

**Center for Community Inclusion
and Disability Studies**
*Maine's University Center for
Excellence in Developmental
Disabilities Education, Research
and Service (UCEDD)*



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Child Care Plus ME/RELATE Project Ends

It is with great regret we inform you that on March 19, 2012, the [University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies](http://www.ccids.umaine.edu) (CCIDS) was notified by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that the **Child Care Plus ME/RELATE** project would not be funded beyond the contract period that **ended February 29, 2012**. We had anticipated that DHHS would issue a contract amendment to allow the project's work to continue through September 30, 2012.

The Child Care Plus ME/RELATE (CC+ME) project was established through a State-University Partnership Agreement between the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies and the Maine DHHS, Office of Child and Family Services, Early Childhood Division, in the year 2000. Since then, the project has provided consultation, technical assistance and coaching to thousands of child care professionals throughout Maine. The aim of the Child Care Plus ME/RELATE project has been to prevent the expulsion of children from their child care programs and to ensure that infants, preschoolers, and children – including children with challenging medical, learning, and behavioral health care needs, have had an opportunity to be cared for and educated in high quality, inclusive educational and community child care settings.

As a direct result of CC+ME intervention, hundreds of individual children who were at risk for expulsion from their child care were successfully retained in their programs. CC+ME was a cost-effective and successful program that contributed to what has been a strong and effective system for support and quality improvement in early care and education throughout Maine. This system also included the regional **Resource Development Centers** that provided regional professional development, technical assistance, and resource and referral services to families and childcare providers that will **close on March 31, 2012** due to state budget cuts. As a result of the loss of this funding, several CCIDS early childhood staff who have worked on the Child Care Plus ME/RELATE project will be leaving CCIDS or substantially reducing their time as of March 31, 2012. **Families seeking** child care or information about child care are advised to call Maine DHHS, Office of Child and Family Services toll-free 1-877-680-5866 or visit the [Maine DHHS website](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs).

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Child Care Plus ME/RELATE Project Ends (continued)

Providers requesting consultation and technical assistance, training and/or professional development assistance, or seeking information about Quality for ME, Maine's Child Care Quality Improvement Rating System, are advised to contact Maine DHHS, Office of Child and Family Services at (207) 624-7909 or visit the [Quality for ME website](#); (or) contact Maine Roads to Quality at 1-888-900-0055 or visit the [MRTQ website](#).

While the Child Care Plus ME/RELATE project has ended, it is one of many initiatives of the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies. As [Maine's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities](#), CCIDS will continue to serve as a resource in the area of early childhood to families of infants, preschoolers and children with developmental and related disabilities, throughout the state. In addition, CCIDS will continue to provide professional development, technical assistance, and consultation to programs, schools and agencies on a fee for service basis.

For more information on organizations or resources on quality inclusive care and education, social-emotional development, and early childhood mental health consultation, please visit the [CCIDS Early Childhood Resources website](#) or contact **Linda Labas, M.Ed., CCIDS' Early Childhood Coordinator**, (207) 623-3925 ext. 17 (v) or email: linda.labas@umit.maine.edu. Online resources include the Center's popular free [Growing Ideas Tipsheets and Resources for Guiding Early Childhood Practices](#) and [Maine's Expanding Inclusive Opportunities Initiative, Early Childhood Settings Inclusion Toolkit](#).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our many partners in the child care and education communities, parents, guardians, children and community members for your support for, and commitment to, high quality inclusive experiences for all children. We look forward to future collaborations.

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The University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS), Maine's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), serves a unique and critical role in enhancing the quality of life of Maine's citizens with developmental disabilities, their families, and the professionals and communities that support them. UCEDD Administrative Core Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities (Grant No. 90DD0641).