Happy holidays and welcome to the first Kindergarten newsletter of the 2011-2012 school year. Below you will find the latest updates related to kindergarten and the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant program! (Note: this is the slightly updated web version.)

**Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant**
Massachusetts Education Secretary Paul Reville and Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Commissioner Sherri Killins announced on October 19, 2011 that the Commonwealth submitted its application for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant. Massachusetts is eligible for $50 million in federal funding under the grant.

We are excited to announce that we learned that Massachusetts is one of the nine states award the Early Learning Challenge Funds! Congratulations to Secretary Reville, Commissioner Killins, and her staff at EEC! To learn more, click Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge Grant, for an article that appeared in the Washington Post. We will continue to keep you updated on Early Learning Challenge activities and initiatives.

**Kindergarten Grant**

**FY 12 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant (FC 701)**
We had a late start to this year’s grant application process but we are happy to report that 99% of the grant budgets have been processed and put on the grants system. In fact, many districts received at least their first grant payment. If you haven’t received your first payment and want to check on the status of your grant, please contact your liaison:

- Donna Traynham (781-338-6372; dtraynham@doe.mass.edu); or
- Min-hua Chen (781-338-6352; mchen@doe.mass.edu).

**FY12 Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten Grant (FC 702)**
The Department has released the FY12 competitive RFP for the Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten (FC 702). The purpose of this grant is to encourage the voluntary expansion of high-quality, full-day kindergarten classrooms across Massachusetts. The grant is intended to assist districts with the preparation needed during fiscal year 2012 (FY12), so that they will be able to implement new full-day kindergarten classrooms in FY13. The competitive RFP has been posted on the Department’s Grants Management and Kindergarten websites, and the direct link is: [http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants12/rfp/702.html](http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants12/rfp/702.html)

There is an optional bidder’s conference informational webinar on Friday, January 6, 2012 from 12:00-1:30pm (register via [http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?conferenceid=1229](http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?conferenceid=1229)). The due date of the grant is January 24, 2012, and an Intent to Apply email is due January 17. See RFP for full details.
**Kindergarten Website**

The Department has added a web-page specifically for kindergarten. The new web-page for kindergarten can be found at: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/kindergarten](http://www.doe.mass.edu/kindergarten). Currently, the following categories of information are available on the kindergarten page:

- Grant Information
- Laws, Regulations, and Guidance
- Resources

We look forward to updating the web-page with additional resources in the coming months.

**Professional Development Opportunities**

We are happy to report that the kindergarten regional network meetings will be returning this fiscal year. The data from the grants indicated that the majority of kindergarten grant coordinators are interested in having the opportunity to network with their colleagues. While we understand that some coordinators continue to have restrictions on their travel, we wanted to try to meet the professional development needs of as many coordinators as possible. As a result, we will be hosting a combination of regional network meetings and webinars. The first professional development series will be regional network meetings scheduled for January 18, 2012 and January 31, 2012. The meeting locations are as follows:

- **Wednesday, January 18th**: Holyoke Community College
- **Tuesday, January 31st**: Lowell PS - Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Office

Due to limited space, this professional development is open to Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grantees only (Fund Code 701).

We are fortunate to have Tracey Martineau from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education joining us at the meetings to discuss the revisions to the English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Framework, specifically in kindergarten, and to discuss with us the importance of oral language development. Tracey’s session will provide the coordinators with the opportunity to think about the link between the revised standards in the ELA Framework with instructional practices. Specifically,

> The Oral Language development workshop is designed to provide strategies for oral language and vocabulary development instruction during the reading time and across all content areas. Participants will understand that there are deep connections between oral language, writing and reading comprehension. The Six Components of Explicit Oral Language instruction will engage participants in interactive activities, such as Dialogic Reading, to promote word consciousness and build oral vocabulary.

Here is the link to the registration for the kindergarten networking meetings: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=1239](http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=1239).

**FY11 Kindergarten Legislative Report**

The FY 11 Kindergarten Legislative Report is now live on the Department’s website. The report is also posted on the kindergarten web-page. The data from your FY11 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grants was used to complete this report; thank you again for that information. Some highlights from the report include:

- 276 of the 306 (90%) districts with a kindergarten enrollment offer full-day kindergarten to either some or all of their kindergarten students;
- Of the 276 districts, 192 (70%) of the districts offer district-wide full-day kindergarten;
- 80% of children enrolled in public kindergarten are enrolled in full-day kindergarten, an increase of 3% from FY10;
- 38 grant districts charged tuition for the second half of the kindergarten day; the average annual tuition was $2,757;
- The average grant-funded full-day kindergarten class size is 19;
- The average teacher child ratio in grant-funded full-day classrooms is 1:10.

The Department is currently working on the FY12 legislative report. Staff may be contacting you if they have any questions related to data submitted through your FY12 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Continuation Grant. We will send you the link to the FY12 report once it is available.

**NAEYC Accreditation**

NAEYC Accreditation is a broad-based and rigorous accreditation system for programs serving children from birth through kindergarten. Researchers, policymakers and practitioners generally accept NAEYC accreditation as a comprehensive high standard for overall early childhood program quality. Research has found significant positive outcomes for children who attend accredited programs compared to children that do not. The accreditation process can be a mechanism to address continuous program improvement.

Grantees receiving the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant are required to pursue NAEYC accreditation or apply for an alternative to accreditation. The majority of the grantees are working on the NAEYC Accreditation. According to the most up-to-date data from FY10: 32% of the school buildings hosting kindergarten programs have accredited kindergarten classes; 31% of kindergarten classrooms are working on re-accreditation; 31% classrooms are working on self-study; 31% classrooms are not involved (e.g., district is using a staggered approach for moving the NAEYC accreditation process forward); and 1% of grantees work on an alternative to accreditation.

The following schools were recently awarded NAEYC Accreditation:

![Congratulations to the following programs that achieved accreditation:](image)

- Adams Cheshire RSD: accredited in 2011;
- Ashburnham-Westminster RSD: Briggs School in Ashburnham and Meetinghouse School in Westminster were accredited in 2011. Three paraprofessionals also received their CDA Credential;
- Carver PS: accredited in February, 2011;
- Holyoke PS: Sullivan School and Donahue School were accredited in 2011; North Adams PS: accredited in 2011;
- Peabody PS: all schools accredited between 2009-2011;
- Plainville PS: accredited in March 2011;
- Quincy PS: all 34 classes were accredited in 2010;
- New Salem/Wendell RSD: Re-accredited in May 2011; and
FY13 Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Policies

The Department has posted its school year 2012-2013 policies for the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant. We are currently working to update the sliding fee scale to align with the Department of Early Education and Care’s current scale. We will make these documents available on our website in the upcoming weeks and will notify districts when they have been posted.

As you prepare for the 2012-2013 kindergarten registration processes, please keep in mind that if you are district that charges a tuition for the second half of the day, you must submit a signed assurance statement, and the districts tuition policy and sliding fee scale, for approval before providing this information to families.

Kindergarten Screening

We have recently received several questions regarding kindergarten screening. As districts prepare for their 2012-2013 kindergarten registration processes and kindergarten screening activities, we thought it would be timely to send along the following information that we’ve been sharing with those who have inquired.

Kindergarten screening requirements in the state fall under Special Education regulations. Districts are required to screen three and four year olds and for all children who are of age to enter kindergarten. Check the regulation at ESE: 603 CMR 28.03: Special Education: School District Administration and Personnel: http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr28.html?section=03#start.

DPH also has regulations on screening regulations related to children’s physical health, vision and hearing. Check the regulation on M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 57, 105 CMR 200.100 and 105 CMR 200.400: http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/source/mass/cmr/cmrtex/105CMR200.pdf.

Districts do not have to re-screen all kindergartners as long as they have been screened in preschool. The DPH regulations cited above indicate the timelines upon which children have to be screened and the duration for which previous health data can be used before another screening must be done.

The screening and assessment data collected by school districts are for internal use only. There are no state data reporting requirements currently in place that require districts to submit this information to the Department.

The State Anti-Bullying Law and Department Guidelines for Implementing Social and Emotional Learning Curricula K-12

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed into law comprehensive legislation to address bullying in public and non-public schools. An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010. Under this law, each school district, charter school, Department-approved private special education school, and collaborative school is required to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention for students in each grade that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school or district.

The Department worked in cooperation with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Mental Health, the Attorney General, the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association, and experts on bullying, created a model bullying prevention and intervention plan (2010), and developed Guidelines for Implementing Social and Emotional Learning Curricula K-12 (August, 2012) to help districts develop and implement their anti-bullying policies and bullying prevention. The model plan and the guidelines are
posted on the Department’s website. The URL’s are: http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/ModelPlan.doc and http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/SELguide.doc.

**School Readiness Study by Ashaunta Tumblin Now Online**
This past spring, FDK grantees from 66 different Massachusetts school districts participated in a school readiness policy study conducted by Ashaunta Tumblin, M.D., an M.P.H. student at the Harvard School of Public Health, in partnership with Strategies for Children (SFC), a non-profit policy/advocacy organization working to ensure that children in Massachusetts have access to high-quality early education and become proficient readers by the end of third grade. A summary of the completed study, An Analysis of Massachusetts School Readiness Policy, and the full report are now available online.

**Resources**
Council of Chief State School Officers/Early Childhood Assessment Consortium (various dates). Resources on early childhood standards and assessment, definitions of related terms, etc.:
http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Early_Childhood_Education_Assessment_(ECEA).html

NECTAC (national early childhood technical assistance center). Screening, Evaluation and Assessment: http://www.nectac.org/topics/earlyid/screeenval.asp


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marian-wright-edelman/full-day-kindergarten-a-m_b_1011342.html

Eye on Early Education: MA Developing Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

http://www.adolescentwellness.org/sites/amhw/Documents/Announcements/Child%20Development.pdf

**Institute of Education Sciences (IES),** Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade. 2010, U.S. Department of Education:


REL Northeast & Islands
- Kids Count Issue Brief, Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters: http://www.rikidscount.org/matriarch/documents/Reading%20by%20the%20End%20of%20Third%20Grade%20Matters%20Issue%20Brief.pdf

U.S. Department of Education
Students who read with understanding at an early age gain access to a broader range of texts, knowledge, and educational opportunities, making early reading comprehension instruction particularly critical. This guide recommends five specific steps that teachers, reading coaches, and principals can take to successfully improve reading comprehension for young readers.

Web Resources
Center on the Developing Child at Harvard
3-part series depicts key aspects of child development:
"Three Core Concepts in Early Development" is a new three-part video series from the Center on the Developing Child and the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. The series depicts how advances in neuroscience, molecular biology, and genomics now give us a much better understanding of how early experiences are built into our bodies and brains, for better or for worse.

"Three Core Concepts in Early Development"
1. Experiences Build Brain Architecture
2. Serve & Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry
3. Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development
The link for each two-minute video includes related resources to explore these core concepts in greater depth.
ChildHealthOnline: http://www.childhealthonline.org/

Free Health and Safety
Booklets
Training Modules

- A New CPR method
  This is a new CPR technique which is much simpler. This is a very important video regarding the latest CPR procedure. Please watch and forward to your friends and family if you haven't already done so. You never know, a life may be saved utilizing this new procedure:
  http://tinyurl.com/2fx8r59

- Playground Safety Training Module
  This training module is based on four basic principles of SAFE playgrounds: *Supervision, *Age appropriate equipment design, *Fall surfacing, and *Equipment and surfacing maintenance. Help participants become more aware of hazards and discuss ways to prevent injury by describing types of injuries that commonly occur on playgrounds; appropriate supervision practices; specific age appropriate equipment; and appropriate resilient surfacing materials. Discussion includes the CPSC Safety Guidelines, and accessibility. Updated to include 2009 CSPC Playground Safety Guidelines.

Education Commission of the States: State Kindergarten Statutes: State Profiles:
http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/83/14/8314.pdf
This documents provides specific profiles of kindergarten statutes in all 50 states.

ED Pub:
- Parent Power - Build the Bridge to Success, 2010:

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA): www.ncela.gwu.edu
The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition collects, coordinates and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for ELLs. To fulfill its mission NCELA supports high quality networking among state-level administrators of Title III programs.

NPG Child Development Center, North Carolina University. Resources on dual language development:
http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu/document-library

Regional Ed Labs: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/ Northeast and Island:

U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) What Works Clearing House:
Practice guides provide practical recommendations for educators to help them address the everyday challenges they face in their classrooms and schools. Developed by a panel of nationally recognized experts, practice guides consist of actionable recommendations, strategies for overcoming potential
roadblocks, and an indication of the strength of evidence supporting each recommendation. IES practice guides are subjected to rigorous external peer review.

**WGBH Teachers' Domain, K-5 resources:**
http://www.teachersdomain.org/browse/?fq_media_type=Lesson+Plan&start=0&fq_hierarchy=k12&fq_grade=K&fq_grade=5

**Youtube:** Early Learning Matters: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8U96Q_x3qE&feature=youtu.be

**Senate HELP Committee Passes Bill Related to Full-Day Kindergarten**
Congress has already delayed reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), better known as the No Child Left Behind Act, for four years. On October 20th, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed a bill which included a number of positive reforms such as measures to make school funding within districts more equitable, support for college and career-ready standards and full-day kindergarten, and educational improvements for children and youth who are homeless, in foster care, and in juvenile justice facilities (information from *Children’s Defense Fun*).

**The Changing Child Population of the United States: Analysis of Data from the 2010 Census**
by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Population Reference Bureau, 2011
http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid=%7b667AADB4-523B-4DBC-BB5B-C891DD2FF039%7d
This paper explores the nation’s changing child population based on data from the 2010 census. While the number of U.S. children increased only slightly, the demographic shifts within the population were considerable. Some areas of the country (Nevada and Texas) and some demographic groups (including children of mixed race) grew significantly, while the number of children in other areas (Vermont and New York) and in other groups (such as non-Hispanic whites) declined.

**Conference and Professional Development Opportunities**

NECTA (The national early childhood technical assistance center) http://www.nectac.org/conferences.asp
    National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs
    Addressing Challenging Behavior: National Training Institute (partner with the Center on Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention)

ASCD Annual Conference & Exhibit Show:

April 28 -29, 2012.
Lesley University 20th Anniversary Reggio Emilia Institute
Sustaining Inquiry: Everyday Experiences and Extended Projects with Children

**December 2011 Kindergarten Newsletter**
(Note: this is the slightly updated web version.)