



**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)
Membership Meeting
March 7, 2013**

Members:

Evelyn Blanck	Robert Frawley*	Dina Lieser	Donna Noyes
Kate Breslin	Doris Fromberg	Barbara-Anne Mattle	Patty Persell
Sherry Cleary*	Ira Katzenstein	James McGuirk	Melanie Pores
Rachel de Long	Kristin Kerr	Mary McHugh	Carol Saginaw
Chris Deyss	Nancy Kolben	Meg McNiff	
Denise Dowell	James Langford	Anne Mitchell	
Maggie Evans	Lee Kreader	Janice Molnar	
* Co-chair			

Guests:

Dee Dwyer	Kim Marquise	Alycia Rhinehart	Josh Wallack
Kathleen Halas	Jenn O'Connor	Sam Stephens	
Britt Myrhol-Clarke	Ashley Pitez	David Voegele	

Staff:

Phil Alotta	Barbara Hogan	Renee Nasadoski	Stephanie Woodard
Liz Belsito	Maggie McGlynn	Susan Perkins	Bridget Walsh

Welcome and Introductions

Sherry Cleary introduced the guests attending the ECAC Membership meeting and reviewed the agenda. She recognized the work that the Steering Committee members contributed to the day's proceedings during a Steering Committee retreat held May 16th.

Maggie McGlynn explained the warm up activity: individuals introduce themselves to others at their table and share one project they are working on to support children and families. She asked that during the breaks, everyone brag about someone at their table to another ECAC member or guest.

There were several announcements:

Community Schools - James Langford shared the new *Measuring Social Return on Investment for Community Schools* report. The case study highlights community school operated by the Children's Aid Society at Public School #5 in New York City. The study documented a return on investment for the services provided by the community school as \$10.30 for every dollar invested. The Children's Aid Society partnered with The Finance Project in the development of the study; the entire report and case study are available at:

http://www.communityschools.org/new_resource_measuring_social_return_on_investment_for_community_schools/

Clinton Global Initiative - Anne Mitchell reported on her attendance at the Clinton Global Initiative meeting held June 13-14 in Chicago. Sponsored for the last three years by the Clinton Foundation, a focus of this year's meetings was on investing in early childhood from birth to age 8. Anne was one of 800-900 invited participants including many philanthropists, representatives of national organizations and business - a diverse group. More information on the event is archived at: <http://www.cgiamerica.org>. For more information on the early childhood working group go to:

http://www.cgiamerica.org/2013/working_groups/early_childhood_education.asp

Child Care

- The Office of Children and Families' Child Care and Development Block Grant Fund plan comments are due to the Office of Children and Family Services by June 30th. Once the plan is approved it will be posted on the OCFS website.
- New child care market rates will be published October 31, 2013 (http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/regs_comments.asp).
- Proposed revisions to the family child care regulations have been posted on the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) website (http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/regs_comments.asp) and open for comment.
- The federal government is allowing New York to use Social Services Block Grant funding to support Super Storm Sandy relief efforts. Funds can be used to help child care and family child care providers recover from damages received during the storm and to provide mental health and other services. The state will send out applications to areas impacted by the storm. Janice requested that people to help get the word out to the effected communities. The application is available at: : <http://www.nysandyhelp.ny.gov/content/sandy-social-services-block-grant-ssbg-funding>

Quality Improvement Work Group - Sherry congratulated Dana Friedman as the new co-chair of the Quality Improvement Work Group and acknowledged:

- David Voegele the new Executive Director at the New York State Early Care & Learning Council
- Josh Wallack the new Director of the Early Childhood Division Director at the Children's Aid Society

Update and Discussion: New Requirements for the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Fund

Janice Molnar presented on the new requirements for the federal Child Care and Development Fund which is due to the Administration for Children and Families by Monday, August 5th. The Child Care Development Fund was established in 1990 when several federal programs were combined into a single block grant. In establishing the Child Care and Development Fund, the federal government reduced the total amount of funding that was allocated to states, but at the same time provided states with greater flexibility to use the funds to support child care. Over the last several years funding has been reduced while requirements for using the funds have increased. Recently, the federal Office of Child Care has proposed new Child Care and Development Fund regulations which greatly reduce state flexibility in the use of the funding. How the funding can be used in New York is greatly complicated by practices New York has instituted to support families and providers. New York is the only state that has followed the federal requirement for reimbursing child care providers at 75 percent of the market rate. The current funding level for the New York State block grant is \$379 million, which will result in fewer children being served in subsidized care. As a result of the sequestration cuts in the 4th quarter there will be an additional \$4.0 million reduction to the state's block grant, which will also result in a reduction of children served in subsidized care. It is possible that the sequestration cuts may carry-over into the funding baseline which would impact future block grant allocations to the state. The federal government indicated that the proposed changes put into place now will affect all the new funding.

At the same time, the proposed Child Care and Development Fund regulations will result in several unfunded mandates which could also negatively impact the number of children who are able to receive subsidized care. For example:

- **Health and Safety:** Federal background checks on licensed providers. Currently there is no federal background check only a state background check in which the state pays the cost. The new requirement will increase the costs to the state as a cost per federal check is \$16.00.
- **Pre-Service training/orientation:** Fifteen hours of training will be required prior to employment and the state will have covered some of the costs.
- **Monitoring:** All programs and providers including exempt providers receiving subsidies should receive and initial monitoring visit and at least 1 unannounced visit annually.
- **Subsidy Policy:** Local districts will need to assess developmental needs of the child when authorizing child care services. This is a change from assessing the needs for the family. This will require a new skill set for local district staff.

Comments on the proposed changes are due to the federal government no later than Monday, August 5th. It is expected that OCFS will provide extensive comments. As part of the process for developing their comments, OCFS is working to determine how many children will leave care because of the funding reduction.

Discussion of ideas from Steering Committee Retreat

Maggie McGlynn facilitated table discussion that included a summary of highlights of the Steering Committee Retreat which included:

- Notable Accomplishments: gratitude and appreciation
- Logical Forward Thinking: anything missing?
- Actions Steps per Financial Scenarios: more thoughts? Connections to other workgroups?

After the brief summary of the retreat was completed, each table was ask to perform an activity which included a discussion on pre-identified concepts for moving forward beyond October 31st and to strategically plan for the how the work of the ECAC can continue. To see the comments generated from the group, using this link (<http://www.ccf.ny.gov/TempPosting/ecac.cfm>) and go to the attachment entitled *Strategic Positioning Work Group Table*.

Infrastructure Considerations Consistent with Our Strategic Plan

Maggie McGlynn facilitated a group discussion regarding the information discussed at the May 16th Steering Committee retreat. Maggie organized the discussion around work group highlights and notable accomplishments. The ECAC members were asked to think about next steps and to examine if anything was missing from the Steering Committee retreat discussions. Several financial scenarios were explored, which included no money, some money, and more money. Each discussion group was tasked with building on the work from the Steering Committee retreat. Additional ideas were discussed and shared with the ECAC membership and the impact each scenario would have on each of the work groups. Members discussed merging work groups and how to crosswalk the work of each work group. The following ideas and suggestions were generated:

- Quality Improvement: Explore partnership with the over 100 regional teacher centers.
- Finance: Explore alternate financing options including braiding and blending of funding.

- Promoting Healthy Development (Group I): Build on what currently exists. Explore the use of Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Initiative funds to support initiatives.
- Promoting Healthy Development (Group II): The ongoing need for developmental screenings to ensure they become a part of regular practice.
- Workforce Development (Group I): Discuss with co-chairs to determine a good strategy to best disseminate information among work groups.
- Workforce Development (Group II): – Establish goals such as what percentage of the workforce needs what level of qualifications.
- Family Engagement: Strategize with other work groups to pursue economies of scale.

Members then discussed the progress of the work groups and to measure if work will continue to have a meaningful impact on children and families.

ECAC Grant Funding Status: Bob Frawley discussed the status of the ECAC grant funding status. Although the ECAC grant concludes on 7/31/13, we have up to 90 days (October 31, 2013) to spend down the funds and close out the grant. This allows the ECAC to maintain staff through October. Efforts are underway to maintain at least some of the staff. If these efforts fail, the ECAC will need to explore how it will conduct business differently without staffing support.

Ad Hoc Committees: Maggie McGlynn suggested the ECAC consider using ad hoc work groups to identify issues or concerns moving forward. The following ad hoc groups were suggested:

- Fund Development
- Communication (including outreach communication) – should create a list of all audiences
- Early Learning Challenge Grant

Fundable Projects: Work groups should explore one or two fundable projects within their work groups. Work groups should forward their ideas to the ECAC Steering Committee by September 2013. The steering committee will develop guidelines or parameters for fundable projects.

It is important not to overlook the work that has already been accomplished by the ECAC and use it to advance the ECAC in a strategic way.

How can the ECAC best influence those that need to know?: There was a discussion regarding the appropriate way to communicate with the New York State Legislature and Governor’s Office. Agreement was made to continue the current line of communication.

Next Steps

1. The Steering Committee will discuss the need to develop ad hoc groups.

Early Learning Challenge Grant

A third round of the Early Learning Challenge Grant is expected to be released sometime this summer. In 2011, New York unsuccessfully applied for \$100 million in funding over 4 years. For this upcoming Challenge Grant, New York is eligible for \$75 million. States that have previously received Early Learning Challenge Grants are not

eligible for this new funding opportunity. Proposed changes to the Challenge Grant application is currently posted for public comment <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-05-20/pdf/2013-11821.pdf>.

In preparation for New York's application, Bob and Sherry are arranging meetings with the Governor's Office, which must initiate New York's application process and appoint the lead agency for the application. Conversations with the Governor's staff will focus on the gains New York has made in building early childhood system elements, such as QUALITYstarsNY and the Aspire registry as well as addressing the importance of showing state investment in early childhood system building efforts for New York's application to be competitive.

In addition to meeting with the Governor's Office, Bob has developed two documents: 1) a summary of proposed changes in the Early Learning Challenge Grant Request for Applications and 2) a chart that shows the progress that New York has made in various areas of the application including an analysis of the advantages and concerns of our current early childhood system. Both documents were included in the ECAC Membership Meeting packets. Members participated in a small group exercise to review and fill in any gaps in the chart.

There was also a short discussion about the Early Development Index (EDI) being an option for New York's kindergarten entry assessment tool. The EDI is currently used on Long Island with great success. Dana Freidman submitted comments about the potential of the EDI tool on the public comment page for Early Learning Challenge Grant. Below is a Dana comment:

*"As an organization dedicated to improving early learning and development for young children in [GEOGRAPHIC AREA], the [NAME OF ORGANIZATION], would like to make the following recommendations to the proposed rules for the new Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) competition. **We recommend that Priority 3 and the definition of Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) embrace and encourage the monitoring of school readiness at the population level. This would allow participating communities to both inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry and inform instruction in the early elementary school grades.***

Population-based school readiness results that are reported neighborhood by neighborhood can be particularly helpful in addressing the readiness gap because they allow communities to see how vulnerabilities in readiness domains are distributed across the community for ALL children. This allows local communities to take collective ownership of the results and engage a broad-base of cross-sector stakeholders around a common, data-driven agenda to address determinants of early childhood development at the individual, programmatic and systems levels. Population level measures of school readiness can also be used for surveillance of vulnerability of children who need additional screening and assessment and provide a very cost effective way of targeting children who may need extra attention. In addition to providing school readiness results at the community and neighborhood level, population-based assessments can be disaggregated at the school level to inform instruction for the incoming cohort of kindergarten children as they move through kindergarten to 3rd grade.

To effectively monitor school readiness at the population level, KEAs should possess the following characteristics. They should be:

- *Based on aggregated results of assessments completed by Kindergarten teachers in order to gain near universal access to children;*
- *Holistic in order to cover all essential domains of school readiness;*
- *Administered no sooner than 3 months and no later than 6 months after the beginning of the school year in order to ensure that teachers have had time to familiarize themselves with their students;*
- *Relatively easy and feasible to administer at a population level, including teacher training requirements of no more than 1 hour, and no more than 15-20 minutes per child to administer the KEA based on teacher recall;*
- *Inclusive of student address data such that the data can be reported at the census tract level (assuming a minimum threshold of records to maintain confidentiality); and*
- *Valid and reliable including evidence of predictive validity.*

In our community we have been using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) as the community-wide KEA to monitor population level school readiness outcomes. This has led to a number of very encouraging improvements in our community that benefit young children such as [LIST BENEFITS]. We would recommend that the EDI be encouraged by RTT-ELC as an ideal KEA for the RTT-ELC effort.”

To view the information generated from the table discussion use this link (<http://www.ccf.ny.gov/TempPosting/ecac.cfm>) and go to the attachment entitled *ECLG Progress Worksheet attachment*.

Next Steps:

1. Bob agreed to share Dana’s comments on Early Development Index (EDI) that she posted to the Early Learning Challenge Grant Federal website.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 26, 2013 at the Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY.