young children with disabilities continue to rank child care among the highest of their unmet needs. Furthermore, early findings of the Part H Early Intervention Program for infants and toddlers show no significant number of young children receiving these services within child care or other natural environments outside the home.

Access to quality child care services for children with disabilities was significantly strengthened and is protected by the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in July 1992. The ADA explicitly prohibits discrimination of children with disabilities in public and private child care settings. The ADA opens many doors and provides the legal protections to assure access to children with disabilities, but this prohibition of discrimination, in and of itself, is limited in its ability to increase the capacity of child care programs to successfully include children with disabilities. Even when providers understand their obligations under the ADA, they continue to need ongoing access to training, technical assistance, mentorship, and consultation to implement meaningful and inclusionary policies and programs.

Furthermore, the linkages between childhood disability and poverty have long gone unnoticed and unaddressed. Nearly 8 percent of children on AFDC have disabilities. Without intervention and support, children in poverty are also at risk for disability. Often overlooked by the child care system are children from homeless shelters. There are indications that many of these children exhibit higher levels of developmental problems. There is also a need for training in the implications of fetal alcohol syndrome, failure to thrive, lead poisoning, abusive head trauma, shaken baby syndrome, pediatric AIDS, and learning delay related to hearing loss from viral infection and congestion.

• *Minimum Requirements for Project Design:* ADD is particularly interested in local and Statewide projects that promote a seamless interagency approach to better serve children with disabilities, especially those children with disabilities who live in poverty. To develop child care services which are responsive to the needs of young children with disabilities and their families, the protections of the ADA must be joined with best practices in the field of early childhood education, early intervention, and family support services.

The following are types of activities projects may wish to engage in:

• Develop and implement a training program to meet the needs of the child

care community, providers, and parents of children with disabilities regarding the ADA and its protections and obligations.

• Identify and demonstrate strategies and mechanisms which support and expand training opportunities across systems. Strategies should illustrate how resources and expertise can be shared, as well as establishing opportunities for technical assistance and ongoing mentorship including mentorship by parents of children with disabilities, parents with disabilities, and other individuals with disabilities.

• Develop formal and informal linkages to increase the knowledge, awareness, and access to resources and services among families, child care providers, early childhood educators, disability service providers, and others who work with children with disabilities and their families.

• Identify and document replicable programs and projects which promote supported inclusion, that is, service coordination for individualizing inclusion of children with disabilities into generic child care programs.

• Produce cost effective models to combine sources of funds or other strategies that will facilitate parents accessing child care settings of their choice.

Projects may expand their focus to children older than 5 if the primary focus is on children birth to 5. Projects may address the needs of siblings of children with disabilities as a family support if the primary focus is on children with disabilities from birth to 5.

ADD is interested in funding projects reflecting these values in culturally competent, inclusive, family-centered and measurably outcome-oriented approaches that can establish ongoing relationships.

In addition, ADD is interested in joint efforts of projects such as the Americorps program of the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Job Opportunities Basic Skills (JOBS) program, whereby young people with disabilities may participate in jobs and community service as personal assistants and inclusion aides.

As a general guide, ADD will expect to fund only those applications for projects that incorporate the following elements:

• Consumer/self-advocate orientation and participation.

• Key project personnel with direct life, parental, or familial experience with living with a disability.

 Strong advisory components that consist of 51% individuals with disabilities and a structure where individuals with disabilities make real decisions that determine the outcome of the grant.

• Research reflecting the principles of participatory action.

• Development of the capacity to communicate and disseminate information and technical assistance through e-mail and other effective, affordable, and accessible forms of electronic communication.

• Cultural competency.

• A description of how individuals with disabilities and their families will be involved in all aspects of the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project.

• Attention to unserved and inadequately served individuals, having a range of disabilities from mild to severe, from multicultural backgrounds, rural and inner-city areas, and migrant, homeless, and refugee families.

• Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1992 (Pub.L. 102–569).

• Collaboration through partnerships and coalitions.

• A community-based approach.

• Responsiveness through systems change.

Identification of barriers and strategies for overcoming barriers.

Outcome orientation.

• Measurement and ongoing evaluation, including the participation of individuals with disabilities in formulation and implementation.

• Development and establishment of practices and programs beyond project period.

• Dissemination of models, products, best practices, and strategies for distribution between the networks and beyond. A plan describing initial activities is needed between funded projects as well as at the end of the project period. These activities should maintain and share ongoing information, existing resources of consultants/experts, and curriculum/ materials with funded projects and within the network.

• *Project Duration:* This announcement is soliciting applications for project periods up to three years under this priority area. Awards, on a competitive basis, will be for a one-year budget period, although project periods may be for three years. Applications for continuation grants funded under this priority area beyond the one-year budget period, but within the three-year project period, will be entertained in subsequent years on a non-competitive basis, subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the