Wisconsin RTT-ELC 2016 Desk Monitoring
Written Responses to Discussion Questions

Question 1: Describe your plan for spending the amounts budgeted in the remaining years of the grant, and any obstacles you foresee to spending the grant funds. How do your drawdown amounts differ from the amounts you have obligated?

Wisconsin recently made a system-wide change in our finance system which has forced us to re-create the entire system for monitoring spending and reporting. Once finance can validate their expenditure information DCF will build queries that can extract the RTTT spending detail. The new system also created the need for all agencies to create new mechanisms for invoicing and billing. This has created a significant delay in spending being invoiced and billed to DCF from the other state agencies. We are confident that we are getting back on track and have been using "informal" means of tracking our contracts to ensure that work is still being completed and funds are still being spent.

I have attached a budget table that outlines by project the funds which have been spent (drawndown), the funds that are obligated (according to your definition and including staff time and overhead), and the funds which have not been spent and are not obligated. This last type of funds (the column on the far right) is the funds included in the cost extension as funds which will be spent in 2017.

Question 2: Wisconsin is not meeting all of its targets for participation in TQRIS, particularly in Head Start, Early Head Start, and public preschool programs connected with school districts. How are you addressing these barriers to participation? Also, how are you addressing challenges related to tracking participation by different types of programs?

A. **How are you addressing barriers to participation?**
   In order to address participation barriers of Head Start/Early Head Start we continue to have open communication with the Office of Head Start and Early Head Start by attending meetings and participating in conference calls to talk about YoungStar and answer questions. We also attend the Head Start conferences to present about YoungStar and quality child care. We are creating a crosswalk that aligns the Head Start learning standards with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.

   The target for Head Start/Early Head Start participation in TQRIS for Year 3 was 108 (80%). We reported 138 (51%) Head Start/Early Head Start programs were participating in TQRIS during Year 3 so in terms of number of programs we are exceeding our target.

   In order to address participation barriers for state-funded preschool programs (4K and 4KCA) we continue to participate in and hold annual leadership meetings and conferences. There are numerous documents and presentations connecting and aligning the 4K/4KCA requirements and YoungStar and outlining the benefits to 4K/4KCA to participating in TQRIS.

B. **How are you addressing challenges related to tracking participation by different types of programs?**

The targets for participation in TQRIS were set with the assumption that the number of regulated providers would remain steady. In Wisconsin, we see a trend that has played out nationally in the decline of regulated programs. With that comes the decline of YoungStar participation as well. While the percentage of regulated programs participating in YoungStar has remained at 80% for years, the number of regulated providers continues to decline. There have also been a number of changes to policy regarding Head Start/Early Head Start since the target numbers were set. Additionally, the numbers that are reported are not necessarily reflective of the actual participation in YoungStar by these two program types; they may just reflect limitations in our data collection system.

Recently, we have added a feature to our YoungStar automated Case Management System (CMS) what will allow us to collect information on Head Start sites that also have a child care program and report the YoungStar Rating of that child care program. Previously we only had information in CMS on stand-alone Head Start programs that were automatically rated at 5 stars. Changes in policy regarding Head Start automated ratings and CMS limitations created data that was not accurate. An enhancement to CMS is planned for state fiscal year 2017 that create the ability to report this information.

Similarly, there is not currently a mechanism for collecting information on the YoungStar rating of the child care portion of 4K/4KCA. DPI is currently working on a survey by which we could collect information from public school districts about their participation in 4KCA. Identifying the child care or community site would allow DCF to match that information in CMS and determine the YoungStar rating of child care.

Question 3: Last year Wisconsin implemented a new mandatory family engagement point in its TQRIS. Describe the roll-out and progress of this initiative.

In 2016 YoungStar quality indicator C.5.1-6 Family Engagement supports programs in earning up to two *optional* points within YoungStar. Participating programs are eligible to earn 1 point if five practices are evident and 2 points if ten practices are evident. Programs have a total of 42 options in five categories: transitioning, family engagement, family communication strategies, family support strategies, and family community connection strategies. In 2017 YoungStar evaluation criteria *requires* that programs rated at a 3 Star level earn 1 FE point and 4 and 5 Star rated programs earn two points.

As of June 1, 2016, 328 programs have earned at least 1 of the 2 new FE points, with 219 having earned 1 point and 109 having earned 2 points. There are currently 1315 3 Star rated programs that need to earn 1 of the 2 family engagement points to remain at a 3 Star rating during their 2017/2018 rating. There are currently 150 4 Star and 51 5 Star rated programs that need to earn 2 of the 2 family engagement points to remain at their 4 or 5 Star during their 2017/2018 rating.

We anticipate that continued YoungStar technical consultation on family engagement will ensure that providers are prepared for the 2017/2018 changes. Currently providers are able to attend an in-person training and apply to receive to receive additional onsite coaching and mentoring specific to the new point. In addition, since the criteria to earn points consists of 42 various options, we predict that providers who consistently earn 3, 4, and 5 Star ratings already have many of these practices in place. Starting in 2017, YoungStar is moving to every other year ratings so for 50% of YoungStar programs, the new quality indicators will not be in effect until their 2018 rating increasing the timeline for necessary outreach.

Question 4: Your APR mentions that a validation study report will be released in April 2015; what is the status of that report. Can you provide us with a copy?

The second of two validation study reports was released on 6/2/2016.

They are fairly large files, but there is a link to both full reports and an executive summary here: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/media.htm

The results of the first study showed that YoungStar differentiates among programs of varying observed quality. Specifically, programs rated 2 Stars had lower observed levels of quality than programs at the 3-5 Star levels. The differences were statistically significant and meaningful.

The results of the second study showed that children in the study were performing in accordance with national norms and had increased assessment scores over the course of the school year and would enter school ready to learn. However, analysis of the data did not support the conclusion that children in higher rated YoungStar programs had higher levels of school readiness compared to children in 2 Star programs.

Question 5: How are you providing technical assistance or professional development to address the needs of the high-need populations including: children with disabilities, English language learners, tribal, and homeless?

Children with disabilities
The Early Childhood Inclusion webpages (http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/default.htm) are up-to-date and monitored to ensure consistent, reliable information is provided. These webpages include resources and information for parents and providers. RTTT Staff connects with related professional conferences, internal Department of Children and Families stakeholders, cross agency staff, and community stakeholders to provide informational trainings around the resources available on the Early Childhood Inclusion webpages.

DCF staff is taking the lead on a statewide Inclusion workgroup to plan for an Early Childhood Inclusion Institute to be held in September. The Inclusion Institute will focus on networking and providing consistency between the Departments of Public Instruction, Health Services, and Children and Families around support and roles for inclusive practices. The Institute will allow professionals from different agencies and organizations to share methods and strategies that have proven effective in supporting early childhood inclusion.

DCF and DPI are working in collaboration to create six inclusion training modules to support providers need for further education. The goal is to host the trainings on the early childhood inclusion pages to be accessed on a statewide basis. Currently, the modules are being finalized and prepared to be screened by the Departments of Public Instruction, Health Services, and Children and Families. The goal is to have these trainings available to the public by the end of 2016.

Department of Children and Families staff are working to record trainings on inclusion and host these recordings online. Filming is scheduled to begin in July 2016 with the editing process going through early 2017. The goal of these trainings is to create viable online options for providers and increase the Departments capacity for creating similar trainings in the future. The topics of these trainings are determined by the most recent provider survey about inclusion training needs, which listed challenging behaviors as the largest barrier for inclusive practice.

English Language Learners
The Early Dual Language Learners (DLL) Initiative is being coordinated by WIDA including: statewide needs assessment, continued translations, improved coordination, and conducting professional development. The cross sector group, Early Dual Language Learners Initiative (EDILL), continues to provide a structure to plan, advise, and evaluate the work. In 2015, the focus was on the development of a cadre of personnel trained in DLL that will to provide training in the various early childhood sectors.

The Registry, and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community of Practice (CLD-CoP) have developed a language endorsement for trainers, technical consultants, and technical assistance professionals. This language endorsement verifies, through The Registry, that trainer, technical consultant, and technical assistance professionals have the ability to speak the language in which they seek to train the early care workforce. The goal of this endorsement is to ensure that T/TA staff are linguistically competent professionals working with and providing training to child care providers that speak languages other than English. Technical consultation and training is presented to child care providers in their home language to assist providers with competence in various training content.

Homeless
In conjunction with the McKinney-Vento Homeless program, a training module is now available to promote better understanding of the impact of homelessness and poverty on young children and to share strategies for programs and communities. A total of five monthly email blasts, highlighting various aspects of the McKinney Vento Law and the challenges faced by homeless families with young children were posted to the WECCP website and delivered to approximately 630 individuals per occurrence.

RTTT-ELC staff at DCF is working with representatives from the Department of Public Instruction to create an addition to the YoungStar website about resources providers can access to assist families experiencing homelessness. These pages are in the early stages of development and planned to be implemented in 2017. In early August, DCF will be co presenting a webinar for child care providers to learn more about new CCDBG requirements and suggestions. This collaboration between DCF and DPI is a starting point in demonstrating currently available resources to providers.

Tribal
On June 4, the early literacy training module was presented to the Inter-Tribal Child Care Council with resources for providing the training with each Tribal Nation. This effort taught us that there needed to be much more culturally sensitive work done before we could obtain buy in and increase the use of resource material. It also reinforced our knowledge of the tribal interest in native language development that included the need for reading materials in the various native languages. We anticipate some of the RTT mini-grants will address this topic.

We learned that we needed to adapt the WMELS trainer approval process and make the materials more culturally relevant. In July 2015, the WMELS Leadership Committee approved a proposal to adapt the trainer process and training materials. The WMELS Tribal Training cohort began training on September 10. There were 10 potential trainers registered from 6 tribal communities, but we ended up with 8 from 5 communities. In October, the WMELS Tribal Pilot train-the-trainers had their first face to face Community of Practice and training meeting.

Targeted training in Milwaukee and within tribal communities helped to deploy trainers to previously unreached areas to focus recruiting potential trainers within tribal communities. This initiative helped

identify more people who may be interested in becoming trainers. This Milwaukee project was a collaborative effort that targeted lower tiered programs and provided a no-cost training sponsored by the Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Question 6: Describe how you are creating a more effective system of information sharing with tribal nations to assure that best practices from both the tribal and state child care systems are benefitting tribal children.

The more we listened and learned from/with the Tribal Nations, the more we learned that a multitude of information sharing systems was needed. These are some of the systems that exist and that we strive to impact:

   a. Bring the state departments together to build a cross sector common vision and approach with the Tribal nations.
   b. Work with GLITC to establish a structure for communication.
   c. Build inter-Tribal communication by supporting the creation and expansion of early childhood collaboration workgroups or councils within each of the Tribal Nations.
   d. Bring together cross sector early childhood stakeholders from each Tribal Nation to share and learn for each other.
   e. Explore the best approach to bring early childhood to the GLITC board meetings, they meet quarterly and have an annual meeting. Consider if presentation should be project specific or broad cross sector early childhood
   f. Explore the best time and format to bring early childhood to the DHS and DCF Tribal Consultation meetings. Consider if the topics should go to GLITC first and if it should be project specific or broad cross sector early childhood
   g. Bring early childhood topics to the WI Indian Education Association, next conference is in April
   h. Consider how to keep Tribal relations on the forefront with the ECAC
   i. Consider linkages with the Intertribal Child Care Council ITCCC with focus on tribal communities focus on child care and subsidy issues

Question 7: Describe the current status of your data system project, including leadership, strategic planning and work across agencies.

DPI - ECIDS
The current status of the ECIDS project is very good overall and on-target. Contributing factors are as follows:
● Open positions have been filled over the past year and the turnover rate of project personnel has slowed. Where turnover has occurred, all three agencies have been prepared with transition plans.
● Leadership for the ECIDS has become more consistently engaged over the past year. The ECIDS Management Committee meets when needed. The three agencies' Internal ECIDS Steering Committees meet on a monthly basis.
● The work across agencies has been improving. The obvious successes we have had recently are a testament to this. We have cross-agency work groups in place for the purposes of Technical Development, Data Governance, Research and Data Request Process Development. Our **ECIDS Roadmap** shows the inter-dependencies amongst the work groups and shows good progress being made. A current copy of the ECIDS Roadmap can be provided. Two recent successes have been:
   o Legal and leadership coming together for the approval/signing by all three agencies of the Knowledge Base DUA.

  ○ Extensive cross-agency and cross-workgroup interaction for the development of the Data Request Process.
- Strategic Planning is underway and will continue throughout the grant life cycle. Good progress is being made on the ECIDS Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan and on the ECIDS Sustainability Plan.

DCF - LIFT

DCF's Longitudinal Information on Family Touchpoints (LIFT) data warehouse went into production on February 29, 2016. The first release of the warehouse contains child-centric data on programs and services provided from Child Welfare, Child Care, and the W-2 Work Program. Children across these programs were matched and brought together into one warehouse. The data can be viewed using an interactive dashboard that shows the number of distinct children being served by one or more of these programs in any month from 2005 forward. Several standard reports are also included in the first release.

Future plans for LIFT include the integration of "fuzzy" matching, annual snapshots, and the eventual integration of Child Support data, when it becomes available.

DHS – Customer Hub

DHS has made ECIDS and the Customer Hub a high priority and, despite vendor delays, is currently on track to Go Live in summer 2016.

As noted in the Project 10 Statement of Work, the most significant delays experienced in the DHS development of the Customer Hub were due to the need to wait for external vendors to make changes to the program source systems they maintain. Without the vendors' changes, we were unable to get daily feeds of data into the Customer Hub. We've moved beyond the delays and we have gathered valuable lessons learned for our estimating and scheduling of similar projects in the future. Now the Customer Hub is in the Production environment and early testing is going very well.

This success has been achieved largely because staff in participating programs have all been aware of the high priority of this project and respond with alacrity when requested to assist with the project. Leadership and key staff from each program are in attendance, and participate, at every Program Leadership monthly meeting. In addition, DHS Executive Management Committee members, the Business Owner (the State Registrar), the DHS Data Governance support team, the research Analyst and the staff building the Customer Hub/Interface meet bi-weekly to discuss policies, make decisions on direction, weigh issues, and ensure progress.

The messaging about ECIDS and the Customer Hub within the Department of Public Health, and particularly within the Office of Health Informatics, has been extraordinarily successful. Staff are invested in the project and have a sincere commitment to the success of the system. This attitude provides a good foundation for sustainability planning.

Question 8: Describe the status of your public-private partnership grant. How are you monitoring those grants? Provide an example of an issue found during monitoring that needed to be resolved.

On April 4th representatives from NC First 2,000 Days Initiative came to Wisconsin and met with all the CETE Network coalitions, staff from the state, and other early childhood partners to facilitate a

workshop on communication. They shared information on communication and messaging and helped to coalitions create communication plans they could take back to their communities. After the April 4th workshop we have decided to work with North Carolina to license the tool-kit materials for use on the CETE website. On August 15th Bill Millet will be presenting to the CETE Networks as a follow-up to the April 4th meeting on finding messengers and communicating the right message to the right people.

All coalitions are continuing to work on their individual work plans. I receive formal quarterly reports documenting their complete activities and any adjustments that were required to their work plans. I monitor spending on a monthly basis. So far no issues have been found during monitoring.

Question 9: Describe your efforts in the last year to communicate with families, stakeholders, and the early learning workforce about training opportunities and policy changes related to this grant.

RTTT staff at DCF have been maintaining and updating the YoungStar, Early Childhood Inclusion, and RTTT webpages to ensure that the public, families and child care providers have access to accurate and up-to-date information about the progress of the grant.

DCF staff have been attending and presenting at various statewide, professional child care gatherings such as the Wisconsin Early Childhood, Pathways to Quality, Wisconsin Family Child Care Association and the Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Conferences with the goal to provide information about training opportunities, policy changes, and allow for face-to-face time with the workforce. Outreach about RTTT will continue throughout the remainder of the grant.

Staff have also attended and assisted in the planning process for various stakeholder cross collaboration meetings and conferences. RTTT staff has attended Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners meetings to address and learn about the needs from various stakeholders throughout the state.

The ECIDS Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is near completion. Communication vehicles include a Public Website, a Fact Sheet and a Quarterly Newsletter.
Training will be provided to those agency personnel who will be using the ECIDS. Policies are in the process of being developed, which the stakeholders and users of the ECIDS will be expected to follow. These policies will be endorsed by the EMC and will be available, along with other documentation, in the Data Governance Manual.

DHS does considerable internal outreach to participating program staff through staff meetings and the bi-weekly & monthly meetings discussed above. We have also conducted numerous demonstrations of the Customer Hub & Interface (from the early version to the current version). Through these demonstrations and hands-on opportunities, the designers and developers of the Customer Hub/Interface gained usability information that was then incorporated. Staff also suggested enhancements that will be considered in the future. Each meeting also considered the ways staff could help achieve the objectives of the ECIDS, and ways we could benefit from ECIDS.

Broader outreach is planned for the Department of Public Health 2016 'Epi Open House'. And our Research Analyst will soon be scheduling meetings with programs who are not currently participating in ECIDS/Customer Hub to describe the value of participation.

Question 10: Describe any additional challenges you are facing related to implementing your Focused Investment Areas – particularly workforce development, health promotion, and the Early Learning Survey. What obstacles do you foresee that might impact your ability to meet the goals of the grant?

Wisconsin's grant was highly collaborative and recognized the important system change role of three state departments, numerous departments, and other associations. Even with this cross sector commitment, we face many obstacles including:

- Conflicting and competing goals and program requirements among/within federal departments
- Conflicting and competing goals and program requirements among/within state departments
- Conflicting and competing goals and program requirements among/within federal and state departments
- Complexity of the big early childhood picture
- Lack of common definitions of terms
- Unwillingness to embrace change

The ECIDS does not face any major obstacles. However, we do acknowledge that cross-agency communications are a constant challenge. With three agencies involved and each having their own terminology, processes and culture, there are bound to be some misunderstandings. We deal with misunderstandings as soon as we are aware of them. Over time, we have learned much from each other!

Question 11: Describe your efforts to sustain the RTT-ELC reforms and strategies after the grant period, including how the recent survey and focus groups impacted your sustainability planning.

The Wisconsin team worked the ELC TA team to design a sustainability process that include managers and program staff from Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and Department of Health Services (DHS) and external early childhood partners and stakeholders.

The first step in sustainability planning for RTT ELC was to create a comprehensive list of all the projects and activities that were supported by grant funds. To accomplish this, an Inventory was created that describes by project, the project objective and highlights the activities from that project.

The next two steps were to document the outcomes for each project activity and identify the need after RTT ELC. To accomplish this, a large stakeholder meeting was held in December of 2015. The purpose of this meeting was to gather information on data sources for outcome analysis and collect ideas on funding and collaboration from the many perspectives represented by the cross sector participates of RTT ELC. This information was used in two ways: (1) to expand the Inventory to include high-level information on the needs of project activities in terms of funding and resources after grant funding and (2) to create detailed Strategy Papers for each project activity. The Strategy Papers contain detailed information on the activity, its impact, and needs going forward after RTT ELC. These papers were then shared with smaller group of state agency staff at a meeting in February of 2016. At this second meeting 4 activities were identified as priorities needing additional funding or resources after RTT ELC.

Review of the Strategy Papers resulted in the identification of 9 activities that are complete, 15 activities that have additional need which can be meet by resource commitment or redistribution, and four priority activities that need additional funding or resources.

Project	Activity
Project 1	CETE Network
Project 5	Challenge Awards
Project 5/7/9	Cross Sector Professional Development (including Social Emotional development)
All	Braided Funding