



## **New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council Initiatives and Work Group Updates March 1, 2013**

**QUALITYstarsNY** – As of December 5, 2012 there are 216 centers/community-based organizations and 174 family homes participating in QUALITYstarsNY. These programs are completing a self-study using the QUALITYstarsNY program standards. Participants are able to indicate the standards they meet and submit documentation. Participants are also able to complete self-assessments using the Environment Rating Scales and complete Quality Improvement Plans based on the results. 40 public school-operated Universal Prekindergarten programs have recently been selected to participate in QUALITYstarsNY. These programs will engage in the standards self-study and observations on an alternate timeline. The Quality Improvement Work Group is engaged in a cultural competence initiative supported by BUILD. A strategic plan was developed that outlines goals and tasks to further incorporate issues of cultural competence in QUALITYstarsNY. The strategic plan was adopted by the Quality Improvement Work Group at the October meeting. Support will be provided by Taniesha Woods to advance some of the tasks outlined in the strategic plan, such as further developing the standards Resource Guide to reflect cultural competence. The cultural competence sub-group will spearhead this work.

**Common Metric** - New York University researchers are in the process of examining the three most commonly utilized formative child assessment systems (Work Sampling System, Child Observation Record, Creative Curriculum GOLD) to create a Common Metric (utilizing item response theory) aligned to all three assessment systems (Phase 1). Once developed, the Common Metric will function as a tool that takes data from different assessments and communicates results in a common language, enabling program leaders and policy makers to understand trends across delivery systems. The Common Metric will enable early childhood education programs to retain their autonomy and use tools they have already invested in while contributing to geographic and programmatic understanding and analysis of the progress children are making.

The Common Metric for prekindergarten is planned to be tested and validated through a representative sample of New York City (NYC) children across all early childhood settings (6000) in the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. To scale up the common metric to a statewide level, the testing and validation will include 4 year olds in Head Start from targeted areas throughout New York State (7000) and will be added to the testing and validation of the Common Metric to ensure its validity and reliability across the state. Recruitment of these programs will begin March 2013.

**Shared Services Resources** – ECE Shared Resources is an easy to use web-based platform offering a wealth of tools, programs and services to help early childhood education centers and home-based providers manage their programs more efficiently and effectively. ECE Shared Resources saves time, reduces costs and improves quality.

- Background & Planning
  - April 2012 Advisory Committee Meeting
  - June 2012 Presentation to ECAC - What is a statewide platform and how it will work for NYS
  - Summer Focus Groups with Stakeholders
  - October 2012 Advisory Committee Meeting
  - December 2012 Update to ECAC
  - November 2012 – April 2013 Implementation Group Meetings
  
- Shared Source EC NY Mission Statement: Shared Source EC NY will strengthen the capacity of programs to provide quality early childhood services and to support their financial viability.
  
- Planning for Launch
  - Development of the Shared Source ECY web platform
  - Profile development, initial NY materials for branded site identified with links, marketing at NYSAEYC Conference
  - Beta test of site
  - Launch of web platform
  - Enrolling users

**Parent Involvement** – Applications for parent involvement in the ECAC are still being accepted. The AdHoc Group on Parent Involvement introduced the application process during the December meeting and wants to remind everyone that we are still seeking suggestions. We have interest from two parents from one organization and would like to have additional names from other organizations.

In your packets please find the “ECAC parent cover page” briefly explaining the roles and responsibilities of the parent representatives and an “interest form for parent representation” that we would ask you to use to identify potential representatives to the ECAC. Return completed forms to Stephanie Woodard. Do not hesitate contacting any member of the Ad hoc group with questions.

Ad Hoc Parent Involvement Group  
 Marsha Basloe  
 Evelyn Blanck  
 Jim McGuirk  
 Mary McHugh  
 Susan Perkins  
 Liz Belsito

## **Work Group Updates**

### **Data Development Work Group**

**Finance Work Group** – On December 14, 2012 the Finance Work Group hosted a Financing Strategies Forum to discuss the feasibility of various financing strategies that have the potential to support early childhood services within New York State. The forum included a presentation from Augenblick, Palaich

and Associates, Inc. (APA) on the work they are doing in New York to develop a Return on Investment component as part of the ECAC Early Childhood Cost Estimation Model. The day was structured with presentations on three potential financing strategies.

- **Social Impact Bonds:** An innovative strategy for accessing private and public investment in services tied to proven and rigorous measurement of outcomes that result in net savings of public funding. Presenters: Robert Dugger co-founder of ReadyNation, Natasha Lifton from Natasha Lifton Consulting, LLC, and Kristen Proud from the New York State Governor's Office.
- **Braiding and Blending funds:** A method to combine two or more funding sources to support a specific program strategy (e.g., high quality early childhood education) or to support programs in providing comprehensive services. Presenter: Charlie Bruner from the Child and Family Policy Center.
- **Federal Waivers:** A strategy to access federal funding for services that meet specific criteria and address the needs of identified target groups. Presenters: Kate Breslin from the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy and Kris Mesler from New York State Department of Health Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.

In December, the *Using Pay for Success Strategies to Increase School Readiness* white paper was finalized and distributed during the December ECAC meeting and forum. The information is being used to frame the direction that will identify strategies to fund early childhood initiatives. The Finance Work Group will retain a consultant to develop strategies for maximizing funding which would include a mix of public and private resources to increase investments in a comprehensive system. For more information regarding the forum please visit the Financing Strategies Forum website (<http://ccf.ny.gov/ECAC/WG/Finance/Forum.cfm>) to view the videos of the presentations and access forum material.

**ECAC Cost Estimation Model:** The ECAC Cost Estimation Model is moving into the final stages of development. All the data has been entered into the model and policy questions are being used to test data and calculations that are used by the model. The technical manual has been written and is currently under final review. APA is moving forward with developing the Return on Investment component of the cost model. In addition, a plan is being developed to update the data in the cost model to capture the State Fiscal Year 2013-2014 enacted budget and current expenditures.

**Benchmarks:** The Finance Work Group will develop a process that will engage: ECAC members, work group members, fiscal and policy staff, and advocates, and other policy groups to use the cost model in developing their own estimates. To generate interest, the cost model will be demonstrated amongst the various groups. The demonstrations will focus on opportunity to incrementally increase funding (early childhood comprehensive program expansion with elements necessary to ensure intended results, developmental screening, mental health consultation, home visit); and Identify funding to support the cost model.

Work Over the Next Six Months:

1. Complete the cost model testing
2. Publicizes the cost mode amongst ECAC members, work group members, fiscal and policy staff, and advocates
3. Implement the Return on Investment component into the cost model
4. Create a product to identify financing strategies to support early childhood comprehensive programs.

**Promoting Healthy Development Work Group** --The Promoting Healthy Development (PHD) Work Group is building capacity among the providers in child-serving systems to improve the health and social-emotional development of young children. This includes promoting health and safety through the development of training and consultation, identifying and responding to the social-emotional needs of young children and their families, and identifying opportunities to collaborate with public health programs.

During this reporting period, the Promoting Healthy Development (PHD) Work Group has been engaged in a variety of projects that continue to incorporate health and social-emotional development into the overall work of the ECAC. The work group met monthly by phone to review on-going projects, receive updates and hear about outside reports and events that can impact the work of the group.

**Benchmarks:** The PHD Work Group has embarked on a process to identify key benchmarks in several primary areas of work: Healthy Active Living (HAL), social-emotional development and screening. The Work Group has held several meetings to determine what those benchmarks should be in each area and the steps necessary to achieve those benchmarks.

**Participation Group:** The ECAC has launched an effort to increase participation in CACFP as part of the work of the PHD Work Group. There was an increase in inquiries to the Department of Health based on distribution of the ECAC CACFP brochure back in the fall of 2012. The ECAC CACFP group is interested in assessing whether the increase in interest in the program came from the brochure and if there are ways of reaching additional providers. At the same time, the Division of Chronic Disease Prevention applied to the CDC for a Community Transformation Grant (CTG) that included a section on increasing participation in CACFP as one strategy to prevent early childhood obesity.

Staff from the ECAC PHD Work Group and the Department of Health met to discuss the expected outcomes for each project and how they were related. It was concluded that each project is working toward one similar objective: *to increase participation in CACFP.*

The ECAC has funded a consultant to help with this effort. She will conduct interviews of newly enrolled providers to determine what brought them in to the program at this time, why they didn't participate previously and what other information would have lead to them enrolling earlier. Six communities around the state have been identified for the study. Letters have gone out to CRRs in those communities notifying them of the study, a questionnaire has been drafted and the Department of Health is assisting in identifying potential participants. Additional brochures are being printed for a targeted mailing. Interviews should start shortly.

**Children’s Institute:** The ECAC has contracted with The Children’s Institute (CI) at the University of Rochester who partners with community agencies and schools to strengthen the social and emotional health of children. The Institute is known as a center of excellence for the social and emotional health of children and offers diverse programs and resources. The Institute brings extensive knowledge and resources to the PHD Work Group’s projects around social emotional development.

CI is assisting PHD with two goals: (1) infuse information on social-emotional development promotion, prevention and intervention into the training of professionals who work with young children and their families, and (2) develop strategies for integrating evidenced-based curricula and other program supports into early learning and development and primary care settings.

CI is currently working to:

- Identify recommended training approaches and develop strategies to infuse training on social-emotional development into the training and professional development of professionals who work with young children and their families. Workforce Development Work Group will contribute to this effort.
- Also identify sources of sustainability for sustaining professional development in social emotional development; where sources are not specified, articulate challenges.

CI staff is actively engaged in developing materials and they have become integral members of the PHD Work Group.

**Child Care Health Consultants:** PHD continues to partner with the state’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) staff to expand the use of health care consultants. A comprehensive paper, *Child Care Health Consultants: Current Models and Implications for Policy and Practice*, was finalized recently and will be distributed. The PHD work group has been very interested in exploring a greater role for child care health consultants.

In early March a task force, including members of the PHD work group and other members of the ECAC, will examine and respond to the questions posed in the white paper with the goal of strengthening the role and system structures for health care consultation in New York State. These strategies will be developed in collaboration with several other health promotion initiatives in the state including Project LAUNCH, Building Bridges, and the health related program standards in QUALITYstarsNY.

**Healthy Active Living (HAL) sub-group (formerly the Nutrition and Obesity Prevention sub-group):** The HAL sub-group continues to work on integrating health into QualityStarsNY and is looking for further opportunities to develop materials and resources.

Work Over the Next Six Months:

1. PHD will deliver a set of benchmarks and strategies for implementation in March.
2. The CACFP project will begin to conduct interviews of providers that have recently enrolled in CACFP. That information will be presented to the ECAC and the Department of Health to develop new recruitment strategies.

3. The HAL sub-group will continue to add to the resource list. In addition, they will begin to look at promoting health and well-being more generally into early care settings.
4. The Children's Institute will be presenting drafts for comment to the ECAC in March and concluding its work by June 1.
5. The screening group will continue to market the parent brochure on explaining the value of developmental screening and ensure that it becomes widely distributed.

PHD and ECCS will seek ways to disseminate the child care health consultant white paper and develop a work plan for next steps.

**Quality Improvement Work Group** – During this reporting period, the Quality Improvement Work Group held two large-group conference calls (December and February) and one face-to-face meeting (January). The organizational structure of seven sub-groups allows for maximum participation of work group members and optimizes the ability of each group to accomplish tasks.

- **Standards:** This sub-group is soliciting feedback from a selected group of school-age child care providers about the newly-released draft standards for program quality. An electronic feedback system is also being considered.
- **Professional Development / Technical Assistance:** This sub-group is working on the development of Clarification Statements for each of the standards so that programs and providers can learn more about the importance of each standard and why it is an important element of program quality. In conjunction with the Clarification Statements, the group is also researching additional tools, resources and websites to post in conjunction with each standard. It is anticipated that these resources will be of benefit to any and all programs and providers of early care and learning programs, regardless of their participation in QUALITYstarsNY.
- **Evaluation, Data, Monitoring and Accountability:** This sub-group is developing an evaluation plan for the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. Using existing resources, and the expertise of a cadre of volunteers, the group is establishing the priority research questions for the project.
- **Financial Supports:** The tasks of this sub-group are currently subsumed by the larger Finance Work Group of the Early Childhood Advisory Council.
- **Communications:** This sub-group is developing the tools and resources that will be used to conduct community outreach to parents and other family members of young children. They were instrumental in developing targeted marketing materials to reach school-based early childhood programs to recruit them for QUALITYstarsNY participation in the high-needs communities surrounding the persistently low-achieving school districts in New York State.
- **Implementation:** This sub-group offers a sounding board for the Project Manager. Topics of discussion vary based on the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY.
- **Cultural Competence:** This sub-group recently received support from BUILD to continue work on improving the effectiveness of the QUALITYstarsNY program standards in meeting the needs of, as well as being responsive to, all children and their families. A strategic plan for this work was approved by the Quality Improvement Work Group in October and, with the newly-identified support, achievement toward the goals established will now be possible.

**Work over the next six months:**

- Continue to add resources and tools to the QUALITYstarsNY website which offer guidance to center-based and family-based early care and learning program providers interested in improving quality.
- Work with the BUILD technical assistance team to assure that QUALITYstarsNY program standards are sufficiently sensitive to a diverse community of children, parents and providers.
- Develop written materials that communicate the importance of a quality early learning experience for all children.
- Create relevant evaluation and research questions to gather information and provide much-needed feedback to QUALITYstarsNY about implementation practices.

**Strong Families Work Group** – The Strong Families Work Group focused on the following activities:

**QUALITYstarsNY:** The Strong Families Work Group continues to support QUALITYstarsNY by providing resources and best practices pertaining to the Family Engagement section of the QUALITYstarsNY standards. The input from the Strong Families Work Group will be used to inform the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY and the work group will be available to respond to feedback from the early childhood field on what resources were valuable and what other assistance early care and education providers would find useful.

**Family Engagement Initiative:** The work group formed three subgroups to adapt on the Center for the Study of Social Policy’s (CSSP) Strengthening Families three “Levers for Change” as a framework for organizing their work going forward: 1. Parent Partnerships 2. Professional Development, and 3. Policy and Systems. Each subgroup will gather New York State specific information in these three areas. The work group will utilize the work of the subgroups to determine a product (or products) for certain audiences (e.g., child care providers, home visitors, etc.). The work group has consulted with Mary McKay, a national expert on family engagement to develop a webinar that would outline components of successful family engagement practices/strategies.

**New York State Home Visiting Coalition:** The work group is supporting the efforts of the NYS Home Visiting Coalition, which include discussions around systems- and infrastructure-building, the sharing of best practices from other states, and proposed legislation to embed home visiting in statute.

**New York State Parenting Education Partnership:** The work group supports the work of the New York State Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) to promote and improve positive parenting practices through the following activities:

**New Parent Kit** –NYSPEP continues work to develop the Parent Guide, which is the core component of the New Parent Kit. The Parent Guide will support parents of children from birth to age 5 in being confident and competent as they decide what to say and do to help their child thrive. The Parent Guide will offer developmentally appropriate guidance to parents based on evidence-based parenting

behaviors and will help parents effectively use service systems and resources to build stronger parent-child relationships.

The goal of the Parent Guide is to help parents:

- **Gain Knowledge** of their child’s developmental behaviors and learn about evidence based parenting behaviors that promote development;
- **Build Skills** in effectively observing and recognizing indicators of their child’s development, implementing evidence-based parenting behaviors based on observations, and accessing appropriate resources and supports as needed; and
- **Practice Parent Reflection** by recording parenting memories and child developmental milestones.

Currently, a work group is working to design sample chapters and prepare to gather parent and provider feedback on the designed chapters, ensuring that the parent groups used to provide feedback reflect the racial, geographic, and economic population of the state. The work group is also beginning to revise an existing website operated by the Council on Children and Families, [nysfamilyresources.org](http://nysfamilyresources.org), to update the content and to add features that will align and supplement the contents of the New Parent Kit.

**Community Cafés** –Currently, community teams are hosting cafes, with many cafés including kids’ cafés, which offer creative and educational activities for children of all ages. The National Alliance has conducted interviews with the Community Teams to capture the progress of each team’s efforts in hosting cafés, their experience building partnerships with parent leaders, and how other community organizations have become involved in their work. A summary report of these interviews will be distributed in March 2013. To capitalize on the project’s momentum and to build awareness, NYSPEP is beginning to plan a Community Café panel at the Prevent Child Abuse New York and the NYS Head Start annual conferences in the spring of 2013. Additional funds were provided by the State’s Project LAUNCH grant to include teams sponsored by the Hunts Point Alliance for Children in East Harlem and Open Door Medical Center in Westchester County.

**Parenting Education Credential** –NYSPEP introduced a Parenting Education Credential to New York State. The Parenting Education Credential defines consistent criteria for the knowledge, skills, and experience needed by all parenting educators. Credential levels accommodate entry level, novice, intermediate and master parent educators; each level requires the parenting educator to demonstrate increasing levels of competence. The Credential is for all those who support families and facilitate the growth and development of parents through support and education, regardless of work setting or job title. In the first year, almost 50 NYSPEP members received one of the first two tiers of the credential. Tiers three and four of the credential are completed and Tier III is being piloted in the first quarter of 2013. NYSPEP has held several free 2-hour Parenting Education Credential Orientation webinars as the first step in the application process.



**Work over the Next Six Months to include:**

- Strong Families Work Group will continue to work with Sam Stephens to refine the system change benchmarks.
- Strong Families Work Group will continue to support and offer guidance to QualitystarsNY regarding family engagement.
- Strong Families Work Group will continue to work to develop a webinar as a training/orientation tool for staff in early childcare agencies and organizations.

**Workforce Development Work Group** – The Workforce Development Work Group is organized to advance the components of an Early Learning Workforce 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); recruitment, retention, continuing education and compensation for early care and education professionals. Work group members have been working to create and implement a competency-based professional development system through a variety of related activities. During this period, the work group has focused on promotion of high quality learning opportunities for active professionals and students entering the early care and learning professions.

Trainer modules for the Core Body of Knowledge and Early Learning Guidelines - The revised Core Body of Knowledge and the first edition of New York State’s Early Learning Guidelines, were released in April 2012 at the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) annual conference. Both documents are designed to guide the learning and development of young children in New York State and support the professionals who work with them. To date over 7,000 copies of each publication have been distributed to licensed early care and education programs and all early childhood faculty in the state.

The work group has been working with higher education faculty and professional organizations to encourage the use of these documents in teacher preparation. Work group members have also provided input on the curriculum for three in-person Train the Trainer modules designed to increase understanding of the content of the Core Body of Knowledge and the Early Learning Guidelines, including practical applications designed for both family child care and center-based settings. Work has now commenced on a web-based training tool that would include the development of an interactive distance learning module and an online resource library of videos demonstrating best practice.

Launching New York Works for Children and developing New York’s workforce registry and career lattice - The work group also launched a new website New York Works for Children, which serves as a vehicle for communicating to the field about the ECAC’s efforts to fully develop the state’s career development system for early childhood education. The website [[www.nyworksforchildren.org](http://www.nyworksforchildren.org)] includes access to Aspire, the workforce registry for New York State early education professionals. Teachers, directors, family childcare providers and trainers can use this new online system to help them keep track of their employment history, education, ongoing professional development, and contributions to the field. Directors can also keep a complete profile of their program staff. Programs that intend to participate in QUALITYstarsNY develop an Aspire program profile, along with profiles of program employees, as an

essential first step in preparing for participation. Finally, the Registry is a cost effective tool for licensors to review staff qualifications and training to determine regulatory compliance.

**Higher Education Opportunities:** Recently the work group has become involved in two exploratory projects with institutions of higher education. The first project is a pilot between higher education and community-based partners in two locations. The goal is to encourage early care and education practitioners to pursue college level training and degrees, to be intentional about their continuing education and to experiment with innovative ways to reach this audience with appropriate educational supports. The second project is in collaboration with University of California- Berkeley to inventory higher education resources and examine access to those resources. Three modules of exploration are proposed: (1) map institutions with departments offering early childhood education, the degrees/certifications offered; (2) identify program goals, content and age focus of course offerings; (3) gather information on faculty experience, formal and applied education.

**Distance Learning:** The work group was asked by the Office of Children and Families Division of Child Care Services to provide guidance on best practices for distance learning. Considering the technical assistance available on the criteria for good distance learning, the work group is providing input on such questions as: Would we recommend a limit to the number of training hours that can be fulfilled through distance learning courses (versus face to face training and coaching)? If yes, what would we recommend the limit be? Should we limit the number of topic areas (currently there are 9) that a trainer or organization can claim a distance learning course covers?

For the next six months, the Workforce Development Work Team will:

1. Continue to promote the benefits of enrolling staff in the Aspire database.
2. Continue to promote and support the Early Learning Trainer credential and those trainers who have attained it.
3. Complete and field test the Train the Trainer Modules and the E-learning Course on CBK.
4. Provide oversight on the two innovative higher education projects introduced during this period: IHE/Community Partnerships and Cal-Berkeley.
5. Distance Learning Guidance will be provided to OCFS that is consistent with standards of professional development articulated by PDW Center (The National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives).
6. Develop a system for assessment, review and approval of training opportunities that are determined to meet high quality standards of practice for early childhood programs.
7. Contribute feedback to the PHD Work Group on a training proposal to integrate social emotional development competencies into professional development guidance and opportunities for early care and learning practitioners.