

New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council

Initiatives Update

June 16th, 2011

Contracts: Contracts with the following are signed and approved:

- Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy for additional staff support,
- Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates (APA) to support our cost estimation work, and
- Maggie McGlynn to facilitate ECAC meetings and provide consultation on systems development.

An agreement with NYC Early Childhood Professional Development Institute transferring funds for the development of the Professional Development Registry has also been signed and approved. A second agreement for transferring funds to support QUALITYstarsNY has been completed and is in the approval process.

Request for Proposals (RFP): The RFP for the development of a communication plan was approved and released last week. Proposals are due July 13th and it is anticipated that a contract can be established and work can begin in mid September. In the meantime, an ECAC Progress Report is being developed by ECAC co-chairs and staff that will promote the work of the ECAC and be disseminated broadly throughout the state.

A second RFP will be developed soon for a variety of consultants to support work group efforts including developing financing strategies and implementing a social-emotional development resource and training initiative.

Home Visiting: On June 8th, the Department of Health submitted its application for federal funds made available through the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program. This application is for a formula grant award of \$4.1 that will be used for state level activities and for continuation of an evidenced –based home visiting program that was previously funded directly by the federal government. In addition, approximately \$2.7 million will be available for a competitive grant program that will support expansion of Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families New York programs in 11 high need communities. The communities were identified through a rigorous process to identify communities in the state that are most in need of home visiting services. Recently, the federal government announced that an additional \$99 million will be made available through a competitive process for expansion grants. The Department of Health has already begun preparing to apply for these funds, which will allow us to fund programs in additional communities and potentially include other program models.

BUILD Meetings and Support: The proposal for BUILD funding has been approved. The budget request asked for support of several ECAC projects including: a consultant to assist in the development of the Request for Information; meeting costs for the Expanding Opportunities for Inclusion initiative; a full day meeting of the Data Development Work Group; meals and other supports for ECAC meetings; meeting expenses and consultant services for a shared services project; activities designed to link communities to the work of the ECAC; and ECAC work group meeting facilitation.

Work Group Reports

Data Development Work Group

The Data Development Work Group is working to determine data needed for a cross early learning program longitudinal data system that helps state and local agencies and others identify trends in early learning programs, answer policy questions, and plan for program development. Plans are to extend this effort to other early childhood service systems and to link data systems to the P-20 student tracking system being developed by the State Education Department.

Much work has been done determining which New York State and New York City data systems have the data elements we are looking for to answer the program and policy questions the Work Group created in February 2011. Meetings were held between some members of the sub group with representatives of the following data systems:

- Child Care Facilities System (CCFS)—Office of Children and Family Services
- Child Care Time and Attendance (CCTA)— Office of Children and Family Services
- Child Care Activity Tracking System (CCATS)—New York City Department of Health
- WELS/QualityStarsNY—New York City Early Childhood Professional Development Institute
- Workforce Registry—New York State Early Childhood Professional Development Institute
- NACCRRAware—Early Care and Learning Council
- Automated Child Care Information System (ACCIS) and New York City Head Start—New York City Administration for Children’s Services
- Early Intervention (EI)—New York State Department of Health
- Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)—New York State Education Department
- Preschool Special Education (PSE)—New York State Education Department

These meetings were used to determine which identified data elements each data system captured.

Based on these meetings, the list of data elements, with a notation about which data system has that element, has been finalized and an analysis report of this information has been developed.

Six-month Work Plan

- Revisit the program and policy questions in light of the gaps in data

- Reprioritize what is important (in light of potential cost, effort and time) to further collect the data elements *in the short-term*
- Develop a map of how these systems would talk to each other and the data warehouse and where the data would come from
- Investigate the legal ramifications of such a project
- Investigate what type of infrastructure is needed for the system
 - Where it could be hosted
 - How much it will cost (initially and long-term)

Finance Work Group

The Finance Work Group continues to work with the firm of Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. (APA) to develop the New York State Early Childhood Cost Model System. The system will be defined by domains (Early Learning, Strong Families, Healthy Children, and Coordinated and Responsive Systems) which are consistent with the ECAC focus areas, and cost elements supported by program and service funding/data information. The cost model will provide information and analysis for determining alternative financing strategies for early childhood services; allow for maximizing existing resources to support the goals of a coordinated and comprehensive service system; and identify barriers associated with early childhood services.

Since receiving the recommended changes to the cost model matrix from the Finance Work Group members and members of the other work groups, ECAC staff has met with state staff to identify funding source and related population; and conducted regular monthly conference calls with the Finance Work Group Co-Chairs. On May 25th, there was a conference call with the Finance Work Group Co-Chairs, ECAC staff and APA representatives to walk through the information and data included in the Early Learning Domain and to plan the next steps for exchanging information on the cost model matrix. APA representatives are in the process of analyzing the data to put the information into a format that is conducive to developing the cost model system.

Six-month Work Plan

- Continue data/funding collection process by working closely with the Data Development Work Group, and NYS budget staff
- APA representatives will begin analyzing and preparing the data and funding information in a format that is conducive to the development of the cost model system
- Begin the development of web-based cost model
- Discuss the reports that will be produced by the cost model system
- Make an in person visits to Albany in early July
- Schedule an in person meeting in New York City for data collection

- Finish data/funding collection process and review the results with APA
- Final adjustments to model
- Present final version of model
- APA will deliver final report and user guide
- APA will provide technical support
- Schedule an In person meeting with APA and Finance Work Group members to begin the system design
- Develop New York City model and incorporate it into main model
- APA's presentation of the "beta" version of cost model to the Finance Work Group

Promoting Healthy Development Work Group

The purpose of the Promoting Healthy Development Work Group is to build the capacity of professionals working with young children to identify and address the social emotional development needs of young children and their families; strengthen and expand health and safety in early care and education settings, and promote healthy behaviors. To achieve these objectives they have focused on the following:

Social emotional development – The Work Group developed and continued to circulate the workforce survey designed to gather information about how professionals working with young children receive training around a host of child health and development issues and what modalities for training they would prefer. During this reporting period there have been over 200 responses from a variety of providers. The Work Group has been compiling the responses to inform their proposed plan to hire a consultant who will use the information to identify and infuse training modules on social-emotional development and other topics into existing professional development systems.

The Work Group has been monitoring the development of Project LAUNCH in Westchester and New York City in order to encourage, support and publicize these efforts to integrate mental health into primary care. They have also been monitoring the Social-Emotional Development Consultation Demonstration Project. Findings are being synthesized and the Work Group will integrate those findings into their ongoing work to support mental health.

Health and safety in early care and education settings - Work Group members have been participating with the American Academy of Pediatrics to integrate best practices in health into early education and care settings. Members of the Work Group have been learning more about the QUALITYstarsNY initiative with the Quality Improvement Work Group in order to inform the efforts to revise standards around social-emotional development, nutrition and physical activity.

Promoting healthy behaviors - The Obesity Prevention sub-group continued to work on efforts to promote healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding support in child care settings in New York State. The work of this team, including its relationship with the ECAC, was recently highlighted in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity's website page devoted to innovative state practices in childcare settings: http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/obesity_program_highlights.pdf .

Six-month Work Plan

- Collaborating with the NYS Department of Health Division of Nutrition on obesity prevention in early childhood. The Department of Health is working with the CDC on a project to reduce obesity in young children so the two groups merged to develop a common agenda and work plan moving forward. Initial initiatives will focus on reducing screen time, eliminating sugar sweetened beverages and increasing breast feeding.
- Moving forward with the development of a web-based tool to deliver information on social – emotional development to providers, parents and professionals working with young children. More work is needed to determine the final direction of the website, but the initial project will gather information and look for gaps in information already available.
- Working with ongoing efforts to see what synergy can be developed with ECAC activities. In addition to the CDC obesity initiative, the group is reaching out to Project Launch for similar discussions. There is also work planned to begin discussions on incorporating work into Quality Stars.

Quality Improvement Work Group

The Quality Improvement Work Group revised its work plan, organizing tasks into the five key elements of a quality rating and improvement system (Standards, Data, Professional Development, Finance and Communication) and an over-arching category of System Building.

On May 24, a statewide videoconference was held in over 30 downlink locations around New York. Approximately 650 people pre-registered for the event, which was targeted to reach licensors, registrars, UPK administrators and others working to support early care and learning programs. Janice Molnar and Anne Mitchell, co-chairs of the Quality Improvement Work Group were joined by Meg McNiff, coordinator of the new State Education Department Office of Early Learning, as panelists. In addition to receiving information about the recently-completed field test evaluation, individuals in the widespread and diverse audience had the opportunity to ask questions about the future of QUALITYstarsNY.

Six-month Work Plan:

Continue implementation of QUALITYstarsNY in the field test communities. Quality Improvement Specialists are coordinating activities at the field test sites to operationalize the Quality Improvement Plans.

- ★ Resume periodic publication of QUALITYstarsNY electronic newsletter and explore additional ways to maintain interest in the program.
- ★ Develop a system that utilizes QUALITY Scholars program to support professional development opportunities that prepare the field for the statewide implementation of QUALITYstarsNY.
- ★ Revise Center-based and Family-based standards, incorporating the field test evaluation results, and issues not sufficiently addressed in the first draft (children with special needs, cultural competence, and nutrition and/or obesity prevention).
- ★ Begin the process of partnering with relevant organizations and providers to create a set of quality standards for School-age Child Care and other after school programs.
- ★ Continue efforts to link New York's implementation of the early learning priority Race to the Top to ECAC workforce development projects and activities and implementation of QUALITYstarsNY.
- ★ Create new categories of professionals and specialists using the Registry and the Early Learning Trainer Credential.
- ★ Identify, adapt or develop replicable professional development activities that will help professionals in early care and education programs 'get ready' for QUALITYstarsNY.
- ★ Develop tools and resources that partners and others can use to promote QUALITYstarsNY
- ★ Explore the mechanism of a Request for Information as a means to determine the criteria for a subsequent Request for Proposal. This process will provide for transparency as we move toward a governance structure for QUALITYstarsNY.

Strong Families Work Group

The purpose of the Strong Families Work Group is to incorporate the principles of strengthening families, promoting resiliency, and enhancing protective factors into a framework for all health, education, and human services. That framework informs the efforts of the Work Group to ensure that appropriate services and supports are provided to families. Those services/supports include parent education, screening and assessment of children and families, and voluntary home visiting for all expectant and new families.

Major activities for the past three months included assisting the NYS Parenting Education Partnership on the development of a New Parent Kit by informing the content. The Work Group has also begun the development of a universal screening initiative beginning with developmental screening. A sub group has been established and met with the Medicaid Director and members of the Medicaid Redesign team to secure support for the initiative and develop plans for implementation. The Work group also has

been serving in an advisory capacity to the NYS Home Visiting Work Group, which is currently preparing an application for federal funding.

Six-month Work Plan

- Continue assisting NYSPEP in social marketing of parenting education standards and in promoting certification with other professions.
- Work with the Quality Improvement Work Group to advance an outreach strategy around QUALITYstarsNY.
- Collaborate with NYSPEP by providing input into prototype New Parent Kit, examine possible funding opportunities and options, and dissemination plans.
- Continue with plans for universal screening initiative, including designing a developmental screening system, working with Medicaid Redesign Team.
- Determine next steps in supporting a sustainable system of home visiting for the state.

Workforce Development Work Group

The ECAC Workforce Development Work Group is organized to advance the components of an “Early Learning Professional Development System” and respond to related issues such as coordination of pre-service education in early childhood (i.e., articulation agreements among institutions of higher education), recruitment, staff retention, continuing education and compensation.

Work Group members are working to create and implement a competency-based professional development system through a variety of related activities. Following an evaluation of the status of current efforts in the field, three subcommittees were organized to focus on the following areas:

- Revise the Core Body of Knowledge;
- Develop a Career Lattice and Registry; and
- Study the issues of transition between two and four year colleges.

Progress continues in updating the Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) into a clearer format; competencies are described in easy to understand language with corresponding examples of expectations in behavior. A consultant has been retained to lead the development of the statewide career development system. Organizational meetings have been held on the development of the Registry. The Work Group has also taken responsibility for the final stages of developing the Early Learning Guidelines (ELG), a project intended to provide educators, policy makers and parents, with a set of expectations about what infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers should know and be able to do during specified developmental stages. Members of the Two and Four Year Transitions Study Groups convened during the NYS AEYC

conference in April 2011, to address issues faced by early childhood students advancing from community to four year college programs.

Six-month Work Plan

- A goal for the next six months will be to finalize sections of the Core Body of Knowledge and share with the wider early care and learning community through regional meetings conducted by local representatives of the Work Group. The CBK will be aligned with the Early Learning Guidelines.
- Continue steps in the development of a Professional Registry including:
 - Costing out the development of the Registry (process has begun);
 - Finalize a process to approve professional development opportunities and trainers;
 - Begin to develop a search feature to assist professionals in accessing approved professional development.
- Two and Four Year Transitions Study Groups will continue work to address issues faced by early childhood students advancing from community to four year college programs such as identify exemplary models of practice as well as challenges within the system of higher education that prevent students from completing their educational goals.
- By the end of the summer 2011, an ELG teacher guidebook will be developed in conjunction with expert early childhood teachers and available for comment as a final draft.