This memo provides a summary of cross-sector resources and partnerships that can provide supports to a greater number of educators, families and children during COVID-19 school and program closures. This memo provides:

1. a synopsis of the Office of Head Start Administration for Children & Families (ACF) funding and resources through the CARES Act, including supplemental summer programs to reduce lost learning opportunities
2. an overview of Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) provisions in the CARES Act
3. an overview of policy implications surrounding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and resources to serve children with special needs
4. a list of public-private partnerships and tools that states are leveraging to provide at-home learning supports during school and program closures
5. mental health and domestic violence resources

1) **Office of Head Start, ACF**

On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This legislation provides $750 million to Head Start Programs: up to $500 million for programs to operate supplemental summer programs and $250 million to provide one-time activities in response to COVID-19.

**Supplemental Summer Programs**

As a result of the CARES Act, up to $500 million is available for supplemental grants to existing Head Start grantees to offer supplemental summer programs.

**Purpose**

Most Head Start programs throughout the country are currently closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, however, all Head Start programs are required to continue to provide comprehensive services to families, mostly through remote means. Closures may result in months of lost learning opportunities and comprehensive services for children and their families. These losses may be exacerbated for children whose Head Start programs remain closed during the summer. Research has shown that children tend to lose academic gains during the summer months; this is particularly true for children from low-income families.

To offset these losses, Head Start programs can operate supplemental summer programs for a portion of their Head Start children who would otherwise not be served over the summer. Up to $500 million is available to existing Head Start grantees that can demonstrate the capacity to deliver high-quality summer learning experiences to promote school readiness and successful transitions to kindergarten. These summer programs would primarily focus on children transitioning to kindergarten. Programs would be expected to provide social and emotionally supportive learning environments, consistent daily
routines, support for families to bring their children up to date on needed medical, dental, and other follow-up services, and transition support for children and families to receiving schools.

These summer programs also would enable parents and primary caregivers to return to work, and to access needed services and supports for mental health, parenting, and stable housing. Program staff working during the summer program would receive income and benefits, access professional development, and have an opportunity to work with children and families as they transition to kindergarten.

Head Start programs that receive supplemental summer funding should consider establishing or amending existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with receiving schools in order to build successful transition plans that include the transmission of health and other important information.

The application for Supplemental Summer Programs funding will become available in late April. For more information, please visit: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/pi/acf-pi-hs-20-03

One-Time Activities in Response to COVID-19

As a result of the CARES Act, approximately $250 million is available for grants to Head Start grantees for one-time activities in response to COVID-19. These funds are not limited to grantees operating supplemental summer programs.

Purpose: Head Start programs may need to undertake a wide range of one-time, specific actions or activities in response to COVID-19. Activities could include:

1. Mental health services, supports, crisis response, and intervention services.
2. Coordination, preparedness, and response efforts with state, local, tribal, and territorial public health departments and other relevant agencies.
3. Provision of meals and snacks not reimbursed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
4. Training and professional development for staff on infectious disease management.
5. Purchasing necessary supplies and contracted services to sanitize and clean facilities and vehicles.
6. Other actions that are necessary to maintain and resume the operation of programs, such as hiring substitute staff, investing in technology infrastructure, making improvements to air conditioning systems, or other emergency assistance.

Eligible Programs: All Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees are eligible to receive funding for one-time activities in response to COVID-19.

How to Apply: Each grantee will be able to apply for a proportionate amount of funding based on their total enrollment. These funds will be combined with the existing FY 2020 Cost-of-Living-Adjustment and Quality Improvement (COLA/QI) applications due on May 15, 2020. OHS will provide further guidance and instruction. Awards are expected to be processed beginning in June.

2) Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding

The CARES Act also provides $3.5 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Program. These funds can be used to ensure providers that serve children who receive child care subsidies can continue to operate or reopen; to provide child care assistance to essential workers during the COVID-19 response regardless of income; and to support eligible child care providers, even those
not receiving CCDBG assistance prior to the pandemic, with cleaning, sanitation, and other activities necessary to maintain or resume program operation.

Key takeaways regarding CARES Act Funds for Child Care:

- Has been provided to State, Territory, and Tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies;
- May be used to provide continued payments and assistance to child care providers in the case of decreased enrollment or closures related to coronavirus, and to assure they are able to remain open or reopen;
- Can be used to provide child care assistance to health care sector employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, and other workers deemed essential during the response to the coronavirus, without regard to the income eligibility requirements;
- Shall be available to eligible CCDF providers (e.g., meeting health and safety requirements, or eligible relative providers), even if such providers were not receiving CCDF assistance prior to the public health emergency as a result of the coronavirus, for the purposes of cleaning and sanitation, and other activities necessary to maintain or resume the operation of programs;
- May be used for any other allowable CCDF uses;
- Are exempted from the quality and direct services spending requirements;
- Can be used for allowable obligations incurred prior to enacted of the CARES Act; and
- Can be obligated by CCDF Lead Agencies in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, FY 2021, or FY 2022.

Allocation of Funding: ACF has not yet finalized each Lead Agency’s allocation. However, if lead agencies need this information for planning purposes, they can visit the State and Territory Allocation table on the OCC website to determine a rough estimate of what they will receive through the CARES Act allocation.

3) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

On Monday, April 27, 2020 the Department of Education released new guidance (see pg. 11-15) that largely keeps the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) intact. The Department is encouraging schools to use distance learning to serve all students, including students with disabilities. To help schools provide distance learning in compliance with federal law, the Department of Education has offered the following guidance:

- Exceptional circumstances may affect how special education and related services and supports are provided to students with disabilities, and the Department will offer flexibility.
- Although online learning must be accessible to students with disabilities, federal law does not mandate the specific methodologies by which distance education must be provided.
- In instances where technology is not accessible or where educational materials are not available in an accessible format, educators may still meet their legal obligations by providing equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or services provided to other students.
Here are some examples of how states and local education agencies (LEAs) are providing special education resources to educators and families, as well as several websites to support at-home learning for students with special needs:

- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division has assembled [Supplemental Optional Remote Learning Resources for Students with Disabilities](https://www.ncpublicschools.org/en/pec).
- New York City Department of Education has a webpage of activities and strategies to support [Diverse Learning at Home for Special Populations](https://www.nyc DOE K-12/learnerservices/).
- Common Sense Media provides a list of the [Best Special Education Applications and Websites](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/) based on recommendations by educators who work with students with special needs. Applications support the development of academic and social-emotional skills, as well as sites to assist teachers in providing differentiated learning opportunities.
- Council for Exceptional Children [COVID-19 Information for Special Educators](https://www.cec.sped.org/), includes a forum for members on how to adapt IEP services during school closures and a link to a resource page developed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE).
- The [State Educational Technology Directors Association](https://www.sedanet.org/) offers strategies and resources for ensuring that online learning supports students with Individualized Education Plans.

4) **Public-Private Partnerships & Resources**

There are several online platforms currently offering free resources and subscriptions to families to support at-home learning. Below is a list of resources that are geared towards PreK children. You can click on the hyperlink in the title to be forwarded directly to the website.

**Caring for Each Other** (Sesame Street)
Children thrive with a structure in their lives and they learn best through play, even in everyday moments like mealtimes and morning and evening routines. This site provides content and resources from Sesame Street that families can use to offer comfort and spark imagination through playful learning activities.

**Cultivate Learning**
Created tips and resources for families and caregivers to encourage learning and positive interactions with children. These free, downloadable resources can be shared with families, caregivers, or programs.

**Daily Schedules and Activities** (Teaching Strategies)
Teaching Strategies is offering free, customizable resources to help educators stay connected and engaged with families. These resources include sample preschool daily schedules and activities for families at home.

**Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Center - ECLKC**
Created an activity handbook for parents which contains fun activities for parents and children to do together at home, away from home, indoors, and outdoors.
Ed Surge
List of activity suggestions for 3-6 year olds during a time of remote learning.

EiE Families (Boston Museum of Science)
Created by the Boston Museum of Science, these hands-on, research-based activities promote collaborative problem-solving and build confidence in families’ understanding of the STEM disciplines.

Frog Street for Young Learners (Frog Street)
This free online resource offers extensive content from Frog Street’s award-winning curriculums to use at home. These engaging materials of over 250 English and Spanish electronic books, activities, and songs offer the first step toward empowering families and educators with the tools needed to influence academic growth at home.

Homer
HOMER is a personalized learn-to-read program that includes a library of interactive stories and songs. It is currently being offered for free on the First Book Marketplace to early learning professionals serving children in need.

Khan Academy Kids (Khan Academy)
This award-winning app includes thousands of educational activities, books, songs, and games for toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarteners, and first graders. Khan Academy Kids was developed in collaboration with learning experts at Stanford University and aligns with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and Common Core Standards.

Lakeshore Learning
Provides free lesson plans, printable worksheets, calendars, and crafts & activities to support educators and families.

Learning at Home: Pre-K Collection
These resources highlight simple ways to stay informed on being healthy, tips for engaging with children on academic subjects, and a variety of resources addressing the social and emotional needs of children who may have experienced trauma.

Learn at Home (Scholastic)
Helps students stay academically active with 20 days of meaningful learning journeys. This free digital learning hub from Scholastic features daily virtual learning plans designed to keep kids reading, thinking, and growing.

National Association for the Education of Young Children - NAEYC
Provides “prop box ideas” for parents and caregivers to create mini learning centers at home where children use hands-on materials to explore, play and learn about specific topics.
Preschool Learning at Home (PBS Kids)
Includes parent tips and resources to raise kind, curious and resilient children. PBS Kids offers free resources to support children’s early learning in literacy, math, and science.

QT30- DE Thrives
All children are learners and all children learn through play. These activities give children a head start on their education.

Skybrary (Reading is Fundamental)
RIF is making Skybrary available for free for 30 days. Their digital library features almost 1,000 eBooks across many topics and genres to engage and excite young readers; hundreds of video field trips hosted by LeVar Burton; and a read-to-me narration option for every book to support new or struggling readers.

“Talk, Read, Sing” Indoor Activities Kit (Talking is Teaching)
These resources from Talking is Teaching provide educators and parents/caregivers with ways to talk, read, sing, and play their way through the day—with items families might already have indoors.

Time at Home Activities (First Book and AFT)
Families can use these fun activities to make the most of time at home with Pre-Kindergartners that boost their reading, math, and critical thinking skills and their mental health.

Tinkergarten At Home
Educational DIY activities and virtual Tinkergarten classes foster at-home learning that is easy to follow, wildly fun, and great for families looking for more at-home activities during program closures.

Vroom (Bezos Family Foundation)
Vroom provides free science-based tips and tools to inspire families to turn shared, everyday moments into Brain Building Moments®. Vroom tools are there to help boost early learning wherever caregivers are. The app, Vroom by Text™ and Alexa skill harness the power of technology. And print at home resources are only a click away.
5) **Resources to Support Mental Health and Address Child Abuse and Domestic Violence**

This last section provides resources to support the mental health of children, parents, caregivers, and educators during COVID-19, as well as resources to address child abuse and domestic violence.

**Mental Health Supports and Services:**
- Free virtual counseling services for children and families – Mosaic Therapy Virtual Clinic
- How to Talk to Your Child About Coronavirus and COVID-19 – St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (coloring and activity books included)
- Health Emergencies – Sesame Street video
- Time to Come In, Bear: A Children’s Story on Social Distancing – Kim St. Lawrence, children's author
- #COVIBOOK: Supporting and Reassuring Children Around the World – Mindheart (multiple languages)

**Resources to address child abuse and domestic violence:**
- Reducing the Risk for Child Abuse During COVID-19
- National Domestic Hotline | (800) 799-7233
- Crisis Text Line | Text HOME to 741741
- Intimate Partner Violence (Fact Sheet)
- Psychological Wellness Guide for Survivors of Domestic Violence
- The Athena Project, a research clinic at the University of Memphis that provides free mental health services to domestic violence survivors, may be a helpful source of information as well.