



## Promoting Development Monitoring in Three States: Collaborative Approach through "Learn the Signs. Act Early" Ambassadors

It is estimated that 17% of children under 18 have a developmental disability, yet the majority of children with developmental delays enter kindergarten without concerns having been identified or addressed through early intervention (Boyle et al 1994, CDC 2012). Parents are often the first to notice a developmental concern but may not know about services or be told to "wait and see" (Raspa et al, 2015). It is essential that state and territorial leaders engage families and each other in early identification so young children with disabilities access needed services as early as possible. Act Early Ambassadors work within a cohort of state and territorial leaders to support national, state/territorial, and local activities to improve early identification of developmental delay and disability through the promotion and integration of CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." (LTSAE) messages and materials across their state. Act Early Ambassadors to the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program Yetta Myrick, SunYoung Ahn, and Deana Buck took a collaborative approach to expand the impact of the LTSAE campaign in the District of Columbia and the two neighboring states. The three ambassadors developed their common Ambassador Goals and supported each other to identify new state stakeholders in developmental monitoring. As their first joint activity, hosted their first [regional webinar](#).

"Engaging Leaders in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia" on Thursday, October 25, 2018 to discuss how and why to use "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials within their states. Katie Green, Health Communication Specialist from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also participated in the webinar to share ideas for how states can use the LTSAE resources to improve early identification of developmental delays and disabilities and the value of integrating developmental monitoring with "Learn the Signs. Act Early." messages and materials into local communities and statewide systems that serve families with young children.

Webinar participants represented various early childhood organizations from DC, Maryland and Virginia, including, IDEA Part C and Section 619, State T&TA, State Department of Education, Childcare Resource and Referral Network, Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN), Department of Health, and ChildSavers. All webinar participants reported that the LTSAE materials were very helpful for their work with families. Webinar participants shared ideas

about how they were currently using the LTSAE materials and how they might use in their state or district in the future. (e.g., introduce LTSAE materials to childcare directors during the state-wide training, use with families who were affected by ZIKA, interest in developing region-wide materials, use of Watch Me training with childcare programs). The three Ambassadors are committed to continue supporting their respective state stakeholder in engaging families in developmental monitoring. They will also continue collaborating with each other to develop and accomplish additional joint goals.

For more information about this project contact [Yetta Myrick](#).