

Announcement of Funding Availability

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce funding for a taskforce that will assist in the development of recommendations to improve access to quality inclusive child and afterschool care. Organizations and individuals are invited to respond to the Request for Applications (RFA) described in this document.

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act), is one of 55 entities of its type in the United States and territories. The NCCDD is an independent agency located in the NC Department of Health and Human Services. Its activities are governed by a 34-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Other members include legislators and policymakers representing various agencies and organizations having a vested interest in people with I/DD. The Council's quarterly meetings are open to the public.

The mission of the NCCDD is to assure that individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote interdependence, contribution, self-determination, and inclusion in the community. The NCCDD achieves this mission by promoting advocacy and leadership, community capacity building, and systems change activities. It also serves in an advisory capacity, under state law, to the NC Department of Health and Human Services.

The NCCDD makes funds available to fulfill its mission in a variety of areas in accordance with the DD Act and the Council's Five-Year State Plan. Funding is made available primarily through competitive bids or Request for Applications (RFA). A general description of the RFA is included in this document. The complete RFA package is available on the NCCDD web site (www.nccdd.org) or may be requested by mail. Please complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply, located on the back page of this publication, if you or your organization intends to apply.

Taskforce on Inclusive Child and Afterschool Care: Improving Access and Outcomes

Release Request for Applications (RFA) #1 2-2010

Intent and Objectives

Today, many parents must go to full or part-time work in order to support their families. Both typically developing children and children with disabilities spend more time than ever in child and afterschool care environments (O'Brien, 2001). However, many parents of children with disabilities find that it is difficult to find child and afterschool care¹ that will fully include their child in all activities (Mezey, Neas, & Irish, 2003). Many segregated care environments exist, despite ample research showing that "children's participation in both home and community activity settings is related to children's developmental progress and a positive sense of parent's well-being" (Trivette, Dunst, & Hamby, 2004, p. 30). Despite the evidence base and federal law and policy, society too often separates individuals with disabilities from

¹Child and afterschool care is here defined as any care for children birth to age 22; this can include child care centers, camps, and afterschool programs of an educational or recreational nature held during school breaks.

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typically developing individuals – initially in child care and school, then later in work, housing, and social settings. Teaching children to treat others in their peer group, regardless of ability or skill level, as equal builds hope for a more inclusive future. Inclusive child and afterschool care can ease parents' struggle to provide for their family; lead to better outcomes for children and families; and foster children's social skills and acceptance of others who are different from themselves.

The NCCDD's Five-Year State Plan includes an objective to promote integration of children with or at risk for intellectual and other developmental disabilities into regular child and afterschool care settings. The intent of this initiative is to invest in systems change, advocacy, and community capacity building efforts that promote and enhance the availability of fully inclusive, high quality child and afterschool care environments for children and youth. In addition, the initiative has as a focal point on removing stereotypes and misconceptions that hinder the development of more inclusive care. The NCCDD seeks to address this objective via funding of an initiative that promotes systemic change and provides education and support around structuring child and afterschool care environments in a more inclusive and accepting way, and offer opportunities for active participation in all aspects of the care environment. In addition, to increase community capacity and support for addressing attitudinal, policy, procedural, training, regulatory, and funding barriers hindering the development of inclusive child and afterschool care environments for children and youth.

It is **not** the primary intent of this initiative to remove barriers to inclusive child and afterschool care that may fall within the purview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (e.g., the need for transportation and accessible facilities), nor is it the purpose of this fund release to create or develop disability-only care environments, conduct research or clinical studies, provide services and supports offered under other publically funded programs for families and children with or at risk for I/DD, or provide interventions that occur primarily in a medical setting or congregate setting for people with I/DD. It is also not the intent that these funds supplant funds for work already being done by the applicant organization.

A successful applicant will:

- Demonstrate in the application an emphasis on facilitating organizational or systems change that will lead to outcomes valued by families of children with I/DD. In addition, they will provide an increase in the quantity and quality of opportunities for children and their families to participate fully in inclusive child and afterschool care environments.
- Ensure the application is inclusive of, and shaped by, the real experiences and hopes of families of children with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, in its design, implementation, and evaluation.
- In its implementation, address the supports that families may need to find, apply for, and have in order for their children succeed in inclusive child and afterschool care.
- Ensure the goals and objectives as well as the action steps are clearly stated, reflective of the intent of the RFA, and measurable.

Our childhood experiences remain with us throughout our lives. It is important for that experience to be one that supports children within the context of their family and community life and offers all children the rich rewards of everyday, natural learning environments.

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What We Know

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) released a position statement in 2009 stating that inclusive child and afterschool care:

“...embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential” (NAEYC/DEC, 2009).

Inclusive child and afterschool care fosters among all of us an attitude of acceptance and a focus on a child independent of their disability. It also promotes an understanding that all children are different and will have different levels of cognitive, emotional, and motor skills (Sweet, 2007). Inclusion is not simply placing children with disabilities alongside their typically developing counterparts; rather, it is making an active effort to include all children in all activities and allowing each child to access the learning and play environments in ways that suit them best. It is more than a shift in *where* support is provided; it is also a fundamental change in *how* support is provided.

Approximately 60% of children in the United States are in some form of child care, making child and afterschool care a prime area for improvement and impact (O'Brien, 2001). Inclusive child and afterschool care provides many benefits, such as equal gains in cognitive, language, and motor skills as could be had from a segregated environment (Bruder & Staff, 1998). In addition, inclusive child care provides greater gains in social interaction skills, increased alertness around typical peers, and improved self-esteem, happiness, and confidence (O'Brien, 2001; Buysse, Skinner, & Grant, 2001). Children with disabilities also receive more opportunity for free-play with their peers and spend more time in a typical child or afterschool care environment than segregated care or therapies provided separately can offer (O'Brien, 2001). Typically developing children benefit as well; they gain a more accepting attitude towards peers with disabilities as well as towards individual differences in general (Sweet, 2007; Buysse, et.al. 2001).

Parents face significant barriers; namely, locating and accessing inclusive child or afterschool care. Forty-five percent (45%) of mothers of children with disabilities do not return to work after the birth of their child because they cannot find care (Mezey, Neas, & Irish, 2003). There are many other barriers to inclusion, for example, the widespread belief that including children with disabilities is an expensive, difficult, and even dangerous process. Staff misperceptions or fear may lead to the belief that children with disabilities cannot be cared for properly in regular settings. Also, attitudinal barriers come into play: society often puts forth a negative view of individuals with disabilities, and those who provide child and afterschool care are not immune.

Target Population

The target population for this fund release is families of children with or at risk for I/DD. The recipient of this fund release will actively engage these families in the implementation of activities under the grant and advance a focus on the issue consistent with principles of family support, participant-determination and family-centeredness.

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The Council seeks investment opportunities that actively involve minorities and that address issues related to, e.g., culture and ethnicity. The Council also expresses a strong interest in endeavors that seek to include both children and parents regardless of disability.

Proposed Structure for the “Taskforce on Inclusive Child and Afterschool Care: Improving Access and Outcomes”

The successful applicant will work closely with NCCDD and key stakeholders in the area of child and afterschool care to develop a comprehensive need assessment focused on systemic barriers to achieving inclusive child and afterschool care in North Carolina. The Taskforce will be charged with developing recommendations composed of long-term, mid-term, and short-term goals accompanied by specific strategies.

The successful applicant will include the following in the application:

- Proposed membership of the Taskforce on Inclusive Child and Afterschool Care: Improving Accessibility and Outcomes;
- Proposed plan for recruitment of state’s current professional leadership in the related areas;
- Proposed plan for recruitment of parents of children with and without developmental disabilities, as well as child and afterschool care providers in addition to other key stakeholder populations;
- Proposed agenda topics and presenters;
- Implementation process and timelines including an ongoing formative evaluation with process benchmarks and intermittent reports; and
- Proposal and methods of completing the needs assessment, ensuring community input, as well as publishing and distribution of the final recommendations.

Strategies

Overall strategies for implementation of this initiative *should* include:

- Coordination and encouragement of collaboration among key agencies, Councils, committees, and advocacy groups concerned with families and children’s services, as well as meaningful partnerships with families themselves.
- Linking like-minded leaders through informal networks and alliances to remove barriers to change.
- Development of strategies to identify and address systemic barriers to the realization of full inclusion in child and afterschool care environments.
- Analysis, recommendations, plans, or strategies to:
 - Expand opportunities for children with or at risk for I/DD and their families to access inclusive child and afterschool care;
 - Empower families of children with or at risk for I/DD via education on their rights, routes of access, and funding options for inclusive child and afterschool care;
 - Educate child and afterschool care professionals, and the agencies that employ them, about how they can support children with or at risk for I/DD while fully including them in all classroom activities;
 - Educate families, and others about how they can encourage and support inclusion;

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- Foster a partnership between parents and inclusive environments for their child.
- Development of strategies to engage NC child care providers, afterschool programs, and child care information resource centers, in supporting the initiative and outcomes meaningful to people with I/DD.
- Initiation of a process for interested child and afterschool care providers to utilize technical assistance, funding streams, and other strategies to expand the inclusivity of child and afterschool care programs.
- Identification of stereotypes that impede inclusion and strategies for addressing these.
- Identification of staff competencies for the provision of inclusive child and afterschool care for children with or at risk for I/DD and recommendations for training
- Identification of approaches to support the modification and adaption of existing community programs, policies, materials, services, or settings as appropriate.
- Making information about the taskforce and its recommendations accessible to persons with intellectual or sensory-related disabilities and to those for whom English is not their primary language.

** Please be aware that this is not an exhaustive list of approaches to address these issues.*

Applicant Qualifications

The NCCDD welcomes applications from entities that have:

- A proven record of accomplishment in planning, providing, evaluating, or training in the area of inclusive child and afterschool care in North Carolina.
- Relationships with recognized North Carolinian leadership in the field of I/DD as well as the child and afterschool care community.
- Demonstrated the capacity to plan, provide, or evaluate approaches, which incorporate core developmental disability policies and values such as inclusion, family-centeredness, family support, and participant-direction.
- Experience in working collaboratively with a variety of public and private agencies and organizations in North Carolina.
- Experience working in close partnership with families, policymakers, and care providers.
- Experience with engaging legislators and other public policymakers in the review and evaluation of existing policies and practices affecting people with I/DD in North Carolina.
- Actively involved persons with I/DD and their family members in substantive, concrete aspects of project development, management, and implementation.
- Demonstrated knowledge or methods of identifying existing specialized and generic supports and services for families and children in North Carolina.
- Ability to work with stakeholders to produce a final report for the Council; and to assist the Council in producing interim materials that promote the initiative and its implementation.
- Capacity and infrastructure to manage grant funds in such a way as to be transparent and to maintain accountability for all expenditures, including development and completion of required reports in a timely fashion. This includes both quarterly programmatic and monthly financial reports.

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- As necessary, capacity to administer subcontracts. This includes both programmatic and financial aspects of administration. NCCDD reserves the right to approve and or deny any subcontract.
- Capacity to create and distribute a final report that will identify the project's processes, successes, barriers, and policy change recommendations for increasing the availability of quality inclusive child and afterschool care across North Carolina.

To carry out the intent of this objective, the NCCDD will make available **one grant for up to \$75,000, for an eighteen (18) month period** with a required minimum of 25% non-federal matching funds. This initiative **will not** be subject to the declining federal/Council participation based on the poverty or non-poverty status of the county in which the applicant is headquartered.

References

- Bruder, M.B. & Staff, I. (1998). A comparison of the effects of type of classroom and service characteristics on toddlers with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Education, 18*, pp. 26-37.
- Buysse, V., Skinner, D., & Grant, S. (2001). Towards a definition of quality inclusion: Perspectives of parents and practitioners. *Journal of Early Intervention, 24*, pp. 146-161.
- Mezey, Neas, & Irish, (2003). *Coming together for children with disabilities: The promise of state child care/IDEA collaboration*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, Easter Seals.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children & the Division for Early Childhood (2009). *Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement*. Washington, DC: Author.
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- Sweet, M. (2007). *A Thinking Guide to Inclusive Childcare: For those who care about young children with and without disabilities*. Madison: Disability Rights Wisconsin.
- Trivette, C. M., Dunst, C.J., Hamby, D. (2004). Sources of variation in and consequences of everyday activity settings on child and parenting functioning. *Perspectives in Education, 22*(2), 17-35.

Definition of Developmental Disability

What is a developmental disability?

According to the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000, section 102(8), "the term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older that:

- Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
- Is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
- Is likely to continue indefinitely;

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- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;
 - (i) Self-care;
 - (ii) Receptive and expressive language;
 - (iii) Learning;
 - (iv) Mobility;
 - (v) Self-direction;
 - (vi) Capacity for independent living; and
 - (vii) Economic self-sufficiency.

Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, supports, or other assistance that is of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated, except that such term, when applied to infants and young children means individuals from birth to age 5, inclusive, who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided.”

Attention all Applicants

Unless otherwise indicated in the specific RFA, all grant awards will be subject to a formula requiring non-federal matching funds from the applicant agency based on the poverty or non-poverty status of the county in which the applicant is headquartered. In addition, unless otherwise stated in the RFA, all grants designed to exceed one year in duration will be subject to declining federal/Council participation based on the poverty or non-poverty status of the county in which the applicant is headquartered. Please refer to the Council's grant application for a list of poverty counties and details on the declining federal/Council participation. All applications must reflect the active participation of people with developmental disabilities and their families in the development and implementation of grants. In addition, preference will be given to those applications demonstrating responsiveness to the beliefs, values, interpersonal styles, attitudes and cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or other traits enhancing maximum participation of and benefit to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

This publication is produced by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, established by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (PL 106-402) to promote interdependence, contribution, self-determination, integration, and inclusion into the community for citizens with developmental disabilities. The NC Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Robert J. Rickelman, Ph.D., Chairman

Holly Riddle, J.D., M.Ed., Executive Director

**Taskforce on Inclusive Child and Afterschool Care:
Improving Access and Outcomes**

Notification of Intent to Apply

I am interested in submitting an application for:

_____ **RFA #1 2-2010** “Taskforce on Inclusive Child and Afterschool Care: Improving Access and Outcomes”

_____ Please send grant application packet.

_____ I will download the grant application packet from the web site: www.nccdd.org.

A meeting for potential applicants will be conducted approximately two weeks prior to the application deadline. Please submit this **intent to apply form by Monday, March 22, 2010** to receive notification of the Bidders’ Workshop tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, March 31, 2010**, from **1 pm – 3pm** at the NCCDD.

Name(s): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

FAX #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Grant applications must be received by 5:00 pm, Thursday, April 15, 2010 to the NCCDD office.

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