

Principles for approaching early childhood funding through the ARRA
Kansas Early Learning Coordinating Council, April 2009

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides an opportunity to stimulate the economy. Early childhood may be a beneficiary of these funds. Agencies are being asked to collaborate and coordinate on a statewide level and to adhere to direction given by the Governor's appointed State ARRA Advisory Group. Additionally, through the Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan, Kansas has coordinated efforts to maximize resources to families with young children. To continue coordination in Kansas, the Early Learning Coordinating Council (ELCC) offers the following principles to consider in planning for and organizing around ARRA funding:

- 1) Early childhood programs and services have a direct impact on **creating and maintaining jobs** in Kansas. Early childhood partners should look at strategies that assist those impacted by the recession, invest in infrastructures to provide for long-term benefits, promote economic recovery and preserve and create employment opportunities. Agencies and programs should look at systemic/statewide initiatives that meet the intent of the Act, as well as initiatives and activities that meet their own mission.
- 2) The **Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (KECCS) Plan is a guiding framework** for all early childhood policies, programs, and services in the State. Plans around federal stimulus funding should take into consideration the KECCS Plan. When applying for new funding, efforts should align with the Plan and support the goals and objectives. The ELCC encourages local level collaboration and coordination to maximize services and programs to families with young children. The complete KECCS Plan is online at www.keccs.org.
- 3) Early childhood stakeholders at the local level are encouraged to develop and use **coordinated community needs assessments**. An agreed upon community needs assessment is the foundation for common standards and continuity across programs for all young children and their families. As part of KECCS Plan efforts, communities have been encouraged and supported to develop local early childhood plans. Many communities have made significant progress. These efforts should not only continue but also be expanded within the scope of the ARRA.
- 4) **Accountability for dollars spent on early childhood programs and services** in Kansas is key to continued funding. Additional funding through the ARRA will specify reporting requirements, but efforts are already underway to ensure accountability. The KECCS Plan is monitored using select early childhood indicators spanning health, mental health, early care and education, parent education, and family supports. Accountability will continue to be a key focus of early childhood leadership in the State. As plans are made for use of ARRA funding in Kansas, it will be critical to identify key outcomes of programming, as well as broader community outcomes in terms of jobs and economic stimulus.

The ELCC will provide ongoing updates to support access to funding for state and local early childhood programs through the ARRA. If you would like more information about stimulus funding, please contact us at keccs@ku.edu.



Kansas is a ready state
with an infrastructure to support communities, families, and schools.
Children are prepared to succeed in school.

www.KECCS.org