



Building Early Childhood Systems to Support Child Health and Development: An Analysis of Progress in 50 States

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NCCP National Center for
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Columbia University
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National Center for Children in Poverty

Who We Are

- NCCP uses research to promote the economic security, health, and well-being of America's low-income children and families.
- Our ultimate goal: Improved outcomes for the next generation.
- NCCP is a non-partisan, public interest research organization at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health

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National Center for Children in Poverty

Our Mission: To promote the security, health, and well-being of America's low-income children and families.

Our Foci: Improved family economic security;
Healthy, nurturing families and young children succeeding in school

Our Aim: Research-informed policy and practice that will help young children thrive



About Project THRIVE

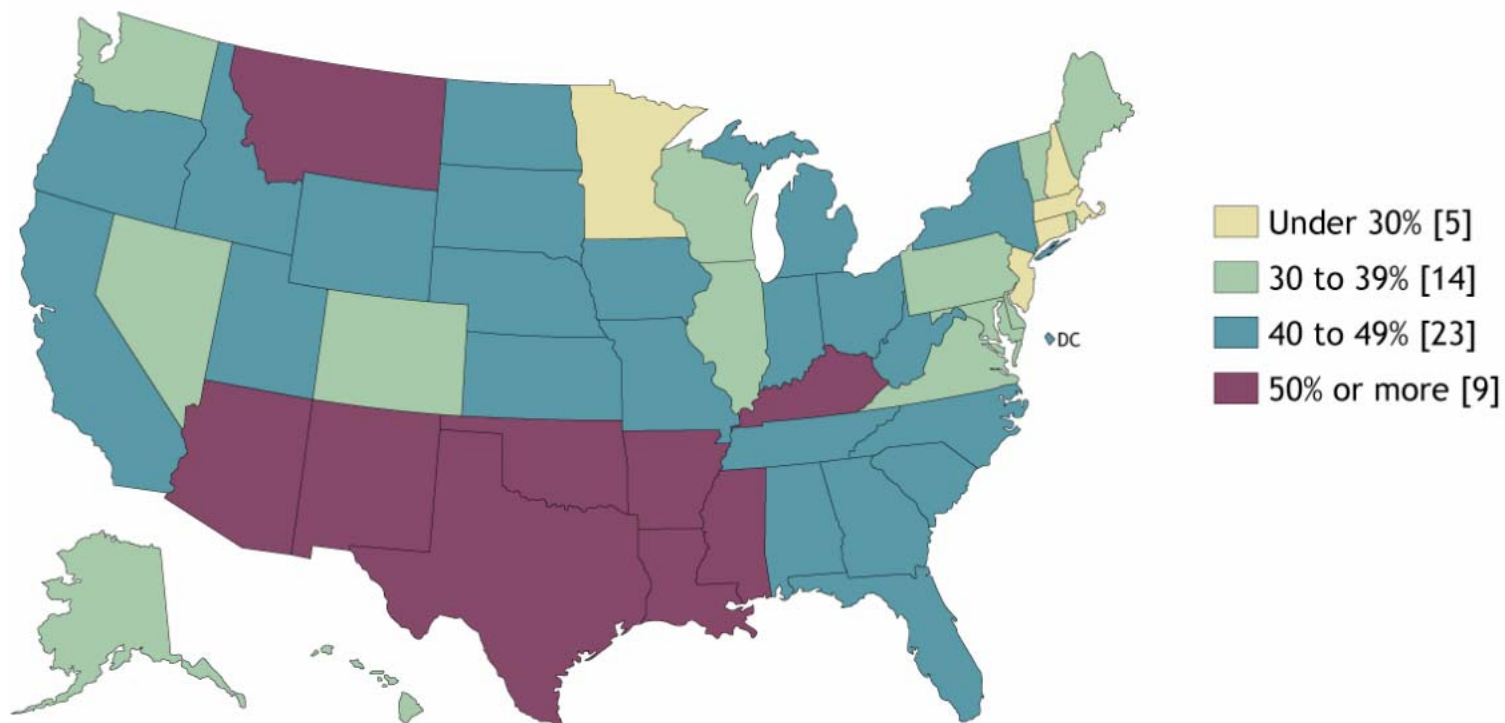
- Established at the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), Project THRIVE is a public policy analysis and education initiative to promote healthy child development.
 - This work is supported through a cooperative agreement with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, HRSA-DHHS.
 - THRIVE provides policy education and analysis for the state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiatives (ECCS)

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10.5 Million Young Children are Low-Income

Low-income rates for young children across the states, 2006

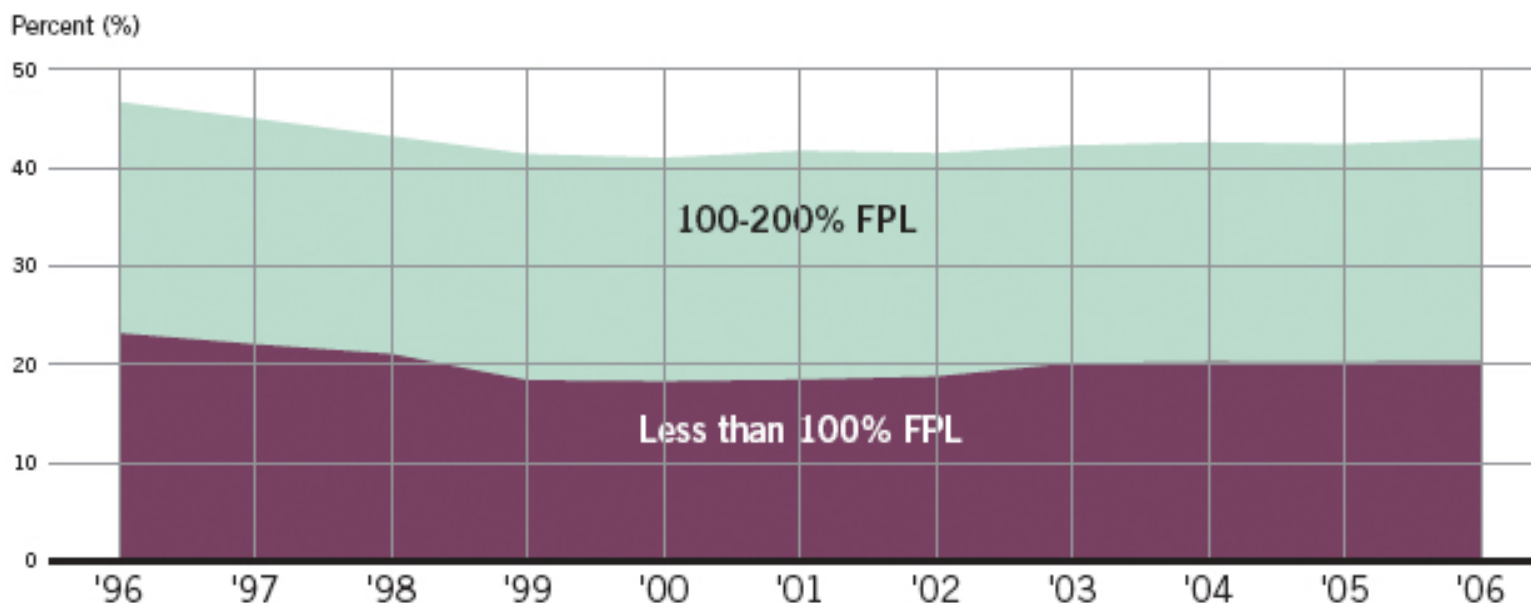


Source: Data prepared by the National Center for Children in Poverty, based on U.S. Current Population Survey, March Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2005-2007.



Poor and Low-Income Children in US Over Time

Children under age 6 living in low-income families, 1996-2006



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Basic Facts About Low-Income Children: Birth to Age 6



Early Childhood Disparities

- At age 4, poor children are 18 months behind more affluent peers
- In third grade, middle class children know 12,000 words vs. low income children know 4,000 words
- Poor and low income children less likely to visit doctor or dentist
- One in five children has a diagnosable mental disorder and 75-80% in need do not receive services



Barriers to Early Childhood Services

- Lack of political will
- Lack of policy built on scientific evidence
- Lack of money
- Services are spread across many domains/agencies
- No clear policy framework for states to follow
- Redundancy



One Solution

- Systems building: linking services and supports
- Intentional policy development
 - Clearly defining problems in policy-relevant terms
 - Discussing issues with the policy community
 - “Spending smarter”

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State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiatives

- Grants support States to plan, develop and implement collaborations and partnerships to support families and communities in their development of children who are healthy and ready to learn at school entry.
- 5 core components:
 - Access to Health Care and Medical Homes
 - Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health
 - Early Care and Education Services
 - Parenting Education
 - Family Support Services



THRIVE: Linking Policies to Improve Results

Improved Policy and Finance Context

- Better use of existing resources across programs and funding streams.
- Improved coordination of eligibility and outreach processes.
- Better mechanisms to integrate service systems.
- Cross-system approaches to serve and support families.

Improved Child / Family Services Across Systems

- Better implementation of critical components.
- More children with medical homes linked to system of care.
- Earlier identification of special needs.
- Cross-system training and professional development.
- Better family support.
- Services in settings families rely on and trust.
- More access to coordinated services for those with greater risks and needs.

Improved Outcomes

- Improved child health and development.
- Reduced family stress.
- Improved parenting.
- Improved work attendance for parents.



Why ECCS Matters

- Reducing disparities in early childhood has life-long impacts
- Linking services and supports across multiple domains means that children and families have better health and developmental care
- Intentional systems building means that states can “spend smarter”



Methods

- THRIVE research staff completed an analysis of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) plans, reports, and related documents from 47 states and Washington, DC, for FY 2005-2007.
 - qualitative content analysis
 - keyword searches
- The analysis also draws on the Project THRIVE staff's responsive consultation with state ECCS coordinators.

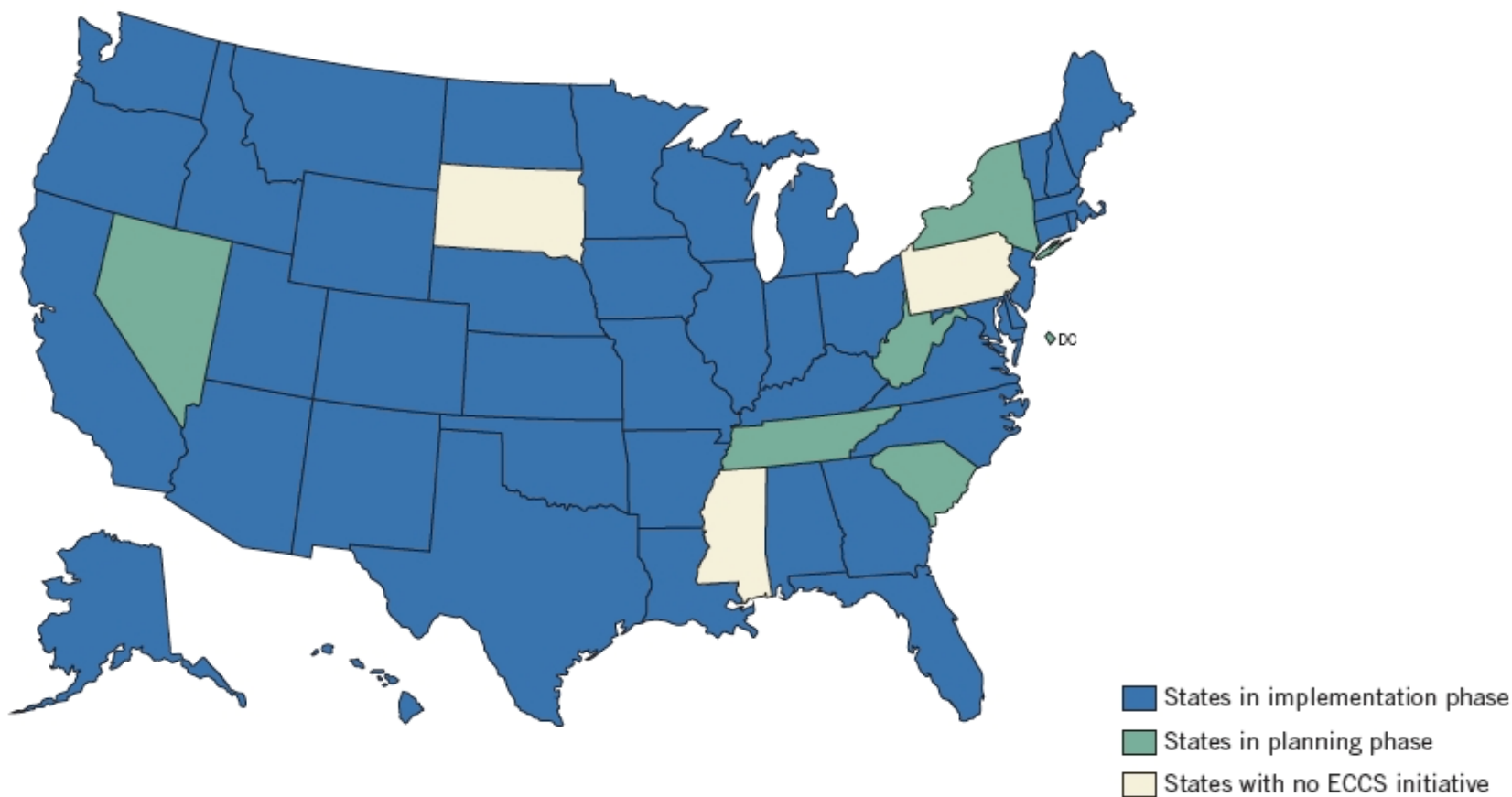


Results of Scan

- 47 states and Washington DC with grants
- 42 of 48 grantees in implementation as of January 2007
- All 48 grants have birth to five focus



States in Implementation in FY 07





Key Factors in Systems Building

- Systems Integration
 - Cross Sector Work
 - Fiscal Planning
- Governance & Structural Mechanisms
 - Leadership
 - Local Systems Development
 - Indicators
 - Partnerships



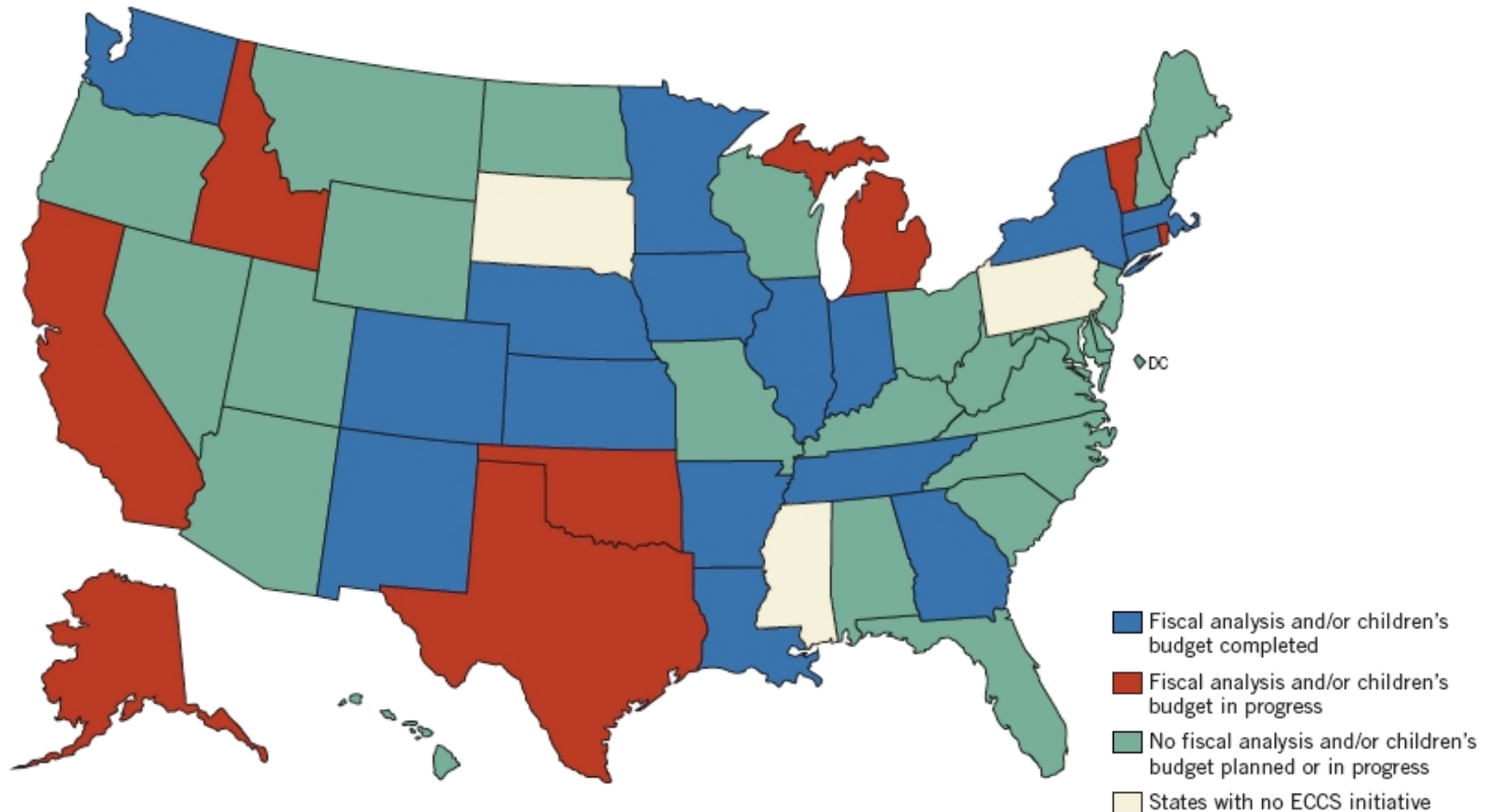
Systems Integration Results

- All 48 have conducted cross-sector program planning
- 44 states show parallel emphasis across five core components
- 41 states say they have system of systems, but only 22 show evidence
- 16 states have completed cross-sector fiscal planning or children's budget analysis

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Children's budgets or cross-system fiscal analyses planned or underway





Questions for a Children's Budget

- What dollars are allocated to services and programs?
- What is the source of funds?
- Is spending increasing or decreasing?
- How to blend and braid local, state, federal, and private funds?

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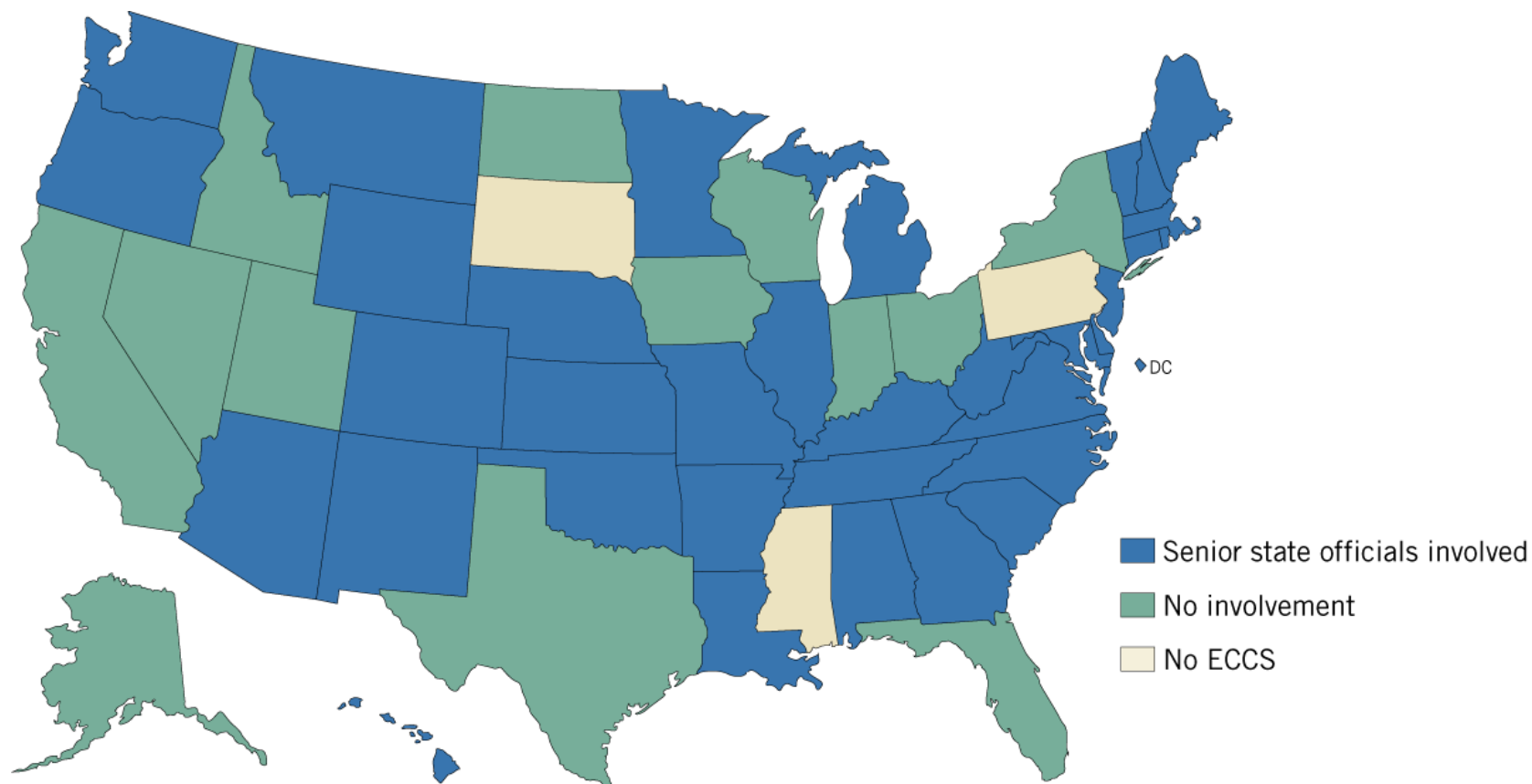
Governance and Structural Mechanisms: Leadership

- 45 states have formally-established cross-sector stakeholder group involving early childhood systems development
- 36 states have cabinet-level officials or governors involved in early childhood systems development

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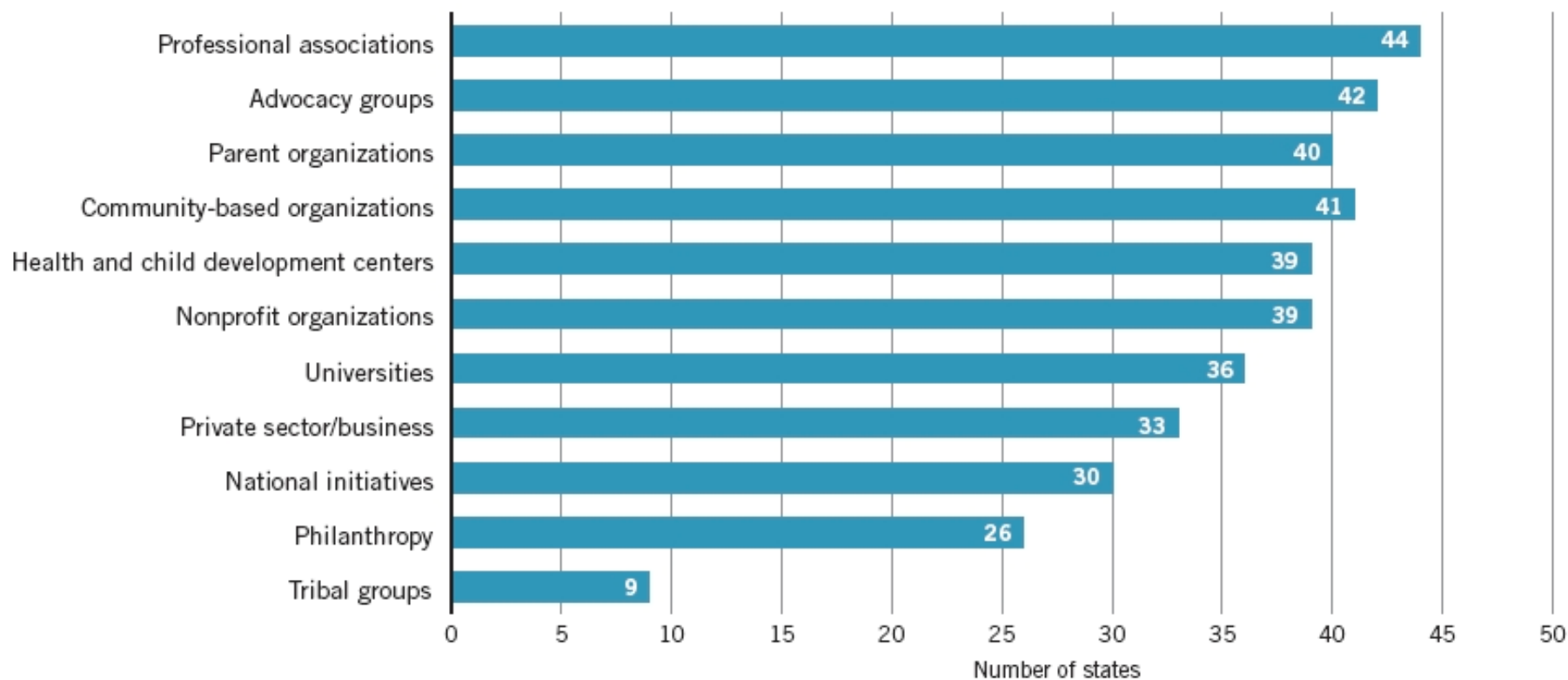


Senior State Officials Involved





Partnerships are a key ingredient of success for ECCS





Governance and Structural Mechanisms: Partnerships

- 24 states have formal public-private entity to improve early childhood systems
 - Incorporated, funded bodies (WA, MI)
 - Quasi-public entities (VT)
- Only 33 states are including families in the leadership



Governance and Structural Mechanisms: Partnerships

- ECCS absorbed into larger national initiative
 - CO, OK, IL, MN, MI, WA
- ECCS funding or planning support for umbrella initiative at cabinet level
 - KY, OH, VT
- New unit of government to focus on early childhood systems
 - WA, ME, VT



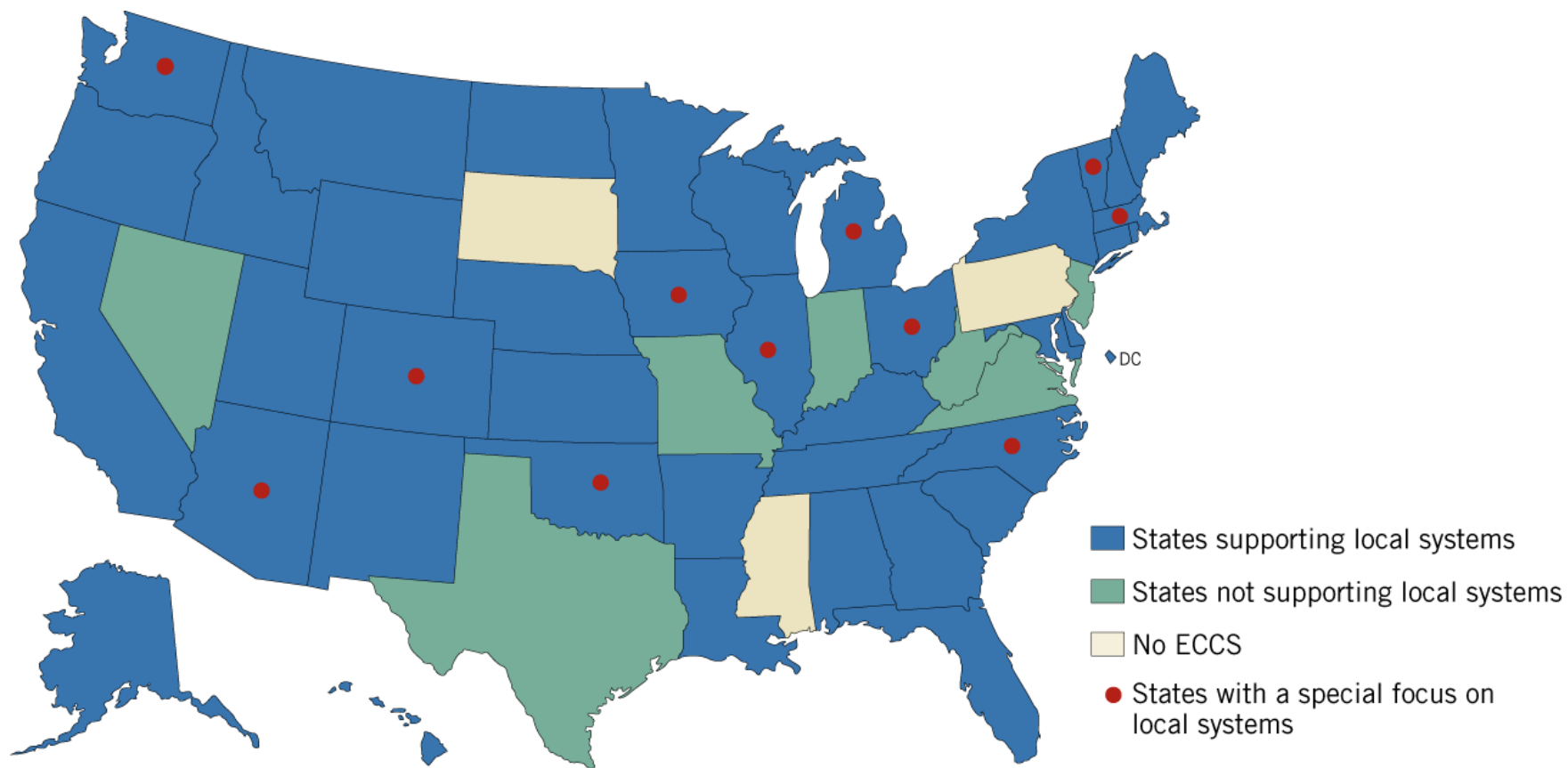
Governance and Structural Mechanisms: Local Systems Development

- 41 states are supporting local systems
 - Technical assistance
 - Formal structures: policy, regulation, guidance
 - Funding
 - Combination
 - Statewide or targeted support

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Support for Local Systems Development





Governance and Structural Mechanisms: Indicators

- Without tracking indicators, we don't really know what's going on and we don't know what works
- Need for indicators within a results-based accountability framework and indicators for system performance monitoring
- 39 states have common, cross-system outcome measures or indicators



Assessing State Progress

	System Integration
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ System of systems approach ▪ Birth-to-five focus ▪ Cross-sector program and fiscal planning ▪ Mechanisms for systems integration ▪ Parallel emphasis across sectors (health, mental health, early care and education, parent education, family support)
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Still trying to get cross-systems communication going ▪ Cataloging, not integrating ▪ Plan primarily focused on MCH or ECE programs ▪ Continuing to focus primarily on Healthy Child Care America



Assessing State Progress

	Governance and Structural Mechanisms
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formally established, cross-sector stakeholder group ▪ Structures to support local systems integration ▪ Cabinet-level and/or legislative leadership involved ▪ Parent leaders engaged ▪ Operational program or policy goals linked to specific strategies ▪ Measurement for outcomes & results accountability
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informally convened planning or implementation group ▪ MCH-centric group, with nominal engagement of MH, ECE, etc. ▪ Health not at the early childhood education table ▪ No structures to support local systems work ▪ No senior official buy in ▪ No data tracking activities



Key Lessons Learned: Finance Mechanisms

- Conduct fiscal scan/create children's budget
- Maximize existing funding streams
- Innovative or alternative funding
- Focus on specific populations
- Use cost-benefit analyses/economic arguments



Key Lessons Learned: Partnerships

- Partnerships grow a system
- Engage private sector and civic leaders as well as government partners and service providers
- Don't forget families



Key Lessons Learned: Leadership

- Promoting a vision, message and objectives that leaders and champions can use
- Systems development is accelerated by strong leadership
- Build common ground



Key Lessons Learned: Local Systems

- Community/local involvement is required to develop systems
- Funding to local communities is helpful, but not necessary
- States need to allow communities to be flexible
- Statewide focus is not essential



Key Lessons Learned: Indicators

- Progress must be measured by indicators
- Select an indicator set that is both comprehensive enough to monitor system developments and specific enough to be useful and manageable.
- States should focus on using a Results-Based Accountability framework



Moving Forward

- States need to give more equal emphasis to all core components
- States need to expand local systems support
- More focus on indicators
- High level leadership buy-in is key
- New governance and structural mechanisms will be required for implementation and beyond



End Results

- Improved services and supports for children and families
- Reduced early childhood disparities
- Children who are healthy and ready to learn at school entry

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