

# Propuesta de Renovación de Puerto Rico Preschool Development Grant



## **Project Summary/Abstract**

Project Title: Puerto Rico Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant

Applicant Name: Administration for Integral Child Care Development

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### **Abstract**

The Administration for Integral Child Care Development ACUDEN received an assignment of federal funds from the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five Program (PDG B-5) for the purpose of updating early childhood planning efforts in Puerto Rico. This grant will contribute to the strengthening and implementation of an integrated mixed and coordinated system that will facilitate the access of children and families to high quality services for their development and the improvement of their quality of life. This project will allow Puerto Rico to develop an up to date statewide strategic plan, informed by an updated needs assessment, which will guide systemic efforts to meet our project's goal to coordinate Puerto Rico's mixed delivery system to facilitate access to all children and families to high quality services they need to improve their lives. The Administration for Integral Child Care Development will lead the work to engage partners and stakeholders, including families, throughout the Project. It also will aim to improve the quality of services for children with special needs and living in the most disadvantaged low-income communities in Puerto Rico.

A preliminary, Needs Assessment in early Childhood in Puerto Rico, 2020 revealed the precarious situation of Puerto Rican children and their families in the context of the pandemic, hurricanes, and earthquakes. Highlighting the vulnerability of communities living in poverty given our current situation. In addition, the areas concerning emotional well-being/mental health are identified as a higher priority, being one of limited access with a lack of continuity of services which includes health services, special needs, and education, among others. The political situation of our country among other situations explained above, have affected the environment and the children's living environment and their families. We understood that the situation of our country was delicate reflecting how much the factors that at this moment limit the access to services by families and service providers. Focused on the needs of children and their caregivers the situation of poverty, the poor access to health services including, mental health, education and the access to child care services among others are the focus of our 36-month plan grant period. As a lead agency in collaboration with private and public alliances we will implement the following expected outcomes: 1) Finish a Comprehensive Needs Assessment, 2) Completed Comprehensive Strategic Plan, 3) Maximize Parental Knowledge and Choice 4: Sharing Best Practices. 5. Improving Overall Quality. Improve the overall quality of PR Early Childhood Programs by increasing the number of centers evaluated with the PR Quality Rating and Improvement System including; (a) evaluate centers in geographical areas where families are in most need, (b) evaluate and provide intensive training to centers with the lowest quality scores, those who have 2-3 points in a rating scale where 5 points is the highest rating. (6) Monitoring, Evaluation and Data Use for Continuous Improvement.

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## **Key Acronyms**

ACUDEN - *Administración para el Cuidado y Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez,*

Administration for Care and Integral Development of Children

ADSEF - *Administración para el Desarrollo Socioeconómico de la Familia, Puerto Rico*

Administration of Socioeconomic Development of the Family

ASSMCA – Administration of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

CCAP – Child Care Assistance Program

CCDF – Child Care and Development Fund

CENTRANA - Resource and Referral Center for Early Childhood

CSMN - The Children with Special Medical Needs

CFDA - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number

COP – Community of Practice

CQI – Continuous Quality Improvement

DF– Puerto Rico Department of the Family

EHS – Early Head Start

ECBG – Early Childhood Block Grant

ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education

EI – Early Intervention

HS/EHS – Head Start and Early Head Start

I/ECMHC – Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

MIECHV – Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

PPEP- Program Performance Evaluation Plan

PRDE – Puerto Rico Department of Education

PRDH – Puerto Rico Department of Health

QRIS – Quality Rating and Improvement System

NAP - Nutrition Assistance Program

TANF- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

T&TA – Training and Technical Assistance

WIC- Woman, Infants and Children

## **Introduction**

The Administration for Integral Child Care and Development of the Puerto Rico Department of the Family, submits a renewal application, as the Lead Agency for the Preschool Development Grant-Birth to Five (PDG-B-5). This is a tremendous accomplishment due the circumstances that Puerto Rico is living since 2017. In an our past three years Puerto Rico has a poverty rate that exceeds 67% (ACS) 2018. During 2017, our island was hit by two hurricanes which reawakened the reality of disadvantaged families. At the beginning of 2020, the southern part of our island was again severely damage by earthquakes which are still felt today. In March 2020 we began to suffer from the Covid 19 Pandemic, that still threatens our lives today. Puerto Rico suffers from a “political limbo” in which our finances are regulated by a Federal Fiscal Board. All of this extremely situations have repercussions in our early childhood. At this time our how services are fragmented and lack consistency from the different models impact the delivery system. However, our people is committed and resilient to update and implement Puerto Rico’s strategic plan to establish an integrated mixed and coordinated system that will facilitate the access of children and families to high quality services for their development and the improvement of their quality of life. Also with B5 we will facilitate collaboration and coordination among early childhood care and education (ECE) programs in a mixed delivery system in order to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to transition into the local educational agencies elementary school.

Taking in consideration a preliminary need assessment in 2020, this renewal will establish a periodization of a following activities:

1. Approve the need assessment plan
2. Develop and implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early childhood care and education in a mixed delivery system across the State
3. Encourage partnerships among the wide range of ECE programs and service partners that make up the B-5 Early Childhood State System
4. Strengthen a relation State, local, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs;
5. Strengths the Pyramid Modules to support socio emotional development and develop a trauma inform approach.
6. Expand parental choice and knowledge about existing programs;
7. Develop school readiness for children from low-income and disadvantaged families, including during children's transition into elementary school by sharing best practices between and among ECE providers.
8. Strengths the Quality Rating System and develop an implementation process that will be supporting a monitoring systems.
9. Develop a clear Data System with a General Register to ensure the qualifications, credentials and competence
10. Develop a Comprehensive System of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Use for Continuous Improvement

## **Expected Outcomes**

Puerto Rico expected outcomes from the Preschool Development Grant Birth-5 Renewal Grant (PDG-R) include results exhibit gaps in the system also needs for accessible services for providers, children and families. Families have increased knowledge and access to the system and services. Families will be more supported as they transition throughout the early childhood system more collaborative and integrated. PDG B-5 Renewal will increased parent/family participation, leadership and advocacy in ECCE systems.

With PDG-Renewal, Puerto Rico will progress its ECCE system on an integral vision for quality; create an even continuous quality improvement (QI) structure. As a result of PDG-Renewal, local pilot's child care centers (Pilots) will maximize family choice and information, strengthen the early childhood workforce, improve program quality systems, including health, mental health and support services, aiming the needs of early childhood and their families. Over our Program Performance Evaluation Plan (PPEP), Puerto Rico will demonstrate and publicize evidence of impact and services provide. Through this PDG-Renewal we expected to provide accessible, affordable, quality ECCE; and develop school readiness for Puerto Rico early childhood, particularly those most vulnerable. Also increased efficiency and alignment across qualified child care service providers and professionals in early childhood.

**Activity One:** PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Building upon the initial year's work to develop a statewide needs assessment:

### **A) Needs Assessment Process and Status:**

Puerto Rico first comprehensive periodic statewide Needs Assessment was on track to be completed by August 2020. The first draft of the needs assessment was submitted by ETI, on August 31st, 2020; and sent back for revision after noticing some items were missing. ETI, the leading planning, economic consulting and strategy firm in Puerto Rico, encountered some situations

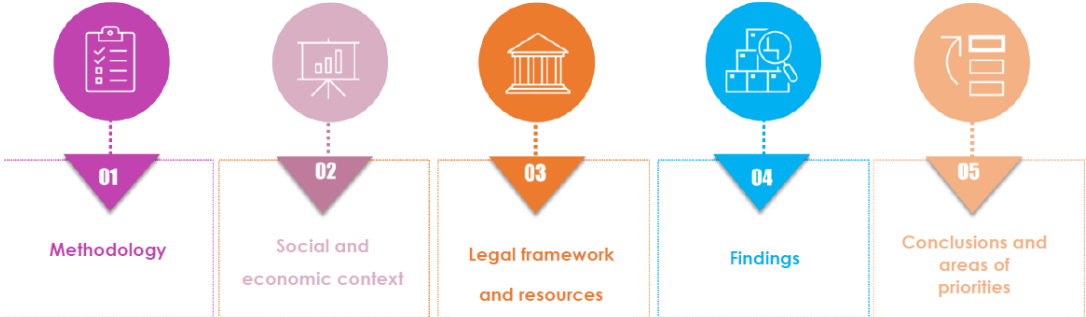
the date that the summit Needs Assessment was postponed for the third time. This delay affected the timeline.

Our major weakness is related to the availability, access, and quality of services in the areas of child and family services, special needs education, nutrition and mental health. Also, lack of continuity in the processes that delay obtaining a service, the integration of services in terms of distance and communication particularly when children need ongoing services, medical attention, therapies and the absence of continuous action. Some other findings were a fragile mental and emotional health in the context of disasters and climatic changes, and now with COVID 19 pandemic, changes in the public policy averse to early childhood and the duplicity in services are most relevant to attend.

ACUDEN contracted the services of ETI, Inc. so that, together with a group of collaborators who are experts in the subject, they could develop the study. For the purposes of carrying out the research, ETI, Inc., recommended the use of a multi-method participatory approach, based on the theory of needs assessment of Witkin & Althuld (1995). This made it possible to integrate the views of various sectors, including children.

This figure presents in detail the research methodology, as well as the findings and conclusions derived from the tasks carried out.

FIGURE 1 : ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT





Over the past decades, and more so since 2006, Puerto Rico has faced unprecedented challenges due to a series of changes in the economic, social and environmental surroundings. This level of complexity has increased following the implementation of fiscal policies associated with PROMESA, the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, earthquakes in the southwestern region of the island, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. This large number of external stressors has highlighted the vulnerability of our institutions and their limited capacity to serve the neediest populations, including early childhood and their families.

The various sources consulted for the purposes of this Study demonstrate how in the past few years, poverty levels among families with young children in Puerto Rico have increased. This is confirmed by the different groups consulted, who point to poverty and the socioeconomic condition of families as the main need or problem affecting early childhood in Puerto Rico. Poverty, however, does not attack everyone equally.

Although it is a phenomenon that affects Puerto Rico in general, significant differences can be observed in geographical terms and in the case of population groups such as families with the presence of children with special needs and single-parent families. Likewise, it is understood that one group that is affected is middle-income families. This is because their economic situation has been affected but they do not qualify for many of the services that by design are directed to low-income populations. The study data also reflect that the main problems linked to the service system are associated with access, availability and integration of services. These problems have become more acute in the context of the health disasters and emergencies that have affected Puerto Rico in the past three years. Regarding public policy and the institutional framework related to early childhood, the groups agree that the greatest weakness lies in the fragmentation and implementation of existing policies.

The following describes Puerto Rico’s plan for completing the Needs Assessment, partners engaged, and status:

| <b>Needs Study Process<br/>(H-Milestone achieved; R-Requirement by project)</b>   | <b>Collaborators</b>   | <b>Status of progress and timeline</b>                 |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>H:</b> Literature review related to the best practices, legislation, methodological as replenishes, analysis and identification of people of interest.<br/> <b>A:</b> Definition of key terms<br/> <b>A:</b> Legislation available<br/> <b>A:</b> Best practices and access</p> | <p>To complete and review the literature and analysis there was contribution of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Studies Inc.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Completed</b><br/><br/><b>May 2020</b></p>       |
| <p><b>H: Analysis of state and federal regulations of other needs assessment</b><br/> <b>A:</b> Population description and socio-demographic data<br/> <b>A:</b> Existing gaps</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Studies Inc.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>July 2020*</b></p>                               |
| <p><b>H: Child focus groups</b><br/> <b>A: Focus group of people of interest and analysis</b><br/> <b>A: Interviews and questionnaires</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Studies Inc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Stakeholders identified"</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Completed</b><br/>July-August 2020</p>           |
| <p><b>H: Final Needs Assessment Report Draft Delivery</b><br/> <b>A:</b> Report Delivery<br/> <b>A:</b> Delivery of executive summary and infographic for disclosure<br/> <b>A:</b> SWOT Analysis Exercise That Gives Strategic Plan Start</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Studies Inc.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>In process</b><br/>September to October 2020</p> |
| <p><b>H: Needs Assessment</b><br/> <b>A:</b> Approval of Study by Administrator and PDG B-5 at region level 2.<br/> <b>A:</b> Publication and Disclosure of Needs Study</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Administrator of Acuden () J.J. Diaz Fuentes and Maritza Maldonado (Program Administrator) Come</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FPO de PDG B-5</li> </ul>            | <p><b>In process</b><br/><br/><b>December 2020</b></p> |

**B) Spotlights Collaboration:**

The Puerto Rico Early Childhood Needs Assessment, 2020 was conducted according to a participatory multi-method approach, based on the postulates of Witkin and Altshuld's theory (1995) which define this type of assessment as “A set of systematic procedures carried out for the purpose of establishing priorities and making decisions about a program, the improvement of an organization or the distribution of resources”. This approach allowed gathering information from a wide range of stakeholders including, children, families, service providers, advisory councils, and key partner agencies. Information was collected for three levels of need: individual and family, providers service system and institutional and public policy framework.

The different sources and groups consulted identify the following needs or problems as the main ones related to early childhood and their families (in order of frequency of mention). These needs were validated and further prioritized, in an exercise conducted with the advisory group constituted for purposes of the PDG 0-5 proposal.

1. Poverty/socioeconomic status of families
2. Mental and emotional health needs of children and their families, particularly in the context of disasters and pandemics, and access to other health services
3. Access and Gaps in Services for Children with Functional Diversity and Special Needs
4. Care Services
5. Low levels of knowledge about the availability of existing services
6. Access to other basic services
7. Nutrition Services
8. Education services during pregnancy
9. Access to recreational and sporting activities
10. Lack of arts-related services

**C) Plans for Further Updates:** After ETI completed the Needs Assessment, they had found a relevant aspect related to the socio-demographic profile of early childhood in Puerto Rico.

The data available demonstrate how our children have the highest levels of vulnerability, the data shows the number of children from 0 to 8 years old live under poverty levels and more than half live in extreme poverty. Also there is no data base to quantify the total number of children receiving services from the system and those who are not served. We have 70% that are not enrolled in a childcare center.

A SWOT analysis was conducted with the advisory group in order to identify areas of priority to address as part of the PDG B-5 proposal. The results of this exercise are included in the next illustration. This provides the basis for the next step of developing Puerto Rico Early Childhood Strategic Plan.



In Renewal Year One, Puerto Rico will Focus on NA Gaps identified through the initial PDG B-5 statewide NA, prioritizing qualitative analysis to better understand how families engage, what they need are and will be working with establishing an integrated information system so that families can have access to resources. This system will provide families with information on services according to their needs.

On the other hand, we hope that the COVID-19 improves in order to expand the focus groups in the Renewal Year Two. This is because for this study, it was difficult to expand the groups due to the pandemic that is going through world.

In addition to the Renewal Year Three will conduct an update statewide needs assessment to incorporate new information.

**Activity Two: PDG B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan**

**A) Strategic Planning Timeline and Deliverable Schedule:**

Puerto Rico Statewide Strategic Plan is in process and scheduled to be completed by May 2021 (in compliance with the no-cost extension granted to Puerto Rico).

Puerto Rico is in its first year of proposal, so it is working with the approval of the NA study to continue the next activity. The chart below describes Puerto Rico’s plan for completing the comprehensive Strategic Plan and current status.

| <b>Strategic Plan Process<br/>(H-Milestone achieved; R-Requirement by project)</b>  | <b>Collaborators</b>  | <b>Status of progress and timeline</b> |
|---|---|--|
| <b>H: Conducting SWOT Analysis of Needs Assessment</b><br>A: Review of Needs Assessment findings to identify priority areas for starting plan development   | <input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team<br><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Studies Inc.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Consultants                   | In process<br><br>October 2020         |
| <b>H: identify people of interest from various representative sectors to participate in working committees for Strategic Plan</b><br>A: Commitment of people of representative interest<br>A: Hiring consultants to work this activity  | <input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team (various sectors)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Studies Inc.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Consultants | In process<br><br>October 2020         |
| <b>H: Work plan development</b><br>A: Participation of interest sectors and talking areas   | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultants<br><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team  | In process<br><br>November 2020        |
| <b>H: Review of existing strategic plans</b><br>A: Plans aimed at early childhood.<br>A: Strategic plan covers services for prenatal children up to the age of five (including AEPI, health, mental health, social services, early intervention, ECCE special education and others)<br>A: Identify collaborations to leverage policy alignments and improve quality and coordination<br>A: Address transitions from birth to age eight.<br>A: Provides a framework to increase participation in quality programs.<br>A: Assesses legal requirements that pose barriers.<br>A: Identify indicators to track progress<br>A: Describes governance and decision-making processes. | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultants<br><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team  | In process<br><br>October 2020         |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>H: Produce and design a draft strategic plan R:</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultants<br><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team<br><input type="checkbox"/> People of Interest | It hasn't started<br><br>It is designed for extension            |
| <b>H: Facilitate and engage stakeholders for information on draft strategic plan.</b><br><b>A:</b> Comprehensive inclusion of stakeholders representing parents, providers, program administrators and all other stakeholders. | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultants<br><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team<br><input type="checkbox"/> People of Interest | It hasn't started  |
| <b>H: Provide the final strategic plan with a plan for regular updates.</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultants<br><input type="checkbox"/> Project staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team<br><input type="checkbox"/>                    | It is planned to culminate in the project extension (4-6 months) |

Still, we continue to work to kick-start the Early Childhood Strategic Plan. We have identified as highlighted in the needs study a group of specialists in the following areas: health, early education, specialist of children with special needs, family and security, sports, art and culture.

This table represent some of the stakeholders that ACUDEN identified to work the Strategic Plan.

| Stakeholders Categorized            |  |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Name and Last Name                  | Organization/Individual                      | Focus Area                      |
| <b>Dr. Annie Alonso</b>             | University of Puerto Rico                    | Family and Security Committee   |
| <b>Juan Gonzalez</b>                | United Way of Puerto Rico                    | Family and Security Committee   |
| <b>Dr. Linna Irizarry</b>           | Puerto Rico Department of Health             | Safe Birth and Health Committee |
| <b>Dr. Ivette Navas</b>             | ACUDEN                                       | Family and Security Committee   |
| <b>Dr. Juana Mendoza</b>            | Ana G. Mendez University                     | Education Committee             |
| <b>Dr. Adlin Bonilla</b>            | Department of Education                      | Education Committee             |
| <b>Dr. Sandra Guzmán</b>            | Ana G. Mendez University                     | Education Committee             |
| <b>Dr. José Luis Castro Borrero</b> | Inter-American University of Puerto Rico     | Family and Security CommitteeW  |
| <b>Dr. Javier Negrón</b>            | Puerto Rico Head Start Directors Association | Education Committee             |
| <b>Dr. Risela Ferrer</b>            | Department of Health                         | Safe Birth and Health Committee |

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Mariano Santini</b>         | University of Puerto Rico                         | Committee on Art and Culture/Games, Recreation and Sport. |
| <b>Luis Pizarro</b>            | University of Puerto Rico                         | Committee on Art and Culture/Games, Recreation and Sport. |
| <b>Dulce del Rio Pineda</b>    | APNIN ACUDEN                                      | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Nancy Nieves Muñoz</b>      | APNIN  ACUDEN                                     | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Lcda. Anitza Cox</b>        | Technical Studies, Inc.                           | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Yadira Pizarro</b>          | ESCAPE, Inc.                                      | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Lcda. Madeline Bermúdez</b> | Office of the Attorney For Women, Inc.            | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Aida Rivera, MSW</b>        | Community Financial Advisors, Inc.                | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Ada Alvarez Conde</b>       | Womens and families advocate                      | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Vilma Gonzalez</b>          | Peace Coordinator for Women, Inc.                 | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Dr. Myrna Quiñones</b>      | Director of the Pediatric Medical Center Hospital | Safe Birth and Health Committee                           |
| <b>De'Marie Valentin</b>       | COOPERATIVE COSIANI, Inc.                         | Education Committee                                       |
| <b>Vilmarie Esquilín</b>       | Puerto Rico Care Centers Association              | Education Committee                                       |
| <b>Delza Canto Ruiz</b>        | Ana G. Mendez University                          | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Dr. Nayda Negrón</b>        | ACUDEN- Head Start                                | Education Committee                                       |
| <b>Antonia F. Samur Zúñiga</b> | Columbia University                               | Education Committee                                       |
| <b>Kalixta Bearga</b>          | Puerto Rico Psychology Association                | Safe Birth and Health Committee                           |
| <b>Marcos Santana</b>          | P.R. Children's and Youth Rights Network.         | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Dr. Elizabeth Miranda</b>   | Inter-American University of Puerto Rico          | Family and Security Committee                             |
| <b>Milagros Ortiz</b>          | Center of Triumph, Inc.                           | Education Committee                                       |

The PDGB-5 Strategic Plan is intended to reflect a thoughtful approach to the implementation of a multi-year effort to establish a comprehensive B-5 (Birth to 5) system for all children from



early childhood, especially those identified as vulnerable, as defined by the state/territory. The identification and integration of the leading leaders of organizations, agencies, entities and specialists directly or indirectly serving these populations and their families is vital to this process.

### **Key components of the PDBG-5 Strategic Plan**

It is important to be able to identify the foundations of the state agency on which PDG B-5 efforts are based. Vision, mission and values organizations, are important in every strategic planning process. Around these elements is that the development of strategies will focus. The final PDG B-5 Strategic Plan shall have at least two document. The first will be an Executive Summary providing a clear explanation of the findings, needs, domains served, the drafting process of the plan and the outcome of the multisector exercise. A brief description of the recommendations offered by each committee during the drafting process of the plan will also be outlined. The second document will be the plan itself, the parts and format of which will be discussed in the next sections of this guide.

### **Strategic elements**

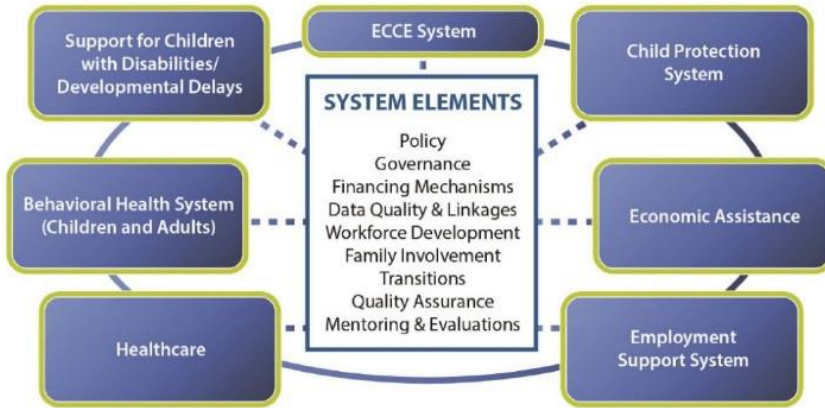
In any strategic planning process, it is important to identify the key strategic elements that will govern the process of analysis, discussion and subsequent drafting of the strategic plan. The basis of the strategic elements should consider the problems that affect the organization and, likewise, all those positive elements where the organization excels or is distinguished. However, for the purposes of this PDGB-5 strategic planning exercise, the plan's discussion, analysis and drafting efforts will focus on the following elements essential strategic:

- Identification and enumeration of the specific needs to be addressed in the strategic plan, according to the results of the Need Assessment *carried* out.

- Alignment of identified needs with the 7 PDG B-5 domains.

The 7 focus domains under this project are:

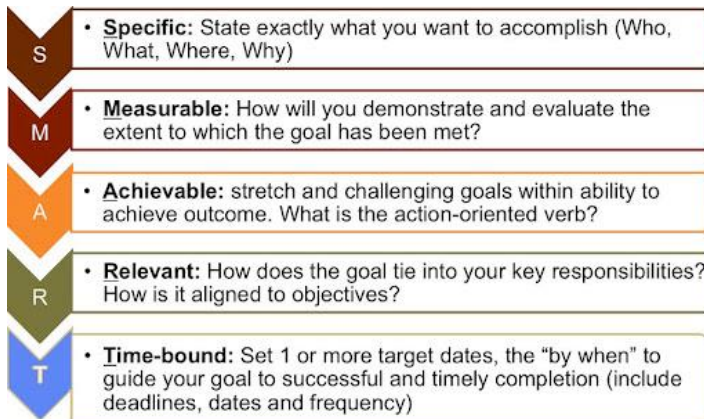
Figure 1. Ensuring a broader system focus: Preschool Birth to Five System (Including Support for Parents/Guardians)



Writing goals/objectives using the SMART model as the basis a more detailed explanation of the SMART model

Goals/objectives should be drafted with the following questions in mind: or are they specific?

- Are they measurable?
- Are they achievable?
- Are they relevant?
- Are they limited/set for a certain time?



Drafting of key activities or action plan involves interconnection and planning over time.

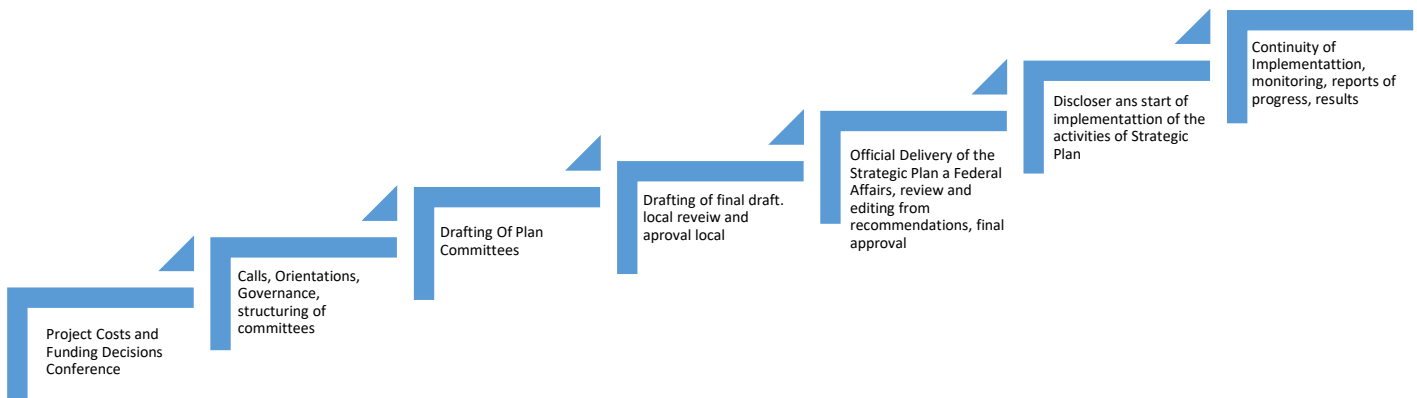
Timelines allow you to visualize horizontally what the sequence of activities to be carried out

would be like and which, how long it would take to complete that activity and, in accordance with the identified needs, which would have the highest priority to be attended to. Timelines can be organized in different ways, here are some suggestions: or First Quarter – Second Quarter – Third Quarter – Fourth Quarter of the Year (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)

- Present (short-term) – Present next (medium term) – Future (long term)
- Immediate Action - Future Action - Un defining Actions

### **Timeline – PDG B-5 Strategic Plan**

The drafting process of the PDG B-5 Strategic Plan will be managed under the essential elements of project management. One such element is the creation of a timeline that allows you to see chronologically, and over time, the duration of each stage of the project. Proper management of each activity or scheduled task and the commitment of all managers are vital to ensure the success of this project. Below is a suggested timeline for the creation of the PDGB-5 Strategic Plan.



### **Activity Three: Maximizing Parent & Family Knowledge, Choice, & Engagement**

#### **Overview:**

Puerto Rico proposes tasks identified for this activity build upon the projects undertaken in the initial PDG B-5 grant period and were primarily planned for the first year. The projects included providing families with the information they need to make informed decisions while also ensuring that culture and sociodemographic background are not barriers to making decisions about and accessing services in the mixed delivery system. It's important to acknowledge that the results of the Needs Assessment identify that many families in Puerto Rico didn't know what services they can access and where to access them. The priority in this activity is that parents and families can identify and have accessible services for children and that they can commit to receiving the necessary help to educate their children and have a comprehensive development for the benefit of early childhood. Also impact vulnerable communities with the 2Gen Framework of Aspen Institute, that can allow access to communities and families residing there, knowing the benefits they can gain through programs aimed at the development of early childhood.

Through the findings of the needs assessment we were able to learn from parents what they desire and need to know and find the ways to engage them in appropriate programs, their children's development and learning, and design and improve systems and implementation of the existing procedures. Furthermore, Puerto Rico will prioritize family knowledge, choice, and engagement in all efforts, and incorporate this priority into other renewal activities. This effort is described below and emphasis on: A) parent and family education and engagement; B) connecting families to services; C) addressing families' child development concerns; and D) family leadership in improving the mixed delivery system.

#### **A) Parent and Family Education and Engagement:**

Puerto Rico Renewal Year One Needs Assessment effort will focus on filling gaps identified in knowledge about how families engage with Puerto Rico Early Childhood System and what they want and need to know. PDG B-5 designed activities to maximize parent and family knowledge about and make suitable connections to an extensive array of children and family services within the B-5 system that includes Early Childhood Education as well as health, socioemotional wellness, nutrition, housing services, employment, and other resources that help them obtain comprehensive well-being and eradicate the cycle of poverty. According to the results of the focus groups of the needs assessment, we learned from parents about their experiences with existing services, recommendations for improvements, and additional needs; and empower families to participate actively in their children's learning and development. Specific strategies to reach families who speak English as a second language or have a child with a disability will be implemented. This approach brings all family members together, assesses all family members together and provides all family members with opportunities, together, to be successful.

In the Initial PDG B-5, The Administration for Integral Child Care Development (ACUDEN) identified three resource and referral centers, CENTRANA, one located at the central offices of ACUDEN, Municipality of Villalba, and Municipality of Vega Baja. The Resource and Referral Center for Early Childhood (CENTRANA) provides educational tools for parents, managers, professionals and the community. Since the Pandemic of COVID-19, these centers stopped providing services and two of them are not working. For this reason, new localities were identified and they were presented with the new approach to services of Two Generations and the integration of families, to work on their economic development, social capital, education in the development stages of early childhood and health.

## *2 Gen Community Centers*

In the initial PDG B-5 grant, the opening of a service and referral center for the family was contemplated. Taking into account the situation Puerto Rico is going through due to the earthquakes and now the Covid-19 pandemic, these plans changed. We identified that we would benefit from implementing a two-generation approach from Aspen Institute in Colorado, which will allow us to work with the family and all its aspects, which through education and services we can break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. As part of the initial grant we requested an extension for the first year to complete the original activities because of, two pilot 2 Gen centers will be opened. In the renovation, eight centers were identified across the island and according to the needs assessment, pointing out as the highest rates of poverty and accessibility of services for early childhood and their families.

According to the NA results, 48 percent of families in Puerto Rico do not have access to broadband internet as well as computer resources at home. Now with the COVID-19 pandemic, education is at a distance and many homes and caregivers do not have the tools to access them. That is why the 2 Gen centers contemplate enabling areas of technology and internet access for children as well as their parents and they can use the tools available for their well-being.



***Generations Wellness Virtual Café***”- This initiative will create a safe place for parents to come together, provide mutual support, and increase parenting protective factors with the help services providers. This space will build resiliency, create social connections, increase knowledge of child development, identify support in times of need, and improve overall communication with our children, family and communities. With the situation that Puerto Rico has experienced due to natural disasters, this space will help families to exchange information and statements on how they have faced the challenges, adopt virtual education and what it implies in daily family dynamics.

**B) Connecting Families to Services:**

The services will be implemented in selected Child Care, EHS, HS and private child care centers.

PDG B-5 Renewal will impact 1,500 families in Year One and their children with support services.

The following chart details active and new partnerships that Puerto Rico PDG B-5 has developed to ensure families statewide are informed about and will connected to needed services.

| Active/ New Partnerships   | Services  |
|--|---|
| “ <i>Sembrando Futuro</i> ” Program of United Way of Puerto Rico | Services aimed at early childhood. These include reading stories for children, virtual workshops for pregnant women and the healthy development of pregnancy, breastfeeding.  |
| Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, Metropolitan campus     | The university signed a collaborative agreement so that Social Work graduate students can carry out their internship, providing support services to families through case management, service coordination, development of financial training workshops as well as workshops on socio-emotional development of children according to their developmental stages. In addition to their clinical practice, students with a specialty in administration will be able to collaborate in the development of community outreach activities and dissemination of services that allow families to know and access services. |
| Child Care Program   | <b><i>Generations Wellness Virtual Café</i></b> , families leadership development, connection to community services and workshops focused on overcoming trauma for parents, caregivers and early childhood service providers.   |
| Municipality of Vega Baja  | The Resource and Referral Center for Early Childhood (CENTRANA) provides educational tools for parents, managers, professionals and the community. These tools refer to trainings, orientations, workshops and  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | specialized materials in early childhood education. The municipality is committed to adopting the Two-generation approach to expand its services to families and early childhood. (New Two Gen Center)  |
| Angeles Vivientes Foundation   | Services focused on working on the aftermath of trauma in minors who experienced earthquakes, hurricanes and covid-19 that have significantly affected Puerto Rico. Workshops and virtual sessions will be offered because of the COVID-19 protocols and expressive arts strategies will be used with trauma informed care model. Topics will include managing emotions, adaptation to virtual learning, how to build interpersonal skills during virtual interactions, resilience and self-esteem. Each workshop will offer activities through art according to the topic. |
| ADSEF  | Administration for the socioeconomic development of the family will collaborate in the identification of opportunities for families in areas of employment, economic incentives and search and placement of jobs according to the available criteria, taking into account the importance of families being financially self-sufficient, helping to break with the intergenerational cycle of poverty.   |
| Department of Health Division of Children Medical Special Needs  | This department will collaborate in the dissemination of information related to the services of early detection of conditions that affect early childhood from evaluation of autism as other conditions and special needs. They will collaborate in the training of parents on indicators and existing services for the population of children with special needs   |
| APNI - APNI's primary purpose is to guide and train parents to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to be able to actively participate in the education of their children. | Training parents in Special Education Laws and Procedures, Effective Intervention with Children with Deficiency Attention, Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution, Disciplinary Procedures, Modification and Appropriate Management of Behavior, Prevention of School Harassment "Bullying", Reasonable Accommodations and the Alternate Assessment, Understanding the Impediments, Knowing Autism   |
| VOCES  | Coalition of health care providers who manages dissemination of healthy practices for families and vaccination for all ages. Covid-19 prevention campaign   |

Engaging these partners in dialogue with parents and families will both ensure these providers better understand families' needs and help inform families and connect them to services in the community.

**Two Gen on Wheels** – It's important to reach vulnerable populations so that they can access and learn about the services available. This is why in this PDG B-5 renewal we identify the need to



bring services to rural and hard-to-reach communities through the 2 Gen on Wheels initiative. Through this bus, equipped with internet access, tv screen, computers, materials to carry out activities and delivery any kind of tools and information to provide services where some families due to lack of transportation and access cannot reach. With this initiative, monthly routes will be established to impact communities and families during the duration of this grant. They will be scheduled from the first grant year. In the visits to the communities, we will provide information on the development of the children's stages, strategies for managing emotions, family support resources and a directory of free services available according to their geographic area will be distributed. Also, families in needs will received the respective referrals for the agencies or services that they need.

According to the results of the need's assessment, it was identified that parents are unaware of the services available to their children. Therefore, it's important that we create a directory of services, which can be easily accessible both digitally and in print, where all the services for early childhood. It's important that this directory will be contained areas such as: health services, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, occupational services among others. Also, areas related to recreation and art activities, technological services will be available.

Due to the natural disasters and the pandemic, Puerto Rico do not have the actual sources to provide parents access to information on available services and systems for early childhood. In the initial PDG B-5 grant we identified that Puerto Rico does not have an integrated data system aimed at early childhood in terms of a directory of services available in a coordinated manner available to parents and providers. In the *PDG-Renewal*, a website and app will be developed to allow families, and early childhood service providers to easily access information as well as services that will be under the Two-Generations Community centers.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Website/APP for families and providers</b></p> <p>Creating a data portal to capture the information families need to make informed choices about services, coordination's and quality.</p> <p>In this <i>APP</i>, there will be an area destined for the centers of two generations to access the loans of resources, make appointments for case management, access in areas related to; financial, socioemotional training workshops and development of early childhood among others. In addition, through the website you can access the virtual library where you can find literature, books and material for parents, children and providers of early childhood services.</p> | <p>With <i>PDG-Renewal</i>, we will work with families to improve the access, availability and effectiveness of information in user-friendly formats to help inform parental choice. Puerto Rico PDG B-5, will design statewide tools and a website, app that will provide user-friendly information to families on ECCE options and child development.</p> |
|---|---|

**C) Supporting Families' Child Development Concerns:**

PDG B-5 Renewal will work in outreach activities that ensure parents from rural areas in Puerto Rico and parents of children with disabilities, infants and toddlers are included. Families will be offered online early childhood development training (sessions) and there will be a resource directory for families to search for information according to their needs. To continue to build upon PDG B-5 initial grant work, renewal activities will include early literacy materials that support physical health, nutrition, oral health, asset building and social/emotional learning with a goal of addressing the whole child and family. PDG B-5 Initial Needs Assessment reveals that the lack of education and guidance about early childhood and the services they should receive at different stages of their development. This situation has become more complex due to changes in the service system following hurricanes, earthquakes and the pandemic, and the lack of navigators or mechanisms to get families through the service system. Similarly, groups consulted highlighted the need for greater knowledge about early childhood services and rights, in the context of the necessary empowerment of families. It reveals some of the groups consulted this may also affect

the transition to Kindergarten. According to the above, the activities and PDG B-5 materials will be updated to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities, rural communities. We will carry out campaigns on social media, Two Gen on Wheels and network to inform about stages of development, infant care and early childhood as well as healthy pregnancies and how to identify situations in the development of children. We will work hand by hand with the Department of Health of the Division of Children with Special Medical Needs. *PDG B-5 Renewal*, will expand the access to information for families about early childhood development of children with disabilities through holistic and coordinated outreach that can maximize enrollment efforts. Also, in alliance with the Pediatric Association we will reinforce the information about screening process and referral services to parents with concerns about their children's development. Due to covid-19 pandemic the families aren't visiting regularly medical services.

**D) Family Leadership in Improving the Mixed Delivery System:**

Puerto Rico will create opportunities for parents to engage and improved the mixed delivery system. In this renewal a portion of our work will enhance new opportunities for families to participate in the planning, design and implementation efforts across our early childhood learning system. PDB B-5 Initial Strategic Plan contemplated parents to participate meetings and tasks established to formulate a strategic plan according to the needs identified and inclusive of all sectors. It's important that families are included and participate in the decision-making process that will be inclusive among early childhood, rural communities and special needs sectors.

Initiative: *Parents Virtual Leadership Academy*; it's a two-day training where parents learn how to be leaders and active participants in the decision making and empowerment of their own. In this pilot parent/service providers attend virtually together to address common issues that affects them.

This initiative gave the parents tools that can help them to be part in the early childhood system. Additional family leadership development is described in Activity Four under activities to connect through Pyramid Model Implementation. These activities will require family engagement on a leadership level whose structure allows parents to be partners in decision making in their child's education, increase confidence as supporters for their children, serve as guides to other families.

#### **Activity Four: Sharing Best Practices & Professional Development for the Workforce**

##### **Overview:**

Puerto Rico revised the activity Sharing Best Practices for the *PDG B-5 Renewal 2020*. The identification of best practices according to the guidelines refer to the following six steps: a. needs assessment, b. literature review, evaluation of the most relevant and appropriate practices according to model d. evaluation of practices and their feasibility, e. scientific evidence on practices, and f. evidence-based practices. Also, we will be creating a professional register to improve training in workplace as part of the professional development.

Puerto Rico PDG B 5, focuses its evidence-based activities on the LAUNCH Project. which is based on the six goals described above. However, the LAUNCH Project ends its functions in December 2020. Given this situation Puerto Rico PDG B5 goal re oriented **the activity in develop “Healthy Steps”**. **Heathy Steps** is a Program evidence focus in pediatric primary care who promotes well-being school readiness of babies and toddlers with emphasis in families living in low income communities. In a preliminary need assessment for this renewal (2020), Puerto Rico evidence poverty level and socio-economic status as a primary problem to address. Also, areas related to mental and socio emotional access, education and health services are categorized as part of this problem.

**A) Improving Training and Workplace Experience of B-5 ECCE Providers.**

The PDG B-5 Renewal will support three years of expanded training across a range of B-5 ECCE roles center-based child care providers, lead and assistant teachers, early interventionists, home visitors, supervisors, administrators, and these approaches are summarized in the table below and then described in greater.

| Approach / Best Practices   | Audience  |
|---|---|
| Healthy Steps   | Evidence base approach Program focus in pediatric primary care who promotes well-being school readiness Through trained specialist of “Healthy Step” we will work with staff who have already been trained by the evidence-based HS/Zero to Three model, certified under the title "Healthy Steps Specialist". Through this program the families increase the efficiency of the medical system and supports comprehensive team-based care. In order to develop these programs in a comprehensive care, we are contacting a pediatric primary care physician that is be identified as the "champion" HS physician, who will work as a team with this assigned and trained HS specialist.   |
| Pyramid Model PD  | Teachers and caregiver’s development- the Teacher and Child Interaction Training (TCIT) and the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. This is a conceptual framework evidence base practice to promote social emotional development  |
| Trauma-Informed Care approach   | To moved forward trauma informed approach will be included; build awareness and generating buy in for trauma informed approach, support culture of wellness, embodies the values of trauma informed care and creating a safe socio emotional environment.   |
| Center for Mind Body Medicine, CMBM<br><br>Learn the Signs              | Professional Training. CMBM Comprehensive stress-and trauma-relief training program; included the two-four-day training and on-going supervision for 18 months. All participants committed to facilitate two mind-body skills groups to bring self-care tools to their communities. These is an evidence-based instruments and models.<br><br>Program aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need.  |
| The Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program | Puerto Rico Home Visiting Program. In Puerto Rico, the MIECHV program is administered by the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division (MCAHD) of the Puerto Rico Department of Health (PRDOH) and is locally known as <i>Familias Saludables</i> Puerto Rico (“Healthy Families Puerto Rico”). The MIECHV program is based on scientific evidence that demonstrates the benefits to the lives of women, children and families of receiving home visits by specially trained health and human services professionals. MIECHV focuses on improving maternal and child health and wellbeing, promoting positive parental behavior beginning in pregnancy, preventing child abuse and neglect, and promoting child development. |

- Healthy Steps model to the child care providers will aim the municipalities served and to other child care providers selected by the PDG B-5 Project, parents and families and Children

Development Faculty, as well as explore ways to expand the training to pediatricians, nurses or other primary care staff, including the PR Primary Health Care Centers' 330 Association, Department of Health's MIECHV PR DH visiting nurses, ASSMCA's Initiative Program staff and HS/EHS health coordinators. Based on this year's results of the training and implementation of it will be considered to be used with early childhood care providers and teachers.

- The PRDH has established the Preventive Pediatric Services Guidelines (that meet EPDST requirements) and the Protocol for the Early Identification of ASD (Birth to 66 months). Both require that developmental screening using the ASQ-3 be offered to all young children at 9, 18, 24 and 30 months; or at any age, if a primary caregiver, care provider or health professional expresses concern about the child's development. Additionally, ASD screening with the MCHAT-RF for all children at 18 and 24 months, or at any age, if there is concern of risk for ASD. It is imperative that early childcare and education providers and parents be aware of these requirements; as well as to the steps to take if the screening processes indicate risk for developmental delay or autism.
- Thorough with alliance with United Ways of Puerto Rico and their Program "*Sembrando Futuro*" we establish a coordinated plan on how to share best practices among early childhood care and education program providers includes the participation and collaboration of pertinent stakeholders.
- The Children with Special Medical Needs (CSMN) Division of the PRDH's staff has the capacity to collaborate in providing orientations and training on the child development and ASD screening instruments at pertinent professional conferences (i.e. Childcare, EHS/HS, psychologists, early childhood professionals, health services providers, etc.).

**Furthermore, the CSMN Division has the Ambassadorship for the Learn the Signs. Act Early CDC program, and will continue to expand the integration of the program's resources directed to strengthening parents' active participation in promoting the learning and development of their young children.**

- Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning is a model that has been in implementation for some years in most of PR's HS/EHS programs. Training to these programs was offered since 2008. ASSMCA *Iniciativa* Program, MIECHV visiting nurses and Department of Family's representative were trained in the model. The ACUDEN worked on its cultural and linguistic adaptation. ACUDEN already trains their programs and will collaborate with trainings to other early childhood providers and families.
- The CSEFEL materials are easily accessible in the Vanderbilt University page and include all modules in Spanish, including the Infant/Toddler, the Preschooler and the Family series.
- By providing training and capacity building to all stakeholders working with children in the early childhood years a coordinated process is set improving transitions across programs and into the elementary grades. The Lead Agency jointly with the Advisory Council and Alliances with Agencies in the public and Privet sector will have as one of its goals to leverage financial and other resources to ensure that there is efficiency of birth to five services.



| Instruments  | Purpose   |
|--|---|
| Child development screening (Birth to age 5 years old) – Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3, Ages and Stages Questionnaires-Social Emotional-2 | The PRDH has established the Preventive Pediatric Services Guidelines (that meet EPDST requirements) and the Protocol for the Early Identification of ASD (Birth to 66 months). Both require that developmental screening using the ASQ-3 be offered to all young children at 9, 18, 24 and 30 months; or at any age, if a primary caregiver, care provider or health professional expresses concern about the child’s development. |
| ASD/MCHAT-RF Early screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders   | ASD screening with the MCHAT-RF for all children at 18 and 24 months, or at any age, if there is concern of risk for ASD. It is imperative that early childcare and education providers and parents be aware of these requirements; as well as to the steps to take if the screening processes indicate risk for developmental delay or autism.   |
| Screening for Maternal Postnatal Depression – Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale.  | The EPDS was developed for screening postpartum women in outpatient, home visiting settings, or at the 6 –8-week postpartum examination. It has been utilized among numerous populations including U.S. women and Spanish speaking women in other countries.  |

**Pyramid Modules, Well Being and trauma approach** to support socio emotional, mental health programs and trauma. This effort supports our care to teachers and staff pointing out as part of our needs. Puerto Rico is being impact by three years of natural disasters including; hurricanes, earthquakes and the 9 months of a pandemic being this area as of one of importance. As improving Training and Workplace Experience this renewal will support an intense year of training and interventions with stakeholders and administrators. An additional best practice training that is implemented in PR is the evidence-based Center for Mind Body Medicine, CMBM, and Professional Training. The PR Healing Collaborative was pleased to offer the CMBM comprehensive stress-and trauma-relief training program. The program taught seventy healthcare professionals, educators, social service providers and community leaders how to address their own stress and trauma, and equipped them with simple but powerful tools to help them support children and adults in their communities. Participants included ACUDEN and other HS/EHS programs,

ASSMCA Emergency Line Director and staff and Initiative Program staff, Primary Health Care Center mental health staff, Department of Education social workers, day care center teachers, psychologists, naturopaths, midwives, doulas, university professors, PR's *Red por los Derechos de la Niñez y la Juventud*, university professors, faith-based and community leaders. ASSMCA's children and youth Coordinator is considering CMBM as a model to use within the agency. The training included the two-four-day training and on-going supervision for 18 months. All participants committed to facilitate two mind-body skills groups to bring self-care tools to their communities.

| <b>Initiative</b>  | <b>Services/ Topics</b>  |
|--|--|
| <p><b><i>Wellness and Self Care</i></b> for teachers working with trauma; we are in the process to implement a series of workshops to support implementation and a reflective practice of well-being and also addressing the elements of trauma. The foundation of the implementation is to support areas of socio/ emotional develop. This tools and strategies help the teaches to promote their well-being and support the strategies in the classroom to strengths the socio emotional development for children. This initiative is called <b><i>“Teachers of the soul, hugging your emotions” Maestros del Alma – Abrazando nuestras emociones we expect to impact 930 staff and teachers</i></b></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional management after disaster situations</li> <li>2. Compassion Fatigue</li> <li>3. Recovery</li> <li>4. Trauma management</li> <li>5. Resilience</li> </ol> <p>-These workshops are to strengths and support mental health. Bases on trauma inform Approach</p> |
| <p><b><i>Mental health first aid (certificate will be provided)</i></b><br/>           Teachers and stakeholders teach you how to help someone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. You learn risk factors and warning signs for mental illness and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations and where to turn for help.</p>   | <p>-One-day training consists in an 8-hour certification.</p>  |

In order to provide systematic statewide technical assistance to local communities and community-based organizations the Project will contract a group of early childhood professionals who will respond to the needs identified through the Quality Rating Instrument and the updated needs

assessment of local communities and community-based organizations. Additionally, a web page dedicated to disseminating best practices will be developed and made available to community-based organizations.

With the preliminary PDG B-5 Needs Assessment is updated, during 2020 any needs for capacity building in additional evidence-based models will be integrated into the Strategic Plan. The purpose of this renewal grant is to share best practices among early childhood care and education programs providers in Puerto Rico to reduce duplication of effort, leverage financial and other resources, and increase program quality, collaboration, efficiency of B-5 services, including transitions across programs and into the early elementary grades. The PDG B-5 Project will fund evidence-based, innovative interventions to help child care providers implement best practices emphasizing methods that incorporate practice-based coaching/technical assistance. A key focus of the new Best Practices trainings will be on effective transitions across early childhood programs and into the elementary grades, practices to meet the needs of priority.

**A) Credential Alignment in the PD Registry:**

Puerto Rico will develop a professional Development Registry will create a single place for unique counts of early care and education options in a community, classrooms within those sites, and educators within those classrooms. In the Renewal Year One, the Puerto Rico PDG B-5 will develop guidelines for the PD Registry. In Year Two A search feature will allow ECCE programs (especially rural) to find qualified PD providers, and the Registry will track trainings. This PD Registry will include an integrated data system to work with the general quality of service providers, agencies and centers. We will make a platform design it will be included in the licensing area of the DF.

The trainings will be focused on the following areas and will be done in a staggered manner.

Education and development of the child from 0 to 8 years

1. Education and development of the child from 0 to 8 years.
2. Learning environments
3. Health, safety and nutrition
4. Family and community
5. Guides and positive interactions
6. Evaluation and observation of the child
7. Professional development and leadership
8. Planning and administration

As a part of this activity Puerto Rico PDG B 5 in alliance with United Ways of Puerto Rico develop trainings during these challenging years. The program that they establish “*Sembrando Futuro*” serves as the prevention program area of the United Way of Puerto Rico that connects, in a single system, different campaigns to develop educational programs to: raise awareness and advocate for prenatal care, comprehensive child development, nutrition, physical activity, recreation, social-emotional development, professional training, breastfeeding education, public health, among other related activities, to promote affirmative actions across multiple sectors. To address these aspects, “*Sembrando Futuro*” adopts the necessary measures and conditions to promote the development of a new generation with the physical, educational, emotional and cognitive skills that each individual needs to have a full and healthy life.

## **Workshops**

### **A. Learning and Development**

| <b>Workshops</b>  | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Impact and target</b>                                       |
|---|---|--|
| Developmental Stages  | Born Learning" Initiatives, Developmental Stages<br>Promote the importance of comprehensive early childhood development, the use of family routines as an opportunity to create learning experiences, and the management of expectations according to developmental stages. | Teachers and Caregivers<br>Parents/Caregivers<br>800 p/virtual |
| Readiness   | Storytelling; To develop the habit of reading and develop attention and concentration   | Parent/Caregiver/<br>Children<br>800 p /virtual                |
| Socio-Emotional Development- "Positive Options for Families " | Develop skills and abilities needed to foster healthy social-emotional development in their children. This project is an evidence-based practice developed by Vanderbilt University   | Parents, /caretakers<br><br>800 p/virtual                      |

### Healthy Development

| <b>Workshops</b>                              | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Impact and target</b>   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>The benefits of Folic Acid</b>             | The benefits of Folic Acid; Focus in the benefits and importance of folic acid consumption in men and women before a pregnancy, this in order to prevent congenital birth defects.  | Teachers/Caretakers<br>Parents/Guardians<br>800 p ZOOM Platform    |
| <b>Prenatal Care (Starting Out Right)</b>     | The March of Dimes' evidence-based initiative encourages pregnant women to develop healthy pregnancy habits, pre- and post-partum information and care for their babies. 8 sessions                                       | Pregnant women 100<br>Zoom Platform                                |
| <b>Healthy Eating and Physical Activity -</b> | Training with Federal Department of Agriculture's new "Mi Plato" nutrition policies and evidence-based strategies to promote better nutrition and how to include more physical activity in the daily routine. 8 trainings | Teachers/Caretakers<br>Parents/Guardians<br><br>800p Zoom Platform |

## **Training for Care Centers**

APRENDO Program (Training Personnel Responsible for the Success of Children and their Optimal Development) is an educational program aimed at child care and development centers, designed by United Way of Puerto Rico (UWPR) and Angel Ramos Foundation (FAR). To train personnel working in Child Care and Development Centers to offer learning experiences aimed at fostering the good social-emotional development of children through sensitive and respectful relationships.

### **Goal:**

To train staff working in Child Care and Development Centers to provide learning experiences aimed at fostering children's good social-emotional development through sensitive and respectful relationships. Staff (teachers, directors, assistants, others)

### **Part One: Enabling environments for social-emotional development (25 workshop hours)**

1. Teamwork (3 hours)
2. Relationships: heart of development: infants and toddlers (3 hours)
3. Relationships: Heart of Development: Preschoolers (3 hours)
4. Collaborating with families (3 hours)
5. Health and safety in the center (6 hours)
6. Atmospheric events and other emergencies (4 hours)

7. Implementation of the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE2) (3hours).

**Part Two: Strategies for good social-emotional development (12 hours' workshop)**

1. Connecting with children: Attachment (3 hours)
2. Self-regulation/emotional control (3 hours)
3. Self-care (3 hours)
4. The basics of positive/effective discipline (3 hours)

**Workshops for families (4 hours)**

1. Why do I behave like this? learning about social-emotional development (2 hours)
2. How does parenting style influence children's behavior? (2 hours)

**Mentor-Coach Component (10 hours' x center)**

It is a process of accompaniment where a mentor-coach (MC) with knowledge about the LEARNING Program, training and mentor-coach characteristics accompanies participants in the development of professional competencies and improvement of appropriate environments to achieve good social-emotional development of children in the center. The foundation of accompaniment is to develop the ability to practice sensitive and respectful relationships between the center's community, comprised of center staff, children, and families.

**Program Indicators**

1. Relations with children
2. Physical health

3. Daily schedule and routines
4. Giving Instructions
5. Establishing rules, limits and consequences
6. Health
7. Safe Environments
8. Reciprocal relationships with families (parent or caregiver)
9. Work team
10. Children Behaviors

Participants: Program is designed for staff working in care facilities.

## 2. *BienEstar*

It's a program that aimed at the prevention of pediatric obesity. The mission of the program is to encourage children to have an adequate body weight by eating healthy foods and doing physical activity. The continuation of these behaviors or practices in the home and in the environment is encouraged with the help of families and the community. As part of the model, teachers and families of children are educated about nutrition and proper practices for physical activity. At the end of the training process, teachers and families are expected to know and practice strategies to promote healthy environments with an emphasis on nutrition and physical activity.

1. Also Encourage children to learn about and consume more fruits and vegetables.
2. Encourage children to get more moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity.



3. Promote good nutrition and physical activity as a family. At the end of the program, children are expected to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables during snacks. Also increase the time of physical activity (directed or semi-directed) of moderate intensity to vigorous.

### **C) Aligning Credentials to Build an ECCE Career Ladder**

This project contains efforts to develop an integral personalized registry that targets diverse early childhood educator to achieve their full development and credentials. We will partner with ECCE programs to create focused activities for child care providers and early childhood professionals. As a part of our plan we will be creating an alliance with a Licensing Program that regulate the requirements for the child care qualifications programs. The law #173 refers that department of licensing will develop a registry with the qualifications and standards for child care services providers. This PD Registry will offer modularized, online coursework that will make professional development more achievable. *PDG B-5 Renewal* Year One will expected support 100-200 educators and services providers in attaining continuing professional education especially in rural and underserved parts of Puerto Rico.

### **D) Increasing Availability of Qualified Providers**

The renewal grant will allow us to get educators and child care, early childhood service providers to request free access to courses, workshops, certifications and materials that help them get continuous professional development without having to invest money. This system will impact professionals in a great way as they will be able to train virtually as well, under modules and

access their development credentials through an integrated platform of services at their fingertips.

### **Activity Five: Improving Quality/Service Integration, Expanding Access (incl. Subgrants)**

#### **Overview**

Puerto Rico intends to use the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant to build on a pilot program called *Dando PASITOS* to increase access and participation, improve quality, and establish local governance and infrastructure; reward leaders and teachers for improving quality; and improve the coordination, collaboration, financing, and efficiency of ECCE systems. The lessons learned and models developed can then be scaled island wide and sustained using existing funds more efficiently and effectively, a key part of the planning and capacity building funded through PDG by leveraging successes and lessons learned from the previous intent to its mixed delivery system and RSN pilots, Puerto Rico will use a plan funding strategy that supports local and rural communities to expand access to birth through five-year-old tools and resources in a manner that is sustainable after the conclusion of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant, addressing the needs raised in Activities One and Two. These pilot program will be offered for three years, in alignment with the school year, with the expectation that communities sustain these tools once the grant ends.

According to the NA three of the most important components of the service system for children ages 0-8 in Puerto Rico are licensed childcare centers, Head Start and Early Head Start centers, and public system schools with Pre-Kindergarten grades. A total of 2,226 care and education service centers were identified, including 972 HS/EHS centers, 1,137 licensed care centers, and 117 public schools that have Pre-Kindergarten. Recent research on the impact of

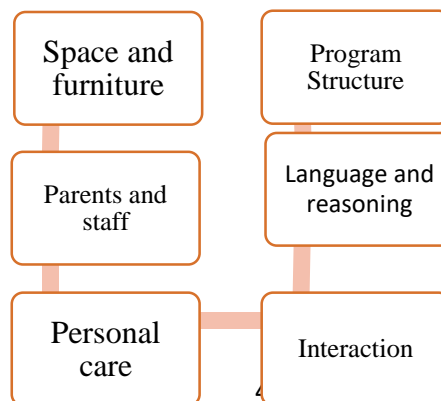
Hurricane María on children, conducted for the Institute of Youth Development (2018) revealed that when considering the 0-5 age group only 30% were enrolled in school or care. The differences between these two numbers are probably since in the case of the 0-3-year-old population, the percentage of children attending a childcare or preschool center is much lower. In fact, as the income level decreases, the less percent is enrolled.

**A) Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot:**

Dando PASITOS is a proposed evaluation system that will connects families in Puerto Rico with information and care that helps their children live a safe, happy and healthy childhood. *Dando Pasitos* will be designed to improve the level of quality in early childhood care and education programs throughout the island. “*Dando Pasitos*” distinguishes the quality of each childcare facility in Puerto Rico by a rating system of level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4 and level 5 with little fingerprints.

The purpose of “*Dando Pasitos*” is to emphasize the value of quality childcare while providing parents with resources to identify and locate quality childcare providers in their communities. PASITOS will also provide Puerto Rico's childcare providers with valuable tools to improve the quality of their programs at all levels. The purpose is to collect the evidence with which to measure and propose areas for improvement in the services offered to early childhood. This system is known in the United States as a “Quality Rating and Improvement System” (QRIS).

This scale is made up of 7 areas or dimensions:



The quality measurement and qualification system and implementation. It is a tool that allows evaluating the system and being able to identify areas of opportunity for improvement, use new strategies and create new models that support the process of improvements and changes. The purpose is to define and promote the quality of the early childhood educators, the programs in which they work, and the field of early childhood education in general.

***1. Needs identified from the NA/SP and how findings relate to the proposed activities.***

By 2021, Puerto Rico will have an approved strategic plan for strengthening the early childhood care and education (ECCE) system that will improve outcomes including kindergarten readiness. DANDO PASITOS pilot program will be impacting rural /communities, representing Puerto Rico's diversity and demonstrate proof of concept with extensive funding and support from state. This *Pilots* will be providing training, technical assistance, materials and ongoing support to improve classroom quality (e.g., *PAS, BAS, Development Standards, Curriculum and Assessment, Professional Development* and teacher support competencies, Ratio and group size and *CLASS* observations), engaging families as part of the process. The Needs Assessment reveals that PR does not have the necessary data to comprehensively analyze ECCE needs across the MDS. It also revealed that the PR does not have enough supply of ECCE programs and support services, especially in rural areas (e.g., infants and toddlers, young children with disabilities).

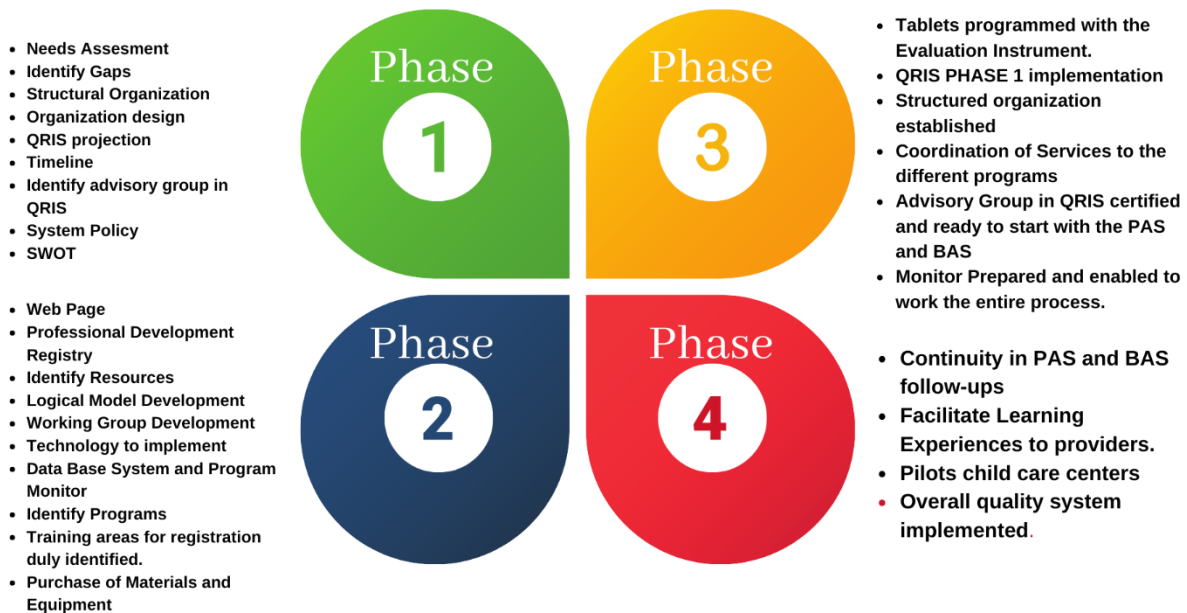
***2. Detailed and clear plan for improving local capacity; proposed project period for pilot program DANDO PASITOS***

Conducted extensive outreach to engage family day home, childcare, Head Start and school partners.

- Created roster of all publicly-funded ECCE sites with site, teacher, and classroom estimates.

- Produced budget to ensure all classrooms can be observed and to complete all access and quality improvement activities; and
- Participated in extensive technical assistance and provided feedback that will inform island wide work going forward.
- Three years to all FCCH, CC, EHS, HS and Privates Reach Level 3 in DANDO PASITOS to continue later with levels 5, 6 and 7 to quality.

### Overall Quality System , Development and Implementation Phases



### 3. *Justify project's length and subaward strategy for greatest impact.*

The inequity in resource distribution, the lack of uniform protocols (ex. quality criteria) Specific statistical data for the population and lack of integrated information systems is our opportunity to potential and to create an information and accountability system to help us to provide a ECE quality system as a finding in the NA. The NA also found that PR does not has many high-quality ECCE programs, but these programs remain inaccessible to some of the PR's

most vulnerable young children and families. Challenges faced by parents such as seeking non-traditional hours of care, transportation to care (especially in rural areas), and the rising cost of care forcing some parents to choose unregulated care out of necessity and not by choice but out of necessity were other NA findings.

Through these efforts, communities will not only strengthen their own systems but will establish models to be scaled to other communities. Note that communities are strongly encouraged to include another key partner including early intervention programs, home visiting programs, resource and referral, infant and toddler mental health and other professional development programs. Build relationships with all publicly funded partners, including schools, Head Start, and all registered subsidy providers; Increase Access; and strengthen quality.

Puerto Rico will make the evidence-based Professional Development activities and trainings described in Activity Four available to pilot project centers in response to site-generated improvement plans and expanded choices available for inclusion of children with special needs, and others. The pilot project will operate for three years including an initial six-month planning period; it will be supported through implementation and outcomes evaluations over the duration of the project. Preferably, each program will advance one QRIS level per year, and with evaluation, the pilot will determine if we must make adjustments to the timeline

| <b>Activity</b>  | <b>Partners</b>                              | <b>Smart Objective</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| Review the 0-60-months education standards, which are based on the state of Arkansas, since Puerto Rico lacks standards for this population. They are expected to be approved by the Department of Education and ACUDEN. | -Department of Education.<br>-Arkansas state | New education standards finalized by 3/31/2021 and incorporated in the new QRIS. |

**B) Community-Based Planning for Expansion:**

The QRIS project is designed to improve quality in existing ECCE programs, this planning activities are designed to expand access and develop new high-quality programs. In Puerto Rico, data collected has consistently shown high unmet needs for ECCE services in certain counties and communities’ow more than ever due to natural disasters and COVID-19, the collection of data and services available has been limited. Therefore, it is important that we design a system that measures the quality of the centers and encourages the training of early childhood service providers to offer quality services to our children, which makes the system an integrated one. It is important to emphasize that the above-mentioned results in little access and knowledge about sources of funds make difficult to our territory to compete for grants aimed at reinforcing and implementing a service quality system. We can mention several issues like the lack of infrastructure to support community-wide planning, including lack of data, absence of a community-level planning entity and integrated efforts cross agencies.

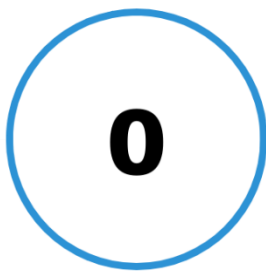
*PDG B-5 Renewal* will aimed children with special needs and families experiencing homelessness, and how programs/centers linkages to health, homeless services and social services are built. In the proposed project, will provide supports targeted specifically to the *PDG B-5 Renewal* goal of increasing equitable access to ECCE programs.

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Core Pilot Activities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pilots provide training, technical assistance, materials and ongoing support to improve classroom quality (e.g., PAS, BAS, Development Standards, curriculum, competencies and CLASS observations)</li><li>• Build a uniform data portal to capture important information about access and quality, enabling the state to create a “program profile” to engage and inform family choice.</li><li>• The professional Development Registry will create a single place for unique counts of early care and education options in a community, classrooms within those sites, and educators within those classrooms.</li><li>• Develop a School Readiness Committee</li><li>• Conduct classroom quality inventory</li></ul> |
|------------------------------|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide hands-on training and technical assistance to users, enabling the state to learn from as much from the onboarding process as from the data.</li> <li>• One on one coaching for pilot program to support providers.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Foundational Supports for New Pilots</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilots develop plan for strengthening access, enrollment and transitions. On-site training and coaching.</li> <li>• Survey results via TYPEFORM (new)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Pilot Innovation Funding</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDG B-5 will assisted childcare service providers for efforts to improve quality with stipend to childcare centers to strengthen quality, improve implementation and reduce turnover.</li> </ul>                                      |

For Years 2 and 3, PR will expand to 50% and 70% of the territory respectively, including all rural communities, providing core, foundational and innovation funding based on actual costs and lessons learned from prior year.

**DANDO PASITOS** towards a quality system **QRIS**



**OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT**

Provider has completed the minimum requirement process for licensing, through the Department of the Family, Licensing Office

All facilities must be up to date with the obligations of the DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY / LICENSING



**LEVEL 1**

**Components / Administration**  
The administrator takes the basic course of PAS.

**Administrator / Staff Credential / Professional Development**  
Administrator and educators are members of the Professional Development Registry or DE  
Administrator complies with RDP training



**LEVEL 2**

Must meet all the requirements for PASITOS 1 and Pasitos 2

1. Program review by a certified PAS advisor
2. Administrator takes the Focus 2 GEN seminar as an initiative aimed at Strengthening Families

CREDENTIALS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**LEVEL 3**

Must meet all the requirements for PASITOS 1 and Pasitos 2

1. Program/center obtains an average of 4.00 or more in items PAS 1-21

**Credentials- Administrator meets PDR intermediate training requirements**



## **Activity Six: Monitoring, Evaluation, & Data Use for Continuous Improvement**

### **Overview:**

*PDG B-5 Renewal* proposed to design a data collection system which is integrated since there is currently no system that provides integrated and accessible information for both agencies and service providers. That is why the efforts will be aimed at designing, planning and implementing an integrated data system. Specialized agencies will be contacted for technical assistance for the design and implementation process. It's important that the data system supports cross-agency data analysis, also keeping an unduplicated count of children receiving services, and be the foundation for performance measurement, monitoring and evaluation to support decision-making and the guidelines of strategic planning. It should be noted that accessing data and governance challenges have been barriers to greater cohesion and ease of use; Puerto Rico PDG B-5 proposes funds that help data standardization and performance measurement that will support execution of the PDG B5 Renewal as well as upcoming governance and funding decisions.

### **A) Data Integration, Management, and Data Use:**

Puerto Rico lack of an integrated data system and quality (scores, teacher credentials, etc.) across all programs, especially in early childhood. No data system in Puerto Rico captures ECCE data consistently across the mixed delivery system, and no data system connects child level data to experiences that provide a more precise view of how specific experiences impact children in the short- and long-term. We identified to solve these gaps, with an ECCE data integration efforts focus on data collection, analysis, and decision making by enabling pilot centers to collect information through a single data portal and to use that data to share between agencies. Puerto Rico will used PDG B-5 grant funds in the current year to contract, develop and launch portal in close collaboration with the centers.

| Areas   | PDG B-5 Envisioned/Proposed   |
|---|---|
| Development of an integrated data system  | PDG B-5 Initial grant will work with a developer to implement this system. An agreement was worked out with the state of Arkansas for the use of the coding of its integrated data system, which already exists an agreement so that Puerto Rico can use it. This system will collect demographic data across agencies that served early childhood and uses direct and predictive matching techniques to generate unique identifiers that can be used in inter-agency analytics in Puerto Rico. |
| Early childhood integrated data system that collects data across a broad set of programs EHS/HS/CC. | Puerto Rico proposed investments/funds in a data link setting, that will support connection and creation of identifiers across additional programs external to ECCE, including social services programs such as TANF, WIC, from ADSEF and health programs. Also, Child Care, Home Visiting, - private pre-k HS/EHS on a local basis, planned to expand statewide under PDG B-5 Renewal – and primary education K-3 according to Puerto Rico #93 Law.  |
| Assessing the data knowledge of key data users  | Dashboard that displays early childhood data and maps across state agencies and HS/EHS for use by local services providers, stakeholders and agencies Puerto Rico PDG B-5 will increase and expand the ability to support bigger data literacy of local decision makers.  |
| ACUDEN and local communities collect and use data across programs to inform decision making.        | PDG B-5 Renewal want to made available support to local decision making, policy making, and a Professional Registry Development of early childhood professionals and QRIS that is integrated and holistic. This data will be largely used by ECCE program directors, educators, and families to support informed decision making related to services workforce availability, program quality, and kindergarten readiness something that Puerto Rico will have to design and implement.          |
| An unduplicated count of children participating in ECCE programs                                    | Puerto Rico PDG B-5 currently lack of unduplicated count of children participating in all ECCE programs, with the exception of HS/EHS which are currently incorporated on a limited basis. This unduplicated count currently will support development for ECCE services to aim underserved areas (special needs children, rural areas, homelessness families), plans to improve this unduplicated count.  |

Through the course of the PDG B-5 Renewal, Puerto Rico plans to increase its data integration, management, and data use through projects focused on infrastructural support to system, analysis to expand the unduplicated count of children receiving ECCE services, and support to improve available data literacy.

*Enhanced Data Linkage Environment-* Puerto Rico will use Renewal funds to create child and workforce datasets within to support enhanced cross-agency analysis, update policy and services practice. This process will begin with work at the agency/centers level in PDG B-5 Renewal Year one to identify, establish, and standardize data across existing systems in preparation for integration in a centralized data, while upholding privacy and regulatory compliance.

We proposed that in Year Two of the renewal, this data will be loaded into a joint analysis platform. These tasks will be required to include the of creation data dictionaries, standardization of demographic variables such as race, sociodemographic and ethnicity, to create variables like program participation and providers. We envisioned in in Renewal Year Three, this investment will motivate and create an ECCE participation dataset on a shared platform that will support deepness analyses of child, and family's trends across systems and access issues that currently prevent integration

*Enhanced Unduplicated Count-* Puerto Rico current unduplicated count it's in early stages to build an effort become more comprehensive scope. At this time, Puerto Rico unduplicated count includes all B-5 children participating in, special education, subsidized child care, and state pre-k, with HS/EHS participation included on a basis. A lack of standardization across datasets prevents more detailed analysis beyond generation of an unduplicated count, while structural limitations prevent full incorporation of HS/EHS data across grantees into the count. Its important to addressed this issue, in Renewal Years One and Two will require ongoing troubleshooting in Renewal Year One at the local, state, and federal levels. Puerto Rico will work with its Head Start Program and federal partners to resolve issues of data sharing agreements and technological barriers in combination within the databases used by HS/EHS grantees. In Renewal Year Two, we will create ECCE participation datasets, PR PDG B-5 will

initiate an analytics activity to expand previous unduplicated count efforts to include HS/EHS/Child Care data statewide. We will work on to include comprehensive data and analysis of services designed to update policy and early childhood practices, as led by a stakeholder's advisory group, and that will support an updated Needs Assessment and strategic plan that led to decision making.

*Enhanced Data Accessibility and Literacy-* Its important the ability to have accessible, data to local ECCE programs and decision makers. Improving accessibility and supporting data literacy of local community and ECCE program also underserved communities. We projected that data users in Year Two will benefit of the expansion of TA to support local data use and analysis for decision making. Puerto Rico PDG B-5 will integrated systems that will allow complex analysis for each activity. PDG B-5 Renewal expected well-informed decision-making and accesses to data of the programs.

**B) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement:** Puerto Rico has identified several tools and methods that will to promote accountability across the state's mixed delivery system. Through the goals identified in the Needs Assessment we will made a significant progress in aligning accountability across its mixed delivery system.

***Identified Accountability tools:***

*Puerto Rico Early Childhood Dashboard-* Puerto Rico Early Childhood Dashboard, will used a website and will be supported by ACUDEN, this initiative will tracks systems outcomes through indicators and metrics designed to be representative of the ECCE system as determined by strategic planning efforts. It's important that this indicators and metrics include data focused on COVID-19 cases presented in the centers and protocols, related services economic security, health, demographic data of families, service providers, special needs, high-quality B-5 ECCE,

coordinated community systems, and the early childhood. In the initial grant, the company that will work this area was already contacted and already began the design part that in the renewal grant will update the dashboard with indicators and metrics aligned to the Statewide Strategic Plan. We will invest in data systems and in the Program Performance Evaluation Plan that will maximize the ability of the project to monitor and c improve the effectiveness.

*Addressing Fragmentation and Building on Progress:*

We identified barriers to design, implement and access a mixed delivery system in Puerto Rico and recommendations to improve the mixed delivery system and ensure that all families and children have unbiased access to high-quality ECCE services. (*Early Childhood Care and Education*)

| <b><i>Barriers</i></b>  | <b><i>Recommendations to Improve the system</i></b>   |
|---|---|
| Lack of awareness   | Develop a dissemination campaign of services accessibility  |
| Lack of state goals or accountability for building a mixed delivery system. | Design, develop and implement strategies that build a governance structure with formal authority and responsibility to lead to inclusive participation of the governance. |
| Puerto Rico /agencies uncertainty about grant funding                       | Aaccess other sources of funds, private sectors, sustainability plans, diversification and inclusion of services.   |

To build on progress from Initial PDG B-5 activities and to address fragmentation and overlay, Puerto Rico proposes to pilot implementation of Activity Five in PDG B-5 Renewal which is aimed at planning and implementing a quality system and integration of a data system that allows access and accountability.

*Program Performance Evaluation Plan:* Puerto Rico PDG B-5 Program Performance

Evaluation (PPE) will help us to manage and monitor the implementation of PDG B-5 Renewal,

inform a periodically updated Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, and evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of both individual pilot projects activities as the whole project. The Project Performance and Evaluation Plan will be a continuous formative /summative assessment of the activities of the Project and evaluate the process and outcomes of the initial grant activities to understand cost, implementation success, and to provide information to start a CQI process in the Renewal grant PPEP. Through the renewal grant, we plan to evaluate implementation and outcomes of projects in Activities Three and Four, which will include document review, stakeholder engagement feedback surveys, informant interviews, lessons learned discussions, online workshops and trainings provided. It's important to evaluate projects in Activity 5 that will identify key indicators of quality across the system that currently didn't exist, or need to be collected for long-term evaluation, conduct a data examination of existing data across sources, collect baseline data on quality, analysis to document the changes in overall quality of the mixed delivery system to measure overall impact of PDG B-5 funds.

| Activity         | PR-PDG B-5<br>No Cost<br>Extension                     |    | Renewal Year One            |    |    |    | Renewal Year Two       |    |    |    | Renewal Year Three    |    |    |    |
|------------------|--|----|-----------------------------|----|----|----|------------------------|----|----|----|-----------------------|----|----|----|
|                  | Q1   | Q2 | Q1                          | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1                     | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1                    | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Needs Assessment | Approved /Complete                                     |    | Verify and fill Data Gaps   |    |    |    | Update NA              |    |    |    |                       |    |    |    |
| Strategic Plan   | Draft of the strategic plan and delivery for approval. |    | Complete and approved       |    |    |    | Enhance Strategic Plan |    |    |    | Update Strategic Plan |    |    |    |
| PPE              | Update to fill data gaps                               |    | Update, Execute and Realign |    |    |    | Execute and Realign    |    |    |    | Execute and Realign   |    |    |    |

The staff will support the execution of the PPE as well as annual updates and enhancements to the PPE Plan over the course of PDG B-5 Renewal. They will select and create impact metrics

and measure the likelihood of positive outcomes for key activities. PDG B-5 Renewal considered PPE will include monitoring of inputs (including proposed costs), activities and procedures, and expected outcomes aligned to the proposed Strategic Plan and Logic Model, which will take place in the context of a continuous. We will hire a company that specialize in program evaluations. The contractors will meet with other key individuals at least monthly and will develop and submit work plans and quarterly reports according to the project.

*Approach and Timeline for PPE Implementation:*

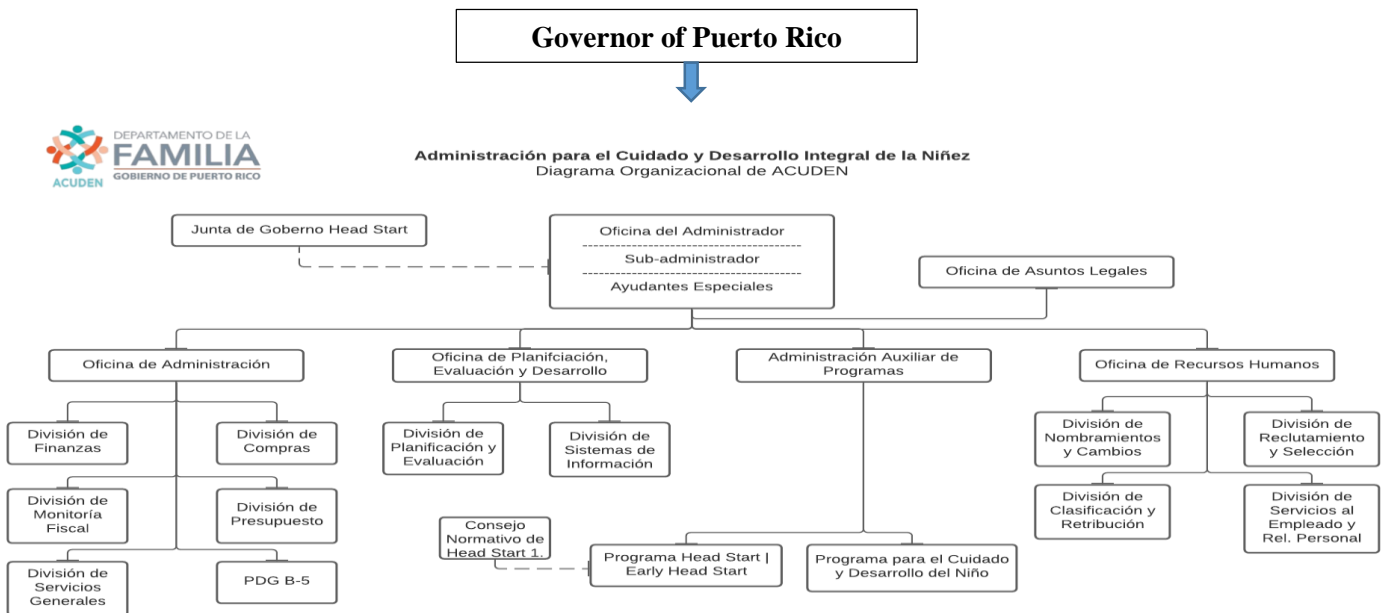
The initial PPE Plan will serve as a resource to be updated throughout PDG B-5 Renewal. In the phase one, alongside the Strategic Plan and Logic Model, we will verify the goals and indicators for each activity. An external evaluator will assess, develop implementation, program evaluation scopes and methodologies for activities and projects. This external evaluator will initiate execution of the pilot project evaluations scoped previously and will implement a performance measurement system. This process will support performance evaluation through activity specific data collection from contractors and they will monthly written progress reports. Reports will be due on a quarterly basis and will be informed annually by an updated Needs Assessment and/or Strategic Plan.

C) **Meaningful Governance and Stakeholder Engagement:** Puerto Rico ECCE system is governed by state agencies who receive and disburse federal and state funds, implement statute, and develop administrative rule for ECCE programs to support children, families, and communities. Each of these agencies report to the Governor's Office. Also state public law 93-2008 called for the establishment of the Multisectoral Early Childhood Council as the governance structure that integrates public policy and the mixed services delivery system for early childhood. In the Puerto Rico Initial PDG B-5 grant, we send in

February 2020 a letter to the governor of Puerto Rico, to activate this council, which has not been active since 2014, but it was not reactivated. Through this grant, several professionals were contacted and a Steering Committee was formed, which collaborated in the beginning of the project and currently there is another advisory group for the following activities.

| Agency  | Program Governance  |
|---|---|
| <b>ADSEF</b>                                    | TANF  |
| <b>ACUDEN</b>                                   | Child Care Licensing<br>Child<br>Early Childhood Services |
| <b>PRDH</b><br>Puerto Rico Department of Health | Medicaid<br>WIC   |

This structure of governance has not changed since the Initial PDG B-5. Puerto Rico decision-making maintains a centralized governance model, where in ECCE system components are managed by different state agencies but all decision run through the governor. Below is a visual depiction of ACUDEN governance structure as previously described.



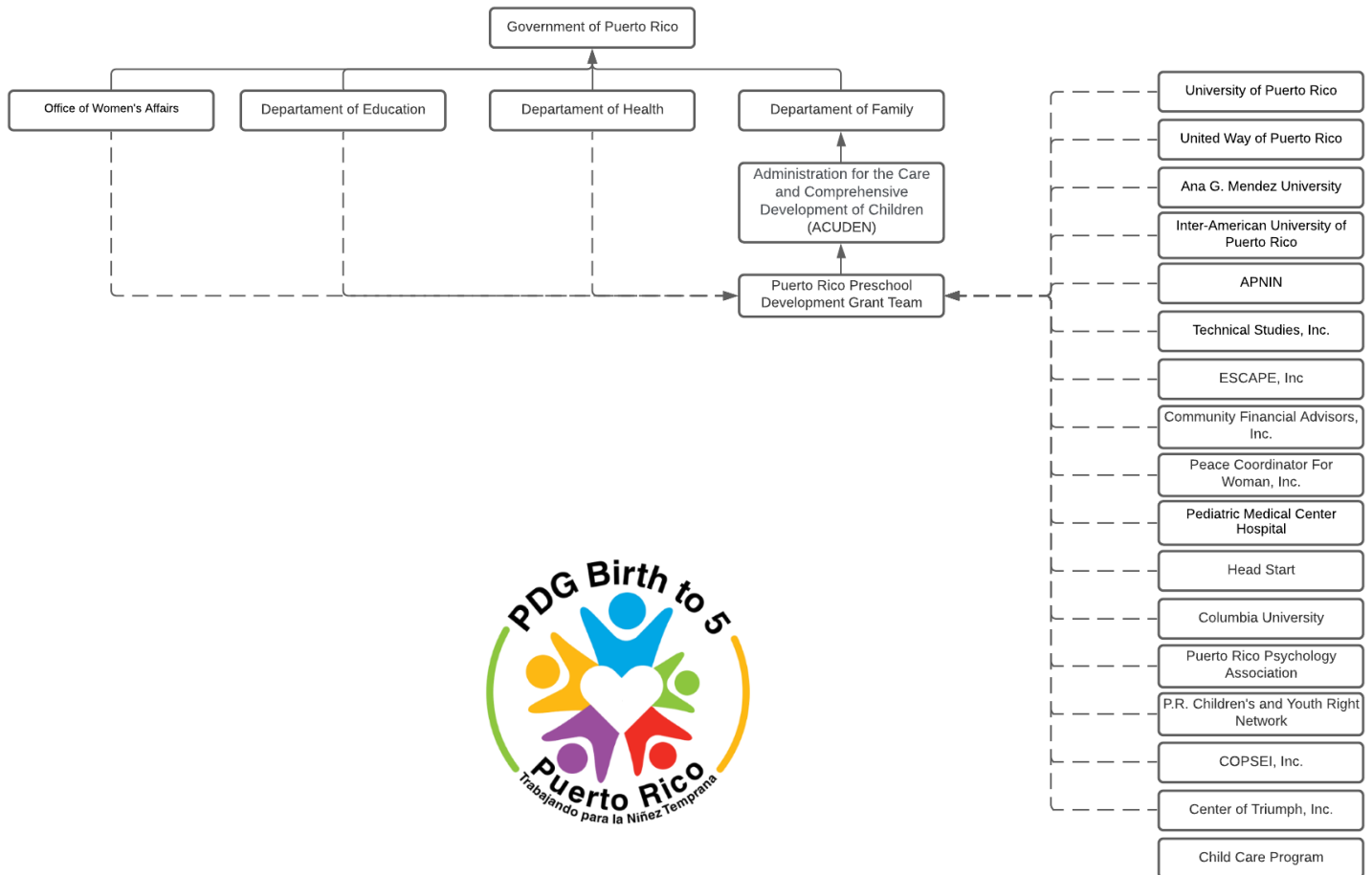


## Stakeholder Involvement in PDG B-5 Renewal:

Puerto Rico PDG B-5 has worked to ensure broad stakeholder representation across the ECCE system in the assessment, subsequent planning of all PDG B-5 activities, Initial and Renewal.

The chart below indicates which stakeholders have been or will be involved, the work they will provide based on areas of expertise, and how they will offer support (including through assessment, planning, or implementation of the activities described in the renewal. Typically, several representatives from each organization will be involved, corresponding to individual area of expertise; key organizations /agencies and individuals.

### Stakeholder's Involvement in PDG B-5



## **Bonus: Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment for Families**

PR PDG B-5 *Renewal* will be making solid progress developing a coordinated enrollment strategies and models through PDG to better reach vulnerable families who may be served, underserved, and unserved with a broad array of holistic services. In partnership with “*Dando Pasitos Pilots*,” PR developed toolkits and templates to facilitate streamlined enrollment processes with a centralized point of entry for families to efficiently access needed services. PR will be drafted a coordinated enrollment self-assessment tool, information guide, and tip sheet, as well as complementary tools to facilitate Pilots’ capacity to integrate ECCE financing. The self-assessments provide a lens on how well Pilot partners coordinate and address sharing of information, eligibility, application processes, preference matching, and waitlists, and where there are opportunities for more efficient integration of funds. Through a collaborative process, Pilots convened relevant community partners and families from June 2021 to August 2022 to complete the self-assessment and develop plans for action related to coordinated enrollment.

All Pilots participated, engaging more than 100 diverse public and private partners, and found that while no communities are fully coordinating enrollment, nearly 70% were coordinating with all or some providers that serve children with special needs, 70% were conducting joint enrollment efforts, 60% were using shared digital or paper resources with all or some providers, 43% were referring families to other providers, and 35% were using common applications with all or some providers.

Armed with this information and PDG-R funds, Puerto Rico will help Pilots build on strengths, learn with peers, and grow capacity to coordinate enrollment and measure progress annually by building models and foster improvements by providing innovation funds as follows:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Building Models</b>                              | <p>Support all Pilots to self-assess, develop action plans for coordinated enrollment systems, focus on family engagement in designing systems, expertise in integrated ECCE financing, and improved transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed transition strategies in the coordinated enrollment model</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Scale best practices</b>                         | <p>Develop a state template and TA for Pilots’ coordinated enrollment action plan to turn insights from self-assessment into concrete action</p>  |
| <b>Seeding Innovation</b>                           | <p>Establish single point-of-access and no-wrong-door strategies among all ECCE programs and B-5 support services</p>   |
| <b>Leverage diverse community service providers</b> | <p>Expand community service providers engaged in coordinated enrollment (beyond Head Start, school division, social services, and FCC and child care providers) to include parents; leaders from Department of Family and community action agencies (delivering Two-Generation Approach services); health, mental health, early intervention, home visiting, and food programs to more seamlessly connect families to needed support services.</p>  |
| <b>Strengthen data and information access</b>       | <p>Partner with a national vendor (SAFE KIDS PR) to adapt software to Puerto Rico’s needs and strengthen the capacity to have real-time information about slots and vacancies.</p>  |
| <b>Engage families/parents</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate family engagement strategies as part of coordinated enrollment through training from the National Network of Partnership Schools’ family engagement model to consider its relevance for Pilots.</li> <li>• Develop processes, messaging, communications materials, and activities to communicate with families as consumers of ECE; engage with families as their child’s first teachers; and enlist families in designing systems and strategies</li> </ul> |

### **Bonus: Infant/Toddler Emphasis**

PR's NA highlighted the gaps in access to quality ECCE options for I/T, with pronounced challenges for families who are vulnerable, in rural communities and childcare deserts, homeless, seeking employment, in school or training, and/or working non-traditional shifts. Based on the findings of the needs study, services to the population of children from 0 to 3 years of age is limited in Puerto Rico and a high percent of them are not enrolled in child care and preschool centers.

Through Pilots, PR will strengthen existing efforts to booster the competencies of family providers, including streamlining access to peer learning opportunities, low- or no-cost PD (using scholarships) and coaching supports including I/T specialists and mental health consultants , start-up funds for materials and training on mental health and safety; access to observations and feedback on effective interactions and instruction; and connection to PR's PDG B5 and to use data and reports to continually improve practices.

Through Pilot access and enrollment efforts, PR will also test strategies to improve B-3 partners (APNI) to connect families with support services including screening and referrals for developmental delays and disabilities, Two-Generation trauma-informed services, health and mental health consultation and services, and food security programs (e.g., through expanding and facilitating enrollment in PACNA).

### **Bonus: Collaborative Transition and Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades**

According to areas identified in the PDG B-5 Initial Grant as well as in the Needs Assessment, Puerto Rico does not have educational development standards aimed at the population of 0-60 months, for which PR PDG B-5 made the arrangements to contact the state of Arkansas to use its

template to serve as a basis for Puerto Rico to meet its education standards. Puerto Rico, through an alliance with the Department of Education, the Early Childhood area, and other professionals joined forces to work on a final draft to be able to present it for approval by the Department of Education and ACUDEN.

The above detailed will help us prepare our minors for the organized transition to school grades. It is important to detail that Puerto Rico does not have a transition to uniform kindergarten. It is an area that we must strengthen and technical assistance will be required to help us design and implement it.

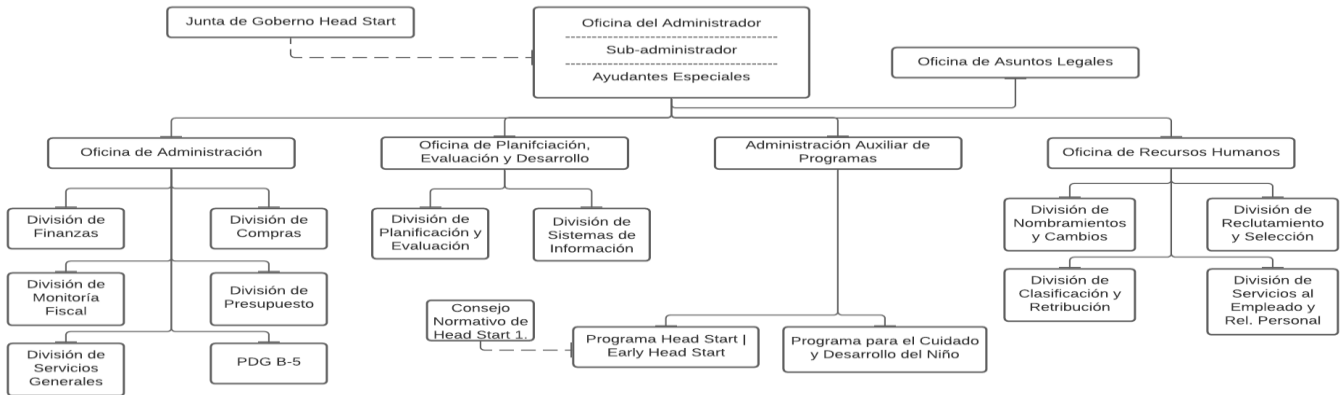
Puerto Rico learned from PDG B-5 that collaborative transitions will require stronger partnerships with families, providers and community program partners, and schools through PDG-R. Pilots will receive funding to build on their strengths and specifically address weaknesses as they develop community-wide structures to support families through transitions in partnership with home visiting, early intervention, social services and ECCE providers.

Pilots will better align ECCE with early elementary efforts. Armed with cross-program data about quality elements, Pilots will develop approaches that align instructional tools, supports and PD across ECCE and early elementary and better leverage multiple ECCE and K-12 funding resources including Every Student Succeeds Act-Title I (for at-risk), IDEA (for special education), services for homeless, and local funding.

## Organization Capacity



Administración para el Cuidado y Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez  
Diagrama Organizacional de ACUDEN



1. Componente organizacionales dispuestos por estatuto para asesorar y establecer la política pública del Programa Head Start y cuyos miembros prestan servicios a tiempo parcial.

One of the strongest assets of ACUDEN is its management structure with highly experienced resources to provide support for the PDG B-5 Project, which includes a Human Resources Office, Planning, Evaluation and Development, Fiscal Management, Budget and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions. The Human Resources Office is the administrative unit in charge of the selection, recruitment and training personnel in compliance with CFR 1304 and CFR 1306 standards. The Planning, Evaluation and Development Division is in charge of doing planning procedures, monitoring evaluation and Program self-assessment of the HS-EHS Program and provides statistical reports to other ACUDEN departments and external organizations. The Fiscal Management Office Division is in charge of all areas related to funding receipts, payments, accounting and financial reporting for HS-EHS and Child Care Programs. This Division assures grantee accountability in fiscal transactions with highly qualified internal accounting staff and external fiscal consultants. The Payroll, Pre-Intervention, Accounting, and Billing Accounts Payable functions permit a reliable and transparent financial system in

compliance with the existing state and federal laws and regulations governing the funds administered by ACUDEN in the following Programs: Child Care and Development Block Grant, Child Care-TANF, Child Care- Food Program, Head Start Program, Early Head Start Program for a total of approximately \$86,124,000 federal funds per year. The Budget Office prepares program budgets with management and program staff, controls the distribution of funds and certifies their availability. The Budget Office approves funding transactions for contracts, purchase orders, materials, and services, and also evaluates compliance with in-kind contributions and matching funds.

The Fiscal Monitoring Office does periodical fiscal evaluations of the Delegate Agencies to ensure compliance with fiscal management standards and applicable state and federal regulations. This Office follows up to any DA audit finding and provides onsite technical assistance. Program Area Management staff have a high level of program expertise and are responsible for implementing public policies and procedures and ensure compliance with local, state and federal regulations.

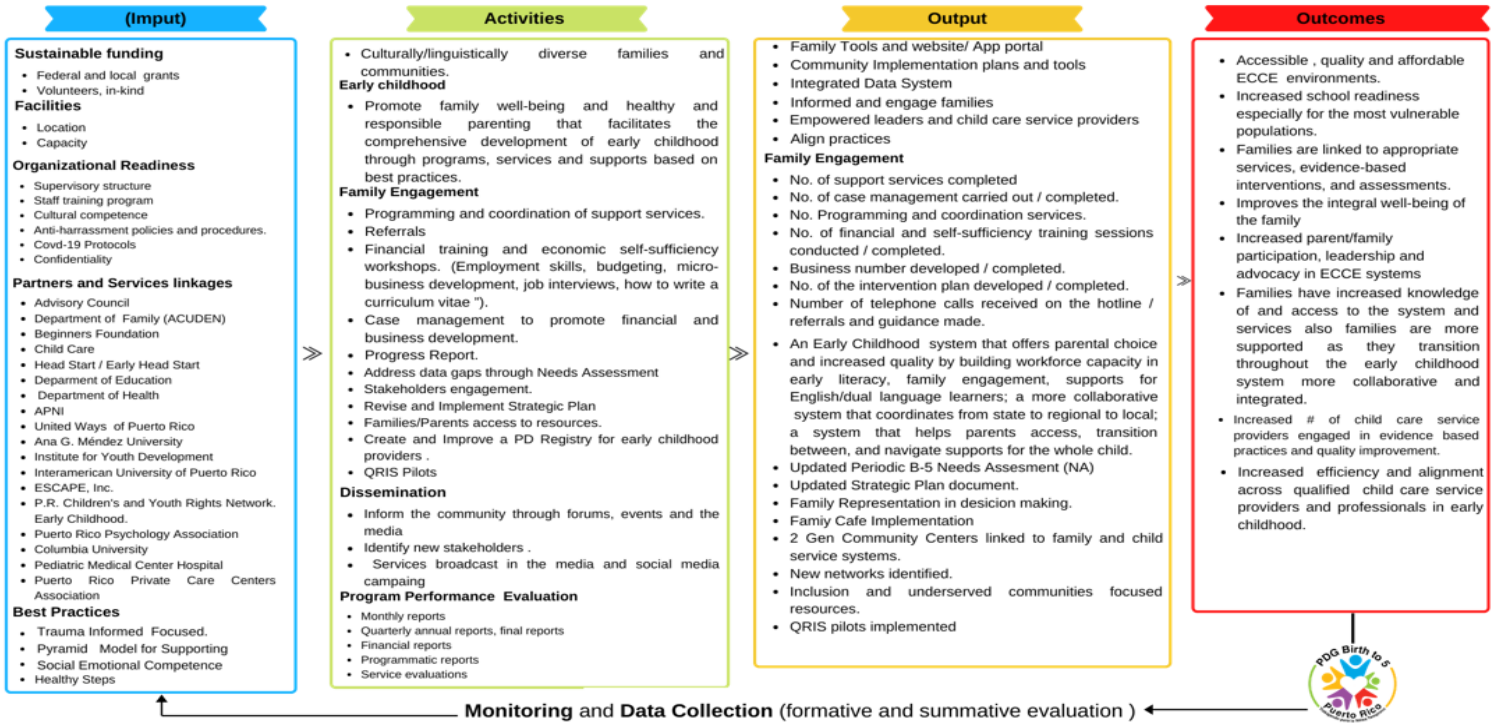
ACUDEN has administered billions of dollars of federal funds for program services and its ability to administer effectively funds in this magnitude has been demonstrated in its single audits reports which since 2009 had no Questioned costs.

### **Logic Model**

The logic model for Puerto Rico PDG B-5 Renewal is shown below. This model represents the accomplishment or renewal activities that will result in the outputs essential to achieve expected outcomes aglined.

## LOGIC MODEL

Promote a state system of service integration that is available, accessible and of high quality while addressing physical, social, emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of children ages 0-5 and their families in P.R



### Project Sustainability Plan

It's important to point out that execution and sustainability of this work will depend on heavily on partnerships and coalitions across the ECCE and other adjacent systems. Through and after the renewal period, Puerto Rico PDG B-5 will ensure sustainability in the grant strategies that have been effective in improving practices and outcomes, as well as incorporate these practices into a comprehensive integration of ECCE system. *PDG B-5 Renewal* will provided outputs and initial learnings that will serve as evidence for other grants funding especially for quality. The needs assessment will be updated periodically to ensure timely, relevant, actionable information is available to stakeholders to inform and guide decision making and to ensure fulfillment of ACUDEN'S vision. The Strategic Plan will be updated periodically in collaboration with stakeholders, as needed. The innovative training activities will be implemented using a Train the



Trainer Model to ensure sustainability beyond the grant period. ECCE programs will identify their own resources on trauma informed approaches and developmental screenings to continue to improve their services.

### **Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information**

The ensure the families safety and autonomy the project will take care of the confidentiality of sensitive information provided by the families and providers. To guarantee the confidentiality, project will develop a consent or release of information form to share information with other agencies, partners, individuals or programs. This release will include information about program requirements, nondiscrimination policy, and participant authorization to share information in statistics reports. Each participants and families will be fully informed about what type of information will be shared after she/he signed a release. All the information is confidential and remains in a file in a locked file cabinet in the centers and electronic files.

### **Dissemination Plan**

The dissemination plan goal is to provide information about PDG-Renewal activities, to ensure that grant objectives and activities are clearly communicated to families, partners, and the public so that families will know what services are available and so that partners can build on the activities that take place. PDG B-5 Initial NA and SP will help identify target audiences who would benefit from information about activities and services. Information on activities and projects will be disseminated via ACUDEN website, emails to EC programs and partners, and to groups during their regular meetings and events. We will provide partners with information that can be included in their communications. We will conduct surveys to received feedback from community and state partners that will help us inform whether target audiences have received and used information. *PDB B-5 R* will distribute a monthly newsletter to share updates and use

the official social media accounts of ACUDEN to post recent activities and update. Press releases, radio interviews and WIPR government television station will be held to publicize services and activities. As described PR will use a tiered approach to broadly disseminate PDG-Renewal activities, initiatives and materials:

| Target                                     | Approach  |
|--|---|
| State Partners/<br>Stakeholders            | Partner state agencies, stakeholders and advocates will receive updates, findings, data summaries and reports through monthly sister agency meetings, webinars, and meetings of the planned activities, and new a proposed family council.  |
| Community level<br>Leadership              | Materials for community-level leaders will be disseminated, reviewed and discussed via weekly office hours, weekly email updates, quarterly in-person TA sessions as well as featured at the annual summit.   |
| Site leaders,<br>teachers, and<br>families | With resources from state, community-level leaders will facilitate dissemination of materials to site leaders, educators and families on at least a monthly basis. Site leaders, teachers and families will receive surveys, electronic communications and webinars from state quarterly. |