



**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)  
Membership Meeting  
September 16, 2014**

**Members:**

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Patti Banghart	Maggie Evans	Kristen Kerr	Patty Persell
Evelyn Blank	Robert Frawley*	Patti Lieberman	Carol Saginaw
Kate Breslin	Dana Friedman	Karen McGraw	Monica Short
Sherry Cleary*	Liz Hood	Janice Molnar	
Chris Deyss	Mark Jasinski	Jenn O'Connor	
Andre Eaton	Ira Katzenstein	Lynnette Pannucci	
* Co-chair			

**Guests:**

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Dan Ferguson	Melanie Pores
Sheri Gruber	Sam Stephens
Betty Holcomb	

**Staff:**

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Renee Nasadoski	Susan Perkins
Rebekah Widrick	Stephanie Woodard

**Welcome and Introductions**

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**Introductions:** All that were assembled for the meeting introduced themselves.

**Announcements:**

Meeting Overview: This meeting was abbreviated because the membership was invited by the Board of Regents to participate in their Symposium on Early Childhood Financing. It is a testimony to our work that one of the first things the Board of Regents did when they started to organize the symposium was to ask if they could invite the ECAC membership to attend.

Federal Preschool Development and Expansion Grant: Last week, the Governor decided that New York should submit a Preschool Development and Expansion application. He identified the State Education Department (SED) to serve as the lead agency.

**Updates and Reports**

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**Federal Preschool Development and Expansion Grants:** Bob provided information on the federal Preschool Development and Expansion Grants. On May 5th, the US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a Request for Public Comment on the Preschool Development and Expansion Grant Program. There are two types of grants available: 1) Development Grants (\$90m) for states with small or no existing state funded prekindergarten program and 2) Expansion Grants (\$160m) for states that have won an Early Learning Challenge Grant or who have large state operated prekindergarten programs. New York State is eligible for a \$25 million grant under the Expansion Grant portion of the Request for Proposal (RFP). Funding is for one year, but the

intent is that funding would be allocated for an additional three years resulting in \$100 million over the four-year period.

Since 95 percent of the money is required to support direct services in high need communities, SED has begun to identify the communities most in need. Sherry and Bob have offered the support of the ECAC and working with staff at SED to identify and support a grant writer that can help pull together the proposal. The membership will be kept informed as this work develops.

The application is due October 14<sup>th</sup> and awards announced December 2014.

**Higher Education Inventory:** Sherry announced funding was obtained for the Berkeley University Center for the Study of Child Care Employment to survey all early childhood teacher education programs in the state. This analysis will help us understand more about the education and background of the state's teacher educators, as well as the coursework provided to the early childhood education workforce.

**Progress of the Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership Task Force:** Patty Persell provided an update regarding the progress associated with the Early Head Start/Child Care (EHS/CC) Partnership grant applications. The ECAC's Task Force worked to help prepare the applicants by hosting five webinars on the following topics:

- Using Data to Show Need in Your Community presented by Cate Bohn and Robin Miller
- Early Head Start-Family Child Care Partnerships in Action: Showcasing two EHS-Family Child Care Programs in NYC
- Fiscal Management: Budgeting and Allocation of Shared Costs with support from BUILD
- New York State's Vision for Infant & Toddler Care presented by Bob Frawley
- Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships: The Role of Local Social Services Districts presented by Janice Molnar and Patty Persell

The Taskforce provided the following resources to potential applicants:

- Data collection resources and how to show need in one's community.
- A list of all child care agencies and family child care providers who serve infants and toddlers and participate in QUALITYstarsNY and earned 3 to 5 stars.
- A list of current child care subsidies by county and age. (Currently there are approximately 400 children enrolled in EHS that receive a child care subsidy).
- An inventory of state supports for infant and toddler programs and providers. For the document [click here](#).
- A document that discusses the ECAC's vision of a comprehensive, high quality infant and toddler services system and how this funding opportunity will enhance this system as well as how New York's system of infant/toddler services will ensure the successful implementation of the EHS/CC Partnerships.
- The ECAC provided letters of support for 25 applicants.

For a list of programs applying to the Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership [click here](#).

**ECAC/EICC Joint Task Force on Social-Emotional Development:** There is a written report describing the work of the Joint Task Force. To access the report [click here](#).

## **Discussion of the 2014-2015 New York State Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten Expansion**

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Members discussed ways to publicize, celebrate and support the [new prekindergarten programs](#). Members were reminded that the ECAC has very little money so the acknowledgement and support cannot be costly. As a result of discussion, the following ideas were generated:

- Send letters to top local officials, including state and national representatives, and news editors recognizing the prekindergarten programs and identifying the programs' role in advancing best practice in prekindergarten;
- Develop a sample PSA that can be used by the providers;
- Send letters of acknowledgement to grant recipients;
- Give each new program provider children's books and training materials;
- Utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, #Pre-K Highlights) to recognize the programs;
- Survey the new prekindergarten recipients to determine their need;
- Send information to companies supporting prekindergarten programs and include the new Developmental Appropriate Papers (DAP) materials with outreach letters; and
- Tie the eight new prekindergarten programs and districts in with QUALITYstarsNY.

Use public television website to publicize the prekindergarten programs and make available the State Library's new Ready to Learn resources, and connections to public libraries. Jenn O'Connor agreed to provide assistance by sending the dates for the Cops for Tots events.

In addition to the discussion on how to recognize the prekindergarten providers, there were some concerns in regards to the information that is available to families and providers as it relates to the new prekindergarten programs. For example, the new prekindergarten programs may not be applicable to all families because child care offers longer hours of care when compared to prekindergarten. Moving a child from day care into prekindergarten may be a burden to some families because they need longer care days while at work.

The new initiative has the intent to generate new partnerships and support linkages between the full-range of early childhood education programs, including home visiting programs.

Members raised the fact that often schools do not have the infrastructure or staff training needed to apply for prekindergarten funding. The membership agreed to create a sub-group to develop a tool kit that would provide information to districts and community-based early childhood education programs to prepare them for grant opportunities. The tool kit would include information like: Licensing, hiring teachers, choosing curricula, and how to partner with other organizations. Volunteers for the sub-group included:

Andre Eaton	Liz Hood	Karen McGraw	Melanie Pores
Dana Friedman	Nancy Kolben	Lynnette Pannucci	Monica Short

If there are other ECAC members that would like to join the sub-group please contact Stephanie Woodard at [Stephanie.Woodard@ccf.ny.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Woodard@ccf.ny.gov).

## Moving Our Agenda/Strategic Positioning

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The members discussed ways to move the ECAC agenda forward by:

**Publicizing Our Accomplishments and Work:** The members discussed several methods for publicizing the ECAC and its work.

- Enhance the ECAC website to be more effective by acknowledging our work and track those who are coming to the website. This will allow the ECAC to generate list of users and identify who to target on specific initiatives. Also post on the website indispensable information that is compelling (i.e. Resource of the day);
- Examine ways to engage the legislature regarding the information produced by the ECAC. There was some caution to this idea because the ECAC is a membership organization appointed by the governor, the ECAC needs to be careful about involving legislators. Two recommendations were made:
  - Have non-state representatives engage with the legislature to make them aware of the ECAC initiatives;
  - Give the Governor's Office information to send to the legislature; and
  - Approach the Governor's Office to see if the ECAC can have some involvement with legislators.

Other ideas on how to engage the legislators:

- Use non-aggressive approaches to attract the legislature to read our material;
  - Reach out to legislative caucuses (Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Asian, SOMOS & Women's)
  - Develop issue papers on legislation that affect ECAC priorities;
  - Publicize model community-based early childhood initiatives and provide the information to legislators from that community;
  - Identify best practices and national lessons learned from the National Governor's Association, other BUILD states, and other ECACs and distribute the information to the legislature.
- Identify regional impacts on what is happening in other parts of the state;
  - Connect to other key news stories and broader campaigns;
  - Use social media to distribute information and resources and drive people to the website; and
  - Request that ECAC members include the ECAC website link on their site, link to news blasts.

**Messaging QUALITYstarsNY:** Bob reminded members that the funding, development, and full implementation of QUALITYstarsNY is an ECAC priority. New York's efforts to develop a quality rating and improvement system began when Carol Saginaw pulled together the first meeting back in 2005. Since that time considerable effort has gone into developing the standards and creating the infrastructure, including developing both the WELS and Aspire data systems. To date, OCFS, SED, foundation, and ECAC funding has contributed approximately \$7 million to support the development, pilot testing, and initial implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. Slightly over 100 programs and providers participated on the pilot test and 340 programs are participating in implementation.

Members were provided with a brief update on the status of QUALITYstarsNY funding:

- SED will continue to fund QUALITYstarsNY until the Spring of 2015, but funding is needed in the state budget or QUALITYstarsNY will need to close down in all but a few privately funded communities.
- Bob and Sherry have had several meetings with people in the Governor's Office and they recognize the important role the ECAC can play in convincing the legislature and others of the importance of high quality early childhood education and the important role that QUALITYstarsNY can play in moving

state's system toward quality. Therefore, Bob and Sherry encouraged members to take an active role in getting the message out about QUALITYstarsNY. This includes talking to the state legislators from their communities and it may include convening groups or organizations to help spread the word.

- Bob reminded ECAC members when talking to legislators it is best to indicate that you are representing your organization and then mention that you are a member of the ECAC rather than saying you are representing the ECAC. Bob identified the two new messaging pieces that have been developed for this purpose. To access a copy of the two new messaging pieces go to the [ECAC website](#).
- Bob provided a brief overview regarding his efforts to message QUALITYstarsNY by meeting with CRRs to encourage them to participate by informing their legislator about QUALITYstarsNY. To date, Bob visited CRRs in Chautauqua and Broome counties and has meetings set up with the CRRs in Warren, Washington, and Hamilton counties, the Directors of the CRRs in the Hudson Valley, North Country and Long Island. Meetings with other CRRs across the state will be set up soon.

Since the ECAC membership can help get the messages out, members participated in a discussion led by Dana Friedman and Lynnette Pannucci on messaging. During the discussions the following themes emerged:

- Keep the message clear to what the policy makers are concerned about which may require the ECAC to change the language in which we have been using to describe QUALITYstarsNY;
- The message should be tailored based on the audience. There is a need to understand the “lay of the land.” For example, Upstate and Downstate messages will need to be different. Consequently there is a need to identify three or four messages for different areas of the state;
- Got to “get it right” regarding the message graduation/school success (spending dollars do it right and front load funds into early education)
- Target sub-groups of the legislature (e.g., caucuses);
- Educate legislators about what happens to children prior to prekindergarten and the impact of quality care makes them more successful;
- Determine how to message to parents and provide them with support?

Key points for developing consistent messages were:

- Develop a graphic (before and after QUALITYstarsNY, Ready Nation: The High Costs of Failing to Invest in Children, and the Heckman Equation);
- Early childhood practice for children birth to three is not the same as pre-school. Use “babies and toddlers” not “early childhood” as this has come to be synonymous with pre-k;
- Advocate for strong pre prekindergarten and emphasize that by age four it is too late for some critical brain development;
- Emphasize the need for continuous effort for quality programs for all children to be prepared for pre-kindergarten;
- More needs to be done to educate and support parents;
- 48 other states are investing in quality rating system (QRIS). If New York State does not continue to support QUALITYstarsNY, it will be a serious missed opportunity.

Members provided ideas of how to make messaging QUALITYstarsNY happen, by:

- Reaching out to organization involved in child well-being like:
  - United Way;

- Advocacy Organizations;
- Labor Unions;
- Legislative Caucuses and key leaders;
- Interest groups (parents, women, family); and
- News organizations.
- Developing a distribution plan and strategy;
- Must “tell” and repeat the message often;
- Need individuals to talk to the legislative aids;
- Involve the business community;
- Routine messaging between Winning Beginning and the ECAC;
- Provide some giveaways such as books for students, teachers, and administrators;
- Develop a distribution plan on how to get the message out to the relevant parties such as the Business community; and
- Get the right partners at the table.

Members also provided ideas of who can do the work and how to spread the message:

- Local Press;
- Key legislators; and
- Governor’s Office

Next steps to developing and disseminating the messages included:

1. A strategy group of ECAC members working with Winning Beginning to coordinate routine messaging.
2. Jenn will share messages developed by Winning Beginning re: financial impact and addressing child abuse.
3. Volunteers needed to meet and talk often with legislative aides.
4. Repeat messages often, using multiple venues.

## **Wrap Up**

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As the result of today’s meeting:

- ECAC co-chairs and staff will follow through on the ideas that ECAC members provided on how to acknowledge new Prek programs; building the visibility of the ECAC, and on messaging QUALITYstarsNY;
- Jenn O’Connor will send us the dates of the Cops for Tots events that she will be scheduling to publicize the new Prek programs and the importance of quality; and
- Add numbers of children and programs to the information piece that was developed to explain QUALITYstarsNY funding.

**The next meeting is scheduled for December 11<sup>th</sup> at the Empire State Plaza, Albany NY - Meeting Room 5 from 10:30 am – 3:30 pm**