**The Center for IDEA**
**Early Childhood Data Systems**

# Thinking about Alignment in Early Care and Education: Definitions and Overview

## Kathleen Hebbeler

## SRI International

A **system** is a set of interacting or interdependent component parts forming a complex/intricate whole. A system's overall purpose or goal is achieved through the actions and interactions of its components.



We live in a complex, dynamic world where everything is connected to everything else

We need better approaches to study, understand and manage complexity

**A "loosely coupled" system:** Health, education, and human service systems generally are loosely coupled but can be aligned and connected to build coherence of purpose.

Coffman, J. (2007). *A Framework for evaluating systems initiatives*. Boston, MA: The BUILD Initiative

# Comprehensive ECE System
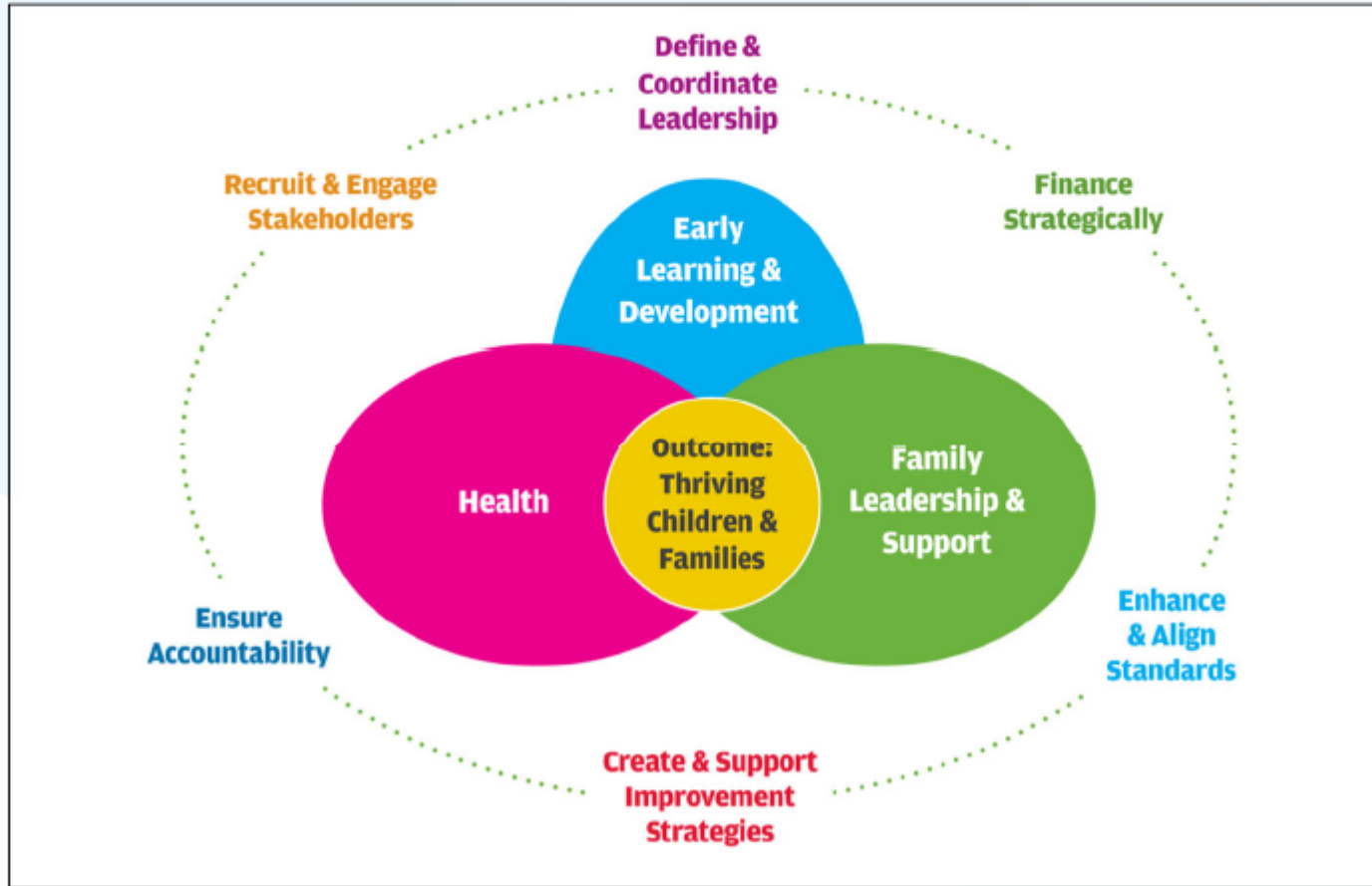


COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM-BUILDING: A Tool To Inform Discussions On Collaborative, Cross-Sector Planning
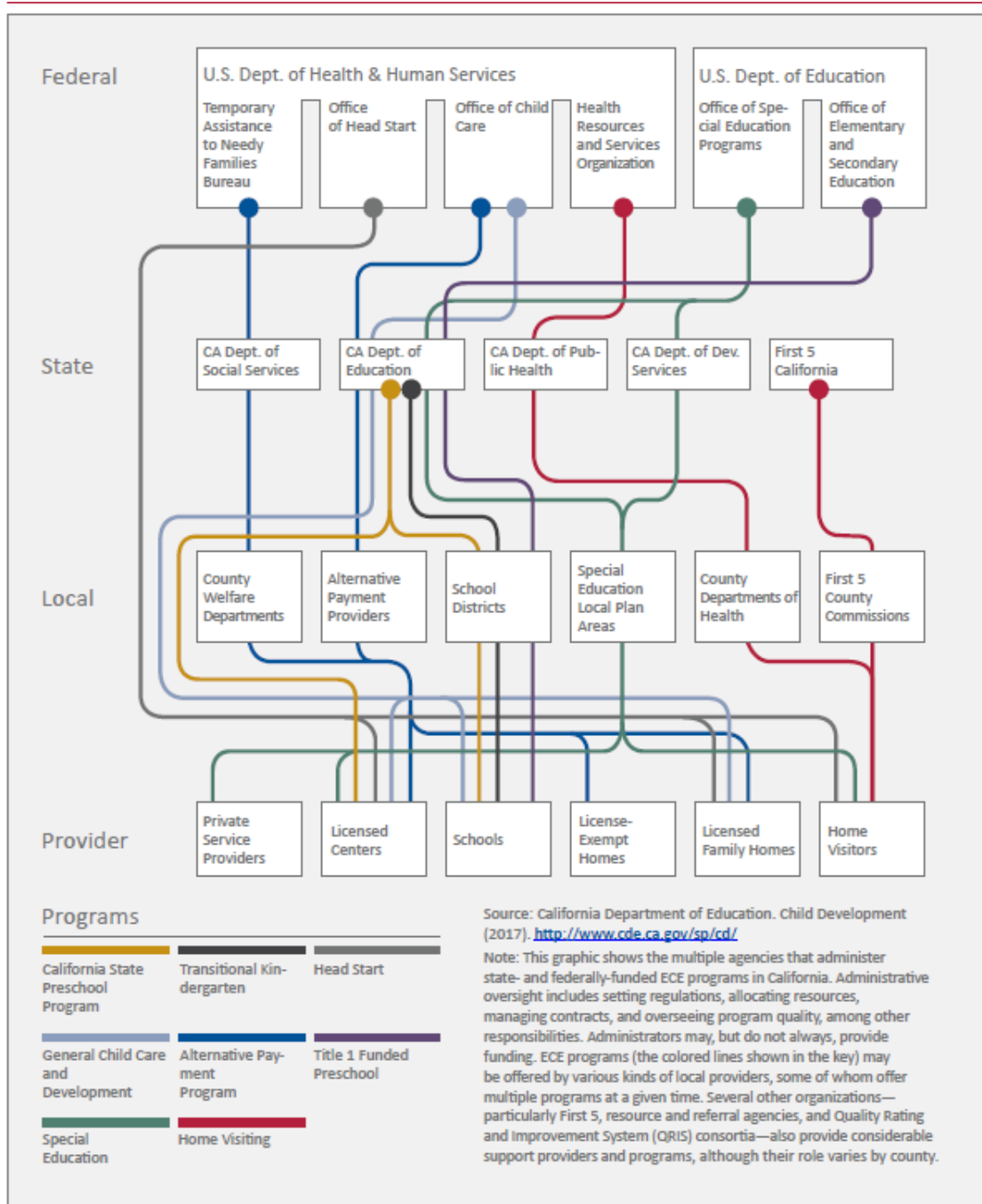http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/ECSWG%20Systems%20Planning%20Tool_2014.pdf

# earlylearning
## NEW MEXICO

HOME | ATION | **PROGRAMS** | QUALITY | ADVISORY COUNCIL | RESOURCES

EC system from a program perspective

PreK

Early Childhood Special Education

Search for
CHILD CARE and
EARLY LEARNING

## Programs

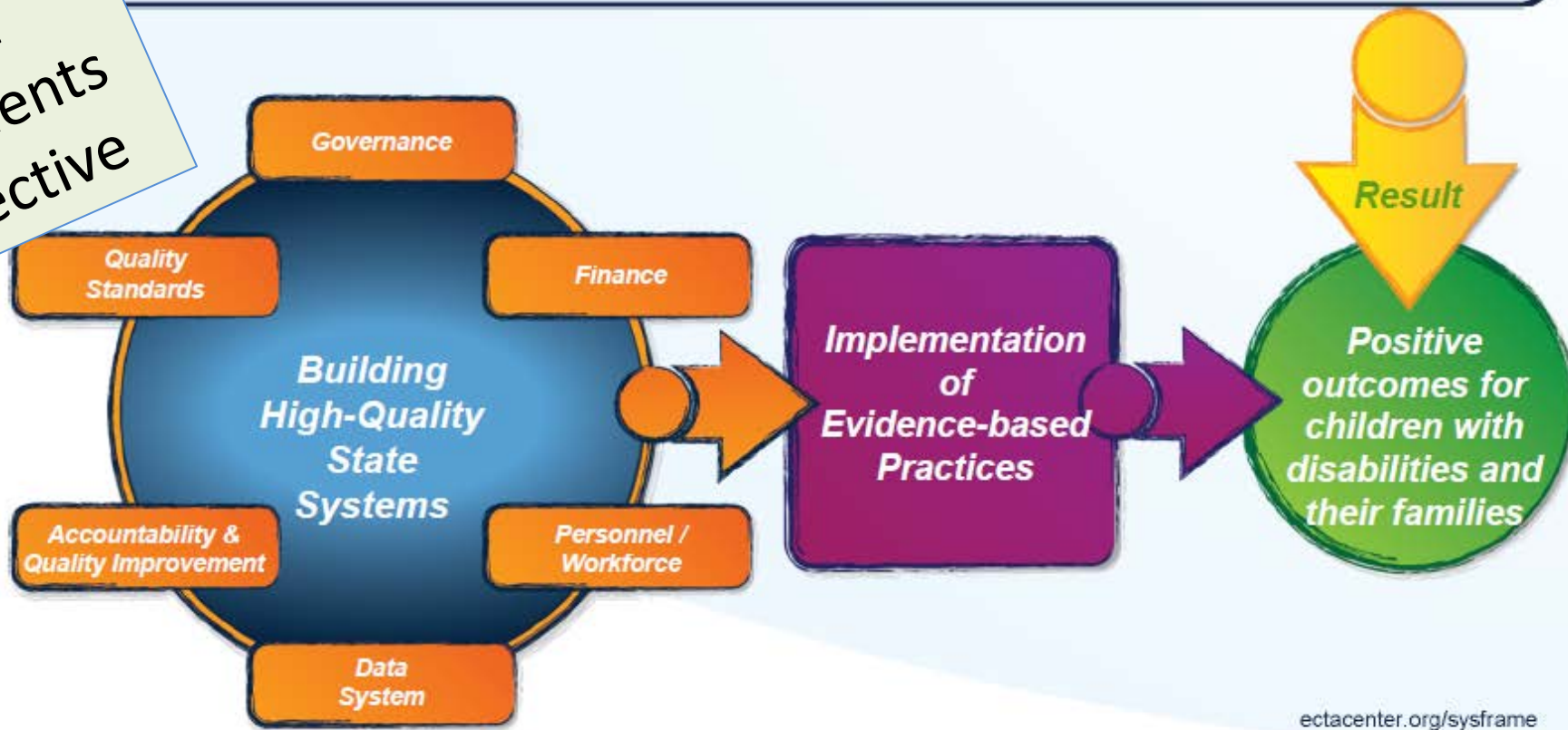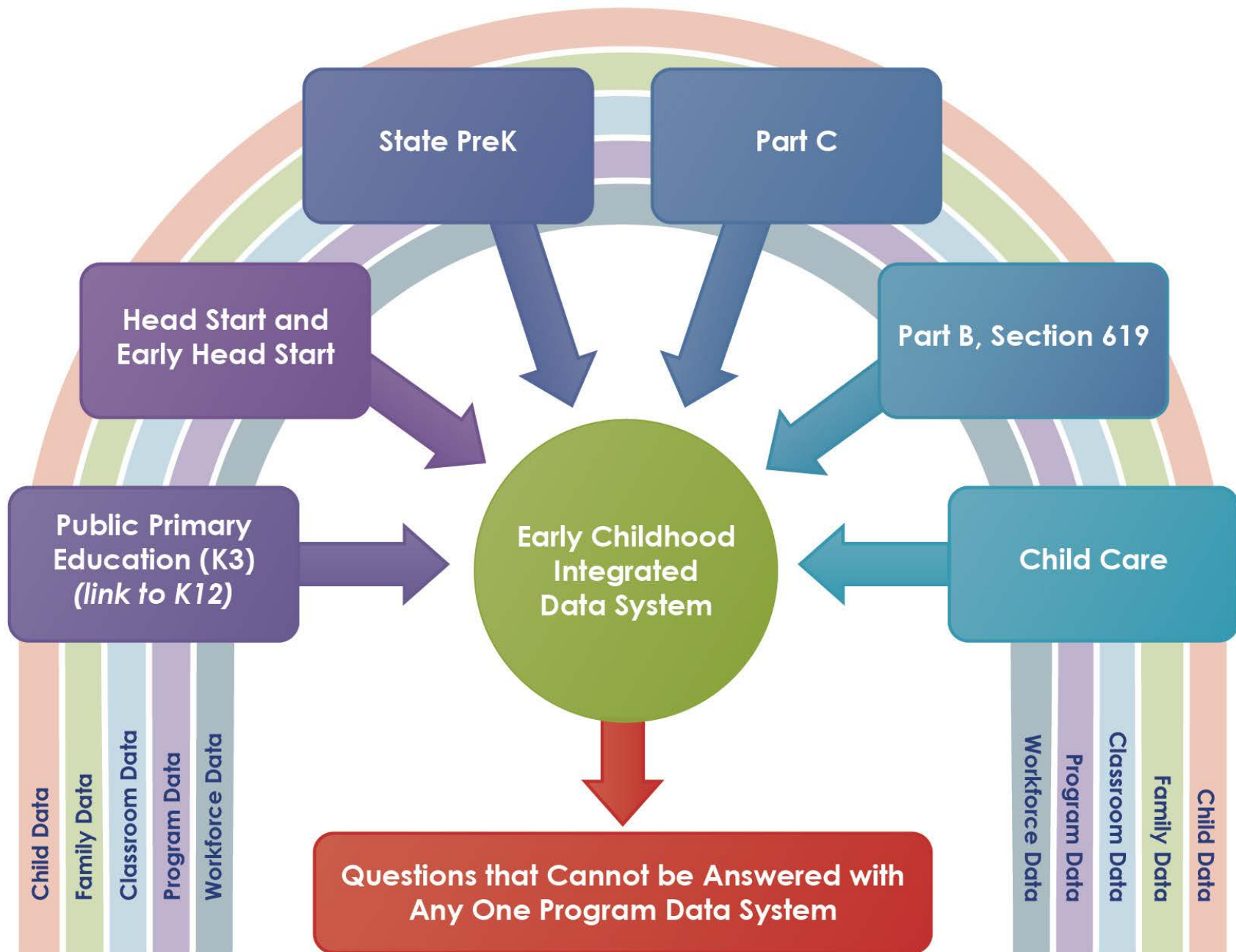| Early Learning NM System | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ages** | | | | | |
| Prenatal | Birth to One | One | Two | Three | Four to Kindergarten Entry |
| **Home Visiting** | | | | | |
| | **IDEA Part C** Early Intervention – NM FIT Program | | | **IDEA Part B** EC Special Education | |
| | **Child Care** | | | | |
| **Early Head Start** | | | | **Head Start** | |
| | | | | **Early PreK** | **NM PreK** |

EC system from a levels perspective

Source: Melnick, H., Tinubu Ali, T., Gardner, M., Maier, A., & Wechsler, M. (2017). Understanding California's early care and education system. *Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute*.

**Federal**

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Bureau | Office of Head Start | Office of Child Care | Health Resources and Services Organization

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Special Education Programs | Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

**State**

CA Dept. of Social Services | CA Dept. of Education | CA Dept. of Public Health | CA Dept. of Dev. Services | First 5 California

**Local**

County Welfare Departments | Alternative Payment Providers | School Districts | Special Education Local Plan Areas | County Departments of Health | First 5 County Commissions

**Provider**

Private Service Providers | Licensed Centers | Schools | License-Exempt Homes | Licensed Family Homes | Home Visitors

**Programs**

California State Preschool Program | Transitional Kindergarten | Head Start
General Child Care and Development | Alternative Payment Program | Title 1 Funded Preschool
Special Education | Home Visiting

Source: California Department of Education. Child Development (2017). http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/

Note: This graphic shows the multiple agencies that administer state- and federally-funded ECE programs in California. Administrative oversight includes setting regulations, allocating resources, managing contracts, and overseeing program quality, among other responsibilities. Administrators may, but do not always, provide funding. ECE programs (the colored lines shown in the key) may be offered by various kinds of local providers, some of whom offer multiple programs at a given time. Several other organizations—particularly First 5, resource and referral agencies, and Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) consortia—also provide considerable support providers and programs, although their role varies by county.

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EC system from a components perspective

What does a state need to put into place to support implementation of effective practices?

Building High-Quality State Systems
- Governance
- Finance
- Quality Standards
- Accountability & Quality Improvement
- Personnel / Workforce
- Data System

Implementation of Evidence-based Practices

Result

Positive outcomes for children with disabilities and their families

ectacenter.org/sysframe

ecta

State PreK

Part C

Head Start and Early Head Start

Part B, Section 619

Public Primary Education (K3) *(link to K12)*

Early Childhood Integrated Data System

Child Care

Child Data | Family Data | Classroom Data | Program Data | Workforce Data

Workforce Data | Program Data | Classroom Data | Family Data | Child Data

Questions that Cannot be Answered with Any One Program Data System

Example of integration within a component: data system

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# Goal:  Getting the parts to interact well

* Cooperate – work or act together for a common purpose
* Coordinate - bring the different elements of (a complex activity or organization) into a relationship that will ensure efficiency or harmony
* Align – make adjustments for coordinated functioning
* Integrate – combine one thing with another so that they become a whole

* Horizontal (within an age group; e.g., Head Start to child care)
* Vertical (across the age years; e.g., PreK to Kindergarten)

EC system from a age year perspective

early learning
NEW MEXICO

HOME  ...ATION  PROGRAMS  QUALITY  ADVISORY COUNCIL  RESOURCES

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Programs

| Early Learning NM System | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| Early Head Start | | | | Head Start | |
| | | | | Early PreK | NM PreK |

**Systems assumptions:**
- Alignment/integration leads to better quality and improves consistency/equity.
- There are not multiple, conflicting definitions of quality (for programs, personnel, etc).
- Duplication, conflicting regulations, inconsistencies, lack of coordination are inefficient and waste precious resources.
- Transitions between poorly aligned programs can be disruptive for children and families.

**Well-functioning federal infrastructure**

**[C] Well-functioning state infrastructure**

**[C] Well-functioning local infrastructure**

**[C] High quality programs**
- Aligned standards, curriculum, assessment
- [C] Qualified personnel
- Smooth transitions
- Etc.

**Improved child and family outcomes**

**Assumptions:**
- Children are/will be in multiple programs between birth and 8
- Local providers operate multiple programs.

**[C] = Consistency**

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# Thank You

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IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

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