



Braiding Federal Funding to Expand Access to Quality Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Supports and Services:

A Tool for States and Local Communities

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Introduction

The goal of this tool is to assist states and local communities in braiding, blending, or layering multiple federal funding streams (for example, Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund) to increase the supply of quality early care and education (ECE) and increase access to comprehensive early childhood and family support services within a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system. This tool will help those interested in braiding better understand what the process entails and how to find existing resources that can help with the process.

Definitions of braiding, blending, and layering

There are multiple ways that state and local governments can use different sources of public funding to achieve specific objectives, including **braiding**, **blending**, and **layering** funds. For simplicity, this tool refers to all three of these processes as “braiding”:

Braiding. With braiding, funds from multiple funding streams are used to support the total costs of a common goal (for example, to expand access to child and family services). Each individual funding stream maintains its specific program identity, meaning that funds from each specific funding source must be tracked separately. This requires that shared costs of services are allocated to specific funding streams in a way that ensures that there is no duplicate funding and that the appropriate amount of program and administrative costs are charged to each funding stream (Butler et al. 2020).

Blending. With blending, multiple funding streams are mixed together to support the total costs of a common goal. Funding sources lose their program-specific identities, meaning that costs do not have to be allocated or tracked separately by funding source. This approach is less burdensome from an administrative perspective than braiding. It can be challenging to blend federal funds, however, because of regulatory and accounting requirements typically associated with federal funding (Butler et al. 2020).

Layering. With layering, different funds are used to support the costs of a common goal. Typically, foundational layers of funding that support core child care services are supplemented with additional layers of funds that support other program-, family-, or child-level services. An advantage of this approach is that one layer of funding can be removed without affecting the provision of services covered by other funding sources (Fonseca 2017).

The braiding process

The approach states and localities take to braid funding streams will vary based on their goals and other aspects of the state or local context, including the specific funding streams and stakeholders involved (for example, leaders of agencies or departments that manage key ECE funding streams and the degree to which various funding streams are siloed in different agencies). Below, we describe key aspects of the braiding process. We note, however, that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to braiding. The braiding process for a particular state or locality may not progress in the exact order described here. For example, some states and local communities may find it useful to develop shared goals and a plan for collaboration as a first step, where others may choose to do this soon after identifying relevant funding streams. Other states and local communities may first seek to learn more about eligibility and reporting requirements for various funding streams to assess the feasibility of braiding before engaging in collaborative planning. States and localities can take the approach that makes the most sense for their context.

The following are key aspects of the braiding process that this tool will address:

- 1. Identify funding streams.** A fundamental step in the braiding process is to identify your state or local community's goals and desired outcomes, scan available federal funding streams that are consistent with these goals and outcomes, and identify gaps between existing funding streams being used in your state or locality and those that are available. Fiscal mapping can help states and local communities identify a strategy to take advantage of federal funding opportunities.
- 2. Identify eligible populations and compare requirements.** Another fundamental step in the braiding process is identifying the populations of children and families that are eligible for services funding through different funding streams. States and local communities should also understand if there are differences in eligibility and reporting requirements of the various funding streams.
- 3. Build integrated data systems.** Building integrated data systems between various early childhood programs can facilitate sharing of information to determine eligibility and fulfill reporting requirements. These data systems can provide a more comprehensive understanding of young children's needs and history, avoid duplication of efforts, support referrals between programs, and limit the number of forms families must complete.
- 4. Align requirements of funding streams.** Although states or localities typically cannot modify or control funding stream requirements, there may be some areas of flexibility. Aligning eligibility and other requirements of funding streams, where possible, can help promote continuity of care for children and families, reduce burden for program administrators seeking to use multiple funding streams, and support braiding. State and local governments should also engage in conversations with federal program administrators to ensure understanding of the limitations of different funding streams, and to share information about barriers to aligning funding streams.
- 5. Develop shared goals and a plan for collaboration.** To facilitate ongoing and sustainable coordination throughout the braiding process and beyond, it is helpful to articulate shared goals and institute a collaborative planning process involving multiple funding streams, agencies, or departments.
- 6. Build state or local programs that use multiple funding streams.** Finding opportunities to braid upstream at the state or local agency level, rather than braiding downstream at the individual provider level, can simplify the process for providers. This section of the tool describes resources on lessons learned and recommended best practices for building programs, initiatives, and systems at the state level that leverage multiple funding streams.
- 7. Develop governance structures to support collaboration.** States have used governance structures to support ongoing collaboration between agencies and other key players in state or local ECE systems.
- 8. Support braiding at the provider level.** Providers and program administrators might seek to combine funds from multiple sources to better serve children and families need. State and local users can provide technical assistance, training, and other supports to providers in their state or locality to help in their use of multiple funding streams.

The sections that follow describe each of these aspects of the braiding process. Each section includes lists of relevant resources with brief descriptions of each resource and how it pertains to each aspect. We include links to each resource and corresponding pages and/or sections so that users can easily find information. Some resources are relevant to multiple steps and are included in multiple sections of this tool. We also highlight examples, if available, of how state or local communities have carried out a particular step.

The resources provided here are broadly relevant to state and local efforts to braid multiple funding streams. However, this tool does not describe the allowable uses of specific funding streams, nor does it describe the allowable uses of funding streams in specific states. Users should talk to program experts in their state and at the federal level to learn more about how specific funding streams can be used in the braiding process.

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I. Identify funding streams

A fundamental step in the braiding process is to identify the funding sources available in your state or locality. This tool focuses on how these funding sources can be used to achieve each of the following goals: to (1) expand ECE access, (2) expand access to comprehensive child and family services, or (3) improve ECE program quality. Fiscal mapping can help states and local communities develop an inventory of funding streams that are aligned with their goals. The tables that follow provide resources that align with each of these goals.

Funding streams that can be used to expand early care and education access

Table I.1 describes resources about key funding streams that can be used to expand ECE access. These include resources that describe and compare the major sources of federal funding for early childhood (for example, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care and Development Fund [CCDF]) and resources that provide information on other sources of federal, state, and local funding that users can leverage to expand ECE access.

Table I.1 Resources on funding streams that can be used to expand ECE access

Resource	Section or pages	Description of resource and funding sources covered
ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams (2021)	n.a.	This brief from the First Five Years Fund identifies nine federal funding streams that can be used to offer ECE programs to families with low income: CCDBG; Head Start; Early Head Start; Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships; the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Child Care Means Parents in School; TANF; Preschool Development Grant Birth through 5; and IDEA Part B and C. For each funding stream, the resource includes a brief statement of purpose, the most recent fiscal year funding amount, and the approximate number of children, families, and parents served nationally.
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Table 1; pages 10 to 13	Table 1 of this toolkit from Start Early compares the key federal, state, and local funding sources, including Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, TANF, state pre-K, state infant–toddler programs, and local programs. The table describes the following information for each funding source: source of funds and payment process, parent co-pay, primary service, length of day and year, child and family eligibility, child age range, and length of eligibility. The document also lists what impacts studies have demonstrated regarding the effectiveness of the programs funded by the various streams.
Financing High-Quality Center-Based Infant-Toddler Care: Options and Opportunities (2015)	Section 5; pages 11 to 14	Pages 14 and 15 of this ACF report identify outside-the-box funding mechanisms to increase the supply and quality of infant and toddler care and supplement federal CCDBG and Early Head Start funding. These funding mechanisms include tax credits, taxing districts, Social Impact Bonds, and earmarks.
Leveraging ESSA Plans in Preschool Development Grant Implementation: Guidance and Recommendations (2019)	Pages 14 to 15	The focused funding streams section briefly describes smaller funding streams (outside of Title I and Title II funding) that can be used to serve the most vulnerable or underserved populations. These sources include migrant education funds, Title III programs for English language learners, Title IV of ESSA, Title VI programs, and services to homeless children under the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Resource	Section or pages	Description of resource and funding sources covered
Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit (2018)	Page 10 to 12	Pages 10 to 12 of this toolkit, created by ECTA to support the development of inclusive preschool systems for preschool-age children with disabilities, includes a brief high-level description of the programs funded by federal, state, local, and private sources to support inclusive preschool for young children with disabilities.
Side-by-Side Comparison of Federal and State Requirements for Early Childhood Education Services (2014)	Page 15	This document from the ACF compares nine different aspects of Early Head Start and CCDF legislation and regulations. It examines funding as one of the nine elements.
Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education (2018)	Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, Chapter 5	Chapter 2 of this report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine describes the current funders of the ECE system, including key federal funding streams (e.g., Head Start and CCDF), state funding streams (e.g., state pre-K programs, CCDF contributions, and tax incentives), and the private sector (e.g., public-private partnership and shared service alliances). Chapters 3, 4, and 5 discuss how these funding streams and mechanisms can support enhancements to workforce qualifications, access, and quality, respectively. Chapter 5 identifies funding sources specific to improving ECE facilities.
Virginia Early Childhood Integrated Financing Toolkit (2019)	Section 2, starting on page 7	The toolkit from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation describes federal (such as the Child Care and Adult Food Program, IDEA Part C, and Title 1), state (state pre-k), and local (such as taxes and bonds) funding streams used to support ECE programs. The descriptions of the federal funding sources include the purpose of the program, eligibility, the program requirements (such as quality standards), and how the federal funds flow. The description of the local funding sources includes the funding source, how it works, and how it is used.

ACF = Administration for Children and Families; CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; ECE = early childhood education; ESSA = Every Student Succeeds Act; IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Funding streams that can be used to expand access to comprehensive child and family services

Table I.2 describes resources about key funding streams that can be used to expand access to comprehensive child and family services. These include resources that describe and compare the major sources of federal funding for early childhood (for example, Head Start, Early Head Start, and CCDF). These also include resources on other funding streams that states can be used to expand access to comprehensive services (for example, Medicaid, Title IV-E, Title IV-B, and Title V funds).

Table I.2 Resources on funding streams that can be used to expand access to comprehensive child and family services

Resource	Section or pages	Description of resource and funding sources covered
A Sourcebook on Medicaid's Role in Early Childhood (2018)	Part One; Appendix C	This is a resource from the Child and Family Policy Center. Part One describes the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment benefit for children, including the types of services that can be funded and for whom. Appendix C summarizes states' authority and cost ranges for a broad array of services possible under the benefit.
ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams (2021)	n.a.	The brief from the First Five Years Fund identifies nine federal funding streams that can be used to offer ECE programs to families with low income: CCDBG; Head Start; Early Head Start; Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships; the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Child Care Means Parents in School; TANF; Preschool Development Grant Birth through 5; and IDEA Part B and C. For each funding stream, the resource includes a brief statement of purpose, the most recent fiscal year funding amount, and the approximate number of children, families, and parents served nationally.
Adding It Up: A Guide for Mapping Public Resources for Children, Youth and Families (2006)	Pages 9 to 13	This is a resource from the Forum for Youth Investment. Pages 9 to 13 review Medicaid funding streams that states can use to finance home visiting programs. It describes funding mechanisms and approaches, including their eligible populations and services, payment approaches, and matching requirements.
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Table 1; pages 10 to 13	Table 1 of this toolkit from Start Early document compares the key federal, state, and local funding sources, including Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, TANF, state pre-K, state infant-toddler programs, and local programs. The table describes the following information for each funding source: source of funds and payment process, parent co-pay, primary service, length of day and year, child and family eligibility, child age range, and length of eligibility. The document also lists what impacts studies have demonstrated regarding the effectiveness of the programs funded by the various funding streams.
Family First Prevention Act (2018)	n.a.	The brief from First Focus Campaign for Children summarizes how child welfare funding streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B, can be used to pay for mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting interventions for families at risk of entering the child welfare system. Specifically, the resource outlines key aspects of the Families First Prevention Services Act of 2018, which reformed these funding streams to allow for reimbursement of these services. It summarizes the types of prevention services and enhanced supports that are fundable and the requirements and standards for funding.
Financing Guidance for IECMHC (n.d.)	Pages 9 to 21	A section of this Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration report, Identify What Funds Align Best with IECMHC Services, includes a list of example funding streams and how they align with the mission of a state IECMHC service provider and a list with an overview of potential federal funding sources. Funding streams covered by this resource include Medicaid, CCDF, Head Start, Early Head Start, the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, and federal grants (such as the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact, and Project LAUNCH).

Resource	Section or pages	Description of resource and funding sources covered
Layering Early Head Start Services and Funds with Child Care – The Cost Estimation Tool for EHS-CC (n.d.)	n.a.	This is a two-page companion document called Funding and Payments to a cost estimation tool for EHS-CC Partnerships from the Administration for Children and Families. The companion document lists the possible funding sources that EHS partnerships can use to finance core child care services in particular and program-level enhancements. The document also has limited information on eligible services under the EHS-CC Partnership grant.
Matrix for Guide to Leveraging Opportunities Between Title V and Medicaid for Promoting Social-Emotional Development (n.d.)	Pages 3 to 11	This resource from the Center for the Study of Social Policy provides a comparison of the ways Medicaid and Title V funds can be used to fulfill a spectrum of types of ECE-adjacent programming. This information can be used to identify ways to use each of these funding sources, together or apart, to meet the goals of each type of programming.
Putting it Together: A Guide to Financing Comprehensive Services in Child Care and Early Education (2012)	Page 22 to 35; 43 to 48.	The report from CLASP includes general information about funding streams that can be used to finance comprehensive services in early child care and early education. The resource includes information about eligibility, how funds can be used, and some considerations concerning the use of funds. Appendix B on pages 43 to 48 offers additional resources, links to high-level information about the funds, information about the agency administering the fund, and other relevant resources. Funding streams covered by this resource include CCDF, Head Start, IDEA Part B and C, and Medicaid.
Virginia Early Childhood Integrated Financing Toolkit (2019)	Section 2, starting on page 7	The toolkit from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation describes federal (such as the Child Care and Adult Food Program, IDEA Part C, and Title 1), state (state pre-k), and local (such as taxes and bonds) funding streams used to support ECE programs. The descriptions of the federal funding sources include the purpose of the program, eligibility, the program requirements (such as quality standards), and how the federal funds flow. The description of the local funding sources includes the funding source, how it works, and how it is used.

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; ECE = early childhood education; EHS-CC = Early Head Start-Child Care; IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; IECMHC = Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Funding streams that can be used to improve ECE quality

Table I.3 describes resources about key funding streams that can be used to improve quality in ECE programs. These include resources that describe and compare the major sources of federal funding for early childhood (for example, Head Start, Early Head Start, and CCDF). The table also includes one resource on how states can finance their quality rating and improvement systems.

Table I.3 Resources on funding streams that can be used to improve ECE quality

Resource	Section or pages	Description of resource and funding sources covered
ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams (2021)	n.a.	This brief from the First Five Years Fund identifies nine federal funding streams that can be used to offer ECE programs to families with low income: CCDBG; Head Start; Early Head Start; Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships; the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Child Care Means Parents in School; TANF; Preschool Development Grant Birth through 5; and IDEA Part B and C. For each funding stream, the resource includes a brief statement of purpose, the most recent fiscal year funding amount, and the approximate number of children, families, and parents served nationally.
Finance and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (2017)	Section III; Appendix A	The resource identifies federal health care, workforce, and public education resources that states could tap to fund their QRIS systems. In addition, it identifies various strategies states and localities use to generate revenue for QRIS.
Virginia Early Childhood Integrated Financing Toolkit (2019)	Section 2, starting on page 7	This toolkit from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation describes federal (such as the Child Care and Adult Food Program, IDEA Part C, and Title 1), state (state pre-k), and local (such as taxes and bonds) funding streams used to support ECE programs. The descriptions of the federal funding sources include the purpose of the program, eligibility, the program requirements (such as quality standards), and how the federal funds flow. The description of the local funding sources includes the funding source, how it works, and how it is used.

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; ECE = early childhood education; IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; n.a. = Not Applicable; QRIS = quality rating and improvement system; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Developing fiscal maps

Another foundational step in bringing together multiple funding streams for early childhood is the development of fiscal maps. **Fiscal maps** are an inventory of funds directed toward a particular population, service array, or intervention. Determining multiple funding streams is typically an early step in braiding funds (Center for Health Care Strategies 2019). Table I.4 provides resources on the key components for developing fiscal maps. Table 1.5 describes worksheets and resources for comparing funding streams. We conclude this section with examples and a description of fiscal map development.

Table I.4 Resources on developing fiscal maps

Resource	Description of key components
Adding It Up: A Guide for Mapping Public Resources for Children, Youth and Families (2006)	This resource from the Forum for Youth Investment is a guide for creating fiscal maps of public or private funding to support children, youth, and families. It offers step-by-step guidance for the process from designing the scope of the map (which populations and what types of funding) to data collection, creation, and dissemination. It includes examples of fiscal maps, sample data collection tools, and a list of secondary data sources that can serve to gather information on federal and state funding and spending for children's services. Fiscal maps can be used for a variety of purposes, including service coordination planning.

Resource	Description of key components
Fiscal Mapping for Early Childhood Services: How to Guide and Data Collection Tool (2019)	<p>The resources that follow are part of a fiscal mapping guide from the Center for Health Care Strategies. They aim to provide communities with practical knowledge about fiscal mapping and include a how-to guide, a data collection tool, and an attached brief that highlights implementation considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How-to guide. The how-to guide provides a framework and steps to complete a fiscal mapping process. Those steps include (1) defining the scope and establishing shared goals, (2) identifying participants, (3) starting the data collection process, and (4) taking action with fiscal mapping data. • Data collection tool. The data collection tool includes a template for gathering and documenting funding details about different funding streams through the fiscal mapping process, including the program description and purpose of the funding, the administrative agency that grants the funding, the provider of services that receives the funding, the funding source, the amount of funding, the funding to whom the funds are directed toward, and the number of people served by that funding source. • Technical assistance brief. The technical assistance brief describes implementation considerations for fiscal mapping based on the experiences of two communities that used the mapping process.
Spark Institute Blending and Braiding Toolkit (n.d.)	<p>This is an online toolkit from the Spark Institute on Blending and Braiding. The toolkit is provided as a free online course: users are required to register for an account with the Spark Institute to access the toolkit. In one section of the toolkit, Phase 3: Exploring Finance Options, states can complete a series of worksheets to map intended populations and services to available funding streams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, there is a framework that is set up as a checklist to help states identify possible funding streams and their appropriateness. • Next, there is a worksheet (Template A: Analyzing Your Funding Streams) that encourages users to analyze each funding stream that appears to be a good fit for their intended population, services, and service delivery providers and to find out what parts of their program each funding stream can cover. When completed, the worksheet compares intended program elements with the eligible populations and allowable activities of each potential funding stream. • A subsequent worksheet (Template B: Analyzing Your Gaps) further breaks out distinct groups and services that are supported by each funding stream to identify the gaps. The tool then encourages a user to identify funding priorities
State and Local Fiscal Maps: An Interactive Tool (n.d.)	<p>This is an online interactive tool from the Children’s Funding Project that allows users to identify existing fiscal maps that have been developed by states and local communities. For each fiscal map, the tool describes the name of the report, the scope of the work, and the included funding sources (including federal, state, local, private, or other funds). The tool also provides links to where users can access fiscal maps that are publicly available.</p>

Table I.5 Additional worksheets and resources to help states compare funding streams

Source	Section	Worksheet Name	Worksheet Description
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Page 75	Assessing Federal, State, and Local Public Funding Streams	This worksheet lists major early childhood funding streams, separate quality enhancement funds, other state and local funding streams, training and consultation funds, and other funding streams. State administrators can fill out the worksheet to indicate the funding streams that exist in their state.

Source	Section	Worksheet Name	Worksheet Description
	Pages 76 to 81	Identifying Regulatory Differences Across Early Childhood Funding Streams	This worksheet asks state administrators to fill out different areas of edibility and enrollment, programmatic issues, and funding by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care Subsidy. The worksheet also has space for notes to be taken regarding child care licensing, state pre-K, state 0 to 3 programs, and other programs.
Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit (2018)	Page 12	The Early Childhood Programs Comparison Worksheet	Page 12 of this toolkit includes a link to a worksheet (The Early Childhood Programs Comparison Worksheet) that can be used to compare program requirements and elements. The worksheet asks the user to fill in program structure and oversight, program operations, program requirements, child development and learning, and behavior supports and requirements by program
Side-by-Side Comparison of Federal and State Requirements for Early Childhood Education Services (2014)	Page 15	N/A	This tool is a grid that enables states and local organizations to enter state-specific early education program requirements. It is intended to be a visual tool and resource that identifies similarities and differences across regulations and funding sources. It can also prompt discussion on ways to overcome barriers to facilitate successful early education partnerships.
Spark Institute Blending and Braiding Toolkit (n.d.)	n.a.	Template A: Analyzing Your Funding Streams	This worksheet can serve as a tool to analyze each funding stream that appears to be a good fit for users' intended population, services, and service delivery providers and to find out what parts of their program each funding stream can cover. When completed, the worksheet compares intended program elements with the eligible populations and allowable activities of each potential funding stream. This toolkit is provided as a free online course: users are required to register for an account with the Spark Institute to access the toolkit.
	n.a.	Template B: Analyzing Your Gaps	This worksheet can serve as a tool to break out distinct groups and services supported by each funding stream to identify funding gaps.

n.a. = not applicable.

Examples and case studies of fiscal map development

Some of the resources described in the preceding tables provide state and local examples and case studies of how to develop and use fiscal maps. We describe some of these examples here to provide additional detail about how some states, local communities have used fiscal mapping:

- [Fiscal Mapping for Early Childhood Services: How-to Guide and Data Collection Tool](#). The guide and data collection tool are accompanied by a technical assistance brief. The brief highlights Maryland and Hennepin County, Minnesota, as case studies of fiscal map creation and use.
 - In Maryland, a team from the Office of Innovation, Research and Development within the Office of Health Care Financing in the Maryland Department of Health used fiscal mapping to understand which funding streams supported children ages zero to five and covered by Medicaid.

The team also used their fiscal mapping process to identify ways to align their work with other fiscal mapping projects in the state, develop relationships with other sectors, and identify new payment streams and models.

- In Hennepin County, Minnesota, a cross-sector team representing public health, human services, education, and health care developed a fiscal map to understand the services used by families who are served by multiple systems, with a focus on Medicaid-eligible children and their families. The cross-sector team used fiscal mapping to identify the main sources of funding for early childhood development; to understand the total amount of funding, critical gaps, and opportunities in funding; and to determine how Medicaid coverage and funding could better support early childhood development in the county.

II. Identify eligible populations and compare requirements

Another fundamental step in the blending and braiding process is identifying eligible children and families and understanding the differences in eligibility and reporting requirements of the various funding streams available in your state or locality. The tables that follow show resources that can help users identify eligible children and families as well as key differences in the requirements of different funding streams. For the latter, we also include a table that focuses specifically on differences in requirements between Child Care and Development Fund and Head Start and Early Head Start.

For many funding streams, there are rules and fiscal constraints that govern the use of funds. The resources provided in this section provide information about funding stream requirements. However, this tool does not provide information about the allowable uses of funding streams in specific states or local communities. Users should talk to program experts in their state or local community about how funds can be used in their state or local community, and to identify specific constraints that can or cannot be removed regarding the use of funds.

Comparing requirements of early childhood funding streams

Table II.1 shows resources highlighting the differences in the requirements of federal and state funding streams for early childhood. Some of these resources include information about multiple funding streams for early childhood.

Table II.1 Resources on comparing requirements of early childhood funding streams

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource	Funding sources covered
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early	Part II Section B, pages 10 to 13	Table 1 of this toolkit from Start Early compares the key federal, state, and local funding sources, including Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, TANF, state pre-K, state infant–toddler programs, and local programs. The table describes the following information for each funding source: source of funds and payment process, parent co-pay, primary service, length of day and year, child and family eligibility, child age range, and length of eligibility.	Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, TANF, state pre-K, state infant–toddler programs, local programs

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource	Funding sources covered
Learning Programs (2013)	Checklists and worksheets on pages 74 to 81	<p>These worksheets help users identify available public funding streams in the state and regulatory differences across funding streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first worksheet, Assessing Federal, State, and Local Public Funding Streams, lists major early childhood funding streams, separate quality enhancement funds, other state and local funding streams, training and consultation funds, and others. Users can fill out the worksheet to indicate the funding streams that exist in their state. • The second worksheet, Identifying Regulatory Differences Across Early Childhood Funding Streams, asks users to fill out different areas of edibility and enrollment, programmatic issues and funding by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care Subsidy. The worksheet also has space for notes to be taken regarding child care licensing, state pre-K, state 0 to 3 programs, and other programs 	It includes space to enter information about major early childhood funding streams, separate quality enhancement funds, other state and local funding streams, training and consultation funds, and others
Putting it Together: A Guide to Financing Comprehensive Services in Child Care and Early Education (2012)	Pages 21 to 26; Funding Streams: The Nuts and Bolts of Federal Sources; Appendix B	This section of a larger CLASP report reviews federal funding streams with the most potential for offering services and supports within child care and early education settings. It also provides an overview of each funding stream, including background, use of funds, and additional considerations. Eligibility for each funding stream is described at a high level. Although reporting requirements are not included in this section, links to other sources of information about each funding stream are available in Appendix B.	CCDF, Head Start; TANF, CBCAP, Title V MCH, ECCS, Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children, MIECHV, Medicaid, Title I, McKinney-Vento, IDEA Part B and C, SNAP, Project LAUNCH, CDBG

CBCAP = Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grants and Programs; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; CDBG = Community Development Block Grant; ECCS = Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative; IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; MIECHV = Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; n.a. = not applicable; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Title V MCH = Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program.

Comparing the requirements of CCDF with Head Start and Early Head Start

Table II.2 shows resources focused on the differences between CCDF and Head Start and Early Head Start. These resources could be particularly relevant for users seeking to support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and other partnerships to support collaboration between Head Start and child care in their state or locality.

Table II.2 Resources on comparing the requirements of CCDF with Head Start and Early Head Start

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource	Funding sources covered
Side-by-Side Comparison of Federal and State Requirements for Early Childhood Education Services (2014)	n.a.	This table compares key requirements of Early Head Start and CCDF across nine general areas. These include family eligibility and income requirements; child eligibility in terms of age, citizenship, and alien status; eligibility periods and duration; length of day and year; and service components across both Head Start and Early Head Start. This table also includes a blank column for states to enter in their own state-funded early childhood services.	Early Head Start, CCDF
State Initiatives to Promote Early Learning: Next Steps in Coordinating Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten (2001)	Section C; pages 14 to 22	Section C of this report discusses regulatory differences between Head Start, CCDF, and TANF, including the programs' eligibility requirements, how the funds are distributed, and fund requirements and standards. The resource also describes how three states (Georgia, Massachusetts, and Ohio) have responded to these differences in the course of blending these funds to support ECE initiatives in their states.	Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, TANF
Top Ten Ways CCDF Can Support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (2017)	Sections 1 to 5, pages 1 to 5	These sections describe how, by partnering Early Head Start, CCDF, and Head Start, agencies can take advantage of Head Start provisions that allow a percentage of families with income above the federal poverty level to be served. This in turn, could help such partnerships more effectively meet their enrollment goal. In addition, under the 2014 reauthorization of CCDBG, state agencies can help ensure continuity of care by aligning the beginning and end dates of EHS-CC partnership eligibility dates with Early Head Start enrollment dates, thereby easing reporting requirements; allow special eligibility considerations for children in need of protective services; and maintain access to child care for parents by allowing parents to continue eligibility for care after a job loss.	Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; ECE = early childhood education; EHS-CC = Early Head Start - Child Care; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

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III. Build integrated data systems

Building integrated data systems between various early childhood programs can facilitate sharing of information to determine eligibility and fulfill reporting requirements. The [Policy Statement to Support the Alignment of Health and Early Learning Systems](#) recommends developing integrated data systems at the state- or community-level to provide a more comprehensive understanding of young children's needs and history, avoid duplication of efforts, support referrals between programs, and limit the number of forms families must complete.

A toolkit on blending and braiding developed by Start Early, [Budgeting to Promote Social Objectives – A Primer on Braiding and Blending](#), describes how users can support these integrated data systems through steps such as creating data-sharing agreements and establishing centers for evaluation that can help build support for collaboration and coordinated budgeting. Table III.1 describes resources for developing integrated data systems. We conclude this section with examples of state and local efforts to build integrated data systems.

Table III.1. Resources to help build integrated data systems

Resource		Description of key components
A Sourcebook on Medicaid's Role in Early Childhood (2018)	Part 7, pages 99 to 107	Part 7 of this sourcebook discusses how states can create and collect a common set of early childhood health measures that can be used across Medicaid, Title V MCH grants, MIECHV, and other early childhood programs to support a shared accountability system.
Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness with CCDF Subsidies (2018)	Page 3	This resource describes four strategies that CCDF lead agencies can use to coordinate child care for children experiencing homelessness with other ECE and community-based programs as specified under the CCDBG Act and Final Rule. One of these strategies includes adding questions to child care applications that would help identify families meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness and to include these data in case-level reports to the Office of Child care.
State Initiatives to Promote Early Learning: Next Steps in Coordinating Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten (2001)	Section E; pages 28 to 32	This resource provides some information about how states can collect and track data across ECE programs. This includes steps that three states have taken to understand the various ECE data systems in their state and efforts to track children over time across program settings: increasing cross-cutting capacity, analyzing and publishing reports on available data on early care and education across programs and funding streams, and incorporating child outcome measures across specific early education initiatives from existing process or outcomes studies of those initiatives.
Policy Statement to Support the Alignment of Health and Early Learning Systems (n.d.)	Pages 8 to 10	This resource recommends developing integrated data systems at the state or community level to provide a more comprehensive understanding of young children's needs and history, avoid duplication of efforts, support referrals between programs, and limit the number of forms families must complete. The resource links to a report that highlights how states and local communities designed and implemented early childhood integrated data systems. The resource also recommends using strategies such as Medicaid's Express Lane Eligibility and Presumptive Eligibility to accelerate and streamline enrollment.

Resource		Description of key components
10 Ways WIC and Head Start can collaborate (2019)	"Partnership agreements"; page 1	This section provides specific guidance on establishing memoranda of understanding between collaborating state agencies. It briefly encourages states to record clearly how and why confidential eligibility data are shared across programs. It also provides a linked example of a guide about best practices in information sharing developed jointly by Arizona's WIC and Head Start programs.
Cost Allocation Methodologies (CAM) toolkit (2015)	n.a.	This Excel-based toolkit helps state, Tribal, and local agencies allocate costs for planning and developing integrated IT systems that simultaneously administer federal and state public assistance programs, including SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, child care, child support enforcement, Medicaid, and child welfare programs. Specifically, it provides a methodology for distributing costs across the federal and state programs that benefit from the IT system and the Excel tool implements this methodology. The toolkit can help develop a cost allocation plan for the advanced planning document that is required for several major federal public assistance programs.
Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (2019) , Virginia Early Childhood Integrated Financing Toolkit (2019)	Page 24	The toolkit discusses how jurisdictions might want to connect with other sources of existing data on child outcomes and collect new data such as those necessary for fiscal mapping. The toolkit provides samples of data-sharing memoranda of understanding and lists resources for fiscal mapping.
TC Study 3: Financing structures and strategies to support effective systems of care—A self-assessment and planning guide: developing a comprehensive financing plan (2006)	Section VII; pages 32 to 35	Section VII of this guide includes a series of strategies that sites or systems can use to develop a strong accountability system for the system of care. Several of these strategies relate to data collection and monitoring.

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; ECE = early childhood education; MIECHV = Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; n.a. = not applicable; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Title V MCH = Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.

Examples of state and local efforts to build integrated data systems

Below, we highlight some resources that provide examples of how states and local communities have worked to build integrated data systems:

- [Budgeting to Promote Social Objectives – A Primer on Braiding and Blending](#). This report highlights some examples of state and local governments that have worked to integrate data. These highlights cite specific data-sharing and evaluation efforts, such as the Washington State Institute for Public Policy’s cross-sector impact analyses of the Communities in Schools and Nurse Family Partnership programs. Other examples include Actional Intelligence for Social Policy at the University of Pennsylvania, which developed integrated data systems that link administrative data across state and local agencies. Other examples highlighted in the tool include the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities and Montgomery County in Maryland's Thriving Germantown Community HUB pilot. These are examples of agencies that worked together to create data-sharing agreements to study programs, share data, or both.

- **[Joint Statement: State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care: Advancing Work Beyond Federal Financing](#)**. This document briefly describes the Utah Early Childhood Statewide Data Integration Project, which is building an integrated early childhood data collection system across ECE programs, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, Part B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, and public primary schools. Other examples described were Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems and Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems created by states including Texas, Delaware, and Colorado and designed to link data from Kindergarten Entry Assessments and quality rating and improvement systems. States with these data-sharing mechanisms in place received a more complete picture of program and participant needs and were better able to target resources as a result.
- **[10 Ways WIC and Head Start Can Collaborate](#)**. This resource provides a linked example of a guide about best practices in information sharing developed jointly by Arizona's WIC and Head Start program. The guide was designed to help streamline administrative procedures for program staff and participants and ensure service coordination and confidentiality simultaneously.
- **[State Issues and Innovations in Creating Integrated Early Learning and Development Systems](#)**. The report mentions an effort in progress, spearheaded by the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology, to integrate data systems across more than 20 programs in five agencies and create a "universal application" for all agencies and programs related to early care and education.

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IV. Align requirements of funding streams

Aligning eligibility and other requirements of funding streams can help promote continuity of care for children and families, reduce burden for program administrators seeking to use multiple funding streams, and support blending and braiding the streams. Regulatory differences between funding streams such as in eligibility criteria and enrollment processes can prevent children from receiving consistent and continuous services and increase burden on program administrators who must track eligibility data and conflicting regulations (Wallen and Hubbard 2013). Programs seeking to use multiple funding streams to provide comprehensive services for children, such as partner programs in Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, often have to identify dually eligible children (Administration for Children and Families 2014). Regulatory differences between funding streams can make it difficult to identify these children.

State and local governments should also engage in conversations with federal program administrators to ensure understanding of the limitations of different funding streams. State and local governments should also share information about barriers they perceive to using different funding streams to achieve desired goals or outcomes, and barriers they have encountered in using different funding streams, so that federal program administrators can consider whether these barriers can be addressed through administrative actions or in future policy development opportunities.

Aligning requirements of Head Start, Early Head Start, and CCDF

In Table IV.1, we describe resources available to help states align eligibility and reporting requirements for Head Start, Early Head Start, and CCDF.

Table IV.1. Resources to help states align requirements of Head Start, Early Head Start, and CCDF

Resource	Pages	Description
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Section III and IV, pages 16 to 27	The toolkit from Start Early includes several resources meant to enable a state administrator to begin braiding or blending funding streams. Part III provides policy recommendations for aligning regulatory requirements of key early learning funding streams, including Head Start, Early Head Start, subsidies (CCDF and TANF), and state-funded programs. These policy recommendations address eligibility and enrollment issues, programmatic issues (such as ages of children served and length of day and year), and funding issues. Part VI includes a series of tables that highlight various policy strategies that states use to align requirements for CCDF and state-funded programs with Head Start and Early Head Start. These strategies aim to facilitate braiding and blending of funding to provide high-quality, comprehensive full-day and full-year services] for young children from families with low income.
Side-by-Side Comparison of Federal and State Requirements for Early Childhood Education Services (2014)	Pages 7 to 9	This resource from ACF shows elements of Early Head Start and CCDF legislation and regulations with the option to add state-funded program requirements. This document can facilitate side-by-side comparison of these funding streams and provide insight about how to change requirements to better coordinate funding streams and improve access for families for these services.

Resource	Pages	Description
Top Ten Ways CCDF Can Support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (2017)	n.a.	This resource from ACF describes strategies to bridge differences in policy, operations, and funding requirements between Early Head Start and CCDF. The document includes 10 areas of CCDF policy that can support Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, such as aligning eligibility policies so that more families are eligible for both Early Head Start and child care subsidies as well as aligning Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships eligibility dates with Early Head Start enrollment dates. Both sections of this resource describe how lead agencies can use Head Start provisions that allow a percentage of families with income higher than the federal poverty level to be served. This, in turn, could help such partnerships more effectively meet their enrollment goal.
Expanding High-Quality Child Care for Infants & Toddlers: Lessons from Implementation of Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships in States (2012)	n.a.	This report from Start Early provides multiple examples of how states participating in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships revised their subsidy eligibility rules to meet its eligibility requirements. For example, states gave children eligible for a Partnership slot categorical eligibility or prioritized them to secure a subsidy.
Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships: Growing the Supply of Early Learning Opportunities for More Infants and Toddlers (2016)	Section IV, pages 24 to 31	This report from ACF describes how states participating in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program are implementing more flexible CCDF eligibility policies. For example, one state allows children enrolled in a partnership slot to be determined eligible for a subsidy for the length of enrollment in the partnership (up to three years for child care centers and up to four years for family child care). Other states have waived co-payments for families at or below the poverty level.
The Importance of Continuity of Care: Policies and Practices in Early Childhood Systems and Programs (2015)	Pages 10 to 12	This brief from Start Early discusses recommendations for states to align eligibility rules between child care subsidies and other programs including Head Start, Early Head Start, and state pre-K.

ACF = Administration for Children and Families; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Aligning requirements of CCDF and TANF

In Table IV.2, we describe resources available to help states align eligibility and reporting requirements of CCDF and TANF.

Table IV.2. Resources to help states align requirements of CCDF and TANF

Resource	Pages	Description
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2014)	Section III and IV, pages 16 to 27	The toolkit from Start Early includes several resources meant to enable a state administrator to begin braiding or blending funding streams. Part III provides policy recommendations for aligning regulatory requirements of key early learning funding streams, including Head Start, Early Head Start, subsidies (CCDF and TANF), and state-funded programs. These policy recommendations address eligibility and enrollment issues, programmatic issues (such as ages of children served and length of day and year), and funding issues. Part VI includes a series of tables that highlight various policy strategies that states use to align requirements for CCDF and state-funded programs with Head Start and Early Head Start. These strategies aim to facilitate braiding and blending of funding to provide high-quality, comprehensive full-day and full-year services for young children from families with low income.
Collaboration Between CCDF and TANF to Meet the Needs of Low-Income Working Families (2019)	n.a.	This brief from ACF offers several suggestions to help ensure eligibility is aligned between CCDF and TANF. Suggestions include policies along which eligibility can be aligned, such as the date assistance begins, composition of the eligibility unit, and verification practices.

ACF = Administration for Children and Families; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Aligning requirements of state pre-K and federal funding streams

In Table IV.3, we describe resources available to help states align eligibility and reporting requirements for state pre-K and federal funding streams.

Table IV.3. Resources to help states align requirements of state pre-K and federal funding streams

Resource	Pages	Description
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Section III and IV, pages 16 to 27	The toolkit from Start Early includes several resources meant to enable a state administrator to begin braiding or blending funding streams. Part III provides policy recommendations for aligning regulatory requirements of key early learning funding streams, including Head Start, Early Head Start, subsidies (CCDF and TANF), and state-funded programs. These policy recommendations address eligibility and enrollment issues, programmatic issues (such as ages of children served and length of day and year), and funding issues. Part VI includes a series of tables that highlight various policy strategies that states use to align requirements for CCDF and state-funded programs with Head Start and Early Head Start. These strategies aim to facilitate braiding and blending of funding to provide high-quality, comprehensive full-day and full-year services for young children from families with low income.
Side-by-Side Comparison of Federal and State Requirements for Early Childhood Education Services (2014)	Pages 7 to 9	This resource from ACF shows elements of Early Head Start and CCDF legislation and regulations with the option to add state-funded program requirements. This document can facilitate side-by-side comparison of these funding streams and provide insight about how to change requirements to better coordinate funding streams and improve access for families for these services.

Resource	Pages	Description
Layering Funding for Quality ECE (2018)	n.a.	This short article lists questions stakeholders can ask to assess the alignment between CCDF plans and the state pre-K system. For example, one question asks whether CCDF eligibility rules ensure 12-month eligibility for families.

Aligning Medicaid eligibility with other programs

In Table IV.4, we describe resources available to help states align Medicaid eligibility with other programs.

Table IV.4. Resources to help states align requirements of Medicaid with other programs

Resource	Pages	Description
Blending, Braiding, and Block-Granting Funds for Public Health and Prevention: Implications for States (2017)	Pages 9, 10, 16, 22	This report from the National Academy for State Health Policy, the de Beaumont Foundation, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials describes how Medicaid eligibility can be expanded to overlap with safety net programs. The report provides examples of models that states can use.

Examples of how states have aligned eligibility requirements

- The [Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit](#) from Start Early provides several examples of how states have aligned eligibility requirements of funding streams.
 - In the **Illinois Child Care Collaboration program**, the state extended the eligibility period (annual eligibility versus six months), job search period (90 days versus 30 days), and maintained indefinite eligibility when children’s or families’ participation in the program is part of their TANF Responsibilities and Services Plan. A 2007 evaluation of this program found that the program led to longer eligibility periods and increased provision of services in one location, increased program quality, increased daily attendance, and increased community partnership and collaboration.
 - **Washington State** passed legislation to expand subsidy eligibility from six to 12 months before it was required by the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. In July 2011, Washington piloted a 12-month eligibility cycle for families receiving Working Connections Child Care subsidies for recipients who participate in Head Start, Early Head Start, or state preschool programs. In spring 2012, the Washington legislature passed legislation that expanded the extended eligibility to all current Working Connections Child Care participants.
- An article called [Layering Funding for Quality ECE](#) (Reidt-Parker and Wallen 2018), describes how states have implemented CCDF in ways that support capacity for braiding and blending funds at the local level.
 - For example, some states define participation in Head Start or Early Head Start as work for the purposes of subsidy eligibility to reduce barriers to families’ receipt of services. States can make similar decisions to align definitions of parental work, education, and training; family income eligibility and processes for eligibility determination; priorities for categorical eligibility; and payment rates and policies.

- Some states have also involved boards of education in the development of the CCDF plan to increase alignment between CCDF and state pre-K. For example, in California, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, and Oregon, the state board of education is involved in the development of the CCDF plan. During public comment periods for CCDF plans, state boards also have the opportunity to review their state’s CCDF plan and comment on alignment between the plan and the state pre-K system. State boards of education can also review the CCDF plan to determine the state’s priorities for professional development and encourage policies for cross-system professional development.

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V. Develop shared goals and a plan for collaboration

A collaborative planning process involving multiple funding streams, agencies, or departments can help promote ongoing and sustainable coordination throughout the braiding process. Facilitating coordination between funding streams upstream at the state level can help simplify the braiding process for providers, children, and families (Wallen and Hubbard 2013). States can use cross-sector, interagency, or interdepartmental councils or organizations to support this coordination. For example, state Children’s Cabinets can provide opportunities for states to establish high-level interagency planning groups to coordinate funding and programs across agencies (Butler et al. 2020). States might also seek to establish a task force, council, or committee that includes program representatives with decision making authority to lead collaboration efforts (Cate and Peters 2018).

The tables that follow show sources of information to support a collaborative planning process. The tables also show sources of information that can provide guidance on developing venues for interagency or interdepartmental collaboration.

Supporting collaborative planning between agencies and departments

Table V.1 shows resources that provide guidance on how to support collaborative planning between different agencies or departments, including how to develop project plans with braided funding models, as well as worksheets and self-assessment tools.

Table V.1. Resources to support collaborative planning between agencies and departments

Resources	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Blended and Braided Funding: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners (2014)	Chapter V and Chapter VI, pages 17 to 21	<p>This guide from the Association of Government Accountants provides guidance for partners in the planning process of implementing blended and braided programs. Chapter V describes how to develop project plans by doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a needs assessment, including a link to the U.S. Department of Education’s Designing Schoolwide Programs – Non-Regulatory Guidance, which provides an overview of how states can comprehensively assess their needs. • Developing a consolidating project plan in collaboration with project stakeholders. The guide provides an overview of key stakeholders to include in collaborative planning and links to the U.S. Government Accountability Office report Managing for Results, which includes the its recommended approaches to enhance collaboration in interagency groups. • Developing a consolidated budget to specify the amount of funding coming from each program. • Monitoring accountability by evaluating key outputs, outcomes, and performance measures. <p>Chapter VI includes a decision framework that users can use to determine whether projects are suitable candidates for braided or blended funds and to identify issues that might have been previously overlooked in the decision making process. This includes key questions stakeholders should ask to determine whether projects are suitable candidates for blended and braided funding and to identify key barriers or challenges.</p>

Resources	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit (2018)	Early Childhood Program Comparison Worksheet	This toolkit from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center includes a worksheet, the Early Childhood Programs Comparison Worksheet , that agency partners can complete to describe the crucial requirements and elements of programs funded by various funding stream. The worksheet prompts partners and teams to identify state, regional, or local agencies and the leads of each funding stream. In addition, the worksheet prompts partners and teams to identify key elements of program structure and oversight, program operations (such as eligibility and enrollment), program requirements (such as class size and teacher–child ratio), child development and learning (such as learning standards and curriculum), and behavior supports and requirements (such as positive behavior supports and suspension and expulsion). The worksheet can help compare programs such as the state pre-K, the Preschool Development Grant, Head Start, Special Education, Title I, and Child Care.
QRIS Resource Guide - Cost Projections and Financing (2019)	Initial Design Process	This tool, which focuses on creating a QRIS, speaks directly about partnership and working together to identify key stakeholders. The initial design process section of the guide discusses establishing a shared QRIS vision and goals by working to clearly define it, using QRIS as a framework for quality improvement efforts, education and building support among policymakers and state and community leaders, education and building support among private funders and businesses, building the design process and the key role that partners play in that, and strategic planning.
State Initiatives to Promote Early Learning: Next Steps in Coordinating Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten (2001)	Section II.A, pages 5 to 9; Appendix A; Appendix B; Appendix C	Section II.A of this report from the Center for Law and Social Policy provides guidance on how states can develop a comprehensive vision for coordinated early learning services that encompasses the need for early education and family work supports. This section describes how policymakers in three states, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Ohio, re-envisioned how these services fit together. It includes a brief discussion of how early education leaders in each state communicated with other key stakeholders. Appendices A to C provide detailed information about the teams that operated in each of these three states.
Virginia Early Childhood Integrated Financing Toolkit (2019)	Pages 23, 25 to 28	This toolkit from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation recommends jurisdictions develop a community-wide early childhood plan and identifies some issues for communities to consider, such as potential stakeholders to include in the plan development. The toolkit links to the Integrated Financing Self-Assessment Tool to help communities evaluate how they are using available early childhood education resources. The self-assessment tool guides communities in identifying assets and gaps, developing steps to address challenges, and fostering commitments to expand and sustain coordination.

QRIS = quality rating and improvement system.

Developing venues for interagency or interdepartmental collaboration

Table V.2 shows resources on developing and using venues for interagency or interdepartmental collaboration.

Table V.2. Resources on developing venues for interagency or interdepartmental collaboration

Resources	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Budgeting to Promote Social Objectives - A Primer on Braiding and Blending (2020)	Pages 25 to 31	<p>This guide from the Brookings Institution highlights the role that interagency planning groups can play in coordinating funding for specific objectives across agencies. It offers guidance to states looking to create an infrastructure of collaboration and coordination. This section provides guidance about five ways that states can support these efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency planning and coordination, including the use of interagency planning groups such as Children’s Cabinets and interagency homelessness councils • New bodies and powers for collaboration, in which states establish new bodies to act as managers of braided or blended funds • Locally established bodies, in which special local institutions carry out coordinated planning and funding functions outside a formal state framework • Making use of federal waivers as a platform for granting permission to lower levels of government • Data sharing and evaluation to promote the value of evaluation and describe the net impact of cross-sector collaboration <p>The various approaches states can use to establish these entities, such as through legislation or through a governor’s executive order, are discussed.</p>
Policy Statement to Support the Alignment of Health and Early Learning Systems (n.d.)	Pages 7 to 8	<p>This policy statement from HHS and ED recommends that states and communities build on existing infrastructure to support coordination across health and learning programs and systems. It lists a number of potential councils and coordinating bodies that could be tapped to help align health and learning programs and systems.</p>
Joint Statement: State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care: Advancing Work Beyond Federal Financing (2016)	n.a.	<p>This policy statement from HHS and ED provides guidance to State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care on activities that the councils can undertake to support coordinated, high quality, and comprehensive systems of early childhood education in states. It includes recommendations for activities to keep current and relevant; to revise statewide plans to meet identified needs; and to align policies and leverage funding across early childhood programs.</p>

ED = U.S. Department of Education; HHS = U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; n.a. = not applicable.

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VI. Build state or local programs that use multiple funding streams

Finding opportunities to braid upstream at the state or local agency level, rather than downstream at the individual provider level, can simplify the process for providers. In this section, we describe resources on lessons learned and recommended best practices for braiding at the state or local level. These resources also provide case studies and examples of how states and localities have leveraged multiple funding streams for users as they develop state or local initiatives and programs that leverage multiple funding streams.

General lessons learned from programs, initiatives, and systems that use multiple funding streams

In Table VI.1, we list resources that describe general lessons learned and best practices from state and local efforts to braid funding streams.

Table VI.1. Resources describing general lessons from programs, initiatives, and systems that use multiple funding streams

Resource	Sections or pages	Description of information included in resource
Blended and Braided Funding: Sharing Costs Across Multiple Sectors (2020)	Pages 6 to 10	This document provides several examples from different states to show the variety of ways state and federal initiatives have leveraged multiple funding streams to support children and families. It describes common challenges and provides a brief list of recommendations to consider when blending and braiding public and private funds at the state level.
Blended and Braided Funding: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners (2014)	Pages 17 to 18	This guide from the Association of Government Accounts provides lessons learned based on case studies that can broadly inform efforts to implement programs with blended or braided funding. It offers recommendations that can apply to programs with braided or blended funding models as well as programs with blended funding models specifically.
Blending, Braiding, and Block-Granting Funds for Public Health and Prevention: Implications for States (2017)	n.a.	This report from the National Academy for State Health Policy focuses on Medicaid and the ways in which the program itself is a partnership between states and the federal government, with both parties bearing a portion of the cost. The guide highlights different scenarios in which states could respond strategically to reduce the structure of block grants and categorical funding to work toward greater flexibility in response to changing federal funding for public and population health.

n.a. = not applicable.

Lessons learned from programs, initiatives, and systems that leverage multiple funding streams to expand access to early care and education

Table VI.2 lists resources that provide lessons learned and best practices from prior state and local efforts to braid funding streams in order to expand access to early care and education.

Table VI.2. Resources describing lessons from programs, initiatives, and systems that use multiple funding streams to expand access to ECE

Resource	Sections or pages	Description of information included in resource
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Part IV, pages 22 to 26	Part IV of this toolkit from Start Early discusses promising strategies states are using to blend and braid early learning funding streams. It includes examples of how states have supported coordination between child care subsidies, Head Start, EHS, and state pre-K.
Expanding Access to Early Head Start: State Initiatives for Infants and Toddlers at Risk (2012)	Pages 5 to 12	This report from the Center for Law and Social Policy describes the various funding sources and policy strategies that states are using to expand EHS services. These state-level initiatives include extending the day or year of EHS services, expanding the capacity of EHS programs, providing resources and assistance to child care providers to achieve EHS standards, and supporting partnerships between EHS and other ECE providers to improve quality. To support these initiatives, states leveraged a variety of funding sources, such as CCDBG, TANF, MIECHV, state general revenues, tobacco settlement revenues, gaming revenue, and private funding. The report concludes with recommendations to states.
State Initiatives to Promote Early Learning: Next Steps in Coordinating Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten (2001)	Part III, pages 33 to 36; Appendices A to C	This report from the Center for Law and Social Policy provides general recommendations to states interested in developing ECE initiatives to coordinate Head Start, child care subsidies, and state pre-K. The recommendations are supported by appendices that include detailed profiles of three state initiatives: (1) Georgia's universal pre-K initiative, which uses state lottery funds to programs to supplement CCDF, Head Start, and Title I funding among other funding sources, with a local match; (2) Massachusetts's Community Partnerships for Children model, which is a state-to-local grant program funded through state dollars and TANF that can be combined with Head Start and CCDF funding to expand access to high quality preschool services; and (3) Head Start's Targeted Head Start Expansion Initiative that draws on state appropriations and private funding to expand Head Start services.
Using Contracts and Grants to Build the Supply of High-Quality Child Care: State Strategies and Practices (2016)	n.a.	This paper from the Administration for Children and Families provides a comprehensive review of how states are using contracts and grants with CCDBG funds—often in conjunction with state quality rating and improvement systems and federal funding streams including Head Start, EHS, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, TANF, and Title I preschool programs—to increase the supply and quality of child care. Payment practices, approaches to monitoring and oversight, general lessons learned, and best practices for using contracts and grants are discussed.
Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education (2018)	Pages 210 to 213	The report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends that states act as the coordinator for most federal and state revenue streams and financing mechanisms. It highlights New York City's Early Learn initiative as a successful example of such coordination. The resource briefly describes this model, which includes three ECE programs and combines four funding streams (CCDBG, Head Start, state pre-K, and city tax levy).

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund; ECE = early care and education; EHS = Early Head Start; MIECHV = Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Lessons learned from programs, initiatives, and systems that leverage multiple funding streams to expand access to comprehensive child and family services

Table VI.3 lists resources describing lessons learned and best practices from state and local efforts to braid funding streams to expand access to comprehensive child and family services.

Table VI.3. Resources describing lessons from state and local efforts that use multiple funding streams to expand access to comprehensive child and family services

Resource	Sections or pages	Description of information included in resource
Adding It Up: A Guide for Mapping Public Resources for Children, Youth and Families (2006)	Pages 14 to 19	This guide from the Forum for Youth Investment briefly describes how states are using Medicaid to finance statewide home visiting programs, often in conjunction with other federal funding streams such as MIECHV, Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, TANF, Child Welfare, and Head Start. The guide describes the focus of each program and funding stream and briefly discusses how states overcome challenges to braiding federal funding sources.
Coverage of Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Services (2016)	Entire report (state example is on page 9)	This Joint Information Bulletin from the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services discusses how Medicaid can fund some components of home visiting services and provides and an example of one state's efforts. On page 9, the report provides an example of how South Carolina received approval to implement a home visiting pilot for pregnant women and children called the South Carolina Enhanced Prenatal and Postpartum Home Visitation Pilot Project.
Expanding Access to Early Head Start: State Initiatives for Infants and Toddlers at Risk (2012)	Pages 5 to 12	This report from the Center for Law and Social Policy describes the various funding sources and policy strategies that states are using to expand EHS services. These state-level initiatives include extending the day or year of EHS services, expanding the capacity of EHS programs, providing resources and assistance to child care providers to achieve EHS standards, and supporting partnerships between EHS and other ECE providers to improve quality. To support these initiatives, states leveraged a variety of funding sources, such as CCDBG, TANF, MIECHV, state general revenues, tobacco settlement revenues, gaming revenue, and private funding. The report concludes with recommendations to states.
Financing Guidance for IECMHC (n.d.)	n.a.	This report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration describes how states, tribes, and communities can conduct needs assessments, consider the key gaps in services a program aims to fund, identify the cost of these services, and identify what funds align best with IECMHC services. It recommends that a program should identify its messenger, gather all of the relevant information and develop the ask, and schedule the ask. It also provides guidance on making the request by demonstrating real-life needs and making the ask. The resource then suggests that a program follow up by debriefing with the team, following up with the funder within 24 hours and asking for feedback if the request is not accepted. It concludes by advising a program to continue to champion IECMHC and prepare for the next ask.

Resource	Sections or pages	Description of information included in resource
Policy Statement to Support the Alignment of Health and Early Learning Systems (n.d.)	Pages 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17	<p>This policy statement from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education recommends expanding evidence-based home visiting programs and provides a high-level discussion of ways home visiting can be funded, such as through MIECHV, Medicaid, and CHIP. This resource also recommends embedding health supports in early learning settings by leveraging funding from the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program, exploring place-based initiatives to support early childhood efforts, and collaborating to implement nutrition and physical activity strategies by using the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.</p>
Putting it Together: A Guide to Financing Comprehensive Services in Child Care and Early Education (2012)	Pages 13 to 20	<p>This guide from the Center for Law and Social Policy offers state and local case studies of successful efforts to deliver comprehensive services to children in child care settings. Each case study details the specific funding streams used and how states implemented the partnership. The examples are organized into states that are working to connect children to preventive health services and treatment (Arizona, Iowa, New York and Maine), states and programs that are supporting children's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and a program in Michigan); and states and programs that are focusing on promoting family support, engagement, and leadership (Tennessee and Washington State).</p>
A Sourcebook on Medicaid's Role in Early Childhood: Advancing High Performing Medical Homes and Improving Lifelong Health (2018)	Part five, pages 71 to 84	<p>Part 5 of this sourcebook from the Child and Family Policy Center States provides an overview of the mechanisms within Medicaid to finance social-emotional or mental health supports for young children and their parents (for example, early childhood mental health consultation, parent-child therapy). The report includes ways states or pediatric medical homes can braid Medicaid with other federal programs to pay for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visiting programs (braided with MIECHV funds) • Early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with physical, developmental, or mental disabilities (braided with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B and C and Title V funds) • Mental health and substance abuse treatment services, including home visiting, for children who are candidates of foster care or their parents (braided with funds from the Family First Prevention Act) <p>The sourcebook also describes how Medicaid alone could be used for prevention or treatment services within primary care practices (such as by hiring a parent educator).</p>

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; CHIP = Children's Health Insurance Program; ECE = early care and education; EHS = Early Head Start; IECMHC = Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation; MIECHV = Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting; n.a. = not applicable; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Lessons learned from programs, initiatives, and systems that leverage multiple funding streams to improve ECE quality

Table VI.4 lists resources describing lessons learned and best practices from state and local efforts to braid funding streams to improve ECE quality.

Table VI.4. Resources describing lessons from state and local efforts that use multiple funding streams to improve ECE quality

Resource	Sections or pages	Description of information included in resource
Expanding High-Quality Child Care for Infants & Toddlers Lessons from Implementation of Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships in States (2020)	Pages 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 19, 23, 27, 31, 34, 39, 43	This report from Start Early provides examples of how states used EHS, CCDBG, and EHS-Child Care Partnership funds to support quality improvement and professional development needs of Partnership programs. For example, some states made EHS training available to community providers. Others used CCDBG set-aside funds to help providers earn a higher credential. Some states raised the payments to subsidized providers participating in the Partnership to reflect the higher standards they had to meet.
Layering Funding for Quality ECE (2018)	Shared professional development, page 30	This article from Reidt-Parker and Wallen describes how state boards of education can advocate for the inclusion of early childhood system providers in state-level pre-K professional development investments. Specifically, it suggests that state boards of education can ask local districts to consider how they can use Every Student Succeeds Act funds to support collaborative professional development between the pre-K and early childhood systems.
State Issues and Innovations in Creating Integrated Early Learning and Development Systems (2011)	Pages 6, 39, 45	This report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education describes state efforts to leverage federal investments in and build infrastructure to support an integrated professional development system. For example, the resource recommends integrating federal training and technical assistance resources with state systems and highlights foundation-funded programs to support professional development. The resource also discusses efforts to increase the access to high quality care for vulnerable children from families with low income. For example, one state uses federal Child Care and Development and state funding to provide grants to Head Start and EHS programs to partner with local providers.
QRIS Resource Guide - Cost Projections and Financing (2019)	Step 3	This section of the QRIS Resource Guides says that state QRIS should be a collaborative effort among various stakeholders that aim to come together to leverage multiple funding streams. The guide discusses how QRIS funding strategies mean leveraging, in most cases, more than one funding stream. It discussed the need for a road map of potential sources and a strategy for securing those funding streams. This section of the guide suggests that those hoping to implement a QRIS assess the resources at their disposal, which could be in different state agencies. This section also links to the Initial Design Process section of the guide, which offers guidance as to which stakeholders or entities should be at the table. It also offers guidance about ways in which key partners can be vested in the process.

CCDBG = Child Care and Development Block Grant; EHS = Early Head Start; QRIS = quality rating and improvement system.

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VII. Develop governance structures to support collaboration

States have used governance structures to support collaboration between agencies and other key players in state or local early care and education systems. Having a single agency, department, or other organization oversee multiple funding streams can break down siloes and support coordination of funding at the state level. Table VII.1 shows resources for users to find recommendations and examples of governance structures that can support the implementation of coordinated early care and education systems.

Table VII.1. Resources to help states develop collaborative governance structures

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
State Initiatives to Promote Early Learning: Next Steps in Coordinating Subsidized Child Care, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten (2001)	Section II.A, pages 5 to 9; Appendix A; Appendix B; Appendix C	This report from the Center for Law and Social Policy describes the governance structures that three states, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Ohio, have used to implement their coordinated early care and education early learning initiatives or child care services. For example, Georgia's universal pre-K program is run by an independent agency that oversees pre-K, licensing of pre-K providers, federal food funding (including the Child and Adult Care Food Program) and other initiatives. Massachusetts has consolidated licensing and subsidy functions under one agency, the Office of Child Care Services, which also oversee TANF block grant funds.
State Issues and Innovations in Creating Integrated Early Learning and Development Systems (2011)	Chapter 1, pages 15 to 23	This report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education describes how states can adapt state governance to coordinate and align early development services. This chapter highlights some examples of how states have aligned their systems among themselves, including sharing authority across state-level sectors and agencies by creating a Children's Cabinet or memoranda of understanding, as well as with local public or private boards or partnerships to support coordination. The report also describes approaches states can take to leverage opportunities presented by early childhood advisory councils.
Ensuring Equitable Access to Funding for All Birth-to-Five Classroom-Based Early Childhood Programs (2019)	Page 22	This report from Illinois Early Learning Council recommends creating a new governance structure for each childhood funding stream that provides a single entity with the responsibility and authority for publicly funded classroom-based early learning services. The report argues that lack of coordination and alignment across funding streams at the state level has placed the burden of navigating complex funding and compliance systems on providers of early childhood services and family supports. It recommends ways the state can develop and implement a coordinated governance approach. These recommendations might inform other state's efforts to implement similar coordinated governance structures.

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VIII. Support braiding at the provider level

A single funding source often does not adequately address children and families’ needs for high-quality early care and education. As a result, individual providers and program administrators might seek to combine funds from multiple sources to offer the programming children and families need (Fonseca 2017, Wallen and Hubbard 2013).

In this section, we highlight resources that illustrate approaches to facilitate braiding funding streams at the individual provider level. State and local users can employ these resources to provide technical assistance, training, and other supports to providers in their state or locality to help in their use of multiple funding streams.

Common challenges to braiding at the individual provider level

Multiple resources have highlighted the challenges of braiding at the individual provider level (also known as braiding downstream). For example, braided funding approaches can require significant staff time and resources to manage each funding stream’s requirements, which might not align (Wallen and Hubbard 2013). The requirements of funding streams can differ and using multiple funding streams often requires complex cost allocation methods (Illinois Early Learning Council 2019). In addition, providers might not have adequate resources or training to meet the tracking and reporting requirements of multiple funding streams.

When seeking to use multiple funding streams, administrators of early care and education providers must be able to determine that funds from a specific stream follow its particular regulations and that funds are only used for eligible children and families (Fonseca 2017). Providers that typically rely on one funding source might not be familiar with the requirements associated with other funding streams, making it difficult to identify additional funding streams that could serve to support children and families in their program (Illinois Early Learning Council 2019).

State supports for braiding at the provider level

Table VIII.1 describes a report from the Illinois Early Learning Council that recommends specific types of supports states can provide to facilitate braiding at the program level.

Table VIII.1. Resources describing state supports for braiding at the provider level

Resource	Description of information included in resource
Ensuring Equitable Access to Funding for All Birth-to-Five Classroom-Based Early Childhood Programs: Illinois Early Learning Council Integration and Alignment Committee Mixed Delivery System Ad Hoc Committee Report and Recommendation (2019)	A 2019 report from the Illinois Early Learning Council recommends specific types of supports states can provide to facilitate braiding and blending at the program level. This report describes the recommendations from a committee tasked with promoting a mixed delivery system in Illinois. The committee recommends that the state create a system to individualize support, technical assistance, and mentoring to promote community-based organizations' participation in the state infant-toddler and preschool program delivery system. The supports can help providers understand the state program requirements and how to manage combined funding streams.

Approaches to using multiple funding streams at the individual provider level

Table VIII.2 describes resources about different approaches to facilitating the use of multiple funding streams at the provider level. These include resources that provide an overview of different braiding approaches, shared services approaches, and detailed examples of how administrators have managed multiple funding streams.

Table VIII.2. Resources that describe different approaches to using multiple funding streams at the individual provider level

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs (2013)	Part II, Sections C and D, pages 14 to 15	<p>Sections C and D of this toolkit, from Start Early, provide an overview of why braiding and blending is necessary and describe the evolution of blending and braiding approaches. These sections describe the two types of collaboration models that have emerged to support braiding and blending early childhood funding streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One agency, multiple funders model. A single program or agency braids or blends funding from multiple sources at a single site. For example, a center might use state pre-K funding, child care funding, and other revenue sources to provide full-day, full-year services. • Multiple agencies model. Two or more agencies partner to serve children at one site. Agencies can co-locate, share space, and share programming and funding. Costs might be covered through subcontracts, purchase of services, or other agreements. For example, a Head Start program might contract with a child care center to provide full-day, full-year services.
Braiding, Blending, and Layering Funding Sources to Increase Access to Quality Preschool (n.d.)	Pages 4 to 7	The Preschool Development Grant brief examines blending, braiding, and layering as strategies to support and sustain high-quality preschool. This section presents findings from structured interviews with program administrators in multiple states. Findings include details about how administrators, including school district personnel, a Head Start director, and the owner and director of a child care program, managed multiple funding streams.
Financing High-Quality Center-Based Infant-Toddler Care: Options and Opportunities (2015)	Section 6, pages 15 to 20	Section 6 of this report from Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start highlights approaches to encourage and support systems-building at the provider level for high-quality, center-based infant and toddler care. It provides four examples of shared services models that pool key administrative functions across multiple centers and programs to improve quality and efficiency. The topic is introduced to state leaders as a potential model to consider.

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit (2018)	Pages 12 to 15	<p>The toolkit from ECTA provides an overview of how braiding and blending funds can increase access to inclusive high-quality preschool programs for all children. It provides examples of funding strategies to better include special needs children in high-quality programs. These examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost sharing in which each program pays the same amount per child • Cost sharing in which cost contribution occurs when a funding source contributes money to the program • Specific cost sharing in which funds are contributed for a specific funding source • Fee for service or private pay • In-kind sharing; class size waivers and funded enrollment
Virginia Early Childhood Integrated Financing Toolkit (n.d.)	Early Childhood Integrated Financing	<p>The toolkit links to information and resources about Virginia's Coordinated Enrollment initiative, which seeks to simplify early childhood enrollment processes and reduce the burden on families and providers. The initiative aims to coordinate eligibility criteria across early childhood programs, use a common application, and create a shared waitlist. The online toolkit includes links to resources related to the Coordinated Enrollment initiative, such as a self-assessment tool and an information sheet, that local communities can reference to support coordination between programs and providers.</p>

Guidance on braiding for program administrators

In Table VIII.3, we describe resources for program administrators that provide in-depth, step-by-step guidance on how to braid funds from multiple sources.

Table VIII.3. Resources that provide in-depth guidance on braiding for program administrators

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Blended and Braided Funding: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners (2014)	Chapter V and VI, pages 17 to 21	<p>Chapter VI of this report from the Association of Government Accountants includes a decision framework (that is, a series of general questions) that users can employ to determine whether their program is a candidate for braided and blended funding. Chapter V also includes a few recommended practices for programs implementing braided and blended funding, including conducting a needs assessment and developing a consolidated project plan and budget.</p>

Resource	Section or pages	Description of information included in resource
Blending and Braiding Toolkit (n.d.)	n.a.	<p>The toolkit from the Spark Institute can be used directly by program administrators. The toolkit is set up as a free online course. It is written in plain language and offers a step-by-step guide for programs to implement fiscal braiding and blending. The guide takes a comprehensive view of the process from identifying a vision and partners to developing and implementing a coordinated financing plan. The toolkit is supported by checklists, templates, and case studies. This toolkit is provided as a free online course: users are required to register for an account with the Spark Institute to access the toolkit.</p>
Early Childhood Guide to Blending & Braiding in New York: A "How To" Guide (2013)	n.a.	<p>This is a how-to guide produced by the Sparks Policy Institute for the New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council. It was developed to be a practical tool for organizations and communities to help them undertake the planning process for blended and braiding funding models. This guide provides definitions of blending and braiding as well as actionable information intended to help users develop blended and braided funding models. The guide includes hypothetical examines of braiding and blending funding approaches.</p>
Blending and Braiding Funds to Support Early Childhood Education Programs: Your "How To" Guide (n.d.)	n.a.	<p>This is a how-to guide produced by the Sparks Policy Institute for the New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council that is intended as a supplement to the Early Childhood Guide to Blending and Braiding in New York. It was developed to be a practical tool for child care providers, Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, and other early childhood education programs to help them plan for blending and braiding. This guide provides specific, concrete examples of best practices in blending and braiding funding sources, including calculation and reporting strategies, that users could directly map on to their own programs by plugging in the necessary values, eligibility information, and reporting requirements.</p>

n.a. = not applicable.

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