



Southern Regional Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education

Survey on the Status of Implementation Efforts

Your State:	District of Columbia
Your Name:	Barbara Ferguson Kamara
Title:	Executive Director
Name of Agency:	Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood Development
Mailing Address:	717 14 th Street, NW, Suite 1200 Washington, DC 20005
E-Mail Address:	barbara.kamara@dc.gov
Phone:	202-727-1839

Goal 1: All children and families will have the benefit of a quality, comprehensive and coordinated early care and education system.

1.1 Public policy at the federal, state and local level will require planning and coordination across major systems to improve quality, including Head Start, state pre-kindergarten, subsidized child care and licensing.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development (MACECD) serves as the umbrella organization focused on planning, coordination and quality through its subcommittees on Accreditation, Professional Development, Data and Needs Assessment, Head Start, Health Promotion and Recognition and Conferences. Agencies represented on the MACECD include school system, licensing, health, parks and recreation, child care, Head Start collaboration, infants and toddlers with disabilities and institutions of higher education. In addition there is representation from community based not for profit and for profit providers, faith based providers, Head Start grantee and delegate agencies and advocates.

MACECD committee of the whole met five times during this period and its subcommittees met in addition.

A task force on four-year-old standards was established and met monthly during the period and produced draft standards that will apply to all four-year-olds in the District regardless of auspice.

The Kellogg Foundation funded SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) DC initiative and sponsored a forum on national accreditation for public schools in three of the eight wards. Three of these schools committed to attain national accreditation for their pre-kindergarten, Head Start and kindergarten classrooms.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The District continued the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System as an incentive for improving the quality of child care. In 2001 the District launched the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of Columbia that provides professional development opportunities to child care workers at all levels.

The District of Columbia was awarded a Kellogg Foundation SPARK grant. An ongoing partnership across District of Columbia systems has been building since early 2001. This partnership includes city agencies, Dept. of Park and Recreation, Dept. of Health, DC Public Schools, City Council members, Head Start programs, representative from the university community and community based groups. The partnership has been working to develop common early learning guidelines, school readiness expectations, clear school readiness system's alignment agreements and public awareness campaigns.

As a result, additional initiatives and grants were awarded to enhance school readiness plans. See below:

District of Columbia Kellogg Foundation, Supporting Partnerships to:

- ❖ Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) Grant, administered by the National Black Child Development Institute;

- ❖ Regional Pre-kindergarten Planning Project, administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers;
- ❖ District of Columbia City Councilman Chavous' "UNIVERSAL SCHOOL ACCESS" legislation; and
- ❖ US DHHS/ACF "Early Learning Opportunities Grant."

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

Policy changes at the federal level including Welfare Reform in 1996 led to increased dollars being available for child care and provided greater flexibility for state and local governments to provide a seamless system since four major funding streams, each with its own rules, were combined into one. The District of Columbia used this opportunity and has consistently transferred funds from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant to the Child Care Development block grant increasing the number of children receiving child care subsidies significantly to a peak of 24,000 children in FY01 or 74% of the 31,500 children deemed to be eligible for subsidies. (Source number of children eligible U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

The District of Columbia Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) includes the Head Start State Collaborative Office and the Early Intervention Program, which increases coordination among these programs.

In 2000, the District implemented the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System to provide incentives for improving the quality of child care. Differential reimbursement rates are paid based on facilities meeting specific criteria including accreditation at the highest level.

Quality Care for Children Initiative (QCCI), 1999.

QCCI provides training and technical assistance to early care and education providers from the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Tiered Rate Reimbursement System, 2000

To increase quality early care and education programs by increasing rate reimbursements to providers according to quality criteria.

1.2 *Public policy at the federal, state and local level will support families by linking early care and education programs to health coverage, physical and mental health care, nutrition, economic support, transportation and parenting education services.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

SPARK DC AND ECCS.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The District of Columbia has a customer service position that assists customers applying for subsidized child care with other social service needs including health care, housing, and training or education. The Office of Early Childhood Development has

partnered with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the Income Maintenance Administration to provide information, referral and intake services to shared customers. Child care eligibility workers provide presentations at DOES job training orientations and conduct intake at job training and job placement locations throughout the city. This “one-stop” model makes obtaining services from multiple agencies more convenient for customers.

The Office of Early Childhood Development also administers, through an agreement with a nonprofit community based organization, a parenting collaborative that provides education and support for parents.

The District’s Head Start programs and subsidized child care program have partnered and used “blended rates” to provide full-day, full-year services to children. The blended rates have continued to be used to meet the needs of children and their families.

Beginning in 2001 the District of Columbia began developing a Child Care Health Consultant Corps and citywide Home Visitor Council. These two bodies began the work of educating and coordinating health promotion messages and recruitment campaign for SCHIP sign ups for parents throughout the District.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia was awarded a Healthy Child Care America Grant to build supportive health services for families of children in child care. Through this grant annual Multi-Cultural Family Health Festivals were held to develop a public education framework for early childhood health promotion.

1.3 *Federal, state and local policies and systems will ensure coordinated, seamless transitions for children moving among early care and education programs and into kindergarten.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The National Black Child Development Institute with funding from the Kellogg Foundation initiated a planning process on coordination and transition in January 2002. During 2002, a series of planning meetings was held with key stakeholders including: the Office of Early Childhood Development, the District of Columbia Public Schools and the Department of Maternal and Child Health, as well as other agencies, community leaders and child care providers. Beginning in September 2003, three sites will pilot transition and coordination strategies.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The Director of the Office of Early Childhood Development and other officials persuaded the Kellogg Foundation to include the District of Columbia in their national SPARK Initiative (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) - focused on seamless transitions in early care and education.

The Head Start program hired a Transition Coordinator and the Office of Early Childhood Development arranged for her to present transition workshops for child care providers as well.

Transition is a critical element of the partnerships listed in item 1.1.

Goal 2: Rigorous licensing requirements and/or regulatory processes will be enacted to ensure that children are adequately protected in all early care and education settings.

2.1 States will establish staff-child ratios and maximum group sizes for centers and homes that meet NAEYC¹, NAFCC², APHA³ or AAP⁴ national standards.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The District of Columbia Child Development Facilities Regulations (29 DCMR, Chapter 3) mandates established staff-child ratios and maximum group sizes for centers and homes meeting the NAEYC and NAFCC standards. The District of Columbia has completed drafting the proposed regulations, which are currently undergoing legal review by the D.C. Office of the District Attorney.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The District of Columbia is in the process of revising its child development facility regulations. We anticipate that these regulations will be published in calendar year 2003.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia Child Development Facilities Licensure Regulation (DCMR Title 29, Chapter 3) has established, since 1970s, specific staff-child ratios and maximum group sizes for centers and homes that meet NAEYC and NAFCC standards.

2.2 States will develop and enforce health, fire and safety requirements for all early care and education settings that reflect standards set forth by the APHA and the AAP.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The District of Columbia Child Development Facilities Regulations has specific health, fire and safety requirements similar to those of the APHA and the APP for all licensed child development facilities.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Same as below.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia Child Development Facilities Licensure Regulation has specific health, fire and safety requirements for all child care facilities similar to those set forth by the APHA and the AAP.

2.3 State law will require strict enforcement of licensing requirements. States will use a range of sanctions that will include license revocation when a provider is unable or unwilling to meet requirements.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The Department of Health, Health Regulation Administration, Child and Residential Care Facilities Division has the legal mandate to impose enforcement actions against providers who are noncompliant. The range of enforcement actions, include: imposition of civil fines, suspension, summary suspension, license denial and revocation of license.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Same as below.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia Department of Health is the licensing agency for child development facilities. It has a range of enforcement authority including civil infraction and denial, suspension and revocation of a license.

2.4 States will conduct at least three unannounced monitoring visits per year to verify compliance with requirements.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The District of Columbia, Department of Health regulatory workforce facilitated at least one (1) unannounced licensure renewal inspection for all licensed providers. Approximately 90% of these inspections required unannounced onsite, follow-up inspections to evaluate the abatement of citations. The remaining 10% of licensed providers submitted documents to inspectors reflective of abatement. Only three (3) licensed facilities actually received monitoring visits at regular intervals following renewal of a license. Other agencies within the District of Columbia conduct unannounced monitoring visits. These agencies include: Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood Development, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the DC Fire and Emergency Service Department conduct inspections in a majority of licensed child development centers and homes.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

No response.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

Two unannounced visits are conducted annually. One by the Department of Health, and one by the Department of Human Services.

2.5 States will require that child care providers, early childhood teachers and others who have regular access to children in early childhood settings have federal and state background checks using fingerprinting and screening against the state child abuse registry.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

DC passed Law 15-117, the "Child and Youth Safety and Health Omnibus Temporary Amendment Act of 2004" on March 30, 2004 which expired on November 10, 2004. The law requires criminal background checks to be conducted on applicants, employees and volunteers in the District government agencies that provide direct services to children and youth.

There is currently a law pending in the D.C. Council that will require criminal background checks for all childcare workers (and others who have access to children) who work in facilities that are under contract with the District. As the technology improves and the cost consequently decreases, the D.C. Council intends to extend this requirement to all childcare workers in all licensed facilities. In addition, newly drafted regulations will require that all childcare workers undergo child protection register checks.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The District of Columbia law was passed in 2003 and will be implemented in Fiscal Year 2004.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia did not have legislation regarding background checks and fingerprinting. Many individual providers did have these requirements.

2.6 States will ensure that all licensing and early care and education staff are educated in recognizing signs of child abuse and are trained in the state's child abuse reporting laws.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

As of January 2004, all childcare licensing staff has received 14-hour training in the District's child abuse reporting laws.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Center for Child Protection and Family Support, Inc. is now the OECD grantee that provides Child Abuse and Neglect Training for the early care and education community since 2001. This grantee is providing a 14-hour training for a minimum of 50 TANF and 300 early care and education providers per year.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

Child Abuse and Neglect Training is offered to the early care and education providers by the Office of Early Childhood Development grantee. The Easter Seal Society for Disabled Children and Adults, Inc. provided training until December 31, 2000.

2.7 States will have a well-trained regulatory workforce with average caseloads between 50 and 75 per staff person⁵ and a system capable of providing technical assistance.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

Due to limited funding, the regulatory workforce received limited training. Fluctuations in the regulatory workforce ranged from 7-5. This resulted in caseload averages per staff person of 93-130.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The current caseload is between 95 and 100 per licensing specialist in the Department of Health. The licensing specialists continue to provide technical assistance as needed.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The average caseload was 73 per licensing specialist in the Department of Health. The licensing specialists provided technical assistance as needed.

2.8 States will ensure parental right of access to their child's early care and education facilities.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

Pursuant to child development facilities regulations, both center and home-based licensed programs are required to develop opportunities for parent involvement. Evidence of this is reviewed during annual licensure inspections.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Parent meetings, involvement and participation is required per DHS Subsidy Provider Agreement with District of Columbia. This is a part of the proposed/revised DC Child Care licensing regulation.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

All DHS Subsidy Providers sign Child Care Agreements that include mandatory parent participation and involvement.

This is a part of the DC Child Care licensing regulation: DCMR 29 Chapter 3.

Goal 3: States will support development of quality early care and education programs for all children.

3.1 States will provide all early care and education providers with resources to help them improve the quality of care and education they deliver, such as technical assistance and training, accreditation support, grants to meet health and safety requirements and grants to support family child care home networks.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Resource/Referral network system. Grants provide training for professional advancement, voluntary Tier Reimbursement System pays different rates per tier, application opportunity twice a year.

All of the below plus:

1. Special Trainings:
 - for school age care providers given by National Institute for Outside School Time, Wheelock College
 - for infant care and preschool care providers given by Teaching Strategies
 - for infant/toddler, preschool and school age care providers given by Frank Porter Graham Institute, U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 - for family child care home providers through workshops and conferences
 - for Spanish speaking providers through workshops and conferences
 - Increased the number of workshops offered on a weekly basis through the Health, Safety, Nutrition and Mental Health Training Program. It also increased the type and topics offered.
2. Increased the number of CDA Training Programs offered, with emphasis on TANF Participants, Home Providers working with children with special needs, English Learners providers.
3. Increased the number of providers participating in the degree programs at the Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) @ UDC.
4. Established the Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship Program that includes on the job training as well as academic work provided by ECLI @ UDC and Mentoring.
5. ECLI provided training for directors, assistant directors through "Taking Charge of Change" and Directors' Credentialing programs.
6. Mentoring programs for home and center providers seeking national accreditation.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

Resource /Referral supported parents in obtaining child care services providers in District of Columbia.

OECD has provided all early care and education providers with different opportunities for training and technical assistance.

1. QCCI (see # 1.1) provided training and technical assistance to infant/toddler and school age care providers using the Environment Rating Scales.
2. CDA Training – Associates for Renewal in Education and Southeast Children's Fund, Inc. were the grantees giving free CDA training for center and home early care and education providers.
3. CDA Scholarships- The Council for Professional Recognition administered the CDA scholarships (for assessment, renewal, add on endorsement and special training) offered by OECD for all providers.
4. UDC and Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments higher education scholarships. Providers could attend UDC and Trinity College.
5. OECD offered scholarships through the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at UDC degree programs, AA and Master's degree.
6. The Health and Safety Training Program, administered by OECD provided weekly workshops on important health and safety topics to providers.

7. OECD also offered scholarships for early care and education providers to attend conferences in the city (e.g. Citywide Coordinated Training Conferences 1999 and 2000, The Children's Foundation Early Childhood Institutes of 1999 and 2000, NAEYC) and outside of the city (e.g. NAEYC, NBCDI Conferences and the National Association of Family Home Child Care Providers).

3.2 States will have Child Care Resource and Referral networks to deliver quality early care and education enhancement support services to providers, such as outreach, training and technical assistance.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

No response.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

Resource and Referral Services operated by Washington Child Development Council (WCDC) provides free information support to persons seeking placement of child in various care services and resources.

3.3 States will implement a rating system to recognize providers for incremental levels of quality.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

Chronology of Tiered Rate Reimbursement Activity:

May 2003 Suspended the tiered rate reimbursement (TRRS) silver tier application process to review & revise criteria & policy.

July 2003 Held TRRS Group Genius session in Baltimore with stakeholders including monitors, management, providers and OECD staff to discuss, review and revise TRRS criteria and policy.

July 2003 Reported back to OECD and PDD staff about the TRRS Group Genius session findings and received feedback.

June 2003 Monitoring Unit traveled to North Carolina to better equip themselves to be partners in the process of assessing and reporting using the Environmental Rating Scales.

December 2003 Sent report of Group Genius session to outside stakeholders for review and comment.

February 2003 TRRS team benchmarked other jurisdictional TRRS programs and conducted a state-by-state comparison and consulted with consultant throughout process.

January 2004 Distributed TRRS Group Genius (GG) Report to entire OECD staff and Group Genius facilitator held a similar GG type session with OECD staff.

February-April 2004 Held weekly meetings with TRRS in-house team to discuss and review proposed policy and criteria changes.

May 2004 Responded to executive director memo about TRRS policy submission and re-submitted for response from executive director.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

- Established that the bronze tier or level would be the entry level for all providers in the subsidy program, and that they would automatically obtain the bronze rate by virtue of being a participant in the District's subsidy program.
- Waived the "accreditation, compliance with licensing, and learning environment" criteria until the establishment of mechanisms to carry them out.
- Invited providers (home and center) to apply for the Silver tier. This is the only tier that can be applied for under the District's Tiered Rate Program.
- Established that providers achieving accreditation automatically received the gold tier rate.
- Presented the District's Tiered Rate Reimbursement Program at national conferences including the November 2002 NAEYC convention in New York City.
- In October 2001, held an Advance with stakeholders and consultant utilizing group systems technology to discuss best ways to implement the program.
- Established a Tiered Rate Work plan to address internal operation, policies and procedures, criteria, promotions of the program, etc.
- Reviewed implementation plan.
- Established "every Friday" meetings with internal ad hoc committee to discuss issues arising around the application process, policies and procedures, the roles of the team members, etc.
- On July 22, 2003, held a "Group Genius" session in a very unique and creative setting in Baltimore, Maryland with outside facilitators where a New Method of learning and resolving complex work problems was experienced by a diverse group of stakeholders including bronze, silver and gold tiered providers, OECD program monitors, and OECD administrative staff. The purpose of this session was to re-address the issues surrounding the District's Tiered Rate Reimbursement program, and resolve and finalize the criteria. Here, we were able to build a strong foundation upon which we could move toward our goals effectively and efficiently.
- Established goal to have an improved Tiered Rate Reimbursement Model for implementation by November 2003.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

- University of the District of Columbia produced a Study of 1998 Market Rates & Capacity Utilization, identifying market rates and rates received by providers in D.C. subsidy program.
- Rates Task Force was convened and recommended differential reimbursement rates for providers that were tied to quality indicators.
- OECD implemented the Quality Care for Children Initiative (QCCI) to improve the quality of services and to assist programs in becoming accredited.
- OECD consulted with Tiered Reimbursement expert, Judy Collins, and the "Going for the Gold" program was born.
- In February 2000, stakeholders (parents, government, and OECD staff) met to determine objectives of the District's Tiered Rate Reimbursement System and to establish the criteria.
- Advance meetings were held with both center and home providers on two separate days to establish group consensus for OECD Tiered Rate Reimbursement Quality Criteria.

- The final consensus of both groups was the establishment of a program for both centers and homes with a Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 Tier System. The Level 1 tier represents bronze rate providers, the Level 2 tier represents Silver rate providers and the Level 3 tier represents Gold rate providers. Currently, gold is the highest tier and represents the highest reimbursement rate attainable. Providers at the gold level or tier must be accredited.

3.4 States will implement tax and other incentives to develop and expand early care and education programs that demonstrate a higher level of quality.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Please see response below.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia has the following tax incentives:

The Earned Income Credit tax benefit that is designed to help low-income workers increase their financial stability by reducing taxes for their work, to supplement wages, and to make work more attractive than welfare.

The Child Tax Credit for taxpayers raising dependent children provides a tax credit per dependent child under age 17. The Child Tax Credit can give a worker back some or all of the income tax taken out of his/her paychecks during the year as well as some or all of any additional income tax still owed at the end of the year.

The Child and Dependent Care Credit is a tax benefit that helps families pay for child care while they work or look for work.

3.5 States will use a formal mechanism to seek parental input in program evaluations and will use that information in making policy decisions related to early care and education programs.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

In 2003 the District of Columbia Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey. The survey provided feedback on existing services and input on additional services that were needed by parents.

In 2001 and 2003, facilitated community meetings and forums were held to obtain input for the Child Care Development Fund State Plan. In 2001 two forums were held at a central location. In 2003 six forums were held throughout the city; one specifically for

non-English speaking persons, and one specifically for other key government agencies and stakeholders. All the forums were open to the public and recorded so that comments from the public, which included a significant number of parents, could be incorporated into the State Plan.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

No response.

3.6 States will identify and support the use of effective research based curricula.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The Office of Early Childhood Development partnered with the DC Early Care and Education Research Consortium and the University of the District of Columbia Center for Applied Research and Urban Development to complete a study of the impact of a waiting list for subsidized child care on parents and providers. The study, "Waiting in the Shadow of the Capitol: Impacts of the Child Care Subsidy Wait List on Families, Providers and Children in the District of Columbia" was published in November 2003. The study was a formal survey conducted with telephone interviews and focus groups. The input from the parents in this study was used to document the need for, at minimum maintaining, and increasing funding for subsidized child.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The state is currently in the process of reviewing scientifically-based curricula to determine effective curriculum practices for pre-school children.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

No response.

Goal 4: Staff in early care and education settings will be appropriately credentialed and adequately compensated.

4.1 States will maintain a professional development system that ensures, at a minimum, providers in early care and education settings meet standards set forth by NAEYC, NAFCC, APHA or AAP.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

Compensation and Qualifications and Credentials are two of the components of the District of Columbia Professional Development System that promote and ensure that

the early care and education settings meet the standards set by the profession and the national professional organizations.

One major initiative co-sponsored by the Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development (MACECD) and the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of the

District of Columbia (ECLI/UDC) is the Accreditation of all the early care and education settings in the District of Columbia. This initiative considers that centers meet the NAEYC standards and home providers meet the NAFCC standards.

OECD Subsidy Program under its Tiered Rate Reimbursement System promotes that early care and education providers meet the standards by providing higher reimbursement programs that get accredited by NAEYC and Council for Accreditation (COA) in case of centers and NAFCC in case of homes.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

All of the below plus, the early care and education system revised several components, among them the qualifications and credentials component (e.g. included the Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship and the directors credential programs); quality assurance including the revised Certified Trainer process and the new Quality Technical Assistance Program (QTAP).

The system has been described and presented at different conferences. The partners are now Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development, the Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood Development, the University of the District of Columbia Early Childhood Leadership Institute and the D.C. Public Schools Office of Citywide Early Childhood Initiatives.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The state has developed a professional career lattice/ ladder consistent with the NAEYC recommendations.

OECD worked with the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development to develop and maintain the District of Columbia early care and education professional system. One of the results was the Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) that is charged with the administration of this system.

The D.C. early care and education professional development system developed criteria for training certification, the early care and education core knowledge areas, the professional levels and different pathways in the career ladder among its components.

4.2 States will require approved ongoing annual professional development for staff, appropriate to their education levels and job requirements, as specified in APHA and AAP. States will provide and implement a professional development system that verifies trainers, approves training and tracks the training of participants.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

OECD continues requiring from the early care and education providers in the Subsidy Program a minimum of annual training hours according to the Tier they are in: 30 hours

for Gold status providers; 24 hours for Silver status providers and 18 hours for Bronze status providers. OECD also requires a minimum of six hours from the In Home and Relative Care providers.

The Certified Trainer Process is one of the Professional Development System's quality assurance components. OECD in partnership with MACECD Professional Development Subcommittee and ECLI/UDC had continued certifying Early Care And Education trainers. Organizations and individuals can apply for certification twice a year.

October 15, 2003, and April 15, 2004, were the deadlines for applications. OECD and ECLI/UDC staff conducted orientation sessions for applicants in September 2003 and March 2004. The applicants must meet requirements of education and experience depending on the Core Knowledge Areas and at the level or depth of content (basic, intermediate, or advance) they plan to train. The applications are reviewed by panels convened by the ECLI/UDC. OECD program monitors tracks

the training of participants from the Subsidy Program by reviewing the mandatory reports providers must submit annually. It's also in the last phase of development of the Professional Module that will allow tracking training electronically.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Subsidy providers must meet required tier reimbursement levels of training for staff and parents.

In 2000, with the establishment of the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System (TRRS) the number of training hours required changed and is now determined by the tier in which they are certified. (e.g. bronze tier must meet the requirement of 18 hours per year; silver, 24 hours and gold, 30 hours). The number of training hours required for the In Home and Relative Care providers did not change.

The certified trainer application process was revised:

- ✓ Established twice a year application and orientations.
- ✓ The Early Childhood Leadership Institute at UDC conducts the review panels.
- ✓ Individuals and organizations are certified trainers to provide training in 3 levels: basic, intermediate and advance. Their levels depend on their qualifications.
- ✓ Required reports twice a year.

The training is being reported and reviewed by the review panels of the TRRS when providers apply to the tier, besides the review that Program Monitors do at the time of renewal packet applications. The certified trainers' reports include all early care and education providers.

OECD has developed two modules to track the training of providers and allow training registrations on line. Technical difficulties of the system had delayed the operation of this tracking system.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

DHS providers required annually to meet training clock hours per staff.

See 4.1. Additionally, the Office of Early Childhood Development required different number of hours of training for all the providers in the Subsidy Program as well as for In Home/Relative Care providers (e.g. family child care home providers working

independently had to have a minimum of 10 hours per year; providers in centers that did intake had to meet the requirement of 24 hours per year). The training of providers was registered with OECD through the Providers Agreement packets that providers had to renew every year.

The D.C. Early Care and Education Professional Development System included the Certified Trainer process.

4.3 *The federal government and states will provide universally available, comprehensive scholarships to early care and education providers who are pursuing a CDA or two- or four-year degree in child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education or child care administration. Scholarships will address the costs of tuition, fees and books and will support components such as travel costs, paid release time and child care.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

OECD continued providing scholarships for CDA Training and CDA Assessments. Four grantees offered CDA training to more than 500 providers in FY'04. They were trained for the first assessment, renewal and second endorsement. Two hundred and fifty-two providers received CDA scholarships to cover assessment, renewals and second endorsements in FY'04

OECD through the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of the District of Columbia (ECLI/UDC) provided full and partial scholarships to early care and education providers who were pursuing AA and Master's early childhood education degrees.

Three hundred and twenty-nine UDC scholarships were offered in FY'04. ECLI/UDC provided training to 904 providers through the: AA and Master's degree programs; Apprenticeship program and other training and professional development programs in FY'04.

The scholarships for the AA degrees are full scholarships that cover tuition and book fees. The scholarships for the Master degree were 50% covered by OECD, 50% paid by the providers.

ECLI/UDC offers child care to providers that needed. Program directors are encouraged to provide release time to their staff while attending classes at UDC. OECD monitors highlight for the providers in the Subsidy Program that an indicator of quality for advancing in the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System is the number of staff participating in CDA and Higher Education training.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Office of Early Childhood Development continues providing scholarships for higher education through UDC and Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments higher education scholarships. These scholarships cover 2/3 of the tuition fees for courses and the Bachelor's degree program.

The Office of Early Childhood Development increased the number of scholarships offered through the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at UDC for the AA degree. These scholarships cover 100% of all costs (tuition and books). They continue offering child care and mentors to the students.

The Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship Program sites made also a commitment to assist Apprentices and Journey Persons to continue their studies at UDC by paying releasing time. The funds of the Apprenticeship Program and OECD covered the training, tuition and books.

The Office of Early Childhood Development now offers scholarships for the Master in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in Administration degree program. These scholarships cover 50% of all costs.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia supported the Higher Education Scholarship Project administered by the nonprofit Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). This program provides tuition scholarships to child care providers seeking college level degrees or credentials. Four colleges and universities in the metropolitan Washington region that offer early childhood education programs participate. The participating schools of higher education provide a 50-50 match to the scholarships so that every dollar invested by the District results in two dollars in scholarship funds. COG also leverages other private dollars from foundations, businesses and individuals.

The Office of Early Childhood Development provided scholarships for higher education through UDC and Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Higher education scholarships. Providers could attend UDC and Trinity College.

The Office of Early Childhood Development offered scholarships through the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at UDC for the AA degree covering 100% of all costs (tuition and books). In addition, they provided child care for the students while attending classes and mentors to assist them individually.

4.4 States will work with educational institutions to ensure that coursework is accessible in order to meet the early care and education workforce training needs, such as courses offered at night, on weekends, in accelerated formats, on-line and in various languages. Courses will address the varying educational levels of the workforce.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The Office of Early Childhood Development works very closely with the University of the District of Columbia, the "State" university to ensure that the programs they offer meet the needs of the workforce. Courses are offered at night and on weekends. ECLI/UDC provided mentors to providers in the different cohorts of the "Project Headway" (the program that takes CDAs to AA degree).

ECLI/UDC provided bilingual (Spanish/English) instructors/advisors for the Latino/Hispanic apprentices and journey persons participating in the Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship Program (CDSAP).

The Office of Early Childhood Development provided weekly training on Health, Safety, Nutrition and Mental Health issues to the early care and education community. The training was offered during children's naptimes and weekends. The sessions were offered also in Spanish and some in Vietnamese.

Two grantees from OECD offered CDA Training to more than 100 providers whose first language was not English in FY'04. Participants spoke Spanish, Amaharic, Vietnamese, and Chinese among other languages.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Continuation and expansion of below. The state continues to work with the consortium of Washington, DC colleges and universities to advance this goal.

1. The Office of Early Childhood Development has increased the number of scholarships for pre-service training, individuals interested in entering in the early care and education field. This has been done through an increase in the number of programs offering CDA Training and the Early Childhood Leadership Institute High School Program.
2. Training is offered at provider sites that are accessible and near METRO or public transportation
3. Training is also now provided in other languages such as Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese, besides Spanish, at the pre and in-service levels.
 - a. The number of certified trainers capable to offer training in other languages has increased, also.
 - b. The number of training in Spanish has also increased.
4. Certified Trainers and National Organizations such as Head Start are providing on line training, e.g. Heads Up.
5. Providers also can apply for the Masters degree program and receive a 50% tuition reduction at UDC.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

In 1998 the state worked to establish the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of the District of Columbia which offers evening, weekend and summer courses in early childhood education.

The Office of Early Childhood Development offered training at all quadrants of the city in accessible buildings. Conferences and other organization trainings were also offered at different times of the day. The trainings addressed the different levels of the workforce, e.g. initial preparation through the CDA Training programs; scholarships for higher education programs for those who met the requirements of the colleges and universities. Some training was offered in other languages, such as Spanish.

4.5 *The federal government and states will provide financial incentives that reward completion of approved levels of professional development.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

As mentioned on 4.3, OECD rewarded early care and education settings with higher reimbursement rates when their staff completed CDA Credential and /or achieved higher education degrees/levels of education.

Also, the CDA Scholarships required that program/center directors signed an Commitment to give a bonus of \$100.00 or more to their staff when they received or renewed their CDA credential. The Office of Early Childhood Development provided that bonus to the Child Care Home Providers who are not under an umbrella organization.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

All programs that have their staff applied for the CDA scholarship signed a commitment to pay a bonus of \$100.00 to the staff that was awarded the CDA Credential. The Office of Early Childhood Development pays that bonus to the Family Child Care Home providers who worked independently.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

All programs that have staff that applied for the CDA scholarship signed a commitment to pay a bonus of \$100.00 to the staff that was awarded the CDA Credential. The Office of Early Childhood Development pays that bonus to the Family Child Care Home providers who worked independently.

1. The OECD CDA Scholarship bonus program has continued. A survey of the CDA Scholarship recipients conducted by the Council for Professional Recognition demonstrated that most of the providers who were awarded the CDA Credential had received, at a minimum, the bonus. They also received promotions, credits, and increase in salaries.
2. With the establishment of the TRRS, early care and education providers who receive a credential or complete more training at the higher education level receive some type of compensation: providers applying to the Silver and Gold tiers must prove that they have a program to implement this criteria.
3. The centers participating in the Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship Program signed an agreement to provide incremental wage increases to the Apprentices when they met the requirements and criteria.
4. The providers who have received their CDA Credential received up to 6 credits at the UDC and up to 9 credits at the Southeastern University.
5. Providers also can continue their education at UDC at no cost for them through the "Project Headway" programs that take providers with a CDA Credential to an Associates of Arts degree.

All providers are also encouraged to apply for the PELL GRANT.

4.6 *The federal government and states will provide college loan forgiveness programs for persons earning an approved degree who work for a specified period of time in early care and education programs.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No new action during this period.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Child Care Loan Forgiveness is being implemented at the District of Columbia higher education institutions.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

No response.

- 4.7 *States will work toward a system whereby staff with approved degrees or credentials will receive employment benefits and compensation at comparable levels to the state's public education system.***

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No new action during this period.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Office of Early Childhood Development continues working with the Mayor's Advisory Committee in Early Childhood Development (MACECD) improving and maintaining the professional development system, especially in the relation to the Staff compensation and Funding components. The TRRS has proved to be one tool that increases quality of care while increasing program reimbursement rates.

The collaborative work with the D.C. Public Schools Office of Citywide Early Childhood Initiative has also allowed resources sharing. However, we haven't achieved the parity to the DCPS levels for the early care and education providers. The flight of providers from childcare to the DCPS continues.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The Office of Early Childhood Development has worked with the Mayor's Advisory Committee in Early Childhood Development developing the professional development system that included the establishment of different compensation programs for the early care and education community. The establishment of the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System is one of the results.

- 4.8 *States will ensure meaningful agreements and processes to enable the transfer of credits between and among approved two- and four-year degree programs.***

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

DC has only one state institution of higher education and it provides seamless articulation between the Associates, Bachelors and Masters degrees. This is the only higher education institution in DC with an associate of arts degree in early childhood education.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

UDC continues receiving and approving the transfer of credits from certified higher education organizations.

Other universities that established Early Childhood Education programs also include process for review and crediting studies and degrees from other institutions and countries, e.g. Southern University.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The University of the District of Columbia has articulation from CDA to AA to BA. Six credits are given for the CDA, and the Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education builds on the Associate of Arts degree in Child Development and Nursery School Education.

Goal 5: Families will have the information to make well-informed decisions about the quality of their child's care and education and to be actively involved in their child's care and education.

- 5.1 States will support Child Care Resource and Referral networks that are easily accessible to parents and that provide information on child development, quality indicators, provider choices, vacancies and linkages to additional information.**

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

No response.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The Washington Child Development Council (WCDC) operates D.C.'s Child Care Resources/ Referral Services. The services provide computerized data on all licensed child care facilities. Services are free for parents seeking placement of children resources, and checklist for parents' use in evaluating child care provider services and quality standards.

- 5.2 States will support early care and education providers in promoting parental involvement and in seeking parental input into the development and improvement of their programs.**

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The Office of Early Childhood Development with its partner organization the Parent Education Collaborative joins with 40 District of Columbia parenting education organizations to provide parent education courses. During the July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, time frame over 400 parents received training and 40 organizations received monthly parent involvement trainings.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

No response.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

All subsidy programs must provide opportunities for parents to meet and be informed of program goals and progress.

Procedures for eligibility determination encourage parents to select a child care facility prior to scheduling an appointment for intake. Parents are counseled by the Resource and Referral Agency (where they are directed for a list of providers) to visit and meet with facility directors before selecting a provider for their child.

Goal 6: Quality early care and education programs will be financially accessible to all children.

6.1 *Federal and state governments will adjust the child care tax credit expense limits to accurately reflect the cost of quality care.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

No response.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

No response.

6.2 *States with income taxes will establish refundable child and dependent care tax credits.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Same as below.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District of Columbia established the child and dependent care tax credit that helps families pay for child care they need in order to work, or to look for work. The credit also is available to families that must pay for the care of a spouse or an adult dependent who is incapable to care for himself or herself.

6.3 State and federal child and dependent care tax credit income-eligibility and expense limits will be indexed for inflation.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No response.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

No changes to the District's EITC have been made since it was instituted.

Income limits were not changed from October 1, 2001 to present. The income limits were updated and will be put into use October 1, 2003. Income limits are based on Federal Poverty Level (FPL) issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for 2003.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

In 1998 the District instituted an earned income tax credit (EITC). The District's EITC is based on the federal EITC.

Income that is counted toward eligibility determination includes wages, salaries and tips, child support and other income including SSI and veterans benefits.

6.4 Federal, state, local and private funds will be sufficient to meet 100% of the need for direct early care and education financial aid, based on initial eligibility levels at 85% of the state median income. Federal law will allow and states will implement redetermination policies that allow families to retain early care and education financial aid until they reach 100% of state median income.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No action taken. Since 2001, for a family of three, the District of Columbia's eligibility threshold is 65% of State Median Income (SMI.) To remain eligible for subsidy the income threshold increases to 78% of SMI.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development has been at the forefront in promoting expansion of eligibility levels in the subsidized child care program. In April 2001 MACECD held a forum specifically on Infants and Toddlers. At that time the most recent Market Rate and Capacity Utilization Survey indicating that over 5,000 infants and toddlers were on waiting lists for slots in child care, over half of who were at facilities that participate in the subsidized child care program. Studies such as the Market Rate and Capacity Utilization Survey and other profiles of child care in the District have been widely distributed to elected officials, advocates and key stakeholders.

District agencies, including the Office of Early Childhood Development continue to participate in the Children and Youth Investment Action Team. This group examines programs and policies and looks at ways to collaborate and maximize resources for serving children and youth.

As a result of the waiting list for subsidized child care that was implemented June 1, 2002, numerous documents have been created and disseminating formatting, elected and agency officials, stakeholders, the provider community about the cost of providing services to children, the funding that had been made available through local and federal dollars over the past five year for subsidized child care. The local budget has remained flat for six years and federal dollars, primarily TANF, have decreased since 2001.

Budget and community hearings discussing these issues are all televised. Presentations on these issues have been made to:

- Elected Officials;
- National League of Cities;
- Business groups;
- Community-based organizations;
- Stakeholders and the general public.

The District is unable, because of budget challenges, to serve all children at 85% of the state median income. In June 2002 a waiting list was established for persons who do not receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The District continues to serve all TANF customers who are in a countable activity, disabled children, children in foster care and child protective services, and children of teen parents in school.

Proposed rules have been published that will lower the eligibility level from 250% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200% of FPL for new applicants and from 300% of FPL to 200% of FPL for current recipients. 200% of FPL for a family of 3 is equal to 57% of the State Median Income in the District. The change in rule, if finalized, will be implemented sometime in FY04.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

No response.

6.5 *Federal and state governments should develop policies and systems to assure families receiving financial aid pay no more than 10% of their gross income for early care and education.*

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The District of Columbia's Sliding Fee Scale used to determine a parent's fee or co-pay is designed so that no more than 10% of annual income is spent on child care. The current Sliding Fee Scale has been used since 2001. Fees apply to the first two children in a family only.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The sliding fee scale has not been changed and still is based upon a parent paying no more than 10% of income.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The sliding fee scale was revised in October 2000 so that parent fees are no more than 10% of annual income. Parents pay a fee for the first and second child in a family. No additional fee is charged for additional children. Fees are based on family size and family income only. Agreements with providers who participate in the subsidized child care system stipulate that parents receiving child care subsidies may not be charged any additional fees for any purpose including field trips, etc.

- 6.6 States will set payment rates at no less than the 75th percentile based on a market rate survey conducted every two years for each level and type of care. Annual inflation adjustments to payment rates will be made between market surveys.**

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No action has been taken. The District's payment rates are below the 75th percentile of the most recent market rate study completed in 2002. The District uses a Tiered Rate Reimbursement System. The highest payments rates for center-based programs that are accredited are on average 86% of the market rate (75th percentile.) The highest payment rates for family child care programs that are accredited are on average 94% of the market rate (75th percentile.) The payment rates for programs that are not accredited are lower for both centers and family child care homes

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Reimbursement rates have not been increased due to budget challenges that began in late 2001.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The District increased reimbursement rates in 1999 and 2000 with the implementation of the Tiered Rate Reimbursement system. At that time, the highest level or Gold Tier was set at the 1998 market rate, the most recent survey at the time. The Market Rate is at the 75th percentile.

- 6.7 States will implement payments to providers commensurate with the quality-rating level achieved by the early care and education programs.**

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

Since 2001 the District has used a Tiered Rate Reimbursement System (TRRS.) The TRRS is called Going for the Gold and includes a Bronze, Silver and Gold Tier. Bronze payment rates are the lowest and are paid to providers meeting minimum standards; Silver payment rates are in between Bronze and Gold rates and are paid to providers who meet specific quality criteria; and Gold payment rates are the highest rates and are paid to providers who achieve national accreditation from an approved accredited body.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

Since the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System was implemented in 2000, the number of nationally accredited programs in the child care subsidy program has increased to 69 as of August of 2003.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The Tiered Rate Reimbursement System called Going for the Gold was implemented in 2000. This system provides differential reimbursement rates based on the achievement of quality criteria. The highest or gold level is awarded if a facility achieves national accreditation by an approved accrediting body. In 2002 there were a total of seven center and home providers at the Gold level or nationally accredited.

6.8 States will examine the financing of quality early care and education in their state and work toward providing payment rates that recognize the cost commensurate with the standards set forth in this action plan.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

No action.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The District has not implemented any policy or changed payments rates since 2000. The District is currently researching and considering alternative payment and program requirements for school-age care. Currently the District is using a child care model for nearly all its service delivery and payment systems. A youth development model is being considered for school age care.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

D. C. established the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System in 2002 and has continued to implement the system. The silver level has not been available as an option since 2002 due to budget challenges.

6.9 States will design and aggressively implement outreach initiatives to provide families with easy-to-understand early care and education financial aid information and application assistance.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The District has always had a large outreach effort and in FY 2003 over 34,000 families received information about child care services. Information is provided by telephone and by mail from the Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) and the Resource and Referral Agency. Other methods of providing information include job fairs, community meetings and interagency meetings. The Office of Early Childhood Development staff are co-located at service centers with the Income Maintenance Administration (the District's TANF and Food Stamp agency) to provide child care intake services to TANF customers

In May 2004 the OECD was part of a city-wide neighborhood services effort to target services in geographically defined "hot spots." These hot spots are areas of high crime, poverty and other key indicators. The Office of Early Childhood Development funded child care programs for the summer only in these targeted areas in addition to the ongoing year round subsidized programs. In addition, the Neighborhood Services

Initiative is an ongoing city-wide effort to provide information about all services including child care to residents. An OECD staff person is detailed to this initiative and serves on the core team made up of representatives for each of the 8 wards of the District

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Office of Early Childhood Development continues requesting from grantees this information.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The Office of Early Childhood Development requests that all grantees include in their work plan an outreach plan to get to the community the information about the services they offer. For example, financial aid for higher education: Under a grant from OECD, UDC developed brochures and posters to inform the early care and education community of the scholarship program. The information was printed in English and Spanish. Also, financial aid for the CDA credential: The Council for Professional Recognition developed scholarship program brochures and fliers in both languages. Videos and radio programs are also included.

All other grantees offering scholarship training e.g. CDA Training or Child Abuse and Neglect, develop different means to outreach the community, meetings, fliers, PSAs.

Goal 7: States will ensure that accountability is built into all systems, programs and activities undertaken to achieve the goals of this action plan.

7.1 States will convene appropriate stakeholders to develop written strategic plans for improving the quality of early care and education programs in the state. These plans will include key goals, quantifiable measures of progress and program outcomes for all quality enhancement activities.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development's subcommittee on Accreditation convened approximately thirty Accreditation Stakeholders which met three times during this period. The Accreditation Stakeholders included all organizations and individuals involved in providing technical assistance, material and moral support and training related to increasing the number of early care and education providers who achieve national accreditation.

The meetings resulted in the review and revision of the Washington, DC Accreditation Program Initiative and the development of seven recommendations to be implemented in fiscal year 2005.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The Office of Early Childhood Development has included in the plans- a survey to be conducted by CARUP – on the quality of the CDA Training Programs. CARUP will also conduct a General Training Survey to all providers in order to measure the accomplishments and identify the needs for future programs. Grant agreements will

have, in 2003, specific measurable objectives and the grant monitors will develop individual plans to carry out the evaluation process. The Office of Early Childhood Development will continue requesting the services of CARUP as an independent evaluator of the grantees. Also, internally, OECD will train its grant monitors in order to provide and to better insure accountability from our programs and grantees.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

The Office of Early Childhood Development used the grant agreements as the tool to measure the outcomes of programs. The Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy (CARUP) at UDC conducted independent evaluation of some of the grants. Its reports assisted OECD in taking steps to continue or suspend programs.

7.2 States will collect and analyze data and produce written annual reports on progress toward identified goals. Reports will be made readily available to the public.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

- Report on number of Child Development Associates (CDAs) and nationally accredited centers published and distributed at the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development and at the Universal School Readiness and Out of School Time Stakeholders conference. This information is updated every two months.
- The number of CDAs and nationally accredited centers in DC was compared to ten major cities including Baltimore, Richmond, Charlotte, Atlanta, [include the

cities from other Southern Institute states] and broadly disseminated by DC and the National Association for the Education of Young Children distributed it to their newly established national Council on Accreditation. DC had the largest number of CDAs of any of the cities.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The University of the District of Columbia's Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy has been the source of consistent data collection on the early care and education community since 1998. They collect demographic, market rate, capacity utilization, compensation, benefits, provider and employee data. Reports are made available in various formats with the same basic data yet targeted to different audiences. This data has been cited by the D.C. City Council, which is the legislative body of the District of Columbia; it has been quoted in newspapers/reports produced by other groups. The data is presented at meetings of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development and is cited in proposals provided by health, education, recreation and human services agencies.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

In 1998, OECD contracted with the Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy. The District of Columbia Office of Early Childhood Development produced reports on a bi-annual basis starting in 1988. These reports were incorporated into a report produced by the Mayor's Office for the public.

7.3 States will use data and annual reports to make continuous policy improvements and evaluate quality enhancement activities.

Action taken between July 1, 2003, and June 30, 2004

The DC Early Care and Education Research and Evaluation Consortium began a review and evaluation of the Child Development Associate training programs in the District. Study protocols were finalized and data collection began.

Action taken between January 1, 2001, and June 30, 2003

The use of data on recipients of child care and the cost of child care have led to additional funds for subsidized child care. In 2002 and 2003 the District's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) has received funds from the District's Department of Employment Service as a result of tracking children referred from that agency and the cost of providing child care for those children. Data on children in foster care is being used to claim funds from Title IV-E from the child welfare agency. In addition, data on where parents who receive child care work has led to initiatives to seek funding from the federal government (a major employer of low-income parents in the District) and local businesses whose employees receive subsidized child care, enabling them to work. The Office of Early Childhood Development had continued its efforts to make the early care and education system # 1 in the country.

New quality improvement initiatives have been shared with others in the country and have been the results of studies done. The Office of Early Childhood Development and its professional development system does not hesitate to learn from others and try new programs that have been successful in other places, e.g. Apprenticeship Program, Reggio Emilia, and others.

Action taken prior to December 31, 2000 (the Southern Regional Task Force on Child Care Quality Improvement Initiative began January 1, 2001)

Market Rate and Capacity Utilization Surveys are conducted bi-annually. The 1998 Market Rate Study led to the creation of a Rates Task Force that developed recommendations for creating the Tiered Rate Reimbursement System, which was implemented in 2000.

The Office of Early Childhood Development considered the reports from the District of Columbia organizations, e.g. MACECD Rate Reimbursement Task Force to establish the TRRS; the Market Rate studies conducted by CARUP to increase and implement new programs, e.g. CDA training programs.

In addition, OECD is aware of events and developments in the early care and education field in the country (and outside the country) that inform policies in quality improvement initiatives, e.g. QCCI.

¹ NAEYC – National Association for the Education of Young Children

² NAFCC – National Association of Family Child Care

³ APHA – American Public Health Association

⁴ AAP – American Academy of Pediatrics

⁵ American Public Health Association & American Academy of Pediatrics. 2002. *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance –Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs*. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.