

Project Summary

Project Title: Alabama PDG B–5 Early Childhood Systems Enhancement Initiative

Applicant Name: Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

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The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) is the designated State of Alabama agency applying for the 2025 PDG B-5 Systems-Building Grant. As a governor’s cabinet-level agency, ADECE carries the statutory responsibility for developing and sustaining a cohesive, comprehensive, and high-quality early learning and care system for Alabama’s young children.

For this funding cycle, ADECE is requesting \$3,942,800 in federal PDG B-5 Systems-Building funds and will contribute \$1,182,840 in nonfederal resources. These funds will enable Alabama to build on significant progress achieved in previous PDG B-5 planning and renewal grants, strengthen existing statewide structures, and scale effective strategies that enhance early childhood outcomes.

This proposed initiative addresses gaps and priorities identified through Alabama’s most recent statewide needs assessment and strategic plan. These priority areas include:

- **Workforce capacity:** increasing the supply, stability, and skills of early childhood professionals;
- **Program quality:** strengthening consistency and alignment across mixed delivery programs;
- **Family engagement:** expanding objectively accessible supports; and
- **Data integration:** developing robust cross-agency analytic systems to guide policy, funding, and service delivery.

The initiative is designed to benefit children birth through age five, their families, and the early childhood workforce across all settings, which includes First Class Pre-K (FCPK), licensed childcare, First Teacher Home Visiting, Part C Early Intervention, Head Start and Early Head Start, and community-based programs, with intentional emphasis on rural regions and historically underserved communities.

Throughout the initiative, ADECE employs data-driven monitoring, extensive cross-agency collaboration, and evidence-based strategies to inform program design and continuous quality improvement. By strengthening the workforce, improving program quality, increasing program access and transparency, and elevating family voice, this initiative will enhance school readiness outcomes and ensure that Alabama’s early childhood system is more coordinated, equitable, and sustainable.

ADECE’s PDG B–5 plan represents a strategic continuation and expansion of Alabama’s long-term commitment to giving all Alabama children the strongest possible start, while supporting the families and professionals who help them grow.

Project Narrative

Approach: Action Plan

Scope of Proposed Project

Alabama's PDG B-5 Early Childhood Systems Enhancement Initiative is a statewide strategy to strengthen the early childhood system by building workforce capacity, improving program quality, expanding family engagement, and enhancing data-driven decision-making. The initiative integrates eight interrelated projects that collectively expand professional learning and reflective supervision across Pre-K, licensed childcare, First Teacher Home Visiting, Part C Early Intervention, and Head Start; strengthen program quality and alignment through continuous improvement and coordinated cross-program planning; and build analytic capacity and integrated data systems to guide equitable policy and program decisions. These projects also promote family engagement, leadership, and access to services (particularly in underserved communities) through conferences, parent leadership programs, and evidence-based supports. Activities include workforce training, reflective supervision, cross-disciplinary professional development, data and analytic system enhancements with ECDataLab and VOICES for Alabama's Children (VOICES), quality improvement efforts, and statewide professional development conferences hosted with Children First. Head Start integration is embedded throughout to ensure alignment with federal standards, workforce requirements, and program priorities.

Implementation Plan

1. *Workforce Development & Professional Learning* will be improved through the implementation of competency-based professional learning pathways, mentorship programs, and a statewide Reflective Supervision (RS) Train-the-Trainer (ToT) model to support well-being, reduce burnout,

and sustain RS providers by partnering with First 5 Alabama to recruit cross-disciplinary cohorts and provide stipends and mentoring for RS providers.

2. *Program Quality & Alignment* will increase through services alignment across Head Start, First Class Pre-K (FCPK), Early Intervention (EI), and First Teacher Home Visiting (FTHV) for integrated, evidence-based delivery as well as by providing coaching, data support, and standardized metrics for program evaluation and improvement.

3. *Analytic Capacity & Data Use* will increase due to collaboration with ECDataLab and VOICES to develop Alabama's State Analytic Plan, including dashboards and equity-focused indicators and by conducting cohort workshops, individualized coaching, and iterative evaluation of analytic tools.

4. *Family Engagement & Leadership* will be improved through partnering with Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) to implement family-centered initiatives such as Books, Balls & Blocks Developmental Screening events, Strengthening Families (SF) programs, and parent leadership development; coordination of statewide Children's Policy Councils (CPCs) and Head Start Family Engagement Conferences to build knowledge, capacity, and cross-county collaboration; integration of family engagement data into statewide planning and decision-making.

5. *Head Start Integration Across Projects* will be achieved by aligning workforce development, reflective supervision, quality improvement, and family engagement initiatives with Head Start standards; and incorporating Head Start data into statewide dashboards to inform resource allocation, policy, and program quality initiatives.

Potential Obstacles and Challenges with Strategies to Address Them

Alabama's PDG B-5 Early Childhood Systems Enhancement Initiative strengthens workforce capacity, enhances program quality, advances analytic readiness, and supports family engagement.

By addressing workforce limitations, data fragmentation, equity gaps, and coordination challenges, the initiative establishes structures and practices that improve cross-program collaboration and data-informed decision-making. Through Head Start integration, statewide partnerships, and evidence-based strategies, it aims to increase access to high-quality early childhood services and promote school readiness outcomes for children. Potential obstacles include:

1. A workforce capacity and participation challenge of having limited early childhood professionals due to burnout, turnover, or insufficient RS providers will be remedied by offering stipends, flexible trainings and tiered mentorship by training RS trainers; expanding apprenticeships and T.E.A.C.H. scholarship opportunities, including Head Start staff; and leveraging CPC and Head Start conferences to build capacity efficiently.
2. Data integration and analytic readiness challenges of having fragmented data systems and inconsistent metrics will be further explored through a partnership with ECDataLab and VOICES to standardize definitions, indicators, and reporting; enhance ECEData to integrate FCPK, FTHV, Head Start, and workforce data; and using dashboards and coaching to guide data-driven decisions.
3. A family engagement and objectivity struggle includes reaching families in rural or underserved communities. This will be addressed by providing travel grants, multi-touch outreach, and accessible locations for conferences and educational programs; and monitoring participation data by demographics to guide improvements.
4. Cross-program coordination challenges include aligning agencies, programs, and funding streams while avoiding duplication. This will be mitigated by maintaining structured interagency planning, regular meetings, and collaborative frameworks; and using dashboards and quarterly reviews to track alignment and embed Head Start integration.

5. Sustaining initiative impact beyond the funding period can be difficult but can be addressed by developing state analytic plans, dashboards, and governance structures; building a pipeline of RS providers; maintaining standardized frameworks for professional learning, apprenticeships, and T.E.A.C.H.; and documenting procedures and outcomes from conferences and family engagement initiatives.

6. Implementation and quality assurance can be challenging because it is difficult to ensure fidelity and quality across programs and regions. Using quarterly progress reviews, fidelity assessments, and feedback from all projects; as well as applying lessons from past conferences and workforce initiatives to refine implementation and enhance equity can increase both fidelity and quality.

Critical element 1: Statewide ECE Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan

Governance: ADECE will administer Alabama’s PDG B–5 Early Childhood Systems Enhancement Initiative through an established statewide governance structure. ADECE provides leadership, fiscal oversight, and cross-program coordination to align grant activities with Alabama’s early childhood priorities. Strategic guidance comes from the Alabama CPCs, which also serves as the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and includes leaders from education, human services, public health, mental health, and community organizations. Local input is gathered through 67 county-level CPCs, which assess needs, identify gaps, and provide recommendations to inform statewide planning. This structure ensures that PDG B-5 strategies are evidence-based, responsive to community needs, and coordinated across agencies. By linking state leadership with local CPCs, ADECE fosters accountability, transparency, and sustainability of early childhood systems beyond the grant period.

Assurance of Up-to-Date Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan: ADECE affirms that its 2023–2025 statewide Early Care and Education needs assessment and strategic plan are current,

comprehensive, and fully meet PDG B-5 requirements. The updates incorporated robust stakeholder engagement, extensive review of existing data, and alignment with state and federal priorities, including Head Start.

Statewide Scope and Coverage: The 2023 needs assessment reviewed 10 existing studies, reports, and datasets and engaged 58 key informants representing families, providers, local and state partners, and ADECE leadership. It addressed family engagement, high-quality programs and services, workforce support, and program accessibility across the state, including rural and underserved areas.

Alignment with State Vision and Program Priorities: Both the needs assessment and strategic plan reflect ADECE’s vision: “Every young child in Alabama will have a strong early learning foundation for healthy growth and development.” The strategic plan directly advances PDG B-5 priorities by promoting a unified, coherent ECE system, expanding high-quality program access, and maximizing family choice.

Integration of Head Start and Mixed-Delivery Systems: Head Start grantees, services, and funding were fully incorporated into strategic planning and data analysis. Strategies ensure alignment of Head Start programs with statewide goals, governance structures, and funding strategies.

Use of Existing Data and Prior Planning: The strategic plan builds on previous PDG B-5 work, lessons learned, and prior goals and objectives. Baseline data from the 2023 needs assessment supports outcome measurement, program improvement, and impact tracking.

Stakeholder Engagement and Shared Accountability: ADECE leadership and agency partners engaged in multiple planning sessions (July and December 2023) to review findings, update

objectives, and ensure buy-in. This collaborative approach promotes shared accountability and cross-agency alignment.

Actionable and Measurable Outcomes: The plan identifies clear goals and objectives, with measurable outcomes for organizational health, family engagement, program quality, and workforce development. These metrics provide a foundation for tracking progress on PDG B-5 priorities.

How Previous Strategic Planning Informed Outcome Strategies: ADECE's prior strategic planning, including the 2023–2025 strategic plan update and earlier PDG B-5 initiatives, directly informed the selection of outcome strategies under Critical Element 2. This ensures that strategies build on past work, address identified gaps and advance the state's ECE vision.

1. Alignment with Goals and Objectives: Strategic priorities of *Organizational Health, Family Engagement, High-Quality Programs & Services, and Workforce Support* guided the selection of outcome strategies. Objectives such as improving access to high-quality programs, strengthening workforce capacity, and enhancing family engagement informed strategies to reconcile fragmented systems, expand program availability, and align data systems.

2. Data-Driven Strategy Selection: Findings from the 2023 needs assessment highlighted gaps in access, workforce capacity, family supports, and data integration. Strategies were selected to: integrate Head Start and other mixed-delivery programs into a unified statewide ECE system; streamline operations and reduce administrative burden through shared services and technology; and build longitudinal data systems to track child outcomes and support continuous improvement.

3. Lessons Learned from Prior PDG B-5 Activities: Previous work emphasized cross-agency coordination, clear governance, and shared accountability. Outcome strategies reinforce these lessons through governance structures, cohesive financing strategies, and unified data systems.

Successes in family engagement and workforce development informed the expansion and scaling of these strategies statewide.

4. Integration Across Systems: Past planning emphasized connecting program operations, funding streams, and policy initiatives. Outcome strategies continue this integration, ensuring that PDG B-5 activities complement existing efforts while addressing persistent gaps.

The 2023–2025 ADECE needs assessment and strategic plan are current, comprehensive, and fully aligned with PDG B-5 requirements. Leveraging prior strategic planning and lessons learned, all proposed outcome strategies are data-informed, advance the state’s vision for ECE, address identified gaps, and support sustainable, statewide impact. No further updates are currently required.

Critical element 2: Outcome Strategies to Advance Program Priorities

Project Narrative

1. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Alabama Scholarship Program

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 1) This project addresses Category 1 by expanding the professional development, compensation, and retention of Alabama’s early childhood workforce through a formal partnership with the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) to administer T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alabama scholarships.

Specific Activities:

Activity	Purpose
Provide early childhood teachers with scholarships for CDA credentials, associate degrees, and bachelor’s degrees	Increase ECE professional qualifications and improve ECE quality statewide
Encourage workforce stability by offering compensation awards and retention stipends to link educational attainment with pay	Reduce turnover, incentivize continued professional growth, and retain qualified teachers in high-need programs
Support first-generation college students and other high-need educators through access stipends (travel, internet, books.	Promote objectivity and access to higher education for underserved and first-generation educators

Track educational, compensation, and retention outcomes across program types: FCPK, childcare centers, family childcare homes, public school settings	Monitor effectiveness, inform program adjustments, and ensure statewide alignment with workforce priorities
Report outcomes and lessons learned to ADECE and PDG B-5 stakeholders	Provide actionable insights, support data-driven decision-making, and guide future workforce development strategies

PDG Program Priorities: T.E.A.C.H. will support ADECE by providing targeted scholarships, compensation incentives, and program management to improve workforce capacity, retention, and quality of care. This work advances all three PDG B-5 Program Priorities:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – T.E.A.C.H. supports a well-trained, credentialed early childhood workforce, aligning workforce development with statewide early care and education priorities.
- 2: **Unified System** – Linking educational advancement to compensation and retention creates a more stable, cohesive workforce across FCPK, licensed childcare, and Head Start programs.
- 3: **Family Choice** – T.E.A.C.H. strengthens family access to high-quality early childhood education by ensuring children are taught by skilled, supported educators.

Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) brings decades of experience administering statewide scholarship programs, tracking workforce outcomes, and linking professional development to compensation and retention. Participation in T.E.A.C.H. ensures measurable improvements in workforce qualifications, reduced turnover, and enhanced quality in early childhood classrooms.

Addressing Gaps: Alabama faces a significant ECE workforce shortage, particularly in high-quality FCPK and licensed childcare programs. T.E.A.C.H. addresses these gaps by:

Activity / Strategy	Purpose
Provide financial and professional support for teachers to advance education and skills	Helps teachers gain credentials and improve classroom quality

Link education to pay to incentivize retention	Encourages workforce stability and rewards professional growth
Target scholarships and stipends for educators in high-need areas, including first-generation college students	Supports equity and access for underserved educators
Support a coordinated, statewide approach to workforce development	Strengthens alignment across programs and promotes consistent workforce quality

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: Head Start teachers will be eligible to apply for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, and compensation incentives so this should improve workforce capacity, retention, and quality of care.

Alignment with Alabama’s ECE Vision: T.E.A.C.H. aligns with ADECE’s vision that every young child will have a strong early learning foundation. By strengthening workforce quality, providing equitable access to professional development, and linking education to compensation, T.E.A.C.H. contributes to a unified, high-quality statewide ECE system.

Activity / Strategy	Purpose / Impact
Administering T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships	APC works with ADECE to distribute scholarships to FCPK and licensed childcare teachers to ensure objective access and collaborates on outreach to increase awareness and participation among high-need educators.
Workforce Tracking & Reporting	APC coordinates with ADECE to collect and report data on retention, compensation, and workforce growth to inform policy and program decisions as well as to align reporting with PDG B–5 outcomes and statewide workforce metrics.
Strategic Alignment with State Goals	APC will align scholarship programs with ADECE’s strategic plan and PDG B–5 workforce priorities to address statewide needs and will participate in joint planning sessions to identify workforce gaps and inform future scholarship strategy.
Professional Development Integration	APC will collaborate with ADECE to ensure coursework and credentialing improve classroom quality, instructional skills, and child outcomes and identify training needs and approving coursework aligned with state standards.
Retention Incentives	APC will support compensation-linked retention strategies to stabilize the workforce, especially in high-need areas and jointly track incentive effectiveness and adjust strategies based on ADECE data insights.
Policy & Advocacy Collaboration	APC and ADECE will work together to advocate for workforce funding, improved teacher compensation, and professional development policies at the state level. They will share data and outcomes with legislators and stakeholders.
Community & Program Outreach	APC and ADECE will coordinate outreach efforts for FCPK classrooms, childcare centers, and family childcare homes to supports statewide communications and engagement to maximize participation in T.E.A.C.H. programs.

Have Similar Efforts Been Attempted in the Past/Build on Efforts/Apply Lessons Learned:

T.E.A.C.H. has been successfully implemented in multiple states, demonstrating measurable impacts on workforce retention, professional qualifications, and child outcomes. Lessons learned include linking education to compensation improves retention, targeting stipends to increase participation among high-need and first-generation educators and centralizing data tracking to support ongoing program refinement and alignment with state priorities.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives, Funding Streams, Including Head Start: T.E.A.C.H.

strengthens cross-program alignment, coordinated funding use, and shared workforce outcomes by supporting statewide early childhood workforce initiatives, enhancing Head Start professional development and retention programs, advancing PDG B–5 priorities, and providing scholarship, retention, and educational attainment data to ECEDData to inform statewide planning and analytics.

Evaluation of Effectiveness:

Category	Goal	Measurement
Educational Attainment	Increase credential and degree completion by 10% over the previous year.	Participant transcripts and scholarship completion data
Retention	Improve workforce stability by maintaining turnover rates at or below 4% for associate-level and 5% for bachelor-level recipients.	Employer verification
Workforce Coverage	Expand employer participation by 5% to 268 employers	Employer agreements and participation logs

2. Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentialing Support

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 1) This strategy strengthens Alabama’s early childhood workforce by expanding statewide capacity for CDA credentialing support across both FCPK and Head Start programs. The CDA is a foundational credential required for auxiliary teachers in FCPK and many instructional positions in Head Start. However, Alabama continues to

experience educator shortages and credentialing delays caused by limited statewide coaching and verification capacity.

During the 2025–2026 school year, 212 auxiliary teachers entered FCPK on waivers because they did not yet hold required credentials. Many Head Start programs report similar recruitment challenges, with newly hired educators needing immediate support to begin credentialing. In 2024–2025, one ADECE staff member supported 42 FCPK educators, leaving no capacity to support non-FCPK Head Start teachers—highlighting a significant statewide gap.

Specific Activities: With PDG B–5 funding, ADECE will expand credentialing capacity by hiring two part-time Retired State Employees (RSEs) with early childhood experience and Professional Development Specialist (PDS) certification. These CDA Support Specialists will provide individualized coaching, observations, portfolio guidance, and technical assistance to CDA candidates statewide, ensuring Alabama has a unified, high-quality system of credentialing supports across FCPK and Head Start.

Activity	Purpose	Impact
Hire two part-time RSE CDA Support Specialists	Increase statewide capacity for coaching, portfolio support, observations, and verification preparation	Reduce teacher waivers, accelerate CDA completion
Provide individualized CDA coaching and technical assistance	Support teachers in completing portfolio tasks, collecting observation evidence, and preparing for PDS verification visits	Strengthen educator quality and alignment with FCPK and Head Start standards
Provide CDA materials and resources	Facilitate access to textbooks, manuals, and required supplies. CDA Specialists will support candidates by providing and distributing essential course materials to those who need help obtaining their CDA resources.	Improve completion rates and reduce local program burden
Track CDA enrollment, progress, and completion	Integrate data into ADECE workforce reporting	Strengthen workforce planning and strategy alignment

Advancement of PDG B–5 Program Priorities:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – This strategy strengthens Alabama’s vision for a professional, well-prepared early childhood workforce by ensuring CDA candidates receive consistent, high-quality coaching aligned with state and federal requirements.
- 2: **Unified System** – By supporting CDA completion across FCPK and Head Start classrooms, this strategy aligns credentialing expectations, reduces fragmentation, and advances coordinated workforce pathways.
- 3: **Family Choice** – Increasing the number of credentialed educators enhances program quality and expands families’ access to high-quality early learning environments.

Addressing Workforce Gaps and Needs: CDA credentialing support directly addresses:

- High numbers of waived FCPK teachers requiring immediate credentialing support
- Head Start staff shortages due to unmet credentialing requirements
- Limited ADECE staff capacity to support statewide CDA coaching
- Systemwide inequities in access to CDA materials and verification preparation

Previous efforts showed that individualized coaching significantly improves credential completion, but limited staffing restricted access. Adding RSE CDA Specialists expands capacity, increases contact frequency, and ensures educators receive high-quality, competency-aligned support across both systems.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: This strategy fully incorporates Head Start grantees by providing direct CDA coaching and observations for HS educators; aligning portfolio requirements with HS classroom expectations and performance standards; supporting HS programs in meeting federal personnel qualification rules and including HS staff progress and completion data in statewide workforce reports.

Alignment with Alabama's ECE Vision: This strategy supports Alabama's vision of a high-quality, credentialed, and stable early childhood workforce by expanding access to individualized, state-supported credentialing pathways. Coordinated CDA support reduces fragmentation between FCPK and Head Start and ensures more educators deliver developmentally appropriate, evidence-based instruction.

Have Similar Efforts Been Attempted in the Past/Build on Efforts/Apply Lessons Learned: Previous ADECE CDA support showed that individualized coaching improves credential completion and teacher readiness, but staffing was insufficient to meet statewide demand. Lessons learned include that individualized coaching accelerates completion and reduces waiver reliance; portfolio guidance, observation support, and verification preparation are essential and expanding staff improves access across FCPK and Head Start. This strategy builds on these lessons by adding part-time CDA Support Specialists for consistent statewide support.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives, Funding Streams, Including Head Start: CDA credentialing support aligns FCPK and Head Start credentialing expectations, supports federal personnel requirements, and leverages PDG B-5 funding for statewide workforce capacity. ADECE is working to integrate workforce data with other ADECE reporting, linking credential attainment, teacher retention, and program quality.

Evaluation of Effectiveness will be measured by increased CDA enrollment and completion rates; reduced dependence on waivers in FCPK; increased percentage of Head Start staff meeting credential requirements; improved teacher retention across both FCPK and HS and integration of CDA progress into statewide workforce data systems.

3. ECE Registered Apprenticeship Expansion and Workforce Pathways

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 1) This project focuses on reconciling fragmented early childhood workforce pathways into a unified statewide system that strengthens educator preparation across childcare, First Class Pre-K (FCPK), and Head Start settings. The Apprenticeship Expansion and Workforce Pathways Strategy will expand Alabama’s Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship (AECEA) statewide; strengthen employer and educator supports; and align wage progression, articulation agreements, and training requirements across early learning program types. This work advances all three PDG B–5 Program Priorities:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – Apprenticeship provides a clear, structured statewide pathway for credential attainment and instructional skill-building, advancing Alabama’s vision of a highly qualified early childhood workforce.
- 2: **Unified System** – By aligning credentials, articulation, wage progression, and coaching supports across FCPK, childcare, and Head Start, this strategy reduces fragmentation and strengthens coordinated governance.
- 3: **Family Choice** – A more stable, better-prepared workforce increases the availability of high-quality early childhood options across all regions and program types, enhancing families’ ability to choose the settings that best meet their needs.

Specific Activities:

Activity	Purpose	Impact
Expand and sustain the AECEA statewide	Strengthen credential and degree pathways across childcare, FCPK, and Head Start	Increase qualified educators and support system capacity
Provide employer related technical instruction (RTI) reimbursement	Reduce employer financial burden	Increase employer participation and apprentice enrollment
Offer 50% wage offset	Support wage progression and aligned pay scales	Improve retention and reduce workforce turnover

Fund mentor stipends	Ensure high-quality coaching and on-site guidance	Increase apprentice competency and completion rates
Recruit and support additional Head Start employers	Expand beyond the single current HS grantee	Strengthen HS credential attainment and workforce compliance
Support higher education articulation agreements	Prevent credit loss and support flexible degree progression	Accelerate degree completion and alignment across systems
Track apprenticeship data across program types	Guide continuous improvement and inform policy	Strengthen workforce planning and system accountability

Addressing Gaps and Unmet Needs: Alabama continues to face significant early childhood workforce shortages driven by low wages, limited preparatory pathways, and lack of alignment across programs. Apprenticeship expansion addresses these gaps by providing a no-cost, structured pathway to credentials and degrees; ensuring educators remain employed while earning credentials; supporting wage progression and retention in under-resourced communities; creating alignment in preparation across FCPK, licensed childcare, and Head Start; and expanding opportunities for rural educators and individuals without access to traditional higher education programs. This strategy directly addresses pain points in state governance by bridging fragmented workforce systems and creating consistent expectations and supports across early learning programs.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: Head Start grantees, services, and workforce requirements are intentionally incorporated into every component of this strategy. The AECEA will:

Activity	Purpose
Recruit additional Head Start grantees	Expand participation beyond current partners and strengthen Head Start workforce alignment statewide
Align apprenticeship competencies with Head Start credentialing requirements	Ensure coursework, coaching, and on-the-job learning meet Head Start CDA, AA, and BA expectations
Support Head Start staff in meeting federal degree requirements	Provide structured coaching, articulation pathways, and college supports to meet Head Start qualification mandates

Integrate Head Start leadership into planning and data processes	Include Head Start leaders in planning sessions, data reviews, and statewide workforce alignment efforts
Ensure wage progression supports Head Start retention and quality standards	Align wage offsets and incentives with Head Start retention needs and federal performance requirements
Create higher-degree pathways for Head Start educators	Establish clear articulation and advancement routes from CDA to AA to BA aligned with Alabama workforce goals

Alignment With Alabama’s ECE Vision This strategy aligns fully with ADECE’s vision that every young child in Alabama will have a strong early learning foundation. A stable, skilled, well-supported workforce is essential to quality learning environments across the mixed-delivery system. Apprenticeship expansion advances that vision by strengthening workforce quality, improving educator retention, and unifying preparation across program types.

Past Efforts and Lessons Learned: Past efforts demonstrated that educators need paid release time and structured coaching; employers require financial supports to participate; stable wages are critical for retention; and unified statewide systems require strong cross-agency coordination.

This apprenticeship support builds on these lessons by combining coaching, wage supports, articulation, and employer reimbursement into one systemwide strategy that meets the needs of childcare providers, FCPK classrooms, and Head Start programs. Apprenticeships are a nationally recognized best practice for addressing ECE workforce shortages by combining paid on-the-job learning, higher education coursework, and structured coaching. Alabama’s demographic and workforce data show that there are persistent teacher shortages across rural and urban areas, there is high turnover among entry-level educators, there are gaps in Head Start credential compliance and there is limited access to degree pathways for first-generation and low-income educators.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives, and Funding Streams, Including Head Start: This strategy supports a unified and coordinated early childhood ecosystem by integrating:

Requirement	Strategy Alignment
FCPK Workforce Standards	Aligns apprenticeship competencies with FCPK teacher expectations and degree requirements to create a unified, statewide preparation pathway

DHR Licensing Regulations for Child Care	Integrates competency-based coaching models that meet or exceed DHR requirements for training, supervision, and continuous quality improvement
Head Start Federal Workforce Mandates	Supports Head Start with aligned wage progression, credential attainment pathways, and coaching structures that meet federal staff qualification rules
Higher Education Policies	Leverages articulation agreements and credit-bearing coursework to ensure apprentices earn portable, stackable credits toward AA and BA degrees
State & Federal Funding Streams: PDG B-5, Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start	Braids multiple funding sources to support employer costs, apprentice tuition, coaching, wage offsets, and sustainability across the mixed-delivery system

4. Strengthening the Infant and Early Childhood Workforce Through Cross-Disciplinary Reflective Supervision Using a Train-the-Trainer (ToT) Model

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 1) This project will strengthen Alabama’s infant and early childhood workforce by implementing a system-wide Train-the-Trainer (ToT) model for Reflective Supervision (RS) in partnership with First 5 Alabama (F5A), the state’s Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Association. F5A, a program of the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC), partners with eight state agencies, three non-profits, and all of Alabama’s higher education institutions, serving children and families statewide. The ADECE will utilize the State Reflective Practice Coordinator and RSC Committee Chair for F5A, employed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health, to assist in the oversight of the project.

RS supports the emotional, relational, and professional development of the early childhood workforce. By establishing a cross-disciplinary RS stipend and training program, ADECE and F5A will compensate and incentivize highly skilled reflective supervisors, promote workforce retention, improve provider well-being, and enhance service quality for young children and families.

Specific Activities:

Activity	Description	Purpose
Recruitment of Participants	F5A recruits a cross-disciplinary cohort representing IECMH, FTHV, FCPK, Head Start, childcare, and EI.	Ensures cross-sector participation and statewide access.
Train-the-Trainer (ToT) Instruction	F5A trainers will train RS providers how to lead RS groups and measure outcomes.	Builds long-term statewide RS capacity.
Reflective Supervision Cohorts	At least 25 participants receive ongoing RS from the ToT providers.	Strengthens worker well-being and quality of practice.
Mentorship & Pipeline Development	Earlier RS cohort participants are mentored to become endorsed RS providers and future trainers for subsequent cohorts. This tiered model supports sustainability.	Creates a sustainable pipeline of RS supervisors.

PDG B-5 Program Priorities Alignment:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – A statewide RS ToT model expands access to high-quality RS across disciplines, building a shared language and reflective practice that supports high-quality services.
- 2: **Unified System** – The ToT model aligns with statewide structures and ensures consistent, endorsed RS practices across ADECE programs, strengthening coordination and workforce stability.
- 3: **Family Choice** – RS improves providers’ capacity to respond to family perspectives with empathy and insight, ultimately enhancing family engagement and satisfaction.

Addressing Gaps: Early childhood professionals face chronic stress, secondary trauma, and emotional labor that contribute to burnout and turnover across FCPK, childcare, FTHV, EI, Head Start and family support programs. RS offers a structured, relationship-based approach to support emotional resilience and professional growth.

Gap Addressed	Impact
Lack of stable, qualified RS providers	Ensures a compensated and reliable statewide pool of supervisors.
Burnout and turnover	Reduces stress and improves retention through consistent RS.
Weak organizational climates	Enhances morale and creates healthier workplace cultures.
Fragmented reflective practice	Establishes statewide consistency and alignment across agencies.
Lack of sustainable RS pipeline	Builds new RS providers and reduces reliance on unpaid supervision.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding:

- Head Start teachers and staff will participate in RS cohorts, ensuring consistent access to reflective supervision across all early childhood program types.
- RS competencies and practices will align with Head Start personnel qualification standards and performance expectations.
- Head Start leadership will be included in planning, mentoring, and evaluation to strengthen workforce quality, retention, and cross-program alignment.
- Integration ensures that data on HS staff participation and outcomes is included in statewide RS tracking, supporting PDG B–5 reporting and accountability.

Alignment with State’s ECE Vision: This project supports ADECE’s vision of a skilled, stable, and well-supported early childhood workforce. By building RS capacity statewide, the project strengthens instructional quality, workforce retention, and professional development across FCPK, childcare, EI, FTHV, and Head Start programs. RS contributes to a unified, high-quality early childhood system where children experience developmentally appropriate, reflective, and responsive care.

Past Efforts and Lessons Learned: Previous attempts focused primarily on recruitment, which did not generate enough RS provider capacity. Many endorsed professionals felt unprepared or were

providing RS pro bono after hours. Adding stipends and structured mentoring will increase confidence and competence; improve RS quality and fidelity; support sustainability and encourage broader participation

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives and Funding Streams, Including Head Start: This project aligns with statewide workforce, mental health, and early childhood program standards, including FCPK, childcare, EI, and Head Start. It supports cross-agency coordination with ADECE, F5A, APC, and other partners to leverage PDG B–5, state, and federal funding streams; integrates RS training, mentoring, and supervision into existing professional development pathways and early childhood workforce initiatives; and ensures reporting and tracking of RS outcomes aligns with PDG B–5 priorities and statewide workforce metrics.

Evaluation of Effectiveness will measure:

- Fidelity and quality of RS across disciplines
- Changes in well-being, reflective practice, and retention
- Links between RS and child/family outcomes
- Barriers and facilitators of implementation
- Stakeholder satisfaction
- Evidence to inform long-term statewide RS sustainability

5. ECEData Enhancements

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 3) This project will address Category 3 by enhancing Alabama’s ECEData system to connect disparate early childhood data sources, integrate Head Start data, reduce administrative burden, and improve data quality, accessibility, and usability. By combining all program data including FCPK, FTHV, workforce development, QRIS,

and Head Start into a single, unified system, this initiative also advances all PDG B–5 Program Priorities:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – Integrated data enables consistent monitoring of child, family, and workforce outcomes, advancing Alabama’s vision that *“Every young child in Alabama will have a strong early learning foundation.”*
- 2: **Unified System** – By connecting ADECE programs and improving interoperability, the project reduces fragmentation and supports cohesive governance.
- 3: **Family Choice** – Enhanced data on program supply, demand, and workforce supports system planning and enables families to navigate services more easily.

Currently, ECEData integrates FCPK and Preschool through 3rd Grade Initiative (P–3) data. This project will expand capacity to include additional ADECE programs, such as FTHV, Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP), Workforce Development, QRIS, and Head Start. Barriers to integration include inconsistent data formats, data ownership issues, technical limitations, and limited staffing resources. This project strengthens technical and analytic capacity, establishes secure data sharing, and integrates Head Start and other program data to streamline reporting, analysis, and strategic decision-making across the statewide early childhood system.

Specific Activities

Activity	Purpose
Build technical and staffing capacity	Expand ADECE’s ability to manage and develop data effectively
Contract ADECE IT/data staff or vendors	Enhance development capabilities and support technical project goals
Update database architecture, enhance security, and standardize documentation	Improve system reliability and ensure consistent data management

Strengthen analytic capacity for cross-program reporting and visualization	Enable evidence-based decision-making and actionable insights across programs
Conduct structured sessions with ADECE programs, partner agencies, and Head Start grantees	Align internal and external stakeholders
Develop data-sharing agreements, common data elements, and integration roadmaps	Facilitate secure and coordinated cross-program data integration
Ensure compliance with legal and privacy standards	Protect sensitive data and maintain regulatory compliance
Refine import functionality and build Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to reduce duplicative submissions	Streamline data collection, minimize administrative burden, and improve efficiency
Integrate Head Start data (FCPK & non-FCPK classrooms)	Assign unique child IDs, automate quarterly reporting, and include all Head Start classrooms in statewide data
Enhance dashboards and intelligence tools for new reporting requirements	Provide accessible, actionable insights for ADECE programs, partners, and policymakers
Incorporate unique identifiers to produce unduplicated child and workforce counts	Enable accurate reporting on workforce metrics
Generate supply, demand, and workforce summaries	Support planning and resource allocation
Create dashboards aligned with PDG B-5 reporting needs and the state strategic plan	Ensure data products meet grant reporting requirements and strategic objectives
Share findings with partners and on the ECEData interface	Promote transparency and informed decision-making

Addressing Gaps Alabama currently lacks a fully integrated birth-to-five dataset, limiting analysis of workforce shortages, program supply and demand, child/family outcomes, and service gaps. Fragmentation across agencies creates duplicative reporting and reduces shared accountability. This project directly addresses these challenges by integrating multiple programs into one statewide system; reducing duplicate submissions and administrative burden; assigning unique IDs to follow children across programs and longitudinally and providing cross-program dashboards and actionable insights for decision-making.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: Head Start grantees will be fully included in planning, design, and data-sharing agreements. This project ensures inclusion of all

Head Start classrooms, including non-FCPK classrooms; quarterly automated reporting from Head Start programs to the state database and alignment of Head Start indicators with statewide workforce, quality, and program accountability metrics.

Alignment with Alabama’s ECE Vision This project supports the state’s vision by strengthening data quality, accessibility, and usability across programs. It provides ADECE, the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), legislators, and statewide partners with a unified, evidence-based system for strategic decision-making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement of early childhood outcomes.

Past Efforts & Lessons Learned Previous ECEData development for FCPK and P–3 demonstrated the value of centralized data and Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) linkage but highlighted staffing, standardization, and integration challenges. This project addresses those needs through dedicated staffing and IT resources, structured integration planning across all programs, including Head Start, enhanced technical and analytic capacity for unified reporting.

A Unified Statewide ECE System By expanding ECEData across programs and agencies, this project will integrate policies and funding streams, reduce duplicative data submissions, include Head Start in statewide reporting, establish cross-program metrics, and support coordination across mixed-delivery settings.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives, and Funding Streams, Including Head Start This project strengthens cross-agency alignment and policy integration by:

Integration	Activity
Unified ECE Reporting System	Connecting FCPK, FTHV, EHS-CCP, workforce development, and Head Start programs into a shared, interoperable reporting and analysis structure.
Data-Sharing Agreements & Standards	Establishing agreements, standardized data elements, and secure protocols that meet federal, state, and privacy requirements (including FERPA and HIPAA considerations).

Leveraging Funding Streams	Using PDG B-5 and other federal/state resources to support technical capacity, dashboards, APIs, and reporting infrastructure improvements.
Head Start Integration	Ensuring Head Start grantees participate fully in planning, data integration, and reporting so that workforce, program, and quality metrics align statewide.
Data-Informed Decision-Making	Using integrated, high-quality data to inform ADECE leadership, partners, policymakers, and legislators to drive system improvements and strategic resource allocation.

Evaluation of Effectiveness will be measured by the number of datasets integrated, deployment of dashboards and automated data-sharing mechanisms, the ability to generate unduplicated child and workforce counts and feedback from ADECE programs, Head Start grantees, and partners.

6. ECDataLab and Collaborative Analytic Capacity Building with VOICES

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 3) This project will build Alabama’s early childhood analytic capacity and expand the state’s ECData system through formal partnerships with ECDataLab and VOICES. By participating in the 2026 ECDataLab Analytic Readiness Cohort and engaging VOICES as a strategic thought partner, ADECE will strengthen its ability to use integrated early childhood data to guide evidence-based policy and program decisions, improve stakeholder coordination, and support equitable service delivery across Head Start, FCPK, FTHV, and other ADECE programs.

Specific Activities:

Activity	Description	Purpose
ECDataLab Analytic Readiness Cohort Workshops	6 virtual and 2 in-person multi-state cohort workshops on integrated data analytics, stakeholder engagement, and actionable reporting	Develop a common framework for cross-agency analytic priorities, improve collaborative problem-solving, and learn peer best practices
ECDataLab Individualized Coaching & Technical Assistance	10 coaching sessions and 6 asynchronous self-study modules to address problems of practice, milestone progress, and adaptive challenges	Strengthen team capacity to define and implement analytic priorities and apply evidence to policy and program decisions
ECDataLab State Analytic Plan	Produce a detailed plan including assessment, priority use cases, alignment statements, interagency agreements, decision-making	Establish Alabama’s actionable and sustainable roadmap for integrated early

	processes, BI options, and implementation roadmap	childhood data use, enabling cross-program reporting and decision support
VOICES Stakeholder Engagement & Planning	Facilitate planning sessions with ADECE programs, Head Start grantees, and other partners; document data needs and shared indicators	Identify priority metrics, ensure alignment, and establish standardized definitions for data use across programs
VOICES Data Interpretation & Dashboard Support	Partner with ADECE analysts to interpret integrated datasets; guide dashboard and report development using equity-focused indicators	Ensure accessible, accurate, and actionable analytics that highlight disparities and inform decision-making
VOICES Evaluation & Continuous Improvement	Support iterative evaluation of analytic tools, dashboards, and reporting products	Strengthen long-term state data governance, analytic capacity, and cross-program collaboration

Advancement of PDG B–5 Program Priorities:

- **1: Shared Vision** – ECDataLab and VOICES expertise will help Alabama define actionable analytics, priority indicators, and interpret child and family outcomes, ensuring integrated data informs decisions for children, families, and providers.
- **2: Unified System** – Both partners will support cross-program planning, alignment of shared metrics, business rules development, and analytic readiness, fostering a coordinated statewide data ecosystem that reduces fragmentation and enhances data use.
- **3: Family Choice** – Insights derived from integrated analytics will inform resource allocation, program planning, and equitable access to services, strengthening families’ ability to navigate the early childhood system.

Addressing Gaps: Alabama currently lacks a unified approach to interpreting early childhood data across programs, limiting its ability to examine workforce shortages, service gaps, and inequities in program access; understand regional variations in family needs and resource allocation and provide integrated, actionable insights to ADECE leadership, Head Start grantees, and local partners. This combined partnership with ECDataLab, and VOICES addresses these gaps by

strengthening analytic capacity and long-term governance; standardizing metrics and reporting across programs; and supporting evidence-based policy and program decisions.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: Shared indicators and dashboards will incorporate Head Start program priorities, workforce metrics, and compliance standards. VOICES and ECDataLab will assist work to ensure Head Start data are integrated into statewide decision-making.

Alignment with Alabama's ECE Vision: This initiative supports ADECE's vision for a unified, evidence-driven early childhood system that ensures every child enters school healthy and ready to succeed. By combining ECDataLab analytic readiness expertise with VOICES' statewide child well-being context and public reporting experience, Alabama will improve data-driven decision-making across programs; enhance family-focused planning and equitable service delivery and strengthen cross-program collaboration and governance.

Past Experiences and Lessons Learned: ECDataLab has helped multiple states build analytic readiness, develop state analytic plans, and implement cross-agency governance. ADECE's recent participation in an ECDataLab Convening provided tools and insights to strengthen ECData. It also highlighted the need for clear data definitions, standardized metrics across programs and accessible, family-friendly interpretation of integrated data sets. VOICES has decades of experience producing the Alabama Kids Count Data Book and supporting state agencies in child well-being analytics, advocacy, and cross-agency planning.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives, and Funding Streams, Including Head Start: By integrating ECDataLab analytic readiness support and VOICES expertise, this initiative will:

- Support cross-program metrics, shared definitions, and standardized reporting

- Facilitate integration of Head Start, FCPK, FTHV, workforce, EHS-CCP, and other funding streams
- Improve statewide decision-making, resource allocation, and family access to early childhood programs

Evaluation of Effectiveness:

Evaluation Metric	Purpose
Completion of Analytic Readiness Assessment and Actionable State Plan	Measures whether Alabama has a comprehensive, practical roadmap for integrated early childhood data use
Defined Priority Audiences, Use Cases, and Analytic Indicators Across Programs	Ensures clarity on who will use the data, how it will be applied, and which metrics are tracked
Structured Approaches to Data Sharing, Governance, and Decision-Making Implemented	Assesses whether formalized procedures and agreements support consistent, coordinated data use
Dashboards and Reports Facilitate Family-Centered Decision-Making	Assesses whether analytics highlight disparities and provide insights that improve access and services for families

7. Alabama Partnership for Children Collaboration for Head Start Family Engagement

Outcome Strategy: (Critical Element 2, Category 2) This project will address Category 2 by strengthening family engagement in Head Start programs through a formal partnership with the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC). APC will support ADECE as a strategic partner, helping to implement and expand family engagement initiatives statewide. Their role will advance integration of Head Start programming with evidence-based family supports, improve access to developmental screenings, and enhance parental leadership and advocacy.

Specific Activities:

Activity	Description	Impact
Family Engagement and Outreach	Partner with Head Start programs to host 5 Books, Balls & Blocks (BBB) developmental screening events, distribute parenting kits, and provide Strengthening Families workshops.	Engage parents in developmentally appropriate activities, increase awareness of community resources, and strengthen parent-child interaction.

Care Coordination	Utilize Help Me Grow (HMG) care coordinators to connect families and children to health and developmental resources. HMG Care Coordinators will follow up with families to verify connection to services. s.	Ensure children and families are linked to appropriate services, improve follow-through, and support early identification of developmental concerns.
Parent Leadership Development	Recruit and train parents through the Alabama Parent Leadership Network (APLN) to participate in advocacy and decision-making at local and state levels.	Empower parents to influence policies, programs, and decisions affecting their children and communities; increase parent knowledge and confidence.
Provider Education	Support early childhood providers with technical assistance and training in family engagement strategies, developmental screening, and protective factor building.	Strengthen provider capacity, improve quality of family engagement, and enhance developmental monitoring practices.
Data Collection and Reporting	Track outcomes from family engagement activities, including number of families served, screenings completed, and parent leadership participation.	Inform program improvement, support statewide reporting, identify gaps and successes, and guide policy and funding decisions.

PDG B-5 Program Priorities Advancement:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – APC’s expertise in family engagement, including HMG Alabama and Strengthening Families (SF), will deepen the state’s capacity to engage families using consistent, evidence-based strategies that promote child development and parental leadership.
- 2: **Unified System** – By supporting cross-program alignment and integration of family engagement strategies, APC will help reduce fragmentation and promote cohesive implementation across Head Start programs and early childhood partners.
- 3: **Family Choice** – Through structured outreach, parent leadership programs, and individualized care coordination, APC will strengthen the state’s ability to ensure all families have equitable access to resources, supports, and early learning opportunities.

APC brings decades of experience coordinating statewide early childhood family engagement initiatives. Their participation will further position Head Start programs to implement high-quality, research-based approaches that empower parents, enhance child development, and support stronger communities.

Addressing Gaps: Alabama currently faces inconsistent family engagement across Head Start programs and limited integration of evidence-based supports. APC’s partnership will address these gaps by increasing access to developmental and mental health screenings for children ages 0–5; strengthening parent knowledge, resilience, and leadership capacity; expanding connections between families, providers, and community resources and using data to identify underserved areas and barriers, guiding strategic allocation of supports.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: APC will ensure meaningful Head Start inclusion by coordinating family engagement events directly within Head Start settings; aligning parent leadership training with Head Start governance and policy priorities and integrating developmental screening data and family engagement outcomes into program planning and improvement.

Alignment with Alabama’s ECE Vision: APC’s mission is to ensure that all Alabama children have strong developmental foundations and families have the knowledge and supports necessary for success. This aligns with ADECE’s vision that every young child will be healthy, safe, and school-ready. Their statewide credibility and long-standing leadership in family engagement ensure that Head Start integration will be guided by research, evidence-based practices, and equity.

Past Efforts and Lessons Learned: APC has decades of experience implementing family engagement initiatives, including:

Activity	Description	Impact
Statewide BBB Coordination & Parent Screenings	Coordinated BBB developmental screening events and developmental with HMG.	Early detection of developmental delays; demonstrated the value of family-centered engagement in promoting child development.
Strengthening Families™ Program Delivery	Implemented protective-factor programs to enhance parenting skills, resilience, social connections, and child social-emotional competence.	Reinforced that evidence-based parent supports strengthen family stability and reduce risks for child maltreatment.
APLN Parent Leadership Initiatives	Led APLN programs to recruit, train, and empower parents for advocacy and community decision-making.	Showed that parent leadership development amplifies family voice and informs policies that better reflect community needs.
Lessons Learned	Emphasized culturally responsive outreach, multi-touch engagement strategies, and systematic data collection to monitor outcomes.	Highlighted the importance of inclusion, consistent follow-up, and data-driven program refinement.
Unified Statewide Family Engagement System	Aligned Head Start family engagement programs with HMG, BBB, SF, and APLN initiatives.	Confirmed that coordinated, cross-program approaches enhance parental choice, improve child outcomes, and foster collaborative early childhood systems.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives and Funding Streams, Including Head Start:

- Head Start programs are directly engaged through event hosting, parent leadership alignment, and integration of developmental screening and family engagement data into program improvement planning.
- APC aligns initiatives across BBB, SF, HMG, and APLN to reduce fragmentation and strengthen coordination with FCPK, home visiting, and other early childhood programs.
- PDG B–5 funding supports statewide implementation, ensuring equitable access, travel support for families, and technical assistance for providers, while leveraging APC’s existing statewide capacity and partnerships.
- Family engagement data will be integrated with statewide reporting to inform policy decisions, identify underserved populations, and guide resource allocation.

Evaluation of Effectiveness will be measured using multiple indicators to assess reach, impact, and quality:

Indicator	Description	Impact
Families Engaged	Number of families participating in BBB screening events, HMG services, and SF workshops.	Track reach and engagement of family-centered initiatives across programs.
Parental Knowledge & Protective Factors	Improvements in parents' understanding of child development and the five SF protective factors.	Strengthen parenting skills, promote positive child outcomes, and enhance family resilience.
Parent Leadership Outcomes	Participation rates, completion, and leadership activities in APLN programs.	Empower parents to advocate for children, influence policies, and participate in community decision-making.
Equity of Access	Distribution of services and engagement across geographic regions, socio-economic groups, and other demographic factors.	Ensure all families, including underserved populations, can access resources and support.
Stakeholder Feedback	Input from Head Start programs, parents, and community partners on quality, relevance, and usability of engagement strategies.	Improve program design, responsiveness, and alignment with family and community needs.

APC is the sub awardee due to its long-standing expertise in statewide family engagement, history of coordinating BBB, SF, HMG, and APLN initiatives, and prior successful collaboration with ADECE. Funding will cover event coordination, parent and provider training, care coordination, outreach, and data collection. APC's infrastructure and partnerships ensure efficient, high-quality implementation, support for Head Start integration, and alignment with PDG B-5 goals for family engagement and system coordination.

8. Children First – 2026 CPC and Head Start Family Engagement Conferences

Outcome Strategy (Critical Element 2, Category 1 & 2): ADECE proposes partnering with Children First to present both the 2026 Alabama Children's Policy Council (CPC) Conference and the 2026 Head Start (HS) Family Engagement Conference.

Alabama Children's Policy Council (CPC) Conference: The CPC system serves as a statewide network of local councils in each of Alabama's counties, supporting collaborative planning and

implementation of programs that address the unique needs of children and their families. County CPCs operate through six subcommittees: Economic Security, Health, Safety, Education, Parental Involvement and Skills, and Early Care and Education, ensuring a holistic approach to supporting families and children. CPC members conduct annual Needs Assessments, which inform local and state policy decisions, program priorities, and the implementation of targeted services.

The CPC Conference provides an annual professional development forum for local council members and statewide stakeholders to share best practices, review regional data, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration. The 2026 conference will continue the model established in 2025, including training, networking, and capacity-building sessions designed to equip CPC members to respond effectively to the evolving needs of children and families in their communities.

Head Start Family Engagement Conference: The Head Start Family Engagement Conference will provide an in-person statewide forum for Head Start families, state agencies, and local ECE partners. The conference will focus on building family capacity to advocate for their child's learning, participate in educational planning, and engage with early childhood programs. Activities will include workshops, networking opportunities, and access to statewide ECE initiatives, supports, resources, and data systems.

ADECE will sub award funding to Children First to coordinate logistics, and facilitate training sessions for both conferences, ensuring equitable participation across all regions of the state.

ADECE will sub grant funds to individual local CPCs and Head Start programs to distribute travel allowances for participant attendance.

PDG B-5 Program Priorities Alignment:

- 1: **Shared Vision** – Both conferences strengthen alignment with Alabama's early childhood vision, ensuring children from birth to age five have a strong early learning foundation.

Training sessions and workshops highlight early childhood data, best practices, and equity-focused strategies to guide county-level implementation of state priorities.

- **2: Unified System** – Conferences promote cross-program coordination and collaboration, reducing fragmentation between early care and education initiatives, Head Start, FTHV, FCPK and other child-serving programs. They provide structured opportunities for counties to align local service delivery with state-level policies and funding strategies, supporting cohesive governance across the statewide ECE system.
- **3: Family Choice** – Both conferences enhance access to high-quality early childhood services by highlighting regional service gaps, program availability, and strategies for improving family engagement. Strengthened capacity of CPC members and families to identify and address barriers expands informed family choice in ECE programs.

Specific Activities:

CPC Conference

Activity	Description	Purpose
Conference Planning	Children First coordinates venue, logistics, and facilitation	Ensure a high-quality statewide professional development event for CPC members
Marketing & Recruitment	Outreach to county CPC members and ECE partners	Maximize participation across all 67 counties
Training & Workshops	Sessions on early childhood data, policy implementation, equity strategies, and cross-county collaboration	Strengthen county CPC capacity to implement state priorities and improve system alignment
Travel Grants	Funding for up to six representatives per county	Ensure equitable participation, especially for rural and underserved areas
Evaluation & Feedback	Post-conference surveys and follow-up	Document participation, learning outcomes, and inform future conferences

Head Start Family Engagement Conference

Activity	Description	Purpose
Conference Planning	Children First coordinates logistics, vendors, and facilitation	Deliver a professional, accessible statewide conference for Head Start families

Marketing & Recruitment	Outreach to families, local ECE partners, and state agencies	Achieve broad statewide attendance (target: 300 families)
Workshops & Networking	Sessions on family engagement, advocacy, and early learning	Build family capacity to support children’s education and engage with programs effectively
Travel Grants	Support for families	Ensure equitable access for families across the state
Evaluation & Feedback	Post-conference surveys and data collection	Assess effectiveness, document outcomes, and guide continuous improvement

Addressing Gaps in Access and Governance: The CPC Conference reduces inequities in professional development access for local council members, particularly in rural or underserved areas, by providing travel support and a central venue for statewide engagement.

The Head Start Family Engagement Conference addresses the limited statewide professional development and networking opportunities for Head Start families. With over 11,400 families served in Alabama, the conference will provide unprecedented access to trainings, resources, and connection with local and state ECE programs.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding: Conference activities ensure Head Start priorities, workforce development, and program quality initiatives are integrated into county-level discussions and statewide ECE initiatives.

Alignment with ADECE Vision and Evidence of Effectiveness Both conferences support ADECE’s vision that every young child in Alabama will have a strong early learning foundation. Children First’s prior experience coordinating the FY25 CPC Conference under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ADECE demonstrates capacity to manage statewide professional development, administer travel grants, and ensure fiscal accountability. Lessons learned from FY25, such as refining travel grant procedures, increasing regional representation, and improving data collection, will inform improvements for both 2026 conferences.

Past Efforts and Lessons Learned

- Travel support is essential to ensure equitable participation, especially for rural and underserved counties.
- Targeted, PDG B-5-aligned training sessions improve the application of local needs assessments to county planning.
- Structured evaluation tools enhance collection of actionable feedback and documentation of participant outcomes.

These lessons will be applied to improve logistics, increase regional representation, and strengthen data collection for both conferences.

Integration of ECE Policies, Initiatives, and Funding Streams, Including Head Start: Conferences integrate Head Start priorities and other ECE initiatives, aligning activities with child-serving programs to support coordinated governance. PDG B-5 funding will cover logistics, travel grants, and professional development, promoting efficient use of state and federal resources. Both conferences support integration of county-level needs assessments, local program data, and statewide metrics into planning and implementation, strengthening data-driven decision-making.

Evaluation of Effectiveness ADECE and Children First will evaluate both conferences through attendance tracking, session-level feedback, and post-event surveys to measure increases in knowledge, engagement, and capacity building. Data will include representation across all 67 counties (CPC) and 400 HS families, along with travel-grant utilization and participation trends. Evaluation tools will document learning outcomes, identify barriers, and capture action steps participants plan to implement locally. Findings will be compared to baseline data from previous CPC conferences and existing family engagement benchmarks, and results will inform continuous improvement and PDG B-5 reporting requirements.

Expected Outcomes

- Participation of county CPC representatives from all 67 counties with priority travel funding for underserved areas.
- Attendance of 300 Head Start families at the Head Start Family Engagement Conference.
- Delivery of targeted professional development sessions aligned with PDG B-5 priorities.
- Documentation of training completion, participant feedback, and action plans for county-level and family implementation.
- Improved collaboration, data-informed planning, and alignment with statewide ECE metrics.

Subaward Justification Children First is the designated sub awardee for both conferences, leveraging prior experience coordinating the FY25 CPC Conference under an MOU with ADECE. Funding will cover conference logistics, travel grants, and outreach/communication activities. This partnership ensures continuity of high-quality professional development for CPC members and Head Start families, reinforcing ADECE’s system-building goals under PDG B-5.

Critical Element 3: Tracking Project Impact

Alabama will assess the impact of its PDG B–5 Early Childhood Systems Enhancement Initiative through a coordinated, statewide, data-driven approach that integrates workforce development, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, data and analytic capacity-building, reflective supervision, professional development, family engagement, and statewide conference initiatives. By linking assessment to program improvement and cross-agency coordination, Alabama will build a unified, evidence-informed early childhood system that measures outcomes across children, families, and the workforce.

Approach to Tracking and Measuring Impact

All indicators are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.), with flexibility to update baselines or adapt metrics as programs evolve. Data from ADECE, ECDataLab, and VOICES will provide actionable insights through centralized dashboards, enabling program-level, county-level, and statewide decision-making. Outcomes will be reviewed and shared across ADECE divisions, T.E.A.C.H., Head Start grantees, APC, CPC councils, and other partners, fostering collaboration and timely course correction.

Quantifying Progress Toward PDG B-5 Priorities

- **Shared Vision:** Adoption of standardized workforce preparation, reflective supervision, T.E.A.C.H. scholarship practices, and integrated data systems across agencies. Indicators include staff credentialing rates, participation in Reflective Supervision (RS), apprenticeship completion, and workforce retention.
- **Unified System:** Alignment across workforce, family engagement, and county-level coordination. Head Start, FCPK, FTHV, EHS-CCP and other programs integrated into statewide dashboards to track program availability, utilization, and quality metrics.
- **Family Choice:** Improved access to high-quality programs, equitable family engagement, and evidence-based supports. Indicators include participation in workshops, developmental screenings, and geographic/demographic equity measures. Head Start Family Engagement Conference participation and feedback will be tracked as a key indicator of statewide family engagement reach and quality.

Measuring Outcomes Against Baseline Data Data sources include:

- Workforce enrollment, credential attainment, and retention records.
- T.E.A.C.H. historical scholarship and completion data.

- ECEData historical submissions across FCPK, FTHV, Head Start, EHS-CCP and other early childhood programs.
- Local needs assessments and family engagement records.
- VOICES Kids Count reporting and prior statewide analyses.
- Head Start grant data, including non-FCPK classrooms.
- Past CPC and Head Start Family Engagement Conference participation and evaluation data.
- Quarterly comparisons to baseline data will provide actionable insights on workforce capacity, program access, family engagement, and regional coordination.

Monitoring Strategy Outputs and Implementation

Outputs will be monitored through:

- Quarterly reporting of participation, engagement, credential attainment, service delivery, and program outputs.
- Fidelity and quality measures for RS, apprenticeships, T.E.A.C.H., family engagement programs, and professional development events.

Implementation tracking will entail:

- ECEData Enhancements – integration of datasets, API functionality, dashboards, and data quality improvements.
- ECDataLab and VOICES Analytic Capacity-Building – workshops, coaching, state analytic plan, dashboards, and cross-program indicators.
- VOICES Kids Count Reporting – stakeholder engagement and communication tools.
- Reflective Supervision ToT – cohort training, endorsement, fidelity assessments, and statewide rollout.

- Apprenticeship & T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships – enrollment, wage progression, retention, and completion metrics.
- CPC Conference – county participation, travel grant distribution, session attendance, and feedback/action plans.
- Head Start Family Engagement Conference – family participation, engagement in workshops, satisfaction, and actionable follow-up plans.
- APC Family Engagement – BBB events, HMG services, SF workshops, developmental screenings, and parent leadership participation.
- Quarterly reviews will inform technical assistance, course corrections, and continuous improvement.

Tracking Trends in Supply, Demand, and Use Enhanced ECEData capabilities will allow:

- Monitoring unduplicated child counts, workforce capacity, program participation, and scholarship recipients.
- Regional analyses of service gaps, high-demand areas, and program supply.
- Cross-program comparisons, including Head Start classrooms, blended FCPK/Head Start sites, and family engagement initiatives, to guide equitable resource allocation.

Incorporation of Head Start grantees, services and funding:

- Head Start staff are included in apprenticeship, wage progression, and credentialing data.
- RS ToT cohorts track Head Start engagement.
- Family engagement activities, CPC conference participation, Head Start Family Engagement Conference, and analytic dashboards incorporate Head Start program data.
- HS leadership participates in governance, planning, and data review, ensuring alignment with federal HS requirements and PDG B–5 priorities.

Updating Data Sources, Technologies, and Analytic Infrastructure

- Standardize data structures, business rules, and reporting formats across programs.
- Integrate Head Start, FTHV, workforce, EHS-CCP, and other ADECE data sources.
- Support flexible, SMART-aligned indicator tracking while maintaining data security and privacy.
- Provide analytic readiness, reporting templates, and guidance via ECDataLab and VOICES.
- Enable longitudinal analysis of children, families, and workforce outcomes across multiple funding streams.

Using Assessment to Foster Integration Across Agencies Quarterly assessment of project results will:

- Identify successes and challenges across programs.
- Support coordinated decision-making among ADECE divisions, Head Start, CPC councils, APC, T.E.A.C.H., VOICES, and other partners.
- Drive iterative improvements in workforce development, family engagement, and service delivery strategies.
- Promote statewide adoption of evidence-based practices, aligned reporting, and shared outcomes.

Quarterly Progress Template

Activity	Measurable Indicators	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
Apprenticeship Expansion	# enrolled, employer participation, credential completion, HS staff, wage milestones						
T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships	# scholars, retention, tuition/stipend disbursed, higher ed participation						
ECData Enhancements	# datasets integrated, API functionality, dashboards deployed, data quality improvements						

ECDataLab / VOICES Collaboration	Cohort completion, analytic milestones, cross-program indicators, dashboards/reports						
VOICES Kids Count Reporting	Reports produced, stakeholder engagement, communication tools						
Reflective Supervision ToT	RS participants trained, supervisors endorsed, cohort engagement, fidelity assessments						
CPC Conference	County participation, travel grants, PD sessions, feedback/action plans						
Head Start Family Engagement Conference	Families engaged, workshops attended, feedback/action plans implemented						
APC Family Engagement	Families engaged in BBB, HMG, SF workshops; screenings; parent leadership						
Cross-Agency Integration	Shared metrics adopted, joint meetings, cross-program reporting, coordination initiatives						

Bonus points: Policies Supporting Child Development Across Systems

Operational State Advisory Council that has a mechanism for feedback from a wide variety of groups: The Alabama Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), operating through the Alabama Children’s Policy Council (CPC), uses a statewide network of county-level CPCs as its primary mechanism for gathering broad, community-driven feedback. Each of Alabama’s 67 counties maintains its own CPC made up of local leaders, service providers, and citizen representatives who meet regularly to assess needs affecting young children and families. These groups conduct annual needs assessments, collect community input, and submit formal reports to the state CPC. This structure ensures that the ECAC receives consistent, representative feedback from diverse regions, including rural, urban, and underserved communities.

At the state level, the CPC—designated by executive order as the ECAC—reviews the county reports and integrates the findings into policy discussions, systems-building work, and statewide early childhood planning. This ensures that community-identified needs directly inform state priorities. The ECAC further supplements local input with targeted engagement activities, including interviews, focus groups, and listening sessions with parents, caregivers, early childhood

providers, and other stakeholders. These sessions are intentionally designed to increase participation by scheduling at accessible times and offering supports such as incentives for families.

In addition to the formal reporting structure and targeted engagement, Alabama also hosts an annual CPC Conference that brings together policymakers, advocates, service providers, and community members to share insights and elevate emerging issues. This provides another statewide forum for feedback and strengthens the communication loop between local communities and state leadership. Together, these mechanisms create a comprehensive, institutionalized system that ensures the ECAC continually receives, reviews, and responds to feedback from a wide variety of groups across Alabama.

Implementation of Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction: The ADECE offers Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) professional development as part of its early childhood literacy strategy. Specifically, we use the “LETRS for Early Childhood Educators” course (designed for Pre-K and Kindergarten), which is based on the science of reading and covers foundational literacy topics like phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. ADECE integrates LETRS into its professional development structure through practice-based coaching. ADECE provides access to the LETRS online platform, and “Bridge to Practice” activities, which help teachers apply what they learn in LETRS units to their classroom instruction. ADECE also incentivizes mastery: lead and auxiliary teachers in the First-Class Pre-K program who complete the early childhood LETRS course and score at least 80% on the post-test are eligible for a \$1,000 stipend. Finally, LETRS is embedded into ADECE’s broader leadership and systems goals. ADECE views LETRS as a key tool for creating

a coherent Pre-K through grade 3 literacy continuum, building a community of practice, and aligning instructional approaches across early childhood and elementary grades.

Alabama’s commitment to LETRS training is tightly linked to its Alabama Literacy Act, which mandates funding for in-service teacher professional learning and scientifically based reading instruction. Under Alabama Code § 16-6G-4, state funds allocated through the Literacy Act support “professional learning activities” for teachers in reading, including those based on the science of reading. The law also requires explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—core components of what LETRS teaches. Policy alignment is further reinforced through the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI). The state’s long-term Literacy-by-Grade-3 policy foundations (including the Governor’s Campaign for Grade-Level Reading) explicitly name LETRS as a key evidence-based PD strategy to strengthen literacy instruction across early childhood and early elementary.

Consideration of Foster Children in the ECE System: ADECE has a cross-agency partnership and a strong collaboration with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to support children birth-5 in various childcare settings. ADECE recognizes DHR’s role (which handles foster care) in its early childhood system and leverages those connections to reach more children, including potentially those under DHR supervision. ADECE runs the *First Class Pre-K* (FCPK) program, which is voluntary, state-funded, and free. Importantly, the Pre-K Program Guidelines explicitly state that *no child is denied participation based on income*. Because there is *no income requirement*, foster children (who may not have their own income, and whose “family” situation is complex) are eligible for enrollment under the same terms as any other 4-year-old Alabama resident. This is a de facto policy that can benefit children in foster care. ADECE also administers the First Teacher Home-Visiting (FTHV) Program that serves families prenatally through early

childhood. These evidence-based home-visiting models (like Nurse Family Partnership/NFP, Parents as Teachers/PAT, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters/HIPPY) support child and family well-being, school readiness, and connecting families to community resources. While not specifically labeled “foster care,” these services could potentially serve foster parents (or kinship caregivers) who are caring for infants and toddlers, helping them navigate developmental, health, and educational needs.

Nutritional Services for Children and Families: ADECE’s First Teacher Home Visiting (FTHV) program (which uses models like NFP, HIPPY, and PAT) explicitly includes health and nutrition as one of its six priority focus areas. Home visitors assess family health and nutrition needs, provide education around healthy eating, and refer families to community health and nutrition services as part of their visits. While ADECE does not run a food-supplement or food-distribution program itself, its home-visiting work helps connect families with other community resources, including public health services. For example, the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) runs nutrition education through WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), which reaches many families with young children. Through its partnerships, ADECE helps ensure that families enrolled in home visiting are aware of and linked to these nutrition supports.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Project	Task	Indicators	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
ECE Registered Apprenticeship Expansion	Recruit & enroll apprentices	Enrollment progress, Head Start staff participation	Begin recruitment; enroll initial cohort	Continue enrollment; support first apprentices	Expand outreach; monitor progress	Maintain cohort; assess outcomes
	Employer RTI reimbursement	Employer engagement, reimbursement processed	Initial engagement	Early reimbursements processed	Additional employers engaged	Review & adjust

	Wage offset incentives	Incentives issued, wage progression	Introduce program	Initial stipends provided	Ongoing support	Monitor & adjust
	Mentor stipends	Mentorship matches, mentor participation	Identify mentors	Begin mentoring matches	Support ongoing mentorship	Evaluate & refine pipeline
	Head Start integration	HS staff participation, alignment	Onboard partners	Align practices	Integrate feedback	Full implementation
	Higher education articulation	Articulation pathways initiated	Explore agreements	Begin planning	Implement pilot agreements	Monitor & refine
	Apprenticeship data tracking	Data collected, analyzed	System set up	Initial data collection	Monitor & review	Ongoing tracking
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarships	Scholarship recruitment	Scholars enrolled; retention tracked	Launch recruitment	Begin awards	Ongoing scholarships	Evaluate outcomes
	Financial support	Tuition and stipend distribution	Initial disbursements	Continue support	Monitor progress	Review & adjust
	Higher ed engagement	Partner institutions, credit transfer	Engage institutions	Confirm program participation	Implement pathways	Evaluate results
CDA Credentialing Support	Hire CDA Specialists	Specialists hired; coaching scheduled	Hire 2 RSE CDA Specialists	Begin coaching & portfolio guidance	Monitor progress	Evaluate outcomes
	Credentialing support	CDA credentials issued, waivers reduced	Provide guidance & materials	Support completion of portfolios	Track credentialing progress	Review outcomes & adjust
ECEData Enhancements & Head Start Integration	Technical capacity build	Staff trained; IT capacity improved	Onboard & train staff	Begin technical development	Continue development & testing	Full operational capacity
	Database & API updates	Database updated; API functional	Design updates	Initial API testing	Integrate modules	Fully operational
	Cross-program data integration	Number of datasets integrated; Head Start classrooms included	Map key sources, initiate Head Start agreements	Pilot integrations (FCPK & non-FCPK Head Start)	QA & adjustments	Launch integrated datasets statewide
	Head Start data collection	Head Start classrooms integrated; IDs assigned	Onboard partners &	Build custom	Assign unique IDs,	Quarterly reports operational

			define data fields	Child Plus reports	automate reporting	for all Head Start classrooms
	Analytics & dashboards	Dashboards live, actionable insights	Prototype dashboards	Gather feedback & refine	Cross-program dashboards live	Monitor usage & share results
	Data governance	Data-sharing agreements, privacy compliance	Finalize agreements	Initial compliance audit	Ongoing review	Maintain compliance & document lessons learned
	Stakeholder engagement	Head Start grantee participation	Conduct any needed training	Host sessions with ADECE & Head Start	Ongoing training & feedback collection	Evaluate & adjust training for sustainability
	Evaluation & continuous improvement	Datasets integrated, dashboard usage, stakeholder feedback	Develop evaluation plan	Initial data collection & monitoring	Refine dashboards & processes	Final evaluation & report submitted
	Registration portal & FTHV integration	FTHV intake operational, data ingested	Design portal & map FTHV data	Build portal & API/ETL workflows	Test & launch FTHV portal	Monitor usage & update as needed
ECDataLab & VOICES Collaboration	Cohort participation	Workshop completion	Initial workshop	Ongoing virtual sessions	Additional cohort activities	In-person workshop & evaluation
	Analytic readiness plan	Plan drafted & implemented	Draft plan	Stakeholder input	Revise & refine	Implement & monitor
	Dashboard & reporting	Key indicators defined	Define indicators	Prototype dashboards	Refine dashboards	Launch dashboards
VOICES Kids Count Reporting & Outreach	Statewide analysis	Reports produced, outreach activities	Initial data review	Draft reports	Stakeholder engagement	Final reports & dissemination
	Communication tools	Accessible reports, dashboards	Develop drafts	Test with stakeholders	Refine tools	Launch publicly
Reflective Supervision ToT	Participant recruitment	RS providers recruited	Begin recruitment	Fill initial cohort	Confirm full participation	Cohort operational
	ToT training	Training delivered; fidelity measured	First training	Coaching & follow-up	Advanced sessions	Evaluate & adjust

	RS cohorts	Cohorts active, engagement tracked	Launch first cohort	Second cohort initiated	Ongoing sessions	Evaluate & plan next steps
	Mentorship pipeline	Mentors matched; pipeline built	Identify potential mentors	Begin mentoring matches	Support mentoring relationships	Review & expand pipeline
CPC Conference – Children First	Conference planning	Agenda developed, speakers confirmed	Develop agenda	Confirm speakers & venue	Outreach to participants	Host conference & collect feedback
	Travel grants allocation	Grants distributed	Identify participants	Begin distribution	Monitor participation	Evaluate & report
	Professional development sessions	Sessions delivered; feedback collected	Prepare materials	Deliver sessions	Collect feedback	Summarize & evaluate impact
APC Collaboration for Head Start Family Engagement	Family engagement events	Families served	Host initial events	Additional events held	Ongoing engagement	Evaluate reach & impact
	Care coordination	Families connected to services	Initiate support	Follow-up & connect services	Continue engagement	Review & improve
	Parent leadership (APLN)	Parents trained & engaged	Recruit initial parents	Training & leadership activities	Apply leadership in programs	Evaluate & plan next cohort
	Provider technical assistance	TA provided; implementation tracked	Initial training	Ongoing support	Monitor implementation	Evaluate & refine TA strategies

Organizational Capacity

Governance: ADECE will administer the PDG B-5 Systems-Building grant through an established statewide governance structure. ADECE provides leadership, fiscal oversight, and cross-program coordination to align grant activities with Alabama’s early childhood priorities. Strategic guidance comes from the CPCs, which also serves as the state’s ECAC and includes leaders from education, human services, public health, mental health, and community organizations. Local input is gathered through 67 county-level CPCs, which assess needs, identify gaps, and provide

recommendations to inform statewide planning. This structure ensures that PDG B-5 strategies are evidence-based, responsive to community needs, and coordinated across agencies. By linking state leadership with local councils, ADECE fosters accountability, transparency, and sustainability of early childhood systems beyond the grant period.

Team Experience and Expertise: ADECE staff, along with state partners such as the Alabama the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the APC, VOICES, institutions of higher education including community colleges and 4-year colleges, and other partners, have the fiscal and administrative knowledge and experience as well as the capacity to effectively perform the duties outlined in the grant requirements. ADECE and state and private partners will work together to make decisions; however, ADECE will be the lead agency for all grant activities to ensure that the grant is carried out according to the applicable Code of Federal Regulations as well as Alabama state requirements. Alabama has a strong commitment to maintaining fiscal accountability and fiscal control.

Organizational Capability: The following chart indicates ADECE leadership staff who will provide oversight of the grant activities, including their credentials, qualifications, and experience.

ADECE Staff	Credentials/Qualifications	Experience
ADECE Secretary	B.S Elementary Education/Early Childhood M.A. Elementary Education	Office of School Readiness Director, Pre-K to 3 rd Grade Early Learning Initiative Director, Pre-K Coach Facilitator, Pre-K teacher. Total Years of experience- 25
Chief Financial Officer	B.S. Business Administration. Certified Public Accountant and Certified Public Manager.	Certified Public Accounting, private practice accounting, internal auditor, and chief financial officer. Total years of experience- 25.
Education Administrator II B-5 Partnerships Director	M.Ed. Early Childhood Special Education	Former PDG B-5 Planning Grant and Renewal Grant Project Director, PDG B-5 Technical Assistant for the PDG B-5 TA Center, ADECE First Teacher Home Visiting Director, Adjunct Instructor. Total years of experience- 32.
Education Administrator II	M.S. - Family & Consumer Sciences	Early Childhood Policy Director, State & Federal Grants Manager, Education

Policy, Operations, and Community Initiatives Director		Admin, Community & Economic Development, Curriculum & Instructional Design, Clinic Director, Staff Admin, Early Childhood Technical Assistant, Childcare Provider. Total years of experience – 30.
Education Administrator II Workforce Development Director	B.S., M.Ed., Ed.S.- Elementary Education Ph.D.- Education Leadership	PDG B-5 Planning Grant Project Director, Workforce Development Director, Literacy Specialist, State Agency Federal Programs Education Specialist, State Agency Federal Programs Education Administrator. Total years of experience- 27.
Education Administrator I Head Start Collaboration Director	Ph.D. Child and Family Development, M.S. Family and Child Development	Office of School Readiness Director, Pre-K Coach, Senior Director, Evaluation Manager. Total years of experience- 32.

Subaward Agreements

Sub awardees will assist ADECE in carrying out its mission: to innovate, support, and deliver cohesive, equitable systems of high-quality care and education so that Alabama children and families thrive and learn. Sub awardees receiving funding for PDG B–5 activities will utilize Foundant, ADECE’s grants management system, which houses all grant applications and approved budgets. The PDG B–5 Project Director and ADECE Grants Management Team will collaboratively manage subgrants, while the Accounting Department will oversee the fiscal component. The Grants Management Team will manage the subaward application process and submit funding requests to the Accounting Department for fund distribution. Subrecipients will submit financial reports and supporting documentation at least quarterly—or as requested—to ensure expenditures align with approved applications and budgets.

The Project Director will lead oversight of subrecipient program activities, including implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. Alabama does not anticipate obstacles to completing sub granting activities within the one-year period. If awarded PDG B–5 Systems-Building Grant funding, subgrant awards will be issued within three months of the Notice of

Award, and subaward activities are expected to begin within one month of award. Ongoing program data reviews, subrecipient monitoring, and evaluations will help measure program quality and inform which activities may be sustained after the one-year grant period. Collaboration with state partners and strategic use of state funding will further support sustainability. ADECE has a proven record of leveraging federal funds to establish or enhance programs that are then sustained with state resources.

ADECE intends to enter into subaward agreements with entities with a demonstrated track record of successful subawards, established relationships with ADECE, no risk factors, successful audits, and timely, complete fiscal and programmatic reporting. Potential sub awardees include:

- Alabama Partnership for Children (APC): Administers T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships, Reflective Supervision Training Stipends through First 5 Alabama, and virtual Reflective Supervision platforms. APC also assists in managing the annual Early Childhood Education conference for over 4,000 educators.
- VOICES: Participates in the ECEDDataLab Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) Cohort, integrates ECEDData findings into the Kids Count Data Project, analyzes statewide child well-being indicators, reports on supply and demand, conducts stakeholder outreach, and supports communication tools such as the annual Kids Count Data Book. ADECE has partnered with VOICES for many years to provide data, printing, and distribution support for the Kids Count Data Book.
- Children First: Receives a subaward to plan and manage both the 2026 Children’s Policy Council (CPC) Conference and the Head Start Family Engagement Conference. These conferences bring together CPC members and Head Start families statewide to share best practices, review regional data, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration. The 2026 events

will build on the 2025 CPC Conference model, including training, networking, and capacity-building sessions to equip participants to respond effectively to evolving needs of children and families. ADECE will fund Children First to coordinate logistics, facilitate training sessions, and manage travel grants to ensure statewide participation.

ADECE maintains a dedicated grant management team, and all grants are managed in an electronic system that includes applications, scoring rubrics, award decisions, risk assessments, MOUs, budgets, receipts (as required), annual audits, and monthly budget expenditure tracking.

Experience and Capacity to Fully Expend PDG Funds: ADECE has been awarded multiple PDG B-5 Planning and Renewal grants and has successfully implemented, administered, managed, monitored, and evaluated the grant activities. All awarded funds were spent within the initial grant periods or during no cost extension timelines when available. No federal dollars were unspent or returned. In addition to PDG B-5 grants, Alabama administers and successfully manages millions of dollars in other federal funding, including Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), and Head Start Collaboration, and has administered American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in the past. ADECE also manages over \$200 million in state funding from the Alabama Education Trust Fund. Alabama will continue this commitment with this additional PDG B-5 Systems Building grant funding.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Governance, Policies and Procedures and Record Keeping and Financial Systems: ADECE Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, Accounting Department, Grants Management Team, Program/Project Directors, state agency partners, and other applicable individuals/entities, including sub award recipients will work collaboratively to ensure grant award requirements are met and 2 Code of Federal Regulations Part 200 is followed. ADECE has policies and procedures

in place to maintain fiscal control and management of all state and federal funds. In addition to the 2 CFR Part 200, ADECE utilizes the State of Alabama's *Fiscal Policy and Procedures Manual*. The manual includes the required policies and procedures related to budgeting, revenue and receipts, expenditures and disbursements, purchasing, contracts, journal vouchers, payroll/personnel, and financial reporting.

Procedures Used to Identify and Mitigate Risks and Issues: ADECE's Accounting Department provides centralized accounting and oversees financial monitoring and reporting, risk assessments, record keeping, vendor payments for goods and services, purchasing, travel, general accounting, sub recipient fiscal monitoring, budgeting and analysis, payroll, contracts, grants financial management, procurement, fiscal compliance, and mitigation. The accounting department will provide oversight of all fiscal operations to ensure that grant activities are in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. To mitigate risks and issues, weekly accounting and grants management meetings occur. Financial expenditure reports are disseminated and reviewed monthly by all program specific areas for transparency purposes and to check for accuracy of expenditures. All issues, including audit findings, are addressed according to generally accepted accounting principles/guidelines. In addition to internal controls within ADECE, the agency is audited annually by State of Alabama auditors.

Key Staff Responsible for Oversight: A full-time Education Administrator II with eleven years of federal grants management experience, including serving as the ADECE PDG B-5 Planning and Renewal Grants Project Director from 2018 to 2023, will serve as ADECE PDG B-5 Systems-Building Grant Project Director. The Project Director has additional state agency level experience administrating and managing federal funding associated with Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Project Director,

ADECE Secretary, and Senior Leadership staff will lead and maintain oversight of program activities including implementation, internal and subrecipient monitoring and evaluation, oversight of personnel, and fiscal and programmatic reporting associated with this grant.

Project Sustainability Plan

Required Support of Key People and Organizations: To promote sustainability efforts, ADECE and state partners, including the State's ECAC, which is comprised of elected state officials, state government representatives, Alabama Department of Human Resources, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid Agency, Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Department of Youth Services, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, etc. will coordinate and collaborate to ensure that available funding is leveraged so that Alabama's children and families receive continued access to high-quality programs, services, and resources. Other strategies to support sustainability include the incorporation of select PDG-supported practices into state budget lines (e.g., quality improvement, mental health consultation, workforce professional development). ADECE may also request legislative support for sustaining data integration, evaluation, and workforce competencies.

Types of Alternative Support Needed: ADECE may need to braid and blend funding to sustain successful projects. Strategic alignment of CCDBG, IDEA Part B/619 and Part C, Head Start, Medicaid, TANF, and state pre-K funds can support elements such as coaching, screenings, and family engagement. Leveraging Medicaid reimbursement for evidence-based developmental, maternal mental health, and home-visiting services projects is another avenue that deserves additional exploration for sustainability.

Maintenance of Cooperation and Collaboration of Key Project Partners:

ADECE will work to institutionalize partnership structures by maintaining interagency working groups formed during the grant and transition them into standing committees under ECAC and will formalize collaboration through MOUs that outline shared goals, roles, and commitments to support project components. Working to embed project activities in partners' mission and workflows by aligning project strategies (e.g., coaching models, family engagement frameworks, data practices) with partners' existing responsibilities and providing training and toolkits to sustain implementation without external support are other strategies that can be used. Maintaining ongoing communication and shared accountability by establishing regular partner convenings (quarterly or biannual) focused on continuous improvement as well as developing shared indicators, dashboards, and reporting cycles that partners can maintain through existing staff capacity will be important for sustainability. Our hope is to provide support through cross-training agency and provider staff so that knowledge gained under PDG is internalized and not dependent on grant-funded roles and capacity-building for partners to independently maintain data systems, assessment tools, and evidence-based practices.