Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 28, 2016
Save the Bay

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item:	Lead
10:00-10:20	**Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview** • Update on Governor's announcement of 3rd grade reading goals; RTT-ELC transition (Ken) • RI Family Home Visiting Act; new Issue Brief on Financing Early Education & Care (Elizabeth)	Ken Wagner Elizabeth Burke Bryant
10:20 - 11:00	**Policy & Program Updates** • State Pre-K Expansion (Phyllis) • Kindergarten Conference (Phyllis) • Update on BrightStars Ratings (Lisa) • Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (Aimee) • Council website re-design/Data Dashboard (Leanne)	
11:00 – 11:30	**Overview of Early Learning Challenge State QRIS Evaluation Studies and Pre-K Evaluation Plans**	Kelly Maxwell Child Trends
11:30-11:45	**Children's Cabinet** • Update on activities • Plan for Work Groups	Dacia Read
11:45-11:55	**Public Comment**	Public Participants
11:55-12:00	**Next Steps** **Next Early Learning Council Meeting** December 14, 10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Save the Bay	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Ken Wagner

RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

September 28, 2016
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Save the Bay

EARLY LEARNING RI

Meeting Agenda

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview
- Governor's 3rd Grade Reading Goals
- RTT – ELC Transition
- Family Home Visiting Act
- Rhode Island KIDS COUNT ECE Financing Issue Brief & Policy Roundtable
- 2016 federal guidance on State Advisory Councils

State Policy & Program Updates
- State Pre-K Expansion
- Kindergarten Conference
- BrightStars Ratings
- Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership
- Early Learning Council website

BrightStars Evaluation Preview & Pre-K Evaluation Plans

RI Children's Cabinet

Public Comment

Next Steps

Governor's 3rd Grade Reading Goals

- Difference between a dream and a goal is a deadline.
- Rhode Island will double the percentage of third graders who can read on grade level by 2025.
- 37% → 75%
- Children born in 2016 will be in third grade in 2024-2025
- Building on existing programs and systems

RI Family Home Visiting Act
Heritage Park YMCA Tour/RI Kids Count Policy Roundtable

2016 Federal Guidance on State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care

- Perform periodic needs assessments
- Expand quality early learning opportunities
- Create unified data systems
- Encourage comprehensive developmental and behavioral screenings, effective linkage to services and follow up
- Improve knowledge, skills, and abilities of early childhood teachers, administrators and staff
- Create or strengthen a focus on early childhood inclusion
- Develop policies to support young children who are Dual Language Learners
- Expand quality early learning opportunities for children experiencing homelessness
- Ensure smooth transitions for children and families between early childhood programs and between early childhood and public school settings.

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State Policy & Program Updates

State Pre-K Expansion

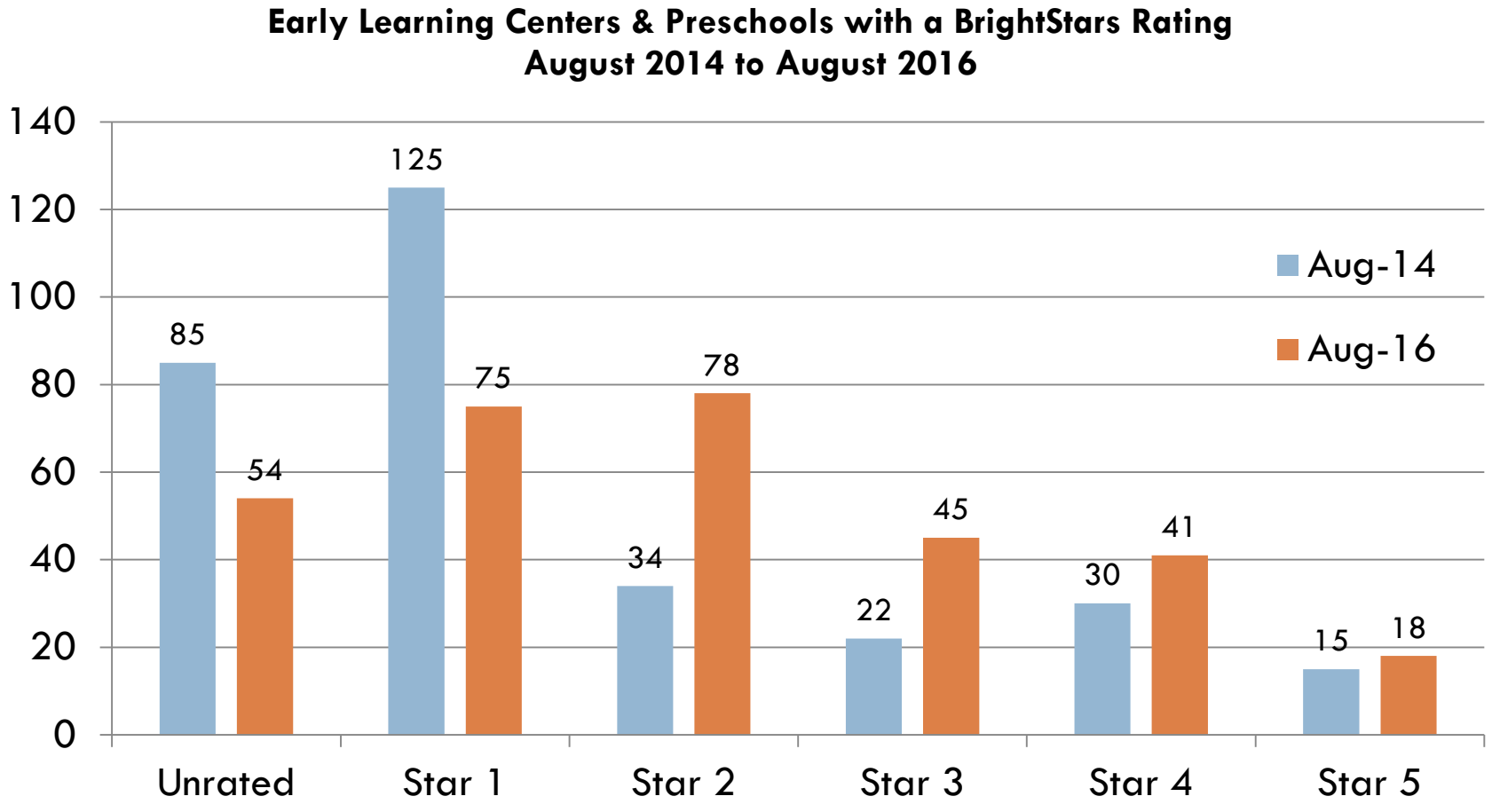
- 12 sites added for 2016-17
- Communities include: Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Pawtucket, Warwick, West Warwick, Woonsocket
- 56 pre-kindergarten classrooms
- Serving 1,008 children

Kindergarten Conference

- 107 attendees
  - 47 were educators associated with the K curriculum pilot
  - 73 were other educators across the state
  - 54 K teachers (both from pilot project and across the state)
  - 25 elementary principals ad reading specialists (both from pilot project and across the state)
  - 24 districts and charter schools were represented

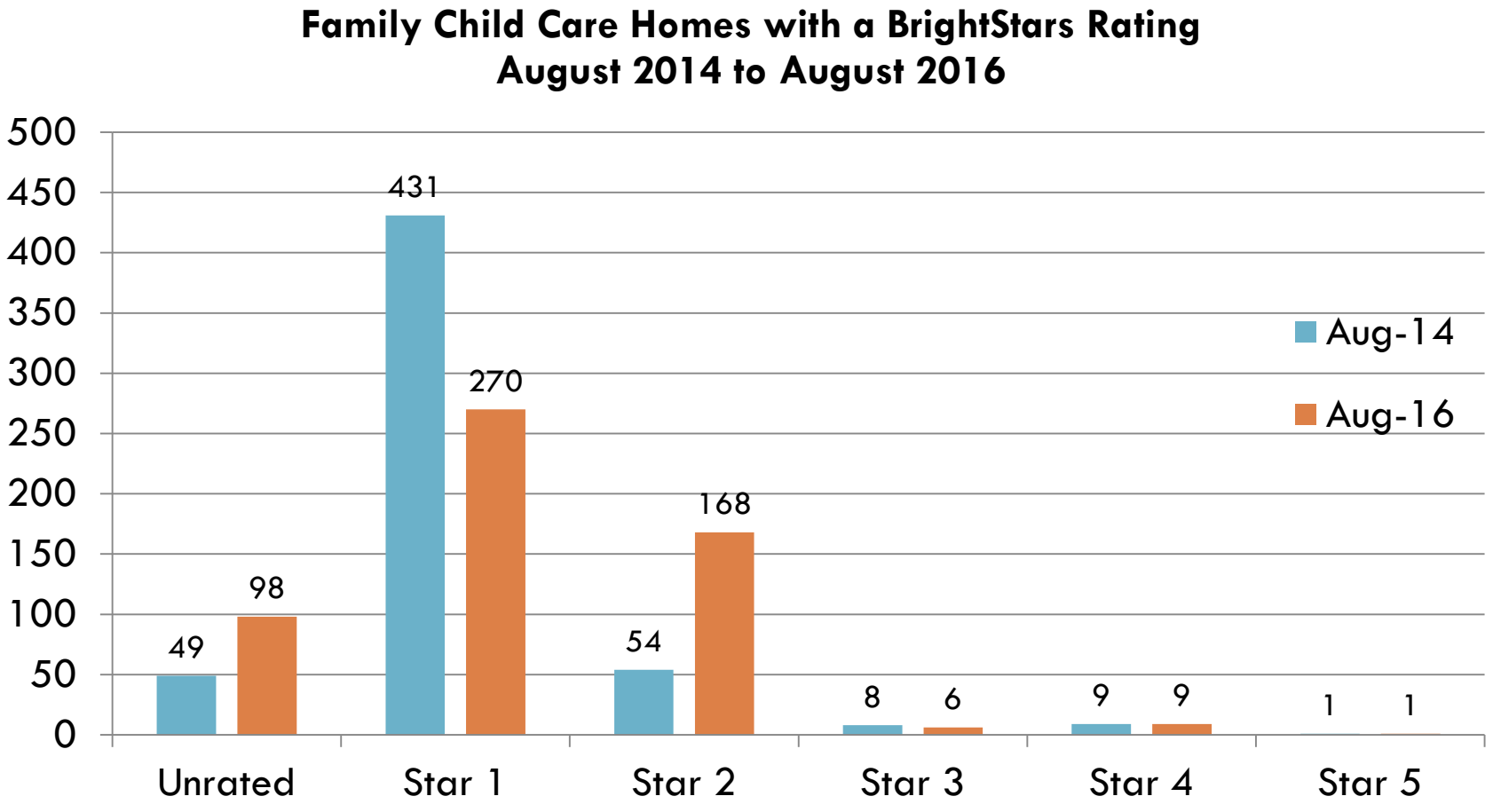
http://bpsearlychildhood.weebly.com

BrightStars Ratings



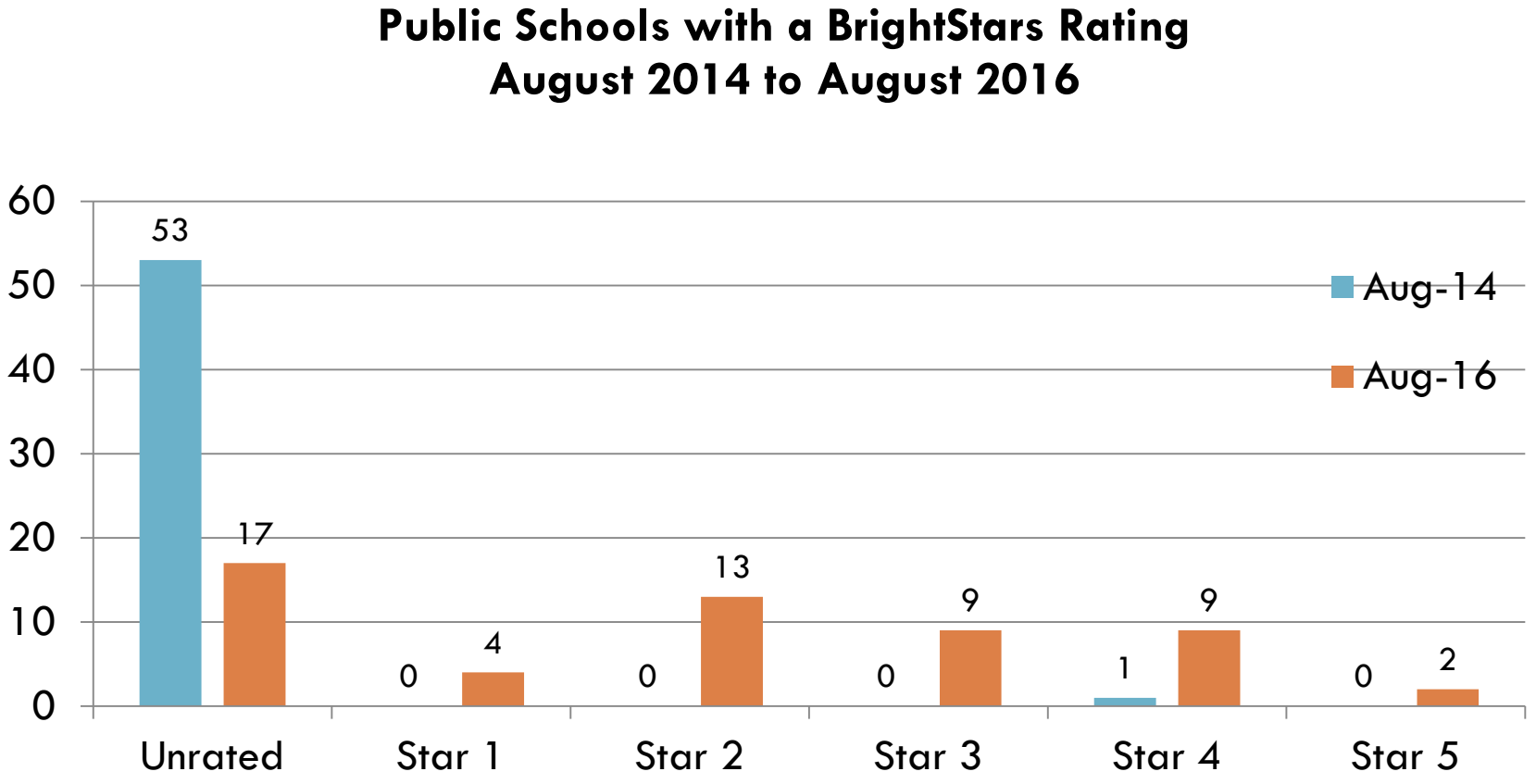
- 83% of licensed centers are participating (rated) (257 of 311)
- 19% of licensed centers have a rating of 4 or 5 stars (59 of 311)

BrightStars Ratings



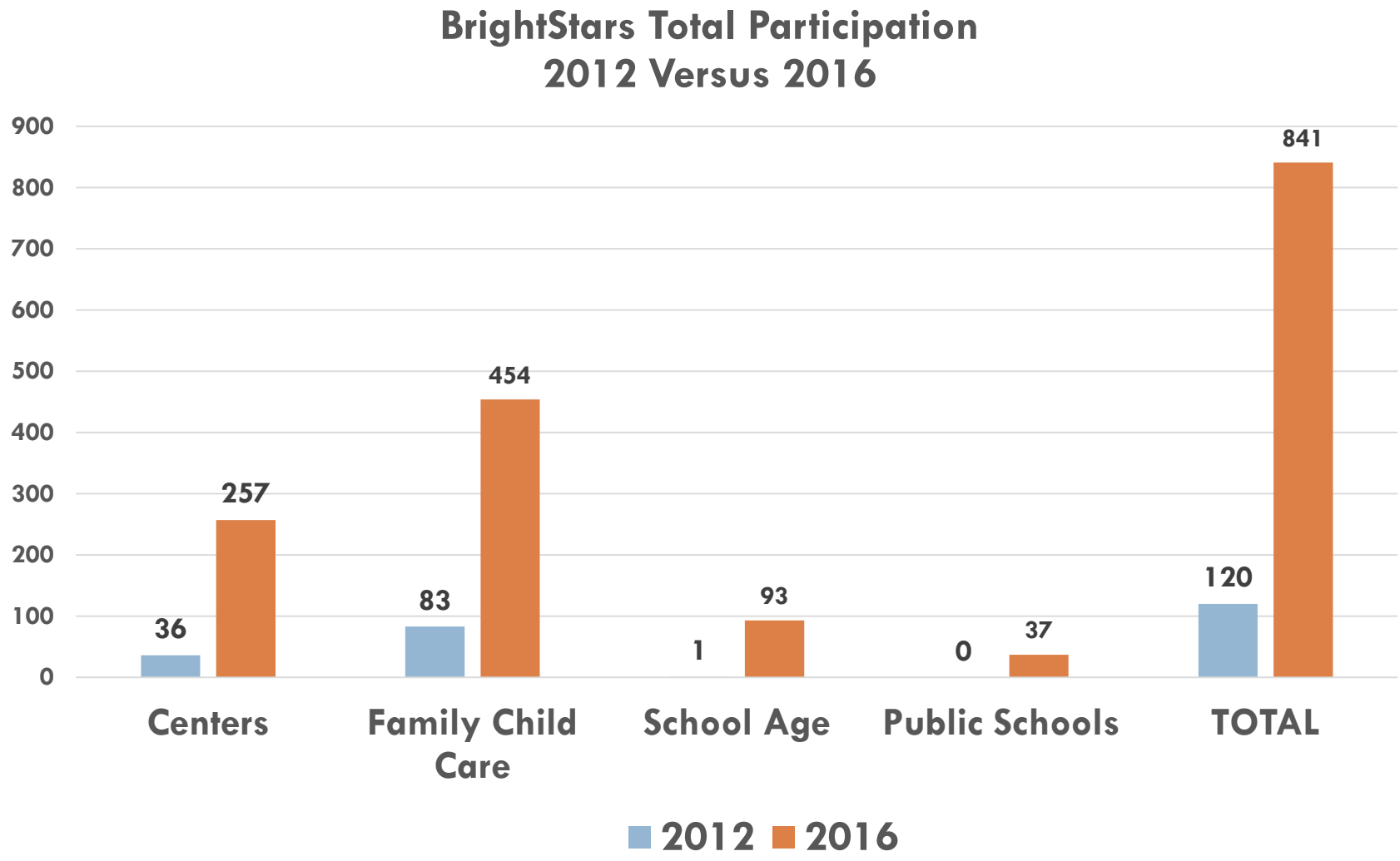
- 82% of licensed family child care homes are participating (rated) (454 of 552)
- 2% of licensed family child care homes have a rating of 4 or 5 stars (10 of 552)

BrightStars Ratings



- 69% public schools serving preschoolers are participating (rated) (37 of 54)
- 20% of public schools serving preschoolers have a rating of 4 or 5 stars (11 of 54)

BrightStars Ratings



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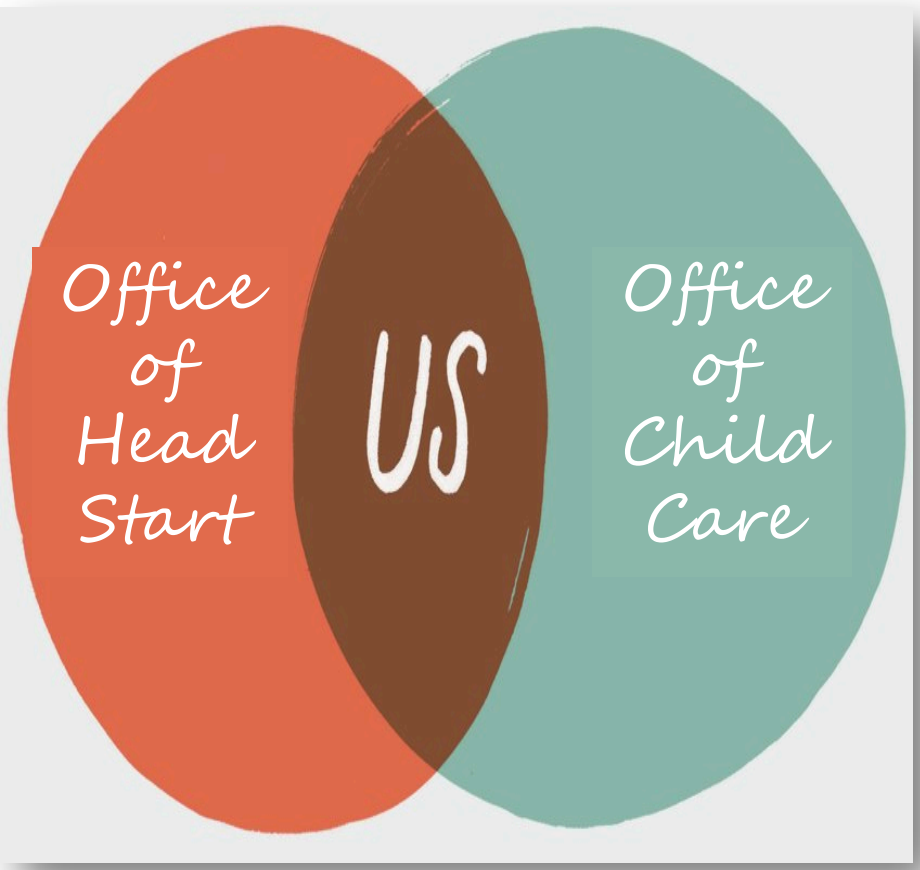
Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

Early Head Start Childcare Partnership

An unprecedented collaboration

Aimee Mitchell
Senior Vice President of Programs Head Start Director

Children's FRIEND



an unprecedented collaboration at the federal, regional and state level…

- Centralize the needs of children and families and ensure that the money follows the child!
- Stabilize and simplify the resources available to centers and family child care homes
- Move beyond alignment to braiding and integration
- Build policies that achieve real outcomes.

Children's FRIEND

We live the principles of **partnership, individualization, open communication,** and most importantly **shared leadership**

- Monthly “Leadership and Stakeholder” meeting
- Monthly “Policy and Solutions” meeting
- External evaluation by UMASS
- Shared monitoring
- On-line/Bi-Lingual Infant Toddler Credential

Children's FRIEND

We built a **performance based stipend system**…
supported though regular visits with liaisons, mentor coaching, trainings, access to resources and support from family workers, RNs, parent engagement staff, mental health and disability consultation etc…

Each partner has a different set up for comprehensive support that leverages their existing resources…

Children's FRIEND

This is US!

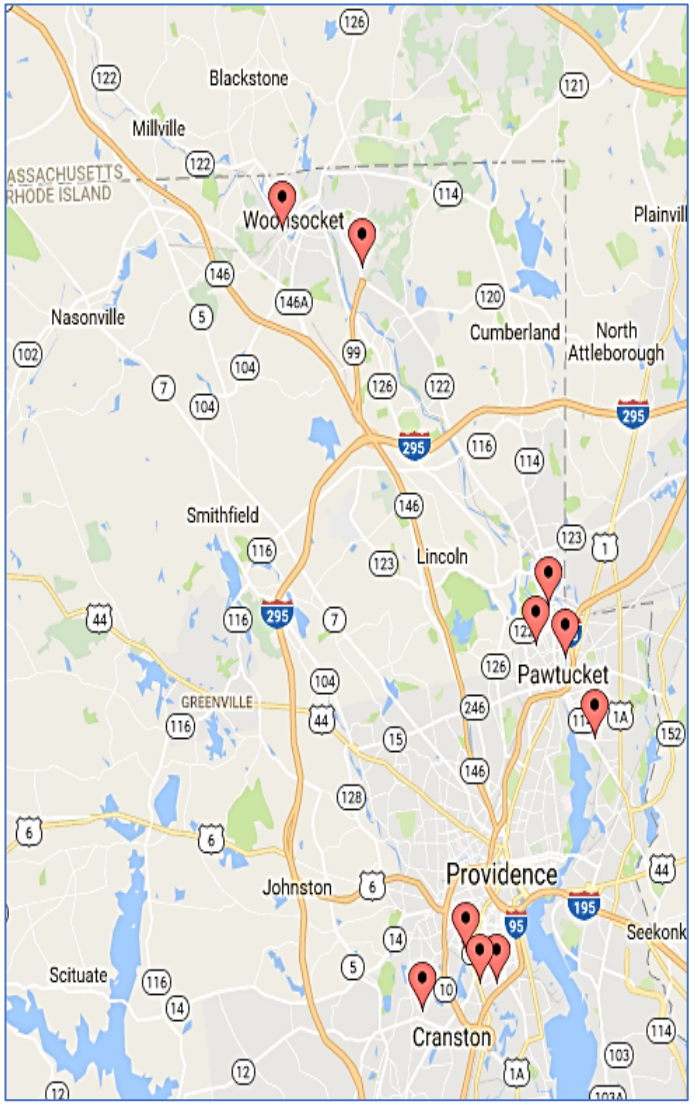
Beautiful Beginnings

CCF Hope Street Child Care Center

Children's Friend - Dexter

Children's Workshop Central Falls

Children's Workshop Foundation



Comprehensive Community Action

Genesis Child Development & Learning Center

Heritage Park YMCA

McAuley Village Child Care Center

Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Center

Children's FRIEND

Establishing a Rhode Island Infant/Toddler Credential

- Early Head Start requires infant/toddler staff to have a CDA and/or state infant/toddler credential. Rhode Island's EHS-Child Care Partnership is supporting both.
- 28 states have an infant/toddler credential
- 15-18 college credits
- Delivered during hours teachers are available incorporate online instruction (hybrid model)
- Incorporate on-site coaching to translate learning into practice
- Use existing Office of Head Start/University of Cincinnati resources (infant and toddler courses in English and Spanish)
- Needs to articulate with Associate's and Bachelor's degrees in early care and education
- Available in English and Spanish
- Launched by September 2017

RI Early Learning Council Website

Child Trends

Overview of State QRIS Evaluations &

RI Pre-K Evaluation Plans

Overview of ELC QRIS Evaluations and Pre-K Evaluation Plans

Presentation at the Rhode Island Early Learning Council
Providence, Rhode Island

Kelly Maxwell

September 28, 2016

QRIS Context

"A method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings" (Anne Mitchell, 2005)

State-driven phenomenon since the early 1990s

Today, all states either have or are developing a QRIS

Shift from Q**R**S to QR**I**S

Most are voluntary

Some are mandatory/moving to mandatory

Intended, in part, to provide a "stair step" to higher quality

Large gap between licensing and national accreditation

Multiple Outcomes of a QRIS

School readiness is often discussed as an important, intended outcome of QRIS

Other outcomes (explicit or implicit)

- Strengthen the early childhood system
- Professionalize or support the early childhood workforce
- Support families

We need more research about all outcomes

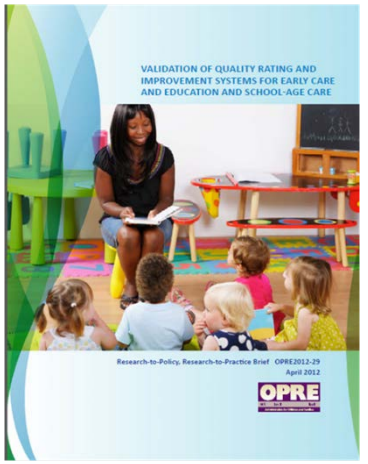
QRIS Validation

"Validation is a **multi-step process** that assesses the degree to which design decisions about program quality standards and measurement strategies are resulting in **accurate and meaningful ratings**."

Zellman & Fiene, 2012

Child TRENDS

QRIS Validation Approaches



Four approaches have been identified

1. Examine key underlying concepts
2. Examine the items/measures used to assess quality and how well they function
3. Assess the ratings and how well they work
4. Relate ratings to expected child outcomes

Approaches vary in terms of timing, cost, difficulty

QRIS Validation is a Process

Validation is not a destination.

Validation does not produce a “yes/no” answer.

Validation Work May Lead to…

- Changing quality standards
- Improving measurement of indicators
- Changing QRIS structure
- Changing supports for programs to meet quality indicators

RTT-Early Learning Challenge Grant

Requires QRIS studies to address 2 questions:

1. Do the ratings meaningfully differentiate higher-quality programs from lower-quality programs?
2. Are children's development and learning greater in higher-rated programs compared to children who attend lower-rated programs?

20 ELC states

- Round 1 (2011): **CA**, DE, MD, MA, **MN**, NC, OH, RI, **WA**
- Round 2 (2012): CO, IL, NM, OR, **WI**
- Round 3 (2013): GA, KY, MI, NJ, PA, VT

***Blue**=report released*

Context of RTT-ELC Validation Studies

QRIS often intended to be a "stair step" to higher quality

Several pieces of information are rolled up into a single program rating

Studies happened at a time of rapid QRIS change

- E.g., becoming mandatory, revising the system

Small number of programs at certain levels restricted analyses

- Eg., 1, 2, & 3 stars vs. 4 & 5 stars

Summary and Considerations about RTT-ELC QRIS Studies

It is great that we are on the cusp of having several state QRIS reports that can be used to inform revisions and improvements in QRIS.

Need to be cautious in generalizing across states because of the variability in state QRIS.

Reminder that ELC QRIS studies focus on the "R." There are still other important issues to address.

- What supports quality improvement (the "I")?

Rhode Island's BrightStars Evaluation

- Study includes 71 programs (child care centers, public school preschool, Head Start)
  - **25** 1-star programs
  - **20** 2-star programs
  - **14** 3-star programs
  - **10** 4-star programs
  - **2** 5-star programs
- Gathered information from 71 preschool classrooms and 32 toddler classrooms
- Measured the development of 332 preschool-age children
- Report in December 2016

RI Pre-K Evaluation Plans

Evaluation conducted by Child Trends (led by Diane Early) in partnership with RIAEYC (led by Lisa Hildebrand)

Multi-year evaluation plan

- What is the quality of Pre-K?
- What effect does Pre-K have on children's development?

  Pre-K vs. Comparison group, capitalizing on RI Pre-K lottery
- What are the cost and savings of RI's Pre-K program?

RI Pre-K Evaluation

This year

- Finalize the proposed evaluation plan
- Review Pre-K program policies and standards
- Examine existing and 2016-17 quality data

Contact Information

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919-869-3251

Thank you!

Child TRENDS

RI Children's Cabinet

Public Comment

2016 Council Calendar

- December 14, 2016

All Council meetings will be from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Save the Bay

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

September 2016

Issue Brief

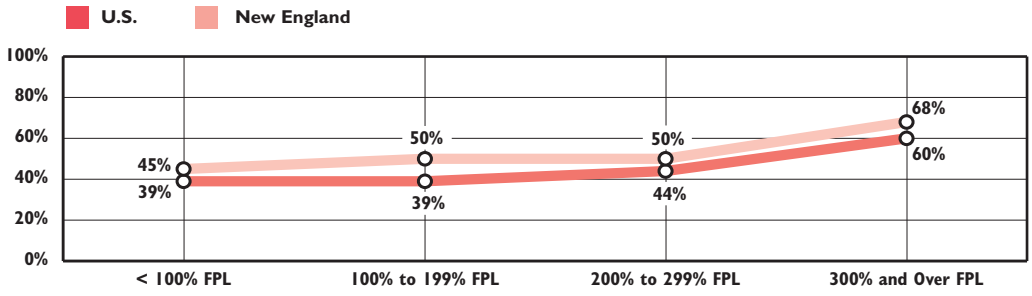
Investing in the Future: Financing Early Education & Care in Rhode Island

The first five years in a child's life are crucial to their success in school. Children begin learning at birth and brain development proceeds rapidly in early childhood. Disparities in learning based on access to enriched experiences and environments begin to appear in the first years of life and, without intervention, grow over time. Access to high-quality early learning opportunities from birth through kindergarten entry, at home and in the community, helps prepare children for success in school.[1,2,3,4,5]

Access to high-quality early learning programs is tied to family income. Children in higher-income families are more likely to attend preschool than children from lower-income families. In fact, 83% of four-year-olds in the U.S. who have families with incomes in the top quintile attend preschool.[6,7]

Many families cannot afford to enroll their children in high-quality early learning programs. Public funding for child care, Head Start, and Pre-K, helps some low-income families enroll in high-quality early learning programs, but many children from low- and moderate-income income families are left out due to limited public funding.[8] Even middle-and high-income families struggle to afford the cost of high-quality early care and education programs. Using a federal affordability guideline that families should spend no more than 10% of their income on child care/early learning, a Rhode Island family would need to earn $101,000 annually in order to afford the average cost for one four-year-old enrolled year-round in a child care center/preschool ($10,172) – well above the median family income for a family of three in Rhode Island ($72,482).[9,10,11]

Preschool Attendance by Federal Poverty Level (FPL), United States and New England, 2011-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Population Reference Bureau's analysis of American Community Survey data, 2011-2013.
Note: Data for Rhode Island alone is not available, due to small numbers creating unreliable estimates.

Public funding helps more children enroll in high-quality early education programs. Providing access to high-quality early education and care is important to ensure all children have a strong foundation for success in school and beyond.

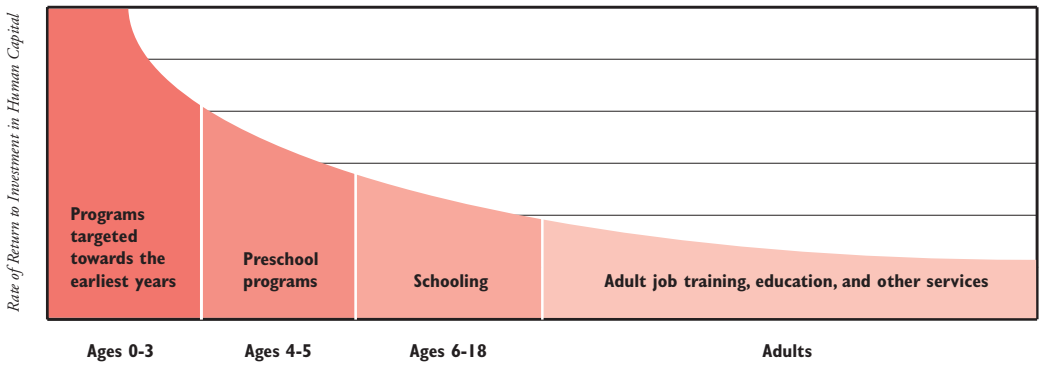
Early Education Funding Systems in Rhode Island

FUNDING TYPE	ADMINISTRATOR	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES OF FUNDING
Child Care Assistance Program	RI Department of Human Services	The Child Care Assistance Program provides vouchers to low-income, working families to help pay for child care. Family co-payments are required for families with incomes over 100% FPL.	• State funding • Federal funding: Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
Head Start & Early Head Start	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	Head Start is a preschool program for low-income children ages three and four, designed to help them enter kindergarten on an equal footing with their more advantaged peers. Early Head Start offers comprehensive services to low-income infants and toddlers.	• Federal Head Start funding direct to local grantees • State supplemental funding for Head Start
State Pre-K	RI Department of Education	Rhode Island State Pre-K is a preschool program for four-year-olds designed to prepare children to succeed in school.	• State funding • Federal funding: Preschool Development Grant
Title I	RI Department of Education	Title I funds help school districts better serve students from low-income families. Schools may use Title I funds to provide early childhood education services.	• Federal funding administered by states to school districts
Early Intervention	RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services	Early Intervention provides special education services to children ages birth to two years with developmental delays or disabilities.	• Medicaid • Private health insurance • Federal funding: *IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)*
Preschool Special Education	RI Department of Education	Preschool Special Education provides special education services to children ages three to kindergarten entry with developmental delays or disabilities.	• Local school district funding • State funding (education formula) • Federal funding: *IDEA* • Medicaid
Direct Pay by Families/ Private Tuition		Many parents pay out of pocket to enroll their children in child care and early learning programs.	• Family Incomes

Public Funding is Limited in Early Years When the Economic Returns are Greatest

- Despite the research documenting the importance of early learning, public funding for education is highly concentrated to benefit older children. One study found that out of every public dollar spent for the development and education of a school-age child (ages 6 to 18), only 7 cents is invested in an infant or toddler (ages birth through 2) and 25 cents in a preschooler (ages 3 to 5). In general, state and local government provide the majority of the resources for school-age children, while the federal government plays a much larger role in funding early childhood programs.[12]
- Economic studies show that the return on investment is better for early childhood interventions than later investments. About 50% of the variance in inequality in life-time earnings is determined by age 18. Gaps in cognitive and non-cognitive skills emerge when children are very young, are related to adverse early environments, and could be mitigated with early childhood interventions.[13]
- Compared with interventions during the early childhood years, effective interventions for adolescents and adults produce lower economic returns. Economically, it makes more sense to invest early.[14]

Return on Investment by Age of Intervention

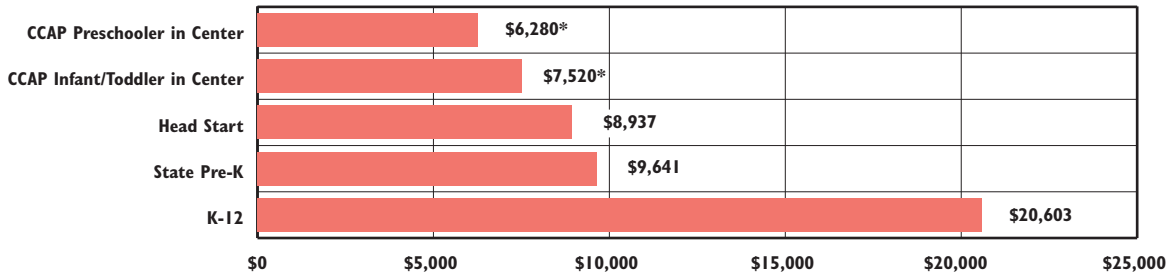


Source: Heckman, J. J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Economic Inquiry, 46*(3), 289-324.

Rhode Island Investments

- In Rhode Island, public investments in early learning and development programs are much lower than investments for school-age children.

Annual Public Funding Per Child Enrolled, Rhode Island, 2014-2015



Sources: Data for CCAP calculated by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT for forty weeks of full-time enrollment (30 or more hours per week). Data for State Head Start, State Pre-K and K-12 from Barnett, W. S., et al. (2016). *The state of preschool 2015: State preschool yearbook.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute for Early Education Research. K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as operating expenses.

* CCAP requires families with incomes between 100% FPL and 225% FPL to make co-payments to the program and deducts this amount from the payment the state makes to programs. Families pay up to 14% of family income to the child care/early learning provider.

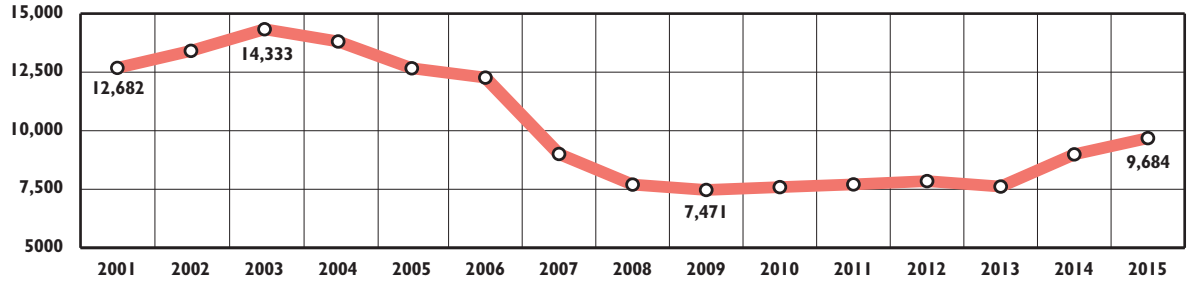
The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

- The Rhode Island Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides a full or partial subsidy to help low-income, working parents pay for child care for children from birth through age 12. CCAP provides a foundation of access to early learning programs, with 5,898 children under age six enrolled (61% of all children enrolled) as of December 2015. The majority of children are enrolled in licensed child care/early learning programs, with 78% enrolled in a licensed center/preschool and 21% enrolled in a licensed family child care home. Only 1% of children with a CCAP subsidy are receiving care from a license-exempt provider (family, friend, or neighbor).[15]

- Families are eligible for CCAP if they have an income below 180% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and work more than 20 hours a week or need child care for employment activities in the Rhode Island Works program. Currently, families remain eligible as their income increases up to 225% FPL through a pilot program designed to help families move up the economic ladder and minimize the "cliff effect" associated with losing a child care subsidy as income increases but not making enough money to afford the cost of child care without a subsidy.[16]

- Prior to state funding cuts and a rollback in eligibility as part of the state fiscal year 2008 budget, Rhode Island families with incomes up to 225% FPL were eligible for CCAP. The original Starting RIght child care law, enacted in 1998, called for a gradual expansion of the CCAP program to serve all families with incomes up to 250% FPL.[17,18]

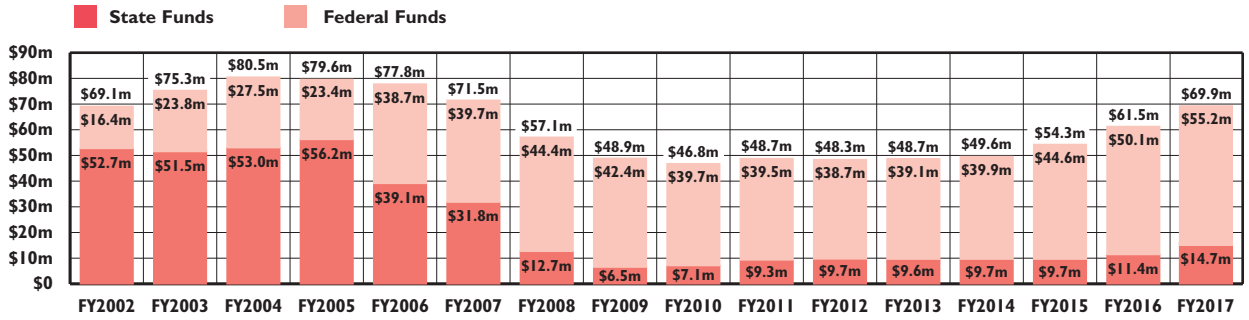
Number of Children with Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, 2001-2015



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2001–December 2015.

- The enacted state fiscal year 2017 budget includes $69.9 million for CCAP, with 79% from federal grants and 21% from general revenue. This is an $8.4 million increase from SFY16, the largest increase in more than 10 years – but the total funding and state general revenue funding remains below levels from a decade ago.[19] Federal funding sources include the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).[20]

Child Care Assistance Program Expenditures in Millions of Dollars, SFYs 2002-2017

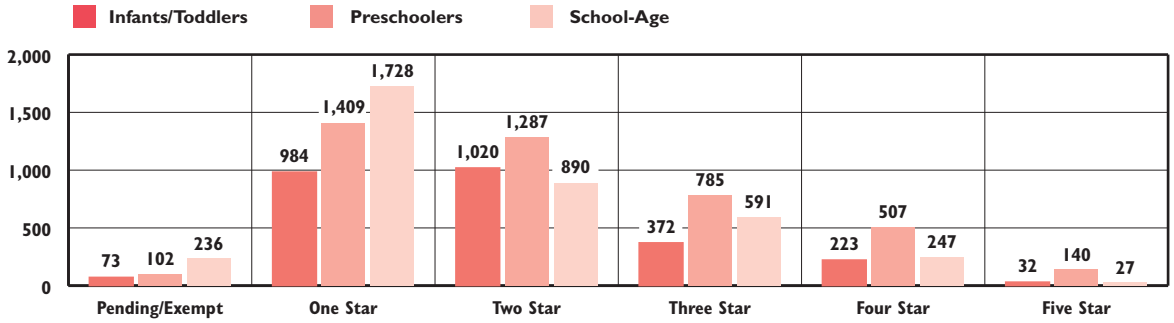


Source: Rhode Island House Fiscal Office. SFY2002-2016 are final expenditures. SFY17 is budget as enacted.

BrightStars, Rhode Island's Quality Rating & Improvement System

- Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia have a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to assess the quality of child care and early learning programs and to promote quality improvement.[21]
- Launched in 2009, BrightStars is Rhode Island's Quality Rating and Improvement System. As of January 2016, 82% of licensed centers/preschools, 87% of licensed family child care homes, and 60% of public schools that enroll preschoolers have a BrightStars rating. As of October 2014, all programs serving children with a CCAP subsidy are required to have a quality rating.[22]
- Although programs continue to make quality improvements and incremental progress with improved ratings, only a minority of programs in the state have reached the high-quality benchmark of four or five stars (17% of licensed centers/preschools, 2% of family child care homes, and 13% of public schools). More than half (54%) of the centers with a high-quality rating of four or five stars receive Head Start funding, State Pre-K funding, or both.[23]

Children Receiving CCAP by BrightStar Quality Rating of Program, March 2016



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database and Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, BrightStars quality ratings, March 2016.

Tiered Reimbursement for High-Quality Child Care & Early Learning Programs

- Most states have tiered quality reimbursement rate systems, meaning that the higher quality a program is, the higher the rates paid by the state for low-income children enrolled in programs. Rhode Island is the only New England state and one of only twelve states in the country that does not have a tiered reimbursement system to support access to high-quality programs.[24]
- High-quality care promotes children's learning and development, but it is more expensive to provide due to the higher cost of wages to attract and retain more qualified and effective staff. The federal government recommends that child care subsidy rates be set at or above the 75th percentile of the current market rate to promote access to high-quality care and learning programs. As of 2015, eight states had rates set at or above the 75th percentile of current market rates for programs at the highest quality level.[25]

Current CCAP Rates Compared with Recommended Rates for Access to Quality Programs

	CURRENT MAXIMUM RATE	PERCENTILE OF 2015 MARKET RATE SURVEY	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM RATE	PERCENTILE OF 2015 MARKET RATE SURVEY
Infant/Toddler in Center	$193.64/week	12th to 21st	$239.50/week	75th
Preschooler in Center	$161.71/week	18th	$215.00/week	75th

Sources: *DHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) established schedule of maximum weekly rates, effective July 2015.* Cranston, RI: Rhode Island Department of Human Services. Bodah, M. M. (2015). *Statewide survey of child care rates in Rhode Island.* Kingston, RI: Charles T. Schmidt, Jr. Labor Research Center, University of Rhode Island.

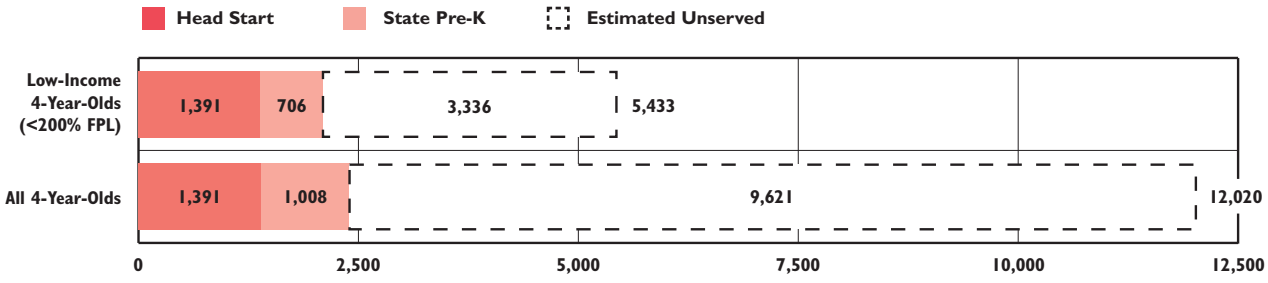
Head Start & Early Head Start in Rhode Island

- Head Start and Early Head Start are federally-managed comprehensive programs designed to improve school readiness for children living in poverty.[26] Children who participate in Head Start show immediate improvements in language and literacy skills. Lasting impacts have been found with reduced grade retention and special education placement in school and increased high school graduation and college enrollment rates.[27,28,29]
- Head Start serves three- and four-year-olds statewide. As of 2015, Head Start served 2,233 preschoolers in Rhode Island, 38% of the estimated 5,868 eligible children ages three and four who live in poverty.[30]
- Early Head Start serves children under age three. As of 2015, Early Head Start served 590 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Rhode Island in 23 of the 39 cities and towns, 7% of the 8,379 eligible children under age three who live in poverty.[31]
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Rhode Island have active waiting lists because they do not have enough funding to serve all eligible children.[32] The federal government allocated $27.3 million in federal fiscal year 2015 for Rhode Island Head Start and Early Head Start programs.[33] The state funds 130 Head Start slots each year to reduce waiting lists, spending $800,000. In the past, Rhode Island has funded 400 Head Start seats, but state funding for Head Start was reduced in 2008.[34]

Rhode Island State Pre-K

- The Rhode Island State Pre-K program was launched in the 2009-2010 school year, and as of the 2015-2016 school year, serves 594 four-year-olds who live in high-poverty communities. State Pre-K classrooms are operated by Head Start agencies (52%), community-based child care centers/preschools (39%), and public schools (9%). Children apply to participate in State Pre-K and participants are selected by lottery, with children from low-income families prioritized for enrollment based on the proportion of low-income children in the local school district.[35]
- The State Pre-K program is projected to grow to serve 1,008 four-year-olds in 11 Rhode Island communities in the 2016-2017 school year, with $5.2 million in state general revenue funding and $5.8 million in federal Preschool Development Grant funding.[36,37]
- Rhode Island's State Pre-K program has been recognized as one of only seven in the U.S. to meet all recommended quality benchmarks, but the state is ranked among the lowest nationally (41st out of 43 states) in terms of access for four-year-olds.[38]

Four-Year-Olds, Access to Head Start and State Pre-K, Rhode Island, Projected for 2016-2017



Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations assuming Head Start enrollment remains stable and 70% of children enrolled in State Pre-K are low-income (below 200% FPL).

- As of the 2016-2017 school year, 39% of low-income four-year-olds (families with incomes up to 200% FPL) and 20% of all four-year-olds in Rhode Island will be enrolled in Head Start or State Pre-K.[39]

Title I & Early Education

- Title I funding from the U.S. Department of Education helps school districts better serve economically disadvantaged children. Districts are allowed to use Title I resources to fund early childhood programs. Under the 2015 federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*, states will be required to help districts fund early childhood programs and to report on the number of children served in early childhood programs. Any early learning program funded with Title I dollars must meet or exceed Head Start performance standards.
- During the Title I application process, the Rhode Island Department of Education advises districts that Title I funds may support preschool programs. The district, in consultation with schools, teachers, and parents, designs the Title I program.[41]
- In Rhode Island as of 2015-2016, two school districts (Central Falls and Warwick) use Title I funds to support four district-operated preschool classrooms. Other districts use Title I funding to support summer learning programs to improve transition to kindergarten and/or evidence-based home visiting interventions for families with young children, such as Parents as Teachers.[42] In the past, Title I funding has been used to support implementation of the State Pre-K program in Providence and Central Falls.[43]

Private Pay & Access to Affordable Early Care & Education

- Many families pay for their children's early learning opportunities out-of-pocket. Families with incomes above state or federal eligibility limits do not qualify for CCAP or Head Start, and only a small number of State Pre-K spaces (approximately 30%, or 302 spaces in the 2015-2016 school year) are available for families with incomes above 200% FPL. In fact, many families who qualify for CCAP are required to make co-payments ranging from 2% to 14% of family income.[44]

Average Annual Cost for Full-Time Child Care, Rhode Island, 2015

PROGRAM TYPE	COST PER CHILD
Child Care Center (infant care)	$12,091
Child Care Center (preschool care)	$10,172
Family Child Care Home (preschool care)	$8,655

Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT analysis of average weekly rates from Bodah, M. M. (2015). *Statewide survey of childcare rates in Rhode Island.* Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island.

- Using the federal affordability guideline, families with incomes up to six times the poverty level ($120,000 for a family of three) struggle to pay tuition for an infant in a licensed center and families with incomes up to five times the poverty level ($100,000 for a family of three) struggle to pay tuition for a preschooler in a licensed center/preschool.[45,46,47]
- Family child care is slightly more affordable, but would still require families to make more than four times the poverty level ($86,000 for a family of three) to pay the full cost of care for a preschooler in a licensed family child care home.[48,49]

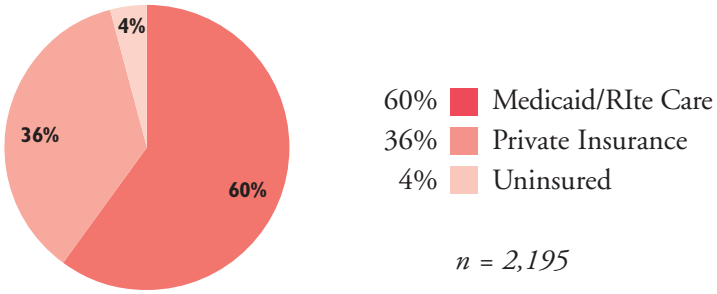
Paid Family Leave & Infant Care

- Experts recommend that healthy, full-term infants be at least three months old before enrolling in child care.[50] Paid time off from work helps parents provide the one-on-one care infants need and can improve child health and development, maternal health, and family economic security.[51] Rhode Island is one of only four states with a paid family leave law.

Early Intervention

- Under the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, Early Intervention services are available to children under age three in Rhode Island who have a developmental delay or a condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay. This includes significant circumstances like loss, trauma, abuse, neglect, or lacking resources to meet basic needs. Early Intervention is paid for through private insurance, Medicaid, and state funds, and is free for families. The majority of Early Intervention services are delivered through home visits or visits to children enrolled in a child care or Early Head Start program.[52,53]
- As of June 2015, there were 2,195 infants and toddlers receiving Early Intervention Services in Rhode Island, approximately 6% of all children under age three in the state.[54]
- Early Intervention cost a total of $20.9 million in SFY2015, with $8 million funded through participants' private health insurance and $10 million funded through RIte Care/Medicaid. Families with private insurance have claims submitted to their insurance for payment, but do not pay any copayments. Insurers are required to cover the cost of Early Intervention services. Each year the federal government awards Rhode Island a grant of $2.15 million for Early Intervention through *IDEA* Part C.[55]

Rhode Island Children Enrolled in Early Intervention By Insurance Type, 2015



Source: RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services, June 30, 2015.

Preschool Special Education

- Starting at age three, children with specific disabilities or developmental delays are eligible for special education through their local school district. As of June 2015, 2,927 preschool-age children were receiving special education services through a school district, approximately 7% of all children ages three to five.[56]
- Preschool special education services provided by school districts is delivered in a variety of settings: 47% receive services within an inclusive early education classroom (in Head Start, State Pre-K, public school, or child care programs) where students with and without delays or disabilities are educated together, 17% are enrolled in a separate special education classroom or facility, 25% receive services through walk-in appointments, and 1% received services at home or in a hospital. Another 10% are enrolled in a regular early childhood classroom, but do not receive their special education services in that class.[57]
- In FY14, preschool special education funding totaled $15.4 million from state, local, and federal sources, including $1.6 million from Section 619 of Part B of *IDEA*. Districts may bill Medicaid for health-related services and in FY2015, Medicaid paid $599,711 to Rhode Island school districts for children in preschool special education.[58,59]

Early Care and Education Staffing and Quality

- Staffing is a critical component of high-quality early care and education. The number of teachers assigned to a group of children, the education levels of the teachers, and the amount and quality of professional development and training are consistently associated with improved teacher-child interactions and improved learning and development outcomes for children.[60]

- After reviewing the evidence, the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council recommend that all lead teachers in early care and education programs for children birth through age eight have a bachelor's degree with specialized training in child development and early education. Experts recognize that achieving this goal will take both a significant investment of new financial resources and time for staff to attain credentials.[61]

Inadequate Wages Make It Difficult to Attract and Retain Qualified, Effective Teachers

- Research shows that adequate compensation for early childhood teachers improves staff retention, attracts teachers with better qualifications, and results in higher-quality educational experiences for children. However, annual wages for child care and preschool teachers are among the lowest in the U.S., with child care workers paid wages at the third percentile and preschool teachers paid at the 19th percentile of the average wage range.[62]

- Many early childhood educators, especially those who work with infants and toddlers, experience significant economic hardship, low social status, unsupportive and demanding work environments, clinical depression, and other chronic stressors.[63]

- As of the 2014-2015 school year, teachers in Rhode Island's State Pre-K program, all of whom have PK-Grade 2 state certification, earned substantially less than elementary school teachers. Those who worked in public school settings earned 79% ($52,000) and those who worked in community-based settings earned 66% ($43,458) of average elementary school teacher's wages ($65,918).[64]

- In 2007, new federal legislation required Head Start programs across the country to work to make sure at least half of Head Start teachers obtained a four-year degree by 2013.[65] As of 2014 in Rhode Island, 70% of Head Start preschool teachers had a bachelor's degree or better. Almost all of the remaining teachers had associate's degrees or a CDA credential. The average wage for Head Start teachers in Rhode Island was $31,384.[66]

- Sixty percent of family child care providers in Rhode Island report making $30,000 or less per year.[67]

Education and Average Hourly Wages for Early Learning Teaching Staff Working in Licensed Centers and Preschools, Rhode Island, 2013

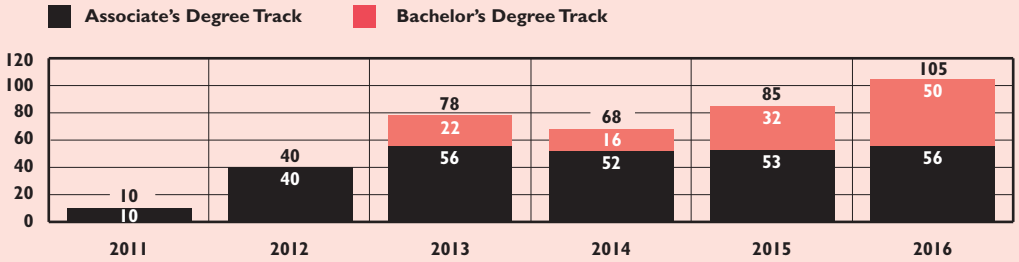
	HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS	SOME COLLEGE	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
Infant/Toddler Classroom	$9.70	$10.25	$10.52	$13.00
Preschool Classroom	$9.00	$10.25	$12.99	$15.25

Source: Oldham, E. & Hawes, S. (2014). *Rhode Island early learning workforce study: Licensed centers and family child care homes.* Retrieved June 7, 2016, from www.earlylearningri.org

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Workforce Development Model

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood, a model implemented by 24 states, provides scholarships and support to adults currently working in the early care and education field to advance their formal education. T.E.A.C.H. works with colleges to ensure students' needs are met and partners with employers to provide modest wage increases as coursework is completed.
- In Rhode Island, 33% of centers have sponsored a T.E.A.C.H. scholar and 168 early childhood educators have completed 1,248 college courses, with 31 educators attaining associate's degrees, two attaining bachelor's degrees, and three receiving PK-Grade 2 teacher certification.[68]

Active T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholars, Rhode Island, 2011-2016



Source: Ready to Learn Providence, 2011-2016. Note: 2016 total scholars does not match sum of associate's degree and bachelor's degree scholars because one person completed her associate's degree and enrolled in a bachelor's program during the same calendar year.

Financing for High-Quality Early Care & Education Facilities

An adequate supply of early care and education facilities is needed to support the growing need for preschool and child care. Well-designed early care and education facilities support children's health, safety, development, and learning. Designing early learning facilities requires technical expertise to meet the needs of young children. Specific design considerations include:

- Secure entrance to ground floor space with adequate fire evacuation routes from each classroom.
- Separate spaces for each group of children (no more than 8 infants, 12 toddlers, and 18 to 20 preschoolers in a classroom and 6 to 12 children in a family child care home).
- Adequate space for each group of children to have a variety of learning centers, child-sized tables and chairs for family-style meals and snacks, and space for cribs and cots. Dedicated storage space is needed for children's belongings (including space for storing car seats and strollers), learning materials, and cleaning supplies.
- Accessible and easily supervised children's bathrooms with child-height toilets and sinks and changing areas for infants and toddlers.
- Adequate space for staff meetings, family events, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Safe and adequate indoor and outdoor space for running, climbing, and jumping.

States can support the development of high-quality early learning facilities and family child care homes by providing expert design assistance, planning grants, and financial support for building renovations, expansions, and new construction, including grants, subsidized loans, and performance-based loan forgiveness programs. In Rhode Island, the state has established a Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund managed by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.[69,70]

Recommendations

Invest in the Early Years

- Expand investments to improve access to high-quality early learning programs so that children enter kindergarten on a more level playing field with comparable skills and knowledge across all domains of learning (social-emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, physical, and approaches to learning).
- Increase the annual per child funding amount for early learning programs to narrow the gap in resources available to educate young children compared with resources available for the K-12 population; recognize that young children need low child-to-teacher ratios for health, safety, and educational reasons.
- Ensure young children in the child welfare system have access to high-quality early learning programs.

Strengthen Financing for the Child Care Assistance Program to Support High-Quality Programs

- Implement a tiered reimbursement system with enhanced rates for child care programs that meet research-based quality standards in BrightStars, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System. High-quality programs should be paid rates at or above the 75th percentile of the 2015 market rate survey. Enhanced CCAP rates for high-quality programs will help ensure that high-quality child care is accessible for low-income, working families. Consider waiving or reducing family co-payments for families that select high-quality child care.
- Provide adequate support, resources, and incentives to help child care programs reach high-quality standards.
- Implement a permanent "cliff effect" policy for CCAP so families do not lose access to a child care subsidy before they are able to assume the full cost of care.
- Restore income eligibility for CCAP to 225% FPL. Begin by securing access for all families with incomes below 200% FPL.

Expand Public Preschool Options for 3- and 4-Year Olds – Especially Low-Income Children

- Expand access to Head Start to serve more eligible children living in poverty by taking advantage of opportunities for additional federal funding and increasing state funding for Head Start.
- Continue to grow the State Pre-K program, focusing on communities with the highest needs first, with a long-term goal of providing all children in Rhode Island with access to high-quality, publicly-funded preschool.

Ensure All Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities Get the Help They Need

- Expand screening for developmental delays and disabilities so that every child who needs Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education is identified and receives special education services. Ensure preschool special education services are delivered within a high-quality early learning program.

Invest in Early Childhood Educators and Facilities

- Sustain the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood model in Rhode Island as an employer-sponsored workforce development program that provides financial support and incentives to early childhood educators so they can make progress along career pathways to attain college credits and degrees in early childhood education (associate's and bachelor's).
- Implement targeted wage enhancement strategies to ensure that similarly qualified early childhood educators earn pay and benefits comparable to those of K-3 teachers and that the field is able to attract and retain more qualified and effective educators and caregivers.
- Provide expertise and financial support through the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund to construct, renovate, and expand spaces to meet the needs of young children.

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Rhode Island kids count

We are very grateful to the Alliance for Early Success for its support of this Issue Brief.

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 28, 2016 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Save the Bay

Meeting Summary

AGENDA SUMMARY

The Early Learning Council agenda addressed the following topics:

- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Policy and Program Updates
- Overview of Early Learning Challenge State QRIS Evaluation Studies and Pre-K Evaluation Plans
- Children's Cabinet
- Public comment
- Upcoming events and meetings

KEY POINTS

Key discussion points from the meeting are summarized below:

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Commissioner Ken Wagner updated the Early Learning Council on the Governor's announcement of her 3rd grade reading goals and the RTT-ELC transition. (See slide). Comments were as follows:

- For children born in 2016, the Governor has issued a challenge to increase 3rd grade reading levels from 37% of 3rd graders reading at grade level to 75% of 3rd graders reading at grade level. These children will be in 3rd grade in 2024-2025.

- This difficult yet achievable challenge will make the RTT-ELC sustainability work easier because it creates an orienting goal that is focused enough to be meaningful but broad enough to encompass all the work that needs to be done beginning in infancy and continuing through age 8. The 3rd grade reading challenge will require cross-departmental collaboration and a continuation of the team structures established under the RTT-ELC grant.

- The Children's Cabinet will be the avenue to articulate the vision of the 3rd grade reading level challenge and track its progress.

- A public engagement campaign will promote the 3rd grade reading level challenge and motivate the public to feel strongly about 3rd grade reading levels. The public must understand that an investment in early childhood education is not only an investment in the future of children, but is also an investment in the whole K-12 and higher education systems.

- KIDS COUNT is partnering with the United Way of RI on the campaign for grade level reading that kicked off last November, which is well timed with the Governor's 3rd grade reading level challenge. There is also synergy between the Governor's 3rd grade reading level challenge and the goals of the Children's Cabinet for grade level reading, which focuses on 4 areas:
    - School readiness
    - Summer reading loss
    - Chronic absences
    - K- 3rd grade reading strategies

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 28, 2016 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Save the Bay

Meeting Summary

Elizabeth Burke Bryant discussed the RI Family Home Visiting Act and the new Issue Brief on Financing Early Education and Care. Comments were as follows:

- The RI Family Home Visiting Act makes family home visiting a long term part of the early learning system instead of just being a program line item. The RI Family Home Visiting Act codifies into law the state home visiting system for vulnerable families with young children. The RI Family Home Visiting System is cost effective because it should reduce the caseload at DCYF and increase children's school readiness.

- The issue brief, "Investing in the Future: Financing Early Education & Care in Rhode Island," includes trends on how Rhode Island and other states are investing in early childhood education programs.

- The whole child view of school readiness and early childhood includes a cross-departmental focus that will support continued improvements to the early childhood education system.

- Comment: Communities that have seen significant improvement as a result of the national grade level reading campaign should calculate the money that was saved as a result. Instead of investing in remedial support, those communities can now invest those resources for more higher learning opportunities. Seeing how these funds can be put to better use might convince other districts to make needed changes.

- The improvements at the Heritage Park Y (location for the Policy Roundtable and tour with governor) are a great example of the positive impact of our efforts to increase quality and access for early childhood education.

POLICY AND PROGRAM UPDATES

State Pre-K Expansion

Phyllis Lynch updated the Council on the State Pre-K expansion. (See slide). The following comments were made:

- Allison Comport will replace Kristen Greene as the Early Learning Specialist. She will be the point person for the State Pre-K programs. Carla Swanson is leading the CECE process and approvals. An Early Learning Coordinator position has been posted.

- There are a lot of commonalities between community based and public school State Pre-K classrooms so all programs benefit from sharing knowledge and experiences.

- The Center for Early Learning Professionals is continuing to support State Pre-K programs with technical assistance. It is not just about setting up classrooms, but also about developing all the other components of quality.

- East Providence and Newport still have some open State Pre-K spots. Head Start and RIDE are sharing waiting lists to make sure all eligible 4 year olds have access to high quality early learning

programs. Allison will be sending more information about the collaborative recruitment between RIDE and Head Start.

- Although the State Pre-K lottery is over, families can still contact programs directly so children can be placed in open spots or on waiting lists. If families are willing to attend any State Pre-K program with an open spot in their community, they should contact Miriam at RIDE. Online applications are no longer being accepted for this school year.

Kindergarten Conference

Phyllis Lynch updated the Council on the Kindergarten conference. (See slide). Key comments included:

- This conference marked the Rhode Island launch for the pilot of the Boston Public Schools' Kindergarten curriculum. Twenty or 21 teachers from 8 districts around Rhode Island are included in the pilot.

- The conference was open to everyone, but Kindergarten teachers were prioritized. People attending the conference but not participating in the pilot could still view the materials and can use them without officially piloting them.

- If the pilot goes well, other districts might join.

- Participation in the pilot was voluntary.

Update on BrightStars Ratings

Lisa Hildebrand updated the Council on the BrightStars ratings. (See slides). The following key comments and questions were made:

- In 2014, new CCAP regulations required CCAP programs to participate in BrightStars. The new 2013 BrightStars standards were also implemented that year.

- BrightStars continues to track unrated programs and encourages unrated programs to participate. The number of unrated programs has significantly decreased from 2014 to 2016.

- The number of 1 star programs has decreased since 2014 and the number of programs rated 2 through 5 stars has increased.

- BrightStars is working on getting family child care homes to the higher star levels.

- Every day more public school districts are asking for support in the application progress.

- Q: Why is there a slight increase in the number of unrated family child care homes from 2014 to 2016?
  A: There are two reasons for this increase: 1) in August 2014 there were many homes that were granted a Starting Star in order to continue participation in CCAP but more than a few of those homes chose not to continue with a 1 star rating. 2) new programs have opened and those new

programs require some time before they are officially rated, although they can still receive CCAP funding during that unrated time.

- Comment: Increasing from a 5 star rating to CECE approval is significant and programs have to be CECE approved every year. Currently, there are 18 CECE approved programs and RIDE is working with 12 additional sites this year.

- Q: Are unrated programs surveyed regularly to determine the barriers to being rated?
  A: They were surveyed in the past and it is a great idea to continue the surveys, however, we do know, anecdotally, some of the barriers to participation. With so many new programs participating in BrightStars in 2014, all of which are poised to renew in 2017, we are also addressing the barriers to continuing participation and what is preventing programs from reaching the next star level.

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

Aimee Mitchell updated the Council on the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership. (See slides). Comments and question included:

- By coordinating the needs of families and children, the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership's money will follow the children and provide full-day child care that meets high-quality Early Head Start Standards and prevents the disruption of childcare placements due to changes within families.

- The Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership's leaders and stakeholders grapple with policy, implementation and professional development efforts with a focus on what is best for teachers.

- Each center collaboration is unique and is based on what that particular center needs, which creates real outcomes and improves quality and engagement.

- The Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership is working hard to develop family child care connections.

- In child care, our lowest paid, least educated, but most devoted people are doing the single most important work for babies and toddlers during the most important years of their life. We need to support them in overcoming barriers to furthering their education. Establishing an online accessible state approved infant/toddler 15-18 credit college credential with supportive coaching that is offered in English and Spanish would put more knowledge and information in the hands of people who enjoy what they do. This credential should articulate into Associate's and Bachelor's degree programs for those who want to continue their education.

- Q: Since this proposed credentialing involves the early childhood workforce, are you engaged with the Department of Labor and Training?
  A: Aimee is meeting with Secretary Roberts to understand where connections can be built and how to navigate the relationship.

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

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Save the Bay

Meeting Summary

- Comment: This proposed credential should be part of the 3rd grade reading campaign. We need to establish this credential this year.

- Although Rhode Island's application for the Child Care State Capacity Building Impact Project grant was unsuccessful, the state will be receiving intensive technical assistance from Barbara Wall and Ronna Shaffer and will consider the possibility of establishing an infant/toddler credential as part of this work.

- RIC will launch a Birth-Age 3 Bachelor's degree program in the fall of 2017. RIC also offers a 15 credit infant/toddler credential at the college level, but it needs a link to a state recognized credential.

- The proposed infant/toddler credential is aligned with the infant mental health competencies.

- Comment: It is good that the proposed credential will be offered in both Spanish and English, especially since family child care homes saw no growth in 4 and 5 star programs from 2014 to 2016. Language is a barrier.

- Comment: The credential should be offered in Portuguese too since it is the second most predominant language.

Council website re-design/Data Dashboard

Leanne Barrett updated the Council on the website re-design and Data Dashboard. (See slide). Key comments included:

- The redesigned website will contain archived meeting minutes, dates for Early Learning Council and work team meetings, the Data Dashboard, special reports, national studies and a parent and family section that includes links to the Exceed and BrightStars websites. Leanne will send a link when the new website goes live.

2016 Federal Guidance on State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care

Leanne Barrett reviewed the federal guidance on state advisory councils. (See slide). Federal programs are increasingly incorporating engagement of State Advisory Councils into plans and funding applications. For example the federal Preschool Development Grants, the federal Child Care Development Fund state plans, and the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require the involvement of the State Advisory Councils. Leanne will post the link to the federal guidance.

OVERVIEW OF EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE STATE QRIS EVALUATION STUDIES AND PRE-K EVALUATION PLANS

Kelly Maxwell, who was involved in the early development of BrightStars and is currently a Senior Research Scientist and Program Area Co-Director of Early Childhood Development at Child Trends, presented an overview of the Early Learning Challenge state QRIS evaluation studies and Pre-K evaluation plans. (See slides). The following key comments and questions were made:

QRIS Evaluation Studies

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Meeting Summary

- Data collection for the QRIS Evaluation study is complete and Kelly will report the findings by the end of the year. Today, Kelly is discussing the context of the study so we will better understand the findings when released.

- The RTT-ELC grant requires a QRIS validation study to assess the meaningfulness of the ratings and the extent to which the QRIS is related to measures of children's development.. Additionally, the Rhode Island QRIS evaluation study will provide information about the standards and criteria that comprise the rating.

- All state reports, including Rhode Island's, will provide information that can help states continue to improve the QRIS States can use that information to:
    - Revise quality standards within BrightStars,
    - Improve the measurement of indicators, e.g., if family engagement is important, how do we measure it well,
    - Change the QRIS structure, either to blocks, points or a hybrid (Rhode Island currently uses blocks), and/or
    - Use the data to inform the supports programs need to improve quality and attain higher rating levels.

- All Round 1 RTT-ELC grant states should be coming out with QRIS evaluation reports by the end of 2016.

- Because Rhode Island is a block system and many other states use point or hybrid systems, the QRIS evaluation reports from those states may not be as relevant for Rhode Island. However, Massachusetts, whose proximity and use of a block system make it comparable to Rhode Island, is supposed to release its report soon.

- Q: Under what standards were the participating programs rated?
  A: They were all rated under the 2013 BrightStars standards, which was another reason the study was delayed. This also helps explain why there are so few 4 and 5 star rated programs in the study since many of the programs included on the BrightStars slide were ineligible to participate because they had not yet transition to the new standards.

- Q: Is the study also looking at the programs' changes in ratings over time?
  A: No, it was a single point in time study. This study was not designed to examine quality improvement over time.

<u>Pre-K Evaluation Plans</u>

- This year, Child Trends and RIDE will review the proposed State Pre-K evaluation plan and finalize it to make sure it addresses the most important priority issues and needs.

- Child Trends will also review the State Pre-K program's policies and standards to learn more about the program itself.

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- Child Trends and RIDE will examine the existing and 2016-17 data about the quality of the State Pre-K program, especially during this expansion period.

- Future data collected on the State Pre-K program will include quality data as well as data on child assessments so that we can compare the growth of children who attend Pre-K with those who do not attend Pre-K.

- Parents will have a choice about whether their children will participate in the State Pre-K evaluation study, and Child Trends will offer them incentives for participation. All Pre-K programs are expected to participate.

- Q: Have you considered the soft benefits received by children who are enrolled in classrooms embedded in more comprehensive centers and how those services may influence the evaluation of the State Pre-K model? For example, comprehensive centers offer access to family workers and nurses, even though the State Pre-K program does not reimburse centers for those services.
  A: This is a good point for the Child Trends team to consider. We will work with RIDE to consider this issue and whether we want to note the range of services provided in programs serving Pre-K children

CHILDREN'S CABINET

Dacia Read updated the Council on the activities of the Children's Cabinet and the plan for work groups. Key comments included:

- The Children's Cabinet is in policy development mode. There may be times over the next 12 months where the Children's Cabinet will ask the Early Learning Council to conduct targeted meetings with ad hoc workgroups to review specific topics and make recommendations to the Children's Cabinet.

- The Children's Cabinet is conducting a multi-part conversation during monthly meetings around children's behavioral health, mental health and substance abuse. If anyone is interested in engaging on this topic, please contact the Children's Cabinet through their website, www.kids.ri.gov .

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments from the public included:

- We need additional resources, such as tiered reimbursement and technical assistance, to help programs maintain the higher quality achieved through the RTT-ELC grant.

- There will be meetings to support Ready to Learn Providence today from 6-7:30 and tomorrow from 2-3:30.

- RIC is awaiting final approval for an articulation agreement and transfer program that allows students to transition smoothly between CCRI and RIC.

- Vote "yes" on questions 6 and 7.

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- Congratulations to Brenda DuHamel who is moving from managing Early Intervention and children with special health care needs to managing long term care at EOHHS. Donna Novak will be filling in for her while they search for a new state Early Intervention coordinator.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Early Learning Council is on December 14, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Save the Bay.