



**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)
Membership Meeting
April 3, 2014**

Members:

Patti Banghart	Maggie Evans	Karen Kissinger	Meg McNiff
Evelyn Blanck	Robert Frawley*	Nancy Kolben	Donna Noyes
Kate Breslin	Dana Friedman	Lee Kreader	Patty Persell
Sherry Cleary*	Dana Friedman	James Langford	Sandy Rybaltowski
Nancy Cupolo	Doris Fromberg	Patti Lieberman	Carol Saginaw
Rachel de Long	Mark Jasinski	Dina Lieser	Mary Shaheen
Christine Deyss	Jackie Jones	Barbara-Anne Mattle	Karen Kissinger
Denise Dowell	Ira Katzenstein	Karen McGraw	
Andrea Eaton	Kristen Kerr	Mary McHugh	

* Co-chair

Guests:

Joli Brown	Jeremy Hoffman	Jenn O'Connor	Kim Scott
Alyse Erman	Giovanna Joseph	Juliette Price	Lonnie Threatte
Scott Feldman	Cynthia O'Connor	Monique Rabideau	Nora Yates
K.A. Hopkins		Jocelyn Rodriguez	

Staff:

Ariel Davis	Renee Nasadoski	Stephanie Woodard
Jessica Howe	Susan Perkins	

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions of were made for the following guest:

- Governor's Office: Lonnie Threatte, Nora Yates and Giovanna Joseph
- SUNY Cradle to Career: Joli Brown and Juliette Price
- Promise Neighborhood: Alyse Erman
- The Campaign for Grade Level Reading: Kim Scott and Cynthia O'Connor
- United Federation of Teachers: Jeremy Hoffman

Updates and Reports

- **Every Student Present Campaign** - Mary DeMasi from the New York State Council on Children and Families made an announcement regarding the Council's public awareness campaign: **Every Student Present** which will increase the understanding of what chronic absenteeism is, how it affects children, and what strategies can be used to reduce chronic absences and improve education opportunities for children. She expressed the need for stressing to parents the importance of maintaining good attendance in child care, because it sets a good foundation for when children enter school.

- **New funding for QUALITYstarsNY implementation** – The United Way of the Capital Region recently announced that it will provide financial support to child care centers and family child care providers who participate in QUALITYstarsNY located in Rensselaer County.
- **Second QUALITYstarsNY presentation to the Board of Regents** – The Board of Regents requested that the ECAC provide a second presentation on QUALITYstarsNY during their March meeting. Ola Friday and representatives of three Albany early childhood education programs currently participating in QUALITYstarsNY implementation made presentations on how their participation in has positively impacted and improved their programs. The Regents were highly engaged in the conversation. Sherry commended Meg McNiff for securing this second invitation to present to the Regents.
- **ECAC Steering Committee** - Dina Lieser and Evelyn Blanck provided an update to the ECAC on the work of the Steering Committee. They reported that the Steering Committee has shifted from monthly conference calls to quarterly in-person meetings. This change has led to stronger participation, leadership and shared direction of the ECAC and its work groups. As the ECAC evolves into a new phase of operating with limited resources, the Steering Committee has identified 1-2 priorities for each work group that can be achieved by leveraging existing resources (including local resources), increasing cross-work group cooperation, and creating readiness for opportunities as they become available.
- **ECAC/Early Intervention Coordinating Council Joint Task Force on Social-Emotional Development – Mary McHugh reported that the Joint Task Force** has begun its work to develop guidance on meeting young children’s social-emotional development needs. On January 29th, the group met to hear a presentation by Dr. Gil Foley, Acting Clinical Director of the New York Center for Child Development, on “Infant Social-Emotional Development across Developmental Domains, Systems and Services.” The Task Force members accepted the charge to develop guidance for early childhood professionals, including Early Intervention and early care and education providers, and assist them in developing partnerships with families in promoting and supporting positive social-emotional development in young children (birth to three years of age) including their transition to preschool. Work has begun on the processes for referring and determining eligibility of children who may be experiencing social-emotional difficulties, and how to connect children who are not eligible for EI to needed services.

NYS Community, Opportunity, Reinvestment (CORE) Initiative

Nora Yates from the Governor’s Office provided a presentation on CORE, the Governor’s new initiative that will align programs, policies and funding across government agencies to help address issues faced by high need communities. The initiative has been designed to target the state’s efforts and investments based on data that is linked to people and places in concentrated distressed areas. This initiative includes an evaluation to determine whether CORE interventions are achieving the intended results based on agreed-to metrics and use this data to make changes when necessary. The CORE initiative is currently working in Albany and Newburg.

Community-Based Birth-to-Eight Frameworks

Dana Friedman introduced the panel discussion by explaining that she became aware of a number of community-wide, birth-to-eight coalitions that were working in New York State to strengthen and expand services for young children and their families. She felt it was important that the ECAC was aware of these initiatives and consider ways they might support the ECAC’s systems building efforts and, in turn, how the ECAC might support their work at the local level. She said some states are designing their early childhood systems by implementing at the local level and then using their results to inform state policy.

Before introducing the other panel members, Dana first reminded members of her presentation two years ago about her work on Long Island using the Early Development Instrument (EDI). Her experience with the EDI tool has led to her commitment to bottom-up policy making and community coalitions to help children succeed. A recent BUILD webinar on State/Community Collaboratives highlighted what these initiatives tend to have in common:

- Aim to effect —needle-moving change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric ;
- Belief in a long-term investment (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success;
- Cross-sector engagement;
- Use of measurable data to set the agenda and improve over time; and
- Really engage community members as partners and producers of impact.

Dana described the goals for the panel presentation as follows:

- Enhance ECAC's efforts to develop a cohesive, integrated birth-to-eight framework to guide state-level policy and system building.
- Learn from local innovations what is working, what is challenging, and identify the shared issues.
- Explore the potential role of the ECAC and state policy in supporting more community-wide initiatives dedicated to improving outcomes for children.

Following Dana's introduction, the panelists described the community initiatives that they represent, including:

- **Kim Scott - Campaign for Grade-Level Reading:** This initiative is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The campaign focuses on the most important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade. Their goal is to make sure quality teaching occurs in every place that touches the life of a child. The three pillars of their work are School Readiness, Chronic Absenteeism and Summer Learning. The Campaign for Grade Level Reading is working in 140 communities across the country including 7 communities in New York State (i.e., Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, New York City, and Madison and Chemung counties).
- **Alyse Erman - Promise Neighborhoods:** The Promise Neighborhoods Initiative was established under the legislative authority of the Fund for the Improvement of Education Programs (FIE), to provide funding to support eligible local entities to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in the most distressed communities, and help to transform those communities. There are 100 funded Promise Neighborhood programs across the country, 50 of which have Federal funding. In New York, Promise Neighborhoods have been established in Harlem, Sunset Park and Flatbush (Brooklyn), Astoria (Queens), Buffalo, and Hudson. Lutheran Family Health Services is the coordinating agency in Sunset Park. They have raised \$900,000 to support their work to address the needs of children birth to 8 and their families.
- **Jolie Brown and Juliette Price - SUNY Cradle to Career:** The State University of New York (SUNY) is helping communities around the state to adapt a framework for civic infrastructure to serve as the foundation of their cradle to career efforts. SUNY views education as a continuum that begins at birth and is carried on through school, college, career, and even into retirement. SUNY's Office of the Education Pipeline is establishing a series of systemic and sustainable regional education networks across the state and bringing together partners who have signed on to strengthen this educational

continuum. The Cradle to Career initiative is located in 12 New York communities (Albany, Bedford Stuyvesant, Clinton County, Geneva, Harlem, Rochester, Astoria/Queens, Farmingdale, Mohawk Valley, Yonkers, Long Island City, and Morrisania (The Bronx)). In Albany, the focus is on improving the quality of early childhood education, improve literacy skills, increase the percentage of math proficient children by the 4th grade, and reduce the school drop-out rate. The intent is to find points of light in each area. This initiative does not evaluate programs, but rather practices that can be built upon to improve outcomes. The Cradle to Career initiatives is not looking to replace what exists, but to tweak what is there so it is more effective. The approach focuses on the contributing factors to success or failure as well as contextual indicators that affect outcomes.

Commonalities across the initiatives include the following:

- **Data are critical** – each initiative uses data to drive their work. Some of the panelists stated that they have trouble accessing useable state data and that data gathered at the local level does not readily fit with state data.
- **Local communities need technical assistance and support** - All of the initiatives are designed around a technical assistance model, where communities have access to experts who can help them create coalitions, plan, collect data, and message results.
- **Larger learning community and support groups are very helpful** - All of these initiatives are part of larger national initiatives. This provides a group of other communities from which to share best practice and get advice for improving local outcomes.
- **Support from the state would be helpful** – Each of the initiatives felt that having state agency representatives as partners in these initiatives would help to solve problems and make progress easier to achieve.

Advocacy Report

Kate Breslin informed the members that over the last few years the budget process has increasingly included policy changes in addition to enacting fiscal proposals. In fact, the Legislature is no longer addressing many policy changes outside of the budget process.

This year Winning Beginning NY focused its advocacy attention on the Believe in Children Campaign: A Call for Universal Child Care, Pre-Kindergarten, and Afterschool. The campaign focused on providing equal opportunity for all New York's children to have access to a continuum of high-quality services that support their learning and development and meets the needs of diverse families. Building a comprehensive system, of which these investments are a critical part, will better serve children and families, streamline regulations, reduce costs, and result in a significant economic return on investment.

The State Fiscal Year 2014-2015 enacted budget included funding for the following programs:

- \$340 million to expand universal full day *Pre-Kindergarten*;
 - \$41 million (\$34 million plus a \$7.2 million restoration) to *Facilitated Enrollment* for child care. In addition, an amendment to the Social Services law enacts a teen earning income disregard from the family's household income, aligning child care with other needs-based programs (i.e. SNAP, HEAP and Public Assistance); and
 - \$3 million to support *Nurse-Family Partnership* programs.
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- Kate and Nancy Kolben will schedule a conference call for a more in-depth overview of the new provisions that will shape the use of the new Prekindergarten funding across the state. The agenda for

the conference call will include an exploration of provisions of law and its challenges and opportunities.

Other budget items are associated with tax revenue:

- Tax Relief for Renters and Low-income Homeowners: \$500 for New York City renters and homeowners with incomes up to \$200,000; and
- Noncustodial Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): Extend the Noncustodial EITC through tax year 2016 for noncustodial parents who pay child support of a qualified child with whom they do not reside.

Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership Task Force

Patty Persell reported on the progress of the Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership Task Force. She reminded members that \$500 million will be available through competitive funding for a new Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership as a new five year grant. The grants will be administered by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACS) Regional Office to new or existing Early Head Start grantees. The Early Head Start grantees will have the opportunity to partner with local child care agencies and family child care homes (who already receive Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) to offer child care) to offer infant and toddler care at a higher quality. Partnerships will be required to meet all of the Early Head Start regulations and performance standards. The federal government anticipates this new initiative will generate 40,000 additional slots for children ages birth to three years of age. States can use their federal CCDF allocation to support this initiative. Of the \$500 million, \$10 million will be used for administrative costs associated with evaluation and monitoring of the program. The grants will allow new or existing Early Head Start programs, states, tribes or local governments, to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving low-income infants and toddlers. Congress described two priorities for the competition:

- 1) Agencies that partner with local child care providers, including center and home-based care (family child care providers); and
- 2) Applicants that provide a unified birth-to-school entry continuum.

Currently, there are 61 Early Head Start grantees in the state serving 6,254 infants, toddlers and 584 pregnant women. The grant will fund child care, but not the pregnant women portion of the Early Head Start Program.

To maximize this new funding opportunity in New York State, the ECAC established a taskforce comprised of ECAC members and representatives for the Head Start community. The Task Force is chaired by Janice Molnar and Patty Persell. Task Force Members include:

Margaret Adeigbo – NYS Department of Health	**Wendy Hopkinson – Parsons Early Head Start
**Maria Benajan – NYC Administration for Children Services	**Jackie Jones – Infancy Leadership Circles
Brenda Knudson Chouffi – NYS Department of Health	Helga Larsen – Head Start Technical Assistance
**Denise Dowell – Civil Service Employee Association	Janice Molnar - NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Evelyn Efinger – Early Care and Learning Council	Donna Noyes – NYS Department of Health
**Maggie Evans – Agri-Business Child Development Migrant and Seasonal HS, Early Head Start	Judy Perry – NYC Administration for Children Services
Bob Frawley – NYS Council on Children and Families	Patty Persell – NYS Head Start Collaboration, Council on Children and Families
Shari Gruber – NYC Administration for Children Services	Sherone Sanchez – NYC Administration for Children Services

Jeremey Hoffman – United Federation of Teachers	**Ouida Foster Toutebon – Head Start of Rockland, NYS Head Start Association
Liz Hood – NYS State Education Department	Stephanie Woodard – NYS Council on Children and Families

** Members of the New York team attending the BUILD technical assistance session.

Since being established, the team has met to determine how best to proceed in supporting competitive proposals in New York State. On April 8-9, 2014, the BUILD Initiative is sponsoring a technical assistance session for state teams to explore strategies for maximizing this new funding opportunity. New York will be sending a five person team as noted above.

Aspire and WELS

As part of the development QUALITYstarsNY and New York Works for Children, two new data systems have been developed that will add greatly to the wealth of data available on early childhood education in New York State.

Aspire: Jessica Howe reported that Aspire is New York State's workforce registry and statewide training calendar for early childhood educators and school age program professionals. Early childhood education teachers, providers, directors, and trainers can use Aspire to develop professional portfolios and keep track of important information about their career, including education, training, and employment history.

Main components of Aspire:

- Practitioner Registry (including early childhood education trainers)
- Organization Accounts(early childhood programs and training organizations)
- Statewide Training Calendar
- Training Event Review
- Web-based reporting tools

When the project began, workforce registries were not designed to track program data, but were designed solely to track an individual's professional development. As Aspire has been developed, its capacity has been augmented so, in addition to tracking early childhood educators' professional development, it can generate reports that allow:

- Licensors access reports on programs' compliance with training requirements.
- Program administrators can obtain reports on the progress of their staff in reaching professional development goals and objectives.
- State administrators can obtain customized reports on the status of the early childhood education workforce and the availability of training resources.
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies can complete reports on training and other professional development activities provided by the organization and keep track of attendance, successful completion and other data.
- Early childhood education programs and providers are able to print their candidacy reports for National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation.

An important component of Aspire is the verification of information submitted by the workforce. In addition to gathering this information, staff working to support the system verifies all information collected. Since an individual's portfolio moves with them, this verification only has to be done once. Currently there are 900

trainers and 5,000 early childhood professionals registered in Aspire. Those registered on Aspire are programs currently participating in QUALITYstarsNY.

WELS – Ariel Davis reported that the WELS data system gathers a wealth of information on QUALITYstarsNY programs and providers and tracks various aspects of QUALITYstarsNY’s engagement with these sites. The information collected is used to generate quality ratings and customized improvement plans.

To summarize briefly, WELS:

- Captures Standards Self-study data to inform quality rating and improvement goals;
- Conveys staff credentials and ongoing professional development data from Aspire;
- Incorporates various assessments and observation tools for program and classroom evaluations(allowing for the direct entry of assessment results and production of aggregated assessment data and reports);
- Produces quality ratings and customized improvement plans;
- Provides a “Shopping Cart” of approved resources to efficiently meet identified quality improvement needs;
- Enables Quality Improvement Specialists and administrators to track engagement with and investments in each site’s quality improvement; and
- Generates a range of useful reports to summarize site’s current and past achievements.

Research Questions

QUALITYstarsNY presents numerous opportunities for research, evaluation and improved data collection. At the behest of the Quality Improvement Work Group’s Evaluation Subgroup (EDNA) Maggie McGlynn led a discussion of research questions that ECAC Work Groups might have that could potentially be answered by Aspire and WELS and other data and research activities associated with implementing QUALITYstarsNY. The open discussion generated the following set of questions that participants felt QUALITYstarsNY data could help to answer:

- What information about families in crisis can be captured to inform family support and interventions, agency abilities and capacity, and indicators of programs poised to meet families’ needs?
- Can we capture information on important outcomes that make a difference that may not directly tie to child outcomes, (e.g. the lack of parent voice may affect delivery of service; the lack of housing affects school attendance)?
- What staff development strategies make a difference?
- What is the overlap of CORE Communities and the programs in QUALITYstarsNY?
- What are the health and safety issues identified by the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and to what extent do the trainings included in Aspire address those issues?

Wrap Up

- Handouts for today’s meeting will be posted on the member’s only section of the ECAC website. If you are not a member contact Stephanie Woodard (Stephanie.woodard@ccf.ny.gov) and she will provide you with the handouts.
- If you are interested in a more in-depth discussion regarding the State Fiscal Year 2014-2015 enacted budget please let Stephanie Woodard know and she will provide Nancy and Kate with the list of names.
- We will keep the membership updated on the progress of the Early Head State Child Care Partnership initiative.

- ECAC Work Group Chair's should continue the conversation with your work group about what QUALITYstarsNY data could potentially answer research questions that would support your work. Please send that information to Dana Friedman (dfriedman@eyi.org).
- **Next meeting: June 12, 2014**