



**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)  
Membership Meeting  
December 11, 2014**

**Members:**

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Patti Banghart	Jennifer Gudahl	Meg McNiff	Carol Saginaw
Evelyn Blank	Liz Hood	Anne Mitchell	Monica Short
Sherry Cleary*	Mark Jasinski	Janice Molnar	Lorelei Vargas
Ariel Davis	Ira Katzenstein	Donna Noyes	David Voegele
Chris Deyss	Kristen Kerr	Jenn O'Connor	
Robert Frawley*	Jim McGuirk	Lynnette Pannucci	
Dana Friedman	Mary McHugh	Patty Persell	

\* Co-chair

**Guests:**

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Bonnie Beukema	Melanie Pores	Ellen Sullivan
Ariel Davis	Giovanna Joseph	
Jennifer Gomez	Mayleen Rivera	

**Staff:**

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Renee Nasadoski	Susan Perkins	Stephanie Woodard
Rebekah Widrick	Patty Persell	

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Introductions:** All participants introduced themselves.

**Announcements:**

Meeting Overview: There were changes made to the agenda to accommodate the presenters.

Federal Grant Awards:

- Preschool Expansion Grant: On December 10<sup>th</sup> the State Education Department (SED) was notified the state is the recipient of a Preschool Expansion Grant. New York will receive approximately \$100 million over the next four years. The grant is expected to create 1,726 new high-quality prekindergarten slots and convert 1,350 half day slots into full day high quality slots. The following school districts will be included as part of the expansion project: New York City, Yonkers, Uniondale, Indian River, and Port Chester.
- Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Grant: Twelve organizations within New York received an Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership grant. Twenty-two million dollars will allow these organizations to provide comprehensive early childhood education services to approximately 1,650 children birth to three years of age and their families with incomes at or below 100 percent of poverty. For a list of the awardees [click here](#).

## Updates and Reports

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- **Federal Preschool Development and Expansion Grants:** Meg McNiff provided an overview of the grant. New York's grant application demonstrated a commitment to the state's existing preschool programs and showed alignment with a birth through third grade continuum; ensured program; and established collaboration with sub-grantees to ensure strong partnerships. For a copy of the state's application [click here](#).
- **New York State Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) Comprehensive Needs Assessment:** Bob presented a request for the ECAC to provide assistance to Rachel de Long and the Department of Health (DOH) with the upcoming needs assessment for the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant. The grant is administered by DOH. Rachel DeLong, within her role as the Director of the Division of Family Health, serves as the state's Title V director. Rachel and her colleagues are in the process of finalizing a plan for carrying out the needs assessment. A key step is to conduct listening forums with various stakeholder groups, both providers and families. Rachel has expressed interest in conducting a session with the ECAC and partner organizations. These will be structured forums, most likely conducted via conference call for 1-2 hours maximum, in January or February. Also there may be an opportunity for local partners to convene and conduct forums with families on behalf of DOH, using guidance and template materials provided by DOH. For all states, a new five-year funding cycle will begin October 2015, with applications due to the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau in July 2015. Rachel will provide more detail about these opportunities in the next several weeks. If you are interested in participating in the forums, please watch your email for more information.

## QUALITYstarsNY Update

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Bonnie Beukema and Ariel Davis from New York City Early Childhood Professional Development Institute provided an overview on QUALITYstarsNY. During their presentation they:

- Provided the history QUALITYstarsNY;
- Highlighted that New York State and Missouri are the only two states that have not implemented a statewide quality and improvement rating system;
- Identified the five areas of importance that make up QUALITYstarsNY: Quality rating standards, continuous quality improvement, monitoring progress and accountability, communication and outreach, and resources and supports;
- Provided information about the rating process and the next steps for 310 programs that will undergo a re-rating and 65 program in Troy and New York City that will undergo their initial rating. All will begin spring 2015; and
- Identified who is currently being served by QUALITYstarsNY.

For a copy of the PowerPoint presentation by Ariel and Bonnie [click here](#).

If funding for QUALITYstarsNY is included in the Governor's budget, it will be important to get people to support the funding so it can be included in the enacted budget. Bob provided the members with an overview of his efforts to obtain the support of the state CCRR network and campus-based child care center directors. He is scheduling additional meetings with CCRRs in New York City, the Mohawk Valley and Erie Canal region.

The following are the issues that were conveyed at the meeting:

- Governance of QUALITYstarsNY: Bob and Sherry, in working with the Governor's Office, have proposed that any funding for QUALITYstarsNY be allocated to the Office of Children and Family Services and administered by the ECAC/Council on Children and Families. If that were to happen the ECAC would

establish a Governance Committee comprised of ECAC members with no financial stake in the funding to oversee the administration of the funds. For multiple reasons, the money could instead be allocated to the State Education Department or the Office of Children and Family Services directly. If either of those two scenarios were to take place, the ECAC will offer to establish a Governance Committee to work with the agency to provide oversight, but it will be up to the agency as how they would administer the funding.

- Language access: Currently, QUALITYstarsNY standards are printed in English and Spanish, but there is a possibility of including more languages in the future.
- Guidelines around publicizing information: At this time, there are no rules around publicizing ratings for the providers currently participating in QUALITYstarsNY. Currently, it's not realistic to publish the ratings at this time since there are so few participants in QUALITYstarsNY in comparison to the number early childhood education programs in the state that are currently not participating in QUALITYstarsNY.

### **Child Care Development Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 2014**

Janice Molnar provided the members with an overview of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) revisions, which was passed on November 17, 2014. She identified a number of concerns for the state as a result of the federal reauthorization, including but not limited to the tremendous cost that will need to be borne by the state to meet the requirements. Janice highlighted several changes from earlier plan requirements that broaden the scope of the program including requirements that have been developed to:

- Keep children safe and healthy including by requiring all child care staff and providers to have federal criminal background checks in addition to state background checks.
- Increase monitoring and inspection of licensed, registered and legally-exempt providers.
- Establish methods to increase professional supports to the providers.
- Increase the focus on improving quality by establishing minimum quality spending requirements;
- Improve care for infants and toddlers.
- Support families through:
  - *Family engagement* by promoting involvement by parents; and
  - *Coordination and access* to services by addressing the needs of families by coordinating with other programs and providing information as part of consumer education (e.g., TANF, Head Start, developmental screenings, IDEA services, etc.).
- Establish provider-friendly payment practices that would include:
  - *Payment practices* established by the state to reflect general accepted payment practices for child care providers, including (to the extent practicable) paying for absence days, and timely reimbursement for child care services; and
  - *Equal access and rates* which requires states to: a) conduct a market rate survey, or use an alternative methodology, such as use of a cost estimation model, and b) describe how payment rates will be established based on results of the survey or alternative methodology, taking into account cost of providing higher quality service.

Janice identified some important timeframes:

- November 2014: Reauthorization of CCDF approved by Congress and signed into law;
- November 2016: Changes to licensing regulation associated with quality; and
- September 2017: Begin conducting federal finger printing and background checks;

Janice identified some next steps which included:

- Determine the timeframes for implementation;
- Assess need for statutory and/or regulatory changes;
- Estimate fiscal implications; and
- Leverage resources through partnership.

Janice would like for the ECAC to be involved with the state's plan and encouraged the membership to think outside of the box and develop creative strategies for implementing the plan. For more detail regarding changes to the Act please [click here](#) for the PowerPoint.

### **Policy and Possibilities to Advance Mental Health in New York**

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Mary McHugh and Evelyn Blanck provided a presentation on policies and initiatives that relate to the social emotional development for young children and the role of the ECAC. The key points of their presentation are as follows:

- There are currently three strategies being implemented to address the social-emotional development needs of young children:
  1. Developing an endorsement system that will provide training and a credential for providers of infant mental health services. This endorsement system is based on a Michigan model and New York is in the very early stages of implementation. On Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, Mary will facilitate an exploratory meeting with stakeholders.
  2. Influencing the Medicaid Redesign plan which would make significant changes in the way services are provided to very young children. Evelyn will be making a presentation to the Redesign Team in June 2015 to advocate for changes to the benefit package. For a copy of the recommendations please [click here](#).
  3. The Joint Task Force on Social-Emotional Development is moving their timeline for completion of a guidance document that will support Early Intervention programs and others who serve the birth-to-three population to the fall 2015.
- Mary and Evelyn expressed that there is great opportunity for synergy among all three initiatives.
- After the presentation, the following discussion topics and questions were generated:
  - a. How can the ECAC support this work?
    - 1) Align the endorsement with other credentials available in New York State. For example the New York State Parent and Education Partnership (NYSPEP) educator credential. A point was made that NYSPEP developed their educator credentials based on research that indicates positive parent outcomes are influenced more by the facilitators/trainers' skills and knowledge than the curricula, including evidence-based curricula.
    - 2) A recommendation for Medicaid payments should be predicated on the credential of the service provider or educator not an evidence-based program. It was also noted the language in the recommendations was chosen to meet the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approval requirements.
  - b. Future considerations and what is missing?
    - 1) Revisit promotion and prevention strategies (housing and economic stability were mentioned);
    - 2) Consider what New York State can learn from Oregon's Family Risk Assessment initiative;

- 3) Hold a discussion on social determinants of health (homelessness, violence and poverty) similar to ones held by the Medicaid Redesign Team; and
- 4) Include the needs of bi-lingual families and families who speak languages other than English.

For a copy of the PowerPoint presentation by Mary and Evelyn [click here](#).

### **Advocacy Report**

Jenn O' Conner and Kristen Kerr provided a brief background of Winning Beginning NY. They reviewed the current [Executive Agenda](#). Jenn and Kristen have been talking primarily with the Governor's Office and they feel that they are getting better reactions to QUALITYstarsNY. They encouraged ECAC members to set up meetings in the next couple of weeks to support funding for QUALITYstarsNY. Winning Beginning NY does have materials that will assist in advocacy strategies. To access the materials [click here](#).

### **Update on Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten Expansion**

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- Update on Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten Expansion: Meg McNiff and Lynnette Pannucci provided an update on the Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten expansion program. The State Fiscal Year 2013-2014 enacted budget increased the Prekindergarten budget by \$340M. By which \$300M was allocated to New York City and \$40M to the Rest of State. There were approximately 169 applicants with proposals to expand existing services from part-day to full day or to add capacity by funding first time prekindergarten programs. Of the 80 districts who received a grant, nine districts were funded for the first time to provide prekindergarten programs. Of the estimated 37,000 children impacted, 12,300 are children who will be attending prekindergarten for the first time. During their presentation, Meg and Lynnette indicated that:
  - *Professional Development Institute (PDI)* will be conducting for Rest of State program providers the quality protocols which are aligned with QUALITYstarsNY standards.
  - *Dual language laws* for K-12 recently revised and a meeting will be scheduled discuss changes needed for younger learners.

After the presentation the members had an opportunity to discuss the information presented. The discussion topics and interest in the information were as follows:

- Interested in learning how many programs hired certified teachers vs non-certified teachers.
- Wanted to know if districts that are contracting with a Community Based Organizations (CBO) are obligated to pass the \$10,000/pupil funding allotted for a classroom with a certified teacher or the \$7,000/pupil in classrooms with non-certified teacher to the CBO. The responses was no they are not obligated to pass the teacher certification funds onto the CBO and SED does not track the funding between the districts and the CBO.
- Request for transparency and consistency in monitoring. SED responded by saying they are working with New York City Education Department to develop the same protocols for monitoring.

There was interest in learning more about demographics of the teachers from ASPIRE the workforce tracking system. For example, information gathered on teachers' salaries. Although annual salary is a voluntary question, many do enter this information.

- A way to recognize the prekindergarten grantees: Bob reminded the members that at the last ECAC meeting several suggestions were made on ways to celebrate the school districts that received a Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten grant. At the November 18<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting members agreed to:
  - Send congratulatory letters to the 53 districts and 26 agencies awarded funds.
  - Provide the grantees with a hard copy of the resources developed by ECAC:
    - ✓ Partners in Early Learning brochure
    - ✓ DAP booklets
    - ✓ Early Learning Guidelines
    - ✓ Core Body of Knowledge
  - Develop a newsletter (E-Blast) to the grantees with links to resources.
  - Create a space on ECAC website/a listserv for sharing information

## **Work Group Highlights**

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- **Strong Families** (*Jim McGuirk and Evelyn Blanck*): They have conducted interviews with state agencies on how they support and define parent engagement. They found Early Intervention to be the model to pursue. They are pleased to announce that we will have a parent advocate on the ECAC soon.
- **Data** (*Bob Frawley and Carol Saginaw*): They met with staff in the Governor's Office and learned that federal funding (.90 for each dollar spent) will be provided to support states in developing data systems that is needed to respond to the Affordable Care Act. These funds can be used to support systems development for an early learning data system. To prepare for developing an early learning data system, the work group is seeking funding to create a 'data definitions dictionary' that will compare data definitions across the 12 independent data systems.
- **Quality Improvement** (*Dana Friedman and Lynnette Pannucci*): In order to expand QUALITYstarsNY it is important to include more Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) representation on the work group. To address that need, the work group has added seven CCR&Rs representatives that will join the four CCR&R representatives that are already members of the work group. At yesterday's work group meeting, Abbe Kovacik shared changes she has made to support QUALITYstarsNY implementation in their counties.

Questions for the ECAC Membership:

- "How do we celebrate the growth and improvements of the participating agencies?"
- "How do we go public with the ratings?"

The QUALITYstarsNY Implementation Subgroup will reconvene.

- **Finance** (*David Voegele*): The work group is looking at several financing strategies to support early childhood services systems, and more specifically, tax credits as a way to fund QUALITYstarsNY. Also, the work group is looking at tax credits as it relates to other states and what has been successful. The work group wants to better engage the business community and leverage local dollars. Although social impact bonds/pay for success is supported by the state, at this point it is complicated and may be a viable resource now, but remains a possibility in the future.
- **Promoting Healthy Development** (*Mary McHugh and Dina Lieser*): They are working on a curriculum for Child Care Health Consultants that will help to expand their capacity.

- **Workforce Development** (*Sherry Cleary and Kristen Kerr*): The work group is working on Coaching Competencies which is currently in draft form. The work group chairs were happy to announce the new [Developmentally Appropriate Practice \(DAP\)](#) briefs for prekindergarten - third grade are now available. There are five briefs: [Leadership](#), [Curriculum](#), [Environments](#), [Interaction](#) and [Assessment](#). The briefs will build on the skills needed to reach the common core learning standards in later years.

## **Wrap Up**

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Below are links to:

- [QRIS Compendium](#)
- [Child Care Development Fund PowerPoint](#)
- [Regional Bilingual Resource Networks \(RBE-RN\)](#)
- [Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers \(RSE-TASC\)](#);
- Winning Beginning NY Sample Letters:
  - ✓ [Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Pre-K Letter to Governor](#) (December 2014)
  - ✓ [Military Leaders for Kids Pre-K Letter to Governor](#) (December 2014)
  - ✓ [Ready Nation Pre-K Letter to Governor](#) (December 2014)
- [Developmentally Appropriate Practice Briefs](#)

**Next Steps:** Efforts will be taken to add a children's librarian to the ECAC.

**The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2015 at the Empire State Plaza, Albany NY - Meeting Room 2 and 3 from 10:30 am – 3:30 pm**