

## 7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). The quality activities should be aligned with a statewide or territory-wide assessment of the state's or territory's need to carry out such services and care. States and territories are required to report on these quality improvement investments through CCDF in three ways:

1. In the Plan, states and territories will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the 3-year period (658G(b); 98.16(j)).
2. ACF will collect annual data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality activities using the expenditure report (ACF-696). This report will be used to determine compliance with the required quality and infant and toddler spending requirements (658G(d)(1); 98.53(f)).
3. For each year of the Plan period, states and territories will submit a separate annual Quality Progress Report that will include a description of activities to be funded by quality expenditures and the measures used by the state/territory to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory (658G(d); 98.53(f)).

States and territories must fund efforts in at least one of the following 10 activities:

- Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

- Improving on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services
- Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers
- Establishing or expanding a statewide system of child care resource and referral services
- Supporting compliance with state/territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety (as described in section 5)
- Evaluating the quality of child care programs in the state/territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children
- Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- Performing other activities to improve the quality of child care services, as long as outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry are possible.

Throughout this Plan, states and territories will describe the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made, including but not limited to, quality set-aside funds and will describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services for each expenditure (98.53(f)) These activities can benefit infants and toddlers through school age populations.

This section covers the quality activities needs assessment and quality improvement activities and indicators of progress for each of the activities undertaken in the state or territory.

## 7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment for Child Care Services

**7.1.1 Lead Agencies must invest in quality activities based on an assessment of the state/territory's needs to carry out those activities. Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design an assessment of their quality activities that best meet their needs, including how often they do the assessment. Describe your state/territory assessment process, including the frequency of assessment (658G(a)(1); 98.53(a)).**

The Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) is responsible for coordination of state systems in order to provide quality efficient, effective, and accessible services for young children. AECCC includes representatives from both the public and private sectors and members generally meet quarterly. The AECCC as a council develops priorities that address the needs of the early care and learning system. Those priorities inform the planning efforts and activities that will occur. The priorities are reviewed and updated annually. The System for Early Education Development (SEED) professional development system and Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System are both integral systems in which the lead agency coordinates with to carry out quality activities. The SEED committee does a strategic plan every three years to assess needs. Learn & Grow has an annual operating plan which assesses needs, as well as a 5-year strategic plan. Other committees engaged in assessing state needs and working on quality activities include but are not limited to: AECCC committees Healthy Start and Strong Families, High Quality Early Care and Education, Data and Systems Alignment, Innovation and Long Term Investment, Public Engagement and Community Partnerships; Developmental Screenings task force; ECE obesity prevention committee; and the Strengthening Families Leadership team. Each individual committee has it's own frequency of updating strategic plans and assessments, which can range from quarterly to every 3-5 years.

**7.1.2 Describe the findings of the assessment and if any overarching goals for quality improvement were identified.**

The Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) priorities and goals are a result of cross sector collaboration and involvement in strategic planning efforts. The AECCC engages in strategic planning efforts that include reviewing federal and state requirements, assessing state needs, reviewing data, and considering national best practice. The council is focused on recommendations that include but are not limited to: expanding early childhood

services to new children and families through in and out of home services; identifying methods to increase the pay in early childhood settings, particularly for those with higher degrees; implementing a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); increasing awareness of the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines; embedding Strengthening Families protective factors through systems across the board; supporting and promoting a local partnerships grant process to invest in early childhood and family support; ensuring well child exams are accessible to all children in Alaska; and seeking to ensure every child and their family has full access to age appropriate services that promote physical, emotional, and behavioral health and safety.

## 7.2 Use of Quality Funds

### 7.2.1 Check the quality improvement activities in which the state/territory is investing

Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce. If checked, respond to section 7.3 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Developing, maintaining, or implementing early learning and developmental guidelines. If checked, respond to section 6.3 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system. If checked, respond to 7.4 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers. If checked, respond to 7.5 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services, as discussed in 1.7. If checked, respond to 7.6 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Facilitating compliance with state/territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety standards (as described in section 5). If checked, respond to 7.7 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the state/territory. If checked, respond to 7.8 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Supporting accreditation. If checked, respond to 7.9 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Supporting state/territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development. If checked, respond to 7.10 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

Other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of child care services and which measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry is possible. If checked, respond to 7.11 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply

CCDF funds

Other funds

Describe:

### 7.3 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce With CCDF Quality Funds

Lead Agencies can invest in the training, professional development, and post-secondary education of the child care workforce as part of a progression of professional development activities, such as those included at 98.44 in addition to the following (98.53(a)(1)).

#### **7.3.1 Describe how the state/territory funds the training and professional development of the child care workforce**

a) Check and describe which content is included in training and professional development activities and describe who or how an entity is funded to address this topic.

Check all that apply.

- Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those efforts related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically based, developmentally appropriate, and age-appropriate strategies

Describe:

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers approved training and/or makes training referrals to the workforce. All thread training includes alignment to Alaska's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies, the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines, developmentally and age appropriate strategies and national best practices. Licensed child care providers have caregiver qualifications including an orientation which includes but is not limited to nutrition and age-appropriate feeding; and access to physical activity. Additionally, scholarships are available through the University of Alaska system through a Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA) with the CCDF Lead Agency. This scholarship provides students working in the field with scholarship funds to support higher education in early childhood courses including social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including nutrition and physical activity.

- Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and early childhood mental health and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool-age children from birth to age five for such behaviors. (See also section 2.5.)

Describe:

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), provides an array of positive behavioral interventions and approved training to the workforce. All thread training includes alignment to Alaska's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies, the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines, developmentally appropriate and age appropriate strategies and national best practices. Specific trainings include, but are not limited to: Pyramid Model Foundations, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Brain Development. Additionally, thread provides individual child consultation when requested by programs. Scholarships are available through the University of Alaska system through a Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA) with the CCDF Lead Agency. This

scholarship provides students working in the field with scholarship funds to support higher education in early childhood courses including behavior management strategies, positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and early childhood mental health and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool-age children from birth to age 5 for such behaviors. Finally, the CCDF Lead Agency provides behavior guidance chats to licensed programs.

- Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development

Describe:

- Implementing developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and evidence-based curricula and designing learning environments that are aligned with state/territory early learning and developmental standards.

Describe:

- Providing onsite or accessible comprehensive services for children and developing community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development

Describe:

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers training on Strengthening Families (SF). One of the SF protective factors is for families to have an understanding of child development and appropriate expectations for their child's age/skill level, and another is for families to get connected with resources and supports, and the providers are assisted in developing community resources files. This training is offered in three regional hubs and may look different regionally.

- Using data to guide program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement

Describe:

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO),

provides an array of training and technical assistance around guiding programs through continuous improvement practices. SEED, housed and managed at thread, administers Alaska's Early Childhood Administrator Credential, which includes courses that instruct a program on how to use data based decision making to guide program evaluation and ensure continuous improvement. Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS) requires administrators to achieve this credential. Scholarships are available through the University of Alaska system through a Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA) with the CCDF Lead Agency. This scholarship provides students working in the field with scholarship funds to support higher education in early childhood courses to meet the requirements of Alaska's Early Childhood Administrator Credential, including human resources and fiscal management to guide programs in continuous improvement.

[Caring for children of families in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment](#)

[Describe:](#)

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers training on Strengthening Families (SF). One of the protective factors within SF is "concrete supports in time of need" and talks about how family situations change and the need to provide concrete supports. There is information about community resources to support families for a variety of situations including homelessness or unemployment.

[Caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities and developmental delays](#)

[Describe:](#)

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers a variety of courses related to supporting the individual needs of children with disabilities and developmental delays. All thread training includes alignment to Alaska's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies, the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines, developmentally appropriate and age appropriate strategies and national best practices. Some training topics include: Positive Behavioral Supports and working with challenging behaviors, Brain Development, Inclusionary Practices,

and Understanding the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and IDEA law. Additionally, scholarships are available through the University of Alaska system through a Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA) with the CCDF Lead Agency. This scholarship provides students working in the field with scholarship funds to support higher education in early childhood courses including caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities.

Supporting the positive development of school-age children

Describe:

Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, funded by a grant through the CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers courses related to supporting the positive development of school age children. Three topics that are offered are: Ready or Not; School Age Engagement; and Get Moving with School Ageders.

Other

Describe:

b) Check how the state/territory connects child care providers with available federal and state/territory financial aid or other resources to pursue post-secondary education relevant for the early childhood and school-age workforce. Check all that apply

Coaches, mentors, consultants, or other specialists available to support access to post-secondary training, including financial aid and academic counseling

Statewide or territory-wide, coordinated, and easily accessible clearinghouse (i.e., an online calendar, a listing of opportunities) of relevant post-secondary education opportunities

Financial awards, such as scholarships, grants, loans, or reimbursement for expenses, from the state/territory to complete post-secondary education

Other

Describe:

### **7.3.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, conducts training evaluations following each in –person or web based training. The percentage of respondents who report increased knowledge after attending a training is the indicator of success. The financial supports made available to child care providers are consistently expended to the fullest. As individuals continue to use these funds the CCDF Lead Agency can track the progress of the individuals advancement on the System for Early Education and Development (SEED) Career Ladder. This advancement data will be a measure of progress on the use of these funds improving the quality of the workforce and child care programs.

## **7.4 Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)**

Lead Agencies may respond in this section based on other systems of quality improvement, even if not called a QRIS, as long as the other quality improvement system contains the elements of a QRIS. QRIS refers to a systematic framework for evaluating, improving and communicating the level of quality in early childhood programs and contains five key elements:

1. Program standards
2. Supports to programs to improve quality
3. Financial incentives and supports
4. Quality assurance and monitoring
5. Outreach and consumer education

### **7.4.1 Does your state/territory have a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality improvement?**

- No, but the state/territory is in the QRIS development phase. If no, skip to 7.5.1.

No, the state/territory has no plans for QRIS development. If no, skip to 7.5.1.

Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS operating statewide or territory-wide

Describe how the QRIS is administered (e.g., statewide or locally or through CCR&R entities) and any partners and provide a link, if available.

Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS initiative operating as a pilot-test in a few localities or only a few levels but does not have a fully operating initiative on a statewide or territory-wide basis.

Provide a link, if available. The link to Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS), Learn & Grow is: <http://threadalaska.org/>

Yes, the state/territory has another system of quality improvement

If the response is yes to any of the above, describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

Learn & Grow currently collects information on number of eligible programs participating, level of achievement, number of children enrolled by quality level, number of children on child care assistance participating by level of quality, and administrator and teacher demographic information related to education and salary.

## 7.4.2 QRIS participation

a) Are providers required to participate in the QRIS?

Participation is voluntary

Participation is mandatory for providers serving children receiving a subsidy. If checked, describe the relationship between QRIS participation and subsidy (e.g., minimum rating required, reimbursed at higher rates for achieving higher ratings, participation at any level).

Participation is required for all providers.

b) Which types of settings or distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care participate in the state/territory's QRIS? Check all that apply

- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes
- License-exempt providers
- Early Head Start programs
- Head Start programs
- State prekindergarten or preschool programs
- Local district-supported prekindergarten programs
- Programs serving infants and toddlers
- Programs serving school-age children
- Faith-based settings
- Tribally operated programs
- Other

Describe:

### 7.4.3 Support and assess the quality of child care providers.

The Lead Agency may invest in the development, implementation, or enhancement of a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services. Note: If a Lead Agency decides to invest CCDF quality dollars in a QRIS, that agency can use the funding to assist in meeting consumer education requirements (98.33). If the Lead Agency has a QRIS, respond to questions 7.4.3 through 7.4.6.

Do the state/territory's quality improvement standards align with or have reciprocity with any of the following standards?

- No
- Yes. If yes, check the type of alignment, if any, between the state/territory's quality standards and other standards. Check all that apply.
  - Programs that meet state/territory preK standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the

same, there is a reciprocal agreement between preK programs and the quality improvement system) .

- Programs that meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between Head Start programs and the quality improvement system).
- Programs that meet national accreditation standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, an alternative pathway exists to meeting the standards).
- Programs that meet all or part of state/territory school-age quality standards.
- Other.

Describe:

#### **7.4.4 Do the state/territory's quality standards build on its licensing requirements and other regulatory requirements?**

- No
- Yes. If yes, check any links between the state/territory's quality standards and licensing requirements
  - Requires that a provider meet basic licensing requirements to qualify for the base level of the QRIS.
  - Embeds licensing into the QRIS
  - State/territory license is a "rated" license
  - Other.

Describe:

#### **7.4.5 Does the state/territory provide financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services that are provided through the QRIS**

- No

Yes. If yes, check all that apply

- One time grants, awards, or bonuses.
- Ongoing or periodic quality stipends
- Higher subsidy payments
- Training or technical assistance related to QRIS.
- Coaching/mentoring.
- Scholarships, bonuses, or increased compensation for degrees/certificates
- Materials and supplies
- Priority access for other grants or programs
- Tax credits (providers or parents)
- Payment of fees (e.g., licensing, accreditation)
- Other

Describe:

**7.4.6 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

Learn & Grow has three internal program goals associated with Phase I. 1) 25% eligible program participants; 2) 85% of enrolled programs will achieve Level 1; and 3) 20% of Level 1 programs will achieve Level 2. The CCDF Lead Agency has also developed a performance measure for Learn & Grow by the number and percent of child care facilities advancing annually to the next level of Learn & Grow. The target for this performance measure is 5% or more of facilities participating in Learn & Grow advance to the next level annually.

## 7.5 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

Lead Agencies are encouraged to use the needs assessment to systematically review and improve the overall quality of care that infants and toddlers receive, the systems in place or needed to support and enhance the quality of infant and toddler providers, the capacity of the infant and toddler workforce to meet the unique needs of very young children, and the methods in place to increase the proportion of infants and toddlers in higher quality care, including any partnerships or coordination with Early Head Start and IDEA Part C programs. Lead Agencies are required to spend 3 percent of their total CCDF expenditures on activities to improve the supply and quality of their infant and toddler care. This is in addition to the general quality set-aside requirement.

### **7.5.1 What activities are being implemented by the state/territory to improve the supply (see also section 4) and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers? Check all that apply and describe**

- Establishing or expanding high-quality community- or neighborhood-based family and child development centers. These centers can serve as resources to child care providers to improve the quality of early childhood services for infants and toddlers from low-income families and to improve eligible child care providers' capacity to offer high-quality, age-appropriate care to infants and toddlers from low-income families

Describe:

- Establishing or expanding the operation of community- or neighborhood-based family child care networks.

Describe:

- Providing training and professional development to enhance child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers

Describe:

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, offers training and professional development in a number of topics to support the field. There are specific courses to infants and toddlers on developmentally appropriate practices and focuses on Alaska's

Early Learning Guidelines and Alaska's Core Knowledge and Competencies. The training titles included in FY18 were: Keeping Children Safe: SIDS, SBS, and Child Abuse; Readers are Born on the Laps of Responsive Adults - The Power of Language in Infant and Toddler Classrooms ; Brain Development and Early Literacy in the Very Young Child ; Backyard Bird Feeders for Infants and Toddlers; Fun fall harvest for Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers ; Flush Your Fears and Frustrations Away when It's Time to Toilet Train Children in your Care; and an Infant/Toddler behavior series. The "Intro to the Environment Rating Scale (ERS)" which was offered multiple times in FY18. included a break out session by age group and included the ITERS.

- Providing coaching, mentoring, and/or technical assistance on this age group's unique needs from statewide or territory-wide networks of qualified infant-toddler specialists

Describe:

- Coordinating with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.).

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), holds regular and ongoing meetings with the Infant Learning Program under Part C. The purpose of these meetings is to coordinate and collaborate on efforts to support the needs of infants and toddlers in child care. Results of this coordination include but are not limited to: shared training opportunities; memorandum of understanding to provide access to developmental screenings for families through their child care provider; coordination on committees and councils; and coordination on consumer education resources to staff, families, and child care providers.

- Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's QRIS, including classroom inventories and assessments

Describe:

- Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's child care licensing regulations

Describe:

- Developing infant and toddler components within the early learning and developmental guidelines

Describe:

Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines are broken down by four age groups and are structured as follows: Domain; Sub-Domain; Domain Component; Goal Statement; Age Group; Indicators; and Strategies. Each goal is accompanied by a specific set of indicators for each of the four age groups. The four age groups are birth-18 months; 18-36 months; 36-60 months; and 60 months to Kindergarten entry.

- Improving the ability of parents to access transparent and easy-to-understand consumer information about high-quality infant and toddler care that includes information on infant and toddler language, social-emotional, and both early literacy and numeracy cognitive development

Describe:

Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELG's) are accessible and available to parents from the websites of thread, Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Department of Education and Early Development, and Best Beginnings. Best Beginnings is a public-private partnership that mobilizes people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed. Best Beginnings offers additional activities that accompany Alaska's ELG's for parents to use. The activity guides are available for infants, toddlers, or preschool, and are available in English, Spanish, and Yup'ik.

- Carrying out other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided within the state/territory and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, cognitive and physical development, and/or well-being

Describe:

Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, offers Quality Initiatives (QI) to licensed child care providers. A QI is an opportunity for early care and learning programs to participate in professional development around a specific early care and learning topic. All Quality Initiatives through thread involve training, goal setting with the development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as well as consultation and a financial stipend to support goal implementation. Upon completion of the Quality Initiative requirements, programs may receive financial support to defray the costs of training

and/or implementing goals based on the QIP. Thread offers a QI on infant/toddler to support the quality of infant and toddler care. In the Spring of FY18 6 spots for the infant /toddler QI's were offered. Participants had to complete training, develop goals, and got up to 5 hours of TA. When they completed the requirements they got over \$1,000 in materials. The design of this QI ensures the wrap around supports a provider would need to ensure the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health, safety, and overall well being.

Coordinating with child care health consultants.

Describe:

Coordinating with mental health consultants.

Describe:

Other

Describe:

**7.5.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), is still in development of collecting the data and implementing measures of progress for each individual strategy being implemented to improve the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

## 7.6 Child Care Resource and Referral

A Lead Agency may expend funds to establish or expand a statewide system of child care resource and referral services (98.53(a)(5)). It can be coordinated, to the extent determined appropriate by the Lead Agency, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based, or regionally based lead child care resource and referral organization (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii)). This effort may include activities done by local or regional child care and resource referral agencies, as discussed in section 1.7.

### **7.6.1 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

The four (4) target populations served are: Families, Child Care Providers, Communities and the Early Care and Learning System. The proposal must describe performance measures (“what” they are going to measure and “how” they are going to measure it) in order to achieve the desired outcomes. To support the goals of the Office of Child Care (OCC), Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Assistance (DPA), and the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), the programs goals and performance measures for each target population for this grant are outlined below.

#### Families:

Goal 1: Increased family knowledge of the characteristics of high quality child care.

Performance measure: family survey results indicate an increased knowledge of characteristics of high quality child care.

Target: 1-2% increase each year until 65% or more of family survey respondents indicate increased knowledge of the characteristics of quality. After 65% reassess maximum threshold.

Goal 2: Market and provide child care referral services statewide.

Performance measure: as measured by the number of child care referrals.

Target: Provide a minimum of 10,000 referrals each year.

#### Child Care Providers:

Goal 1: Advance the knowledge in early care and learning of staff working in licensed and

regulated child care facilities.

Performance measure: Number and percent of early educators who reported an increase in their knowledge after receiving training.

Target: 1-2% increase each year until 75% of survey respondents indicated an increase in their knowledge. After 75% is achieved, reassess maximum threshold possible.

Communities:

Goal 1: Engaging, educating, and advocating with entities and organizations about the importance of high quality child care, its impact on the economy and how they can make a difference.

Performance measure: Measured by collaboration and outreach efforts.

Target: a minimum of 5 collaboration and outreach efforts per year.

Early Care and Learning System:

Goal 1: Increase the quality of child care facilities in Alaska.

Performance measure: Number and percent of child care facilities advancing annually to the next level of Learn & Grow.

Target: 5% or more of child care facilities participating in Learn & Grow advance to the next level annually.

Goal 2: Advance the professional development of staff working in licensed and regulated child care facilities.

Performance measure: Number and percent of staff working in a licensed or regulated child care facility advance on the System for Early Education and Development (SEED) Career Ladder.

Target: 10% or more of participants advance on the SEED Career Ladder annually.

## [7.7 Facilitating Compliance With State Standards](#)

**7.7.1 What strategies does your state/territory fund with CCDF quality funds to facilitate child care providers' compliance with state/territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety and with state/territory licensing standards? Describe:**

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO) measures the quality and effectiveness of child care programs through on-site health and safety inspections and compliance with the Child Care Licensing or Child Care Assistance Program regulations. The CCPO uses CCDF quality funds to administer the Child Care Licensing Program to ensure compliance with state standards. The CCPO provides financial assistance through the System for Early Education and Development (SEED) and scholarship funding through the University of Alaska, which supports individuals in meeting education and training requirements. Additionally, the CCPO administers the Child Care Grant (CCG) program. The purpose of the CCG is to promote quality child care by assisting licensed child care providers who care for children of families participating in the State of Alaska CCAP, with costs associated with their facilities. The CCG promotes quality child care by supporting and encouraging professional development, the retention of early childhood care and education professionals, and safe and healthy environments for children in care. As part of the CCG, eligible providers can receive a monthly reimbursement towards improving the quality of their facility. The areas of quality supported are as follows: to support staff salaries, wages, and benefits; costs for substitute care providers; health and safety related costs; supplies, activities, and equipment for the children in care; and education and training related to child development.

**7.7.2 Does the state/territory provide financial assistance to support child care providers in complying with minimum health and safety requirements?**

- No
- Yes. If yes, which types of providers can access this financial assistance?
  - Licensed CCDF providers
  - Licensed non-CCDF providers
  - License-exempt CCDF providers
  - Other

Describe:

### **7.7.3 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), is still in development of collecting the data and implementing measures of progress for each individual strategy being implemented to improve the quality of child care programs and services.

## **7.8 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services**

### **7.8.1 Describe how the state/territory measures the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services in both child care centers and family child care homes currently being offered, including any tools used to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, or provider improvements, and how the state/territory evaluates how those tools positively impact children**

Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS) is housed and managed at thread, Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Currently phase I of Learn & Grow is available to all licensed child care programs throughout the state of Alaska. Participation is voluntary. Phase I includes Levels 1 and 2 of a five leveled system. In level 2 of Learn & Grow, the facility will have an environmental rating assessment done using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ICERS).

**7.8.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the State/Territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in child care centers and family child care homes within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), is still in development of collecting the data and implementing measures of progress for each individual strategy being implemented to improve the quality of child care programs and services. The CCDF Lead Agency, the CCPO will monitor annually the number and percent of facilities participating in Learn & Grow that advance to the next level.

**7.9 Accreditation Support**

**7.9.1 Does the state/territory support child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality?**

- Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for both child care centers and family child care homes

Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers and family child care homes to achieve accreditation

Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, offers Quality Initiatives (QI) to licensed child care providers. A QI is an opportunity for early care and learning programs to participate in professional development around a specific early care and learning topic. All Quality Initiatives through thread involve training, goal setting with the development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as well as consultation and a financial stipend to support goal implementation. Upon completion of the Quality Initiative requirements, programs may receive financial support to defray the costs of training and/or implementing goals based on the QIP. The QI on Accreditation is open to any

provider interested in becoming accredited, and assists them in becoming familiar with the accreditation requirements and allows programs the opportunity to reflect on the quality of their services and how these compare to national practices.

- Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for child care centers only. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers.

Describe:

- Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for family child care homes only. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to family child care

Describe:

- Yes, the state/territory has supports operating as a pilot-test or in a few localities but not statewide or territory-wide

- Focused on child care centers

Describe:

- Focused on family child care homes

Describe:

- No, but the state/territory is in the accreditation development phase

- Focused on child care centers

Describe:

- Focused on family child care homes

Describe:

- No, the state/territory has no plans for accreditation development

**7.9.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

The measurable indicators of progress is the amount of providers who become accredited after receiving the support of the Quality Initiative attached to the evaluation process for the mini grant.

**7.10 Program Standards**

**7.10.1 Describe how the state/territory supports state/territory or local efforts to develop or adopt high-quality program standards, including standards for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and/or school-age children**

Not applicable.

**7.10.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures**

Not applicable.

## 7.11 Early Learning and Development Guidelines and Other Quality Improvement Activities

**7.11.1 If quality funds are used to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and development guidelines, describe the measureable indicators that will be used to evaluate the state/territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services and the data on the extent to which the state/territory has met these measures (98.53(f)(3)).**

CCDF quality funds are not currently used to develop, maintain, or implement Alaska's early learning and developmental guidelines.

**7.11.2 List and describe any other activities that the state/territory provides to improve the quality of child care services for infants and toddlers, preschool-aged, and school-aged children, which may include consumer and provider education activities, and also describe the measureable indicators of progress for each activity relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. Describe:**

Not applicable.