



Our Webinar Series to Kick Off February 10!

It is with great excitement that we pass to our Fellows, news of our first of four webinars related to Early Learning. Please mark your calendars and join us on **Friday, February 10th** for our first in the series *Best Practices in Early Learning from Other States*. The webinar will run for 90 minutes and will begin at Noon Pacific Time, 1pm Mountain Time, 2pm Central Time and 3pm Eastern Time.

This webinar will give you the opportunity to hear from Representative Ruth

Kagi from Washington state; Rolf Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood Development, Maryland State Department of Education; Greg Moody, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Transformation in Ohio and Senator Peggy Lehner, State Education Chair and Ohio Children's Caucus Co-chair has been invited. Both Representative Kagi and Rolf Grafwallner are NCSL Early Learning Fellow Faculty members.

You should have all re-

ceived an email with information on how to register. Please note that you must register in order to participate in the call on February 10. If you still have not registered please do so by visiting www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/best-practices-in-early-learning-from-other-states.aspx. Or contact Alison May with comments or questions at 303-856-1473 or alison.may@ncsl.org.



What can NCSL do for YOU?

Don't forget that **WE** are here for **YOU!** As many of our Fellows have begun their 2012 legislative session the Children and Families team wants to remind you of our services. Need help with a bill? How about some in-

formation about how other states have handled an issue? Perhaps just a little research? Be certain to contact the staff you had the chance to meet in Tampa. Steffanie Clothier, Julie Poppe, Phuonglan Nguyen and Al-

ison May are all at the ready and eager to assist.

Please call us at 303.364.7700 or send an email to steffanie.clothier@ncsl.org, julie.poppe@ncsl.org, phuonglan.nguyen@ncsl.org, alison.may@ncsl.org.

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Save the Date— Webinar Series:

Friday, April 13, 2012 3pm
ET: *Expanding on the Science: Foundations of Early Childhood Development*. Confirmed speakers include Ron Haskins, Brookings Institute and Jack Shonkoff, Center on the Developing Child Harvard University

Friday, June 8, 2012 3pm
ET: *Revolutionizing Early Childhood Teaching*. Confirmed speaker includes Bob Pianta, Dean Curry School of Education Center for Advanced Study of Teaching University of Virginia

Friday, August 8, 2012 3pm
ET: Topic and speaker to be confirmed soon.



Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge

As you all know the White House announced in mid December the nine states—California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Washington—receiving grant dollars from the \$500 million Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge fund. This is a competitive grant program encompassing the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services.

The grant competition focuses on improving early learning and development. Specifically in the areas of: raising academic standards, building robust data systems to improve instruction, supporting great teachers and leaders, and turning around lowest-achieving schools. These nine awarded states have been determined to be leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implement-



ing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive early learning education reform. For anyone interested you can read the complete and submitted applications from all 37 states by visiting www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html.

Additionally, seven states—Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania—will each receive a proportional share of \$200 million in Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge phase three funding to advance targeted K-12 reforms aimed at improving student achievement.

Source:
U.S. Department of Education website.

Highlighting a Fellow



Rep. Behning recently introduced a bill that provides a refundable income tax credit for each child attending a child care facility that voluntarily participates in Indiana's quality rating system and receives a higher quality rating. The bill also provides that a qualified child care facility is entitled to a refundable tax credit for providing child care ser-

vices to a child participating in the subsidy program or is in foster care. Rep. Behning's goal is to improve the quality of child care the children of Indiana are receiving. He's not looking simply to mandates, but hoping to accomplish improved quality through incentives with this voluntary program. If you have a piece of legislation or policy work to highlight in the next Fellows newsletter, please email julie.poppe@ncsl.org.

Fellows Website—www.ncsl.org/fellows

We are in the midst of updating the Fellows portion of the NCSL website and would love to incorporate some of your ideas. Do you have any specific suggestions?

Please continue visiting www.ncsl.org/fellows. It is at this site where you can view all presentations that were given at the kick off meeting in Tampa, *Next Steps for States in Early Learning: Policy, Research and Innovation*. Shortly we will begin posting current and archived webinars and newsletters.

We have also been putting some time and consideration

in utilizing social networking. Are you on Facebook? Would you follow us on Twitter?

As a friendly reminder please do not forget about NCSL's website overall and especially the Human Services section. Be certain to check out the Child Care and Early Education Legislation Database that updates every other week.

Faculty at your Fingertips...

Be certain to remember the wonderful Faculty available to you, our 2011-2012 Fellows.

Early Learning Fellows Faculty include:

Steven Barnett,
Rolf Grafwallner,
Ron Haskins,
Representative
Ruth Kagi,
Geoff Nagel,
Robert Pianta
&
Jack Shonkoff.

Please let us know if you'd like an introduction to a member of the faculty team.