

**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council Membership Meeting
September 20, 2012
Minutes**

Participants

Members

Marsha Basloe	Evelyn Blanck	Kate Breslin	Sherry Cleary, Co-chair
Nancy T. Cupolo	Chris Deyss	Denise Dowell	Andre Eaton
Bob Frawley, Co-chair	Dana Friedman	Doris Fromberg	Jacquelyn Jones
Ira Katzenstein	Kristen Kerr	Karen Kissinger	Nancy Kolben
Lee Kreader	Linda Landsman	James Langford	Patti Lieberman
Barbara-Ann Mattle	James McGuirk	Mary McHugh	Karen McGraw
Anne Mitchell	Janice Molnar	Elba Montalvo	Donna Noyes
Patty Persell	Sandy Rybaltowski	Carol Saginaw	

Guests

Ola Friday	Maggie McGlynn	Britt Myrhol-Clarke	Krystal Reyes
Alycia Rhinehart	Sam Stephens	Taniesha Woods	

Staff

Regina Canuso	Barbara Hogan	Jeff Luks	Jenn O'Connor
Bridget Walsh	Stephanie Woodard		

Welcome and Introductions

Bob Frawley and Sherry Cleary welcomed all participants, and acknowledged special guest Gerry Cobb from the BUILD Initiative, and those members newly appointed by the Governor's office: Marsha Basloe, Kate Breslin, Nicolas Storelli-Castro, and Barbara-Ann Mattle.

Facilitator Maggie McGlynn led the group in an ice-breaker exercise to explore and share personal "dimensions of diversity" as a prelude to the afternoon presentation on Cultural Competence.

Updates and Discussion

QUALITYstarsNY - Bob Frawley reported the establishment of two groups to help manage the administration and implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. The groups are:

1. **Quality Implementation Support Group:** This Quality Improvement Work Group subgroup will support the implementation process for QUALITYstarsNY and provide support to Project Coordinator Ola Friday by providing her with a forum for issues and discuss development and implementation ideas. The members of the subgroup are: Patty Persell, Jackie Jones, Kristen Kerr, Dana Friedman and Denise Dowell.
2. **QUALITYstarsNY Implementation Oversight Group:** The QUALITYstarsNY Oversight Group is a subgroup of the ECAC. The Oversight Group will be responsible for the administrative and policy decisions regarding initial implementation and the process that will follow to move toward full implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. This will include making decisions regarding how QUALITYstarsNY will be administered on the ground, and what functions will require a contractor. The group will also be responsible for the development of any necessary RFPs. The members of the QUALITYstarsNY Oversight Group are as follows: Janice Molnar, Meg McNiff, Anne Mitchell, Denise Dowell, Jackie Jones, Dana Friedman, and Bob Frawley as Chair.
Note: Included as part of the ECAC membership packet was the amended organizational chart which includes the QUALITYstarsNY Implementation Oversight Group

In addition to the two new groups there are two new Co-Chairs for the Quality Improvement Work Group, Lynnette Pannucci and Marsha Basloe, who bring tremendous experience and energy to the work. The ECAC thanks former co-chairs Meg McNiff, Anne Mitchell, and Janice Molnar, who together successfully shepherded the Quality Improvement Work Group up to this point.

Governor's Proposal - A proposal to the Governor's office is currently under development to provide funding for the ECAC and full implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. The proposal makes the case that the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY addresses several of the governor's priorities such as: education reform; improved effectiveness of state programs and services; and return on investment. The Oversight Group is reviewing the proposal and once the Oversight Group signs off on it, the proposal will be available to membership. Bob had preliminary conversations with the Governor's Office and they were perceived as favorable. However, Bob cautioned that there are many competing priority funding issues, such as child care subsidies. This year's budget funding will be tight and the Governor has alerted agencies that it will be a zero growth budget.

BUILD National Conference in Atlanta, GA, October 17-19, 2012 - This year the ECAC will have a team of people that will attend the BUILD National Conference in Atlanta, they are as follows: Bob Frawley, Sherry Cleary, Dana Friedman, Jim McGuirk, Karen McGraw and Marsha Basloe, and Sam Stevens.

Common Metric - This initiative is moving forward, however there is a need to fundraise to support the initiative as it moves from a citywide sample to the creation of a larger statewide sample. Fundraising efforts are ongoing.

Aspire - The Aspire credential registration system is up and running. Currently there are 940 people registering their credentials on-line. The majority of the people are participants in QUALITYstarsNY. The

expectation is that by the end of October 2012 there will be several thousand registered. There has been 10 in-person trainings and four webinars. Note: Since the meeting there are now over 3,000 people who have registered.

Shared Services - Three focus groups on support for the concept of Shared Services were conducted in the following areas: Rochester, Albany, and New York City. The attendees in Rochester were program directors, in Albany family day care providers and New York City program administrators. The concept of Shared Services was received well; however participants in the focus groups raise similar issues of usability and localization. Focus group participants felt a need to be able to customize purchasing of goods and services because they want to continue to support resources within their city.

Next Steps

- The group is planning a meeting on October 4th in Albany to move forward with steps to establish a statewide Shared Services project, integrating the information gathered through the focus groups.

Communication Plan – The Advocates for Human Potential (communications consultant) conducted a communications audit and submitted recommendations regarding an ECAC communications strategy. The results of the audit and recommendations were included in the ECAC member packet. In addition, Sherry provided an update on progress toward identifying an ECAC logo and tag line. Members received a list of the recommended tag lines and participated in an exercise to review and discuss the recommended tag lines.

Next Steps

- Members should review the audit along with the recommendations and send comments to either Bob or Sherry.
- ECAC Co-Chairs will review the recommendations and any further comments from ECAC members and meet with Advocates for Human Potential to discuss the audit and recommendations.
- Bob and Sherry will review the top choices that ECAC members selected.
- ECAC members should send any new ideas for a logo and tag line to Bob and Sherry.

Work Group Focus

Developmental Screening Efforts – The ECAC has created two new documents to promote routine developmental screening of children. One is a brochure for parents, *“Are You Pregnant or the Parent of a Young Child?”* designed to help educate parents about the significance of developmental screening for their young children. This brochure will help create consumer demand as parents become empowered to ask for and expect developmental screening at well-child visits. The second piece, *“Improving Early*

Childhood Screenings in New York: Early, Routine, Coordinated”, is designed for a wide array of stakeholders across the state, including policymakers, early childhood professionals, and the public.

Evelyn Blanck led a discussion about dissemination ideas for the parent brochure. The ECAC membership suggested a variety of venues for distribution, including their own agencies, organizations and networks.

Next Steps

- The ECAC will be printing large quantities of both documents when the new logo is available.

Child and Adult Care Food Program – The ECAC has created an ad hoc group that is spearheading an effort to increase enrollment in CACFP, the federally funded nutrition program that provides programs and providers with nutritious food at no cost. Research shows that the quality of a program is enhanced by enrollment in CACFP or following their menu patterns. In addition, QUALITYstarsNY has a standard that incentivizes programs to be enrolled in or follow the guidelines of CACFP. The ad hoc group consists of Marsha Basloe, Regina Canuso, Mary DeMasi (of the Council on Children and Families), and CACFP staff. The ad hoc group has been engaged in a marketing campaign to increase awareness of and interest in CACFP and are educating Quality Improvement Specialists, CCR&R staff and others throughout the state about the program’s benefits and how to enroll. Brochures have been created for family day care homes and for centers and have been mailed out to all licensed and registered programs and providers in the state. A special mailing has been done to programs and providers in QUALITYstarsNY who are not yet enrolled in CACFP.

Next Steps

- ECAC members are encouraged to request more of each brochure to distribute to their networks.
- The ad hoc group will be doing targeted community outreach and the development of a broader outreach/education plan within three communities in the state.

Reports

Education Reform Commission - The Education Reform Commission, created by Governor Andrew Cuomo in April, 2012, has started meeting and has been holding a series of hearings around the state. ECAC members who are also members of Winning Beginning NY and other advocacy groups have been very active in this effort, speaking at all the hearings, meeting with members, and getting press on the importance of implementing QUALITYstarsNY, and addressing other early childhood issues that we hope the Commission will include in the recommendations that they will be making.

Commission members have reached out to the ECAC and asked for recommendations. In considering what the ECAC should recommend, Bob and Sherry looked at their charge and compared it to ECAC work and our strategic plan to see what the critical connections were. The Commission has identified three major goals, two of which closely connect to the ECAC's work:

- Examining factors in preparing, recruiting, training, and retaining high quality teachers and principals, as well as factors in developing district leadership.
- Examining factors in raising student achievement from prekindergarten through high school including parental involvement and support systems for students.

The two ECAC strategies that we are working on that parallel the Education Reform Commission's work are:

1. Funding the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY, a quality rating and improvement system for all licensed and regulated early care and education programs.
2. Establishing New York's Early Learning Framework as the foundation for the Birth – Grade 2 Teacher Certification.

To support these recommendations, the ECAC wrote a paper that incorporated the information from the paper for the Governor's Office on implementing QUALITYstarsNY but added a different introduction. The paper to the Education Reform Commission makes the case for full implementation based on the evidence that quality early childhood programming supports children's readiness and that poor quality can have a detrimental effect, and makes the case that quality early childhood programs provide a good return on investment. Otherwise the description of QUALITYstarsNY is the same in both papers.

Action Taken: The ECAC Membership endorsed these two recommendations to the Education Reform Commission.

The ECAC Co-chairs are currently working on a paper to support the second recommendation, the essence of which is that the *Core Body of Knowledge*, the *Early Learning Guidelines*, the *Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core*, and the QUALITYstarsNY program standards should become the foundation for early childhood teacher education.

In addition to these two papers, the packet that the ECAC will send to Commission members will include a paper that Gerry Cobb and BUILD commissioned that describes the ECAC and how its work supports that of the Education Commission. Bob described it as a brief paper that succinctly establishes the ECAC's credentials to support their efforts.

In response to a Steering Committee suggestion, the ECAC membership then discussed potential steps to take to influence Commission members to include our recommendations in the set of recommendations that they will be preparing.

To begin that discussion, Sherry and Bob suggested that the ECAC identify several members in addition to themselves whose names could be sent to the Commission as ECAC members who are available to meet with them or answer their questions. The following volunteered: Marsha Basloe, Dana Friedman, Doris Fromberg, Kristen Kerr, Lee Kreader, Nancy Kolben, James Langford, Patti Lieberman, Anne Mitchell, Jenn O'Connor, and Carol Saginaw.

In addition, the following suggestions were made:

- Include the need to fund an Early Childhood Data System.
- Emphasize the need to strongly prepare administrators, who do the evaluations of teachers, on the same trainings being used for teachers, so they will so they understand what quality teaching is.

Next Steps

- ECAC members should contact Bob and Sherry as soon as possible with any new ideas or suggestions, as the timeline for recommendations is the middle of October.

Advocacy - Jenn O'Connor reported on the efforts of the *Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College* Campaign, a partnership between *Winning Beginning NY* and Citizen Action/AQE. The Campaign met with SED and successfully worked with that agency to include two visits to QUALITYstarsNY programs in Commissioner King's 10-city back-to-school tour in early September. The events, in Albany and NYC, generated good local press. The Campaign has also been successful in having advocates testify on early care and education at each of the Education Reform Commission hearings. Testimony is posted at www.winningbeginningny.org. The Campaign is drafting recommendations to the Commission, as well. The Campaign is now working with Assembly Member Jaffee to host a public forum on QUALITYstarsNY on October 10th in Albany. The hope is to garner press and policymaker attention. Finally, *Winning Beginning NY* has a new Steering Committee that will begin its work October 1st.

Health Care Reform: Impact on Children's Health Care - Kate Breslin, President and CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) presented information to the ECAC membership about the health policy changes that will occur nationally and in New York State subsequent to the passage of the Affordable Care Act and shifts in health care policies.

Health Benefit Exchange Regional Advisory Committees- The New York Health Benefit Exchange has established five Regional Advisory Committees pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order No. 42 to provide advice and make recommendations on the establishment and operation of the Exchange, including recommendations about relevant regional factors. The five Committees represent the following regions of the state:

Western NY

Central NY/Finger Lakes
Capital District/Mid-Hudson/Northern NY
New York City/Metro
Long Island

Each committee is comprised of representatives of consumers, small business, health care providers, insurance agents and brokers, labor organizations, and other stakeholders.

Kate's handout provides a comprehensive overview that includes a history of the Affordable Care Act with a particular emphasis on how it could impact children. The Health Benefit Exchange will allow a comparison of products, key services, a website, and navigators who will help people who get health insurance through the Exchange learn about their options and assist with enrollment.

The SCAA is focusing on how the Affordable Care Act will affect children, especially so that benefit packages meet the unique needs of children. Bridget Walsh is working on the pediatric dental benefit. Kate encouraged ECAC members to look at the Medicaid waiver and possible impact on home visiting, foster care, and managed care. The advocacy organization, Voices for America's Children, is working on a primer explaining these issues to families.

Next Steps

- The ECAC membership will have a further discussion at the December meeting to explore the possibilities of a role for the ECAC in promoting aspects of health care reform that impact young children.

Innovative Strategies

Conversation on Cultural Competence - Ola Friday, Taniesha Woods, and Elba Montalvo, who are all members of the Quality Improvement Work Group Cultural Competence subgroup, facilitated a presentation on Cultural Competence. In preparation for this discussion, two documents were distributed prior to the meeting: *"Cultural Competence Initiative Theory of Change"* and the draft of an implementation plan to integrate cultural competencies within QUALITYstarsNY as well as more broadly in the ECAC. The implementation plans will be presented for approval to relevant work groups, and potentially the Steering Committee, before being implemented.

Ola thanked BUILD for technical assistance, and thanked the Quality Improvement Work Group ad hoc Group on Cultural Competence, and those ECAC members who completed the online survey, for significant contributions. Ola presented an overview of the BUILD Cultural Competence Initiative. The team relied on the NAEYC Cultural Competence Toolkit but has modified it for New York as the Cultural Competence Program Checklist. She emphasized the goal: To have cultural competency integrated into all standards of QUALITYstarsNY.

To this end, cultural competence will be a part of recruitment and training of Quality Improvement Specialists (QIS) and Early Learning trainers. The development team also recognized that there are implications for the field beyond QUALITYstarsNY and will broaden the scope of their work as they move forward.

Ola reviewed the Theory of Change to improve program quality and infrastructure. The handout also includes an example of the Implementation Plan (the complete document was emailed to the ECAC members on September 17th). The Implementation Plan is intended to provide concrete guidance to the field. She also reminded members that their response to the electronic survey about Cultural Competence is still welcome. ECAC members can find the survey at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHBvZHYwbEcxSFA3MEYtZlneGEtR3c6MQ>

Discussion questions:

- To what extent is cultural competence factored into our cost model? It is not included explicitly, but could be the designated topic for professional development.
- Where is training needed? QI Specialists will identify the need as they meet with participating programs. Maggie offered to help. Mary McHugh offered to provide a link to a curriculum by Judy Samuels at NYU on cultural competence in mental health care.
<http://ssrdqst.rfmh.org/cecc/index.php?q=node/36>

Dana Friedman of the Early Years Institute and Jim McGuirk of Astor Services shared their experiences in addressing cultural competency in their organizations.

Dana suggested that everyone think beyond individual programs to the community as well. She encouraged members to consider focusing intensive work in one community at a time and invite families to contribute. The example she used was Westbury where cultural competence is one of the biggest obstacles between black/brown populations of color. She endorsed an asset-based development approach using Community Cafés and implementing the Wakanheza Project. Wakanheza is the Dakota word for child that literally means Sacred Being. This approach is being implemented by eight libraries on Long Island whose staff learned about and practice principles for the following: handling difficult situations and letting go of judgment; enhancing relationships between parents and child care staff; creating a welcoming environment; and understanding its effects on behavior. She is looking for an anti-bias curriculum designed for parents.

Jim shared his experience that started with annual training on cultural diversity many years ago. Staff at their Bronx facility pushed for more and he reached out to the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services to talk about race, power, and privilege. He continues to ensure that senior management participates. He recommended the Race Matters Institute Toolkit, especially the organizational self-assessment, to the Quality Improvement ad hoc Group and others (see: <http://racemattersinstitute.org/homepages/>).

Elba challenged the members to learn their community demographics, become knowledgeable about differences, and embark on what is a life-long process. In response to the question, *How can the ECAC be involved in supporting this work?*, members offered these ideas regarding their agencies:

- NYSPEP will revisit its parenting education credential to embed training on cultural competence,
- The Parent-Child Home Program will add cultural competence to their staff training.

In addition, general suggestions for the Quality Improvement Work Group subgroup on Cultural Competence included:

- align with SED's Dignity for All Students initiative,
- engage parent voice when and where possible,
- adapt efforts to rural as well as urban settings, and
- commit as a body to set a goal for the ECAC regarding embracing of cultural competence in practices and policies.

Next Steps

- ECAC members should send feedback on the Implementation Plan to Ola Friday.
- Quality Improvement Work Group will discuss implications for their work group and issues for the ECAC Steering Committee to consider.
- If ECAC members have not done so already, please complete the cultural competence survey and send to Ola.

Wrap-Up

- The next ECAC Membership meeting will be held on December 13th 2012 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany.