The Center of Excellence Awarded Funding to Expand Early Head Start Program
Building Capacities to Strengthen Communities Through Education

Leadership in Academics, Research and Service

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS
Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential (TECPAC)
Tennessee State University – TN CAREs Early Head Start
Tennessee Childcare Online Training System (TCCOTS)
Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)
Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT)

RESEARCH INITIATIVES
STEM Education
Teaching and Learning
Early Intervention Models
Student Learning Measurement
Early Childhood Educator Professional Development
P-12 Instructor and Administrator Professional Development
Birth to Three Curriculum, Program and Professional Development
The Center of Excellence Awarded Funding to Expand Early Head Start Program

By Dr. Celeste Brown

In December of 2014, US Department of Health and Human Services announced the first wave of selected grantees to receive part of $500 million in new funding for new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from low-income families. The Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences submitted a proposal for this new program and received a preliminary award of $1.5 million to expand our current Early Head Start program, Tennessee CAREs.

The Center is currently in negotiations with the US Department of Health and Human Services regarding the final award amount. Once funded, the expansion will serve four child care programs that the Center has selected in priority zip codes of 37208 and 37209, as identified by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Tennessee CAREs currently serves an enrollment of 140 children in six centers and in home-based care in Gibson, Henry and Weakley counties in northwest Tennessee. This award will expand that coverage to add an additional 112 children in 14 classrooms across the four child care programs in Nashville. The central office is located in Paris, Tennessee and houses the Program Director, Administrative Assistant, Education and Disabilities Coordinator, Family and Community Partnership Coordinator, and the Health and Nutrition Coordinator. The expansion will also include seven additional administrative staff to service the Nashville area.

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The Office of Head Start, under the direction of the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, funds the Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start program. The program is supported by the expertise and commitment of the entire University. All teachers meet the Early Head Start requirements regarding Staff Qualifications and Development with credentials ranging from Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate credentials to Masters degrees.
The 2014 Home Visiting Training Institute was held on August 3-6, 2014 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The event featured special guest speaker Naomi Judd who shared her life experiences as a mother and a former nurse to the crowd of close to 400 attendees.

Staff from the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences and the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance helped to organize the training, hosted the event, and also worked to register the attendees. This conference served as a training opportunity for Home Visitors in area Head Start programs and those working within the Tennessee Department of Health.

TECTA has been a partner with the Tennessee Department of Health since they received federal funding to support professional development for their Help Us Grow Successfully (HUGS) and other home visiting programs within the Maternal and Child Health unit. TECTA worked with the Department of Health to design a Home Visitor Orientation that provided training on the competencies needed to understand home visiting in the framework of early childhood. Once the Orientation is completed, the home visitor with a degree outside of Early Childhood can move on to the process of acquiring a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential with a home visitor focus, also known as a Home Visitor CDA.
TECTA Invited to Pilot NAEYC Professional Development Project

By Dr. Celeste Brown

TECTA has been invited to represent Tennessee in a pilot project for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The project is a part of NAEYC’s Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative that assists states in developing, enhancing, and implementing policies for an integrated early childhood professional development system for all early childhood education professionals working with and on behalf of young children. NAEYC is funding this project through a grant from the Alliance for Early Success. The purpose of this project is to develop a set of quality indicators that measure states’ progress for effective, integrated state professional development systems.

Since 1992, TECTA has been a leader in state systems of early childhood professional development. Our system of professional development focuses on the career lattice that combines tuition support for higher education and training opportunities. Tennessee partners include Phil Accord, President and CEO of the Children’s Home/Chambliss Shelter in Chattanooga and Rhonda Laird, Manager of the Edgehill Center, Child and Family Center in Nashville as reps from community based programs. The team also includes Policy Co-Chairs and representatives from the Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC).

TECTA Program Sees a Change in Leadership

Dr. Celeste Brown

Lin Venable now serves as Statewide Interim Program Director of the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance, or TECTA, program. The previous director, Dr. Katari Coleman, has taken a position as Director of Child Care Services within the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Dr. Coleman served as the Statewide Program Director for TECTA since 2008. During Dr. Coleman’s time as Director, the TECTA program celebrated its 20-year anniversary and expanded and added several initiatives that focused on online learning, training and education pathways for administrators and high school students, and more.

Mrs. Venable has more than 15 years of experience with the TECTA program and most recently served as its Assistant Director. The Center looks forward to the TECTA program continuing its mission of providing professional development and training opportunities for Tennessee’s child care workforce.
The TECPAC Program Completes First Phase of New Academy Format

By Dr. Celeste Brown

Administrator Academy participants who attended the Fall 2014 Academy will receive their Administrator Credentials this February. This class marks the first group to complete since the program was restructured to offer the Academy twice a year.

Since 2008, the TECPAC program has awarded over 180 Credentials to child care program administrators. During this time the Academy lasted 10 months from August through May of the next year. Beginning in August 2014, the Academy switched to a two-semester format with Academy I occurring August through December and Academy II occurring January through May. The accelerated program covers the same content with administrators meeting twice a week instead of once a week.

Enrollment for the Spring 2015 Academy is complete and training will take place from January 20 - May 20, 2015. The attendees meet online each week, undergo pre and post assessments of their programs, and complete a portfolio at the end of the Academy.

TECPAC Administrator Academy II
Spring 2015
January 20 – May 20

Module 1
Session 1: Orientation
January 20, 2015

Session 2: Introduction to the Academy
February 3, 2015

Module 2
Session 3: Leadership
February 17, 2015

Session 4: PAS/BAS Goal Setting
March 4, 2015

Module 3
Session 5: Early Childhood Management I
March 18, 2015

Session 6: Early Childhood Management II
April 1, 2015

Module 4
Session 7: Building Family and Community Relationships
April 15, 2015

Session 8: Curriculum
April 29, 2015

Module 5
Session 9: Observing, Documenting and Assessing
May 6, 2015

Session 10: Goals/Portfolio Achievement
May 20, 2015
Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events

**TECTA Higher Education Institute**
March 27, 2015
Tennessee State University
Avon Williams Campus
Downtown Nashville

**Tennessee Family Child Care Alliance (TFCCA)**
23rd Annual State Conference
March 27 – 28, 2015
Airport Marriott Hotel
Nashville, Tennessee

**Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare (TCSW)**
102nd Anniversary Leadership & Networking Conference
March 30 – April 1, 2015
* Catalyst For A Better Tennessee
  Franklin Marriott Cool Springs
  Franklin, Tennessee

**Seventh Annual TECTA Summer Research Institute**
May 30, 2015
Tennessee State University
Avon Williams Campus
Downtown Nashville
The mission of the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences is to design and conduct multidisciplinary research and demonstrations concerning practices, policies, and programs that promote the educational, social, physical, and psychological well-being of children and families; and to disseminate research and information to improve public policy and the programmatic decisions of agencies, schools, institutions, and communities in Tennessee, the nation, and the global community.