

New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council
Membership Meeting
June 16th, 2011
Minutes

In Attendance

Sherry Cleary (co-chair)	Linda Landsman	<u>ECAC Staff:</u>
Bob Frawley (co-chair)	James Langford	Liz Belsito
Evelyn Blanck	Patti Lieberman	Regina Canuso
Pedro Cordero	Karen McGraw	Barbara Hogan
Suzanne Corey (for Sandy Rybaltowski)	Meg McNiff	Renee Nasadoski
Nancy Cupolo	Mary McHugh	Jenn O'Connor
Rachel de Long	Kelly Medora (for Sophia Pappas)	Susan Perkins
Chris Deyss	Anne Mitchell	Patty Persell
Andre Eaton	Janice Molnar	Bridget Walsh
Maggie Evans	Donna Noyes	Stephanie Woodard
Dana Friedman	Jackie Orr (for Denise Harlow)	
Liz Hood	Melanie Pores (for Phil Cleary)	<u>OEL Staff</u>
Mark Jasinski	Rose Rodriguez (for Elba Montalvo)	DeSylvia Dwyer
Ira Katzenstein	Carol Saginaw	Colleen Ferrone
Kristen Kerr	Maryanne Schretzman	Leigh Mountain
Karen Kissinger	Mary Shaheen	Lynette Pannucci
Nancy Kolben	Mary Sontheimer (for Jim McGuirk)	Amy Rudat
Lee Kreader	Meredith Wiley	Rebecca Valenchis
		<u>Additional Guests</u>
		Marsha Basloe
		Arielle Bernstein
		Kate Breslin
		Lori King Kocsis
		Jessica Klos

Welcome and Introductions

ECAC co-chairs Bob Frawley and Sherry Cleary welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Maggie McGlynn, Facilitator. Maggie gave special recognition to those who were attending their first ECAC membership meeting, either as a guest or representing a member who could not attend. She then asked all participants to introduce themselves and provide three words to describe a positive memory from their childhood as an "ice-breaker" for the group.

Innovative Strategies

Leigh Mountain of the Office of Early Learning (OEL), State Education Department (SED), did a presentation and led a discussion on Screening and Assessment for Pre-school and Kindergarten.

Leigh reported that the Office of Early Learning has merged with the Early Education and Reading Initiatives and is now a combined Office of Early Learning. The office will provide guidance to the field on early childhood assessments.

The Office has developed and disseminated surveys about early childhood assessments on Survey Monkey for different groups – teachers, administrators and higher education. The surveys will be open until June 30 and they are getting a good response.

Responses are mostly from general education teachers, with some from special education, and the smallest percentage from prekindergarten. Most have over 10 years experience and most are from public schools. Over half of administrators who responded are principals or assistant principals.

Preliminary findings are that teachers are encountering time constraints in using data to inform instruction; most information is still written data from previous level and not all teachers have data for every child. Preparation helps teachers use the data and most teachers want professional development on data use. There are also many SED resources that are not being utilized.

Administrators also report time constraints in using data and most data is still written, although there is an interest in using electronic data. Administrators also want professional development on using data and want quality data. There is still an emphasis on using data but not analysis of the data.

OEL is working to determine what data elements should be collected and the characteristics of an ideal assessment process. They hope to develop more alignment and further consensus on data.

After the presentation, the ECAC conducted table exercises with SED staff at each table to facilitate the discussion. The first discussion was on Pre-School Assessments and the second was on Kindergarten assessments. While a summary of discussions will be captured by SED, some of the many suggestions reported out include:

- Prenatal information should be added to the form.
- Policies for administering assessments should be standardized.
- Better definitions are needed of what is being collected, when it should be collected and by whom in the system.
- Assessments must be culturally responsive and meet cultural expectations.
- Assessment must have a clearly defined purpose, be conducted at predictable intervals using the same instrument.
- There must be parent and family engagement.
- Parents must be oriented to the schools systems/environment.
- Assessments should capture parental expectations from school.
- Assessments should follow the recommendations of the National Academy of Science.
- There should be screening of the family environment.
- Data must be shared seamlessly between age levels and systems.
- There must be a move to electronic data.
- Kindergarten assessments should not redo what was done during the PreK assessment.

SED asked ECAC members to email any thoughts they had after the meeting and offered to distribute by email the questions for further consideration.

Parent Engagement and Involvement in the ECAC

Mary McHugh, Evelyn Blanck and Marsha Basloe led a discussion on possibilities for the involvement of parents on the ECAC.

Experience of ECAC Member Organizations:

Several members discussed ways that parents are involved in their agencies and lessons learned.

- Office of Mental Health (OMH) – History of parent involvement has evolved from marginal to central – Parents are involved in critical areas of decision-making regarding their children and as community partners. Centralized structure of parent involvement in OMH includes 10 full time parent liaisons (2 in every OMH region). It is OMH policy to consult parent liaison when developing programs and policies (i.e. OMH wrote guidance on how to involve parents of children in residential care).
- Department of Health (Early Intervention) - Long history of involving parents, especially regarding their own children. Structure of parent involvement is now throughout community, and state bodies. Federal law requires 20% of coordinating council membership must be parents.
- Department of Health (Lead Bureau, Maternal Child Health Department) – Had a grant to train parents with the goal of developing a cadre of parents of children with special health care needs to join in the initiative. This group still functions and one parent now sits on the National Advisory Council. The department had a parenting mentor on staff, who is no longer there, but had training in parent empowerment and knew how to work with parents. Lessons learned include that parents did not want to be vetted in order to be on a group, and there should be more than one parent who is participating.

Discussion of Possibilities for Parent Involvement

- Benefit of Advisory Group: avoids the vetting process, provides parents who are already leaders in organizations/agencies in the ECAC to be recognized as leaders.
- Counterpoint to an Advisory Group: parents should participate in authentic work ; should be directly on the ECAC and not be an advisory to the advisory group.
- Parents should be paid a stipend as well as meals, childcare, transportation.
- Need to create an orientation process
- Ways for Parents to contribute directly to the ECAC:
 - have representatives elected from their advisory group (co-chairs of the parent advisory) sit on the ECAC (the co-chairs will go through the vetting process or be “ex-officio” members)
 - have the advisory group be at all ECAC meetings
 - have parents participate in Work Groups in which they have expertise- many work groups already have non-ECAC members, and Work Group members do not have to be vetted.
- Be sensitive to parents’ time and travel constraints, especially those with young children – utilize social media, such as Facebook, also utilize webcam possibilities so parents do not need to travel.
- Length of service should be limited to 1-2 years.

- Pregnant women and parents of young children should serve, as they have a fresh and real-time perspective on issues affecting young families.
- Map the organizations in the ECAC that have parent involvement and tap into them to elicit parent input into the ECAC.
- Parent voice should be at all levels of the ECAC, including Steering Committee.
- Feedback loop should be two ways - go to structures that have parents to bring the ECAC to them and to develop interest in the projects of the ECAC and then recruit parents to the ECAC.

Next Step

- The Ad Hoc Group will do a quick survey of ECAC members to determine the ways in which parent involvement occur and to inform the application process.

Partner Updates

Winning Beginning NY (Jenn O'Connor):

- Recently submitted a proposal for a second year of funding related to promoting the implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. The first year focused on educating policy-makers, providers and the public. The video "What is QUALITYstarsNY?" was disseminated widely electronically and delivered in person by some of the children who were 'stars' of the video to key legislators and the Governor's office.
- WBNY will be re-releasing the Pre-K Report as part of a Back-to-School initiative to renew attention to the issue.
- Provided input to the ECAC regarding priorities for the Early Learning Challenge Grant proposal (QUALITYstarsNY and home visiting)
- Coalition call will be held on June 27 to discuss priorities in greater detail; planning a full coalition retreat for September.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (Meredith Wiley):

- New report recently published – "Quality Matters, High Quality Early Care and Education Can Cut Crime in New York," (<http://www.fightcrime.org/state/2011/reports/quality-matters-high-quality-early-care-and-education-can-cut-crime-new-york>) highlights research in all early learning settings. The report was sent to all legislators last week.

Division of Child Care Services – Office of Children and Family Services (Janice Molnar):

- Child Care and Development fund Public Hearings were conducted recently. The federal government has extended the due date for the CCDF State Plan to August 1, 2011 and added several topics to be addressed in the application (how quality funds are distributed, continuity of care, access, developmental screening, etc. The intention is to have the CCDF plan more consistent with the Early Learning Challenge Grant.)
- As a result of the public hearings, OCFS has added two biennial goals to the child care subsidy section of the CCDF state plan – an in-depth review of the subsidy regulations, and a reference to prioritizing children with special needs for child care subsidy.

Early Learning Challenge Grant Discussion

Bob Frawley and Sherry Cleary led a discussion about how New York State can prepare for the application process once the Early Learning Challenge grant request for proposals is released by federal agencies. It is expected that federal agencies will release the Request for Proposals at the end of the summer with funds distributed by the end of the calendar year.

The discussion focused on identifying what initiatives and activities of the ECAC's and its partners' should be identified as components to include in the proposal as present strengths within New York's early childhood system and what opportunities for improvements and expansion the grant funds could support as well as identifying processes for developing a strong application. Both the components and processes identified by members are listed below

Before beginning the discussion, Bob described the steps that have been taken since the announcement of the Early Learning Challenge Grant including a meeting between with the Governor's office, who offered support for New York State applying for the grant, and collaborative meetings between ECAC staff and the Office of Early Learning staff. Sherry also announced that BUILD has chosen New York as a state that is likely to receive funds through the Challenge Grant and therefore will be offering technical assistance throughout the application process.

Components that highlight strengths:

- Developmental Screening Initiative and efforts to link social-emotional screening
- NYS Parenting Education Partnership and New Parent Kit Initiative
- Longitudinal data system
- Early childhood systems cost model
- QUALITYstarsNY
- Alignment of prekindergarten Common Core standards
- Size/scope of Early Intervention services (New York has the largest Early Intervention program in the country)
- Professional Development
- Coordination of system of informal education through libraries and and public television

Components that highlight opportunities:

- Improving access for early learning services for immigrant families
- Use needs assessment completed for the NYS Department of Health Home Visiting applications to outline strategies for targeting at risk children and families
- Increase alignment of curriculum and parent engagement practices for grade prekindergarten through third grade.

Strategies for Application Process:

- Look for exemplary programs/systems within the state to replicate or expand
- Identify procedures for the ECAC to officially endorse the application
- Build off of work started when Early Learning Challenge Initiative was first announced
- Have background pieces in place so we are ready when the RFP is announced

- Consider use of Project Management Office of the State Education Department for technical assistance
- Identify and recruit key stakeholders including: public library system, local and county membership associations, New York Public Welfare Association, SED Office of Professions, Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies, homeless service and advocacy organizations, labor unions.
- Provide key stakeholders and allies with preparation materials
- Identify private funding sources to offer leverage to federal funds

Wrap-Up

Sherry Cleary and Bob Frawley closed the meeting and reminded attendees that the next ECAC meeting will be held on Monday, September 19th, 2011.