Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

March 23, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.
Location: Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090

Agenda

12:00-12:10	**Welcome /Meeting Overview**	Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant
12:10-12:15	**Introduction of David Hansell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services**	Sandra Powell/ David Hansell
12:15-12:25	**Public Comment (Topic: Access)**	Public Participants
12:25-1:25	**Report from Access Team**	Elizabeth Burke Bryant and Larry Pucciarelli, Access Co-Team Leaders
1:25-1:35	**Kindergarten Assessment Recommendations**	Michele Palermo
1:35-1:55	**Updates**	Leslie Gell/ Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant
1:55-2:00	**Next Steps**	Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant

Development and Coordination of Work Teams to Support the Early Learning Council Work

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

Early Learning Council Work Group

Work Teams

Work Teams

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Work Teams
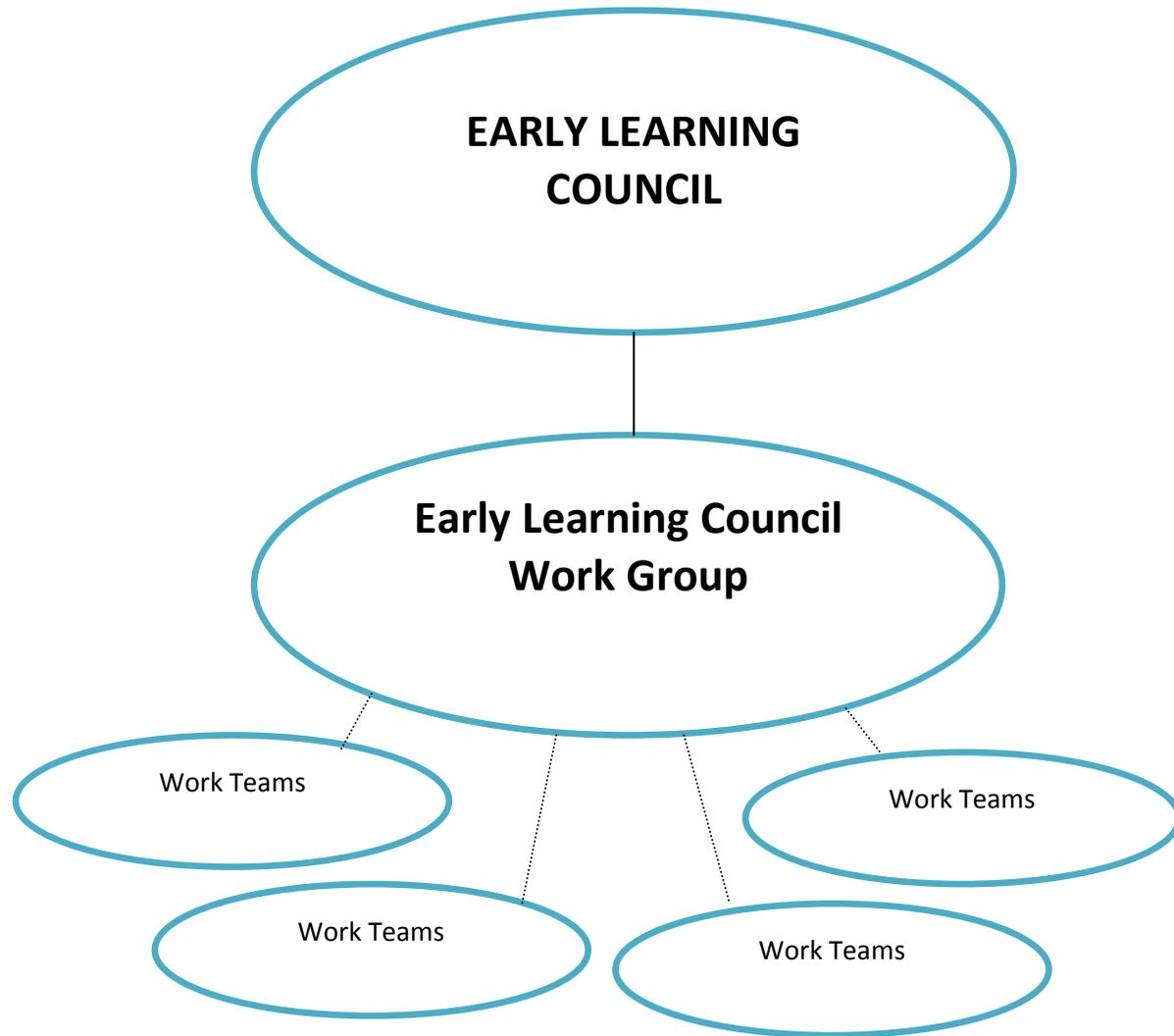
Key Features

- Work gets done in smaller teams (either already existing groups or new groups) that align with the scope of work of the Council.
- The teams include the right mix of content experts and state agency managers and engage other expertise as needed.
- Frequency of meetings and the duration of the team is based on need.
- All ELC Work Group members are engaged in at least one work team.
- The ELC Working Group meets once before each Early Learning Council Meeting Team (4x/year); team leaders share progress and invite feedback from the Working Group.
- Team leaders are engaged to provide updates and recommendations to the Council as needed.

Focus Area	Early Learning Council Work Team	ELC Scope of Work	Team Leader(s)	Team Members
ACCESS	Access Team	❖ Work to expand access for more children (particularly from low income and vulnerable families) to participate in high-quality early learning programs, including high-quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, Pre-K, Full Day Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education programs (including Early Intervention and preschool special education). ❖ Conduct periodic needs assessments on the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs (access, quality and workforce). ❖ Identify opportunities and barriers for collaboration and cooperation. ❖ Develop recommendations on increasing participation in high-quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, Pre-K, Full Day Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education programs (including Early Intervention and preschool special education).	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Larry Pucciarelli	Khadija Lewis Khan (Beautiful Beginnings) Leslie Gell (R2LP) Ann Turrell and Michele Palermo (RIDE) Karen Beese (DHS) Chris Amirault (RIAEYC) Cindy Larson (LISC) MaryAnn Finamore (Westbay Children's Center) Pam High (Hasbro Children's Hospital) Colleen Dorian (Family Childcare Homes of Rhode Island) Katheryn Tavares (United Way of Rhode Island) Karen Ennis (Connecting for Children and Families) Lee-Ann Beaupre (EI Directors' Association) Lynda Dickinson and Aimee Mitchell (RI Head Start Association), Kathy Keenan (Warwick Public Schools) Rachel Flum (The Poverty Institute) Kim Maine (Sunshine Child Development Center)
INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	Incentives and Supports for Quality Improvement Team	❖ Continue expansion of participation in BrightStars, Rhode Island's evidence-based quality rating and improvement system. Ensure that administrative/program costs to operate and sustain BrightStars continues to be supported through a public-private funding partnership and that participation in BrightStars is encouraged, rewarded, and recognized by all parts of the early learning system. ❖ Develop effective supports and strategies to help programs achieve high-quality standards by providing financial incentives for participation in BrightStars and for program quality improvements tied to improving a BrightsStars rating and/or achieving RIDE Approval. ❖ Ensure there are adequate resources and supports for high-quality facilities,	Leanne Barrett Tammy Camillo Karen Beese	Chris Amirault (RIAEYC) Cindy Larson (LISC) Mary Ann Finamore (Westbay Children's Center) Khadija Lewis Khan (Beautiful Beginnings) Michele Palermo (RIDE) Katheryn Tavares (United Way of Rhode Island) Kim Maine (Sunshine Child Development Center) Tania Quezada (Ready to Learn Providence),

		equipment and materials, and a qualified and stable workforce across all types of early learning programs, from birth to third grade. ❖ Review tiered reimbursement systems, quality bonuses, and financial incentives developed by 29 other states to support program quality improvement and develop recommendations for implementing in Rhode Island.		
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM	Professional Development Planning Committee for Resource Center	❖ Develop an adequately-funded, evidence-based system of professional development to prepare an effective and well-qualified workforce of early educators with appropriate levels of training, education, and credentials. ❖ Develop high-quality professional development opportunities and technical assistance that support program quality using the Environment Rating Scales, CLASS, and other research-based tools. ❖ Support implementation of effective professional development with college credit and on-site technical assistance, including the RI Early Learning Standards and other local and national models. ❖ The workforce includes staff of child care centers, preschools, Head Start programs, public Pre-K, early childhood special education programs, family child care, and school-age programs.	Tammy Camillo Karen Beese	Brenda Almeida (DCYF) Leanne Barrett (RI Kids Count & ELC Coordinator) Blythe Berger (Health) Colleen Dorian (Family Child Care Homes RI) Brenda Duhamel (DHS Early Intervention) Leslie Gell (R2LP) Jerry Hatfield (CCRI) Mindy Mertz (Providence School Dept) Michele Palermo (RIDE) Larry Pucciarelli (Head Start Collaboration) Sue Washburn (EDC/RITTA Center) Joseph Morra (RIASPA)
HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	TEACH Advisory Group	❖ Establish and implement the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood workforce scholarship model and secure public and private funding for scholarships. ❖ Expand access to higher education and ensure institutions have the capacity to effectively support the development of early childhood educators. ❖ Map the capacity of institutes of higher education in the development of early educators and assess effectiveness in meeting needs of the early childhood workforce.	Leslie Gell	Leanne Barrett (RIKC) Karen Beese (DHS) Blythe Berger (Health) Tammy Camillo (BrightStars) Jerry Hatfield (CCRI) Khadija Lewis-Kahn (Beautiful Beginnings) Michele Palermo (RIDE) Barbara Schermack (Head Start Directors Association) Sue Warford (URI) Laura Harper (URI) Katheryn Tavares (United Way of Rhode Island) Doreen LePage (Imagine Preschool

				Joseph Morra (RIASPA) Maura Pearce (R2LP) Josefina Recio (Family Child Care provider) Alexander Sidorkin (Rhode Island College),
EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS	RI Early Learning Standards Steering Committee	❖ Support implementation of the *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* in a variety of programs through professional development with college credit and on-site technical assistance and coaching. ❖ Participate in national planning and development of common core Early Learning Standards to include comprehensive learning guidelines across all domains of child development (physical, cognitive, social emotional, language and literacy, and approaches to learning) for children birth to age three and children ages three and four. ❖ Work with the Council of Chief State School Officers to provide input into the common core standards for early learning for preschoolers and infants/toddlers. ❖ Review and consider adopting Infant-Toddler Early Learning Standards developed by another state as an interim strategy to guide the development of high-quality professional development opportunities for infant-toddler educators in Rhode Island.	Michele Palermo Blythe Berger	TBD (the following Council/Work Group members have expressed interest: Christine Arouth, Kristen Greene, Ann Turrell, Mindy Mertz, Karen Beese)
ALIGNMENT OF STANDARDS	Alignment of Standards Team	❖ Update DCYF child care center licensing regulations (last updated in 1993), monitoring procedures, and licensing data system to incorporate best practices from other states. ❖ Conduct a review of all elements of the various standards and identify any inconsistencies. Discuss possible modifications that improve alignment. Share findings with providers and develop educational materials to explain alignment. ❖ Ensure alignment of quality standards and monitoring across program settings, including local Rhode Island systems of child care licensing,	Brenda Almeida Leanne Barrett	TBD (the following Council/Work Group members have expressed interest: Maryann Finamore, Cindy Larson, Karen Beese, Tammy Camillo, Katheryn Tavares, Blythe Berger, and Michele Palermo)

		BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System, the Department of Education preschool approval and the national quality systems of accreditation (NAEYC and NAFCC) and Head Start.		
ECE DATA SYSTEM	NGA Ready States Data Planning Team	❖ Using technical assistance from the National Governors Association's Ready States Initiative, plan a coordinated birth to age 8 data infrastructure to collect essential information so we can track young children's participation in early learning programs (including child care, Head Start, special education, and Pre-K) and understand the quality of programs that serve them. This system needs to include information on children, programs and workforce characteristics, begin at birth and be linked to the K-12 data system through a unique student identifier. ❖ Develop and implement recommendations for data system enhancements and linkages.	Leanne Barrett	Leslie Gell (R2LP) Blythe Berger (Health) Larry Pucciarelli (Head Start Collaboration) Brenda DuHamel (DHS) Karen Beese (DHS) Michele Palermo/Ann Turrell (RIDE) Brenda Almeida (DCYF) Tammy Camillo (BrightStars) Christine Arouth (Newport Family and Child Opportunity Zone) Cathie Walsh (RIKC) Katie Murray/Rebecca Lee (R2LP/Providence Plan) Kristine Campagna/Ellen Amore (Health) James Wiley (RIDE) Ron Seifer (Brown University)
KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT	Kindergarten Assessment Work Group	❖ Explore best practices in other states and develop a statewide kindergarten assessment system that builds on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and is used to guide practice and policy and inform kindergarten teachers of children's strengths and areas for growth. ❖ Review kindergarten assessment systems in other states and develop recommendations to RIDE for the development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment system for Rhode Island.	Michele Palermo	Maryann Finamore (Westbay Children's Center) Kristen Greene (Mariposa) Mindy Mertz (PPSD) Ann Turrell (RIDE) Kenny Duva (Woonsocket School Department)

RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL MEETING

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1:35-1:55	Updates
1:55-2:00	Next Steps

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING ACCESS

CHILD CARE

❖ Change policy so that currently enrolled families remain eligible for the program up to an exit income limit of 225% of FPL. Work to restore eligibility to 225% of FPL

❖ Increase child subsidy reimbursement rates to a fair market rate based on the most recent 2009 market rate survey (current rates are based on the 2002/2004 market rate survey).

❖ Request that the Department of Human Services considers the recommendations to reduce barriers to accessing and retaining eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program:

  ❖ Recertify families every 12 months instead of every 6 months

  ❖ Extend the amount of time families can keep child care after a layoff (currently only 21 days)

  ❖ Ensure that DHS provides adequate information to providers about case closures with 2 week payment.

❖ Provide continued child care assistance to children in their pre-kindergarten year who are enrolled in a high-quality early learning program regardless of parent work status changes.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START

❖ Restore state funding to the original 500 Head Start slots (currently 156 slots)

❖ Provide transportation to children enrolled in Head Start (between home and Head Start).

Pre-K

❖ Maintain the funding formula plan to expand the state Pre-K program to provide a high-quality early childhood education program with a mixed delivery system, to 3- and 4- year old children in the critical preschool years.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

◎ Expand general access to high-quality early learning programs for children ages 3 to 5. Many children who do not qualify for early childhood special education, still need access to early education in order to be prepared for kindergarten.

◎ Ensure access to appropriate services to support families with children exhibiting behavioral concerns that may not rise to the level of special education including evidence-based parenting education programs.

◎ Increase the proportion of children under age 3 who are involved with DCYF who receive EI services. Consider expanding eligibility for Early Intervention to all children birth-3 with a substantiated case of abuse or neglect (categorically). Simplify consent for treatment process.

◎ Improve transition for children as they move across early intervention, early childhood special education and school age (K-3) education systems.

◎ Provide access for children with special needs, but who are not Medicaid eligible, to home based services, respite, care management, etc. (particularly related to children with Autism)

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

❖ Encourage access to full day kindergarten by maintaining differential reimbursement within the funding formula (e.g. half day funding for half day programming).

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF LOSS OF ARRA FUNDING

- ❖ **Child Care ARRA Funding**: $5.2 million with $4.5 million for subsidies and $682,000 for quality improvement initiatives (BrightStars grants, Child Care Support Network infant/toddler training, RIDE Core Competencies). State has re-allocated federal and state funding for child care subsidies to maintain access for children after ARRA. Potential loss of funding for targeted quality initiatives.

- ❖ **Head Start ARRA Funding**: $1.9 million for 18 Head Start slots and 152 Early Head Start slots. Potential loss of access for 170 lowest income children.

- ❖ **Early Intervention (Part C IDEA) ARRA Funding**: $2.4 million used by EI providers for professional development, staff recruitment and retention, enhanced resources, upgraded technology and/or educational supplies. Loss of resources to support quality.

- ❖ **Preschool Special Education (Part B, Section 619 IDEA) ARRA Funding**: $1.7 million used by LEAS for professional development and improvements to assessment systems designed to improve instruction. Loss of resources to support quality.

- ❖ **Title I ARRA Funding:** $300,000 was used to support Pre-K classrooms in Providence (2 classrooms).

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: DEVELOPMENT

❖ Early Learning Council role: Facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care (for birth – 8) designed to improve school readiness.

❖ Early Learning Council Workgroup reviewed national and current state practices regarding kindergarten assessment and the multiple purposes for a kindergarten assessment (Oct. and Nov.).

❖ Small work team meet in December to draft recommendations for the Work Group to consider

❖ Work Group reviewed draft recommendations at January meeting

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

❖ **Purpose**

   ❖ Prioritize the development of a kindergarten assessment which can be used for the purpose of guiding instruction and can also be used to describe the entry status of children at the population level (state and community).

❖ **Process**

   ❖ Identify a core team which will complete the following tasks:

      ◉ Review of current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered

      ◉ Develop methods for gathering RI stakeholder information based on identified key issues

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

❖ **Process cont.**

   ❖ Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups

      ◉ Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff – administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; community-based early childhood staff

      ◉ Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as, the current state of kindergarten assessment

   ❖ Analyze the information collected and develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment, and the communication of kindergarten assessment information.

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

❖ **Implementation**

  ❖ Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for RI population

  ❖ Assessment tools should be aligned with standards

  ❖ Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan

  ❖ Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in PreK and in 1st and 2nd grade

  ❖ Assessment tools should address all domains of learning and development

  ❖ Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g. professional development, cost, time

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

❖ **Implementation cont.**

  ❖ Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g. preschool teachers, family)

  ❖ Potential barriers should be considered (e.g. cost, time to implement)

  ❖ The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).

UPDATES

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- TEACH

- Striving Readers

- Home Visiting State Plan

Next Steps

◎ Next ELC Meeting: Wednesday, June 29, 2011 12:00-2:00 pm, Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090