

Early Childhood Advisory Committee

Initiative Updates

ECAC Staff: We have encountered numerous bureaucratic barriers to getting staff on board. However, we are very happy to announce that our staff positions have been filled and they will be starting later this month. We hope to soon be announcing our project manager. Joining us to support our work are:

Barbara Hogan will serve as a policy analyst to support the Quality Improvement Work Group. Barbara has worked in the OCFS Division of Child Care Services for almost three years. Her responsibilities include coordinating all the training contracts for the division, serving as the liaison for all Human Resources issues, and facilitating the QUALITYstarsNY project. Barbara grew up in Syracuse and earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Ithaca College. Her work experience spans 30 years in the field of early care and education and includes employment in the Department of Education in three states: Massachusetts, Connecticut and, most recently, Ohio, where she was a member of the Early Learning and School Readiness staff. While in Ohio, Barbara represented the state department of education on several interagency workgroups that developed "Step Up to Quality", a quality rating and improvement system. Barbara and her husband, Mike, live in Delmar and have three grown sons.

Jeffrey Luks will serve as the data analyst and support the work of the Data Development Work Group. Jeff recently worked at the Center for Human Services Research for over 9 years. During this time, he worked on developing, supporting, and supervising the creation of many local and statewide human services management information systems, including Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Services, Hoyt Trust Fund Family Resource Centers, Healthy Families New York, and Healthy Families New Jersey. Previously, Jeff worked at Parsons Child and Family Center as a direct care worker and in the Quality Improvement office. Jeff has a Bachelor's in Political Science and a Master's in Public Administration, both from the SUNY-Albany. Jeff and his wife, Shelley, live in Latham with their two children.

Stephanie Woodard will serve as the fiscal analyst and support the work of the Finance Work Group. She received a Bachelors of Science and a Master of Public Administration from Union College, Schenectady New York, and Baruch College, City of New York, respectively. For the last six years, Ms Woodard has worked for OCFS in the Bureau of Budget Management. There she developed, monitored, and administered both State and Federal budgets for the Foster Care, Adoption Subsidy, and Committee on Special Education, Foster Care Medical Assistance Per Diems, Child Welfare Services Quality Enhancement Fund, Kinship Caregiver Program and the Kinship Guardianship Subsidy Program. Ms Woodard's work

experience includes a combine ten years working as a Budget Analyst at the Division of the Budget and Assembly Ways and Means. In these positions, she developed, monitored, and administered both state and federal budgets and developed legislation for Department of Social Services (currently Office of Children and Family Services), Department of Health, Department of Labor and the State Office for the Aging. She also worked as the Project Coordinator for the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Photo Listing and Family Adoption Registry system where she managed the development and implementation process of the new system. Stephanie lives in Albany with her son.

Renee Nasadoski will serve as the Assistant Project Manager and will support all our work in innumerable ways. Renee has worked at the Council on Children and Families for last 5 years where she has provided administrative and project management support to all CCF projects and staff. Prior to that she worked for the Office of Children and Family Services at the Tryon Youth Facility. Renee lives in Hagaman (near Amsterdam) and is the mother of two grown sons.

Related staff: CCF has also recently added **Elizabeth Belsito** to its staff to coordinate the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Initiative. It is expected that Liz will also assist on ECAC activities. Liz has recently earned her Master's degree in Social Work from the University at Albany and holds a dual Bachelors degree in English and Social Thought and Political Economy from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. While earning her MSW, Liz served as a Center for Women in Government Fellow at the NYS Department of Health, Center for Community Health and gained clinical experience counseling children with severe emotional disturbance in a day treatment program. Prior to coming to Albany, Liz worked in Massachusetts as an Assistant Coordinator in a permanent housing program for custodial mothers with histories of homelessness and substance dependency and while living in Colorado, Liz worked directly with chronically homeless adults in an emergency shelter and as a street outreach worker. Liz had also developed and managed community-based after school programs for youth and vocational programs for adults.

Contracts: Contracts have been sent out for signature with:

- Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy for additional staff support,
- APA Associates to support our cost estimation work,
- Dynamic Research to provide an evaluation of our efforts, and
- Maggie McGlynn to facilitate ECAC meetings and provide consultation on systems development.

A Request for Proposals has been developed and is being prepared for release to seek bidders for the development of a communication plan and for supporting work being done to provide cross systems training in social-emotional development. A second RFP will be developed early next year for consultants to develop financing strategies and for work on the development of an universal screening instrument.

Race to the Top: Bob and Sherry met with Assistant Commissioner Jean Stevens, Doris Hill-Wiley, and Lynnette Pannucci on coordinating ECAC and Race to the Top activities. A chart that describes these activities is included in the meeting materials. General agreement was reached on the importance of working together to implement these activities. A work plan to provide concrete steps for coordinating this work is under development.

As a follow up to the meeting, Sherry and Kristen met with the Early Education and Reading Initiatives team (Doris and her colleagues) and discussed a joint work plan to ensure that PreK Standards and Early Learning Guidelines will be aligned and how best to introduce them to the field.

Home Visiting: The Department of Health submitted the needs assessment that is a required part of the application process for the new federal home visiting program. Efforts are now underway to augment that needs assessment for the application. The guidance for the application has yet to be released.

Build Meetings and Support: Sherry Cleary, Bob Frawley, Kate Breslin, Evelyn Blanck, and Nina Gottlieb attended the BUILD national conference in Chicago in October. The conference provided excellent information on variety of topics including, but not limited to, home visiting, data development, parent engagement, and systems building along with providing important opportunities to meet with other states and discuss common issues. Kathy Glazer also arranged for a meeting with Margie Whalen of the Ounce of Prevention Initiative and Eliot Regenstein (a consultant and former Chair of the Illinois Early Learning Advisory Committee) on how we might work with SED on the implementation of Race to the Top. The discussion led to the idea of the developing a chart showing common activities.

Susan Perkins, Mary McHugh, and Dina Lieser attended the BUILD Conference on Healthy Social-Emotional Development in Young Children in Denver. The conference provided useful workshops on mental health consultation, developmental screenings, as well as making important connections with other states tackling similar issues.

Work Group Reports

Promoting Healthy Development Workgroup

Projects for Last Six Months

- Conducted interviews and electronic survey of the early childhood workforce to identify practical training methods, understand how health promotion content might be incorporated into training and learn how information is disseminated.
 - Almost 250 surveys returned to date.
 - Selected results attached – entire study available.
 - Committee is still interested in dissemination of survey.
- The Workgroup receives regular updates on the status and progress of Project Launch. The committee is working with state agencies to monitor the project and learn about possible replication.
- The Workgroup is assisting the NYS Department of Health with their CDC project to develop an action plan for obesity prevention in child care settings. New York was one of six states chosen for this work.
- Workgroup chairs attended the BUILD Conference on Social-Emotional Development that was held in November.
- Workgroup members are assisting the Strong Families Work Group on editing of the Parent Guide for the New Parent Kit and participating in discussions about dissemination.
- The Workgroup has also begun conversations with Early Learning Work Force Development and the Quality Improvement Work Groups about health promotion.

Six Month Work Plan

- The Workgroup will continue to gather responses to the continuing education survey and analyze the results. The information will be shared with other groups as the ECAC starts to consider developing training opportunities. The Workgroup is seeking a consultant to assist with the next phases of this project.
- The Workgroup has decided to adopt a *Bright Futures* approach to work to align evidence-based health promoting practices across systems and to ensure that these are infused across early childhood settings.
- The Workgroup will be collaborating with the Strong Families Workgroup on the development and implementation of universal early childhood screening system in New York. The work will include making the case, identifying resources, identifying screening tools and approaches, and conceptualizing an actionable plan based on best practices to address this at the practice, community, and policy level.
- Work with Early Learning Work Force Development and the Quality Improvement Work Groups to ensure health promotion and screening is woven into their work.
- Continue to monitor and assist with already identified projects.

Strong Families Workgroup

Accomplishments and Plan for Next Months

The Strong Families Workgroup has identified several areas of focus for the year. The following is an update on the status of each initiative;

I. Develop a New Parent Kit.

A committee has been reviewing the content of the New Parent Kit. They will present to the Strong Families Workgroup their recommendations at the January Strong Families Workgroup Meeting for workgroup input. We will also work with them on a plan for dissemination.

II. Guide the establishment of a system of universal screening and the expansion of assessment activities that identify families in need of additional supports and services at the earliest possible point.

The Strong Families Workgroup drafted the attached questionnaire which Kathy Glazer of the BUILD Initiative distributed to the BUILD Initiative states. Through this process, we have observed that in most states, representatives from various agencies/systems needed to be consulted to get comprehensive responses to the questionnaire; most states do not have a unified or universal view of screening. By and large, screening/assessment is done in a more isolated system specific approach rather than seen as an organized continuum. However, the responses and interest show that there is potential for alignment and consistency.

Next steps in the process will be to reach out to a couple of states (that have the most potential and examples for a universal approach such as Washington State). BUILD is also considering a webinar to discuss assessment systems in states, promoting strategies that support a universal approach to include all the States. We will keep you posted.

The Promoting Healthy Development Workgroup is interested in collaborating around this initiative which is very much in concert with their goal of using Bright Futures as model to promote social emotional screening in primary care and to integrate health and mental health in primary care settings. Interested members will be invited to the January in-person workgroup meeting.

III. Guide the development of a system for providing comprehensive home visiting services for vulnerable pre- and post-natal women, fathers, and families.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) has convened a home visiting workgroup of state agencies, home visiting programs, and advocacy partners for the last several years. In 2007, SCAA published a policy brief entitled *Universal Prenatal/Postpartum Care and*

Home Visitation: The Plan for an Ideal System in New York State, which outlined a plan for a model neutral system of services in the state.

The group's work continues and, in 2010, included assisting the Department of Health (DOH) with the needs assessment required to apply for new federal home visiting funding. DOH is currently waiting for federal guidance on the application process and expects that guidance this spring. The home visiting group will assist DOH with the application process.

A number of members of the Strong Families Workgroup are also members of the home visiting group. They have and will continue to keep the Strong Families Workgroup up-to-date on the federal application and resulting state plan. The Strong Families Workgroup can lend its expertise to the discussion this spring by commenting on the application. It can contribute further by supporting the state plan when it is proposed and implemented. Additional assignments for the Strong Families Workgroup will be clearer once the federal guidance is released.

Early Learning Workforce Development Work Group

Description and Accomplishments:

The Early Learning Workforce Development Work Group was organized to advance the components of an "Early Learning Professional Development System;" and respond to related issues such as coordination of pre-service education in early childhood (i.e., articulation agreements among institutions of higher education); staff recruitment and staff retention and compensation.

Work Group members are working to develop and implement a competency-based professional development system through a variety of related activities. In the initial months discussions centered on an evaluation of the status of current efforts in the field. In the last six months the Work Group has organized into three subcommittees to focus on the following areas:

- Revisions to the Core Body of Knowledge;
- Development of a Career Lattice and Registry; and
- Studying the issues of transition between two and four-year colleges.

Expected deliverables for the next six-month period:

- A revised Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) will be in a clearer format; competencies will be described in easy to understand language with corresponding examples of expectations in behavior. A goal for the next six months will be to share the CBK with the wider early care and learning community through regional meetings conducted by local representatives of the Work Group.
- A version of the Career Lattice will be available for comment. A Professional Registry and Career Calculator, as compliments to the Career Lattice, are being developed.
- Two and Four Year Transitions Study Groups will be held to address issues faced by early childhood students advancing from community to four-year college programs. In the next six months, the study groups will identify exemplary models of practice as well as challenges within the system of higher education that prevent students from completing their educational goals.

Quality Improvement Workgroup

Accomplishments

QUALITYstarsNY Field Test

In January 2010 NYS embarked on the field test of its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), QUALITYstarsNY. The field test concludes at the end of December 2010 and work is in progress on the final reports which will be released in early 2011.

QUALITYstarsNY Expansion

The Quality Improvement work group developed an estimate of the costs and revenues for various phases of implementation post the Field Test. The estimated revenues included reprogrammed or current funds, money from ECAC, and “asks” from private funders, and State funds.

The goals of the QSNY Expansion Phase I or “The Bridge to Implementation” (15 months: January 2011 through March 2012) is to double participation in the 13 communities across NYS (i.e., expand field test communities to reach over 500 centers, schools and homes).

The following activities were identified:

1. Revise standards and online tools based on evaluation results.
2. Train assessors (ERS).
3. Conduct assessments, award ratings, manage overall QSNY system.
4. Provide QI consultation (develop and implement program improvement plans) to majority of participating programs.
5. Provide scholarships for continuing education for majority of practitioners in participating programs.

6. Develop and conduct information sessions: Intro to QSNY, Intro to Program Assessment Tools (ERS, Family Strengthening, Cultural Competence, Program Administration Scale, etc.) in 13 communities and across the state.
7. Offer modest financial awards to participating programs for the purposes of quality improvement and quality maintenance.

QUALITYstarsNY Communication

A Communication Plan has been developed. A consultant will be selected to help in developing an expanded informational tool kit, expanding on the material developed for the field test and adding information on the website. We will be planning informational webinars for various constituencies and audiences, and continuing to make presentations at state and regional conferences, and using local opportunities to promote QUALITYstarsNY. In addition, members of the ECAC Quality Improvement Work Group are coordinating the work of the QUALITYstarsNY Campaign that is being led by Winning Beginning NY and the Public Policy and Education Fund of NY (aka Citizen Action/Alliance for Quality Education).

Trade-marking QUALITYstarsNY

We are in the process of submitting trademark applications for *QUALITYstarsNY* (both for the name and the logo) and for both the names *QUALITYscholarsNY* and *QUALITY scholars*.

Early Learning Guidelines and Pre-K Learning Standards:

A sub-group of members of the QI Workgroup have been working on next steps for finalizing the 0-5 early learning guidelines and figuring out how Pre-K learning standards and the 0-5 early learning guidelines can be used together. A timeline is being worked out for completing the 0-5 early learning guidelines and a writer has been engaged to help finish a formal draft that will be shared/vetted broadly before they are finalized. The staff of Early Education and Reading Initiatives in SED has presented to the Regents (November) a timeline for finalizing the Pre-K learning standards and anticipates presenting the final Pre-K learning standards in ELA and Math to the Regents early next year.

EXPECTATIONS for the NEXT SIX MONTHS

- Receive and review reports from the field test of QUALITYstarsNY.
- Continue to communicate broadly and specifically about QUALITYstarsNY.
- Establish the funding for the next phase of QUALITYstarsNY (post field test).
- Develop a plan for implementing the proposed QSNY Expansion Phase I activities.
- Develop a plan for coordinating TA activities across the state.
- Continue work on the guidelines for early learning for children birth through prekindergarten to make them integrated and comprehensive.
- With other ECAC workgroups, lead the statewide conversation on child assessment.

Finance Work Group

Accomplishments

The Finance Work Group commissioned through the BUILD Initiative a white paper “**A Framework for Public Finance of New York’s Early Childhood System**” written by Anne Mitchell and Louise Stony. The paper provided a conceptual framework for addressing early childhood financing issues including cost estimation and development of financing strategies. That led the work group to propose that the ECAC budget include funding for APA Associates to support the work group in the development of a cost estimation model. APA Associates is a Colorado consulting firm that has developed software to support cost estimation and has worked with other states in estimating costs for comprehensive early childhood service systems. The construction of the cost model will allow the work group and other policymakers to gauge the impact of changes in access, quality, and funding levels. The cost model will inform the workgroup’s analysis of barriers to and opportunities for maximizing use of existing resources to support the goals of a coordinated and comprehensive system of services that meet agreed-upon standards. A contract is currently under development for this purpose. To prepare for this process, the work group developed a list of service elements that would comprise a comprehensive system of services.

Six-month Work Plan

The Work Group will hold its first meeting with the consultants on December 15th. This meeting will provide an opportunity to orient Work Group members and staff to the cross estimation process and begin the data collection phase of the project. The cost estimation process is expected to take a year to 18 months to complete.

Data Development Work Group

The Data Development Work Group is working to determine data needed for a cross early learning program data system that helps state and local agencies and others identify trends in early learning programs, answer policy questions, and plan for program development. Plans are to extend this effort to other early childhood service systems and to link data systems to the P-20 student tracking system being developed by the State Education Department.

The Work Group recently completed a report that provides detailed information on the data currently collected by child care, Head Start, Universal Prekindergarten, Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education administrative agencies. Charts are included that enable the work group to determine the extent of commonality of data collected across agencies, and allows for the identification of gaps in data collection. Recommendations are included that will guide the work group’s efforts over the next few years.

Six-month Work Plan

During the next six-months, the work group will:

- Identify the most important policy and program questions for which end users will look to a cross-program data system to answer.
- Identify all groups—service providers, families, policymakers, researchers, advocates, any others—who will use linked data to improve outcomes for children and families, to ensure that their questions and their ability to make use of the data are considered as the system is designed.
- Identify and define the data elements essential to answer the highest priority questions—usually through combinations of two or more elements.
- Begin effort to determine infrastructure needs.