

EXHIBIT D



CENTER FOR
**Early Learning
Solutions**

MEET OUR TEAM



Jamie Rayford

Executive Director



Mollie Hill

Early Learning Initiatives
Manager



Danell Hetrick

Operations & Analysis
Manager

Stakeholder Engagement Report Highlights

Families

- Gaps in access
- Long waitlists
- Limited infant/toddler capacity
- Lack of services for non-traditional hours

Providers

- Significant operational strain and administrative burdens
- Confusing, fragmented systems
- Limited focus on quality

Opportunities

- Shared services
- Modernized tools and data
- High-quality classroom supports
- Partnerships to advance local strategies

PURPOSE & APPROACHES

The Center for Early Learning Solutions at Forward Arkansas strengthens the early learning system by identifying, implementing, and elevating best practices, in close partnership with stakeholders across the sector.

**Drive innovation
in the field to
advance best
practices**

**Solve collective
problems to
improve operational
excellence and
system performance**

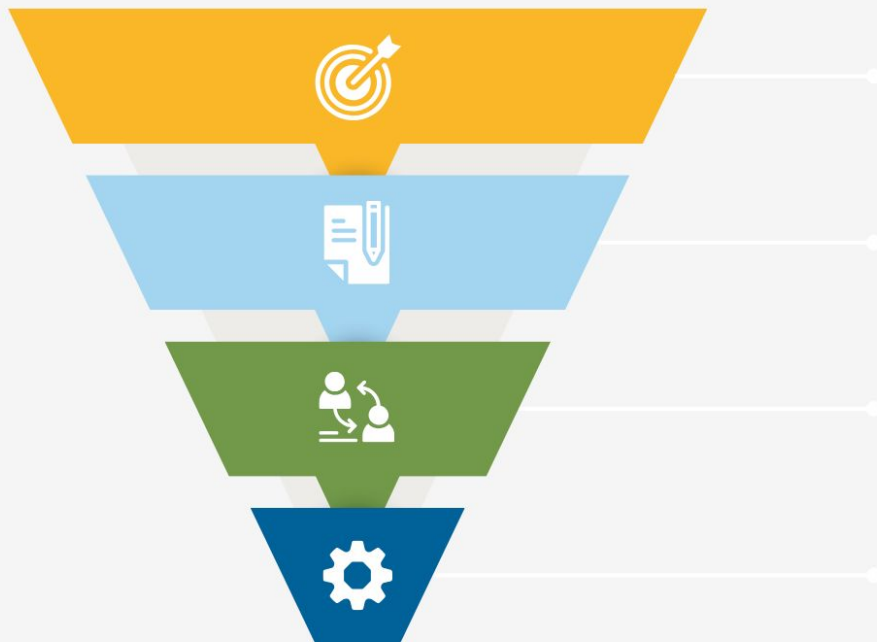
**Leverage data
and insights to
strengthen statewide
systems and policy**

Project Portfolio

SYSTEM CHALLENGE	 FRAGMENTED SYSTEMS Communities are working through similar challenges, often without connection or shared solutions.	 PROGRAM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY Funding is complex and insufficient to cover the true cost of quality care and early education.	 ADMINISTRATIVE & OPERATIONAL BURDEN Providers face time-consuming tasks, fragmented systems, and limited operational supports.	 ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CLASSROOM SUPPORTS Educators need affordable, high-quality instructional materials and implementation support.
How this work helps	Builds a statewide network among Local Leads to share solutions, strengthen capacity, reduce duplication, and drive local implementation.	Examines how resources flow, where barriers exist, and what it takes to improve long-term sustainability.	Tests technology-enabled solutions and provides discovery for shared service models that reduce burden and improve efficiency.	Pilots and refines evidence-based high-quality instructional materials with implementation supports.
CELS Project	LOCAL LEADS NETWORK Strengthening collaboration, peer learning, and collective capacity across Arkansas.	EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE & FINANCE PROJECT (ECGFP) Informing smarter investments and maximizing and aligning existing resources.	TECH-ENABLED SOLUTIONS PILOT Improving provider operations and building scalable supports through technology.	HQIM PILOT Creating a pathway to affordable, sustainable statewide access to high-quality instructional materials.

Four interconnected projects addressing the conditions needed for a stronger early learning system in Arkansas.

Local Leads Network



What this could inform:

The network can help state leaders distinguish between isolated local issues and systemic barriers that may require statewide action.

What we are learning:

Top themes across local plans: Kindergarten Readiness, Program Quality, Access to Resources, Family Engagement & Voice, & Cross-Sector Partnerships

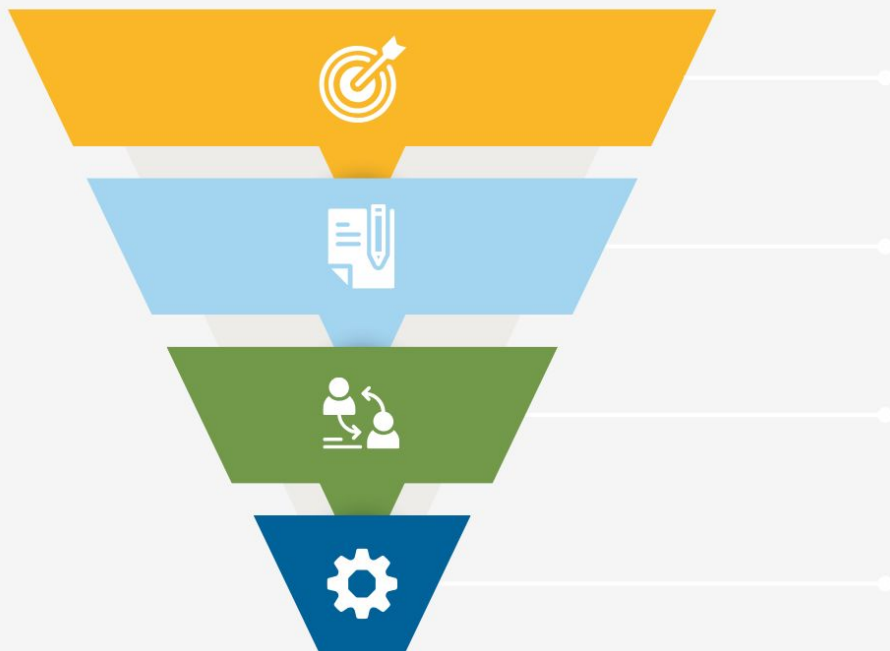
What we are testing:

Creating a statewide peer network where Local Leads can exchange solutions, identify recurring barriers, and strengthen implementation capacity.

The challenge:

Communities are working through similar early childhood challenges, but often do so independently.

Early Childhood Governance & Finance Project (ECGFP)



What this could inform:

- State systems by strengthening governance, coordination, and data systems.
- Funding alignment by identifying opportunities to streamline policies, program requirements, and family eligibility.
- Funding strategy by informing how existing and future investments can best support statewide early childhood goals.

What we are learning:

Across the state, there is significant variation in the amount of funding available to serve low income children. Counties with similar geographic and demographic characteristics experienced very different funding levels per low income child in FY25.

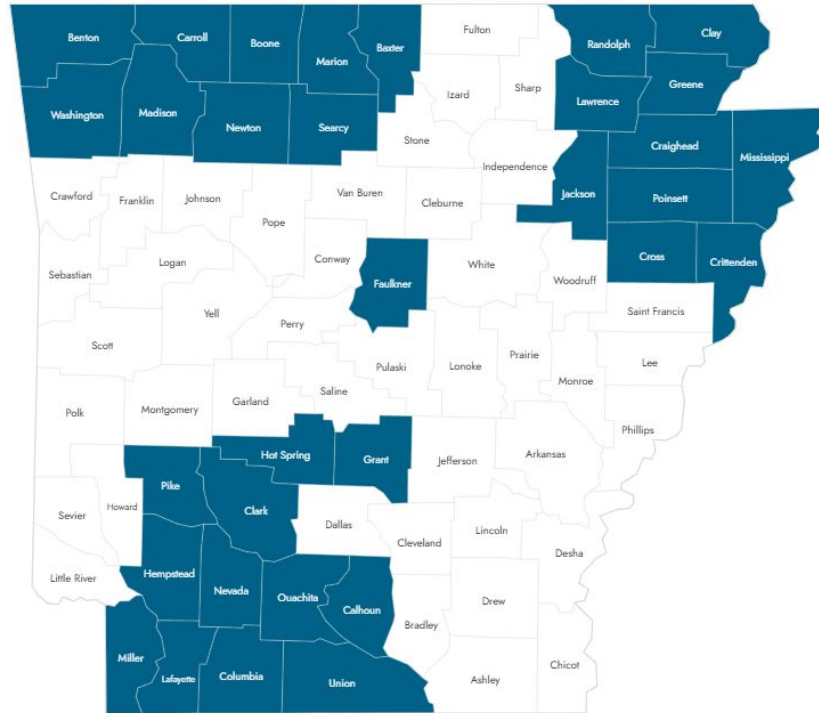
What we are testing:

How statewide and local fiscal analysis can help communities and state leaders better understand funding flows, maximize existing resources, identify gaps, and model future investment strategies tied to shared early childhood goals.

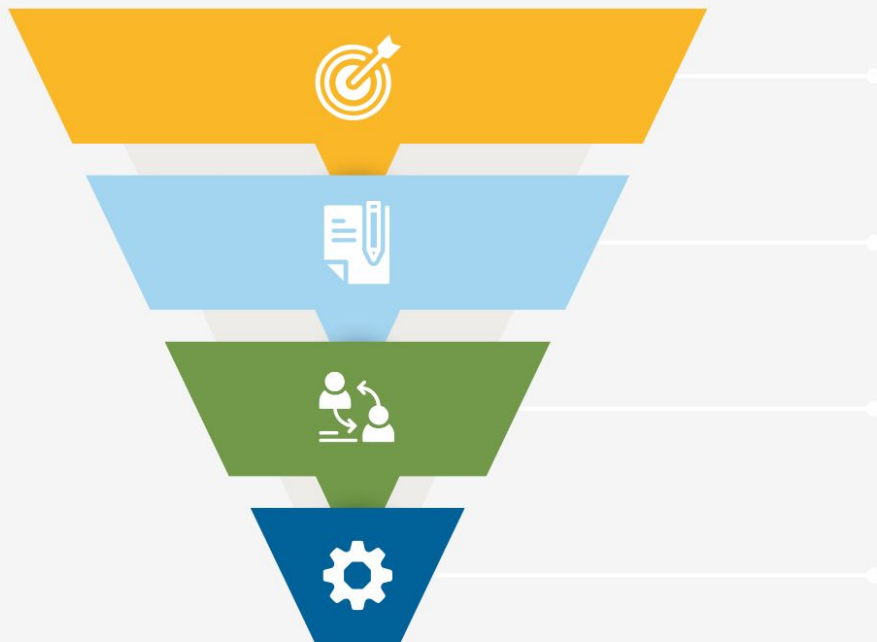
The challenge:

A fragmented view of early childhood funding limits our ability to align resources, maximize existing investments, and inform where future investments can best strengthen Arkansas's early childhood system.

EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE PROJECT (ECGFP)



Tech-Enabled Solutions Pilot



What this could inform:

- Shared service models that reduce administrative burden for providers.
- Technology investments that strengthen provider operations and data quality/use.
- Implementation strategies that support successful statewide adoption of operational innovations.

What we are learning:

What implementation supports providers need to successfully adopt new tools.

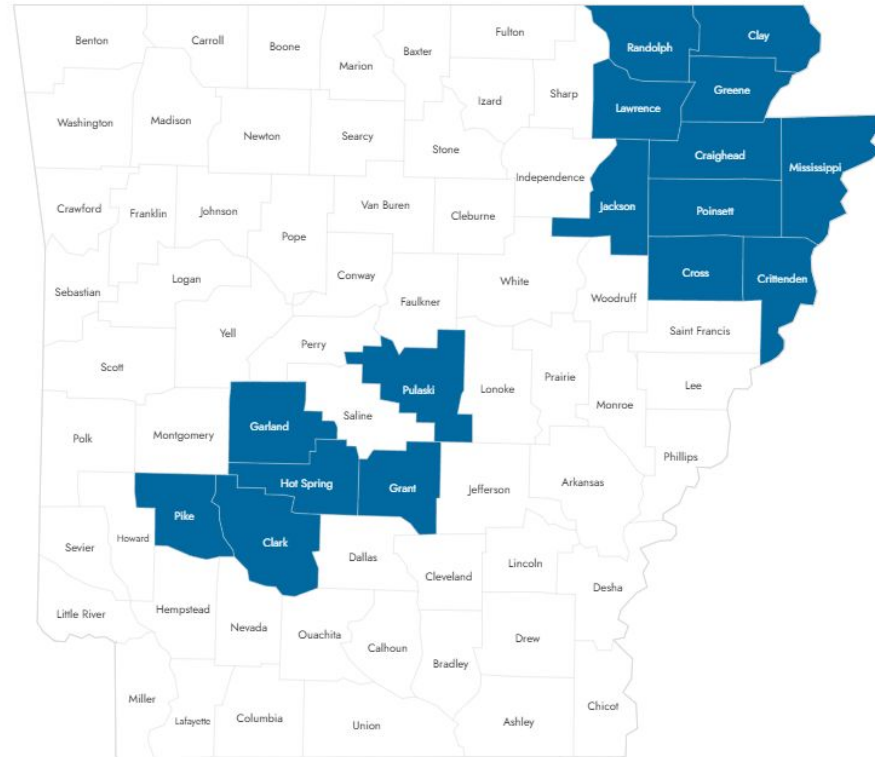
What we are testing:

How child care management system (CCMS) and implementation support can improve provider operations, reduce administrative burden, maximize revenue, and strengthen data-informed decision-making.

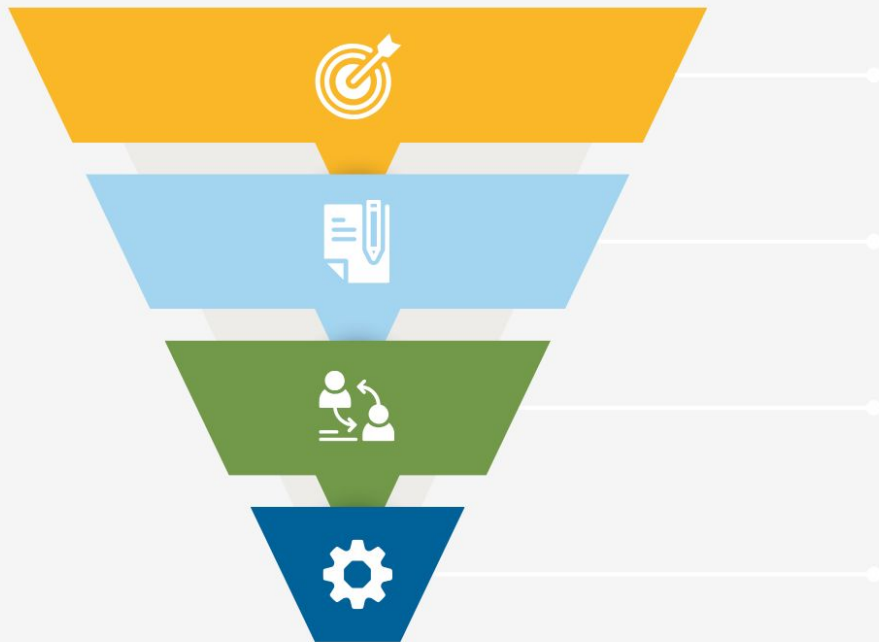
The challenge:

Early childhood providers often lack access to the operational tools and support needed to work efficiently, use data effectively, and sustain high-quality programs.

TECH-ENABLED SOLUTIONS PILOT



HQIM Pilot



What this could inform:

- Instructional supports that strengthen classroom quality.
- Implementation strategies that improve educator success with HQIM.
- Statewide scaling approaches for sustainable access to high-quality instructional materials.

What we are learning:

- What educators need to successfully implement HQIM.
- What implementation supports drive successful adoption.
- What conditions are necessary for sustainable statewide scale.

What we are testing:

How an open-source, evidence-based HQIM model, supported by educator feedback and implementation supports, can create a sustainable pathway to statewide access.

The challenge:

Many providers lack affordable access to high-quality instructional materials and the implementation support needed to use them effectively.

LEARN *with us!*

Jamie Rayford

Executive Director

jrayford@forwardarkansas.org





Danell Hetrick

Early Learning Initiatives Manager

dhetrick@forwardarkansas.org





Mollie Hill

Early Learning Initiatives Manager

mhill@forwardarkansas.org

