SUPPORTING STATE CHILD CARE EFFORTS WITH AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDS

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Child care helps children learn and enter school ready to succeed and helps parents work with the peace of mind that their children are in safe, supportive settings. For 2009 and 2010, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is providing a $2 billion increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), including $255 million for improving the quality of child care, of which $93.6 million is targeted for activities to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Even with this new funding, however, states are grappling with serious budget shortfalls that are threatening their ability to maintain funding for a range of programs and services, including child care. These two developments make this a time of both opportunity and risk for efforts to support high-quality child care and early education.

States are using their ARRA child care funds in several ways. They are using the funds to maintain child care assistance for families already receiving it and provide assistance for families who would not otherwise have received it, including by eliminating or reducing waiting lists, expanding assistance for parents who are looking for work, increasing provider reimbursement rates, lowering parent copayments, and improving technology for administering child care assistance. They are also using the funds for numerous quality initiatives to support enhanced early learning opportunities for children, including by establishing or expanding quality rating and improvement systems, increasing professional development opportunities for child care providers, providing grants to providers to buy educational materials and equipment, supporting linkages with health care and other services, and targeting specific efforts to improve infant and toddler care.

Although evaluating states' choices about how they are using their ARRA funds is beyond the scope of this paper, it is clear that ARRA funds have helped many children and families receive assistance that otherwise would not have received it and have made possible improvements in the quality of child care, particularly infant and toddler care, that otherwise would not have occurred. Indeed, the presence of these funds enabled several states to turn back proposals to cut their child care programs. The additional funding for child care has also helped save and create jobs—for the parents who have been able to work because they have reliable child care, for the child care providers who have been able to maintain enrollment in their programs, and for trainers, specialists, and other individuals employed to help improve the availability and quality of child care.

Yet despite the infusion of these new resources, a number of states enacted cuts to their programs for the 2009 or 2010 fiscal years. Given the serious budget deficits most states are facing, it is highly likely that without the ARRA funding even more states would have made cuts and the cuts would have been deeper than they were. Forty-eight states experienced budget shortfalls totaling $158.5 billion as the 2010 state fiscal year began (July 1, 2009 for most states), and since their 2010 budgets passed, forty-one states had identified additional shortfalls totaling $38 billion as of February 2010.[1]

As 2010 begins, however, states and the families they serve face an uncertain future because the ARRA funding is expected to expire at the end of this year, but the fiscal situation may not have improved by then or could be even worse.[2] Continued investments will be needed to sustain and build on the progress states have made using ARRA funds.

Methodology

The information in this report was compiled from a variety of sources, including state early childhood advocates, state child care administrators, state agency websites, published reports by other organizations, and newspaper articles. As a first step, the National Women's Law Center sent a brief survey to at least one early childhood advocate in each state, requesting information on the ways in which states are using their ARRA funds as well as proposed and enacted cuts to state child care programs. Other resources were consulted to supplement this information. Child care administrators in each state were then given an opportunity to verify and add to the information collected. Most of the state administrators responded, providing updates and additional details. Although the resulting report is not an exhaustive list of states' use of ARRA funds for child care, or state cuts to child care, it provides a number of important examples of both.

Use of ARRA Funds to Maintain or Increase Access to Child Care Assistance for Children and Families

Child care assistance helps families afford the care that parents need to work and provides their children with a safe, stable, supportive environment. In these challenging economic times, child care assistance is particularly important in helping families struggling financially and enabling parents to find and maintain employment. States are using ARRA funds to maintain child care assistance for families who would otherwise have lost it and to provide assistance to families who would otherwise not have received it.

At least ten states are using ARRA funds to maintain child care assistance for children and families:

- Alabama is using $33.4 million for child care slots, including slots for 3,000 children who were prevented from losing child care in FY 2009.[3]
- Arizona expended $33 million between February and December 2009 to prevent 9,230 children, on an average monthly basis, from losing child care assistance.[4]
- California is using $91.35 million in FY 2009-10 to maintain child care assistance for children and families. A limited amount of these funds may be serving children from the waiting list.[5] The total includes $15.74 million that is being used to provide assistance to working families with school-age children who would have otherwise lost access to services when a program to provide care to school-age children was eliminated.[6]
- Colorado is using $21 million to maintain child care assistance.[7]

- Ohio is using $59 million to stabilize the budget for child care assistance, which is preventing families with incomes between 150 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level from losing child care assistance.[8]

- Oregon used $19.5 million to cover child care assistance in April, May, and June, 2009. Without the funding, the state would have increased parent copayments, reduced provider reimbursement rates, and restricted eligibility for child care assistance.[9]

- Rhode Island is using $4.5 million to continue to guarantee child care assistance to families with incomes up to the existing eligibility limit of 180 percent of poverty.[10] Based on the state's average annual subsidy amount per child of $7,350, this funding can be used to serve an estimated 612 children (or 306 children per year for two years).[11]

"Because of ARRA funds...I was able to hire an additional staff member and increase my student enrollment by six children. In these challenging economic times, that was very significant for my business."
—Cheri Erskin, Owner, Together for Children, Ocala, FL

- South Carolina is using approximately $24 million to preserve child care assistance for about 4,900 children.[12]

- Washington is using $27.5 million to prevent 5,100 children from 3,100 families from losing child care assistance.[13]

- Wisconsin is using an undetermined amount to help to continue to provide child care assistance to 30,000 families and 64,000 children in the program.[14]

At least three states are using ARRA funds to maintain child care assistance for children and families by covering caseload growth:

- Minnesota is using $14.6 million to cover child care caseload growth for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Without the funding the state would have had to consider changes in eligibility levels, copayments, or reimbursement rates.[15]

- Missouri is using $11.7 million to maintain the state's income eligibility limit to initially qualify for assistance at 127 percent of poverty and to maintain the exit eligibility limit for families already receiving assistance at 139 percent of poverty for FY 2010 and FY 2011. This funding will enable the state to cover caseload growth and adjustments for the updated federal poverty level each year and allow 972 children to either maintain existing or gain new child care assistance. Without the additional funding, the Department of Social Services estimates that the state would have reduced the income limit to qualify for assistance, already one of the lowest among all states, to 123 percent of poverty, and the exit eligibility limit to 135 percent of poverty.[16]

- Montana is using $4.7 million to cover caseload growth for child care assistance and adjust its income eligibility limit for the updated federal poverty level.[17]

At least four states are using ARRA funds to provide child care assistance to children and families who would not otherwise have received it by delaying or avoiding implementation of new waiting lists for child care assistance:

- Louisiana has used $3 million to delay implementation of a waiting list from October to December 2009, keeping approximately 2,700 children off the waiting list.[18]

- Maryland has used $15 million to avoid implementation of a waiting list. However, even with the infusion of ARRA funds, the state will have to implement a waiting list on February 15, 2010.[19]
- New Hampshire has used $1.2 million to delay implementation of a waiting list from May 13, 2009 to June 30, 2009.[20]
- New Mexico has used $13.9 million to help delay implementation of a waiting list until January 1, 2010 while maintaining the income eligibility limit for child care assistance at 200 percent of poverty and providing child care assistance to 2,200 additional children. The state has maintained child care assistance for children who were receiving it prior to January 1, 2010, including those added with the ARRA funds.[21]

At least ten states are using ARRA funds to provide child care assistance to children and families who would not otherwise have received it by reducing or eliminating waiting lists for child care assistance:

- Arkansas is using $21 million to add 12,232 children and 7,606 families to its child care assistance program, primarily for six-month time periods. Based on the availability of funds, each family is reevaluated after six months and reauthorized for an additional six months if the family continues to meet the eligibility requirements. These funds are enabling the state to clear its waiting list, which had over 8,000 children on it as of March 2009.[22]
- Connecticut is using $11.9 million for child care assistance, including to reopen intake for its child care assistance program, which was closed to non-TANF-related families from May 13, 2009 to November 1, 2009, and clear its waiting list—which had grown to 3,800 families. The program remained open as of February 2010.[23]
- Georgia is using $38 million to work toward clearing its waiting list, which had 2,185 families on it as of February 2009. In August 2009, Georgia began serving 5,000 to 8,000 additional children per month. As of November 2009, 817 families remained on the waiting list.[24]
- Indiana is using $35 million to provide child care assistance to 3,500 children who had been on the waiting list. This assistance was available beginning in June 2009 and will continue until September 2011.[25]
- Maine is using $2,478,000 to remove 300 children from its waiting list. In addition, the state is using $1,652,000 to provide child care assistance to 200 new families transitioning off TANF.[26]
- Minnesota is using $8 million to remove approximately 379 families per month over two years from its waiting list.[27]
- Mississippi is using $25,389,491 to clear its waiting list, which had 6,500 children on it as of March 31, 2009. The waiting list was completely cleared as of October 2009 and remained clear as of February 2010.[28]
- Nevada is using an undetermined amount to provide child care assistance to children on the waiting list.[29]
- New Jersey is using $24 million to reduce its waiting list, which had 6,000 children on it as of August 2009. More than 3,000 children had been removed from the list as of January 2010, and as of that time the list continues to be reduced.[30]

STATES REPORTING USE OF ARRA FUNDS TO DELAY, REDUCE, OR ELIMINATE WAITING LISTS (14):

AR, CT, GA, IN, LA, ME, MD, MN, MS, NV, NH, NJ, NM, PA

- Pennsylvania will be using $31.8 million to reduce the number of children on the waiting list, to the extent possible, through FY 2010-11. The waiting list had 6,000 children on it as of January 2010.[31]

At least two states whose child care programs are administered by local entities are using ARRA funds to maintain child care assistance for children and families already receiving it, provide assistance to children and families on the waiting list, and/or otherwise provide assistance to children and families who would not have received it if these funds were not available:

- Florida is allocating $80 million to its local coalitions to serve approximately 20,000 children.[32]

- Texas is allocating $151.2 million to its local workforce development boards to serve about 18,500 children per day, on average.[33]

At least six states are using ARRA funds to provide child care assistance to children and families who would not otherwise have received it by expanding eligibility to serve families at higher income levels than the states did previously. Two of these states are providing this assistance in the form of "child care scholarships":

- Connecticut is using $2.2 million (out of the total $11.9 million for child care assistance cited above) in FY 2010 to provide child care assistance and help support an increase in the income eligibility limit to qualify for child care assistance from 50 percent to 75 percent of state median income, which went into effect November 1, 2009.[34]

- Georgia is using $23.7 million to provide child care assistance through a new Temporary Child Care Assistance (TCCA) program for parents who are unemployed or underemployed and do not qualify for the existing child care assistance program, Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS). To receive the child care assistance under the new program, parents must be residents of the state, be actively involved in either job readiness training, vocational training, technical school, or college, be unemployed or work part time (less than 24 hours per week), and have income below an eligibility limit (200 percent of the 2008 federal poverty level).[35] This TCCA program ends September 30, 2010.[36]

- Iowa is using $2.3 million for "child care scholarships" for families with incomes between 145 percent of poverty (the eligibility cutoff for its existing child care assistance program) and 185 percent of poverty. Parents may use the scholarships to help pay for infant and toddler care offered by providers that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) or that have a rating of a level three or higher under the state's child care quality rating and improvement system. The program ends June 30, 2011 or earlier if the amount of funding available is expended.[37]

- Tennessee is using $41,932,000 to provide "child care scholarships" to low-income, working parents who have incomes up to 85 percent of state median income—higher than the previous income eligibility limit of 60 percent of state median income—and who are not receiving child care benefits through any other state program. The scholarship program began April 1, 2009 and will end September 30, 2010.[38]

- Vermont is using $1.5 million in FY 2010 and approximately $1.15 million in FY 2011, together with a $3.3 million increase in the annual amount of state general funds for child care assistance, to support an increase in the income eligibility limit for child care assistance as well as an increase in reimbursement rates and quality bonuses for child care providers. The state increased its income eligibility limit for child care assistance from 82.5 percent of the 1999 state median income ($31,032 a year for a family of three) to 82.5 percent of the 2000 state median income ($35,484 a year for a family of three), effective April 2009, and increased the income eligibility limit again, to 200 percent of the 2009 federal poverty level ($36,620 a year for a family of three), effective January 2010.[39]

- Wyoming is using a portion of the $2,248,867 available for child care assistance to increase its income eligibility limit for child care assistance from 200 percent to 250 percent of poverty.[40]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS TO PROVIDE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE TO PARENTS SEARCHING FOR WORK

Allowing parents to receive child care assistance while they search for a job offers financial support to parents who are out of work and have less income to cover their expenses, including for child care. It also provides children with a stable child care environment at a time when their families are experiencing the instability associated with job loss.

At least nine states are using ARRA funds to begin to offer child care assistance to parents to search for a job, to allow new groups of parents to qualify for child care assistance to search for a job, and/or to expand the amount of time parents can receive child care assistance to search for a job:

- Delaware is using $110,000 to extend the time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job from 30 to 90 days.[41]

- Illinois is using $2.2 million to extend the time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job from 30 to 90 days.[42]

- Indiana is using an undetermined amount to extend the time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job from four to twelve weeks.[43]

- Louisiana has used $6 million to continue to allow parents to receive child care assistance to search for a job from July through December 2009; the funds have been used to provide child care assistance to 4,300 children.[44]

- Missouri is using $16.7 million to extend the time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job, from 30 days to eight weeks for non-TANF parents. In addition, non-TANF parents can now qualify for child care assistance to search for a job; previously, these parents could only qualify if they were receiving child care assistance when they lost a job. The state is also using the funding to disregard the first $30 and one-third of a parent's income in determining eligibility for child care assistance for parents participating in Division of Workforce Development activities, which provide dislocated workers with a paycheck while they obtain training in a new job skill.[45]

- North Carolina is using an undetermined amount of blended child care assistance funding, including ARRA funds, to extend the time parents can receive child care assistance to search for a job or participate in educational activities. For example, the time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job has been extended from 60 days to six months for parents unemployed or underemployed on or after October 1, 2008, or who graduated with a degree or certificate as of December 2008. The time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to participate in educational activities has been extended from 24 months to 36 months for parents who lost employment on or after October 1, 2008, or otherwise need additional training to enhance their marketable skills. In addition, parents can qualify for child care assistance to search for a job; previously they could only qualify if they were receiving child care assistance when they lost a job.[46]

> *"...we were able to receive help to enroll our children in child care, so we could work. Without this extra money, we would still be on a waiting list and unable to work."*
> —Florida mother

- South Dakota is using $542,355 to temporarily provide child care assistance to parents who had not already been receiving assistance to search for a job for up to two months. This policy went into effect as of June 1, 2009 and is expected to last through September 2010, depending on funding availability. Previously, the state provided child care assistance only for up to one month and only if the family was already receiving child care assistance.[47]

- Texas is allowing local workforce development boards to use a portion of the $151.2 allocated to them to extend the time parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job beyond the previous limit of four weeks. Local boards may also now provide child care assistance to parents to search for a job when they initially apply for assistance. In addition, boards may provide child care assistance to employed parents whose work hours have been reduced—by the employer and not voluntarily by the parent—below Texas Workforce Commission- or board-determined activity requirements.[48] (For example, under the previous child care assistance program in Southeast Texas, parents had to be working or going to school 30 hours a week to receive child care assistance, but with new guidelines under ARRA, parents can receive child care assistance if their hours have been reduced to 20 to 24 hours.[49])

- Utah is using $1.12 million to provide child care assistance to non-TANF parents to search for a job for up to 100 hours, as of July 1, 2010; previously, the state only provided parents receiving child care assistance funded through TANF with limited access to that assistance to search for a job.[50]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR PARENT COPAYMENTS

High parent copayments for child care assistance are difficult for low-income families to meet, especially during periods of economic downturn. When parents are unable to pay their copayments, child care providers—who are already struggling to break even—must absorb the costs or stop serving these families. Several states are using their ARRA funds to address this problem by lowering copayments or preventing increases in copayments.

At least seven states are using ARRA funds to reduce copayments for some or all families receiving child care assistance:

- Delaware has used $1,561,400 to reimburse families receiving child care assistance for the amount of their copayment during the months of July and October 2009.[51]

- Illinois is using $30 million to reduce copayments for families receiving child care assistance by 15 percent as of October 1, 2009. The state will use an additional $37.9 million to implement further copayment deductions as of May 1, 2010.[52]

- Kansas is using an estimated $7.3 million to reduce copayments for families receiving child care assistance between March 2009 and October 2010. Families with incomes below 100 percent of poverty have no copayments for the year (previously, only families with incomes below 70 percent of poverty had no copayments while families with incomes between 70 and 100 percent of poverty had copayments equal to approximately 1.5 percent of income), and families with incomes between 100 and 185 percent of poverty have their copayments cut in half.[53]

- South Dakota is using $3,060,401 to reduce copayments for families receiving child care assistance. Copayment ceilings are decreased from 15 percent to 7.5 percent of gross family income, which reduces copayments by half for families with incomes between 115 and 200 percent of poverty.[54]

- Utah is using $2.95 million to reduce copayments for families receiving child care assistance as of July 1, 2010. For the half of families receiving child care assistance with the lowest incomes, who were previously paying between $11 and $26 per month (2,289 cases), copayments are reduced to $1 per month (a reduction of 91 to 96 percent), and for the remaining half of families, copayments are reduced by 20 percent.[55]

- Vermont, as discussed above, is using $1.5 million in FY 2010 and approximately $1.15 million in FY 2011, together with a $3.3 million increase in the annual amount of state general funds for child care assistance, to support an increase in the income eligibility limit for child care assistance along with other improvements in its child care assistance program. In raising the income eligibility limit, the state is also adjusting its sliding fee scale in a way that shifts families all along the scale to lower copayment levels. For example, a family of three earning $2,867 a month ($34,404 a year) has had its copayment reduced from 90 percent to 80 percent of the cost of care following the adjustment to the sliding fee scale as of January 2010. The income level up to which a family of three has 100 percent of the cost of care covered by the state has increased from $1,179 per month ($14,148 per year) to $1,525 per month ($18,300 per year) as of January 2010.[56]

- Wyoming is using a portion of the $2,248,867 available for child care assistance to reduce copayments for families receiving child care assistance. Families with incomes between 110 and 125 percent of poverty have had their copayments reduced from 20 cents per hour of care to 5 cents per hour of care.[57]

In addition, two states (Oregon[58] and Washington[59]) are using an undetermined amount of ARRA funds to avoid increasing copayments for families receiving child care assistance and one state (Montana[60]) is using an undetermined amount of ARRA funds to adjust its sliding fee scale for the updated federal poverty level.

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR REIMBURSEMENT RATES

The level at which states set reimbursement rates affects child care providers' willingness to serve families receiving child care assistance and child care providers' ability to afford the expenses entailed in supporting a high-quality program, including qualified staff and materials such as books, toys, and other educational materials. Yet, only nine states set their reimbursement rates at the federally recommended level (the 75th percentile of current market rates) as of February 2009.[61]

At least four states are using ARRA funds to maintain or increase reimbursement rates:

- Alaska is using an undetermined amount to increase rates from the 50th percentile of 2007 market rates to the 75th percentile of 2009 market rates for infants and toddlers and to the 50th percentile of 2009 market rates for preschoolers and school-age children as of March 1, 2010.[62]

- Michigan is using $1.65 million to restore a reduction in provider reimbursement rates that was included in a May 2009 budget-cutting executive order by the governor.[63]

- Nebraska is using $10,259,000 to maintain reimbursement rates at the 60th percentile of current market rates.[64]

- Vermont, as discussed above, is using $1.5 million in FY 2010 and approximately $1.15 million in FY 2011, together with a $3.3 million increase in the annual amount of state general funds for child care assistance, to support an increase in the income eligibility limit for child care assistance as well as to implement increases in reimbursement rates as of January 2010. The base rate increased by an average of about 14 percent, and bonuses at each level of the state's quality rating and improvement system also increased—from 4 percent to 5 percent of the base rate for one-star providers, from 8 percent to 10 percent for two-star providers, from 12 percent to 20 percent for three-star providers, from 18 percent to 30 percent for four-star providers, and from 20 percent to 40 percent for five-star providers. As a result, four-star providers are paid at approximately the 75th percentile of 2008 market rates. For example, the reimbursement rate for a preschool-age child in a four-star center increased from $583 per month to $729 per month.[65]

Iowans Brandy and Dustin, parents of three children, lost child care assistance when Dustin got a new and better-paying job, putting them over the income eligibility limit by $60. An ARRA-funded program for parents with incomes over the limit is helping pay for care for their youngest child.

In addition, Delaware is using $2.2 million to provide child care programs one-time bonuses based on the average number of children in attendance in the first quarter of 2009.[66]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

Improving technology for administering the child care assistance program can help increase efficiency and accuracy and reduce bureaucratic burdens and barriers for families trying to get and keep child care assistance and for child care providers trying to receive reimbursement. Upgraded technology for the child care licensing system can make it easier for licensors to track whether child care providers are meeting licensing requirements and disseminate information about providers' licensing status. Technology investments also can help support implementation of child care quality rating and improvement systems.

At least fourteen states are using ARRA funds to implement or upgrade technology systems for their child care assistance programs:

- Arkansas is using $40,000 to help child care providers who had not yet made the transition to online billing make that transition and overcome barriers to using online billing.[67]
- Connecticut is using $150,000 to develop direct deposit and electronic invoicing capabilities for the child care assistance program. The state is also using $100,000 to develop an Early Childhood Information System, a single, statewide web-based reporting system intended to eliminate duplication and capture detailed information on children and families participating in federally and state-funded early childhood programs.[68]
- Florida is using $14 million to support the development of a new web-based centralized information technology system that will replace a system that had 34 separate servers. The state estimates that the new technology system will save $28 million each year, which will enable it to serve approximately 7,000 more children each year.[69]
- Georgia is using $1.57 million to upgrade its information system, including expansion of the COMPASS Online Screening Referral and Application portal that allows parents to apply for child care online, development of an electronic document management system that allows employees to manage and store

client records involving child care eligibility, and shifting from paper documentation to electronic case records.[70]

- Kansas is using an undetermined amount to make its online application more user-friendly and integrating the online application with the processing of payments and other aspects of the system. This project will include the development of both a customer and provider portal and a provider management system with a professional development registry.[71]

- Louisiana is using $2.3 million to implement an automated electronic time and attendance system in August 2010 to support the delivery of child care assistance.[72]

- Maine is using $1 million for computer and swipe card technology to manage child care assistance payments. In addition, the state is using $140,000 for two new full-time staff to administer the new child care assistance the state is making available and $15,000 for additional computers and office space for the new staff.[73]

- Nevada is using $200,000 to purchase computers and software for child care centers, with priority for those centers with the highest percentage of their children receiving child care assistance. The computer and software will aid centers with tracking child and family information, billing, staff management, and reimbursement for serving children receiving child care assistance. Centers requesting these systems must agree to bill for reimbursements online as soon as this process is available and receive their reimbursements through direct deposit.[74]

- New York is using $5 million to support an automated child care time and attendance payment system in all counties, outside of New York City, for automated time and attendance tracking, accurate payment calculations, eligibility determination, and ongoing management of the child care assistance system.[75]

- South Carolina is using an undetermined amount to upgrade the efficiency of its child care assistance system.[76]

- Texas is using $10 million for its Child Care Automated Attendance tracking project.[77]

- West Virginia is using an undetermined amount for an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system for child care that will allow parents to use a benefit card to pay for child care services.[78]

- Wisconsin is using an undetermined amount to develop automated attendance technology for parents, to manage child care assistance payments.[79]

- Wyoming is using an undetermined portion of the $2,248,867 available for child care assistance for an EBT system for payment to providers.[80]

At least nine states are using ARRA funds to implement or upgrade technology systems for their child care licensing systems:

- Connecticut is using $774,400 to address child health and safety in child care, including by enhancing electronic monitoring and compliance systems for child care licensing and enforcement.[81]

- Georgia is using $1.6 million to expand system functionality for child care licensing and monitoring.[82]

- Kansas is using an estimated $400,000 to $500,000 to develop and design software enhancements and purchase the hardware necessary to fully automate the state's child care inspection process. An automated inspection process will enable inspectors to provide a summary of licensing reviews to child care providers in the field without the delays currently experienced by providers. In addition, the state is creating an online system that will making licensing information available to providers and parents and that will allow providers to apply for licensing renewal.[83]

Maine is using $1 million for computer and swipe card technology to manage child care assistance payments.

- Kentucky is using $500,000 to create an electronic child care licensing process that will interface with the existing child care assistance payment system and will replace the current system, which is largely a paper process.[84]
- Louisiana is using $200,000 to support the redesign of its child care licensing system, including technology improvements, standards revisions, and staff training.[85]
- Missouri is using $259,000 to upgrade licensing inspection software and make the results of licensing inspections available online.[86]
- Ohio is using $300,000 to replace inoperative and outdated computers and printers used by child care licensing specialists.[87]
- Utah is using $50,000 for the Bureau of Child Care Licensing to provide computer tablets for licensors.[88]
- West Virginia is using an undetermined amount to develop a web-based regulatory system that better automates regulatory functions and provides reports on regulated providers.[89]

At least two states are using ARRA funds for technology that will support their child care quality rating and improvement systems:

- New Mexico is using $80,000 to purchase specialized software and hardware to document providers' scores on environmental rating scales, which are used to determine their quality level in the state's quality rating and improvement system, and to conduct training for staff on the use of the software and reporting features. In addition, the state is using $300,000 to purchase necessary software and complete programming of its Early Childhood Services Child Care database and for software for Child Care Audit functionality to support accountability.[90]
- West Virginia is using an undetermined amount to develop a web-based system to help implement a quality rating and improvement system that will link to other early childhood databases.[91]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS

A growing number of states are adopting quality rating and improvement systems, which assess the quality of child care providers and programs, provide programs and providers with encouragement, incentives, and support to enhance their quality, and inform parents about the quality of their child care options. Twenty states had a statewide child care quality rating and improvement system as of January 2010.[92] Quality rating and improvement systems offer a comprehensive, coordinated strategy for improving the quality of care and have produced positive results in several states that have implemented and evaluated this approach.[93] The infusion of ARRA funds has given states that do not yet have such systems an opportunity to develop and begin to implement them and states with existing systems an opportunity to strengthen and expand them.

At least sixteen states are taking advantage of these opportunities:

- Arkansas is using $1.05 million for the final implementation of its newly revised quality rating and improvement system, Better Beginnings. This includes development of a Better Beginnings website for providers, a toolkit for applicants, messaging to parents, and training for all 2,873 licensed child care centers and registered and licensed family child care homes to support their participation in the quality rating and improvement system. Specific targeted assistance is provided to programs with a large number of children receiving child care assistance through a coaching model and expanded training opportunities.[94]

- Delaware is using $375,791 to support its quality rating and improvement system, Delaware Stars, with an emphasis on supporting those providers who accept children receiving child care assistance.[95]

- Idaho is using $970,525 to enhance the IdahoSTARS quality rating and improvement system that was rolled out statewide on January 1, 2010, and for related activities and systems-building.[96]

- Indiana is using $1 million for a marketing campaign to promote and increase community awareness of Paths to QUALITY, the state's quality rating and improvement system.[97]

- Kentucky is using $200,000 to increase parents' and providers' awareness of and encourage providers' participation in its STARS quality rating and improvement system.[98]

- Minnesota is using $1.4 million to continue to pilot its Parent Aware Quality Rating System and $1.3 million for training, coaching, consultation, and other supports to help providers improve their quality in preparation for the full implementation of the system.[99]

- Montana is using $1 million for the development of infrastructure for a quality improvement and rating system, the field test for which is to be implemented in mid-2010.[100]

- Nevada is using $500,000 for its Silver State Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System Pilot Project. The pilot will last two years and include 24 child care centers in Southern Nevada. It will be used for data collection and future planning of a statewide quality rating and improvement system.[101]

- New Mexico is using $125,000 to conduct a statewide public awareness campaign for Look for the STARS, the state's five-level quality rating system. The state is also using $200,000 to eliminate the waiting list for programs wanting to receive intensive on-site consultation to assist them in improving their quality rating, with a focus on helping programs remaining at STAR Level 1 to attain STAR Level 2. The state is allocating $300,000 for awards of up to $2,500 each for providers that have STAR Levels 2 through 5 and at least 25 percent of their children receiving child care assistance; priority for awards will be given to programs that have a high percentage of children receiving child care assistance, that propose to spend awards to stimulate the local economy, that are located in areas of the state with the greatest need for high-quality programs, and that have documented hardship, health and safety concerns, or documented code violations. In addition, the state is using $60,000 to train child care licensing surveyors on STAR Level 2 criteria and $265,000 for training for its technical assistance program staff on assessing providers on STAR Levels 3 and 4 criteria.[102]

- New York is using $1.2 million over two years to field test QUALITYstarsNY, the state's new quality rating and improvement system.[103]

- Ohio is using approximately $5.3 million to provide increased payments to programs that are serving children receiving child care assistance and that are at the two highest levels of Step Up To Quality, the state's quality rating and improvement system.[104]

- Pennsylvania is using $3.7 million in FY 2009-10 and $6.1 million in FY 2010-11 for tiered reimbursements under its Keystone STARS quality rating and improvement system.[105]
- Rhode Island is using $181,000 for incentives to providers to participate in its BrightStars quality rating and improvement system and for program quality supports.[106]
- Texas is using a portion of the $26 million allocated to local workforce development boards for improving the quality of child care for activities to expand the number of its Texas Rising Star certified or nationally accredited providers.[107]
- Washington is using $1 million to field test its Seeds to Success quality rating and improvement system, beginning in July 2009, in collaboration with its private partner, Thrive by Five Washington.[108]
- Wisconsin is using an undetermined amount to create a child care quality rating and improvement system.[109]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR PROVIDER TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The qualifications and education of child care providers are key factors in determining the overall quality of care. Teachers with training and education in early childhood education can reach children more effectively, provide age-appropriate instruction, and help improve children's early reading skills and development.[110] Many states are using a portion of their ARRA funds set aside for child care quality improvement to support training, education, and professional development for child care providers, which in a time of economic downturn have become even more difficult for providers to pay for themselves.

STATES REPORTING USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR PROVIDER EDUCATION, COMPENSATION, TRAINING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (26):

AK, AR, CA, CT, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, ME, MO, NV, NM, NC, ND, OR, RI, SC, TX, UT, WA, WV, WI, WY

At least six states are supporting professional development through adoption or expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project model or similar approaches that offer providers financial support and incentives to obtain more education linked to higher compensation. For example, T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships to child care providers who complete a specified amount of education, followed by additional compensation in the form of a raise or a bonus if the providers then commit to continue working in their child care programs for a set period of time.[111]

- Connecticut is using $400,215 to support professional development for child care and early education providers, including through supplementing the Support, Training, Advancement, and Retention of Teachers ($TART) program, which compensates staff in state-funded prekindergarten classrooms for increasing their education level. The funds are also being used to expand the availability of scholarships to assist teachers and providers in prekindergarten programs, child care centers, and family child care homes in obtaining credentials and degrees.[112]
- Missouri is using $1 million for T.E.A.C.H. and $628,000 to improve its Early Childhood Professional Development System, which provides a systematic process to track training hours, professional resources and

guidelines for trainers, and online training and databases demonstrating the impact of training on provider practices and child outcomes.[113]

- New Mexico is using $275,000 for additional T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, with priority given to infant/toddler caregivers. Ten of the scholarships are being used for training and technical assistance program staff and child care licensing staff to take courses in early childhood education.[114]
- Oregon is using $2 million to support the first phase of a new public-private partnership called Education and Quality Investment Partnership (EQUIP), which provides education awards of $100 to $500 to providers who document educational achievements on the Oregon Registry, the state's early care and education professional development lattice.[115]
- Rhode Island is using $200,000 to establish a T.E.A.C.H. model and $50,000 for preschool core competencies and a career lattice.[116]
- Washington its using $1.5 million for the Washington State Early Childhood Education Career and Wage Ladder, replacing funding that had been cut from the program. The state estimates the funding will enable the initiative to reach 70 centers employing approximately 700 child care providers and serving approximately 7,000 children.[117]

At least twenty-two states are using ARRA funds for other activities aimed at expanding training and professional development opportunities for child care providers:

- Alaska is using an undetermined amount to fund the statewide child care resource and referral network to further support development of the state's provider training registry (System for Early Education Development), to support the work of the state's professional development committee on implementing the statewide professional development plan, and to provide mini-grants for provider training and professional development.[118]
- Arkansas is using $502,200 to support training for 1,000 child care providers on improving business and financial practices.[119] Newly and recently licensed family child care homes receive Business of Child Care Training and in-home visits to assist with taxes, parent contracts, and good business practices. Online modular training has been developed for providers to assist in good business planning and strategic planning for improving quality.[120]
- California is using $1,339,081 to fund a portion of the Child Development Training Consortium, a state-funded program that provides direct child development training through college-level coursework. The state is also using $2,975,000 for the California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), a statewide child care and development support system with a lead staff member in each of eleven regions who is responsible for establishing and maintaining networks of prekindergarten administrators, teachers, or leaders who meet at least five times during each school year to provide leadership and instructional support to preschool administrators and teachers; the funding will be used to provide professional development to the CPIN regional leads, develop training modules for their use, and develop and maintain the CPIN website. In addition, the state is using $250,000 for professional growth advisers for its Child Development Permit Matrix (a career ladder), including for maintaining a registry of professional growth advisers, providing training for new and existing advisers, and developing and maintaining an electronic system for providing information about the professional growth plan requirements. The state is supporting several other training and professional development initiatives as well, including: the California Early Childhood Mentor Program, which provides financial compensation and other benefits to child care and development teachers and directors who are selected as mentors for students at approximately 103 community colleges

($3,271,919); the Family Child Care at Its Best Project offered through the Center for Excellence in Child Development at University of California, Davis, which will provide training and quality improvement services to family child care providers throughout the state ($1,000,000); a project to align content and competencies of key California Department of Education, Child Development Division materials and initiatives into the core early childhood education curriculum in the California Community Colleges and the California State University systems ($500,000); a Stipend for Permit Program, which covers teachers' application fees for obtaining a Child Development Permit ($500,000); a Child Development Teacher and Supervisor Grant Program, which provides individuals with assistance for college coursework leading to the attainment of a Child Development Permit at the teacher, master teacher, supervisor, or program director level ($350,000); and materials and information, onsite technical assistance, and support to preschool teachers of English language learners ($1,625,319).[121]

Missouri is using $1 million for T.E.A.C.H. and $628,000 to improve its Early Childhood Professional Development System.

- Florida is using $3 million to advance an effort launched in 2007 to develop a comprehensive professional development system. A steering committee is working to create a system that recognizes informal training and formal education, supports a pathway from high school to higher education, sets out core competencies for practitioners, directors, and coaches, establishes trainer and training standards and assessments, and addresses the availability of early learning trainings.[122]

- Georgia is using $4 million to help child care teachers and providers earn credentials such as a Child Development Associate (CDA), Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC), and Technical College Diploma (TCD). The state is providing 3,400 teachers and providers with $1,200 each to help them earn their CDA credential or higher credentials by February 2011. The state is also using $900,000 to develop and expand new online training modules and podcasts for early care and learning teachers. In addition, the state is using $1.25 million to train 80 Department of Early Care and Learning, resource and referral, and collegiate teaching professionals on the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC), and $500,000 for the professional development registry.[123]

- Idaho is using $108,000 for a child care provider trainer and training approval system, including development of trainings on strengthening families through early care and education and on caring for children with special needs; $30,000 for database development for a professional development registry; and $20,000 for training of mentors to work with providers.[124]

- Indiana is using $100,000 to create a certification system for quality enhancement technical assistant specialists, a statewide cadre of nearly 100 individuals who provide mentoring and technical assistance to child care programs. The project will involve the development of the certificate, delivery of training and certification of existing staff, and development of online certification. In addition, the state is using $50,000 to provide scholarships for child care providers to attend the 2010 Indiana Early Childhood Conference; $25,380 to help providers obtain an associate degree in early childhood/child development that articulates into a bachelor's degree at an institution of higher education in the state; and $73,000 for a study of the characteristics of the early childhood workforce in 2010.[125]

- Kansas is using $200,000 to support and promote technology-driven professional development such as online classes.[126]

- Kentucky is using $420,000 to expand professional development opportunities and make training more accessible in rural areas for early care and educational professionals throughout the state. The state is partnering with universities to develop a web-based distance learning platform, accessible statewide, so that training for child care providers can be provided via webinars and/or other distance-learning opportunities.[127]

- Louisiana is using $170,000 to investigate distance learning opportunities for child care providers designed to help them maintain compliance with licensing regulations and participate in the state's Quality Start Child Care Rating System.[128]

- Maine is using $338,672 for scholarships to help child care providers receive a degree, credential, or certification. The state is also using $100,000 for a half-time position for training coordination and provider support and $70,000 for website development and design for a Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education coordinated child care training calendar. In addition, the state is using $50,000 to increase the availability of training related to Maine's early learning guidelines.[129]

- Nevada is using $40,000 for two professional development institutes that will provide approximately 10 hours of training over two days to 100 trainers registered with The Nevada Registry (a statewide system of career development and recognition for early care and education professionals). Travel support and scholarships will be provided to registered trainers residing outside the two institute locations (Las Vegas and Reno), and all participants will receive a binder of materials to support their future training activities. In addition, the state is using $10,000 to revise its professional development plan to address areas not covered in the original plan, including outcomes, family, friend, and neighbor care providers, and inclusion practices.[130]

- New Mexico is using $35,000 to review and revise the state's Five-Year Early Childhood Professional Development Plan. In addition, the state is revising its 45-hour entry-level course to focus more on infants and toddlers and make it more appropriate for school-age care providers and training course facilitators ($50,000). The state is also supporting nine additional online 45-hour entry-level courses to eliminate the waiting list for child care providers required to attend this training and make the training more accessible, in particular, for providers in rural and remote areas ($55,000). Other activities include enhancing the Training and Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) database for tracking training and assistance received by providers statewide ($65,000); purchasing the Early Childhood Trainee Registry System from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) to identify providers who are obtaining required training in the state ($47,000); offering eight workshops for providers on combining funds from various sources ($50,000); conducting training for child care licensing staff ($15,000); providing grants to the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children, New Mexico Child Care and Education Association, and New Mexico School Age Child Care Association for their annual conferences ($30,000); providing scholarships for providers to attend in-state professional development conferences ($50,000); and providing 20 Mind in the Making workshops (research-based training modules for providers on brain development and the importance of early education) statewide ($50,522).[131]

- North Carolina is using $410,000 to facilitate a year-long, regional early childhood professional development planning process, managed by the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council and conducted in partnership with the North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. The state is also using over $60,000 to support further implementation of training for child care providers in the Pyramid Model, a systematic framework developed by the Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning for promoting children's social-emotional development, providing support for children's appropriate behavior, preventing children's challenging behavior, and addressing children's problematic behavior. In addition, the state is using $459,000 to further the certification of child care providers.[132]

- North Dakota is using $3.6 million for the Growing Child Care Initiative, which includes child care provider training, among other components. The child care resource and referral agencies that received a contract to carry out the initiative have developed 120 hours of online courses that meet criteria for a CDA credential, defined a CDA scholarship program that will be launched in early 2010, and created a workforce registry.[133]

- Oregon is using $946,876 to preserve programs resulting from collaboration between child care resource and referral agencies and local county commissions, including programs that offer: relationship-based professional development through child care provider networks, consultations, resource teams, mentoring, and other approaches; coverage of training costs; outreach and services for special groups of providers, such as infant/toddler providers, school-age providers, providers who do not speak English, and family, friend and neighbor care providers; and recognition and celebration of providers.[134]

- South Carolina is using approximately $1.3 million for child care provider education and training opportunities, scholarships, materials, and related support.[135]

- Texas is using a portion of the $26 million allocated to local workforce development boards for improving the quality of child care to enhance professional development opportunities related to child health and safety, inclusive child care, child development, and early learning and literacy.[136]

- Utah is using $116,757 for a study of the effectiveness of the state's child care professional development system to determine whether participation improves the quality of care and keeps child care providers in the field. The state is also providing $35,395 to the Children's Center to offer training and consultation on quality improvement. In addition, the state is using $2,643 to develop an online professional training program for school-age care providers in partnership with Salt Lake Community College.[137]

- West Virginia is using an undetermined amount to develop a director's credential for center directors based on their experience, training, and portfolio; work with the Families and Work Institute to purchase materials and training for training specialists in child care resource and referral agencies; research professional development models in the areas of mental health, protective factors, and resiliency and purchase related materials and training; and develop a 40-hour online pre-service training for beginning caregivers using the state's Core Knowledge/Core Competencies Handbook for Early Care and Education Professionals.[138]

- Wisconsin is using an undetermined amount to increase training and technical assistance to child care providers.[139]

- Wyoming is using $307,658 to develop a series of credentials for early care and education practitioners. This effort will include development of a curriculum, development of a system for delivering the training, delivery of the training, training for mentors and instructors, and incentives for early childhood professionals and mentors to complete courses.[140]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR GRANTS FOR EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, AND MATERIALS FOR CHILD CARE SETTINGS

Child care programs and providers struggle to make ends meet and stretch their resources to afford the supplies and materials they need for an early learning environment that encourages children's development, a struggle made even more difficult in times of economic downturn.

At least fourteen states are using their ARRA child care quality funding to provide child care programs and providers with grants to help them purchase books, toys, other materials, and equipment, and to cover other costs to ensure a healthy, safe, and educational environment for young children:

- California is using $2.5 million for grants that are available to center-based child care and development providers under contract with Department of Education Child Development Division to repair and/or renovate programs for children participating in state-subsidized child care and development programs.[141]
- Connecticut is using a portion of the $774,400 for child health and safety in child care (cited above) to hire certified playground inspectors to conduct a review of all of the state's licensed child care centers and to provide grants to purchase materials and equipment necessary for playground safety enhancements.[142]
- Georgia is using $2.9 million to provide mini-grants for community organizations and businesses to improve the quality of care for children and provide grants to child care programs and providers to pay for self-study materials, applications, and assessment fees for national accreditation and materials and equipment required by accreditation standards. The state is also using $1.75 million for prekindergarten classroom equipment and supplies.[143]
- Indiana is using $500,000 to provide financial support to child care facilities for the design and maintenance of safe playgrounds.[144]
- Kansas is using an undetermined amount to provide grants to child care providers for specified activities, including improvements in health and safety, start-up for infant/toddler providers, professional development with an Early Head Start focus, school-age care, infant/toddler care, and care for children with disabilities.[145]
- Maine is using $90,318 to assist child care providers serving children of all age ranges in purchasing equipment required to attain or maintain accreditation.[146]
- Missouri is using $3 million for quality improvement grants to licensed child care providers to improve or sustain licensing standards. Previously, grants were only available to start up or expand programs and could not be used solely for quality improvement. Preference is given to grant proposals that increase access to licensed care for low-income children, foster care children, and children in rural communities.[147]
- New Jersey is using $1.8 million to provide small grants for renovations to help child care centers meet licensing requirements related to health and safety.[148]
- New Mexico is using $300,000 for grants to child care providers demonstrating quality innovation, with a priority for providers of infant/toddler care.[149]

New Jersey is using $1.8 million to provide small grants for renovations to help child care centers meet health and safety licensing requirements.

- New York is using $3 million to establish a grant program to help regulated family child care providers increase the quality of the environment in which they provide their services.[150]

- South Carolina is using approximately $8.4 million for equipment, supplies, materials, and related support to assist child care providers in improving the quality, health, and safety of child care settings and practices for children, including infants and toddlers.[151]

- South Dakota is using $1,186,250 to provide Provider Enhancement Grants, which are available to registered and licensed child care programs to help purchase equipment, developmentally appropriate toys, outdoor play equipment, curriculum materials, children's books, and other items to enhance the child care environment.[152]

- Texas is using a portion of the $26 million allocated to local workforce development boards for improving the quality of child care for provider grants. This may include purchasing adaptive equipment for children with special needs, indoor and outdoor equipment, educational materials, curriculum, and developmentally appropriate toys.[153]

- Utah is using $137,000 for quality improvement grants for child care providers.[154]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF CHILD CARE

An important step in improving the quality of a child care program is identifying what needs to be improved. At least three states are using their ARRA funds to evaluate and assess the quality of child care programs or develop a system for evaluation and assessment so they can determine where to direct quality improvement resources:

- Alaska is using an undetermined amount to fund the statewide child care resource and referral network to create an initiative that expands use of environmental rating scales (widely used, research-based tools for evaluating child care and early education settings) in child care facilities.[155]

- Florida is using $3 million to support the development of a common environmental evaluation system to assess early learning environments. Previously, the different local coalitions that administer the child care assistance program had been using different tools. Having a single evaluation system will allow for statewide comparisons and analysis of needs as well as better identification of areas where providers may need ongoing training and technical assistance.[156]

- West Virginia is using an undetermined amount to conduct a baseline assessment of the quality of child care programs using environmental rating scales. All centers and facilities will be evaluated as well as 10 percent of family child care homes. The assessment will evaluate the quality of classrooms by education and experience of classroom teachers and will look at county and regional comparisons of quality, helping to identify areas for improvement.[157]

At least one state is using ARRA funds to evaluate a particular pilot program that is intended to be a model of high-quality early care and education:

- Maine is using $300,000 for evaluation of an Educare pilot program, which supports high-quality early childhood education centers funded through public-private partnerships.[158]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

States are required to include a description of their progress in developing and implementing research-based voluntary early learning guidelines for children ages three to five in the plans they submit every two years to the federal Child Care Bureau on the ways in which they are implementing their CCDBG programs.[159] Some states are developing early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers as well. These guidelines are intended to help child care programs and providers identify different stages of children's development, skills, and knowledge in various domains such as language and literacy, mathematics, physical development, and social-emotional development; develop curricula for classrooms and trainings for child care providers; and design activities to help promote children's learning.

At least six states are using ARRA child care quality funds to develop and/or disseminate early learning guidelines:

- Connecticut is using $150,000 to expand dissemination of its infant/toddler early learning guidelines.[160]
- Georgia is using $500,000 to align content standards for birth to third grade.[161]
- Kentucky is using $50,000 to distribute field guides containing the state's early learning guidelines.[162]
- New Mexico is using $90,000 to finalize its early learning guidelines for children birth through kindergarten, $75,000 to print the guidelines for distribution to teachers and parents, and $50,000 to disseminate the guidelines and train providers on their use.[163]
- South Carolina is using an undetermined amount to develop and disseminate infant/toddler guidelines.[164]
- Wyoming is using $30,000 to support the Governor's Early Childhood Development Council in developing early learning guidelines for children birth to age three.[165]

OTHER USES OF ARRA QUALITY FUNDS

States are using their ARRA child care quality funds to pilot new quality projects, improve the quality of certain types of care, improve the quality of care provided to certain groups of families and children that are underserved, collect information and data to inform efforts to improve the quality of care, or launch or expand other initiatives aimed at improving the quality of care.

- California is using $100,000 for the 800-KIDS-793 Phone Line for Parents, which offers assistance to parents and child care providers in obtaining child care and family resource information in their communities.[166]
- Connecticut is using $60,000 to develop a statewide emergency preparedness plan for child care providers.[167]
- Georgia is using $5.4 million to provide intensive support to child care centers and family child care homes that are the least compliant with regulations through training, technical assistance, financial assistance, and evaluation.[168]
- Hawaii is using $529,608 to continue funding contracts for the following existing quality initiatives: practitioner registry, training and scholarships, nutrition, Learning To Grow, Healthy Child Care Hawaii, background checks, infant/toddler training, and teen parent infant/toddler centers at the high schools.[169]
- Indiana is using $1.3 million for the Hoosier Child Care Quality Expansion Project, which is aimed at expanding the availability of and access to higher-quality child care in areas in which the existing demand

exceeds the current supply of such care. The project will begin with a comprehensive analysis of child care supply and demand in the state and will include child care provider training and technical assistance designed to improve the quality of their care, beginning with pre-licensure and culminating with attainment of national accreditation. The state is also using $1 million to expand a project for improving child care ministries (faith-based child care centers that are exempt from regulation) to six central Indiana counties in partnership with the United Way of Central Indiana. The project will support mentoring services and quality improvement grants to 60 child care ministries and capital improvement grants to up to 25 child care ministries as well as provide professional development and curriculum support for participating programs.[170]

- Louisiana is using $200,000 to investigate delivery of the Picard Child Development Program (LA4) in diverse settings and provide child care centers that collaborate with local education agencies a per child financial incentive for serving children in the program.[171]
- Michigan is using $5.7 million for a quality improvement initiative that will be implemented by the state's Early Childhood Investment Corporation, which is responsible for administering the state's quality dollars. The quality improvement initiative includes funding for a variety of professional development opportunities, including helping providers meet new training requirements and implementing regional quality improvement plans.[172]
- Minnesota is using $750,000 to continue a pilot program begun in 2007 that aims to improve the quality of family, friend, and neighbor care. The funding will be used to continue grants for current grantees.[173] The state is also using $211,000 to partially continue funding the School Readiness Connections Pilot, which supports continuity of care for children receiving child care assistance, higher reimbursement rates for providers participating in the pilot, and incentives for parents and providers to chose high-quality care.[174]
- Nevada is using $118,650 for an Early Childhood Database Warehouse that will provide a comprehensive compilation of data on the state's children to help assess the needs of children and inform children's policy in the state. The state is also using $80,000 for a study of the contribution of child care to the state and local economy.[175]
- New Mexico is using $100,000 for a study to determine the actual cost of providing child care, with a particular focus on the cost of infant/toddler care; $75,000 for a workforce study to collect demographic information about child care providers; $50,000 for Child Care Task Force meetings and research to increase the viability of child care as a business; and $121,000 for additional equipment and materials for toy lending and professional resource libraries.[176]
- North Dakota, as discussed above, is using $3.6 million for the Growing Child Care Initiative, which provides start-up funds and technical assistance to prospective providers as well as training, consultation, and monetary incentives to existing providers who participate in the quality plan.[177]
- South Carolina is using an undetermined amount to implement specialized training, technical assistance, and grant support for family and group child care providers in a region of the state with the highest concentration of these providers.[178]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR INFANT AND TODDLER INITIATIVES

Infant and toddler care, particularly care that is high-quality,[179] is hard to find in many communities.[180] When high-quality care is available, it is often unaffordable for many families—even average-priced infant care ranges from approximately $3,600 to $15,900 a year, depending on where a family lives and the type of care.[181] Providing support for infant/toddler providers not only can help them improve the quality of their programs, but also can allow them to do so without raising costs for parents. States are using ARRA funds for child care quality, including the funds expressly set aside to improve infant/toddler care, to support a variety of infant/toddler activities and initiatives, including infant/toddler specialists, who have expertise in care for very young children and who work throughout the state to support both family child care providers and child care centers by offering them assistance and guidance on how to improve their quality; other training for infant/toddler providers; scholarships for infant/toddler care coursework; and grants to infant/toddler providers for equipment and materials.

At least one state is using the ARRA infant/toddler set-aside for infant/toddler resource centers:

- New York is using $3.1 million to enhance the funding currently provided to seven regional infant/toddler resource centers, specifically to augment staff capacity in order to reach more infant/toddler programs and providers.[182]

At least five states are using the ARRA infant/toddler set-aside for infant/toddler specialists:

- Arkansas is using $498,000 for infant/toddler health specialists in six resource and referral agencies. During the first six months of ARRA funding, these specialists helped with 637 new infant/toddler slots in child care programs. The infant/toddler health specialists are helping train child care program staff on health practices and developmental screening protocols that are consistent with standards in the state's quality rating and improvement system.[183]
- California is using $75,000 to fund a portion of the Healthline project, which supports the presence of an infant/toddler specialist in infant/toddler programs to provide guidance about health issues.[184]
- Illinois is using $3.6 million to implement a statewide network of infant/toddler specialists.[185]
- Ohio is using $2.2 million to support its infant/toddler specialist network. This funding prevented the loss of twelve infant/toddler specialists.[186]
- South Carolina is using an undetermined amount for assistance to child care providers to improve services to infants and toddlers through multiple approaches, including infant/toddler specialists.[187]

At least thirteen states are using the ARRA infant/toddler set-aside for other forms of training and education for providers on infant/toddler care:

- California is using $200,000 for the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Partners for Quality Regional Support Network, which supports a variety of training activities for trainers of infant/toddler providers.[188]
- Georgia, as discussed above, is using $1.25 million to train 80 trainers statewide on the PITC, and they will in turn train providers in their community on how to improve the quality of care for infants.[189]
- Kentucky is using an estimated $1.6 million to promote high-quality environments for infants and toddlers. This will include developing and purchasing training materials on early brain development for parents, child care providers, agency staff, and community groups. It will also include the provision of classroom and web-based technical assistance to child care providers, research on infant/toddler credentialing, and the purchase

New York is using $3.1 million to augment staff capacity at seven regional infant/ toddler resource centers.

of booster seats for providers who attend training on the new child safety seat laws in the state.[190]

- Louisiana is using $795,000 for Beginning with Babies, a statewide infant/toddler pilot project that will provide CDA training with a focus on the social-emotional development of children before age three. The state is also providing $540,000 for stipends to teachers to participate in the project.[191]
- Maine is using $100,000 to support scholarships for coursework in infant/toddler care and $40,000 for infant mental health training delivery throughout the state.[192]
- New Jersey is using $1 million to support scholarships for infant/toddler caregivers to attain the required college credits for the Infant Toddler Credential.[193]
- New Mexico is using $200,000 to offer a newly created online Family Infant Toddler Studies degree program for providers statewide through the University of New Mexico College of Education. In addition, the state is allocating $25,000 for a recruitment campaign for infant/toddler caregivers. The state, as discussed above, is also using $275,000 to fund additional T.E.A.C.H. scholarships with priority given to infant/toddler caregivers.[194]
- North Carolina is using $56,587 to support specialized training for agency lead consultants to complete the PITC certification.[195]
- Ohio is using $1 million to allocate T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to infant/toddler teachers; provide Mind in the Making training; develop and disseminate the Standards of Professional Practice, a field guide to the states' infant/toddler guidelines; and create consumer education materials.[196]
- South Dakota is using $261,405 to provide Provider Scholarships for Infant Toddler Training to registered family child care providers, group family child care providers, and child care centers that care for infants and toddlers to help offset costs such as travel and staff time for participation in training on infant/toddler care.[197]
- Texas is using a portion of the $6.3 million allocated to local workforce development boards for improving infant/toddler care for professional development training. One board is training and certifying its technical assistance staff on the PITC approach and Zero to Three's Cradling Literacy in order to offer free training to providers.[198]
- Utah is using $103,000 to provide CDA support and on-site technical assistance to infant/toddler caregivers interested in pursuing a CDA. The state is also using $5,000 to provide scholarships for Salt Lake Community College's online infant/toddler class.[199]
- West Virginia is using an undetermined amount to develop an infant/toddler training program; deliver three PITC training sessions, including an academy for directors, an academy for caregivers, and a train-the-trainers session on inclusion of children with special needs and early intervention for early childhood training specialists in child care resource and referral agencies; redesign the current infant/toddler training to better meet the needs of family child care providers and to serve as a pre-service training for TANF recipients and others who are interested in a career in early childhood; and develop an Infant and Toddler Credential for Practitioners based on their experience, training, and portfolio.[200]

At least eight states are using the ARRA infant/toddler set-aside for grants for infant/toddler programs and providers to enable them to purchase equipment and materials and improve their quality:

- California is using $197,599 for infant/toddler resource grants to cover the cost of infant/toddler equipment, appropriate educational materials, and minor renovations to meet health and safety requirements.[201]
- Indiana is using $500,000 for a project that will provide equipment and materials to programs located in areas identified as needing a greater supply of high-quality infant/toddler care. The project will include three tiers of support: resource kits designed to support safe sleep practices and curriculum supports for infants and toddlers; equipment and materials to improve the quality of care currently being offered; and facility improvement grants to increase the number of infant/toddler slots within an existing program.[202]
- Louisiana to using $180,000 to provide equipment and materials to enhance the environments of infants and toddlers as well as improve environmental rating scale scores after training through the Beginning with Babies pilot.[203]
- Maine is using approximately $184,000 to help infant/toddler providers purchase equipment required to attain or maintain accreditation.[204]
- New Jersey is using $1.6 million to provide small quality enhancement grants to infant/toddler providers for purchase of materials and equipment.[205]
- Texas is using a portion of the $6.3 million allocated to local workforce development boards for improving infant/toddler care to fund grants to providers to help improve or expand infant/toddler classrooms. This funding may be used for, among other purposes, minor classroom repairs and renovations, adaptive equipment for infants and toddlers with special needs, indoor and outdoor play equipment, and developmentally appropriate toys.[206]
- Utah is using $220,000 to provide quality improvement grants to infant/toddler providers.[207]
- Vermont is using $177,315 to extend an infant/toddler grants program from June through January 2010.[208]

At least seven states are using the ARRA infant/toddler set-aside for other activities to improve the quality of infant/toddler care:

- California is using $2.66 million for the Child Care Initiative Project with an Infant/Toddler Focus, which is designed to increase the supply of infant/toddler family child care providers throughout the state by the recruitment, training, and initial support of family child care providers serving infants and toddlers, focusing on those counties with the greatest unmet need for infant/toddler care.[209]
- Indiana is using $750,000 for an initiative designed to increase the quantity and quality of infant/toddler care throughout the state by coordinating existing support systems and resources and providing specialized training and technical assistance to infant/toddler providers.[210]
- Kentucky is using $50,000 to improve the safety of infants and toddlers by educating child care providers, families, and communities on recent changes in car/booster seat laws. The state is partnering with the Department of Public Health for training in the use and dissemination of booster seats to providers and then to families.[211]

- Louisiana is using $150,000 to develop an infant/toddler strategic plan and revise the state's early learning guidelines to include the development and production of training materials and $350,000 for a Beginning with Babies conference to set the stage for implementing the strategic plan.[212]

- Pennsylvania is using $2.88 million to implement Keystone Babies, a pilot program to support infants and toddlers in high-quality child care programs and offer supportive resources to their families. Child care centers that have a three- or four-star rating (the highest rating) under the state's Keystone Stars quality rating and improvement system and that are located in an eligible county or city (selected based on high poverty and availability of high-quality infant/toddler care) can apply to participate. All infants and toddlers in a Keystone Babies classroom must be receiving child care assistance. Participating classrooms must meet quality and monitoring requirements beyond those required for the three- or four-star rating and receive additional resources and support to help them enhance their quality.[213]

- Rhode Island is using $250,000 for an infant/toddler quality project that will be managed by the Department of Health in coordination with its Child Care Support Network project.[214]

- Texas is using a portion of the $6.3 million allocated to local workforce development boards for improving infant/toddler care to support activities such as promoting child care for infants and toddlers that is inclusive of children with disabilities and special needs, enhancing professional development, increasing child care slots for infants and toddlers, and promoting collaboration among early childhood programs.[215]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR SCHOOL-AGE CARE INVESTMENTS

Millions of school-age children need care before and after school.[216] Yet many families lack sufficient options for their school-age children during the hours before and after school, and many before- and after-school options that exist are not of sufficiently high quality.

At least six states are using a portion of their ARRA funds to increase families' access to and improve the quality of school-age care:

- Arkansas is using $592,000 to support implementation of and training for school-age and youth development providers through the Arkansas Out of School Network on school-age quality standards. This training includes: An Introduction to the 40 Developmental Assets, on-site training on creating an intentionally rich asset-based after-school program; Creating Culturally Competent Afterschool Programs, which introduces the core elements of creating a culturally competent after-school program; Adventures in Peacemaking: Conflict Resolution Activities for School-Age Programs, a training on team-building and conflict reduction strategies to use with children in the programs; Arkansas 4H Afterschool Essentials Training, an introductory-level training on positive youth development, experiential learning, and a hands-on learning experience; Arkansas 4H Out of School Time Training, which addresses experiential learning, day camps, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, and the ExCEL Leadership Challenge Course; and Save the Children Literacy Training, which addresses the strategies, tools, and hands-on practice for implementing a model literacy program.[217]

- California, as discussed above, is using $15.74 million to provide child care assistance to working families with school-age children

STATES REPORTING USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR SCHOOL-AGE CARE INVESTMENTS (6):

AR, CA, KY, MA, SD, UT

who would have otherwise lost access to services when a program to provide care for school-age children was eliminated.[218]

- Kentucky is using $700,000 to develop after-school/out-of-school care core content, standards, and training topics, and a school-age credential. Technical assistance and training opportunities will be developed throughout the state to support local school-age programs and staff.[219]

- Massachusetts has used $2.5 million to provide Summer Learning Vouchers for working families with school-age children during the summer months of 2009. The vouchers provided assistance to children and families who met the income criteria for child care assistance and resided in school districts determined to be underperforming, with priority given to children whose siblings were already receiving child care assistance. The funds were used to support children's attendance at summer-only programs with a specific component or focus on addressing summer learning loss. Over 800 school-age children attended more than 250 summer enrichment programs across the state. In addition, the state is using about $250,000 to provide professional development and quality improvement to after-school and out-of-school time programs around literacy.[220]

- South Dakota is using $450,000 to provide Out-of-School-Time Maintenance Grants for Rural Programs to help cover costs for personnel, professional development, transportation, equipment and materials, and other expenses associated with the general operation of the program.[221]

- Utah is using $103,000 to provide quality improvement activities, community outreach, and training to community leaders interested in after-school care and partnerships through the Utah Afterschool Network.[222]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT, ADDRESSING SPECIAL NEEDS, AND PROVIDING HEALTH LINKAGES AND OTHER SERVICES

Child care can offer an opportunity to identify disabilities, developmental delays, or other special needs of children in care, determine the health care or other comprehensive services that could help them, and provide or connect children and their families with support services and other resources. At least ten states are using ARRA funds for screening and assessment, promotion of child care that is inclusive of children with disabilities or other special needs, and/or efforts to help address children's broader needs:

- Arkansas is using $732,000 to provide social-emotional development training and curricula for child care programs, particularly targeting programs with a high proportion of children receiving child care assistance. The state is also using $43,000 to implement a module of parenting training for women in substance abuse treatment programs with children under five years of age in connection with their child care programs, as part of an existing project to address fetal alcohol syndrome.[223]

- California is using $275,000 for the Map to Inclusive Child Care Project, a statewide initiative to expand opportunities for children with disabilities and other special needs in child care settings. The state is also using $508,541 for the Inclusion and Special Needs Consultation Project to develop a comprehensive plan to support implementation of a system of inclusion and behavior consultants, development of an intake questionnaire and an on-site observation tool, the recruitment of a statewide cadre of consultants, and facilitation of regional Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning training.[224]

- Connecticut is using $151,375 to support a pilot program offering health and mental health consultation and training in child care settings and to fund the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health to coordinate and implement guidelines for infant mental health training of infant/toddler providers.[225]

- Florida is using $3 million to develop a unified statewide child assessment system that will allow for earlier detection of developmental delays, improve child health and well-being, and guide high-quality classroom instruction. Previously, each local early learning coalition selected its own child assessment tools to determine if children were making age-appropriate progress. However, these tools varied from coalition to coalition and were not easily coordinated with one another, making it extremely difficult to compile statewide data.[226]

- Maine is using $180,000 for a full-time position for two years for its Health Consultant Network to provide development and training to child care providers on children's health.[227]

- Maryland is using $366,431 for its statewide system of family support centers. These centers serve pregnant women and young parents with children from birth through age three and provide comprehensive, preventive services related to child and parent health, early identification of and referral for developmental delays, improved parenting skills, increased use of family planning, and advancement in education, employment, and self-advocacy.[228]

- Missouri is using $1,123,000 for child care quality initiatives through the Department of Health and Senior Services, including: training and guidance for child care providers on children's social and emotional development; nurse consulting services and education for child care providers; and small equipment purchases and dietician services for healthy meal planning and transition to family-style meals in child care settings. The state is also using $2,704,000 for child care environmental health activities, including equipment, training, and infrastructure development to assist local public health staff perform environmental assessments and suggest ways to improve child care facilities in order to reduce environmental hazards and support healthier environments for early childhood learning. These funds are also supporting training for local public health staff and caregivers to identify and manage childhood asthma and resources and training to improve home environments for children.[229]

- New Mexico is using $110,000 for its Quality Child Care for ALL Inclusion Initiative. The initiative includes using $30,000 to finalize, pilot, and offer a newly developed course on approaches for working with parents and child care providers to meet the needs of individual children, with a focus on infants and toddlers. The initiative also includes providing training for all child care inclusion specialists to obtain endorsement by the New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health ($15,000); conducting a summit to establish New Mexico's Principles of Inclusion ($35,000); reviewing all competencies and course syllabi for early childhood degrees to ensure that they adequately incorporate inclusion information, resources, and activities ($10,000); and conducting two institutes to provide training for higher education faculty regarding inclusion resources and activities ($20,000).[230]

- South Carolina is using an undetermined amount to provide specialized training opportunities for child care providers, including training on the social-emotional development of children, identification and prevention of child abuse and neglect, and obesity prevention practices.[231]

- Texas is using a portion of the $32.3 million allocated to local workforce development boards for quality improvement and infant/toddler care to promote inclusive child care. Two boards are providing SpecialQuest training on supporting inclusive child care to their technical assistance staff, who will mentor child care providers needing assistance. Some boards are offering grants to providers to assist with purchasing adaptive equipment and technology.[232]

Use of Other ARRA Funds for Early Care and Education Investments

In addition to providing funding for the CCDBG, ARRA provides funding for 2009 and 2010 for several other specific early care and education programs, including $1 billion for Head Start, $1.1 billion for Early Head Start, $400 million for preschool grants (Part B, section 619) for children with special needs, and $500 million for formula grants (Part C) to serve infants and toddlers with special needs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ARRA also provides funding that is not specifically targeted for early care and education, but that can be used to support it, including $13 billion for Title I grants for education programs for disadvantaged children, which local districts can use for early education programs for children ages birth to kindergarten entry. Several states are taking advantage of these opportunities to expand early care and education opportunities. For example:

- Arkansas is using $225,000 in ARRA IDEA Part C funds, in combination with ARRA child care quality funds, to support development of five local and one statewide teams to implement SpecialQuest,[233] a system of professional development, training, materials, and activities used in states and communities throughout the country to support inclusive early childhood services.[234]
- Florida is using $38 million in ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Funds from the U.S. Department of Education for its Voluntary Prekindergarten program in FY 2010, helping the state to increase total funding for the program by $13.7 million (4 percent) over the FY 2009 level and serve more than 7,700 additional children.[235]
- Maryland's Montgomery County Public Schools are using 10 percent of their ARRA Title I allocation ($635,000) to support extending 21 Head Start classes from half day to full day, as well as fund supplemental instructional materials and professional development for those programs.[236]
- Oklahoma is using $15 million in ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Funds to permit the Tulsa school district to build three early childhood education centers. The district will pilot two new early childhood programs—one for three-year-olds and another for children birth to age five. The state funding is being matched with funding from the George Kaiser Family Foundation.[237]
- Rhode Island is using approximately $450,000 in ARRA Title I funds (from Providence and Central Falls Districts) to match $700,000 in state general revenue for a prekindergarten demonstration project targeted to urban communities using a range of providers to offer prekindergarten classes. The project began in September 2009 with approximately 126 children participating. The program's prekindergarten classes have teachers with bachelor's degrees and certification in early childhood education and operate six hours a day with access to extended child care.[238]
- Vermont is using $509,600 of its ARRA IDEA Part C funding for database development for Children's Integrated Services, a Child Development Division initiative aimed at integrating three child development programs—Part C Early Intervention, Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting, and Early Childhood and Family Mental Health.[239]
- Wyoming is using $855,922 of its ARRA IDEA Part C funding for regional programs to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; $100,000 to conduct an in-depth comprehensive study of the state's early intervention services; $54,000 to develop a statewide Early Intervention Specialist and Family Service Coordinator training system employing evidence-based practices; $50,000 to support the state's Annual Early Intervention and Education Program Conference in August 2009; and $10,000 to supplement the statewide Child Find activities to locate, identify, and refer young children with disabilities and their families who are in need of early intervention or special education services to ensure that the state meets its performance targets related to serving infants and toddlers.[240]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS FOR CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) help parents find child care and help providers improve the quality of care they offer. CCR&Rs offer parents guidance and materials on what to look for in choosing care, information on help paying for child care, classes on parenting, and referrals to other programs and resources for children and families. CCR&Rs also provide support to child care providers, including trainings, materials, and other resources. Statewide networks of CCR&Rs play a number of roles, including coordinating the activities of local CCR&Rs, sharing best practices, offering technical assistance, and analyzing data on child care needs and trends.

In addition to the ARRA-funded activities and initiatives involving CCR&Rs described above, at least eight states are using ARRA funds to increase CCR&Rs' capacity to support parents and providers:

- Alaska is using an undetermined amount to fund a position to assist the statewide child care resource and referral network in becoming Quality Assured,[241] a validation for local child care resource and referral agencies and state resource and referral networks that have demonstrated to the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies that they meet best practices criteria for delivering outstanding services to parents, providers, businesses, and communities.[242]

- Arkansas is using $294,000 to establish a local child care resource and referral agency in an underserved area.[243]

- Idaho is using $142,000 to support seven regional child care resource and referral offices.[244]

- New Hampshire is using $195,770 each year for FY 2010 and FY 2011 to increase funding for existing contracts with ten child care resource and referral agencies. This increase allows the agencies to help families on the newly created waiting list for child care assistance locate affordable child care options until they are able to receive assistance.[245]

- New Mexico is using $10,000 to purchase written outreach materials to send to families who use child care resource and referral services, $25,000 to advertise and market child care resource and referral services, and $5,000 to conduct a satisfaction survey of families who have used child care resource and referral services.[246]

- Oregon is using part of the $946,876 to preserve programs resulting from collaboration between child care resource and referral agencies and local county commissions described above to expand child care resource and referral services in terms of hours of service, staff, and other resources.[247]

- Utah is using $200,000 for equipment updates for child care resource and referral agencies.[248]

- Washington is using $850,000 to support its child care resource and referral network.[249]

USE OF ARRA FUNDS TO REPLACE TANF FUNDS FOR CHILD CARE

States may transfer up to 30 percent of their TANF block grant funds to the CCDBG, or use TANF funds directly for child care without first transferring the money. In FY 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, states spent a total of $3.3 billion in TANF funds for child care.[250] Yet states are under pressure to divert the TANF funds they had been using for child care to other purposes, as the recession has resulted in more families needing direct cash assistance and as states grapple with serious budget gaps and competing demands on their resources. At least seven states are using ARRA funds to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care and are now being diverted for other purposes:

- Arizona is using $12 million to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care.[251]
- Georgia is using at least $12 million to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care.[252]
- Michigan is using $21 million to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care.[253]
- Oklahoma is using approximately $30 million to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care.[254]
- Rhode Island is using $4.5 million to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care.[255]
- Utah is using $10 million to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care.[256]
- Wisconsin is using an undetermined amount to replace TANF funds that had been used for child care; as of February 2010, $11 million had been spent.[257]

CUTS AFFECTING THE AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY, AND QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

Although ARRA funds are enabling most states to maintain or expand their investments in child care, a number of states have been cutting their child care assistance programs in the last year. These state cutbacks include limiting eligibility, freezing or reducing provider reimbursement rates, increasing parent copayments, and/or curtailing or eliminating quality initiatives.

At least nine states are making cuts to their child care assistance programs that will affect families' access to assistance and/or the level of benefits they receive. The cuts might have been deeper or might have gone into effect earlier had ARRA funds not been available. However, ARRA funds were not sufficient to prevent these cuts.

- Arizona, as discussed above, used ARRA funds to avoid eliminating child care assistance for 9,230 children, on an average monthly basis, between February and December 2009. However, the ARRA funds were not sufficient to reverse a 5 percent reduction in reimbursement rates and the elimination of copayment discounts for the second and subsequent children if a family has more than one child in care (both of which were approved prior to the passage of ARRA and went into effect April 1, 2009). Moreover, to implement a combined $59 million cut during the 2009 and 2010 state fiscal years, the state is limiting the availability of child care assistance for newly eligible families. Effective February 18, 2009, newly eligible families who apply for assistance are placed on the waiting list.[258] There were approximately 11,200 children on the waiting list as of January 2010,[259] and that number is expected to grow to 17,000 by June 2010.[260]
- Hawaii, which is using ARRA funds to maintain child care assistance and existing quality initiatives, increased parent copayments for child care assistance as of February 1, 2010. Under the previous sliding fee scale, parents paid a copayment of between 0 and 20 percent of the child care provider's fee. Under the new sliding fee scale, parents pay a copayment of between 0 and 90 percent of the child care provider's fee. In addition, the state decreased the monthly reimbursement rate for license-exempt care by $100.[261]
- Maine, as discussed above, is using ARRA funds to provide child care assistance to 300 children on the waiting list and approximately 200 families newly transitioning off TANF, but the state is making cuts in other areas. The state, which had been setting provider reimbursement rates based on 2008

STATES REPORTING CUTS TO CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE OR QUALITY INITIATIVES (12):

AZ, HI, IA, ME, MA, MI, MO, NH, NM, NC, OH, WA

market rates, began setting rates based on 2006 market rates as of October 1, 2009. This change translated into a rate cut of approximately 10 percent. Effective the same date, the state raised parents' copayments for part-time care to the rate for full-time care, from the rate of half the full-time rate.[262]

- Massachusetts, as discussed above, used ARRA funds in 2009 to provide vouchers to working families with school-age children to participate in programs to address summer learning loss. But for the most part, child care assistance has become more scarce due to several rounds of funding cuts to the state's early care and education programs starting in November 2008. In October 2009, the $537 million budget provided for the Department of Early Education and Care in the state fiscal year that began July 1, 2009 was reduced by about $16.5 million.[263] The cut includes a reduction in funding for Income Eligible Child Care (child care assistance for families who qualify based on income as opposed to other categories such as participation in or transition from TANF) by $11.61 million to $261.95 million as well as cuts in administration and quality supports.[264] Among other effects, Massachusetts' funding cuts have resulted in approximately 100 staff of child care resource and referral programs being laid off.[265]

- Michigan, as discussed above, used ARRA funds to maintain reimbursement rates and replace TANF funds for child care assistance in 2009, thus avoiding cuts to the child care assistance program. However, the state's 2010 budget includes a reduction in child care expenditures by $113 million. The state is achieving these budget savings by reducing fraudulent payments and payment errors and lowering reimbursement rates for child care providers exempt from regulation who have not completed certain training.[266]

- New Hampshire, as discussed above, used ARRA funds to delay implementation of a waiting list from May 13, 2009 to June 30, 2009. The state used other funds to continue delaying implementation of a waiting list after the start of the state fiscal year in July 2009, but the state started a waiting list on October 1, 2009. This is the first time the state has had to use a waiting list and 1,198 children were on the list as of January 2010. Families on the waiting list, other than those receiving TANF or protective/preventive care, are not expected to receive child care assistance during the fiscal year, which lasts through June 2010.[267]

- New Mexico, as discussed above, used ARRA funds to delay implementation of a waiting list until January 1, 2010. The state has since been placing all families with incomes above 100 percent of poverty who apply for child care assistance on the waiting list. As of March 2010, approximately 800 children were on the waiting list.[268]

- North Carolina, as discussed above, is using ARRA funds to extend the time some parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it to search for a job or to participate in educational activities and to allow parents newly eligible for assistance to receive it to search for a job. However, the state cut funding for child care assistance for FY 2010 by $15 million, and for Smart Start—which funds a range of early childhood services, including child care assistance—by $16 million. Agencies have been required to hold back additional state funds to meet budget requirements for FY 2010, including $16.4 million for child care assistance and $6.8 million for Smart Start. Despite these reductions and hold-backs, ARRA funds added to the child care assistance program have helped reduce the waiting list from a record high of 41,000 children in September 2009 to 33,732 children in December 2009.[269] Meanwhile, cuts to other programs are having a ripple effect that sometimes extends to child care. For example, Winston-Salem State University closed its child care center, which served 36 children, to save $400,000 because it was facing $7 million to $9 million in state budget cuts.[270]

- Ohio, as discussed above, is using ARRA funds to allow families with incomes between 150 and 200 percent of poverty who are already receiving assistance to continue to receive it.[271] However, the state reduced its income eligibility limit to qualify for assistance from 200 percent to 150 percent of poverty and reduced its reimbursement rates from the 65th percentile of 2006 market rates to the 35th percentile of 2008 market rates, effective July 23, 2009.[272] In addition, the state eliminated funding for the Early Learning Initiative (ELI), a full-day, full-year early care and education program; the state transferred approximately 7,500 of the 12,000 children cut from ELI into child care assistance programs.[273]

At least five states are cutting funding for child care quality improvement initiatives. The cuts to these initiatives might have been deeper if the ARRA funds earmarked for quality had not been available.

- Arizona, which has not yet contracted out the portion of ARRA funds that will be allocated to child care quality services, cut quality improvement projects by almost $1.6 million during the 2009 state fiscal year. The areas affected included the career registry (which was eliminated), a quality improvement and accreditation preparation (self-study) project, recruitment and certification preparation for family child care homes that serve children receiving child care assistance, community-based training and outreach as a part of child care resource and referral, assistance with tuition for post-secondary education, training and orientation of new child care staff, and school readiness and after-school programs.[274]

- Iowa, as discussed above, is using ARRA funds for "child care scholarships" to help families with incomes between 145 and 185 percent of poverty pay for high-quality infant and toddler care. However, the state reduced by $500,000 the amount of early childhood funding distributed to the state's 58 local community empowerment areas, which use the funding to enhance the capacity and quality of child care. In addition, the state eliminated $1,097,084 for Professional Development for Early Care services provided by the Department of Education, reduced funding for the quality rating and improvement system by $599,207, and reduced funding for child care resource and referral services by $48,000.[275]

- Michigan, as discussed above, is using ARRA child care quality funds for the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), which administers the state's child care quality funding. However, the FY 2010 budget cut total funding for the ECIC by $200,000, to $14.6 million. The state also cut school-aid funding for local Great Start Collaboratives, which aim to coordinate public and private early childhood efforts, through the ECIC by $750,000, to $6 million.[276] It cut funding for before- and after-school care from $5 million, to $3 million, as well.[277]

- Missouri, as discussed above, is using ARRA funds for several initiatives to improve the quality of care in 2009 and 2010. However, the state cut funding to the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network in FY 2010, reducing the amount provided for technical assistance to bolster the quality of care by $263,000 (16 percent).[278]

- Washington, as discussed above, is using ARRA funds for a variety of child care quality initiatives for 2009 and 2010. However, the state eliminated funding for its Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program, an organized, formal system of on-the-job training under the supervision of a mentor, as of July 1, 2009. This funding ($200,000) had covered the salary and benefits of the program administrator plus additional administrative costs. In addition, as of July 1, 2009, the state cut funding for family, friend, and neighbor care support by $1.2 million; cut funding for the Council for Children and Families, which implements home visiting, by $1.49 million; and cut $870,000 that supported five quality improvement specialists at the Department of Early Learning who assisted in licensing and quality improvement issues, eliminating the positions.[279]

CONCLUSION

ARRA funds have served an extremely valuable purpose in enabling families to hold on to the care they need to enable parents to get and keep a job and improve the likelihood that children will be in a nurturing environment that promotes their learning and development. With states facing substantial budget gaps, many families would have lost access to child care assistance and many child care providers would have lost access to supports that help them enhance quality of that care—or would have even closed their doors and lost their jobs—without the influx of ARRA funds. Yet, a number of states still made cuts to their child care programs despite the ARRA funds. Moreover, states and their child care programs are not out of the woods yet, as the state budget outlook remains bleak and ARRA funds are only available through 2010. Further federal and state investments in child care and early education will be necessary to sustain and build on the progress states have made in maintaining and expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care using ARRA funds.

State Child Care and Development Fund Allocations in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009

	ARRA Targeted Funds: Quality Expansion	*ARRA Targeted Funds: Infant & Toddler*	*ARRA Discretionary Excluding Targeted Funds*	*Total ARRA Discretionary (Including Targeted Funds)*
Alabama	$3,180,354	$1,841,842	$33,448,794	$38,470,990
Alaska	333,660	193,233	3,509,202	4,036,095
Arizona	4,205,936	2,435,788	44,235,162	50,876,886
Arkansas	2,077,781	1,203,307	21,852,679	25,133,767
California	18,209,797	10,545,859	191,518,208	220,273,864
Colorado	2,009,871	1,163,979	21,138,455	24,312,305
Connecticut	1,131,375	655,215	11,899,034	13,685,624
Delaware	375,791	217,632	3,952,313	4,545,736
District of Columbia	222,009	128,572	2,334,936	2,685,517
Florida	8,707,619	5,042,852	91,580,783	105,331,254
Georgia	6,848,875	3,966,396	72,031,782	82,847,053
Hawaii	533,108	308,739	5,606,868	6,448,715
Idaho	987,604	571,952	10,386,941	11,946,497
Illinois	6,098,702	3,531,948	64,141,978	73,772,628
Indiana	3,535,279	2,047,390	37,181,652	42,764,321
Iowa	1,498,030	867,556	15,755,256	18,120,842
Kansas	1,522,384	881,660	16,011,391	18,415,435
Kentucky	2,885,032	1,670,812	30,342,801	34,898,645
Louisiana	3,307,924	1,915,722	34,790,488	40,014,134
Maine	558,672	323,545	5,875,734	6,757,951
Maryland	1,987,394	1,150,961	20,902,050	24,040,405
Massachusetts	1,981,321	1,147,444	20,838,177	23,966,942
Michigan	4,851,108	2,809,428	51,020,643	58,681,179
Minnesota	2,157,438	1,249,440	22,690,463	26,097,341
Mississippi	2,561,362	1,483,365	26,938,660	30,983,387
Missouri	3,197,775	1,851,931	33,632,007	38,681,713
Montana	475,099	275,144	4,996,763	5,747,006
Nebraska	975,439	564,907	10,259,006	11,799,352
Nevada	1,183,433	685,363	12,446,540	14,315,336
New Hampshire	391,540	226,753	4,117,945	4,736,238
New Jersey	2,819,507	1,632,864	29,653,643	34,106,014
New Mexico	1,472,873	852,987	15,490,674	17,816,534
New York	8,001,162	4,633,721	84,150,757	96,785,640
North Carolina	5,583,716	3,233,704	58,725,714	67,543,134
North Dakota	301,234	174,454	3,168,174	3,643,862
Ohio	5,633,128	3,262,319	59,245,393	68,140,840
Oklahoma	2,493,182	1,443,879	26,221,590	30,158,651
Oregon	1,860,906	1,077,709	19,571,739	22,510,354
Pennsylvania	4,972,267	2,879,594	52,294,906	60,146,767
Rhode Island	431,873	250,111	4,542,144	5,224,128
South Carolina	3,002,225	1,738,682	31,575,350	36,316,257
South Dakota	451,375	261,405	4,747,251	5,460,031
Tennessee	3,466,514	2,007,566	36,458,430	41,932,510
Texas	17,761,545	10,286,262	186,803,792	214,851,599
Utah	1,848,939	1,070,778	19,445,877	22,365,594
Vermont	233,405	135,172	2,454,796	2,823,373
Virginia	3,132,468	1,814,110	32,945,163	37,891,741
Washington	2,757,107	1,596,726	28,997,371	33,351,204
West Virginia	1,078,599	624,650	11,343,966	13,047,215
Wisconsin	2,520,849	1,459,902	26,512,562	30,493,313
Wyoming	213,825	123,833	2,248,867	2,586,525
TOTAL*	**$158,028,411**	**$91,519,163**	**$1,662,034,870**	**$1,911,582,444**

*Total here includes state allocations only, and does not include funding for Puerto Rico, US territories, and tribes, and funding for technical assistance, which, together with state allocations, totals $2,000,000,000.

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