

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

June 29, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Location: Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090

Agenda

12:00-12:05	Welcome /Meeting Overview	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Deborah Gist
12:05-12:15	Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Initiative	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Deborah Gist
12:15-12:25	Public Comment (Topics: Early Learning Data, Professional Development and Higher Education)	Public Participants
12:25-1:20	Priorities for Improving Rhode Island’s ECE Data System	Leanne Barrett, Team Leader, ECE Data Systems Team
1:20-1:35	Report from Professional Development Team	Lisa Hildebrand (representing Tammy Camillo) Karen Beese Co-team leaders, Professional Development Team
1:35-1:45	Report from Higher Education Team	Leslie Gell Team leader, Higher Education Team
1:45-1:55	Updates	Deborah Gist Elizabeth Burke Bryant
1:55-2:00	Next Steps	Deborah Gist Elizabeth Burke Bryant

Rhode Island Early Learning Council

Expanding Access to High Quality Early Learning Programs

March 23, 2011

Access Priorities: These priorities were endorsed by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council on March 23, 2011 as key strategies to improve children's access to high-quality early learning programs. These recommendations are categorized by program funding area to help clarify the key areas for change. It is important to recognize that children's needs often don't fall into only one program/funding area. It is a goal of the council to remove barriers and to improve coordination and integration across early learning program areas, including strategies to increase access for English Language Learners and children involved with the child welfare system.

Child Care

- Change the Child Care Assistance Program policy so that currently enrolled families ($\leq 180\%$ of the Federal Poverty Level) remain eligible for the program as their income increases, up to an exit income limit of 225% of Federal Poverty Level. Work to restore eligibility for child care subsidies to 225% of the FPL.
- Increase the state's reimbursement rates paid to child care providers serving children from low-income working enrolled in the Child Care Assistance Program to a fair market rate based on the most recent market rate survey.
- Request that the Rhode Island Department of Human Services amend current regulations so that:
 - ❖ Low-income working families participating in the Child Care Assistance Program are re-certified every 12 months instead of every 6 months
 - ❖ Families can maintain eligibility for child care assistance for longer periods of time during periods of unemployment (beyond current 3 week period) so they can more effectively engage in job search.
 - ❖ Information about case closures is immediately shared with providers serving children in the Child Care Assistance Program with a 2 week final payment.
- Increase the consistency of children's participation in high-quality early learning programs by providing continued child care assistance regardless of changes in parent work status to children in their pre-kindergarten year for children enrolled in a high-quality early learning program.

Head Start/Early Head Start

- Restore state funding for Head Start to support enrollment of 500 low-income children. (currently 156 slots).
- Provide transportation to children enrolled in Head Start (between home and Head Start)

Rhode Island Early Learning Council

Expanding Access to High Quality Early Learning Programs

March 23, 2011

Public Pre-K

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

Early Childhood Special Education

- Increase the proportion of children under age 3 who are involved with DCYF who receive Early Intervention (EI) services.
 - ❖ Consider expanding eligibility for EI to all children birth-3 with a substantiated case of abuse or neglect (categorically).
 - ❖ Simplify EI consent for treatment process.
 - ❖ Incorporate evidence-based parenting education programs into EI.
- Ensure access to appropriate services (including evidence-based parenting education programs) to support families with children exhibiting behavioral concerns that may not rise to the level of special education
- Improve transitions for children as they move across early intervention, early childhood special education and school age (K-3) education systems.
- Provide access for children with special needs, but who are not Medicaid eligible, to home based services, respite, care management, etc. (particularly related to children with Autism)

Full Day Kindergarten

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

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***Rhode Island Early Learning Council
and
Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting Calendar
2011-2012***

Date	Meeting	Time	Location
Tuesday, September 13, 2011	Work Group	9:30-11:30 a.m.	CCRI-Knight Campus, Room 1130 400 East Ave, Warwick
<i>Wednesday, September 28, 2011</i>	<i>Early Learning Council</i>	<i>12:00-1:30 p.m.</i>	CCRI-Knight Campus, Room 1130 400 East Ave, Warwick
Thursday, November 10, 2011	Work Group	9:30-11:30 a.m.	CCRI-Knight Campus, Room 1130 400 East Ave, Warwick
<i>Wednesday, December 7, 2011</i>	<i>Early Learning Council</i>	<i>12:00-2:00 p.m.</i>	CCRI-Knight Campus, Room 1130 400 East Ave, Warwick
<i>Wednesday, January 25, 2012</i>	<i>Early Learning Council Retreat</i>	<i>12:00-3:00 p.m.</i>	
Thursday, February 16, 2012	Work Group	9:30-11:30 a.m.	
<i>Wednesday, March 28, 2012</i>	<i>Early Learning Council</i>	<i>12:00-2:00 p.m.</i>	
Tuesday, May 17, 2012	Work Group	9:30-11:30 a.m.	
<i>Wednesday, June 13, 2012</i>	<i>Early Learning Council</i>	<i>12:00-2:00 p.m.</i>	

RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL MEETING

June 29, 2011

12:00-2:00 p.m.

CCRI – Knight Campus, Room 4090





MEETING AGENDA

12:00-12:05	Welcome /Meeting Overview
12:05-12:15	Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Initiative
12:15-12:25	Public Comment
12:15-1:20	Early Learning Data System Recommendations and Priorities
1:20-1:35	Report from Professional Development Team
1:35-1:45	Report from Higher Education Team
1:45-1:55	Updates
1:55-2:00	Next Steps

**RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY
LEARNING CHALLENGE
INITIATIVE**

PUBLIC COMMENT

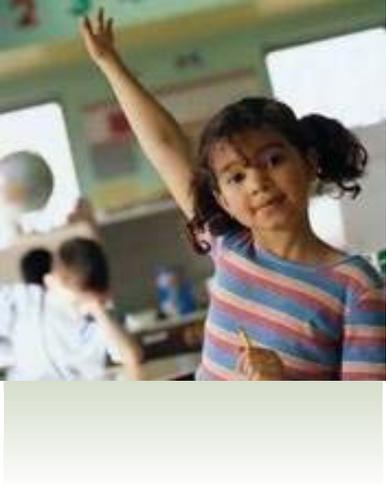
**TOPICS: EARLY LEARNING DATA, PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING RHODE ISLAND'S ECE DATA SYSTEM



RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM PLANNING TEAM

- ❖ Began meeting in June 2010 when Rhode Island was selected to participate in the National Governor's Association's *Ready States Policy Initiative*
- ❖ Core team includes representatives from Rhode Island KIDS COUNT (coordinator), RI Department of Human Services, RI Department of Education, RI Department of Health, RI Department of Children, Youth and Families, state Head Start Collaboration Director, and Ready to Learn Providence. Other participants include Governor's Office policy staff and research data experts from Brown University
- ❖ Technical assistance from the NGA Ready States Team and the national Early Childhood Data Collaborative. Policy Academies in Seattle (July 2010) and New Orleans (December 2010). Field trip to Harrisburg, PA with four other promising states.



DATA AS A POLICY LEVER

Data enables policymakers and community leaders to:

- ❖ Sustain and grow current investments in effective programs
- ❖ Identify areas most in need of intervention
- ❖ Make changes to improve outcomes for young children and families
- ❖ Track the results of investments
- ❖ Monitor trends over time



NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Increasing recognition of critical need for data on young children's learning and development and their access to high-quality early learning programs

- ❖ NGA: Longitudinal and coordinated early learning data systems are needed to track results and drive continued improvement by (one of 4 core action areas)
- ❖ 2007 federal legislation requiring states to establish Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Councils requires Councils to "develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State"
- ❖ Key leader: Data Quality Campaign – national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to enhance the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement (annual survey of states)



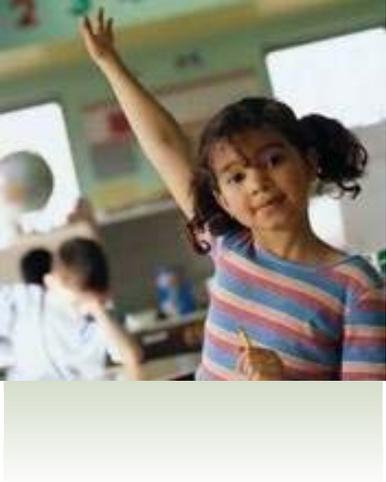
CAN STATES ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

- ❖ Are children, birth to age 5, on track to succeed when they enter school and beyond?
- ❖ Which children have access to high-quality early care and education programs?
- ❖ Is the quality of programs improving?
- ❖ What are the characteristics of effective programs?
- ❖ How prepared is the early care and education workforce to provide effective education and care for all children?
- ❖ What policies and investments lead to a skilled and stable early care and education workforce?



10 FUNDAMENTALS OF COORDINATED STATE EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEMS

1. Unique statewide child identifier (?)
2. Child-level demographic and program participation information
3. Child-level data on development and learning
4. Ability to link child-level data with K-12 and other key data systems
5. Unique program site identifier with the ability to link with children and the early learning workforce
6. Program site data on structure, quality and work environment
7. Unique early learning workforce identifier with ability to link with program sites and children
8. Individual early learning workforce demographics, including education, and professional development information
9. State governance body to manage data collection and use
10. Transparent privacy protection and security practices and policies



SOUTH CAROLINA EXAMPLE

CHILDREN EXPERIENCING EARLY SCHOOL FAILURE

Percentage of Children Possessing *This Risk Factor* “Not Succeeding by 3rd Grade”

Readiness Risk Factors

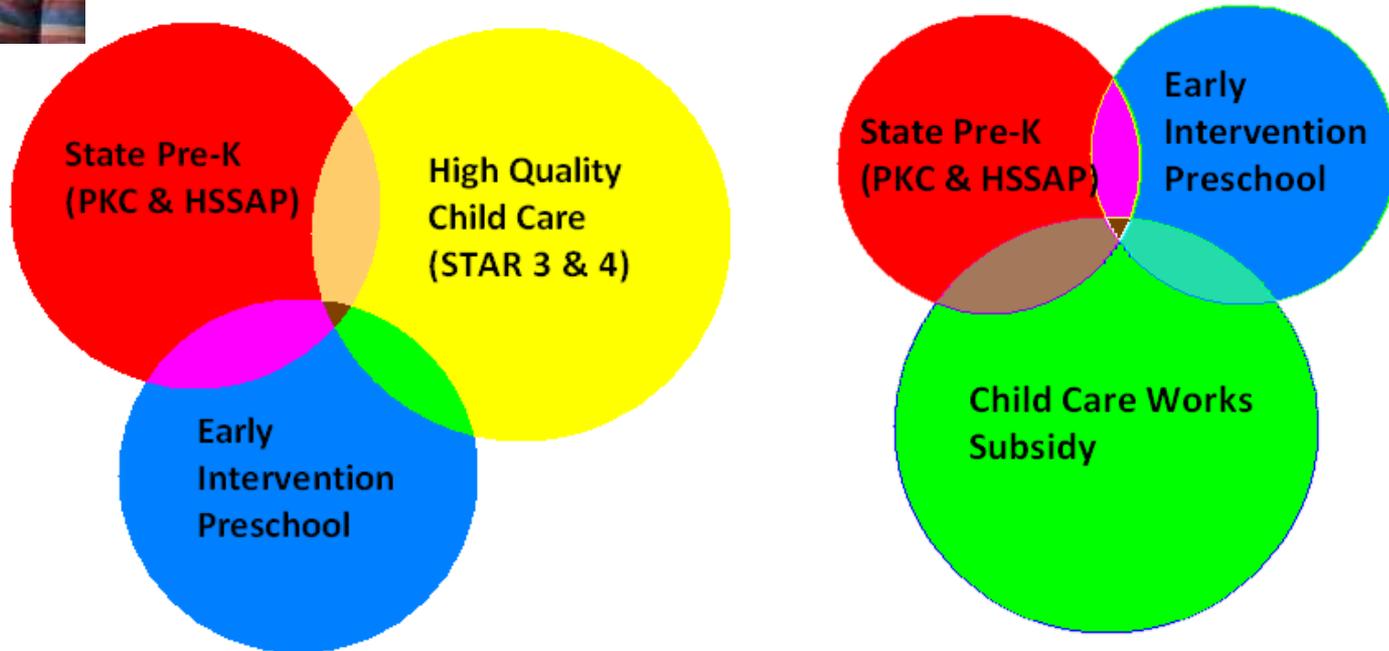
Percentage (and Estimate) of 0-6 Child Population Possessing *This Risk Factor*

53%	Abused, Neglected, or in Foster Care	3% (10,173)
48%	Low Maternal Education (Less than High School)	24.13% (81,852)
45%	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) (50% of Federal Poverty)	8.4% (28,690)
43%	Low Birth Weight (1500 - 2000 grams)	2.77% (9,390)
43%	Teen Mother (Under 18)	4.6% (15,618)
42%	Food Stamps (130% of Federal Poverty)	20% (67,897)

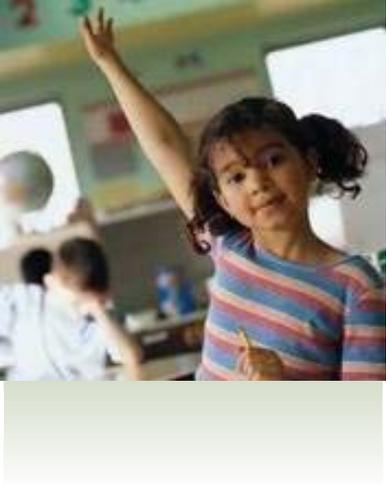


PENNSYLVANIA EXAMPLE

UNDUPLICATED CHILD COUNT



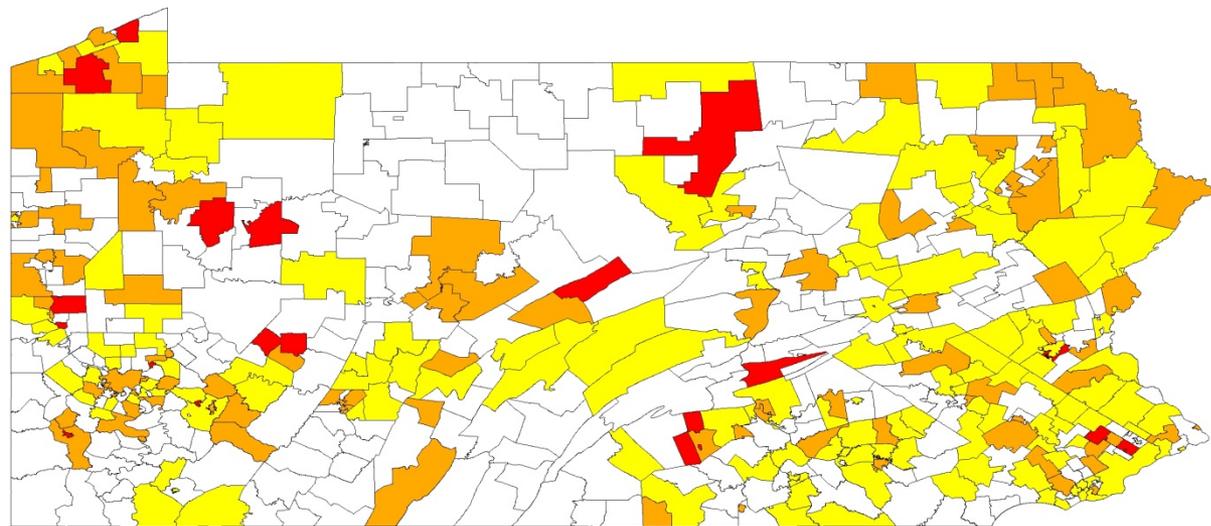
State PreK (PA PKC, HSSAP) only	14,384	State PreK and EI	900
Quality child care (STAR 3 and 4) only	9,277	Quality child care and EI	610
Early Intervention Preschool only	13,561	CCW, EI, STARS	195
CCW Only	28,662	CCW, STARS, State PreK	442
CCW and State PreK	2,248	CCW, EI, State PreK	87
CCW and EI	1,190	State PreK, quality child care, and EI	29
CCW and Quality	4,734	State PreK, Quality, EI, CCW	14
State PreK and quality child care	753		



PENNSYLVANIA EXAMPLE

% OF CHILDREN IN HIGH QUALITY
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Estimated Reach Star 3 and Star 4 Facilities



Low Reach Moderate-High
Moderate-Low High Reach

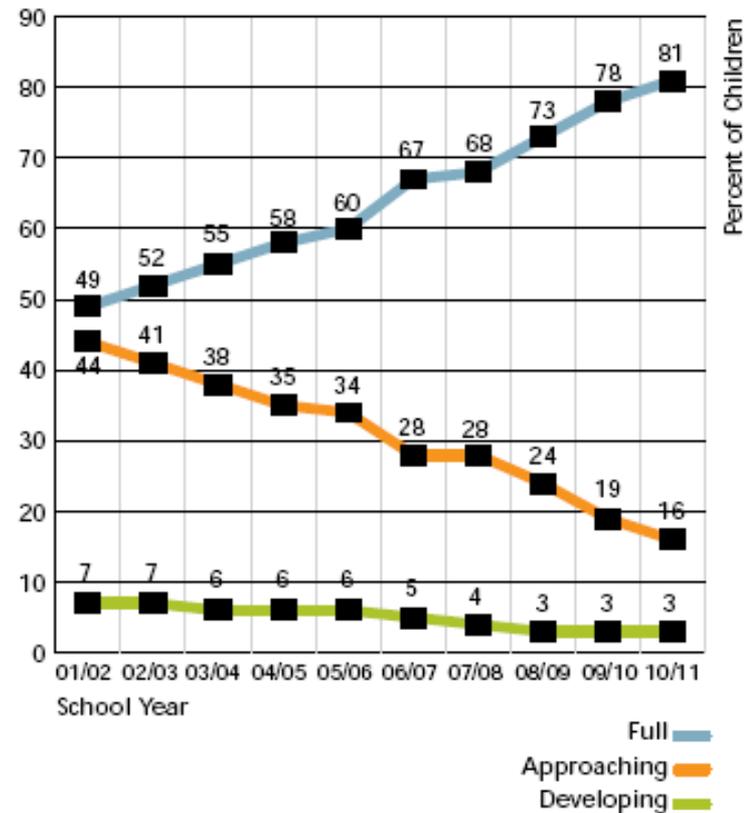
MARYLAND EXAMPLE

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM



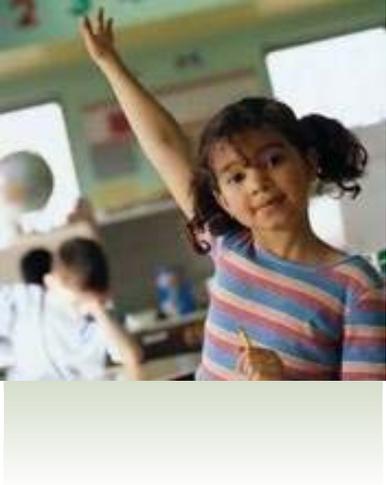
- ❖ 65% gain in children's skills and knowledge at K entry over 10 years
- ❖ Gains in all school districts
- ❖ Significant gains for children with risk factors (poverty, minority status, ELL, IEP, etc.)
- ❖ Gains across prior care/learning arrangement

School Readiness Data

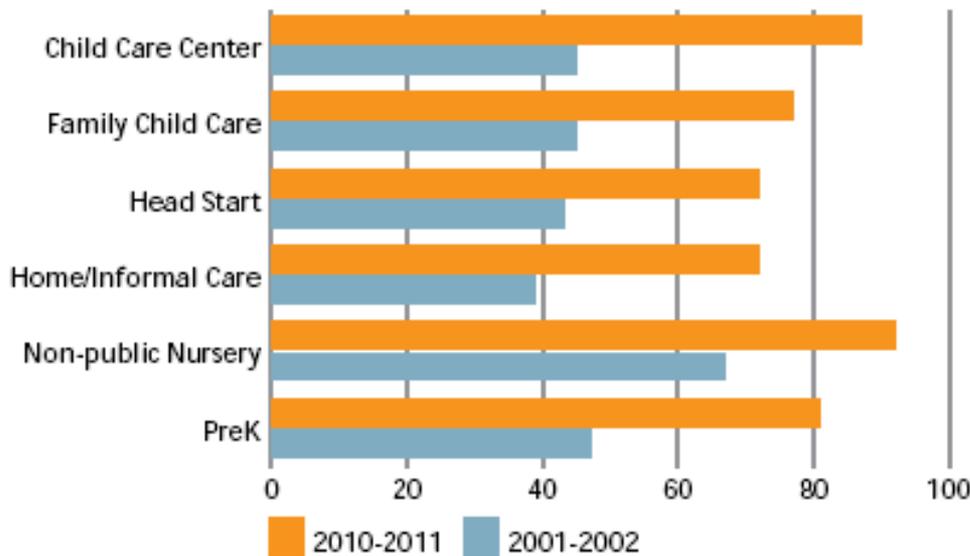


MARYLAND EXAMPLE

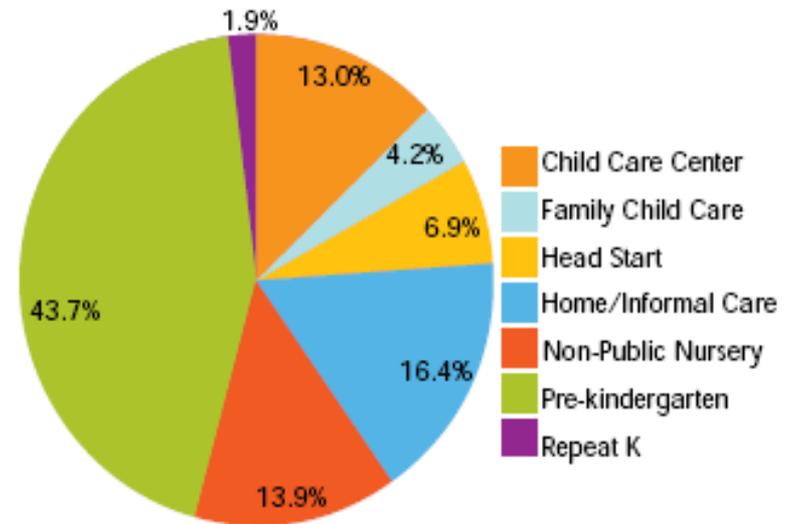
KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM



Full School Readiness by Prior Care



Prior Care Enrollment, * School Year 2009-2010





RHODE ISLAND

POLICY QUESTIONS

Children's Development and Learning

- ❖ How many/what percentage of children are on track to succeed, during the early childhood years, at school entry, and beyond?

Access

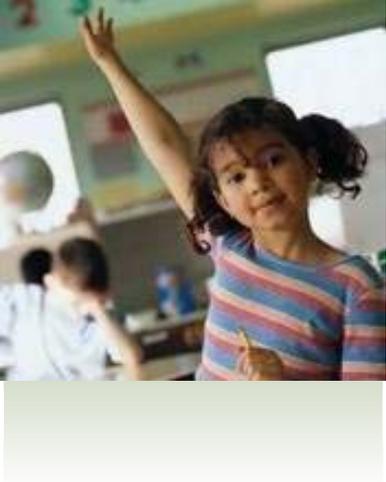
- ❖ What percentage/how many children are in various early care and education settings? (unduplicated children by type of setting, location, and quality). **Are low-income and disadvantaged children enrolled in high-quality early learning programs?**
- ❖ How much high-quality early care and education programming are children receiving?
- ❖ How many different programs do children attend before entering kindergarten? (stability)

Program Quality

- ❖ What percentage/how many of early care and education programs are high-quality?
- ❖ Does program quality improve over time? **What are the barriers for quality improvement?**

Early Childhood Workforce

- ❖ What percentage/how many of the early childhood workforce are qualified, by meeting specific established standards, to prepare children to succeed at school entry (e.g. core competencies, career lattice education levels)?
- ❖ What are workforce characteristics and patterns (turnover, compensation, diversity, education, etc.)?



RHODE ISLAND

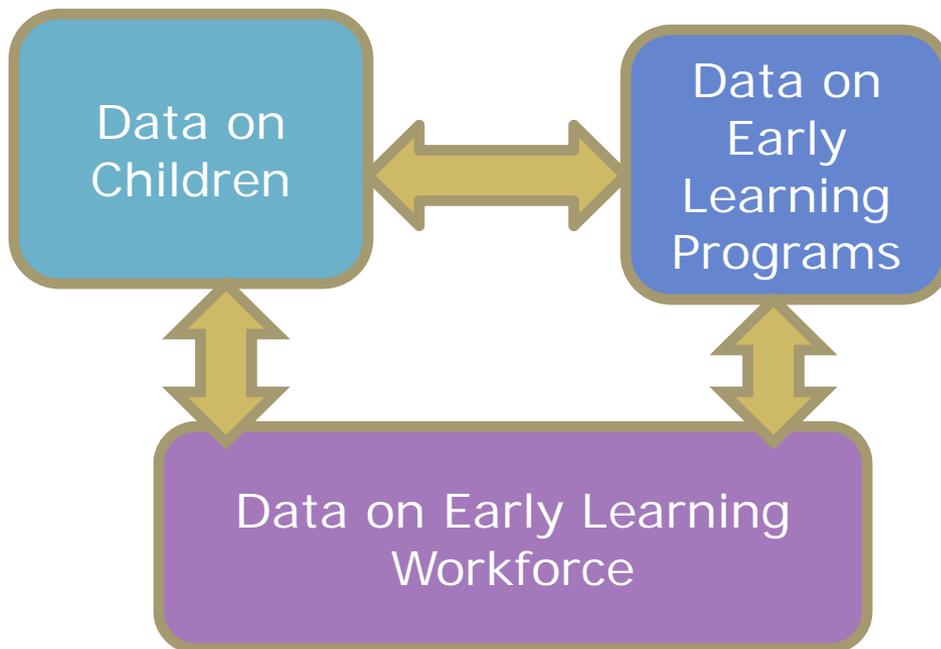
EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM GOALS

- 1. Aggregate data to inform policy makers and guide resource allocation to support increased school readiness of children – data to help “close the preparation gap.”***
- 2. Data to inform educators about individual children –to guide instruction and services for specific children***



WHAT DO WE NEED?

Coordinated state Early Learning Data Systems will promote data-driven decision making to **improve the quality of Early Learning programs and the workforce, increase access to high-quality Early Learning programs, and ultimately improve child outcomes**





WHAT DO WE HAVE?

DATA ON CHILDREN – RISKS, ACCESS DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

RIDE
126 State Pre-K children

DOH
KIDSNET
All children

RIDE
2,700 Preschool Special Education children

RI's Early Head Start and Head Start Agencies
3,000 children

CHILD Inc.	South County CAP
Children's Friend	Tri-Town CAP
CCAP	Woonsocket Head Start
EBCAP	
Meeting Street	

DHS
In Rhodes: Child Care Assistance Program
7,000 – 8,000 children

RIDE
K-12 Data

RIDE
Child Outreach Screening Data

DHS
Welligent: Early Intervention Program
3,800 children

DOH
KIDSNET
Health and Developmental Screening

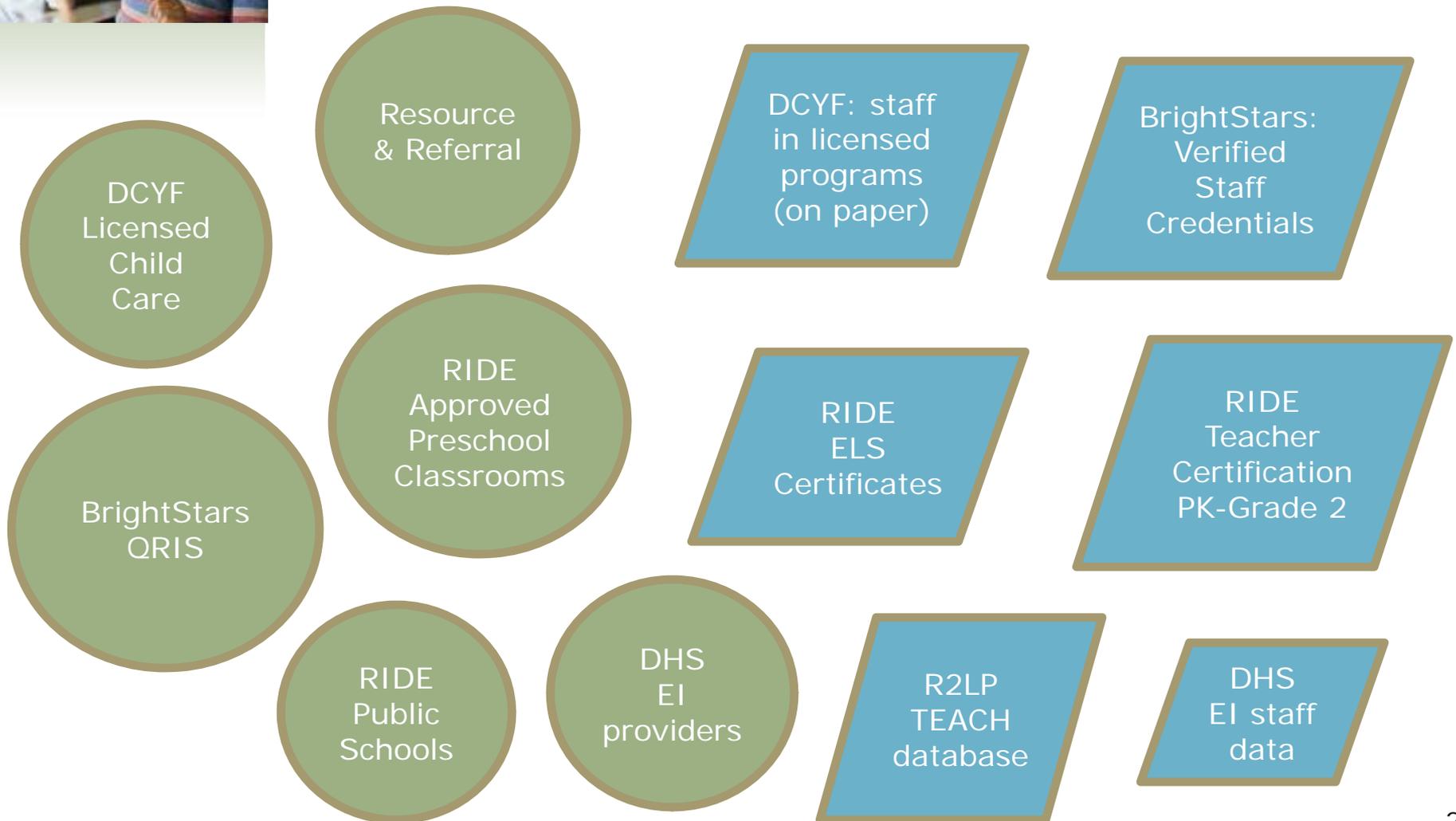
DHS
EI child outcomes

RIDE
GOLD
Child Assessment Data



WHAT DO WE HAVE?

DATA ON PROGRAMS & WORKFORCE





DATA GAPS

Ability to link data:

- ❖ Cannot routinely link data on individual children across early learning programs.
- ❖ Cannot routinely link the data from early childhood data to K-12 data.

Areas of limited data:

- ❖ Head Start/Early Head Start participation data
- ❖ Children enrolled in early learning programs without a government subsidy
- ❖ Developmental screening data (0-K entry)
- ❖ Child assessment data (0-K entry)
- ❖ Child assessment data (K-2)
- ❖ Quality of programs
- ❖ Workforce



RHODE ISLAND

NEXT STEPS – EARLY LEARNING DATA

- ❖ Work with the co-chairs of the Early Learning Council and the current ELC Data Work Group to identify leadership and establish an official cross-departmental, public-private **planning/governing body with authorized decision-makers for state early learning data systems** to act on the recommendations of the Early Childhood Data Work Group.
 - ❖ Hire consultant to support continued planning and development of more specific, detailed data system plan
 - ❖ Capitalize on RIDE's expertise and resources re: e-transcripts and program-teacher-child data logic
 - ❖ Determine best strategies to link/coordinate and build data capacity. Shared data system across departments and programs? Data hub(s)? Internal or contracted state system?



RHODE ISLAND

NEXT STEPS – EARLY LEARNING DATA

- ❖ Consider expanding/using KIDSNET to **track child participation in more early learning programs** (in addition to EI). Link child care subsidy participation data? Add or link Head Start enrollment data? Potential to link/add more data?
- ❖ Continue progress expanding KIDSNET to track **child-level developmental screening data** for children ages birth – K entry. Build on RIDE-Health partnership and add RIDE’s Child Outreach screening data to KIDSNET. Consider creating SASID at age 3 in KIDSNET.
- ❖ Move forward to develop a statewide **kindergarten entry assessment system** using best practices for early childhood assessment with the goal of supporting kindergarten instruction. Link to development of early childhood and Grade 1 and 2 assessment systems.
- ❖ **Examine statewide use of early childhood assessment tools and data collection and storage systems** (e.g. Teaching Strategies GOLD). Consider alignment across early childhood and K-2 assessment systems.



RHODE ISLAND

NEXT STEPS – EARLY LEARNING DATA

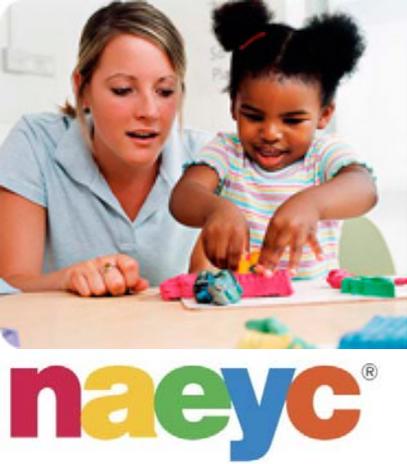
- ❖ Use **BrightStars as central storage place for program quality data** (including star level, licensing status, accreditation status, RIDE preschool classroom approval status). Clarify state ownership of database. Strengthen resources to encourage program participation and support quality improvement.
- ❖ Establish a **central storage place for data on Rhode Island's early learning workforce**. Build on data collected and systems in place at DCYF, BrightStars, RIDE, and R2LP (TEACH). Consider using licensing data as foundation by requiring programs applying for and renewing a DCYF license to enter/update workforce data in a registry where they can also track annual professional development hours

TEAM REPORTS



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORK TEAM STATUS UPDATE

- ❖ **Goal:** Working to build a PD system that makes efficient use of existing resources, responds to the needs of the workforce and addresses quality improvement needs of programs based on data about program quality
- ❖ First meeting- March 2011; Report due to Early Learning Council- September 2011
- ❖ Cross-sector team to ensure that the team understands how each sector's current PD is structured and key resources. Includes representation from: Child care (*including family child care*), Head Start, Pre-K, Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, School Age.
- ❖ Contracted Anne Mitchell, President Early Childhood Policy Research, for facilitation/TA. Also receive TA from Kim Keiser, NCCIC
- ❖ Conducted individual meetings with stakeholders across sectors in the state to gather input/needs information to inform the Work Team
- ❖ Monthly meetings following the NAEYC Workforce Blueprint



WORKFORCE DESIGNS

A POLICY BLUEPRINT FOR STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

Summary: *Policies that connect professional development activities and that support and make possible effective implementation of a state system of professional development*

Essential Policy Areas to follow when developing a Professional Development System:

- ❖ Professional Standards
- ❖ Career Pathways
- ❖ Articulation
- ❖ Advisory Structure
- ❖ Data
- ❖ Financing



Professional Development Institute (PDI) Work Summit

June 11, 2011

- ❖ Met with state PD Teams across the country.
- ❖ Learned about collaborative opportunities and professional development-related resources and projects.



CORE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES (CKC)

- ❖ **The foundation of a high-quality PD system:**
 - ❖ Supports professional development efforts
 - ❖ Assists with articulation of job expectations and design of evaluation processes.
 - ❖ Guides higher education and PD providers in development of curricula and training.
 - ❖ Used by families to identify quality early education settings for their children.

- ❖ **Current CKC's in Rhode Island:**
 - ❖ After school and youth development professionals (published)
 - ❖ Infant/toddler consultants (drafted)
 - ❖ Early Intervention providers (drafted)
 - ❖ Center-based early education teacher and teacher assistant (in development)
 - ❖ Draft released in July
 - ❖ Feedback forums in July and August
 - ❖ Final draft delivered to DHS in Fall



HIGHER EDUCATION TEAM UPDATE

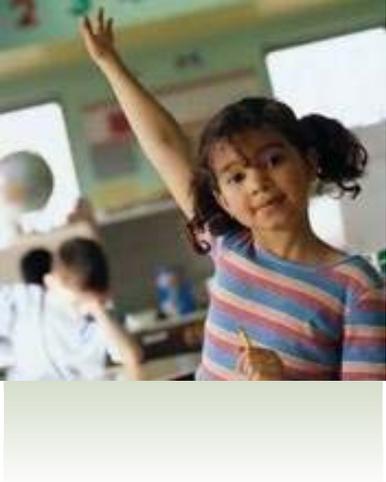
- ❖ RIC hosted a retreat with representatives from the institutions of higher education and T.E.A.C.H. to advance a conversation about articulation.
- ❖ Conceptual agreement was reached around accepting ECE coursework between schools, particularly between CCRI and the four year institutions.
- ❖ 9 of the enrolled T.E.A.C.H. Scholars (8 from centers, 1 family home provider) have submitted spring grades indicating successful completion of 16 courses, or 48 credit hours; three individuals are taking summer courses.
- ❖ Currently enrolling for the fall semester with the goal of 40 T.E.A.C.H. scholars in CCRI coursework by fall 2011.

UPDATES



UPDATES

- ❖ Striving Readers
- ❖ PreK RFP Process
- ❖ Legislative Updates
 - ❖ Exit strategy bill
 - ❖ Full Day K
 - ❖ Pre K Funding
 - ❖ Posting Licensing Violations online
 - ❖ Budget
- ❖ CCDF State Plan
- ❖ Child Welfare – Head Start Partnership
- ❖ State Home Visiting



NEXT STEPS

- ❖ Next ELC Meeting: Wednesday, September 28, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m. Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090
- ❖ 2011-2012 Calendar

Rhode Island Early Learning Council

Kindergarten Assessment: These recommendations were approved by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council on March 23, 2011 to inform the work of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Creating a high-quality, comprehensive, statewide kindergarten assessment system will help to improve connections and strengthen alignment between the state's early childhood education system and the K-3 education system. A kindergarten assessment system will help us understand the skills and knowledge of children entering Rhode Island kindergarten classrooms and will help to direct resources to increase young children's access to high-quality, effective early learning programs.

Recommendation re: Purpose of a Kindergarten Assessment

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

Recommendations re: Process

- Identify a core team to complete the following tasks:
 - ❖ Review current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered.
 - ❖ Develop methods for gathering RI stakeholder information based on identified key issues.
- Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups
 - ❖ Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff – administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; and community-based early childhood staff.
 - ❖ Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as, the current state of kindergarten assessment.
- Analyze the information collected and develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment, and the communication of kindergarten assessment information.

Recommendations re: Implementation

- Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for the Rhode Island population.
- Assessment tools should be aligned with standards.
- Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan.
- Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in PreK and in 1st and 2nd grade.
- Assessment tools should address *all domains* of learning and development.
- Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g. professional development, cost, time).
- Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g. preschool teachers, family).
- Potential barriers should be considered (e.g. cost, time to implement).
- The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

June 29, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Location: Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090
400 East Avenue, Warwick, RI

Meeting Summary

Council Members In Attendance: Co-chair Commissioner Deborah Gist, Co-chair Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Leanne Barrett, Thomas Brady, Lisa Hildebrand attending for Tammy Camillo, Maryanne Finamore-Allmark, Dr. Michael Fine, Maura Pearce attending for Leslie Gell, Kristen Greene, Pamela High, Khadija Lewis Khan, Cindy Larson, Larry Pucciarelli, Barbara Schermack, Susan Warford, , Katheryn Taveras (representing Tony Maione, UWRI), Karen Beese (representing Sandra Powell DHS),

Additional Attendees: Brenda Almeida (DCYF), Ellen Amore (DOH), Jason Becker (RIDE), Andrew Bramson (Providence Plan), Ruth Galluci (RIDE), Karen Pucciarelli (RIDE), Susan Zoll (R2LP), Sue Libutti (Project LAUNCH), Karen Ennis (CCF), Lisa LaDew (Meeting Street), Susan Kelley (Even Start), Peter Lee (John Hope Settlement House), Mindy Mertz (Providence Public School District), Leon Saunders (DCYF), Teri DeBoise (Children’s Friend), Michele Cameron (Children’s Friend) Carol Patnaude (CCRI)

12:00-12:10	Welcome /Meeting Overview	Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant
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The meeting of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council was called to order at 12:05 pm by Co-Chairs Deborah Gist and Elizabeth Burke Bryant with opening remarks by Deborah and Elizabeth:

Deborah: Welcome! I want to start us off with a celebration. You probably remember this story, but when I was interviewing to come here, I saw the NIERR “State of Pre-School” Yearbook report and next to Rhode Island there were the words, “No program.” But then I came here and while it was true that there had not been a significant State commitment to Pre-K, I realized that there was and is an incredibly rich community of organizations and people committed to early education. Fast forward a few years and you can imagine how thrilled I was to see that the most recent report not only did not say “no program” but also showed Rhode Island as meeting all 10 benchmarks of quality! Only 5 states in the country are doing that and we all should be very proud of this accomplishment.

So you can imagine my concern about continued funding for Pre-K in the budget; as of right now it does not look like it will be funded through the school funding formula. We are continuing to work diligently on it and we do not know yet what we will end up with but we want you to know that we are working on it.

Elizabeth: The governor had included \$700,000 for Pre-K in the proposed budget. I was flabbergasted when I saw that the base had been removed by the House Finance Committee. In fact, I thought it was a mistake. The state has a huge budget and we know that everything is in a state of flux right now so my hope was that it had been an error; but it was not. We worked hard with House, Senate and Governor’s Office to fix it but it was not rectified in time for the vote on Friday night. We are trying to figure out a way to keep the Pre-K program going while at the same time keeping an eye on the need for a more sane funding structure that is more predictable for this group of young children. Even though the program does not have an eligibility threshold, we know that most of these children would not be in any program if they were not in this Pre-K program. The Pre-K data shows that most of the children come from

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households with a high level of poverty and have no prior to exposure to high quality programs.

Elizabeth: Does anyone have any questions or thoughts to share?

Kristen Greene: I need to better understand what you mean when you talk about it going from one funding stream to another.

Deborah: Because it was a demonstration project last year, the funding was a part of RIDE's budget. But now that Pre-K is part of the funding formula, it is identified as a categorical expense. The good news is that even though it is not funded in the current budget, the category is there and it is part of the expectation that this is part of the education structure in our state. .

Kristen Greene: So even if it is in the formula, it is not funded?

Deborah: Yes. That is the case for many things in the funding formula such as aid to cities and town, for example.

Elizabeth: Having it as part of the funding formula makes it a part of the educational landscape. The trick was successfully getting it into the funding formula while still preserving a mixed delivery model. When other states have included Pre-K in their funding formula, they have sent the money through the school districts and the programs end up being provided only by public schools. In Rhode Island, with RIDE's leadership and your advocacy, we were able to set it up so that we could still have a mixed delivery system. This lets us have an RFP process like the one we have right now. It is way better to have it in the funding formula than as a free-standing program.

Kristen Greene: Elizabeth, I want to thank you for all you have been doing to advocate for this; it is incredible.

Mary Ann Finamore: This past year was really a phenomenal experience for all of us – we learned so much. We thank you both (Deborah and Elizabeth) for everything you have been doing to advocate for this project. We have all grown so much and have a much stronger understanding of what it means to have a high quality program. It was hard work, but boy, when it clicked, it was fabulous. I would like a copy of the NIEER report because I want to see if there was a difference between the first and second year.

Khadija Lewis Khan – It was wonderful knowing that that the kids would be there consistently throughout the year and that no one would lose funding part way through. And we learned a lot through the technical assistance and training.

Kristen Greene: I want to share some data from our program based on assessment data in all developmental categories gathered by the teachers in the Fall and at the end of the year. Overall, at the

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beginning of the year, over 80% of our children were “below” in all developmental areas. At the end of the year, everyone had progressed out of the “below” category and approximately 75% were meeting expectations and 22% were exceeding expectations (IN ALMOST EVERY DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN); All in just one year. That is amazing.

Deborah: Data like that will help us. The NIEER evaluation report on the Pre –K demonstration program will be a tool for us to use as to why high quality early learning matters.

Elizabeth: We expect to have that report in the early Fall and that will really help us with our long term advocacy.

Leanne Barrett: In August they will do the data analysis and the report will be released in the early Fall. They are expecting it to have a big splash nationally too. I am sure we will be able to use it. We will need to pull a larger group together to share the results.

Elizabeth: I want to take this opportunity to salute Tom Brady. He stepped up to commit Providence Public School District funding to this. Tom, you have been a real champion for early learning and we want to thank you.

Deborah: RIDE has received 21 program applications for the State PreK-program. The applications have been reviewed and we will let you know what we will be able to do based on the funding.

Deborah: I also want to update you Striving Readers. We applied for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Discretionary Grants. A portion of the funding will be used to improve early childhood literacy. We expect to find out whether we are going to receive a grant in August. We applied for \$8 million. We will let you know what happens.

Elizabeth reviewed the meeting agenda.

12:05-12:15	Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Initiative (see handout)	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Deborah Gist/
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Elizabeth and Deborah gave an overview of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Initiative:

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius announced a \$500 million new Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge initiative. Later in 2011, states will have an opportunity to compete for funding to create systems to improve the quality of early learning settings for children ages birth to five and increase disadvantaged children’s access to higher-quality early learning programs. The grants will be jointly administered by the U.S. Department of

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Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reflecting that early learning programs are housed in different departments.

Secretary Duncan explained that the bar will be high and states will need to demonstrate “**courage, commitment, capacity, and creativity**” in moving toward a coordinated system of high-quality early learning programs and services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

We see this initiative as part of our case for making sure that Rhode Island’s early care and education field does not go backwards. Not just with Pre-K but with Child Care, Head Start, etc. We have a lot of the building blocks that will help us be competitive for this grant. For example, it is our understanding that states will get extra points if they can show that they have real engagement from their Early Learning Councils.

Also, we wanted to let you know that there is an ongoing blog where you can email comments. We will email you the link and we will keep in touch as the guidance comes out in early August.

Deborah: The whole process will be very fast so it will have to be closely coordinated so that we get it done and also get the right feedback from the field.

Larry Pucciarelli: Is there a non-federal match requirement for this initiative?

Deborah: No.

Leanne Barrett: Shannon Rudisill, the Director of Office of Child Care within the Federal Administration for Children and Families, gave very strong signals that the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state plan is very important and needs to include goals for the state and not just a report out on subsidies. We will need to have strong goals in this plan.

Deborah: We have started to list out our strengths and weaknesses and figure out how we can position ourselves well for this grant.

Elizabeth: I also wanted to mention quickly that Shannon Rudisill said at a meeting that she was so excited to read the Access Team’s recommendations to the Council because it was exactly the direction that states should be heading in.

Pam High: I am thinking about children in youngest age groups and in high risk categories and wondering if we should broaden this more to include things like Part C eligibility and including more “at-risk children” and making some populations categorically eligible for Early Intervention. I think there is an opportunity to bring people in the room together to think about families who don’t have the opportunity to put their children in an early care and education setting. We also have a strong pediatric network here and we have an opportunity to come together to work on this.

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Karen Beese: The CCDF state plan deadline has been extended to August 1st so we can do additional work on the plan to strengthen the application for the Race To the Top – Early Learning Challenge application. DHS is actively working on revising it. DHS welcomes all feedback and input and is look forward to working with all of you.

Elizabeth: We will be in touch via email when the RTT-ELC guidance comes out re: our process and plan for this initiative.

12:15-12:25	Public Comment (Topics: Early Learning Data, Professional Development and Higher Education)	Public Participants
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Peter Lee (John Hope Settlement House): Has there been any conversation about looking at the lessons learned from our experiences with the Full Service Community Model? Much of what we have learned from that initiative could be applied to early care and education in regards to education attainment, healthy homes, parent engagement, and healthy community.

Deborah: While I think about Community Schools a lot, I have not thought about them in this context. There is a lot of talk about Bailey school in particular as a great model. This is something we can add to our list of things to talk about.

Elizabeth: Excellent point Peter. It will be important for us to show how we are connecting early childhood to K-3.

Tom Brady: I will ask Mindy to put together some data and think through some tie-ins.

Deborah: I think it will be important to emphasize in the application that we understand what the research says about this – early care and education has to be followed by high quality education or gains are lost.

12:25-1:20	Priorities for Improving Rhode Island’s ECE Data System	Leanne Barrett, Team Leader ECE Data Systems Team
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Leanne Barrett presented some background information and the Data Team’s proposed priorities for improving Rhode Island’s ECE Data Systems (see presentation for more detail):

Data enables policymakers and community leaders to:

- Sustain and grow current investments in effective programs.
- Identify areas most in need of intervention.
- Make changes to improve outcomes for young children and families.

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- Track the results of investments.
- Monitor trends over time.

National Perspectives

- Increasing recognition of critical need for data on young children's learning and development and their access to high-quality early learning programs.
- NGA: Longitudinal and coordinated early learning data systems are needed to track results and drive continued improvement by (one of 4 core action areas).
- 2007 federal legislation requiring states to establish Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Councils requires Councils to "develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State".
- Key leader: Data Quality Campaign – national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to enhance the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement (annual survey of states).

Can States Answer These Questions?

- Are children, birth to age 5, on track to succeed when they enter school and beyond?
- Which children have access to high-quality early care and education programs?
- Is the quality of programs improving?
- What are the characteristics of effective programs?
- How prepared is the early care and education workforce to provide effective education and care for all children?
- What policies and investments lead to a skilled and stable early care and education workforce?

10 Fundamentals of Coordinated State Early Learning Data Systems

- Unique statewide child identifier(?).
- Child-level demographic and program participation information.
- Child-level data on development and learning.
- Ability to link child-level data with K-12 and other key data systems.
- Unique program site identifier with the ability to link with children and the early learning workforce.
- Program site data on structure, quality and work environment.
- Unique early learning workforce identifier with ability to link with program sites and children.
- Individual early learning workforce demographics, including education, and professional development information.
- State governance body to manage data collection and use.
- Transparent privacy protection and security practices and policies.

Examples from Other States:

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- South Carolina is able to count children who are experiencing early school failure by readiness risk factors. We would like to be able to have this information and to be able to look at it by program setting.
- Pennsylvania has an unduplicated child count by program type and can also map the percentage of children in high quality programs.
- Maryland can track skills gains over time by group and look at full school readiness by various factors such as developmental domain or prior care setting.

Rhode Island has developed policy questions as a fundamental driver of the proposed priorities for ECE data system improvement:

Children's Development and Learning

- How many/what percentage of children are on track to succeed, during the early childhood years, at school entry, and beyond?

Access

- What percentage/how many children are in various early care and education settings? (unduplicated children by type of setting, location, and quality)
- How much high-quality early care and education programming are children receiving?
- How many different programs do children attend before entering kindergarten? (stability)

Program Quality

- What percentage/how many of early care and education programs are high-quality?
- Does program quality improve over time? What are the barriers for quality improvement?

Early Childhood Workforce

- What percentage/how many of the early childhood workforce are qualified, by meeting specific established standards, to prepare children to succeed at school entry (e.g. core competencies, career lattice education levels)?
- What are workforce characteristics and patterns (turnover, compensation, diversity, education, etc.)?

Rhode Island's Early Learning Data System goals

1. Aggregate data to inform policy makers and guide resource allocation to support increased school readiness of children – data to help “close the preparation gap.”
2. Data to inform educators about individual children –to guide instruction and services for specific children

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What Do We Need?

- Coordinated state Early Learning Data Systems will promote data-driven decision making to improve the quality of Early Learning programs and the workforce, increase access to high-quality Early Learning programs, and ultimately improve child outcomes.

What Do We Have? Data on Children – Risks, Access, Development and Learning

- DOH KIDSNET: Data on children beginning at birth (All Children)
- DHS: InRhodes Child Care Assistance Program (7,000-8,000 children)
- DHS: Welligent: Early Intervention Program (3,800 children)
- RIDE: State PreK-12 children (126 children)
- RIDE: PK Special Education children (2,700)
- RIDE: K-12 Data
- RIDE: Child Outreach Screening Data
- RIDE: Teaching Strategies GOLD child assessment data
- DOH/KIDSNET: Health and Developmental Screening data
- Head Start and Early Head Start Programs (3,000 children)
- DHS: Early Intervention Outcomes

What Do We Have? Data on Programs and Workforce

- DCYF: Licensed Child Care Data
- Bright Stars: QRIS Data
- Resource and Referral
- RIDE: Teacher Certification PK-Grade 2
- RIDE: Approved Preschool Classrooms
- RIDE: Public Schools
- DCYF: Staff in licensed programs (on paper)
- RIDE: ELS Certificates
- R2LP: TEACH database
- BrightStars: Verified Staff Credentials
- DHS: EI staff data

Data Gaps

- Ability to link data:
 - Cannot routinely link data on individual children across early learning programs.
 - Cannot routinely link the data from early childhood data to K-12 data.
- Areas of limited data:
 - Head Start/Early Head Start participation data.
 - Children enrolled in early learning programs without a government subsidy.
 - Developmental screening data (0-K entry)

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- Child assessment data (0-K entry)
- Child assessment data (K-2)
- Quality of programs
- Workforce

Next Steps

- Work with the co-chairs of the Early Learning Council and the current ELC Data Work Group to identify leadership and establish an official cross-departmental, public-private planning/governing body with authorized decision-makers for state early learning data systems to act on the recommendations of the Early Childhood Data Work Group.
 - Hire consultant to support continued planning and development of more specific, detailed data system plan.
 - Capitalize on RIDE's expertise and resources re: e-transcripts and program-teacher-child data logic.
 - Determine best strategies to link/coordinate and build data capacity. Shared data system across departments and programs? Data hub(s)? Internal or contracted state system?
- Consider expanding/using KIDSNET to track child participation in more early learning programs (in addition to EI). Link child care subsidy participation data? Add or link Head Start enrollment data? Potential to link/add more data?
- Continue progress expanding KIDSNET to track child-level developmental screening data for children ages birth – K entry. Build on RIDE-Health partnership and add RIDE's Child Outreach screening data to KIDSNET. Consider creating SASID at age 3 in KIDSNET.
- Move forward to develop a statewide kindergarten entry assessment system using best practices for early childhood assessment with the goal of supporting kindergarten instruction. Link to development of early childhood and Grade 1 and 2 assessment systems.
- Examine statewide use of early childhood assessment tools and data collection and storage systems (e.g. Teaching Strategies GOLD). Consider alignment across early childhood and K-2 assessment systems.
- Use BrightStars as central storage place for program quality data (including star level, licensing status, accreditation status, RIDE preschool classroom approval status). Clarify state ownership of database. Strengthen resources to encourage program participation and support quality improvement.
- Establish a central storage place for data on Rhode Island's early learning workforce. Build on data collected and systems in place at DCYF, BrightStars, RIDE, and R2LP (TEACH). Consider using licensing data as foundation by requiring programs applying for and renewing a DCYF license to enter/update workforce data in a registry where they can also track annual professional development hours.

Discussion

Mary Ann Finamore: Is all of this doable?

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Jason Becker (RIDE): It is a big project and I can only speak for RIDE when I say that we are already working on many of these recommendations within our agency so it is a matter figuring out how to extend the competencies that already exist and figure out how to coordinate the expansion of those efforts so that it is connected.

Sue Warford: I appreciate that wage data is included in these recommendations. It is so important to know this. We know that it is highly correlated to turnover.

Ellen Amore (DOH): DOH and RIDE have been working closely together around mutual goals so there is a lot of development going on that is related to these recommendations. For example, we are already working on expanding the amount of developmental screening data in KIDSNET. But there has to be investment by community to get data into the system –someone has to do the data entry and that costs time and money.

We would like to be able to look at who is getting screened and who is not getting screened. KIDSNET is a population based system and it is an existing web-based system that a lot of the partners are already connected with and using including, pediatricians, child care providers, and Head Start providers. We don't have to develop a big huge system like Pennsylvania. We need to look at the questions RI wants to answer and build our capacity to answer them. I think this is doable and that we have the motivation to do it.

We are also working on building the capacity of KIDSNET to collect evidence-based home visiting data. We have received a grant to do this. We will be able to collect a lot of detailed data and we would like to be able to use it to guide policy.

Pam High: As the only pediatrician in the room, I want to make the case that things are being connected in the education world but are not being connecting in the health world. For example, risk data on children is in KIDSNET, but pediatricians cannot access it. The medical home may be the only place that a child can be followed over time and in many cases the whole family is a part of that medical home but we cannot maximize this opportunity because we cannot access all the data. It would be helpful to understand chronic school absenteeism, for example, in the context of the larger medical home.

Michael Fine: It almost sounds like this is an opportunity to re-imagine a health care system and education system reinvented together. Right now data exists in silos and no one can put it together. We need to imagine what the system needs to look like and then design a child identifier so we have a way for the data to follow the person.

Leanne Barrett: We can add linking medical home and education data as a goal. It is also important to note that one of the reasons that information has not been shared is because of concerns about data privacy and security. We need to address that issue for many areas.

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Elizabeth: Thank you for your comments and insights. If you all are willing to endorse these recommendations with a few adjustments based on our discussion today these priorities will be included in the Data Team’s report and plan going forward. All in favor of endorsing these recommendations raise their hands.

All opposed?

None opposed.

1:20-1:35	Report from Professional Development Team	Karen Beese Lisa Hildebrand (representing Tammy Camillo) Co-team leaders Professional Development Team
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Lisa Hildebrand presented an updated on the work of the Professional Development team (see presentation for more detail):

Professional Development Work Team Status Update

- Goal: Working to build a PD system that makes efficient use of existing resources, responds to the needs of the workforce and addresses quality improvement needs of programs based on data about program quality.
- First meeting- March 2011; Report due to Early Learning Council- September 2011.
- Cross-sector team to ensure that the team understands how each sector’s current PD is structured and key resources. Includes representation from: Child care (including family child care), Head Start, Pre-K, Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, School Age.
- Contracted Anne Mitchell, President Early Childhood Policy Research, for facilitation/TA. Also receive TA from Kim Keiser, NCCIC.
- Conducted individual meetings with stakeholders across sectors in the state to gather input/needs information to inform the Work Team.
- Monthly meetings following the NAEYC Workforce Blueprint.

Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems

- **Summary:** *Policies that connect professional development activities and that support and make possible effective implementation of a state system of professional development.*

Essential Policy Areas to follow when developing a Professional Development System:

- Professional Standards

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- Career Pathways
- Articulation
- Advisory Structure
- Data
- Financing

Professional Development Institute (PDI) Work Summit

- Met with state PD Teams across the country.
- Learned about collaborative opportunities and professional development-related resources and projects.

Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) – presented by Sue Warford

- The foundation of a high-quality PD system:
 - Supports professional development efforts.
 - Assists with articulation of job expectations and design of evaluation processes.
 - Guides higher education and PD providers in development of curricula and training.
 - Used by families to identify quality early education settings for their children.
- Current CKC's in Rhode Island:
 - After school and youth development professionals (published)
 - Infant/toddler consultants (drafted)
 - Early Intervention providers (drafted)
 - Center-based early education teacher and teacher assistant (in development)
 - Draft released in July
 - Feedback forums in July and August
 - Final draft delivered to DHS in Fall

Discussion

Mary Ann Finamore: Is there a vehicle for teachers to build their competencies?

Sue Warford: The core competencies are the foundation of the development of a professional development system. We need the core competencies to build the system for teachers.

Lisa Hildebrand: The core competencies will help us look at the professional development needs of the field relative to the existing system and identify gaps.

Leanne Barrett: We need competencies for Family Child Care providers which serve a significant proportion young children.

Karen Beese: That is the next frontier. Because family child care providers serve all ages, we will use the after school and center-based competencies as a launching pad for developing those competencies.

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1:35-1:45	Report from Higher Education Team	Maura Pearce (representing Leslie Gell, Team leader Higher Education Team)
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Maura Pearce presented an updated on the work of the Higher Education team (see presentation for more detail):

- RIC hosted a retreat with representatives from the institutions of higher education and T.E.A.C.H. to advance a conversation about articulation.
- Conceptual agreement was reached around accepting ECE coursework between schools, particularly between CCRI and the four year institutions.
- 9 of the enrolled T.E.A.C.H. Scholars (8 from centers, 1 family home provider) have submitted spring grades indicating successful completion of 16 courses, or 48 credit hours; three individuals are taking summer courses. Average GPA is 3.04.
- Currently enrolling for the fall semester with the goal of 40 T.E.A.C.H. scholars in CCRI coursework by fall 2011.
- There are now two new eligibility categories as of last week. Now we can give scholarships to people with prior AA and BA degrees that were unrelated to early childhood and people who are teaching directors and working in the classroom 30 hours or more can also participate.
- We have 5 new programs who have committed to participate in the Fall. And we hope that most prior programs will renew their contract.
- We have very good geographic diversity statewide.
- Everyone is eligible to apply but we will continue to give programs who are participating in BrightStars or located in the inner city priority.

Discussion

Elizabeth: I just want to say many thanks to CCRI for playing a leadership role in this effort.

Mary Ann Finamore: My scholars now have completed 5 college level courses. They could never have done it without TEACH.

Maura Pearce: We sent out a survey to our participants and people were saying that the release time from work has made such a difference in their ability to go to class.

1:35-1:55	Updates	Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant
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Elizabeth gave several legislative updates:

- The Exit strategy bill was not passed. We had supported this bill as a Council. It would have allowed families to stay on child care longer. We still believe it is a hugely important issue and will continue to advocate for this.
- None of the bills that would have required schools to provide full day kindergarten passed.
- There is also a bill in process right now that, if passed, would enable DCYF to post licensing violations online. 21 states currently post violations online. It was originally written so that all violations would need to be posted. However, there were concerns raised by some child care providers that having everything online was too much information because some things are fixed quickly. So there is a second version of the bill that reduces the types of violations that would have to be posted. In addition, there would be a waiting period before the post went online. Before the violation could be posted, DCYF would need to wait until the center had been notified and had time to address it. And, then, if it still wasn't addressed, the violation would be posted online along with the remedy. Rhode Island Kids Count endorses that.
- All departments have sustained major budget cuts. DCYF had a budget cut of \$25million.
- DHS is working on extending the child care recertification period from 6 to 12 months. This should be in place by the Fall.

Teri Deboise, Director of Program Development, Children's Friend gave an update on the Child Welfare – Head Start Partnership:

- The Administration on Children and Families recently released a 17 month infrastructure building grant. They will make 8 awards of approximately \$250,000. This is an opportunity to systemize the policy and procedures between child welfare programs and early child care programs.
- We want the application process to be collaborative.
- Our focus is on Head Start because children in foster care are categorically eligible for Head Start and with slots federally funded, it won't cost the state any additional money. And we know that very few foster care children are participating in Head Start. So it is a good place to start. There is lots of opportunity to connect early childhood programs into the whole child welfare process. Children in the child welfare system are at high risk of educational failure and need access to high-quality early learning programs to build protective factors and basic skills and knowledge.
- One of the areas of identified need is access to data so one of the objectives we are building into this grant is working on this. We would like to coordinate with the ELC on this.
- I came to ask for the Council's support and the ability to coordinate with the Data Team.

Discussion

Pam High: What happens if the child returns to their family of origin?

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Terri DeBoise: They can stay in Head Start.

Pam High: In the same Head Start program?

Terri DeBoise: That is one of the things we need to look at as part of our infrastructure building so we can begin to address some of the gaps in the system.

Khadija Lewis Khan: Don't all foster care children qualify for child care?

Brenda Almeida – No, the foster parents have to be working to qualify for child care.

Mary Ann Finamore: It is my understanding that many of the Head Start programs are full. So what happens to the foster care kids if they can't access those programs?

Terri DeBoise: Children in foster care can go up higher on the priority list during the enrollment process. Part of this initiative will be building these systems to make sure the kids get in.

Mary Ann Finamore: I advocate that we take those kids who can't get in and work to get them into another early learning program through the child care subsidy system.

Elizabeth: All in favor of generally as a body endorsing this initiative please raise your hand. All opposed?

None opposed.

Ellen Amore gave an update on the State Home Visiting:

- While DOH has supported home visiting for years we have not had the capacity to provide evidence based home visiting. So we jumped at a federal opportunity to fund a large needs assessment on risk factors, resources available, and evidence-based programs that were approved that we could bring to RI.
- It was no surprise that Providence, Central Falls, Woonsocket, and Pawtucket had the highest risk.
- We have chosen to implement two models: Healthy Family's America and the Nurse-Family Partnership.
- We identified 354 families in those 4 communities with children at the highest risk. Our funding formula is determined by this. It is a formula based grant that will allow us to serve one third of those who are eligible.
- There is another grant opportunity that will allow us to expand the number of kids who will be served through that program. The application is due this week. If we get the award, then our capacity to serve these children will double and it will allow us to make enhancements to the systems to follow families through the program.

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

June 29, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Location: Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090
400 East Avenue, Warwick, RI

Meeting Summary

- DOH has asked Elizabeth and Deborah, as co-chairs of the Council to endorse the application. We will circulate the application once it is submitted.

1:55-2:00	Wrap-up/Next Steps	Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant
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The meeting of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council was adjourned at 2:00 pm by Co-Chairs Deborah Gist and Elizabeth Burke Bryant.