlined below will create new opportunities for early childhood practitioners to obtain their credentials and degrees. The first year success of the School Readiness Tax Credits suggests that owner/employees of child care centers are receptive to additional training and the pursuit of professional qualifications.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Hire an Early Childhood Professional Development Coordinator to oversee work on this objective and coordinate efforts between	X	X		

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
governmental and nongovernmental entities.				
2. Review make-up of current Professional Development Advisory Council and transition to the Professional Development Workgroup. Add members as needed. Assure that representatives from the Infant-Toddler community are included in the Professional Development Workgroup.	X	X		
3. Have Early Childhood Professional Development Coordinator participate in the review and revision of Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three, as part of the team being convened by DCFS. Ensure that these revised guidelines align with the recently completed revision of the Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four Year-Old Children.			X	X
4. Collaborate with the NGA grant initiative to develop and finalize a Professional Development Strategic Plan.	X	X		
5. Review and incorporate, as possible, recommendations for professional development included in the strategic planning report for infant and toddler initiatives.		X	X	X
6. Review and evaluate Core Knowledge and Competencies from other states for early childhood professionals across early care and education settings.		X	X	
7. Develop age specific Core Knowledge and Competencies for Louisiana practitioners to assure that they have the information and knowledge to achieve excellence in implementation of programs for young children. Use the revised Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four Year-Old Children, and Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three (once they are completed), as a framework for the development of these Core Knowledge and Competencies			X	X
8. Assess existing capacity within agencies or initiatives (DCFS, DoE, Head Start) to support these professional development efforts.	X	X		
9. Develop common terminology/definitions across the professional development system.		X	X	X
10. Meet with representatives of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and those four year institutions offering Early Childhood/Care and Development of Young Children programs (i.e. Departments of Family and Consumer Science and Human Ecology) to review existing articulation agreements and explore possible additional		X	X	X

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
opportunities.				
11. Begin work on assessment of capacity and effectiveness of Higher Education to support the development of early childhood educators including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in early education programs.			X	X
12. Begin to review the current Louisiana career ladders (e.g., classroom, administrative, family child care) and begin to incorporate the Core Knowledge and Competencies. Review and revise the career pathways for early childhood professionals to be aligned with the career ladders.			X	X
13. Explore the creation of a certification/credential for infant-toddler educators and directors and for early childhood educators.			X	X
14. Begin to develop a data system that describes the early childhood workforce and ongoing professional development opportunities.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An Early Childhood Professional Development Coordinator will be hired.</li> <li>▪ The Professional Development Advisory Council will be reconstituted as the Professional Development Workgroup.</li> <li>▪ The revision of the Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three, will be underway.</li> <li>▪ A Professional Development Strategic Plan will be completed through collaborative efforts with the NGA grant.</li> <li>▪ Core Knowledge and Competencies from other states will be reviewed.</li> <li>▪ Review of articulation agreements with Higher Education will be underway.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue participation of the Early Childhood Professional Development Coordinator in the work of DCFS for review, revision and implementation of Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three, which are aligned with the Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four Year-Old Children.	X	X	X	X

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2. Begin the implementation of the Professional Development Strategic Plan.	X	X	X	X
3. Complete age-specific Core Knowledge and Competencies. Ensure that they are aligned with the revised Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through 3.	X	X	X	
4. Review and revise the current Louisiana career ladders (e.g., classroom, administrative, family child care) and incorporate the Core Knowledge and Competencies. Review and revise the career pathways for all early childhood professionals to be aligned with the career ladders.	X	X	X	X
5. Expand career ladders to include all early education providers, including management and leadership roles, and ensure they are applicable across early education systems.	X	X	X	X
6. Develop a career ladder for Early Childhood Professional Development Specialists by revising the current Louisiana Trainer Registry. Development of the new registry will include a broader definition of professionals who provide training and consultation to early childhood professionals and will incorporate the Core Knowledge and Competencies.	X	X	X	X
7. Finalize articulation agreements with Higher Education that focus on the Core Knowledge and Competencies.			X	X
8. Meet with representatives of the LA Association of Independent Universities' departments offering Early Childhood/Care and Development of Young Children programs to develop articulation agreements that focus on the Core Knowledge and Competencies at various levels and explore possible additional opportunities.			X	X
9. Begin work on course content in each of the Higher Education programs to align with the Core Knowledge and Competencies finalized above. Include the DoE Office of Certification and Board of Regents' specifically-assigned Teacher Education staff members to expand development of certification options to include ages 0-3.			X	X
10. Develop recommendations for a certification/credential for infant-toddler educators and directors and for early childhood educators.			X	X
11. Begin to develop online workshops to help early childhood educators understand the revised career ladders.			X	X
12. Research how other states have developed and implemented career advising resources, corresponding data collection systems, and develop recommendations.	X	X	X	X
13. Continue to develop a data system that describes the early childhood workforce and ongoing professional development opportunities.	X	X	X	X

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Core knowledge and competencies will be completed and adopted.</li> <li>▪ The Core Knowledge and Competencies for early childhood professionals will be aligned with the Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three.</li> <li>▪ Recommendations for changes and additions to career ladders will be completed.</li> <li>▪ Career ladders will be expanded to include all early education providers.</li> <li>▪ A career ladder for Early Childhood Professional Development Specialists will be completed.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing work with Higher Education will be underway to assess the capacity and effectiveness of their system to support the development of early childhood educators.</li> <li>▪ Articulation agreements will be finalized that focus on core knowledge and competencies at various levels.</li> <li>▪ Recommendations for certification/credentialing of infant-toddler educators and directors and early childhood educators will be developed.</li> <li>▪ Work will have started on the development of online workshops to assist early childhood educators to understand the career ladders.</li> <li>▪ Professional development data system will be nearing completion.</li> <li>▪ Development of career advising resources will be underway.</li> </ul>				

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue the implementation of the Professional Development Strategic Plan.	X	X	X	X
2. Complete assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of Higher Education to support the development of early childhood educators.		X	X	
3. Review course content at all schools in Higher Education to ensure alignment with Core Knowledge and Competencies and that other training resources meet the educational needs of early childhood professionals.			X	X
4. Conduct assessment of compensation parity and develop recommendations that identify policy solutions to address gaps; explore ways to provide improved wages/benefits for early childhood practitioners by studying other states and comparable industries.		X	X	X
5. Adopt and begin implementation of the recommendations for changes and additions to the career ladders, including the	X	X	X	X

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
career ladder for Early Childhood Professional Development Specialists.				
6. Adjust the Pathways Scholarship Program to reflect the finalized career pathway.	X	X		
7. Explore the option of placing the requirement of full articulation on programs approved for scholarship utilization.		X	X	
8. Implement the online workshops to assist early childhood educators in understanding the career ladders.			X	X
9. Complete the development of a data system that describes the early childhood workforce and ongoing professional development opportunities.			X	X
10. Complete recommendations for career advising resources and corresponding data systems.			X	X
11. Implement a certification/credential for infant-toddler educators and directors and for early childhood educators.				X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessment of capacity of Higher Education to support the development of early childhood educators will be completed.</li> <li>▪ Assessment of compensation parity and developing recommendations that identify policy solutions will be underway.</li> <li>▪ Revised and additional career ladders will be implemented.</li> <li>▪ Pathways Scholarship Program will support and align with the new career ladders and pathways.</li> <li>▪ Online workshops will be available to inform early childhood education professionals about the new career ladders and opportunities to support their professional growth.</li> <li>▪ Data system that describes the early childhood workforce and ongoing professional opportunities will be implemented.</li> <li>▪ Recommendations for certification/credentialing of infant-toddler educators and early childhood educators will be implemented.</li> </ul>				

Factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work - There are many challenges to achieving this objective. First, collaboration is needed between the professionals who serve young children, the state departments that are involved with administering and/or regulating these services, and the programs, including Higher Education, that will provide the formal education and training. For the latter, this may prove difficult in a time of severe budget reductions across Higher Education in Louisiana that will result in schools, colleges

and departments of education finding that they do not have the capacity to meet the growing community needs. Second, the disparity of pay across early education settings must be addressed if real improvements in quality are to be achieved. The current system results in teachers who do attain higher education and skills moving from their current positions into higher paid jobs, usually away from child care and Head Start and into the school system where there are greater financial and fringe benefits.

**Objective 3: Creating a Statewide Unified Early Childhood Data System**

With new Federal support to create a statewide, unified data collection system, Louisiana will begin the work to integrate existing early childhood data systems and to establish new capacity to collect needed data elements. BrightStart envisions this data system as linking education, health and social services data systems, thereby providing a comprehensive and complete picture of child well being, across developmental domains, beginning at birth. In addition, uniform data collection across governmental systems will allow the state to monitor trends over time and make informed policy decisions to enhance access to, and the quality of, programs serving children.

Work here will support efforts to have young children, from birth through pre-k, included in ongoing unified data system efforts. Recently, the DoE received a federal grant to move forward the multiphase, Louisiana Education Data Repository System (LEDRS). LEDRS will allow DoE to organize and link all of its data into a centralized repository with project completion in Spring 2013. The DoE has also recently organized a state application for the US Department of Education Longitudinal Data Systems Grant (P-20). Although this application was not funded, a large collaborative effort was organized. This included a signed Memorandum of Understanding between all state agencies that serve children,

including the Board of Regents, DCFS, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Office of Juvenile Justice, and others (see attached list of workgroup members – Appendix 3).

Work has been completed in diagramming the P-20 Longitudinal Data System (see Appendix 4). As DoE pursues future grant opportunities to fund the P-20, it is critical that the work on the early childhood data system is included and integrated into these efforts.

This truly unified and coordinated, statewide, data system will ultimately allow

stakeholders to track and analyze student achievement from early childhood throughout adulthood.

**Objective:** To develop the framework for a statewide, unified early childhood data system that is coordinated with existing P-20 data system efforts in the state.

**Rationale:** Before Louisiana can develop a comprehensive early childhood data system, in-depth technical analyses are needed about what data Louisiana presently collects, current data collection gaps, and how those gaps can be addressed to provide the foundation for a unified birth-to-five data system. Creating a new data system is a massive undertaking that involves significant financial investment and cooperation across agencies. This objective lays out a careful planning process to assure that this data system will meet the needs of stakeholders for years to come.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Hire an Early Childhood Data Systems Project Manager to work closely with all of the key state departments involved in early childhood. Coordinate with current state data system building efforts and ongoing efforts to obtain funding for P-20.		X	X	X
2. Establish the Early Childhood Data Workgroup and hold regular quarterly meetings.			X	X
3. Ensure communication between new Early Childhood Data Workgroup and the existing P-20 Data Systems Workgroup. Combine efforts/work of the two workgroups as indicated.			X	X
4. Conduct interviews with key state agencies to obtain information about their current systems of data collection (i.e. use of data, limitations of data collection processes, system design information, etc.). Result will be a current data element list.			X	X
5. Identify the legal, administrative, political and privacy (e.g., HIPAA, FERPA) obstacles that may arise.			X	X

Year 1				
6. Develop ideas for unique identifier for each child, service provider, and teacher.				X
7. Research how other states have successfully developed or implemented an early childhood data system.			X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early Childhood Data Systems Project Manager will be hired.</li> <li>▪ Data Workgroup will be seated.</li> <li>▪ Current early childhood data element list will be completed.</li> <li>▪ A report will be drafted depicting current early childhood data collection processes in Louisiana.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Early Childhood Data Systems Project Manager continues to work closely with the all of the key state departments involved in early childhood. Continue coordination and communication with current state data system building efforts and ongoing efforts to obtain funding for P-20.	X	X	X	X
2. Continue to convene the Early Childhood Data Workgroup for quarterly meetings.	X	X	X	X
3. Complete interviews with key state and federal agencies around their current system of data collection and finalize report.	X	X		
4. Draft recommendations for data collection strategies for data that should be included in an integrated early childhood data system, but that may not have the electronic systems in place that would enable data integration.			X	X
5. Develop recommendations for ways to address any legal barriers, including privacy, to data sharing and use.			X	X
6. Develop ideas for unique identifier for each child, service provider, and teacher.	X	X	X	
7. Conduct review of successful state Early Childhood Data Systems and draft report.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data collection strategies for data that should be included but do not currently have electronic system will be determined.</li> <li>▪ A plan will be in development that addresses the barriers to data sharing and allows for user interface across departments.</li> <li>▪ A report will be drafted summarizing successful state Early Childhood Data Systems.</li> </ul>				

<b>Year 3</b>				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Early Childhood Data Systems Project Manager continues to work closely with all of the key state departments involved in early childhood. Continue coordination and communication with current state data system building efforts and ongoing efforts to obtain funding for P-20.	X	X	X	X
2. Continue to convene the Early Childhood Data Workgroup for quarterly meetings.	X	X	X	X
3. Finalize recommendations for data collection strategies for data that should be included in an integrated early childhood data system, but that may not have the electronic systems in place that would enable data integration.	X	X	X	
4. Finalize report of successful state Early Childhood Data Systems in other states.	X	X		
5. Create a design plan for the early childhood data system including maps of systems to illustrate data flow, use and access levels for users, and identification of areas of potential improvement in the ways that data can be linked. Develop comprehensive data architecture of systems to be linked or integrated. Ensure plan is compatible with P-20 effort.		X	X	X
6. Provide a cost estimate for implementing the data system, including outlining how costs will vary depending on use by differing audiences and access levels (e.g. researcher, program, advocate, parent, and/or agency staff).			X	X
7. Draft an RFP for contractors who will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the data system, as well as for Web hosting costs and site, and user interface design (both technical and aesthetic), and reporting tools.			X	X
8. Create recommendations that inform the user interface to be employed at final implementation.		X		
9. Develop technical assistance and training plans.			X	X
10. Develop projection of the costs for ongoing maintenance of needed software and hardware for the data system.			X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recommendations will be finalized for data collection strategies for needed data.</li> <li>▪ Report will be finalized detailing the most effective data system models in other states.</li> <li>▪ A system design plan will be completed and cost estimates finalized.</li> <li>▪ Technical assistance and training plans will be developed.</li> <li>▪ An RFP will be drafted for use in selecting a contractor to implement/maintain the data system.</li> </ul>				

Unusual features – The project is intended to provide access to empirical data about child development from birth through school entry and beyond. Louisiana intends to make this data available to all state departments and stakeholders much in the way that vital statistics are available to help inform policy and better understand how children are faring.

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – Recently, there has been a great deal of attention given to the need for and use of data systems, both on the federal and state levels, yielding much shared interest by key stakeholders in the development of comprehensive, integrated data systems. Success in other states will be studied to determine ways to accelerate the project. DoE has received a federal grant to integrate their existing data systems and has developed a multi-department collaboration to pursue funding for the P-20 longitudinal data system. Attention to early childhood data needs can be integrated with these ongoing efforts.

#### **Objective 4: Improving Birth Outcomes through Interconception Care**

Louisiana has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the United States at 9.0 per 1,000 live births (2007 LA Vital Records) compared to 6.8 nationally (Kaiser). The main contributor to infant mortality is preterm birth and the primary predictor of preterm birth is a prior preterm birth. In response to this public health problem, the Louisiana Legislature passed SCR 103 in 2009 urging the state, through planning and collaborative efforts, to address the problems of preterm birth and infant mortality. In addition, the Louisiana Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Title V Program identified preconception and interconception care as one of the top needs during the 2010 MCH Needs Assessment process.

Currently in Louisiana, under LaMOMS, pregnant women up to 200% of the federal poverty level qualify for Medicaid during their pregnancy and up to 60 days after pregnancy ends. Outside of a pregnancy, adults up to only 13% of the federal poverty level qualify for Medicaid in Louisiana. In 2007, Medicaid deliveries comprised 68.4% of all deliveries;<sup>5</sup> and for black women in Louisiana, Medicaid pays for almost all (90.1%) births.

Given these sobering statistics, DHH has just launched a Birth Outcomes Initiative and has hired a Director and Deputy Director to lead this effort. As part of this initiative, the state is planning to pursue a program that will include community-based care coordination services for the highest risk women in Louisiana, those who qualify for continuous Medicaid coverage including SSI, TANF, and other non-LaMOMs Medicaid coverage. These eligibility groups are at the highest risk of the overall Medicaid covered pregnant women and many are the poorest, living below 13% of the poverty level. The anticipated model relies on the work developed at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, GA where women who received care coordination had 3.5 times (95% CI: 1.0-11.7) fewer adverse pregnancy outcomes as women in the intervention cohort.<sup>6</sup> The goal is to have a sustainable model which could be expanded to other populations as health care reform is implemented. Therefore, the proposed project has four aims:

- (1) To identify immediate prenatal or immediate postnatal women who have delivered a low-birth-weight baby or women with chronic diseases and link to a care coordination team;
- (2) To provide primary health care to these women, improve their health status, and reduce their medical and social risks;
- (3) To reduce subsequent poor pregnancy outcomes in enrolled women;

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<sup>5</sup> Kaiser, <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/8014.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Dunlop Al et al. Interpregnancy primary care and social support for African-American women at risk for recurrent very-low-birthweight delivery: a pilot evaluation. [Maternal Child Health J.](#) 2008 Jul;12(4):461-8.

- (4) To share with health care providers, policy makers, and community members how improving interpregnancy health affects subsequent health and pregnancy outcomes for women.

BrightStart looks to support the state's new Adverse Birth Outcomes initiative and assist in the planning and coordination of this important effort.

**Objective:** Reduce adverse birth outcomes by targeting interconception care efforts to women who have had a previous adverse pregnancy outcome or who have a chronic health condition.

**Rationale:** It is clear that the best prenatal care cannot adequately address chronic health issues that contribute to poor pregnancy outcomes. Improving a woman's health before a first or subsequent pregnancy will greatly reduce the incidence of low birth weight, prematurity and infant mortality.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Support the recently announced state effort to address adverse birth outcomes.		X	X	X
2. Conduct presentation to the BrightStart Advisory Council on the evidence supporting interconception care.		X	X	
3. Have the Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist (see Objective 1) work under the guidance of the state CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist to create a birth outcomes registry including reportable diseases and chronic health conditions.		X	X	X
4. Have the Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist assist the Birth Outcomes Initiative Director and the CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist with the design of the evaluation plan for the Interconception Care Program.		X	X	X
5. Establish the BrightStart Birth Outcomes Workgroup and hold regular quarterly meetings.		X	X	X
6. Hire national consultant to advise the BrightStart Birth Outcomes Workgroup.		X	X	X
7. Assist state efforts in coalition building in communities around Louisiana to build support for interconception care.		X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The BrightStart Advisory Council will be informed about the need for interconception care and the benefits that could be obtained for child development.</li> <li>▪ Contract with national consultant will be finalized.</li> <li>▪ Birth Outcomes Workgroup will be established and be meeting regularly.</li> <li>▪ Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist will have completed a preliminary birth outcomes registry.</li> </ul>				

Year 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluation plan will be developed.</li> </ul>	

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. The Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist, under the guidance of the state CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist, will manage the birth outcomes registry including reportable diseases and chronic health conditions.	X	X	X	X
2. Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist will work under the guidance of the state CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist to handle data management of the evaluation for the Interconception Care program implementation.	X	X	X	X
3. The BrightStart Birth Outcomes Workgroup will continue to meet quarterly.	X	X	X	X
4. Continue to utilize the national consultant to advise the BrightStart Adverse Outcomes Workgroup.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BrightStart Birth Outcomes Workgroup will have completed a long range plan for the program with the support of the national consultant.</li> <li>▪ Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist will have implemented the birth outcomes registry.</li> <li>▪ Evaluation plan will be implemented and the Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist will have started receiving outcome data.</li> </ul>				

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. The Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist, under the guidance of the state CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist, will manage the birth outcomes registry including reportable diseases and chronic health conditions.	X	X	X	X
2. Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist will finish the program evaluation under the guidance of the Birth Outcomes Initiative Director and the state CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist.			X	X
3. Conduct strategic planning for expansion of the program to newly eligible Medicaid recipients in 2014.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluation report will be completed.</li> <li>▪ Birth outcomes registry will be updated with most current available data.</li> <li>▪ Strategic planning will be done to prepare for the increased Medicaid enrollment in</li> </ul>				

**Year 3**

2014 and for expansion of the program.

Unusual features – The costs to Louisiana’s Medicaid program for preterm births is estimated at \$370 million and this figure does not include the potential future health care costs that are associated with low birth weight and preterm births such as an increased risk of mental retardation, chronic respiratory problems, and deficits in hearing and vision, among others.

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – The Louisiana Medicaid program already has in place the foundation needed to accomplish pre- and interconception health care for women. Now, with the new Birth Outcomes Initiative, there is an immediate opportunity to make important gains in addressing this critical issue and the hope of defining an effective program that can be expanded as health care reform is rolled out, and implemented as part of an integrated early childhood system.

**Objective 5: Supporting Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development**

A comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of young children includes addressing their mental health and social-emotional development. Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) is a prevention and intervention program that serves children from birth to five years of age who have been identified as at risk for developing social, emotional and/or developmental problems. Risk factors include abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, parental mental illness, parental substance abuse, poverty, presence of developmental disabilities, and emerging social or emotional problems. The program provides supports and services to both the child and the family, and currently has nine sites covering 13 parishes.

ECSS is an innovative program that serves the unique social and emotional developmental needs of young children. It is based on best practices derived from infant mental health and prevention science. The program uses a “bottom-up” approach by building a coalition of community agencies to assist these high risk young children and their families. Each ECSS site has an infant mental health team available to provide intensive prevention and treatment services. These teams are comprised of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and case managers who have received specialized training in infant mental health. ECSS teams provide supportive services to reach high-risk families. Many of these families require child abuse and domestic violence prevention services, parent support groups, case management and evidence based therapy/treatment. Additional information about this program is available at <http://www.ecssla.org>. This objective provides for its expansion by addressing infrastructure and training/consultation to enhance clinical capacity.

**Objective:** Address mental health and social-emotional development of young children and their families by building infrastructure and training/consultation to improve and expand clinical capacity of the Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) program, and provide trainings to other early childhood professionals in infant and early childhood mental health.

**Rationale:** ECSS targets the most vulnerable families in Louisiana and uses evidence-based services to promote positive social and emotional development and mental health. The program provides supports and services to both the child and the family, but currently has only nine sites covering 13 (of 64) parishes.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Schedule a presentation about the ECSS program and its program outcomes for the BrightStart Advisory Council.		X		
2. Work with LA Office of Behavioral Health to develop cost estimates for potential expansion and determine site selection and availability of professional staffing.			X	X

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3. Work with Medicaid to explore options for Medicaid reimbursement for components of the ECSS model.			X	X
4. Provide Circle of Security (COS) training for ECSS Clinicians.		X	X	X
5. Provide Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) training for ECSS Clinicians.		X	X	X
6. Enhance availability of clinical consultation to 2 additional ECSS teams.		X	X	X
7. Provide infant and early childhood mental health trainings to early childhood professionals outside of the ECSS program.		X		X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The BrightStart ECAC will be informed about the need for infant mental health services and be familiar with the ECSS program.</li> <li>▪ Cost estimates and expansion plan will be determined.</li> <li>▪ Additional COS training will be conducted.</li> <li>▪ Additional PCIT training will be conducted.</li> <li>▪ Additional clinical consultation to 2 ECSS teams will be provided.</li> <li>▪ Infant and early childhood mental health trainings will be provided to early childhood professionals outside of the ECSS program.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue to work with Medicaid to establish funding of components of ECSS as appropriate.	X	X	X	X
2. Hire consultant to work with Office of Behavioral Health Regional Leadership in at least 2 areas of the state to create Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for establishing or expanding ECSS in their area.		X	X	X
3. Provide COS training for additional ECSS Clinicians.	X	X	X	X
4. Provide PCIT training for additional ECSS Clinicians.	X	X	X	X
5. Enhance availability of clinical consultation to 2 additional ECSS teams.	X	X	X	X
6. Provide infant and early childhood mental health trainings to early childhood professionals outside of the ECSS program.		X		X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional PCIT and COS trainings will be conducted.</li> <li>▪ MOU's will be established with two regions of the state.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clinical consultation will be provided in additional regions.</li> <li>▪ Infant and early childhood mental health trainings will be provided to early childhood professionals outside of the ECSS program.</li> </ul>				

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Finalize work with Medicaid and establish reimbursement for components of ECSS model.	X	X		
2. Expand program, based on available funding and Medicaid reimbursement.	X	X	X	
3. Work with consultant to establish MOUs with 2 additional regions.	X	X	X	
4. Provide COS training for additional ECSS Clinicians.	X	X	X	X
5. Provide PCIT training for additional ECSS Clinicians.	X	X	X	X
6. Enhance availability of clinical consultation to 2 additional ECSS teams.	X	X	X	X
7. Provide infant and early childhood mental health trainings to early childhood professionals outside of the ECSS program.		X		X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with Medicaid to establish funding for components of ECSS model will be finalized.</li> <li>▪ If funding is available, ECSS will be expanded according to plan.</li> <li>▪ Additional PCIT and COS trainings will be conducted and MOUs executed.</li> <li>▪ Clinical consultation will be provided in additional regions.</li> <li>▪ Infant and early childhood mental health trainings will be provided to early childhood professionals outside of the ECSS program.</li> </ul>				

Unusual features – A substantial amount of research in the area of brain development has shown that by the age of three, a child should have achieved key milestones in emotional regulation, language and motor skills. Negative biological and environmental stressors can compromise the attainment of these crucial milestones and delay development. Scientific evidence has linked delayed social and/or emotional development to serious societal

problems including juvenile delinquency, school failure, violent crime, and health problems or disabilities. However, the general public does not understand the need for mental health intervention for very young children.

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – Following the 2005 hurricanes, the need for mental health services escalated in Louisiana while many mental health providers left the state. Also, the availability of mental health providers in rural areas is problematic. Public funding will be difficult to obtain as the state continues to contend with severe budget shortfalls.

**Objective 6: Supporting High Quality Early Education through the Diverse Delivery of Pre-K**

High quality early childhood education, including child care and pre-k, is one of the most effective ways to improve school performance, increase high school graduation rates, and enhance job performance and adult productivity. Louisiana has aggressively expanded its public pre-k program and today almost 60% of four year olds are in state or federally funded pre-k or Head Start. Additionally, Louisiana has a quality rating and improvement system known as Quality Start. Quality Start is a voluntary system and provides star ratings for licensed child care centers and Head Start providers. Today, almost 44% of eligible child care providers participate.

LA 4 is the largest public pre-k program in Louisiana and is administered through the DoE. It is a high quality pre-k program, but it is offered almost exclusively on public school sites. By contrast, nationally, states are building and expanding their pre-k programs through a “diverse delivery model,” offering some publicly funded pre-k in private child care or Head Start settings. Diverse delivery avoids the costs of building new

school buildings as pre-k expands and promotes quality and accountability across early childhood settings.

By promoting diverse delivery in Louisiana, BrightStart seeks to develop a seamless early education system of coordinated programs across departments that will result in greater educational benefits and improved quality care for all children, as well as future cost savings to the state.

**Objective:** Improve quality across early education settings by expanding opportunities for diverse delivery of pre-kindergarten programs.

**Rationale:** Diverse delivery of public pre-k, where public pre-k is offered in community settings including child care and Head Start, provides parents more high quality choices in their local communities, avoids the costs of building new school buildings as pre-k expands, and promotes quality and accountability across early childhood settings.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Hire a Diverse Delivery Coordinator to oversee and implement the work on this objective.	X			
2. Support the revision of the Child Day Care Center Class A Minimum Standards (licensing regulations), which include many changes related to all aspects of child care centers. The proposed revisions are now complete, and there will be opportunities for public comment in late summer, 2010.	X			
3. Develop/identify handouts and other promotional materials and create information packets to distribute to child care, Head Start, and school systems about diverse delivery.		X	X	
4. Work with state and local leaders in DCFS, DoE, Local Education Agencies (LEA), Head Start and child care to support and promote diverse delivery for pre-k through collaborations of LEAs with child care and/or Head Start settings.	X	X	X	
5. Assist in the implementation of two or more diverse delivery collaborations for the 2010-11 school year.	X	X		
6. Research and create a crosswalk of rules, regulations, standards, eligibility requirements, evaluation requirements etc. that govern the different funding streams for early education in Louisiana to facilitate diverse delivery and maximize available funding for programs.			X	X
7. Research and report how diverse delivery and braiding of funding streams for pre-k programs have been successfully implemented in other states.			X	X

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
8. Assist in building partnerships between DoE, DCFS and LEAs and their community child care and Head Start providers.		X	X	X
9. Plan and carry out activities to increase the capacity of community-based child care providers to meet state pre-k standards.			X	X
10. Plan and deliver joint professional development that meets Quality Start and state pre-k program requirements.			X	X
11. Help design model subcontracts between LEAs and community providers including budgets and program components.			X	X
12. Conduct "collaboration building meetings/conferences" with community-based child care providers, Head Start programs and school district personnel to identify and promote opportunities for expansion of the diverse delivery model.			X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Diverse Delivery Coordinator will be hired.</li> <li>▪ Publicly funded pre-k classrooms in two private child care or Head Start sites will be implemented.</li> <li>▪ A report including a diverse delivery crosswalk and examples of braided funding opportunities will be completed.</li> <li>▪ Community collaboration meetings will be held in at least 10 school districts and handouts explaining and promoting diverse delivery will be distributed.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue to build partnerships between DoE, DCFS and LEAs and their community early care and education partners.	X	X	X	X
2. If funding is available, assist in the implementation of two or more diverse delivery collaborations for the 2011-12 school year.	X	X		
3. Create a manual for community-based child care providers, Head Start programs and school district personnel that includes the crosswalk, examples of contracts for diverse delivery, timelines for applications, budgets and other instructions, forms and materials that will assist LEAs and providers to implement diverse delivery in their communities.		X	X	X
4. Create pages on the BrightStart website, and/or the DCFS and DoE websites that provide information for LEA's and community providers about how to implement diverse delivery.	X	X		

<b>Year 2</b>				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
5. Create pages on the BrightStart website, and/or the DCFS and DoE websites that provide information for parents on all public child care, Head Start and public pre-k programs available in the state and how to apply for them.	X	X		
6. Continue to conduct “collaboration building meetings or conferences” with community-based child care providers, Head Start and school district personnel to identify and promote opportunities for expansion of the diverse delivery model.	X	X	X	X
7. Provide at least one presentation per quarter to School Boards and Superintendents about the benefits of the diverse delivery model and distribute handouts explaining and promoting diverse delivery.	X	X	X	X
8. Develop model of braided funding from various federal and state funding streams for pre-k programs (such as Head Start, child care assistance, LA 4, Title I etc.) to facilitate diverse delivery.	X	X	X	X
9. Provide activities to increase the capacity of community-based child care providers to meet state prekindergarten standards.	X	X	X	X
10. Provide joint professional development that meets Quality Start and state pre-k program requirements.	X	X	X	X
11. Ensure technical assistance to child care centers is high quality by defining the credential requirements to be a technical assistance consultant (e.g., educational background, required skills/competencies, etc.).		X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-k classrooms in two additional private child care or Head Start sites will be provided (if funding is available).</li> <li>▪ A diverse delivery manual will be completed.</li> <li>▪ Web pages that provide information for LEA's, community providers and parents will be launched.</li> <li>▪ Community collaboration meetings will be held in an additional 10 school districts and promotional materials will be distributed.</li> <li>▪ A minimum of 4 presentations to School Boards and Superintendents on the benefits of diverse delivery will be made and handouts explaining and promoting diverse delivery will be distributed.</li> <li>▪ A braided funding plan will be developed.</li> <li>▪ A plan for improved minimum requirements to provide technical assistance to child care centers will be implemented.</li> </ul>				

<b>Year 3</b>				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue to build partnerships between DoE, DCFS and LEAs and their community early care and education partners.	X	X	X	X
2. Use the plan for braided funding to assist in establishing at least two additional diverse delivery sites for the 2012-2013 school year.		X	X	
3. Continue to conduct “collaboration building meetings/conferences” with community-based child care providers, Head Start programs and school district personnel to identify and promote opportunities for expansion of the diverse delivery model.	X	X	X	X
4. Update and distribute manual for community-based child care providers, Head Start programs and school district personnel that includes the crosswalk, examples of contracts for diverse delivery, timelines for applications, and other instructions, forms and materials that will assist LEAs and providers to implement diverse delivery in their communities.	X	X	X	X
5. Update web pages that provide information for LEA’s, community providers, and parents.	X	X	X	X
6. Continue to provide at least one presentation per quarter to School Boards and Superintendents about the benefits of the diverse delivery model and distribute handouts explaining and promoting diverse delivery.	X	X	X	X
7. Continue to provide activities to increase the capacity of community-based child care providers to meet state prekindergarten standards.	X	X	X	X
8. Continue to provide joint professional development that meets Quality Start and state pre-k program requirements.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-k classrooms in two additional private child care or Head Start sites using braided funding plan will be provided (if funding available).</li> <li>▪ A revised diverse delivery manual will be distributed.</li> <li>▪ Web pages that provide information for LEA’s, community providers and parents will be updated.</li> <li>▪ Community collaboration meetings will be held in an additional 10 school districts and promotional materials will be distributed.</li> <li>▪ A minimum of 4 additional presentations to School Boards and Superintendents on the benefits of diverse delivery will be made and handouts explaining and promoting diverse delivery will be distributed.</li> </ul>				

Unusual features – The LA 4 funding for pre-k services flows through DoE and the school systems have used the available dollars to directly provide pre-k programs exclusively on school grounds. School systems need to be convinced that collaborative arrangements with child care and/or Head Start centers can provide high quality services and reduce the demand for limited classroom space and resources in their facilities while improving quality in other educational settings. Previous resistance to such collaborations are due in part to the lack of quality child care. However, this concern will hopefully be alleviated with improved quality as a result of Quality Start,

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – DCFS has committed to use ARRA funding to support two pre-k classrooms in private child care settings in collaboration with DoE. This will serve to launch a state supported diverse delivery effort. However, additional funds will be needed in the future to sustain these pilots and increase the number of diverse delivery sites.

### **Objective 7: Supporting Infrastructure and Training for Parenting Education**

High quality parenting education can provide parents with the tools they need to enhance their children's development and assist in preparing their children for success in school and in life. Unfortunately, many parents are unprepared for the important role of nurturing a child. Social service agencies and early childhood programs and the courts have recognized this deficit and many now recommend or require parenting education. Because of the lack of infrastructure and support for parent educators in Louisiana, in 2008 BrightStart established LAPEN as a statewide association for parent educators. Although its only funding has been a small Children's Trust Fund grant and one-time small grants from private foundations, through the work of many volunteers from the field, LAPEN has

been able to create core competencies for parent educators, adopt a code of ethics, offer regional trainings with national speakers, create a website with resources and other information ([www.lapen.org](http://www.lapen.org)), hold three statewide Summits and offer a parenting education track as part of the Prevent Child Abuse LA Conferences for the past three years. Additionally, as part of the website, LAPEN has established a registry of parent educators, making Louisiana one of the few states to have such a registry. It includes the background, training, experience etc. of the diverse professionals in this field, and the curriculums that they are using in their work.

Additionally, with its ongoing focus on evidence based parenting education models, BrightStart has recently facilitated grant funding from the Children's Trust Fund and a private foundation to implement Triple P in 3-4 pilot regions of the state. This effort will be a public-private partnership and include at least three different state departments who will have state employees trained in Triple P, joined by many private providers. In addition, the Office of Public Health is providing the initial financial resources to fund a Triple P coordinator who will work closely with LAPEN. Funding from this ECAC grant would be used to sustain these efforts.

**Objective:** To assist LAPEN in providing support for parent educators, and to assist in the implementation of evidence based models of parenting education, including Triple P, by providing infrastructure, technical support, trainings, and ensuring fidelity to the chosen models.

**Rationale:** The success to date of LAPEN is testament to the need for leadership and infrastructure to support Louisiana's parent educators from every field.

<b>Year 1</b>				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Hire a director of LAPEN to coordinate LAPEN's activities and functions.	X	X	X	X
2. Maintain the LAPEN website and update as needed.	X	X	X	X
3. Promote the registry of parent educators among public and private agencies.		X	X	X
4. Review and analyze the data collected by the LAPEN registry as to the background and training of parent educators and the curriculums and models being used in the state.		X	X	X
5. Begin to compile the list of parenting education models being used in LA according to the registry, and research whether the models are evidence based.			X	X
6. Coordinate professional development activities for parent educators including the annual LAPEN Summit.		X	X	X
7. Have existing Triple P Program Coordinator manage the pilot implementation in 3-4 regions of the state.	X	X	X	X
8. Triple P Program Coordinator report to BrightStart ECAC on the progress of the implementation.		X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A LAPEN director will be hired and managing the activities of LAPEN.</li> <li>▪ Number of parent educators included in the LAPEN registry will increase by 30%.</li> <li>▪ Summary report on the background and training of parent educators and models used as of Year 1 will be completed.</li> <li>▪ At least two professional development activities for parent educators will be offered.</li> <li>▪ Pilot Triple P sites will be trained and delivering services.</li> </ul>				

<b>Year 2</b>				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue to promote the registry of parent educators among public and private agencies.	X	X	X	X
2. Review and analyze the background and training of parent educators and the curriculums and models being used in the state, and use the report to inform the professional development activities.	X	X	X	X
3. Complete the compilation of the parenting education models being used in LA according to the registry, and the research as to whether they are evidence based models, and post information on LAPEN website.	X	X	X	X

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4. Continue to have LAPEN coordinate and provide parenting education professional development activities.	X	X	X	X
5. Decide if Triple P pilots should be continued, expanded, or terminated. Create plan of action according to this decision.			X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summary report on the background and training of parent educators as of Year 2 will be completed and compared to Year 1 report.</li> <li>▪ Number of parent educators included in the LAPEN Registry will increase by 20%.</li> <li>▪ Report on the parenting education models being used and the evidence supporting those models will be completed.</li> <li>▪ At least two professional development activities for parent educators will be offered.</li> <li>▪ Plan of action for future of Triple P will be determined.</li> </ul>				

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Continue to promote the registry of parent educators among public and private agencies.	X	X	X	X
2. Update the report on the data collected by the LAPEN registry as to the background and training of parent educators and the models being used in the state and their level of evidence. Keep website updated to reflect this information.			X	X
3. Continue to implement Triple P action plan as determined in Year 2.	X	X	X	X
4. Continue to have LAPEN coordinate and provide parenting education professional development activities.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of parent educators included in the LAPEN registry will increase by 20%.</li> <li>▪ Report on the LAPEN registry, describing the background and training of parent educators and the models being used, will be revised.</li> <li>▪ LAPEN website will continue to be updated.</li> <li>▪ At least two professional development activities for parent educators will be offered.</li> <li>▪ Triple P plan will be implemented.</li> </ul>				

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – LAPEN has been in existence for over two years and has had to accomplish much of its work through volunteers. With the

addition of a full-time director, LAPEN should be able to greatly increase its capacity to provide ongoing support for the parent educators in Louisiana. With regard to the registry, there may be some resistance by educators to register but the membership of the BrightStart ECAC represents the major organizations in the state that fund or contract for such services and funding opportunities can be structured in a way to encourage registration. Some programs may be using models that are not proven to be effective, and they may be resistant to a LAPEN website that posts such information.

**Objective 8: Improving Child Safety**

In Louisiana, more children die each year of injuries than all medical causes combined. Although there are more unintentional injuries than intentional injuries to young children ages 1 month to 5 years of age, violence-related injury deaths are on the rise. Homicide or violence-related injury deaths of infants less than 12 months of age have increased by 67% from 2002 to 2007.<sup>7</sup> Specifically regarding abuse and neglect, the number of children under age five years in Louisiana entering foster care has increased by 75% since 2001. Given these alarming statistics and the negative impact of injury and child maltreatment on the health and well-being of Louisiana’s young children, BrightStart has added child safety as one of its focus areas.

Unintentional injury and child maltreatment share similar etiologies and history and are influenced by similar preventive efforts. Therefore, as part of this grant initiative, BrightStart will create a Child Safety Workgroup to specifically address similar/shared challenges facing unintentional injury and child maltreatment prevention efforts. This

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<sup>7</sup> CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS Injury Mortality Reports, 2002 and -2007. Data Source: NCHS Vital Statistics System for numbers of deaths. Bureau of Census for population estimates.

workgroup will include representatives from DCFS, DHH, DoE, and other partner agencies that serve young children and their families. Using an integrative, systematic approach across agencies, BrightStart will survey select agencies about their existing data collection, policies, legislation, and/or program standards/regulations that address selected key risk areas of child safety and will use the survey results to develop policies, tools, and trainings that standardize and improve data sharing and child safety practices across agencies in selected key risk areas.

Additionally, BrightStart will continue to support key existing efforts in Louisiana that focus on the child safety of young children. One such effort is the expansion of Nurse-Family Partnership. NFP is a voluntary nurse home visiting program that helps transform the lives of vulnerable, low-income mothers pregnant with their first child. Although NFP currently provides services in 52 of Louisiana's 64 parishes (counties), it has funding to only serve 15% of eligible women in the state. Louisiana is one of four states that received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts to establish a home visiting campaign in an effort to expand home visiting services. Also, with the passage of health care reform in February, Louisiana is preparing for new federal support for evidence based home visiting programs.

Decreasing unexpected, preventable deaths of infants and children in Louisiana is a priority of DHH's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program, within the Office of Public Health. MCH manages Louisiana Child Death Reviews (CDR), a statewide system of surveillance and review of all sudden unexpected deaths of infants and children ages 14 years and younger since 1993 through a State CDR and 9 local CDR Panels. MCH also oversees a coordinated, strategic statewide system of evidence-based childhood injury prevention efforts targeted at reducing the most common childhood injuries in Louisiana

through its Child Safety Initiative. Community level child safety/injury prevention efforts are carried out by 9 MCH Child Safety Coordinators. BrightStart supports healthy and safe child care through its assistance with the MCH Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) Program's annual trainings of CCHCs who provide health and safety trainings to child care center staff. BrightStart also supports the promotion and distribution of the MCH Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters, a unique, statewide child abuse prevention intervention consisting of a series of 27 newsletters for parents and caregivers that addresses infant psycho-social and emotional development. Other MCH efforts include SIDS Risk Reduction and Infant Safe Sleep Program and its social marketing campaigns.

A number of efforts are also underway in Louisiana that focus on the needs of young children already entering the child welfare system. DCFS has developed a workgroup charged with increasing safety and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect of children birth to five who have come to the attention of the Department. This workgroup is known as the Strategic Initiative Workgroup for Addressing High Risk Infants, Toddlers, and Pre-school Children and their Families. BrightStart is working as part of this effort, which includes supporting a framework for clinical consultation on high risk children birth to five who are receiving in-home services through the child welfare system.

**Objective:** To ensure collaboration in Louisiana's diverse efforts to improve child safety and reduce risk of abuse/neglect to infants, toddlers, and pre-school children.

**Rationale:** In Louisiana, more children die each year of injuries than all medical causes combined. Unintentional injury and child maltreatment share similar etiologies and history and are influenced by similar preventive efforts. A number of different agencies are seeking to address intentional and unintentional injuries in young children in Louisiana. Therefore, as part of this grant initiative, BrightStart will create a Child Safety Workgroup to specifically address similar/shared challenges facing unintentional injury and child maltreatment prevention efforts.

Year 1				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Work with the Pew funded Home Visiting Campaign in their effort to expand high quality, home-based services for new and expectant families.	X	X	X	X
2. Host representatives of NFP to provide an overview of the program at a BrightStart Advisory Council meeting.		X		
3. Support the State's application for funding under the new Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.	X	X	X	X
4. Collaboratively support the efforts of the DCFS High Risk Infants initiative in developing a framework for clinical consultation on high risk children ages zero to five who are receiving in-home services through the child welfare system.	X	X	X	X
5. Collaboratively support the efforts of the DCFS High Risk Infants Advisory Team in reviewing policy and practices related to the assessment and services provided to this target population.	X	X	X	X
6. Collaboratively support DHH CCHC Program's annual trainings of CCHC's who provide health and safety trainings to child care center staff.		X	X	
7. Collaboratively support the promotion/distribution of DHH's Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters.	X	X	X	X
8. Establish Child Safety Workgroup and identify key areas of focus for child safety and injury prevention.	X	X	X	X
9. Survey select agencies about their existing data collection, policies, legislation, and/or program standards/regulations that address the selected key focus areas of child safety and injury prevention.		X	X	
10. Complete report on survey results.				X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the first year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members of the BrightStart Advisory Council will be informed about the NFP in Louisiana.</li> <li>▪ An application will be submitted for the new Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.</li> <li>▪ BrightStart will have collaboratively supported the DHH CCHC Program annual training and the promotion/distribution of the Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters.</li> <li>▪ BrightStart Child Safety Workgroup will have been convened and will have identified key areas of focus for child safety and injury prevention.</li> <li>▪ A survey of agencies on data collection, policies, legislation, and/or program standards/regulations that address the selected key focus areas of child safety and injury prevention will have been developed and conducted and final report completed.</li> </ul>				

Year 2				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Work with the Pew funded Home Visiting Campaign in their effort to expand high quality, home-based services for new and expectant families.	X	X	X	X
2. Support the State's application for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.	X	X	X	X
3. Collaboratively support the efforts of the DCFS High Risk Infants initiative in developing a framework for clinical consultation on high risk children ages zero to five who are receiving in-home services through the child welfare system.	X	X	X	X
4. Collaboratively support the efforts of the DCFS High Risk Infant Advisory Team in reviewing policy and practices related to the assessment and services provided to this target population.	X	X	X	X
5. Collaboratively support DCFS CCHC Program's annual trainings of CCHC's who provide health and safety trainings to child care center staff.	X	X	X	X
6. Collaboratively support the promotion/distribution of DHH's Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters.	X	X	X	X
7. Continue meetings of the Child Safety Workgroup.	X	X	X	X
8. Develop standardized policies and tools to improve practices across agencies based on the results of the survey and data trends detailed in the report from Year 1.	X	X	X	
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the second year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Louisiana will submit an application for the second year of funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.</li> <li>▪ BrightStart will have collaboratively supported the DHH CCHC Program annual training and the promotion/distribution of the Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters.</li> <li>▪ Policies and tools to standardize and improve practices across agencies on identified key areas of child safety and injury prevention will have been developed.</li> </ul>				

Year 3				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Work with the Pew funded Home Visiting Campaign in their effort to expand high quality, home-based services for new and expectant families.	X	X	X	X
2. Support the State's application for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting	X	X	X	X

<b>Year 3</b>				
Activities	Timeline			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Program.				
3. Collaboratively support the efforts of the DCFS High Risk Infants initiative in developing a framework for clinical consultation on high risk children ages zero to five who are receiving in-home services through the child welfare system.	X	X	X	X
4. Collaboratively support the efforts of the DCFS High Risk Infant Advisory Team in reviewing policy and practices related to the assessment and services provided to this target population.	X	X	X	X
5. Collaboratively support DHH CCHC Program's annual trainings of CCHC's who provide health and safety trainings to child care center staff.	X	X	X	X
6. Collaboratively support the promotion/distribution of DHH's Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters.	X	X	X	X
7. Continue meetings of the Child Safety Workgroup.	X	X	X	X
8. Develop and conduct trainings and/or webinars on each of the selected focus areas of child safety and injury prevention and their respective new policies and tools.	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> By the end of the third year of the grant period, the following deliverables will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Louisiana will submit an application for the third year of funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.</li> <li>▪ BrightStart will have collaboratively supported the DHH CCHC Program annual training and the promotion/distribution of the Happy and Healthy Kids Parenting Newsletters.</li> <li>▪ Trainings and/or webinars on each of the selected focus areas of child safety and injury prevention and their respective new policies and tools will have been developed and conducted.</li> </ul>				

Unusual features – Louisiana is fortunate that investments have already been made in creating an infrastructure for NFP that assures fidelity to the model.

Factors that might accelerate/decelerate the work – The inclusion of a provision for home visiting in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 should make it possible for Louisiana to expand this needed service. Current child safety efforts within DCFS and DHH will expedite the development of a collaborative framework for advancing

BrightStart's efforts to improve the health, safety, and well-being of Louisiana's young children.

### **C. Advisory Council Meetings and Public Hearings**

The initial meeting of the new BrightStart Advisory Council was convened on March 16, 2010, and the members were provided information about the history of the BrightStart initiative and its successes, and an overview was provided of this grant application. A second meeting was held on May 7 and an outline of the grant proposal was presented and discussed. The third, and most recent meeting, was held on June 25, 2010 to update members on the application and receive further input. All meetings are open to the public. During the grant period, the Advisory Council will continue to meet at least quarterly, and more often as needed. The Advisory Council meetings will be used to review the status of the grant activities and make modifications to the implementation plan.

A public hearing and opportunity to comment on the BrightStart Strategic Report and grant application was held on June 25, 2010, following the meeting of the Advisory Council. Notice of the hearing was e-mailed to the BrightStart mailing list (which contains over 500 names), and posted on the BrightStart website (<http://www.brightstartla.org>). Comments from the public hearing were incorporated into the final version of the application. As discussed above in Objective #1, throughout the grant period, BrightStart will hold public hearings around the state to provide information and to receive input, comments and suggestions on its work. There will be at least two regional meetings/public hearings held each year with opportunity for comment. Public comments will be taken under consideration by the BrightStart Advisory Council, and the grant activities will be modified as appropriate.

#### **D. Needs Assessment**

In the past, Louisiana has not consistently measured and tracked key indicators for early childhood. The new Early Childhood Systems Integration Budget, described above, is a start to monitoring the funding and specific state government programs serving young children and their families.

Additionally, BrightStart has initiated the development of a Risk and Reach Report that will detail information down to the parish (county) level. Modeled after a similar effort in Pennsylvania, Risk is examined by parish based on twelve indicators, and Reach will detail by parish what programs are serving young children. Initial work for the Risk component of the report has been completed with existing resources and the in-kind contribution by the Louisiana State University/Tulane University Early Childhood Policy and Data Center. (Appendix 6). The Reach component will be completed as part of this grant initiative (see Objective 1). The Risk and Reach Report will be updated annually as part of the work of BrightStart and will serve as the basis for the ongoing needs assessment requirement.

#### **E. List of Organizations, Cooperative Entities and Key Individuals**

The key individual tasked to supervise the work under this application will be the BrightStart Director, who serves as the Chair of the BrightStart Advisory Council, Geoffrey Nagle, PhD. Dr. Nagle has led the BrightStart initiative since the inception of the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant in 2004. He is the Director of the Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health at Tulane University Medical School. He has been assisted in this work since 2005 by an Assistant Director, Melanie Bronfin, JD, a public policy analyst also at the Tulane Institute. The existing SECCS grant effort will continue to

support them and BrightStart with the same financial commitment as has existed to date. The specific positions that will be created through this grant funding to carry out the goals and objectives herein, and the specific assignments, are described in the section on goals, objectives and activities above and described further in Section III.

#### **F. Sustainability**

This grant application is designed to use these one-time funds, over three years, in high impact ways that bring about long-term change. One of the major efforts is around professional development that will improve the existing systems, by creating core competencies and aligning the existing career ladders with them, by creating a new career ladder for Early Childhood Professional Development Specialists that will be incorporated into the existing Pathways system, by creating common terminology/definitions across the professional development system, by executing articulation agreements and realigning the current Pathways Scholarship Program. This work will mainly improve and refine the infrastructure for professional development that is already in place. Similarly, the work that will be done in revising the Early Learning Standards will be completed within the grant period, and will improve what is already in place.

Also, much of the work throughout the objectives involves training that will lead to greater impact from existing appropriated funds. Additionally, if the Birth Outcomes initiative is successful, it will result in substantial cost savings, and will be incorporated into the new health reform in Louisiana. It is hoped that once diverse delivery is successfully piloted and implemented in Louisiana, school districts will see its benefit, and voluntarily choose to provide some of their pre-k in community settings without a need for a specific state level coordinator. The BrightStart proposal for the design of a unified data

system will ultimately require new federal or state funding to implement but the planning will be completed through this grant effort. Fortunately, no young children or programs will suffer a direct adverse impact if there is a delay in obtaining new funding.

Since its inception, BrightStart has been sustained with only the small core funding of the SECCS grant. During this time, BrightStart has obtained other small federal, state, public and/or private grants as needed to achieve its goals. In part due to the work of BrightStart around public engagement, there has been a growing commitment from the private sector to developing an early childhood system. Local private foundations have increasingly contributed to the initiative. There is also a growing awareness among the private sector in general, including key members of the state's business community, about the importance of the early childhood period. A combined commitment from the state and private sectors will sustain the work. The BrightStart Advisory Council and staff will continue to monitor new federal and state funding opportunities to capitalize on those that could be used to continue to build our early childhood comprehensive system.

### **G. Conclusion**

Much work has already been accomplished in Louisiana in building a comprehensive early childhood system. However, what has been completed to date is only a starting point for addressing the great challenges we face as we try to improve the extremely poor outcomes of Louisiana's children and families. The proposed objectives and activities detailed in this application fully support the vision, mission and goals of BrightStart and can serve to move Louisiana forward in our work to build the infrastructure needed to provide high quality services for our young children.

### **III. STAFF AND POSITION DATA**

**POSITION TITLE: BrightStart/ECAC State Director (Geoffrey Nagle, PhD)**

Brief Biography: Dr. Geoff Nagle is the director of the Tulane University Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Tulane University School of Medicine. He serves as the state director of BrightStart, Louisiana's early childhood comprehensive systems initiative. BrightStart has been designated by Governor Jindal as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council. Geoff currently serves on numerous advisory groups and boards including the Governor's Children's Cabinet Advisory Board, the board of the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, and the board of the Institute of Mental Hygiene in New Orleans, among others. Geoff is a graduate of Duke University with a degree in political science. He moved to New Orleans in 1995 to attend graduate school at Tulane University where he earned a master's of social work degree in 1996 and a master's of public health degree in 1997. In 2002, he completed his doctoral work in Mental Health Policy Research, an interdisciplinary degree combining social work, biostatistics, and epidemiology.

**Job Description**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A master's degree plus four years of professional level experience in business operations, economics, health, mental health, public health, or in providing social services or health services or related field
- A master's degree in the above fields will substitute for two years of the experience
- A Ph.D. in the above fields will substitute for three years of the experience

**REPORTS TO:** Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet, the Principal Investigator of the SECCS Grant, and the Secretary of the Department for Children and Family Services.

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To provide leadership in the development and implementation of a comprehensive early childhood system in Louisiana and to direct and coordinate all activities of BrightStart.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Provide overall leadership to the early childhood comprehensive systems building effort in Louisiana
- Convene and chair all meetings of the BrightStart Advisory Council
- Plan and coordinate the activities needed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the BrightStart Advisory Council
- Consult with all BrightStart Advisory Council members as required in the implementation of grant objectives
- Convene BrightStart Workgroups as needed
- Represent the BrightStart Advisory Council at the Children's Cabinet and the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board to present reports and updates on the work of the BrightStart Advisory Council
- Ensure required updates and reports are delivered to the Children's Cabinet and the legislature on the activities of BrightStart

- Convene and conduct meetings with pertinent agencies and organizations to implement the goals and objectives of the BrightStart Advisory Council according to schedule

**POSITION TITLE: BrightStart/ECAC Assistant State Director (Melanie Bronfin, JD)**

Brief Biography: Melanie Bronfin is a public policy analyst at the Tulane University Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, and an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Tulane University School of Medicine. She has served as the assistant state coordinator of BrightStart since 2005. In her role with BrightStart, she has worked to develop and implement a strategic approach to bridging multiple funding streams and forging collaborative partnerships for cross service system integration in support of families and communities. Through this effort, she has been involved in the design and implementation of Louisiana's quality rating and improvement system and the Louisiana School Readiness Tax Credits, the expansion of eligibility for public pre-k and the creation of a statewide network for parent educators. She has also served as the project director for the Louisiana Home Visiting Campaign, an advocacy and educational effort funded by the Pew Center on the States.

**Job Description**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A baccalaureate degree plus two years of professional level experience in business operations, economics, health, mental health, public health, or in providing social services, health services or related field
- Eight years of full-time work experience in any field may be substituted for the degree only
- A master's degree in the above fields will substitute for two years of the experience
- A Ph.D. in the above fields will substitute for three years of the experience

**REPORTS TO:** BrightStart State Director

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To assist the State Director in the development and implementation of a comprehensive early childhood system in Louisiana and to assist in the direction and coordination of all BrightStart activities of the BrightStart.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Assist the State Director in providing overall leadership to the early childhood comprehensive systems building effort in Louisiana
- Assist the State Director in convening meetings of the BrightStart Advisory Council and establishing the agenda
- Assist the State Director in planning and coordinating the activities needed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the BrightStart Advisory Council
- Assist the State Director in consulting with all BrightStart Advisory Council members as required in the implementation of grant objectives
- Assist the State Director in preparing reports from the BrightStart Advisory Council for the Children's Cabinet

- Assist the State Director in convening and conducting meetings with pertinent agencies and organizations to implement the goals and objectives of the BrightStart Advisory Council according to schedule
- Assist the State Director in obtaining the commitment of agencies and organizations necessary for implementation of the BrightStart Advisory Committee activities

**POSITION TITLE: BrightStart Project Coordinator (vacant)**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A baccalaureate degree plus two years of professional level experience in business operations, economics, health, mental health, public health, or in providing social services, health services or related field
- A master's degree in the above fields is preferred and will substitute for two years of the experience
- Writing and organizational skills
- Knowledge and experience of relevant software applications - spreadsheets, word processing, and database management
- Ability to work well either alone or as part of a team

**REPORTS TO:** BrightStart State Director

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To assist the State Director in coordinating all components of BrightStart, monitoring and ensuring all responsibilities and functions are progressing as scheduled.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Maintain matrix of grant requirements and assure that timelines are met
- Work with State Director to coordinate Advisory Council agendas including speakers, maintain minutes, and make logistical arrangements
- Work with all workgroup chairs to maintain roster of members, set meetings, arrange logistics, maintain minutes
- Coordinate workgroups and their respective meetings/activities and to monitor their progress toward achieving the goals and objectives
- Maintain listserve and keep it updated
- Manage website and keep it updated
- Arrange regional meetings, public hearings and opportunities for comment

**POSITION TITLE: BrightStart Professional Development Coordinator (vacant)**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development preferred; BA with five years of experience in the early childhood education field
- Experience in the delivery of early childhood education and knowledge of current Louisiana Quality Start model, Head Start/Early Head Start, and/or state pre-kindergarten programs and professional development and quality assistance initiatives in the state

- Knowledge of child development and developmentally appropriate practice from infancy through school age
- Experience in program planning, development, accountability standards, data analysis
- Experience in writing curriculum is beneficial
- Possession of leadership qualities including good listening and communication skills

**REPORTS TO:** BrightStart State Director

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To lead effort to create an integrated professional development system in Louisiana for early childhood professionals

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Review make-up of current Professional Development Advisory Council, assist with transition to the Professional Development Workgroup, and identify potential additional members, as needed
- Participate in the review and revision of Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three, as part of the team being convened by DCFS and ensure that revised guidelines align with the recently completed revision of the Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four Year-Old Children
- Collaborate with the National Governor's Association grant initiative to develop and finalize a Professional Development Strategic Plan
- Review and evaluate Core Knowledge and Competencies from other states for early childhood professionals across early care and education settings
- Oversee development of age specific Core Knowledge and Competencies for Louisiana practitioners to assure that they have the information and knowledge to achieve excellence in implementation of programs for young children
- Meet with representatives of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and those four year institutions offering Early Childhood/Care and Development of Young Children programs (i.e. Departments of Family and Consumer Science and Human Ecology) to review existing articulation agreements and explore possible additional opportunities
- Explore the creation of a certification/credential for infant-toddler educators and directors and for early childhood educators
- Review and revise the current Louisiana career ladders (e.g., classroom, administrative, family child care) and incorporate the Core Knowledge and Competencies
- Complete assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of Higher Education to support the development of early childhood educators
- Conduct assessment of compensation parity and develop recommendations that identify policy solutions to address gaps; explore ways to provide improved wages/benefits for early childhood practitioners by studying other states and comparable industries
- Complete the development of a data system that describes the early childhood workforce and ongoing professional development opportunities

**POSITION TITLE:** BrightStart Early Childhood Data System Project Manager (vacant)

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- An MBA with technology as a core component preferred, but a baccalaureate degree in a computer-related field may be considered
- Experience in data system building efforts

**REPORTS TO:** BrightStart State Director

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To develop the framework for a statewide unified early childhood data system that is coordinated with existing P-20 and other data system efforts in the state.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Work closely with all of the key state departments involved in early childhood
- Coordinate with current state data system building efforts and ongoing efforts to obtain funding for P-20
- Establish the Early Childhood Data Workgroup and hold regular quarterly meetings
- Conduct interviews with key state agencies to obtain information about their current systems of data collection (i.e. use of data, limitations of data collection processes, system design information, etc.) to create a current data element list
- Develop ideas for unique identifier for each child, service provider, teacher
- Research how other states have successfully developed or implemented an early childhood data system and finalize report of successful state Early Childhood Data Systems in other states
- Draft recommendations for data collection strategies for data that should be included in an integrated early childhood data system, but that may not have the electronic systems in place that would enable data integration
- Develop recommendations for ways to address any legal barriers, including privacy (e.g., HIPAA, FERPA), to data sharing and use
- Create a design plan for the early childhood data system including maps of systems to illustrate data flow, use and access levels for users, and identification of areas of potential improvement in the ways that data can be linked
- Develop comprehensive data architecture of systems to be linked or integrated and ensure plan is compatible with P-20 effort
- Provide a cost estimate for implementing and maintaining the data system, including outlining how costs will vary depending on use by differing audiences and access levels
- Draft an RFP for contractors who will be responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the data system
- Develop technical assistance and training plans
- Assume other duties as assigned

**POSITION TITLE:** BrightStart Diverse Delivery Coordinator (vacant)

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development preferred; baccalaureate degree with five years of experience in the early childhood education field considered
- Certification by the Louisiana state Department of Education in nursery school education, kindergarten, or early intervention preferred
- Experience in the delivery of early childhood education
- Knowledge of child development and developmentally appropriate practice from infancy through school age
- Experience in program planning, development, accountability standards, data analysis, and program monitoring preferred
- Demonstration of ability to work collaboratively and in community
- Possession of leadership qualities including good listening and communication skills

**REPORTS TO:** As determined by the Department of Education

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To increase access to high quality prekindergarten (pre-k) by creating a model of diverse delivery of pre-k in community-based settings (e.g., child care or Head Start).

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Work with state and local leaders in DCFS, DOE, local educational authorities (LEAs), Head Start and child care to support and promote diverse delivery for pre-k through collaborations of LEAs with child care and Head Start settings
- Assist in the implementation of two or more diverse delivery collaborations for the 2010-11 school year
- Assist in researching and creating a crosswalk of rules, regulations, standards, eligibility requirements, evaluation requirements etc. that govern the different funding streams for pre-k to facilitate diverse delivery
- Assist in the research and exploration of models of braiding funding from various federal and state funding streams for pre-k programs (such as Head Start, child care assistance, LA 4, Title I etc.) to facilitate diverse delivery
- Assist in building partnerships between DCFS, DoE and LEAs and their community early childhood care and education partners
- Plan and carry out activities to increase the capacity of community-based child care providers to meet state pre-k standards
- Plan and deliver joint professional development that meets Quality Start and state pre-k program requirements
- Assist in designing model subcontracts between LEAs and community providers including budgets and program components
- Invite community-based child care providers, Head Start programs and school district personnel to "collaboration building meetings/conferences" to identify and promote opportunities for expansion of the diverse delivery model

**POSITION TITLE: BrightStart Early Childhood Data Epidemiologist (vacant)**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Master's Degree in epidemiology or a related field

- Excellent math skills and ability to easily interpret complex data and statistics
- Knowledge and experience of relevant software applications
- Ability to work well either alone or as part of a team
- Ability to produce reports

**REPORTS TO:** BrightStart State Director

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To complete and update the Risk and Reach Report and support the improving birth outcomes objectives.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Respond to data requests from all BrightStart staff, members and stakeholders
- Finalize the Risk Report
- Develop the Reach Report and integrate it into Risk and Reach Report
- Continuously update the Risk and Reach Report
- Develop presentations for the BrightStart Advisory Council as requested
- Work under the guidance of the state CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist to create a birth outcomes registry, including reportable diseases and chronic health conditions, and manage the registry
- Assist the Birth Outcomes Initiative Director and the CDC assigned MCH Epidemiologist with the design of the evaluation plan for the Interconception Care Program and complete the program evaluation
- Staff the BrightStart Birth Outcomes Workgroup
- Provide data management of the evaluation for the Interconception Care program
- Assume other duties as assigned

**POSITION TITLE: BrightStart Louisiana Parenting Education Network Director (vacant)**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Master's degree preferred in social work, education, counseling, or equivalent training in other related field
- Preference given to previous experience in parenting education, program development, and program implementation
- Experience in program planning, development, accountability standards, data analysis, and program monitoring preferred
- Grant writing and computer skills preferred
- Demonstration of ability to work collaboratively

**REPORTS TO:** BrightStart State Director

**FUNCTION of WORK:** To assist LAPEN in providing infrastructure and support for parent educators, and to assist in the implementation of evidence based models of parenting education, including Triple P, by providing infrastructure, technical support, trainings, and ensuring fidelity to the chosen models.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Coordinate LAPEN activities and functions including maintenance of website
- Coordinate meetings of the LAPEN Guidance Team and other LAPEN Committees
- Assist in the development of a career ladder for parent educators
- Promote the registry of parent educators among public and private agencies
- Review and analyze the data collected by the LAPEN registry as to the background and training of parent educators and the curriculums and models being used in the state
- Compile a list of parenting education models being used in Louisiana and research whether the models are evidence based
- Coordinate the annual LAPEN Summit and other trainings
- Maintain contacts with national organizations such as the National Parenting Education Network and the National Resource Center for Community-Based Abuse Prevention
- Assist BrightStart with other projects related to parenting education as assigned

#### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**

As described above, BrightStart grew out of the SECCS grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services, which began in Louisiana in 2004. BrightStart is conducted under the auspices and guidance of the Louisiana Children's Cabinet and its Advisory Board. Additionally, Senate Concurrent Resolution 83 (Appendix 1), passed in the 2008 Legislative Session, calls upon all the state agencies that serve young children to participate in BrightStart. The work of the initiative has been guided by the BrightStart Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from all state agencies serving young children, as well as representatives from the Legislature and nongovernmental child-serving organizations. Governor Bobby Jindal has designated BrightStart as Louisiana's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). (Governor Jindal's letter is provided in Appendix 5 and the Governance and Funding Organizational Charts are in Appendix 7). The BrightStart Steering Committee has been expanded and reconstituted as the BrightStart Advisory Council, and will serve as our state's ECAC. As directed by Governor Jindal, BrightStart will provide written updates to the Louisiana's Children Cabinet by January 31<sup>st</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup> of each year on the status and progress of the ECAC.

The funding for BrightStart includes the federal SECCS grant which is administered by the Louisiana Maternal and Child Health Program in the Office of Public Health, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. The designated lead agency for the current planning grant will be the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. BrightStart is also supported at times by grants from private, local foundations.

## **V. BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

### **Non-Federal Share**

The non-federal share comes from Louisiana's investment in the School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) and the Refundable Child Care Credit. As detailed in this application, the SRTC are a package of state tax credits tied to Quality Start, Louisiana's quality rating and improvement system for child care. In 2009 (for the 2008 tax year), the first year, \$3.7 million of state funds in SRTC were issued. Data for the 2009 tax year was recently provided by the Louisiana Department of Revenue and shows that the SRTC has increased by 37%, up to \$5.1 million (for the 2009 tax year). These state tax credits will continue to increase each year as the quality of child care increases as determined by the state rating system. The SRTC are a critical component in assisting child care centers to improve their quality of care.

The Refundable Child Care Credit is a credit to families with incomes less than \$25,000 per year and is intended to help offset the cost of child care and to thereby support the child care system in the state.