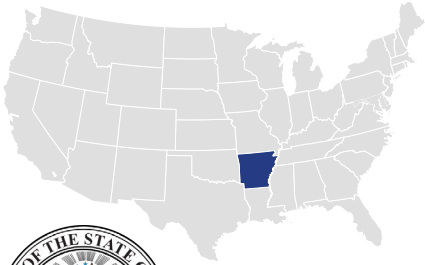


PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

2015 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Arkansas





U.S. Department of Education

PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Check only one box per Program Office instructions. Annual Performance Report Final Performance Report

General Information

1. PR/Award #: S419B150025 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: _____

3. Project Title: 84.419 B Preschool Development Grants-Expansion

4. Grantee Name: Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

5. Grantee Address: 700 Main Street

City: Little Rock State: Arkansas Zip: 72201

6. Project Director Name: Tonya Williams

Title: Director Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

Phone #: (501) 320-8953 Ext.: _____ Fax #: _____

Email Address: Tonya.L.Williams@dhs.arkansas.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2015 To: 12/31/2015

8. Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	\$3,875,336.00	\$500,000.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$2,386,725.00	
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

9. Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

- a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant? Yes No
- b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No
- c. If yes, provide the following information:
- Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: _____ To: _____
- Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: _____
- Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only) Provisional Final Other Specify other: _____
- d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:
- Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

10. Performance Measures Status

- a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? Yes No
- b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? 07/30/2016



U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: AR

PR/Award #: S419B150025

You are required to submit an Executive Summary of up to 3000 words with your Annual Performance Report. This summary should relate to your approved application and summarize the goals and objectives that have been achieved under your grant, what you learned, and any evaluation results. Describe any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and any barriers that you may have encountered. If there have been any changes to the project from the approved application, those should be explained as well.

The State of Arkansas was able to utilize funds from the Preschool Development Grant to expand the current state funded preschool program, Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program, by 1,238 slots and improve an additional 1,400 current slots. The State enrolled 92% of the enrollment opportunities provided by the Preschool Development Grant. During Year 2, the State expects to provide additional resources and technical assistance to sub-grantees that focus on eliminating service barriers for children and families and strong recruitment efforts. The State anticipates that during Year 2, the additional 239 enrollment opportunities will be filled.

The State has continued to build upon and strengthen its robust early child and education (ECE) system. Use of the funds, combined with funds from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, have supported the following on-going projects: 1) Creating a "best-in-class" set of Early Learning and Development Standards; 2) Developing a family engagement framework and state infrastructure; and 3) Selecting and piloting a new Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The projects are primarily funded by the Kellogg grant, supplemented by existing state funded resources (e.g., CCDF, Arkansas Department of Education Funds). In addition to these projects, the State utilizes funding from the Preschool Development grant to: revise the state's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, implement statewide training promoting relationship based practices; and strengthen the State's system of monitoring and continuous improvement.

Arkansas recognizes that a well-educated and qualified workforce is critical to nurturing the learning and development of young children, particularly those with high needs. Arkansas has utilized funding provided by the Preschool Development Grant to provide support the expansion of the Powerful Interactions Program to Early Childhood Education providers. Beginning in January 2016, all ECE providers will have access to register for the Powerful Interactions Program. Programs funded by the Preschool Development Grant will be required to attend the Powerful Interactions Program during Year 2 of the grant.

The State is in the initial stages, seeking input and recommendations for the new Kindergarten Entry Screener. The new KES will be aligned with the Arkansas' child Development Early Learning Standard, will be culturally and linguistically appropriate, will have sound measurement properties, and will provide strength based reports for parents, teachers, and administrators. The State will seek requests for proposal for agencies to assist in the completion of the KES. Significant progress is expected in year 2.

The State has completed the Family Engagement guide, which provides supports for early child programs in building a family engagement system. The guide consists of the state's definition for family engagement, guiding principles, brain development, benefits, pyramid framework, strategies for each of the family engagement outcomes, models for continuous improvements, and a state-wide resource list. A training DVD is currently being made to assist programs with the use of the Family Engagement Guide. The first statewide Train the Trainer session will be held in March of 2016.

The State has completed all processes for updated Child Development Early Learning Standards and will be seeking approval from the Arkansas Early Childhood Commissioners in April 2016.



**U.S. Department of Education
PDG Annual Performance Report
Grant Status Form
Explanation of Progress (524B Section A)**

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: AR PR/Award #: S419B150025

Section A: Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (narrative)

1. Project Objective

1(a) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant. Describe the State's progress in meeting this Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure based on enrollment of Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant as of December 1, 2015.

As of December 1, 2015, the State of Arkansas enrolled 2,638 of the allotted 2,877 eligible children in high need communities funded by the grant. Programs are continuing to recruit children for the current 239 enrollment vacancies. The areas with vacancies are being evaluated and compared based on the Arkansas ABC School Data Matrix to determine reallocation to programs who are in need of additional enrollment opportunities within their communities.

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

As of December 1, 2015, the State of Arkansas was serving 10.5% of eligible children with disabilities in High-Quality Preschool Programs. All sub-grantees of the Preschool Development Grant must adhere to the state funded preschool program, Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program, *Rules and Regulations*. The *ABC Rules and Regulations* require that within 45 days of enrollment, a child shall receive a routine annual developmental screening to determine individual needs. The purpose of the screening is to identify developmental delays and/or educational deficiencies. Children so identified shall be referred to Special Education within seven calendar days of the date of screening. Programs must comply with State and Federal laws for children with disabilities. The developmental screening must include, at a minimum, the following areas: vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, fine and gross motor skills, social skills and developmental milestones. The ABC/PDG Program Specialists will review the developmental screenings during regular monitoring visits to ensure policies and procedures are being implemented and followed accordingly. The data specialists will monitor the State's data system to ensure that the sub-grantees are entering the data accordingly and following through with services.

Describe the State's progress in increasing the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.

During the 2015-2016 program year, the State of Arkansas increased the state funded preschool program by an additional 1,238 enrollment opportunities (9%) with the potential of 1,371. This allowed an additional 62 high-quality preschool classrooms in Arkansas's highest need communities. DCCECE will provide additional technical assistance for providers regarding recruitment and enrollment of children.

1(b) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children served overall in the State Preschool Program. Please describe any increases or decreases in this GPRA measure based on fall enrollment in the State Preschool Program for the 2015-16 school year.

During the 2015-2016 program year, 19,334 children (three and four year olds) are being served with funds from the State Preschool Program, with 33% of those served within the high need communities. 16,696 children are funded solely by the State Preschool Program, 1,400 are funded with a combination of state preschool funds and PDG funds, and 1,238 are funded solely by PDG. Due to the PDG grant, the State of Arkansas was able to increase enrollment opportunities by 9%.

1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.

In the Year 2 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children served by the grant at the end of their 2015-16 preschool year or in their 2016-17 kindergarten year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).

In the Year 1 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
 - Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
 - School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

State of Arkansas ACT 49 of 2003: Section 4 requires that all children enrolled into the state funded preschool program be assessed upon enrollment in the program and continue until each child completes the fourth grade, so long as the child is enrolled into a public school within the state. The assessments provide an indication of each child's school readiness and is directly aligned with the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework/ Early Learning Guidelines and serves to promote curriculum development and instructional methods.

The current assessment tool for the state funded preschool program is, Work Sampling, and must be implemented within all state funded preschool programs. Work Sampling measures the following domains of school readiness: personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, art, and physical development. All child development staff, are required, *ABC Rules and Regulations (11.10)*, to attend Work Sampling training during their first year of employment. Work Sampling has been the assessment tool of choice since 2004.

The State defines School Readiness as "School ready children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life".

The State of Arkansas contracts with the Arkansas Research Center to collect and report school readiness data. The mission of the Arkansas Research Center (ARC) is to "provide educators, parents, policy makers, and researchers with relevant data to improve educational outcomes for students in Arkansas". ARC participates in related State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) initiatives, including Common Education Data Standards (CEDs). As of January 2014, all children who receive state and federal funding for early learning programs (i.e. ABC programs, CCDF and now PDG) are included in the SLDS. The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) currently sends the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) the full roster of Pre-K information twice a year. The data includes demographics, screening-related information, and the teacher and paraprofessional education profiles. A unique ID is generated for each Pre-K student enrolled in ABC. In addition, all data related to Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) is included in the SLDS. Arkansas Research Center has developed a "QuickLooks" system that allows any interested party the opportunity to look at aggregated results of the KEA by year and program for different categories of children.

The State will continue to make progress in the reporting of school readiness data with the piloting of the new KEA instrument, which covers all of the Essential Domains of School Readiness. As the KEA is piloted throughout the state, the high quality preschool programs will participate with the expectation that children who participated in High Quality Preschool Programs will score significantly higher than their peers.

For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:

1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

N/A

Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria "C" of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.

The State has continued to build upon and strengthen its robust early child and education (ECE) system. Use of the funds, combined with funds from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, have supported the following on-going projects: 1) Creating a "best-in-class" set of Early Learning and Development Standards; 2) Developing a family engagement framework and state infrastructure; and 3) Selecting and piloting a new Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The projects are primarily funded by the Kellogg grant, supplemented by existing state funded resources (e.g., CCDF, Arkansas Department of Education Funds). In addition to these projects, the State utilizes funding from the Preschool Development grant to: revise the state's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, implement statewide training promoting relationship based practices; and strengthen the State's system of monitoring and continuous improvement.

Arkansas recognizes that a well-educated and qualified workforce is critical to nurturing the learning and development of young children, particularly those with high needs. Arkansas has utilized funding provided by the Preschool Development Grant to provide support the expansion of the Powerful Interactions Program to Early Childhood Education providers. Beginning in January 2016, all ECE providers will have access to register for the Powerful Interactions Program. Programs funded by the Preschool Development Grant will be required to attend the Powerful Interactions Program during Year 2 of the grant.

The State is in the initial stages, seeking input and recommendations for the new Kindergarten Entry Screener. The new KES will be aligned with the Arkansas' child Development Early Learning Standard, will be culturally and linguistically appropriate, will have sound measurement properties, and will provide strength based reports for parents, teachers, and administrators. The State will seek requests for proposal for agencies to assist in the completion of the KES. Significant progress is expected in year 2.

The State has completed the Family Engagement guide, which provides supports for early child programs in building a family engagement system. The guide consists of the state's definition for family engagement, guiding principles, brain development, benefits, pyramid framework, strategies for each of the family engagement outcomes, models for continuous improvements, and a state-wide resource list. A training DVD is currently being made to assist programs with the use of the Family Engagement Guide. The first statewide Train the Trainer session will be held in March of 2016.

The State has completed all processes for updated Child Development Early Learning Standards and will be seeking approval from the Arkansas Early Childhood Commissioners in April 2016.

2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and
- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

High Staff Qualifications: *ABC Program Rules and Regulations* require the lead teacher shall hold a standard Arkansas teacher license with P-4 certification. Non-public school based or non-educational cooperative based ABC programs may hire a non-certified teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development. 100% of all classrooms funded with PDG funds employ a teacher with a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway. Arkansas also encourages providers to employ a paraprofessional with a minimum of an associate's degree.

High-Quality Professional Development: Between July 1 and June 30 each year, all ABC teachers and paraprofessionals shall participate in a minimum of thirty (30) hours of staff development on topics pertinent to early childhood education and approved by DCCECE. Teachers and paraprofessionals shall be required to receive training in the following areas: Arkansas Early Childhood Frameworks, Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas), INDEX (Math and Science for Young Children), Social/Emotional Learning in Arkansas, Work Sampling Online, COPA, Special Needs, including process, Special Education rules and regulations and IDEA.

A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1: *ABC Rules and Regulations (10.02)* states the adult-to-child ratio in any classroom with ABC children shall not exceed 1:10 (3 years-5 years).

A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications: *ABC Rules and Regulation (10.01)* states the group size in any classroom with ABC children shall not exceed 20 children for ages 3-5 years or the classroom's licensing capacity, whichever is less.

A Full-Day program: *ABC Rules and Regulations (9.06)* states that for each child enrolled, ABC programs shall provide a minimum of 7 hours per day, 178 days per year for instruction.

Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities: *ABC Rules and Regulations (14.07 & 14.08)* states for any ABC child also receiving special education services, appropriate staff from the Education Cooperative or school district shall have access to the child at mutually agreeable times during the program day in order to provide services outlined in the child's IEP. For any ABC child requiring the intervention services of special education, the ABC program shall collaborate with special education professionals to ensure each party has access to necessary information to provide the appropriate services. Early Education Special Education teachers shall have access to any information pertaining to a child receiving special education that is in the possession of the ABC program that would be necessary for reviewing and evaluating the child's progress in the general education setting. Access to proprietary information on the child shall be on a need-to-know basis.

ABC Rules and Regulation (13.04) states an ABC program shall be individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. Each curriculum model and the actual classroom practice will be assessed using the applicable environmental rating scale (Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) or Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)) to ensure the model is developmentally appropriate.

Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction: *ABC Rules and Regulations (13.01)* states all early childhood programs funded by ABC monies shall be developmentally appropriate and individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. The following references shall be utilized to determine developmental appropriateness: *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, and *Arkansas Early Childhood Frameworks*.

ABC Rules and Regulations (13.02) states programs shall demonstrate that the classroom arrangement satisfies "substantial portion of the day" as defined by the environmental rating scales. If used, room dividers shall be arranged and of sufficient height to prohibit distractions from other classes yet not hinder proper supervision within the classroom.

ABC Rules and Regulations (13.05) states the program shall have a written overall curriculum plan which is arranged in thematic units, projects or topics of study and includes goals and objectives related to the following:

cultural

diversity, social/emotional development, creative/aesthetic learning, cognitive/intellectual learning, physical development and language.

ABC Rules and Regulations (13.06) states all programs must utilize a curriculum approved by DCCECE. A list of approved curriculum models will be made available by DCCECE on an annual basis. A program wishing to use a curriculum not on the list may request, in writing to DCCECE, consideration of an additional curriculum. Program coordinators shall ensure teachers have adequate training on curriculum.

Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities: *ABC Rules and Regulations (13.03)* states each classroom shall be equipped with toys, books and play apparatus to take care of the needs of the total group and to provide each child with a variety of activities through the day. A variety of equipment shall be accessible from low shelves to children of all ages and shall be arranged in learning centers.

ABC Rules and Regulations (13.04) states the program shall be individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. Each curriculum model and the actual classroom practice will be assessed using the applicable environmental rating scale to ensure the model is developmentally appropriate.

Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff: this element is currently being evaluated.

Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement: ABC Programs are monitored in three ways: 1) through the child care licensing system, 2) by ABC program monitoring staff or compliance to ABC standards, 3) As part of Arkansas Better Beginnings (AR-BB), the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TGRIS), which includes classroom assessments using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). ABC program specialists conduct unannounced visits each year and utilize a detailed multi-item protocol that measures compliance to all sections of the ABC program standards.

ABC Rules and Regulations (16.01) states the program shall have a plan for parent involvement which includes opportunities for parental input into program operation and design. Parent involvement plans shall include a mechanism for parental advice and review of programmatic plans, parent conferences and a method to involve the parent in the child's educational experience.

In addition, each program must recruit and employ a Family Service Worker with a caseload of no more than 40 families. The Family Service Worker will be responsible for assisting families with access to community resources that support their child's learning and development, as well as establishing a home school link.

ABC Rules and Regulations (15.08) states within 45 days of the first day of attendance, every child shall receive an age-appropriate health screening, which includes a hearing and vision test, performed by a licensed physician or physician assistant.

In addition, PDG subgrantees must ensure that all children enrolled receive a dental screening and a mental health screening within 90 days of the first day of attendance. Any child identified as needing additional services will be referred to the appropriate service provider.

Table 6 - Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot. Please explain if *Year 1 Target* from the application and *Year 1 Actual* in **Table 6** differ, and any approved changes in targets for Years 2-4.

The target enrollment for Year 1 was 100% enrollment.

The State enrolled 92% of the funded slots with a total of 2,638 eligible children.

	Improvement	Expansion
PDG Funds	\$2,460	\$7,830
Local Match (40%)	\$3,240	\$5,220
State Funded Preschool	\$4,860	

(per-child allocation)

Total Cost Per Slot	\$13,050	\$13,050
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3. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (Selection Criteria E of the application)

Describe the extent to which the State has collaborated with each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the application) and how the State ensures strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate.

ABC Programs are monitored in three ways: 1) through the child care licensing system, 2) by ABC program monitoring staff or compliance to ABC standards, 3) As part of Arkansas Better Beginnings (AR-BB), the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TGRIS), which includes classroom assessments using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).

ABC program specialists conduct unannounced visits each year and utilize a detailed multi-item protocol that measures compliance to all sections of the ABC program standards. DCCECE has a strong working relationship with the state's ABC Providers and places significant focus on the role of supporting the success of the providers. There are a number of touch points throughout a program year in which DCCECE and sub-grantees work together using a continuous improvement framework. These touch points include the yearly process of funding renewal, on-site monitoring, and state wide meetings of ABC staff. State-level ABC program specialists use these opportunities to review program data including licensing reports; ABC compliance reports; and ECERS-R and TQRIS ratings scores. Program Specialists work with ABC providers to examine data, develop improvement plans, and connect to the appropriate professional development opportunities.

4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

The State of Arkansas has fostered the relationships between PDG sub-grantees and other early care and education programs to determine where children birth-5 are currently being served. Sub-grantees are also working with their local School Readiness Teams, which were established in 2012, to promote a strong continuum of learning across state funded preschool, Head Start, home visiting, child care/CCDF, and public school settings. The School Readiness Teams support transitions between early learning settings, promoting collaborative relationships, and engaging in constructive data sharing initiatives. In addition to coordination of programs at the community-level, efforts have been made to include early childhood education staff in joint professional development and leadership opportunities. Joint professional development has allowed teachers to benefit from ongoing access to a highly qualified facilitator as well as the opportunity to receive feedback, advice, and support from their peers. Similar to the collaboration and joint learning opportunities of teachers, birth-third grade efforts will also focus on establishing and supporting teamwork among school principals and early care and education directors/administrators.

Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 1 Target* differs from the *Year 1 Actual*.

As of December 1, 2015, 100%, of the \$500,000, non-Federal matching funds had been obtained to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan, which consists of Early Learning and Development Standards Revision and Implementation, Statewide Family Engagement Initiative, and the Selection and Piloting of new Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, full-day kindergarten, and before and after care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of eligible children and their families within each high need community served by each Subgrantee. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

The State of Arkansas has fostered the relationships between PDG sub-grantees and other early care and education programs to determine where children birth-5 are currently being served. Sub-grantees are also working with their local School Readiness Teams, which were established in 2012, to promote a strong continuum of learning across state funded preschool, Head Start, home visiting, child care/CCDF, and public school settings. The School Readiness Teams support transitions between early learning settings, promoting collaborative relationships, and engaging in constructive data sharing initiatives. In addition to coordination of programs at the community-level, efforts have been made to include early childhood education staff in joint professional development and leadership opportunities. Joint professional development has allowed teachers to benefit from ongoing access to a highly qualified facilitator as well as the opportunity to receive feedback, advice, and support from their peers. Similar to the collaboration and joint learning opportunities of teachers, birth-third grade efforts will also focus on establishing and supporting teamwork among school principals and early care and education directors/administrators.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

As of December 1, 2015, the State of Arkansas had met 90% of it's target for new high-quality preschool program slots. The State will implement new strategies, focused on the recruitment and enrollment of children, for the 2016-2017 program year to ensure that 100% of the new high-quality preschool slots are utilized for children in high need communities. The amount \$9,693,540 of the Preschool Development Grant (65%) has been allocated for the expansion of high-quality preschool slots.



Section B: Budget Information

Budget and Sustainability (Section G in the application)

1. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies between the State's approved budget and its total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

The state requested and received approval to carry over funds to the next year. Due to the state's requirement to advertise requests for applications, inviting interested programs to apply to participate in the PDG. Applications then had to be reviewed and approved. This process took a few months. It also took several months for the state agency to hire qualified staff to work in the program as written in the grant.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016).

We do not anticipate any substantive changes to the budget at this time.

3. Describe the State's progress on its plan for sustainability at the end of the grant period to ensure that the number and percentage of Eligible Children with access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded, including to additional High-Need Communities.

The state agency will create a sustainability task force. It will inventory accomplishments of the program. It will review potential federal and state funding sources to sustain the program, including additional funding from legislature.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

The sub-recipients did not start on the PDG until August, beginning of 2015-2016 school program year. Therefore, they did not expend all their funds by December 31st.