NCLD Applauds Investment in Early Education

Inclusion of Preschool RTI provisions will ensure effectiveness

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(Washington, D.C.), The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) applauded U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan for announcing a $500 million investment in State based early learning programs through the Race to the Top program. As states compete for and receive these important funds, a critical component of their effectiveness will be the inclusion of PreK response to intervention (RTI).

"This unprecedented amount of resources will significantly increase the quality of early learning for our youngest children," said James Wendorf, executive director of NCLD. "As States use these funds, we want them to make sure young children have the highest quality early learning experiences. By integrating PreK RTI into their programs, States can provide the early intervention services necessary to ensure our youngest children have the educational and social and emotional supports necessary to enter kindergarten."

The Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge is designed to fund states which create comprehensive plans to transform early learning systems. States applying for challenge grants will be encouraged to increase access to quality early learning programs for low income and disadvantaged children, design integrated and transparent systems that align their early care and education programs, bolster training and support for the early learning workforce, create robust evaluation systems to document and share effective practices and successful programs, and help parents make informed decisions about care for their children. The program will be jointly administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Health and Human Services Department.

Response to intervention is an intervention process designed to help struggling learners. Under RTI, the intensity of services can be escalated for individual students through a system of “tiers” that provide increased levels of interventions and instructional support. This process enables instructional personnel to help struggling learners get the help they need to succeed in the classroom before their learning difficulties impact their academic achievement.

While typically used for school age children, RTI has been adapted to work appropriately and effectively in early childhood settings. RTI has been adapted for young children by recognizing the social and emotional needs of children, engaging their parents and providing services in settings which are natural for young children. Additional information on PreK RTI can be found at http://www.rtinetwork.org/pre-k.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities’ (NCLD) mission is to ensure success for all individuals with learning disabilities in school, at work and in life. We:
- Connect parents and others with resources, guidance and support so they can advocate effectively for their children.
- Deliver evidence-based tools, resources and professional development to educators to improve student outcomes.
- Develop policies and engage advocates to strengthen educational rights and opportunities.

More information about NCLD can be found at www.NCLD.org.

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