Caring for Our Children Basics

February 10, 2015

Linda K. Smith

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development

Moniquin Huggins

Director, Program Operations Division of the Office of Child Care

Administration for Children and Families

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Purpose of Today's Webinar

- Ensure that our State partners have information on Caring for Our Children Basics (COCB)
- Share background and development process of COCB
- Review proposed standards across domains
- Discuss ways to use COCB for alignment
- Answer questions
- Encourage submission of comments

ACF Early Childhood Goals

- Building successful early learning and development systems across Head Start, child care, home visiting, and pre-K

- Promoting high-quality and accountable early learning and development programs for all children

- Ensuring an effective early childhood workforce

- Promoting family support and engagement in children's development

- Improving health and safety of early learning and development programs

Foundations of Care Quality

- High-quality early care and education settings can have significant developmental benefits and other positive long-term effects for children well into their adult years.

- Poor quality can result in unsafe environments that disregard children's basic physical and emotional needs, leading to neglect, toxic stress, injury, or even death.

- Health and safety have been identified in multiple parent surveys as important factors when considering child care options.

Issue

- Healthy and safety standards vary widely across States and other jurisdictions in terms of number and content of health and safety standards as well as the monitoring of adherence to these regulations.

- Standards and requirements vary greatly by program type and funding stream.

- There is no Federal guidance that supports States in creating consistent health and safety standards across early care and education settings.

State Actions Taken to Strengthen Health and Safety Requirements

- 27 States made changes to licensing regulations for center-based care

- More than half have made changes to licensing requirements for family child care homes

- Largest increase was in the number of States that have requirements about safe-sleep practices

Caring for Our Children Basics

- ACF has developed a set of **voluntary**, baseline health and safety standards for use across child care programs, Head Start, and pre-K.

- We are working towards setting a consistent **floor** across early care and education programs from which programs would aspire/move to higher quality.

- Provides parents with assurances that children are **safe**.

Partners

- Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development

- Office of Child Care

- Office of Head Start

- Division of Home Visiting and Early Childhood Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration

- Outside Expert Panel

Resources

- *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, Third Edition*

- *Stepping Stones to Caring for Our Children, Third Edition*

- Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014

- Key Indicators from Head Start Program Standards

- Key Indicators from Stepping Stones 3

- Observable Health and Safety Standards Checklist for Early Care and Education Providers from Caring for Our Children

Domains

- Staffing
- Program Activities for Healthy Development
- Health Promotion and Protection
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Facilities, Supplies, Equipment, Environmental Health
- Play Areas/Playgrounds and Transportation
- Infectious Disease
- Policies

Using Caring for Our Children Basics

- How do States use COCB as a basis for alignment?
  - ❑ Licensing
  - ❑ Head Start
  - ❑ CCDF
  - ❑ How else can you use this in your community?

Please look for _Caring for Our Children Basics_ in the Federal Register!

https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/18/2014-29649/caring-for-our-children-basics-comment-request

Questions?