

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 12, 2018 9:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.

Save the Bay

Meeting Summary

AGENDA SUMMARY

The Early Learning Council's agenda addressed the following topics:

- Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview
- Discussion: State Pre-K Expansion
- Policy & Program Updates – Program Quality
- Policy and Program Updates
- Public comment
- Work Group Discussion: Meeting Social-Emotional Needs and Addressing Behavioral Concerns of Children in ECE Programs

KEY POINTS

Key discussion points from the meeting are summarized below:

WELCOME, OPENING REMARKS, AND MEETING OVERVIEW

Commissioner Ken Wagner, Director Courtney Hawkins, and Elizabeth Burke Bryant welcomed the Council. (See slides). The following comments were made:

- The test score results for 3rd through 8th grades were not surprising. The RICAS test administered was identical to the test administered in Massachusetts and we had a 98% participation rate. The results provide an opportunity to start a concerted effort to improve test scores. More investment in teachers would lead to better teaching and better learning.
- RIDE has updated the teacher regulations in several significant ways.
 - RIDE doubled the required practical experience from a semester to a yearlong residency model or equivalent.
 - RIDE extended emergency certification in shortage areas to seven years to provide more time for investment and monitoring.
 - RIDE now recognizes cultural competence as a shortage area to permit strategizing around attracting a diverse workforce.
 - RIDE reinstated ongoing professional development for certificate renewal and included collaboration with colleagues as a way of satisfying that requirement.
 - RIDE established a new accountability system for schools and districts that allows for a summary representation of progress through a 1 to 5 star system. This system includes measures beyond test scores and graduation rates, such as absenteeism among students and teachers and expenditures per pupil at the school level. It also considers the growth of a school. For example, a low performing school could be increasing every year while a high performing school could be stagnant. That growth needs to be recognized and celebrated.
- The governor has promised to roll out high quality State Pre-K for all 4-year-olds in Rhode Island. RIDE and DHS are working together systematically to achieve that goal. The governor wants to build a high quality mixed delivery system, including school districts and community based organizations, that does not negatively impact early learning programs in the community.

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- A strong early care and education system is key to moving vulnerable families in Rhode Island to a place of economic progress.

DISCUSSION: STATE PRE-K EXPANSION

Cara Harrison led the discussion of State Pre-K expansion. (See slides). Key comments and questions included:

- Rhode Island was able to accelerate its investments in additional State Pre-K classrooms with the first round federal PDG grant, but that funding is winding down and needs to be replaced and, more importantly, expanded upon.
- The State Pre-K Expansion Plan is still under development. The completed plan will incorporate feedback from the early childhood education community.
- The plan will use 70% enrollment as its benchmark for universal State Pre-K for 4-year-olds, or about 7,000 seats. That enrollment rate is equivalent to the percentage of children enrolled in public schools in Rhode Island, K through 12th grade. If the demand for State Pre-K is higher, the state will increase its capacity so that all families who want to enroll can find a space.
- Currently, State Pre-K and Head Start programs enroll 41% of low-income 4-year-olds. State Pre-K and Head Start programs enroll 23% of all 4-year-olds. State Pre-K mixed delivery programs account for 11% of those 4-year-olds, 1,080 children, and the rest are enrolled in Head Start.
- COMMENT: Our goal is big so we need unrestricted thinking to achieve it.
- The state realizes that the six-hour model for State Pre-K programs does not meet the needs of all families. We are exploring how to utilize other funding to ensure families who need a longer day can access wrap around child care.
- Q: Can we determine the whereabouts of the 4-year-olds not enrolled in State Pre-K programs?
A: Some of the children in that sector are attending private community preschool programs, but we do not have data on those children. The new PDG grant we hope to receive will include funding to conduct more data analysis on the early childhood education system.
- COMMENT: Districts can claim the funding formula for State Pre-K classrooms because the state considers Pre-K a grade level. Additionally, districts can use facility spaces for shared purposes and still qualify for state funding, which helps with providing before and after care. This funding is not available to districts receiving State Pre-K funding.
- COMMENT: Community and Head Start programs have more flexibility with staffing than school districts because they do not have to negotiate union contracts. In addition, community and Head Start facilities are better organized for before and after care than school district facilities are.
- COMMENT: Rhode Island's mixed delivery State Pre-K system is categorically funded so individual districts are not determining how to deliver Pre-K programming.

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- COMMENT: Some community based programs pay property taxes, which could be significant.
- COMMENT: The early childhood education system is experiencing a devastating staffing crisis and serious facility issues. Programs are unable to apply for available funding because they do not have sufficient facilities or the necessary staff to open additional classrooms.
- Q: Can we use modular classrooms to help alleviate facility issues?
A: Modular classrooms are just a temporary fix and there are considerable regulatory and other hurdles before programs can use modular classrooms. The one company that used to provide modulars in Rhode Island will no longer do business here because it was too difficult.
- COMMENT: The early childhood education plan that will evolve in Rhode Island over the next four years is not the final permanent plan. We need interim solutions to get us on the pathway to our long-term goals.
- COMMENT: Although it might be unrealistic as we expand the State Pre-K system, establishing a smaller class size is the mark of a higher quality program.
- COMMENT: We cannot forget about family child care providers as we expand the State Pre-K system, including the possibility of forging new partnerships.
- COMMENT: We need to increase engagement with programs that have only 1 or 2 facilities because these programs need support in opening infant toddler classrooms.
- COMMENT: Some people thought that early childhood education programs would convert preschool classrooms to infant toddler classrooms if/when 4-year-olds moved into public schools or other community-based State Pre-K system. However, the reality is that programs that lose 4-year-olds have not opened infant toddler classrooms because the expense needed to meet the enhanced regulations for infants and toddlers is not covered by family tuition or state reimbursement rates. The reimbursement for infants does not cover the additional expenses infants require. Programs need help and support with planning to open infant toddler classrooms.
- COMMENT: We need more certifications so teachers can better understand the infant toddler age group. High quality programs need teachers that know how to address the social-emotional needs of all children and programs need to offer those additional supports regardless of insurance coverage.
- Any further comments or questions can be emailed to Cara: cara.harrison@governor.ri.gov

Discussion

- **High-Quality, Mixed Delivery System for Pre-K**
 - Successes
 - Maintaining salary parity requirements

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- Challenges
 - Rolling out plans to include sites/school districts outside of the core cities
 - The system should include Title 1 schools statewide
 - Ensuring consistency in quality before and after the six hour period
 - Ensuring Pre-K expansion does not reduce the number or quality of slots for Birth to 3 children.
 - Establishing connections/partnerships with family child care providers for before and after care
 - Maintaining a mix of lower and higher income children in State Pre-K, which hugely benefits lower income children
 - Identifying facilities funding for community early learning programs that do not have access to state bond money, which school districts use to expand facilities for their State Pre-K classrooms
 - Increasing the resources and quality supports focused on family child care providers
- Recommendations
 - Create public bond dollars to expand and improve facilities for community based centers, like they do in Massachusetts and Connecticut
 - Maintain a class size of 18
 - Offer wrap around affordable child care in State Pre-K programs, especially since transportation is not provided
 - Create a pathway for faith based programs to include them in the mixed delivery system, thereby offering a choice for families
 - Offer grants to support environment needs in facilities
 - Assist programs in identifying the infant, toddler, and 3s programming that they can keep with funding
 - Invest in facilities for infant/toddler expansions
 - Allow children living outside of a community to attend a program in that community
 - Ensure every State Pre-K program provides comprehensive services addressing all family and child needs
 - Include the comprehensive services required by Head Start into the quality rubric, such as medical home and dental home
- **Developing Diverse, Effective Pre-K Teachers**
 - Successes
 - Supporting Pre-K teachers in achieving the RIDE Pre-K requirements for certification and continuing professional development
 - Challenges
 - Ensuring that alternative paths to certification established in some public school State Pre-K classrooms are fair to children and Head Start programs
 - Establishing true parity for teacher compensation based on teacher experience, including benefits for teachers
 - Improving access to technical assistance
 - Preventing the loss of early learning teachers
 - Improving low wages and recalibrating high expectations

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- Correcting the inequality between wages from Head Start/community based programs and wages from State Pre-K programs
- Improving the consistency of itinerant special education needs across systems and districts, including:
 - Funding
 - Caseload numbers
 - Facilities issues
 - Capacity of educators
- Recommendations
 - Qualify teachers with ECE degrees for State Pre-K
 - Define waiver benchmarks for certification
 - Continue to provide grant funded higher education, such as the RIECETP at CCRI and the T.E.A.C.H. program
 - Offer alternative pathways to certification, including pathways that encourage diversity
 - Provide scholarships to increase the number of special education Pre-K teachers
 - Develop higher education BA programming to support a cohort model with weekend programs and online classes
 - Develop coaching and certification
 - Use state money for wage equality in all classrooms
 - Find ways to keep high quality, competent teachers in the field that have a BA in an unrelated field
 - Many great teachers leave because they do not “qualify” as lead teachers and can only serve as teachers
 - Develop a campaign to recruit young, diverse teachers to fill Pre-K positions
 - Give ECE teachers seven years and the necessary supports to achieve certification as PK-2 teachers
 - Address concerns about funding for teachers and the overall loss of teachers and the impact that it has on infant toddler slots
- **Engaging Families and Managing Enrollment**
 - Successes
 - Utilizing dedicated staff for simultaneous recruitment efforts for Head Start and State Pre-K families
 - Challenges
 - Addressing the needs of families after six hours and/or 180 days with wrap around care, especially for children with social-emotional behavior issues
 - Ensuring that families attending out of district child care programs can stay in those programs if they convert to a State Pre-K classroom
 - Ensuring that Head Start classrooms maintain enrollment as the State Pre-K program expands
 - Recommendations
 - Offer family friendly options that include the ability to attend out of district programs
 - Expand the State Pre-K program beyond the core communities

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- Expand the hours of operation to a full day and full year
- Reach out directly to stand alone centers that are not aware of the changes to the early childhood education system
- Maintain smaller class sizes
- Consider out of district enrollment
- **Coordinated Efforts to Strengthen the Birth to 3rd Grade Early Childhood Education System**
 - Successes
 - Keeping IECSE itinerants embedded within early childhood programs and encouraging collaboration with special education
 - Challenges
 - Establishing an infant toddler credential
 - Funding the expense of opening infant toddler classrooms
 - Addressing the lack of teachers for Birth to 3 years
 - Recommendations
 - Incorporate infant/early childhood mental health competency guidelines (0-3 and 0-5)
 - Incorporate an infant/early childhood mental health endorsement system to affirm competence
 - Embed this system in BrightStars and leverage salaries based on endorsements
 - Create an economic model with incentives or low interest loans/grants for current centers who do not want a State Pre-K classroom so they will convert unused classrooms to infant/toddler slots
 - Collaborate with Head Start to ensure continuity of care
 - Offer behavioral health supports
 - Implement a MTSS/Social-emotional curriculum with its associated professional development and technical assistance
 - Support the financial development of infant toddler teachers for BA degrees

POLICY AND PROGRAM UPDATES – PROGRAM QUALITY

BrightStars Revisions

Caitlin Molina discussed the BrightStars revisions. (See slides.) Comments and questions included:

- DHS, in preparation for tiered reimbursement rates, convened a BrightStars Think Tank of key early childhood education stakeholders to solicit feedback on the BrightStars framework, with the goal of strengthening it and making it more applicable for programs across Rhode Island.
- After four meetings, the Think Tank submitted twenty-four recommendation to DHS for consideration. DHS met with stakeholders and individually reviewed the recommendations. The recommendations and responses can be found on the DHS website:
<http://www.dhs.ri.gov/Documents%20Forms/BSImplementationFall2018Response.pdf>
- The recommendations fall into four key strategy areas:
 - Program Observation Tools

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- ECERS, FCCERS, and ITERS were a source of anxiety for programs who had no access to trainings or onsite coaching and modeling to prepare for those observations.
- In partnership with RIDE, DHS trained an assessor team in the new ECERS tool. DHS created an implementation plan for transitioning to the newer version of ECERS. As part of the implementation, DHS will consider updating the scoring mechanism used to assess programs. Implementation will take a year or two. Currently, DHS is still using the existing ECERS tool.
- DHS worked closely with family child care homes to provide more accessible training and more onsite coaching and mentoring. BrightStars is conducting a pilot with four family child care homes with a practice FCCERS so the experience can be tailored to ensure the quality of programming in family child care homes is accurately measured. This cooperation will help build trust between family child care homes and the BrightStars/DHS system.
- DHS & DCYF Licensing Alignment
 - State licensing regulations are duplicative and confusing. Over the course of the next year, DCYF and DHS will prioritize an improved approach to support providers in accessing resources for both departments.
- BrightStars' Framework Improvements
 - BrightStars eliminated discrepancies that caused confusion. BrightStars will offer a quarterly opportunity to provide feedback on the framework revisions.
- Workforce Development & Credentialing
 - Providers experience significant barriers to credentialing and development, particularly Spanish-speaking teachers.
 - The state is expanding its offerings. For example, CCRI has tripled capacity for its infant toddler CDA certificate, which offers a cohort based program that serves both family child care and center based providers.
 - The revised BrightStars framework recognizes the CDA as a stand-alone credential. The hope is that this recognition will make 3 Stars more attainable for providers. At 3 Stars, providers can receive onsite observations and, as a result, more opportunities for onsite coaching and mentoring.
 - Before recognizing the CDA in the BrightStars framework, DHS consulted CCRI to ensure they could meet the demand of the workforce seeking to improve quality. DHS also consulted national stakeholders. Although the state ultimately wants higher credentials for early childhood education teachers, honoring the CDA as a stand-alone credential represents where the workforce currently is and provides them with an opportunity to grow. As the workforce increases in quality, recognition of the CDA in the BrightStars framework may no longer be necessary.
 - DHS is working with RIELDS to revise its trainings. RIELDS will offer more shorter trainings tailored to the workforce and will provide a more accessible online training platform. DHS will grant waivers for the Foundations course if a provider has a BA in early childhood education.

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- We are currently in Phase 1 of tiered reimbursement rates. Infant toddler rates are at the 75th percentile in 5 star centers. Ultimately, our goal is to move preschool rates for 5 star programs to the 75 percentile as well.
- On the BrightStars Impact to Date Slide, the November feedback visits were low because that was when the BrightStars team was trained in the new ECERS tool.
- A BrightStars Quarterly Advisory Group consists of people involved on the BrightStars Think Tank. Other people can join the Advisory Group by contacting Caitlin at: Caitlin.Molina@dhs.ri.gov
- Q: How is the waiver of the RIELDS Foundations course implemented?
A: Currently, RIDE is individually issuing waivers for providers that apply and have a BA in early childhood education. RIDE and DHS will soon operationalize that process.
- Q: While some programs were increasing their quality star ratings, were other programs decreasing in their star ratings?
A: Yes, the number of programs decreasing in star ratings was approximately equal to the number of programs increasing in star ratings.
- Q: Does BrightStars monitor why programs are decreasing in star ratings?
A: Yes, the reasons for those decreases are tracked.
- There soon will be 36 CDA graduates and DHS will closely follow those people to see how they mobilize themselves within the quality rating improvement system, especially the 16 family child care providers. Family child care providers have more impact towards quality improvement within the BrightStars framework because providers at centers are just one of many factors that contribute towards quality improvement.
- There has been a considerable amount of reengagement with BrightStars as a result of tiered reimbursement. .

Child Care Licensing Update

Veronica Davis presented the Child Care Licensing Update. (See slides.) Comments and questions included the following:

- The Deputy Chief of Licensing moved to a new position and DCYF is currently looking for a replacement. DCYF is onboarding several new licensing specialists, including one that is fluent in both Spanish and Creole. Providers will receive new contact information for the staffing changes in January.
- The FCCH regulations are in the final stage of edits. DCYF will send out the regulations for public consideration soon thereafter. Following the next level of stakeholder feedback, the regulations will be promulgated.

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- Licensing monitoring reports are now available online through the DCYF website. The reports are uploaded as a batch every few weeks. A new DCYF website will launch by the end of the year, which will improve the public interface and allow providers and stakeholders to more easily access the resources available online through the EXCEED website.
- The CCDBG Block Grant expands the requirements for background checks for child care employees. Previously, every child care employee was required to get a national FBI fingerprint criminal check, a state level BCI criminal check, and a Child Abuse and Neglect check. Now, federal requirements have added a National Sex Offender Registry check and a RI Sex Offender Registry check. Additionally, for every state in which the child care employee has resided during the past five years, programs must obtain an interstate criminal check, an interstate Child Abuse and Neglect check and an interstate Sex Offender Registry check. All of these requirements must be repeated every five years. DCYF is working with the Attorney General's Office as well as state and local police to ensure sufficient capacity to meet these new requirements.
- In 2019, DCYF will coordinate with law enforcement to offer fingerprint events that will include state and national criminal checks, Child Abuse and Neglect checks and state and national Sex Offender Registry checks. Individual programs must facilitate the checks required from other states, but the Administration for Children and Families website has a resource for connecting with the relevant agencies in all 50 states, although some states refuse to cooperate. For those state contacts, go to https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/child_care_subsidy_cbc_state_contacts_9-12.pdf
- The Child Abuse and Neglect check is only available through DCYF. Programs can request those checks online. Soon the online portal will include additional automation.
- COMMENT: RIDE recently revised its background check requirements for volunteers in State Pre-K programs so they now match the background check requirements for volunteers in school age programs.
- Volunteers are not required or able to receive fingerprint checks.
- If an employee breaks employment with a program and goes to another employer, the background checks must be completed again.
- Q: Would DCYF be willing to work with a local company that would conduct background checks at a negotiated fee-per-program rate?
A: No, we cannot use a local company because, with the new requirements, they could not conduct all the necessary checks. Sex Offender Registry checks cannot be separated out from a general criminal check and only a law enforcement agency can conduct a sex offender registry check.
- Q: Does DCYF have the support staff necessary to monitor the background checks?
A: Yes, there is a team focused on background checks for the entire department so this responsibility will be added to that existing team.

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- Q: Is a check of the online Sex Offender Registry sufficient to satisfy that requirement?
A: No, the online Sex Offender Registry does not include a confidential lower level of information that is only accessible to a law enforcement agency. The necessary Sex Offender Registry check is included in DCYF coordinated fingerprint checks as long as a program has updated its staff information on ECEDS.

RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Regulations

Lisa Nugent explained the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Regulations. (See slides.)

Comments and questions included:

- There are no significant content changes in the revised Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Regulations, except for decibel levels. The previously required decibel levels were unattainable even with no children in the room so RIDE modified them to be realistically achievable.
- The new regulations will blend State Pre-K regulations and CECE regulations where appropriate. The revisions will eliminate duplication and mesh deliverables.
- In the revisions, RIDE may revise class size from 18 to up to 20 so programs have flexibility to determine size, especially where facilities cannot physically fit 20 children or where special needs children require additional attention by providers.
- COMMENT: If stakeholders determine that class size is a non-negotiable component of the regulations, then members of the early childhood education system must offer other suggestions for negotiable requirements to ensure that the system is attainable with the limited funding available in this state.
- COMMENT: Recruitment for the 1080 children currently enrolled in State Pre-K programs focused on the population with the highest needs, a population that generally requires more social-emotional and behavioral supports. The more the State Pre-K system grows, the more universal its enrollment will become and the number of high needs children will return to normal proportions. When that happens, class size could increase without impacting quality.
- COMMENT: Programs need more funding to train parents to help their children.
- COMMENT: Providers need a basic understanding of positive strategies to support children with behavioral challenges. This investment in training might cost more upfront, but it will eventually save money because these children will not need as many services when they are older. In the State Pre-K system, teachers receive foundational skills through the Pyramid Model and practice based coaching.
- COMMENT: Rhode Island has the infrastructure for the Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines and Endorsement system for Birth to 3. There is now an Early Childhood Mental Health Competency and Endorsement system that builds on the infant one, which expands the system to age 5.

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POLICY AND PROGRAM UPDATES

PDG Birth to 5 State Grant Application

Kayla Rosen discussed the PDG Birth to 5 State Grant Application. Key comments included:

- We do not know yet if we will receive this grant. A decision should come out before the end of the year.
- This grant will help Rhode Island build on more than a decade of incredible progress and would help the state launch into a new phase with its State Pre-K system. It would also ensure that we are serving all children from Birth to age 5 in a strong and equitable way.

Think Babies 2019 Policy Goals and Campaign Plan

Leanne Barrett presented the Think Babies 2019 Policy Goals and Campaign Plan. Comments and questions included:

- Low-income families do not take advantage of Paid Family Leave because the percentage of wage replacement is inadequate to cover daily expenses.
- By adopting national standards for child care licensing, licensing can encourage improved quality of care.
- Rhode Island can leverage pediatrician visits to improve connections to services for infants and toddlers.
- Federal funding for home visiting in Rhode Island is declining and must be replaced to sustain the number of slots. Medicaid funding is a good option.
- The Think Babies steering committee is meeting January 11th.
- COMMENT: DHS has been working with family child care providers to adopt tiered reimbursement for those providers in the next phase. Family child care providers will hire an FTE entirely allocated to quality and training. The FTE will coordinate a training fund and CCRI will expand its capacity to better support family child care providers.
- Q: Has there been any discussion of funding credentials for content knowledge?
A: Yes, the wage strategy is connected to qualifications. Also, BrightStars includes requirements related to teacher knowledge and competencies. The T.E.A.C.H. program also provides some compensation improvements connected with access to college.
- COMMENT: We need to join the 35 states with an infant toddler credential. We also need a compensation strategy along with credentialing.
- COMMENT: DLT has not prioritized early childhood career pathways for support because it does not pay well.

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- COMMENT: Some programs do not use T.E.A.C.H. because it mandates a salary increase, which, to ensure equality, would require a program to increase the salary of all employees completing additional coursework. Programs cannot always afford that added expense. T.E.A.C.H. previously allowed for a bonus as an alternative to a salary increase. A bonus option provided more flexibility and did not create as many parity concerns.
- RIDE and DHS are developing a joint RFP to solicit feedback on expanding access to professional development and scholarship opportunities.
- Q: What is the implication of a T.E.A.C.H. requirement to increase wages if programs are not able to implement wage increases due to their wage structure?
A: This is something we need to examine.
- COMMENT: T.E.A.C.H. goes beyond a scholarship and a wage increase. It also includes release time and ensures that a program works together with the scholar towards additional qualifications. Students feel supported by a program's investment in their future.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND NEXT STEPS

There were no additional comments and questions from the public.

WORK GROUP DISCUSSION: MEETING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS OF CHILDREN IN ECE PROGRAMS

Ruth Gallucci and Jennifer Kaufman facilitated the discussion on meeting the social-emotional needs and addressing the behavioral concerns of children in ECE programs. (See slides.) Comments included:

Overview of work group activities

- The work group has met for five months. The work group's goal has been to develop state level recommendations that ensure RI meets the social-emotional needs of young children.
- The draft recommendations involve three areas: Early Childhood Education Foundation, Behavioral Health Supports, and State Policy/Systems
- The workgroup is currently looking for stakeholder input on the draft recommendations.
- Final recommendations will be presented to the Early Learning Council in March and be used by newly constituted work groups to create implementation strategies.
- If we reach children on a foundational level in early learning programs, then we could prevent many of the issues that arise later and force children into more intensive stand-alone behavioral programs.
- Some early learning programs are already effectively addressing the social-emotional needs and behavioral concerns of children, but not all of them are. The work group hopes to expand the number of programs addressing these needs and concerns.

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- The work group is proposing a change to the KIDS CONNECT funding structure in the upcoming certification standards revision that would more effectively meet the needs of children enrolled in KIDS CONNECT.

COMMENT: Many foster children need help as soon as they enter early childhood programs and some programs have had to turn foster children away because of the significance of the children's needs. Not all foster children need extra services.

- COMMENT: Training everyone in trauma informed care is key.
- COMMENT: A small group of children in foster care has urgent needs that we should communicate and support as they enter the early childhood education system.
- COMMENT: Teachers need mental health consultants to coach and help them in the classroom.
- The questions considered during the discussion were:
 - Did we capture the correct recommendations within the specific category?
 - What did we miss?
 - Additional comments
- Contact Jen with any feedback, comments or to join the work group:
Jennifer.Kaufman@ohhs.ri.gov

Stakeholder Recommendations

- Early Childhood Education Foundation
 - Consider using Zero to Three for foundation support, like RIC does for its curriculum and development
 - Consider home/family visiting as a key component for positive outcomes and political support
 - Develop certificate programs that address how teachers/programs know what to do, what the process is and who are the players
 - Use a whole child approach
 - Provide opportunities for coaching and mentoring that include instruction in the classroom, with the support of a supervisor, on techniques and strategies
 - Infuse a trauma sensitive/informed approach into the curriculum and professional development
 - Include IHE representation on the work group to assist in preparing and utilizing curricula focused on special education and mental health
- Behavioral Health Supports
 - Ensure funding/reimbursement for KIDS CONNECT is adequate to provide a 1-4 ratio for children with behavioral needs
 - Provide more flexibility with KIDS CONNECT funding, which is based on identifying 4 children to "break-even"

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- Provide parenting curriculum workshops and individual coaching to engage parents on working with children with special education challenges
 - Imbed evidence based positive parenting groups and education for EI and ECSE educators, e.g., Incredible Years, Triple P
 - Support parents to ensure what is practiced in the classroom is also practiced in the home
 - Invest in system wide evidence based culture changing professional development like Incredible Years
 - Adopt curriculum that supports this work
 - Ensure KIDS CONNECT educators have the knowledge to help students
 - Support teachers through mentoring, training, classroom supports, ongoing professional development, classroom design and curriculum work
 - Train itinerants to support early childhood work
 - Expand professional development to include coaching and mentoring
 - Expand or share wrap around services
 - Connect with pediatric practices for integrated behavioral work across systems
- State Policy/Systems
 - Coordinate with the governor's executive order on mental health parity
 - Ensure all service providers work directly in the room with teachers
 - Develop a system to share information on a child's needs when they enter foster care and when they change early childhood centers, including:
 - Information to foster parents
 - Information to early childhood centers
 - Feedback to case workers
 - Information to biological parents, as appropriate
 - Increase investment in upstream prevention programs for parents to support them in tending to/fostering the special education needs of their children
 - Expand "clinical judgement"
 - Expand EI to birth to 5 with shared costs and services between Parts B and C
 - Provide parents and caretakers/caregivers with a strong, usable voice and acknowledge their potential role/expertise
 - Decrease the time for referral and screening
 - What do teachers do in the meantime?