

## **Transitioning Center Directors into Instructional Leaders of Their Campuses**

### **Overview**

The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning (Lastinger Center) is pleased to submit this proposal to Child Care Associates (CCA) to impact the quality of both Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms serving thousands of high need children and families in the North Texas region. The Lastinger Center has spent the last decade developing innovative systems that build the skills of educators at all levels to improve teacher practice and child outcomes, with a particular focus in the early childhood field. Through the development of hundreds of hours of innovative online content that can be delivered in online only or blended models, the Lastinger Center has created highly engaging, dynamic, innovative courses that are research-based, reflect adult learning principles, provide extensive examples of strong teaching and learning practice, and are designed to be build skills that can be immediately applied in early childhood settings. Yale University has found that both the online only and the blended models — in which the online courses are combined with either communities of practice or individualized coaching — significantly improved teacher skills and CLASS scores, particularly on the difficult to change Instructional Support domain. The Lastinger Center has taken this system to scale quickly in Florida, delivering over 80,000 hours of training in the last 12 months and training and certifying over 350 early childhood coaches and 400 Community of Practice facilitators. We are also working in Arizona, South Carolina, California, Georgia, Louisiana, and Kentucky in various ways to develop the capacity of early learning instructional leaders. The Lastinger Center has deep equity experience through the development of an Equity-Based Coaching Certification that prepares professionals to identify and interrupt inequities as well as develop and implement programs and services that promote equitable outcomes among all children.

The Lastinger Center proposes a partnership with CCA to design a comprehensive professional development system that intentionally develops the skills of center directors of Early Head Start and Head Start programs as well as in Independent School Districts (ISD) to effectively improve program quality. This 12-month program would begin in July 2017 with an initial planning and design phase with CCA to co-create the Instructional Leadership Framework, followed by the Coaching Certification training, which would begin in August. Our team of experienced early learning and coaching staff will work with CCA staff each step of the way to develop a high-quality, high-impact system customized for their directors' specific needs. We will *co-design a Framework for Educational Leadership* to prepare center directors that will strengthen instructional leadership through:

- ***Training and certifying approximately 30 professionals in a Collaborative Coaching model*** that empowers early childhood managers to serve as pedagogical leaders by engaging in safe, reflective conversations that shift teacher beliefs and transforms instructional practices; this will include the 23 center directors and appropriate staff serving the 72 ISD classrooms. The training and certification process will include the cultivation and rigorous certification of the skills below:

- ***Facilitative Leadership Development*** that promotes the development of trusting relationships with families and stakeholders and empowers others to take individual and/or collective action to achieve quality improvement goals
- ***Professional growth plans & portfolios*** to document performance according to the co-designed Framework for Educational Leadership
- ***Communities of Practice (CoP) and reflective supervision*** as a structure to support job-embedded professional development
- ***Leading for Equity focus*** that will be woven throughout the training to help the certified coaches sharpen their equity lens to enhance the knowledge and skills for supporting change in challenging contexts and help EHS/HS leaders address persistent disparities in child/family outcomes
- ***Co-create metrics for center director performance and recruiting*** that focus on instructional leadership practices and the Head Start and Early Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- ***Ongoing in-person and virtual coaching support*** that develop the internal capacity for EHS/HS to sustain the work.