



The Campaign for  
**GRADE-LEVEL  
READING**



## MISSOURI'S SECOND ANNUAL GRADE LEVEL READING CONFERENCE 2021

**OUR NEW MISSOURI OFFICE OF  
CHILDHOOD AND REGIONAL HUB  
MODEL: LET'S GET STARTED!**



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## FEW HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS



Welcome! Please say hi in the Chat Box!

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This Zoom meeting will be recorded. A copy will be available along with the slide deck for you after our meeting.

You are muted throughout the presentation, but feel free to ask questions in the chat box during the presentation.

After the presentation, you can unmute yourself and ask questions.

Enjoy & Be Inspired – It is about our kids!!!!

# **Pam Thomas, Ed.D.,**

## **Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Childhood at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)**

Pam Thomas, E.D., is the Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Childhood at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This new Office of Childhood is responsible for administering nearly all state-funded childhood programs, including home visiting, parent education, early intervention, childcare, and afterschool programs. The office also administers several federal grants, including the Child Care and Development Fund, Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five, and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems. Pam has over 17 years of experience in early childhood as an in-home provider, services coordinator, training consultant, state program coordinator, and grant administrator. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Culver-Stockton College, a master's in school counseling from Truman State University, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis from University of Missouri-Columbia. Pam grew up in rural, northeast Missouri and moved to the Jefferson City area in 2008 to work at DESE. Pam and her husband Dale have four grown sons.



# Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) & Office of Childhood

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July 28, 2021

For more information go to: [EarlyConnections.mo.gov](https://EarlyConnections.mo.gov)

# Preschool Development Grant

The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) has six priority areas, including professional development and quality programming. The PDG B-5 grant aims to:

- Strengthen infrastructure
- Obtain enhanced systems
- Align programs and policies

<https://dese.mo.gov/early-learning/projects/PDGB-5>

# Office of Childhood



Safety

- Home Visiting
- Child Care (Subsidy)
- Professional Development



Health

- Home Visiting
- Child Care (Licensing)
- Safe Sleep & Safe Cribs
- Parent Advisory Council
- Professional Development



Education

- Home Visiting
- Quality Rating System
- First Steps
- Pre-K
- Professional Development



One team will continue to provide these services

# Office Priorities

**1**

Maintain essential services  
& maximize limited resources

**2**

Strengthen partnerships between public &  
private programs

**3**

Focus on the whole child: safety, health &  
education

<https://earlyconnections.mo.gov/who-we-are/new-office-childhood>

# Regional Hub Model

- 1 Designed as a systems approach to maximize limited resources
- 2 Designated area of Missouri
- 3 Focused on the information and services that children and families need

<https://earlyconnections.mo.gov/what-we-do/regional-hubs>



# Regional Hubs

## Goals & Activities

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**The ultimate goal is school readiness for all children.**

- Align administrative activities to increase families' access to and participation in early childhood programs
- Coordinate outreach activities to increase community support for a coordinated early care and education system

# Hub Implementation Phases



**I: Readiness**

Preparing communities

**II: Start-up**

Figuring out logistics

**III: Implementation**

Assisting families

# Questions?



Contact us at:  
[EarlyLearning@dese.mo.gov](mailto:EarlyLearning@dese.mo.gov)

# Deanna Finch

Executive Director, United 4 Children, St. Louis

Deanna Finch (she/her) is the Executive Director at United 4 Children. De has led United 4 Children through transitioning their strategic plan and business model to a collaborative, equitable, and community-centric approach building stronger relationships within the community of stakeholders especially those United 4 Children serves. De is on a self-proclaimed anti-racist journey and is seeking to bring other leaders in our community along with her. By promoting equity training and education she improves the organization's culture and program systems for better child outcomes which fuels her fearless drive. Her favorite quote to summarize the importance of early childhood educators to our communities and the responsibility they hold in building a strong foundation for their children to thrive is “when our children are well, we are ALL well” (African Proverb).



# Jovanna Rohs, Ph.D.

## Director of Early Learning for the Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas City

Over the past 20+ years, Dr. Jovanna Rohs has served in a variety of roles within the field of early childhood education. She has been a classroom teacher, early interventionist, home visitor, teacher educator, researcher, and advocate. In her current role as the Director of Early Learning for the Mid-America Regional Council, Dr. Rohs works with her team to provide leadership and coordination to build a robust early learning system with strong families, skilled teachers, quality programs, supportive communities, sustained and sufficient funding, and multi-sector collaboration. She has served on local and state-level governing and coordinating boards, and currently holds an appointment on the first-ever Jackson County Community Children's Services Fund Board of Directors and was recently elected to the Oak Grove R-VI school district board of education..



Dr. Rohs received her Ph.D. in Education and Urban Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), her M.A in Curriculum and Instruction from UMKC, and her B.S.E in Elementary and Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Central Missouri. She has a ten and thirteen-year-old who remind her every day that the experiences they had in the early years laid the foundation for their current development.

# Regional Hubs

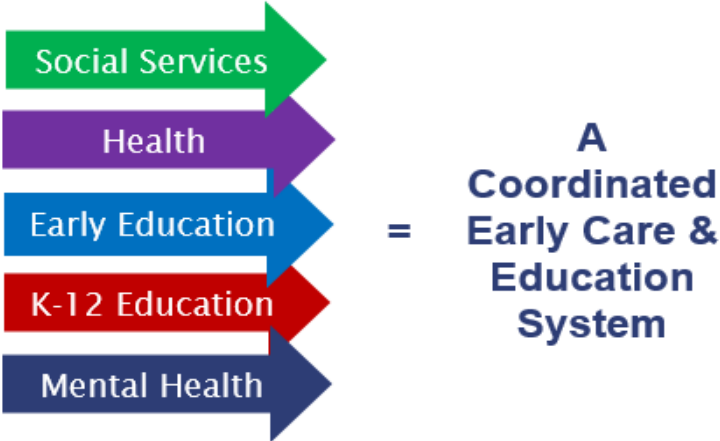
7/27/2021



Missouri's Early Care & Education  
**Connections**

# Regional Hub Goal

A coordinated system that is easy to access, navigate and is responsive to families.



## **Why a Regional Hub?**

To ensure families have the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about the safety, health and education of young children.

## **How Will Families Access the Hub?**

- Regional hub location
- Statewide phone line
- Online portal

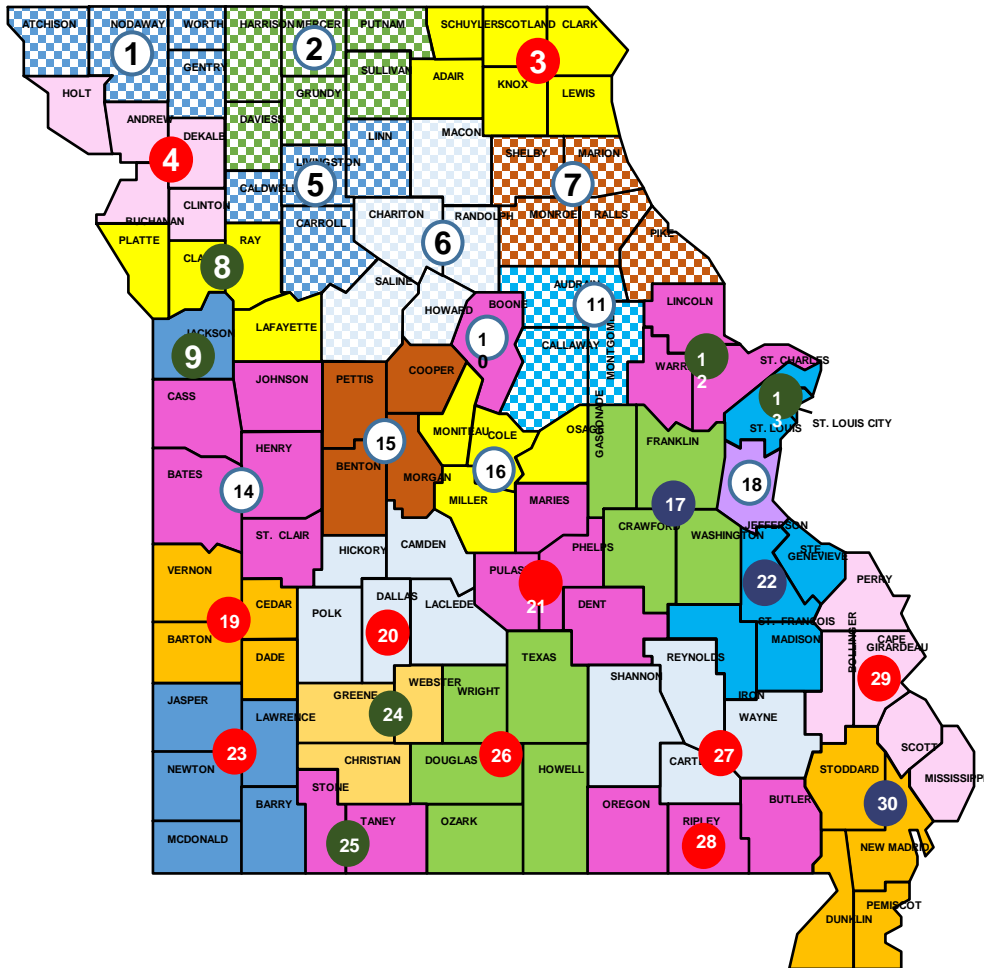


## Activities of a Regional Hub

- Align activities
- Coordinate outreach

## Benefits of a Regional Hub

- Expand community partnerships
- Increasing families' participation
- Improve families' access



# Where are the Hubs?

# Where are we now?

## Stage I: Readiness

- Build community support
- Strengthen partnerships

# Partnerships are Important



- Parents as Teachers
- First Steps
- Preschool programs
- Early Childhood Special Education



- Early Head Start
- Head Start



- Early Childhood Infant Mental Health initiatives



- Child Care Subsidy
- Home Visiting



- Child Care Licensing
- Home Visiting (coordinates with Children's Trust Fund home visiting)

# **How Can I Be Involved in the Readiness Process?**

## **Community Stakeholder Roles**

- Stay Informed or
- Inform Others and Assist in Decision-Making Activities

# Community Leaders Contact Information

## STL Regional Hub

- Deanna Finch
- United 4 Children
- [finchd@united4children.org](mailto:finchd@united4children.org)

## Kansas City Regional Hub

- Jovanna Rohs
- MARC
- [jrohs@marc.org](mailto:jrohs@marc.org)



# THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?



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