

Introduction

North Dakota (ND) is committed to building a high-quality B-5 early care and education system (ECE) that enables vulnerable children to have a strong foundation for kindergarten. A new energy in recent state agency collaboration has brought an urgency and commitment to improved coordination in the B-5 ECE system. ND's grant application details improvements to the quality and scope of B-5 ECE in ND through a focus on shared data capabilities, early relationships, and quality services. The application explains and describes how the grant will be used to significantly improve the State's infrastructure while increasing quality opportunities, stakeholder engagement, and choice across a coordinated, mixed delivery B-5 ECE system. The application demonstrates attention to professional development and vital early relationships as the foundation for a strong B-5 ECE system. Continuous quality improvement and evaluation are built into the application as the State works toward the long-term outcome of children having access to high quality programs with shared data and use of best practices, positively impacting the B-5 ECE system. ND's application is ambitious and achievable by enhancing infrastructure, family involvement, stakeholder engagement, transition preparedness, and B-5 ECE opportunities.