

**Policy Statement from the
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and Department of Education**

Guidance to State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education & Care

- Conducting periodic statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of high-quality early care and education (ECE) programs.
- Identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally-funded and state-funded ECE programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering such programs
- Establishing recommendations for:
 - Developing a statewide, unified data collection system.
 - Creating or enhancing a statewide professional development system and career ladder.
 - Improvements in state early learning standards and undertaking efforts to develop high-quality and comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.
 - Increasing participation of children in ECE programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.
- Assessing the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education to support the career development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs.