BACKGROUND
In 2004, the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” (LTSAE) program to provide educational information to parents, health care professionals and early care and education providers about the importance of early identification and intervention for children with signs of autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities (ASD/DD). The Act Early Program is a collaborative initiative of the CDC, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), AMCHP and the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) to further advance the CDC’s LTSAE program.

Act Early State Systems grants are awarded on a competitive basis to state teams to strengthen their state and community systems for the early identification and improve coordination of early intervention services for children with signs of ASD/DD. The State Systems grants are for a two-year period and are designed to increase parent-engaged developmental monitoring by promoting the adoption and integration of LTSAE materials and training resources into programs and statewide systems that serve young children and their families.

2016-18 ACT EARLY STATE SYSTEMS GRANTEES

CALIFORNIA:

Goals: To 1) promote parent engaged developmental monitoring; 2) prepare our CA Autism Professional Training and Information Network (CAPTAIN) Trainers to better use the LTSAE resources within their regions; and 3) increase the number of Family Resource Center trainers involved in the CAPTAIN network.

Activity Areas: Conduct a LTSAE campaign where CAPTAIN Regional Teams develop the local resources and distribution plan; Host a LTSAE Train the Trainers workshop at the 2016 and 2017 CAPTAIN Summits; Recruit and train additional Family Resource Center trainers, who are often the initial point of contact for families who have concerns about their child’s development.

Project Leads: Robin L. Hansen, UCEDD Director, UC Davis MIND Institute, rlhansen@ucdavis.edu; and Patricia Schetter, Coordinator of ASD Education Initiatives, CEDD at the UC Davis MIND Institute, plscherter@ucdavis.edu.

FLORIDA:

Goals: To integrate and distribute LTSAE materials in Help Me Grow (HMG) Florida to reach family, health care, and providers.

Activity Areas: 1) Integrate the developed materials into the current outreach resources that are created for HMG Florida 2) Bring different community agencies, such as Part B/Child Find, Part C/Early Steps, and the local Child Care Block Grant agency to the table to collaborate on a screening day for children in the community that they serve; and 3) promote the LTSAE materials through our screening campaign “Don’t Wait and See. Check and See.”

About AMCHP
The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) is a national resource, partner and advocate for state public health leaders and others working to improve the health of women, children, youth and families, including those with special health care needs.

AMCHP supports state maternal and child health programs and provides national leadership on issues affecting women and children.
GEORGIA:

**Goals:** To ensure that families of children enrolled in Georgia’s Part C Program are aware and knowledgeable about developmental milestones, and that families have the knowledge and language needed to be active participants of the IFSP team.

**Activity Areas:** 1) Develop a family-focused educational training 2) Develop and provide training and guidance to Early Intervention Providers (Service Coordinators and Special Instructors) on strategies for sharing the LTSAE information with families

**Project Leads:** Donna M. Johnson, MHS, Director, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs / Part C, Georgia Department of Public Health, Donna.Johnson@dph.ga.gov; and Michelle Allen, Director, Maternal and Child Health, Georgia Department of Public Health, Michelle.Allen@dph.ga.gov.

GUAM:

**Goals:** For all children with ASD to receive timely services through early identification through parent-engaged developmental monitoring and screening by integrating LTSAE into the Guam Early Learning Council activities.

**Activity Areas:** 1) Develop a LTSAE State Plan 2) Develop and implement Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Plan for integrating the LTSAE resources for parent-engaged developmental monitoring and screening into the island-wide Developmental and Behavioral Screening System and other ASD assessment processes for early identification and referrals to appropriate services. 3) Revise and update the Early Childhood (EC) Public Awareness Campaign to include the importance of early identification and developmental monitoring and screening of ASD with other EC partners’ support.

**Project Leads:** Heidi San Nicolas, PhD, Director, University Of Guam CEDDERS, heidi.sannicolas@quamcedders.org; and June De Leon, M.Ed., Associate Director, University Of Guam CEDDERS, june.deleon@quamcedders.org.

MASSACHUSETTTS:

**Goals:** To develop and broadcast a coordinated series of seven cable access television shows and three radio programs to be promoted, aired, and archived on multiple online platforms that will educate families from both mainstream and diverse cultures across the state and region about healthy developmental milestones and what to do about red flags for concerns in young children, with a particular focus on families from racially, culturally, economically and regionally diverse communities.

**Activity Areas:** 1) Develop, review & evaluate culturally competent content for 3 radio & 6 cable access TV 30-minute shows 2) Recruit cable & radio stations, interview panelists & show hosts, train hosts & rehearse shows 3) Translate all written materials into 7 languages for use on air and for dissemination to families through online downloads and mailings.

**Project Leads:** Elaine M. Gabovitch, MPA, Instructor, Family Medicine & Community Health; Family Faculty, LEND Program UMass Medical School-E.K. Shriver Center, Elaine.Gabovitch@umassmed.edu; and Joan Rafferty, OTR/L, CEIS Regional Early Intervention Specialist and Coordinator of Specialty Services MA Department of Public Health, joan.rafferty@state.ma.us.
MINNESOTA:

**Goals:** To increase and integrate parent led developmental monitoring in diverse communities.

**Activity Areas:** Build and expand the Act Early Delegate Network using a Parent-to-Parent Training; Develop parent community leaders in diverse communities; Develop training resources; Integrate Act Early outreach model into large diverse cultural organizations serving families with young children

**Project Leads:** Jennifer Hall-Lande, PhD, hall0440@umn.edu; and Kelly Nye-Lengerman, MSW, PhD, knye@umn.edu, Institute on Community Integration.

MONTANA:

**Goals:** Maintain/expand the state ASD/DD team partnerships and activities, with a focus on serving rural and remote communities and working in reservation-serving areas and through tribal health services

**Activity Areas:** Engage current partners in rural/ frontier communities, build their training capacity, then mentor them in the training process; Partner with the Montana Parent Training Information Center and Montana’s Children with Special Health Services Bureau to target the dissemination of print and electronic family-engaged developmental monitoring tools and resource information statewide; Focus screening (e.g., M-CHAT) training and resource dissemination activities on extreme rural/ frontier communities; Continue information dissemination through the virtual Montana Autism Center.

**Project Leads:** Martin Blair, Director, Montana UCEDD, Martin.Blair@umontana.edu; and Ann Garfinkle, LTSAE Ambassador, UM Dept. of Teaching and Learning Ann.Garfinkle@umontana.edu.

NEW MEXICO:

**Goals:** Support and engage parents in the monitoring of their child’s development through the promotion and adoption of LTSAE and other developmental materials and ensure that children receive developmental/behavioral screenings that are early and regular through partnership with key stakeholders, implementation of activities and ongoing evaluation.

**Activity Areas:** 1) Through the Red Envelope Project, increase parent engagement in developmental monitoring by disseminating newborn screening documents, customized developmental/behavioral screening resources and LTSAE materials in four pilot hospitals. 2) Convene the New Mexico Act Early State Team as consortium of early childhood partners to identify systems of care in the state to disseminate and integrate LTSAE materials and trainings to increase parent engagement in the developmental monitoring of their children 3) Increase awareness among the public and build capacity among professionals by maintaining a website to link, educate and distribute the LTSAE materials/public awareness materials

**Project Leads:** Nancy Lewis, Education and Outreach Manager, New Mexico Developmental Screening Initiative, nancylewis@salud.unm.edu; and Susan Chacon, Director, Title V CYSHCN, State New Mexico Department of Health, susan.chacon@state.nm.us

NORTH CAROLINA:

**Goals:** To collaborate with Title V-Innovative Approaches project to increase parent-engaged developmental monitoring by promoting the adoption and integration of LTSAE materials and training resources in programs and statewide systems that serve young children and their families.

**Activity Areas:** Coordinate with Title V partners and lead Health Department coordinators from 5 regional sites to design and implement LTSAE campaign; Design a system of dissemination and integration of the LTSAE campaign materials and messages into the 5 regional (14 counties) NC Innovative Approaches sites.
**Project Leads:** Rebecca Edmondson Pretzel, PhD, CIDD/UCEDD/LEND faculty, UNC-CH, Becky.edmondson@cidd.unc.edu; and Elizabeth Crais, PhD, CCC-SLP, Division of Speech & Hearing Sciences, Medical School, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Betsy.crais@med.unc.edu.

**SOUTH CAROLINA:**

**Goals:** To improve Home Visitation workforce development and increase home visitors’ capacity to attend to developmental milestones, engage parents in developmental screening, and connect families to the appropriate early intervention services.

**Activity Areas:**

1) Collaborate with Children’s Trust MIECHV-funded home visitation programs through the MIECHV Quality Improvement Collaborative and the Home Visitation Consortium program leaders to integrate LTSAE messaging and materials into their work with families; 2) Integrate LTSAE content into ongoing training and technical assistance (TA) to home visitors.

**Project Leads:** Lorraine Cragan-Sullivan, LMSW, MA, NCC, Developmental Screening Coordinator, Help Me Grow SC Children's Advocacy, Health Child Development, Greenville Health System, LCraganSullivan@HelpMeGrowSC.org; and Jane Witowski, MA Program Manager, Help Me Grow SC Children's Advocacy, Health Child Development, Children’s Hospital, JWitowski@HelpMeGrowSC.org.

**TENNESSEE:**

**Goals:** To educate partners, collaborators, and supporters about developmental monitoring and to intentionally infuse Learn the Signs-Act Early content in existing programs and systems.

**Activity Areas:**

1) Collaborate with early care and education systems to integrate the use of “Watch Me!” training into professional development 2) Work with partners to integrate LTSAE content into ongoing training and technical assistance to professionals 3) Work with partners to integrate LTSAE content into ongoing home visits, parent trainings, and parent information opportunities

**Project Leads:** Joyce Bridges, Director, Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Joyce_bridges@signalcenters.org; and Karen Wright, Health Coordinator, 865-414-4656.

**VIRGIN ISLANDS:**

**Goals:** To engage parents in a systematic developmental monitoring process through coordinated efforts by partner agencies charged with serving young children and their families.

**Activity Areas:**

1) Integrate LTSAE materials into parent orientations and workshops, home visits, classrooms, and parent-teacher conferences 2) Collaborate and partner with early care and education programs and local university to host a Developmental Monitoring Conference 3) Collaborate and partner with early care and education systems to integrate the use of “Watch Me!” training into required professional development for directors, home visit personnel, and classroom teachers

**Project Leads:** Dr. Karen Harris Brown, Associate Director for Research, Evaluation, and Grant Development, Associate Professor of Education Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD), University of the Virgin Islands, Karen.brown@uvi.edu; and Shamika Thomas, Program Coordinator for Research and Community Engagement, VIUCEDD, University of the Virgin Islands, shamika.thomas@uvi.edu.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Visit the AMCHP website to find out more information on the Act Early State Systems Grants, including:

- [Current grantee project overviews and contact information](#)
- [Resources and materials developed by former grantees](#)

To learn more about LTSAE, visit [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly) or contact [ActEarly@cdc.gov](mailto:ActEarly@cdc.gov).

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