

the Ounce

STATE POLICY UPDATES AS OF APRIL 2012

This report for the **Peer Advocate Roundtable Network**
is brought to you by the National Policy Team at the
Ounce of Prevention Fund

 = Recent Budget Cut  = Pending/Proposed Budget Cut  = Pending/Proposed Increase
 = Recent Increase  = Funds held level  = Pending Policy Change  = Policy Change

Thank you to the state advocacy leaders from the Peer Advocate Roundtable Network states for contributing the following information. If you have any questions or comments, please use the contact information listed for each state; or, contact editor Anna Torsney-Weir (atorsneyweir@ounceofprevention.org; 312-348-3994).

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Arizona

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Quality early education for reading success/early childhood literacy
- Bring back KidsCare (state children's *health* insurance program/SCHIP) state match
- Provide grandparents raising 70,000 children in Arizona with basic financial assistance
- Child protective services reforms to better protect children from abuse and neglect

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  Enrollment freeze to KidsCare continues, resulting in tens of thousands of children on wait list
-  No new funds to reduce Child Protective Services caseloads or to provide in-home support for parents and the children in their care
-  No state funding for full-day kindergarten or preschool
-  No state funding to provide qualified, working parents with childcare assistance
-  Funding for more families adopting children with special needs

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

-  Proposed policy changes support the statewide data system for public preschools, elementary and secondary schools, and postsecondary education established in state law in 2011.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Concurrent Resolutions in House and Senate that would refer First Things First (FTF) back to the ballot in 2014.
- No state funding for KidsCare, meaning the number of children with *health* insurance is plummeting.
- *Child Care* Development Fund (CCDF) state match is zeroed out.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Aligning CCDF to Quality First (*Quality Improvement and Rating System*)
- Adopting a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment
- Sales Tax initiative on ballot in November could fund preschool, state match for *child care* subsidy, and restore KidsCare.

RACE TO THE TOP - EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Moving forward with professional development plan outlined in RTT-ELC
- Virginia G. Piper Trust (private foundation) is hiring a State Literacy Director
- Virginia G. Piper Trust committed \$3M to instigate a statewide kindergarten entry assessment
- Focusing on longitudinal data system development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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California

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Restore, preserve and build existing Early Childhood Education (ECE) systems through state and federal budget advocacy for policy reforms and a restoration of ECE funds.
- Develop and build support for long-term revenue possibilities.
- Build champions (business, legislator, K-12 partners, parents, etc) to broaden the coalition of ECE supporters.
- Deepen the *infant-toddler* focus within 0-5 advocacy and policy development efforts.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



In December 2011, an additional \$23M cut to quality early learning was ordered due to a shortfall in revenue, but was averted due to funding made available through unearned state contracts. However, since 2008 ECE has already suffered a loss of \$1.2B, which has impacted over 100,000 children and their families.



In Jan 2012, Governor Brown proposed to cut child development programs by \$517M, eliminating spaces for at least 62,000 children from vital early care and education programs by slashing program eligibility (lowering family income eligibility levels; requiring stricter CalWORKS work requirements; denying additional CalWORKS recipients access to *child care*), and further reducing reimbursement rates to providers.



He also proposed to completely eliminate funding for Transitional Kindergarten, a program that would serve 120,000 young children in preparation for kindergarten. Districts are beginning to make 2012-2013 service provision decisions based upon this budget proposal, which has notably resulted in San Francisco Unified School District forgoing plans to implement transitional kindergarten, leaving several hundred families without access to the educational program they were counting on.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



Gov. Brown has proposed to “realign” ECE to the local government level by moving the most state ECE programs from a quality-based state-level system overseen by the Dept. of Education to a county-driven voucher system overseen by County Welfare Departments that only would require licensing, without regard to quality or educational content.



In November 2011, a trial court invalidated a bill passed by California’s legislature which would have forced First 5 county commissions to stop funding many of their own local programs in order to provide \$1B for the State’s pre-existing children’s programs. Under a 1998 measure, the First 5 commissions were charged with allocating the funds in each county to *health* and educational services for preschool-aged children. With the passage of the bill, the Legislature would have raided those funds to pay for state *health* programs.

- P** California received an Early Learning Challenge grant for \$52.6M to fund 17 Regional Leadership Consortia to expand and implement a *Quality Rating and Improvement System*.
- P** Advancement Project filed a statewide initiative for the November 2012 ballot to increase education revenue by \$10B annually, including \$1.5B for ECE access expansion, quality enhancement and systems-building. Gov. Brown also filed a revenue initiative to raise \$4.9B for four years, which does not dedicate any funding for young children.
- P** First 5 California will roll out the Child Signature program, which incorporates much of the model and learning of Educare, and brings those lessons to a larger statewide scale. Educare Santa Clara and Educare Los Angeles are moving forward with planning and implementation.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Services and supports for children birth to five are not a priority for the Brown administration.
- Continued budget deficits, requiring deeper cuts to remaining government programs.
- Inability of the Legislature to achieve two-thirds majority necessary to raise revenue through taxes or fees.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Utilizing the Early Learning Challenge grant to expand and strengthen *QRIS*, improve data coordination, promote greater *health* integration, and support positive child outcomes throughout the state.
- Capitalizing on and deepening existing relationships with champions to stave off proposed cuts to ECE. The legislature may be able to act on revenue issues if Democrats achieve the 2/3 majority necessary for revenue-raising, based on early speculation about new legislative maps after redistricting.
- If the Advancement Project's 2012 ballot campaign for revenue is successful, there is an opportunity to double the funding of the existing ECE system. This would result in quality improvements; access expansion; systems building; and greater, more consistent supports for ECE providers and the families that they serve.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Higher degree of intra- and inter-county coordination and collaboration among many local *QRIS* systems.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Colorado

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Senate Bill 12-130 creates a new Office of Early Childhood in the Department of Human Services that will be responsible for the integration of programs and services for pregnant women, young children birth to 8 and families. The Office will be responsible for the development of a biennial state plan for the delivery of services to young children that includes both inter- and intra-departmental coordination. Colorado's current state advisory council, the Early Childhood Leadership Commission, will act as an advisory body to the office. SB-130 passed the Senate committees and is waiting to be heard in the House.
- House Bill 12-1276 strengthens the appeals and waiver process for *child care* licensure material waivers by ensuring the Division of *Child care* provides information on the process to *child care* centers with their licensing application and feature it prominently on inspection reports; sets specific time frames for the process; requires *child care* programs receiving a waiver to provide adequate professional development to teachers using the curriculum materials included in the waiver and to parents; includes early childhood representatives on the appeals process. This bill has passed through the full House and the Senate committees. It is awaiting second and third readings in the House.
- House Bill 12-1218 reauthorizes the legislative Early Childhood and School Readiness Interim Commission for five more years. This bill has passed its first committee hearing in the House and is awaiting a hearing by the appropriations committee.
- Senate Bill 12-022 creates a pilot program to extend *child care* subsidies to families whose income exceeds locally set eligibility limits (while remaining at or below federal income eligibility limits) for two years by creating a parent fee program that gradually increases parent co-payments over time until the parent is paying the full cost of *child care*. This bill has passed through the Senate and its first committee in the House.
- Senate Bill 12-138 would remove all references to quality from Colorado's *child care* licensing rules and regulations and transfer the authority to rewrite rules from the Department of Human Services to either the General Assembly or the Governor. This bill failed in committee.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



\$600k in General Fund dollars was cut from this fiscal year's *child care* subsidy budget. It is a one-time only cut.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Continuing a sufficient level of funding to at least maintain current service levels of *child care* subsidies for poor and low-income children
- Ability to move forward a strong early childhood agenda in light of strong and persistent messaging from conservatives that early childhood supports dilute the rights of parents
- Ability to expand Colorado's state-funded preschool program for at-risk children to be able to serve all eligible children

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- A new early childhood governance structure in the form of a new Office of Early Childhood
- Greater attention paid to language development and early literacy due to a Governor's birth to age 8 years early literacy initiative

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Discussions regarding the development and implementation of a unique child, educator and program identifier are moving forward.
- Further development of early childhood professional development system, including efforts to establish an BA level ECE degree with teacher certification
- Further consideration of data system components that can be built out with limited funding, and a fully fleshed out agenda for future work once funding is obtained
- Colorado's school readiness assessment is being piloted in four school districts and is slated to be rolled out in fall of 2013.
- Colorado continues to work to redesign its *Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System*.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Washington, D.C.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- P** In November, Chief Judge Royce C. Lamberth, US District Court for the District of Columbia, issued sweeping declaratory and injunctive relief for the plaintiff class of 3-5 year olds who may need special education services in the District of Columbia in the long pending class action D.L. v District of Columbia. Finding that the District of Columbia had violated the rights of young, pre-school age children under the Individuals with Disability Education Act local DC laws and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act from 2005 through April 6, 2011, he enjoined the Chancellor of DCPS and the State Superintendent of Education for the District from further violations of the IDEA and DC law and **ordered specific Corrective Actions, including to provide special education services to 8.5% of the children ages 3-5.**
- P** In September 2011, **Strong Start DC launched the Don't Wait and Wonder campaign, which brings attention to the signs of developmental disabilities and delays in children from birth to age three, highlights the long-term benefits of early intervention, and provides information on access to treatment services.** A toolkit was also developed to help District organizations promote Strong Start to their employees and constituents. Strong Start services are based on the individual needs of the child and family and are provided by **health** care providers, social workers, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists. For more information on Strong Start and the campaign, click [here](#).
- P** The city is calling on community groups to re-focus their expertise to children younger than 3. As part of a multiyear effort, the administration is working with D.C. Public Schools and the Office of the State Superintendent for Education to figure out which organizations can serve as effective partners and how much financial assistance the city can give to the programs. In Spring 2012 the Division of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) will issue an RFP for one-year **Infant/Toddler** Expansion Grants to Gold Centers participating in the District's **Going for the Gold TQRIS** and centers that meet Gold level standards in increase the number of infants and toddlers served in the District. Priority will be given to applicants who currently serve 50% of families eligible for subsidized **child care** and programs that have non-traditional hours to accommodate working families.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- **Mayor Vincent Gray mentioned early learning and Educare DC in his State of the District address on February 7th.** He said, "An exciting new resource in our "early success" plan is the \$12M, state-of-the-art early childhood Educare center in the Kenilworth-Parkside promise neighborhood, which will provide services to 171 children and their families...At the center, we will test, learn, and teach important best practices about early childhood development that we then will roll out more broadly in a coordinated, city-wide strategy." Read more [here](#).
- D.C. Mayor Vincent C. Gray's administration is preparing to be the county's role model for early-childhood education through programs for children as young as 6 months. Education

officials are working on *a partnership that builds on universal pre-kindergarten in the District and leverages the abilities of community-based organizations that formerly ran pre-k programs.*

Florida

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Move from various local **QRIS** initiatives to a statewide **QRIS**
- Develop a statewide, comprehensive and coordinated screening and assessment system
- Create a coordinated, articulated statewide professional development system
- Develop and implement a Children's Budget for Florida that is linked to policy outcomes
- Support evidence-based **Home Visiting** programs
- Support targeted enrollment efforts in the Florida KidCare program (**health** insurance) to reduce the number of uninsured children and maximize matching revenues
- Support active engagement by the Governor and Legislature with the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet and its initiatives as well as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council that advises the Cabinet
- Create more intentional linkages and student identifiers between early childhood and K-3

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

-  Maintains current funding of **child care** subsidies for low-income working families
-  Additional funds to cover enrollment increases but not quality improvements to Voluntary **Prekindergarten** (VPK). Per student allocation remains at \$2,383; adds funding for a pre- and post-assessment during the VPK year
-  Appropriates \$6.8M for Early Steps (Early Intervention services), sufficient for federal match to continue the program
-  Restores \$5.4M to Healthy Start (**health** screenings for at-risk pregnant women and newborns) cut from last year's budget
-  Maintains Healthy Families at \$18.2M
-  Preserves T.E.A.C.H. funding at \$3M

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

-  Office of Early Learning (OEL) moved from the state's Workforce agency to the Department of Education, reporting directly to the Governor's office. The OEL has been centralizing and streamlining many of its functions, consolidated through legislation passed this session.
-  Legislation passed this session modifies School Readiness statutes to include pre- and post-assessments for every child enrolled in a School Readiness program.
-  There is now one set of educational standards for School Readiness and VPK for 4-year-olds. Early learning standards for Birth-3 are aligned to standards for 4-year-olds.

- P** An integrated early childhood data collection system for the state received continuation funding and is scheduled to be up and running during 2013.
- P** Legislation passed this session changes standardized contracts and provider reimbursement rates:
 - reduces local community flexibility to manage school readiness programs;
 - limits administrative, non-direct and quality expenditures to 18% (federal requirements allow up to 30%);
 - limits the definitions of quality expenditures (and removes state authority to establish a statewide *Quality Rating and Improvement System*); and
 - requires the OEL to develop a 3-year phase-in plan for statewide provider payment rates and statewide parent co-payment rates.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Educating legislators about the importance of quality
- Combating misinformation about current early learning system elements
- The ‘Quality vs Slots’ issue in the statewide *QRIS*
- Implementing a statewide *QRIS*, especially after legislation passed that eliminated the state’s rulemaking authority for statewide *QRIS*
- Budget cuts and recent changes in the state’s early learning system structure and priorities

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Anger generated among early childhood advocates and providers this session over the legislative threats to quality and accountability in the state’s early learning programs could result in a positive ‘backlash’ of support for quality initiatives.
- We can use election season ‘momentum’ to get on candidates’ radar.
- Although new legislation eliminates the state’s authority to write rules for *QRIS*, the backlash (see above) may result in new *QRIS* legislation and a renewed commitment for local *QRIS* initiatives.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Illinois

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Oppose cuts in early childhood funding and, where possible, restore prior year budget cuts.
- Transfer *child care* licensing from state child welfare agency to agency that administers the *child care* subsidy system.
- Work to maintain where early childhood programs are currently clustered across state agencies in light of a legislative proposal and other efforts to separate the programs.
- Early Intervention Part C Reform.
- New birth to three early learning guidelines and updating Early Learning (3-5) standards.
- New **TQRIS**.
- Responding to proposed changes in early childhood and K-12 teacher certification.
- Full implementation of the federal MIECHV, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood **Home Visiting** Program, funding initiative, including design and implementation of a universal screen around the birth of a baby in six pilot high risk communities.
- Continue to develop the capacity to provide early childhood **mental health** and trauma informed consultation to a range of early childhood programs and services
- Work to defend against substantial proposed cuts in Medicaid.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊖ Proposed **Child care** Budget Cuts would require an average of a 52% increase in Parent Co-Pays and lowering the entry level for eligibility into **child care** assistance from 185% FPL to 150%FPL. The cuts would also include cuts in quality investments.
- ⊕ \$20 M increase in Early Childhood Education Funding (Birth to Five).
- ⊖ \$2.2M proposed cut in **Home Visiting** would violate federal maintenance of effort language for \$19 million Illinois has been awarded under the MIECHV, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood **Home Visiting** Program.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- Ⓟ New three-year strategic plan for State Early Childhood Advisory Council.
- Ⓟ Illinois was awarded a competitive grant for MIECHV, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood **Home Visiting** Program, **Home Visiting** to fund a randomized control of select **Home Visiting** programs that also include doula services
- Ⓟ Illinois State Board of Education issues RFP to develop tool for piloting a Kindergarten Individual Development Survey to be scaled up to statewide implementation.
- Ⓟ The RFP for state Early Childhood Construction funding went out August 26, 2011 for \$45M of available funds. The state received over \$500 million in proposals.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- State budget deficits and low revenue estimates/ huge unpaid bills/Medicaid and pension liabilities.
- High Legislative turnover/loss of tenured champions/ Election year posturing, which can often include ignoring children's issues all together.
- Attempt to move key Early Childhood programs into Illinois Department of Public *Health*, which doesn't have appropriate infrastructure or leadership to support these programs.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Developing new champions with about one third of legislature turning over.
- Political and public will to fix state revenue problems, perhaps through a progressive income tax or closing of certain corporate tax 'loopholes'.
- Monitoring the award and implementation of Early Childhood Education capital grants at the State and Chicago Public Schools.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- There are plans in motion to implement aspects of Illinois' application, but the timeline and specific plans are still to be determined.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Kansas

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Ensure the Children’s Initiative Fund (CIF), which provides support for early childhood programs and serves approximately one-third of the children in Kansas, is funded at \$56M as recommended by the Kansas Children’s Cabinet.
- Maintain the state Earned Income Tax Credit, Child and Dependent Care Credit, and other tax provisions that assist in providing family economic security. These supports are critical in light of the fact children under age five are more likely than children ages five to 17 to live in poverty.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



In November, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet delivered CIF funding recommendations to the governor based on an anticipated funding level of \$56M. The governor’s budget proposal assumes less than \$40M in funding for the CIF, a departure from the way monies from Kansas’ tobacco have traditionally been used. Programs facing significant cuts include the Childcare Quality Initiative, Children’s *Mental Health* Initiative, Early Childhood Investment Grants, Parents as Teachers, and the *PreK* Program.



The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) faces elimination under the governor’s proposed tax plan. In Kansas, more than 90% of EITC dollars go to families with children. Studies estimate that if the EITC were eliminated, an additional 4,000 children would fall into poverty. Other elements of the governor’s tax proposal that would negatively impact children and families include elimination of the adoption credit, child and dependent care credit, child day care assistance credit, temporary assistance to families’ contribution credit and the individual development account credit. A new proposal by the leadership of the Kansas House also would eliminate the EITC.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) instituted an administrative change that eliminated food stamps for hundreds of low-income U.S. children whose parents are illegal immigrants. Under the new policy, SRS changed the way it counts household income when determining who is eligible for SNAP benefits. The formula now includes the entire income of all members of a household. Before the change, SRS counted only a portion if one or more members did not provide proof of legal U.S. residency. From Oct. 1 to the end of 2011, once incomes were recalculated using the new policy, benefits were eliminated for 1,042 households.



Lexie’s Law regulations became effective February 3, a comprehensive overhaul of the *child care* licensing and regulations system spearheaded by the Kansas Coalition for School Readiness in 2010. Kansas Action for Children (KAC) will continue to monitor implementation, including the on-line registry that has been delayed until March due to technical issues.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- A decrease in Kansas tobacco settlement receipts combined with years of diverting tobacco dollars to the State General Fund threatens funding for programs supported by the CIF. Advocates will need to convince lawmakers to make a commitment to CIF programs regardless of tobacco revenues.
- The 2012 state elections play a significant role in policy discussions. Traditional legislative champions of early childhood issues are on notice that support for government spending will be used against them in elections.
- The Administration has created a “Reading Roadmap Program” with the stated goal of improving fourth grade reading scores. Although few details are available, the Governor’s budget documents suggest the new initiative may be financed by diverting funds from programs such as Parents as Teachers and the *PreK* program. While investing in early literacy is essential, it should not come at the expense of programs with a proven track record of building the foundation for early literacy in Kansas.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The strength and the breadth of the Kansas Coalition for School Readiness is growing, as evidenced by the overwhelming number of registrations for Early Learning Day (which caused the event to be moved to a larger venue). KAC continues to expand its work with influential segments of the electorate by targeting business leaders, law enforcement, and other community leaders who are poised to speak directly to the administration about the economic benefits of investing in birth to five programs.
- The appointment of KAC President/CEO Shannon Cotsoradis to the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has provided a seat at the table when funding recommendations are made for early childhood programs. Early childhood advocates began the year from a position of strength when the Children’s Cabinet stated its intention to focus on funding for early childhood programs and delivered CIF recommendations to the governor based on an anticipated funding level of \$56M. A significant number of lawmakers from both parties have voiced their commitment to support funding at the \$56M level.
- The Secretary of the SRS resigned in December. New leadership may signal a new direction for the agency after a year of unprecedented layoffs, closures of SRS offices throughout the state, and the promotion of controversial initiatives adversely affecting children and families.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Maine

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Prevent significant proposed cuts to *child care* subsidy, *Home Visiting* and Head Start
- Build support for a standardized kindergarten entry assessment
- Track legislation on an education omnibus bill, which as currently amended in committee would significantly reduce the early childhood components
- Focus on increasing access to Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) and identifying opportunities within Medicaid policy to better serve at risk children, as emphasized in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood *Home Visiting* (MIECHV) Program systems grant

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊖ A curtailment over the summer resulted in a loss of \$500,000 each for *child care* subsidy and *Home Visiting* and a loss of \$800,000 for state Head Start funding.
- ⊖ The proposed budget eliminates all state funding of the *child care* system through the *Child care* and Development Fund (CCDF). The elimination of this funding will automatically trigger a reduction of federal matching funds, cutting total funding approximately in half. As a result, parents in low wage jobs would lose *child care* subsidies.
- ⊖ The proposed budget reduces all the *Home Visiting* funding from the Fund for a Healthy Maine. This would impact Maine Families, an organization that provides a wide array of critical services focused on concerns such as drug-affected babies and family substance abuse, domestic violence, prevention of abusive head trauma and other severe infant abuse, and multiple areas of *health* and safety.
- ⊖ The proposed budget eliminates all state funding for Head Start. The majority of Head Start parents are working or in school, so this cut will result in low-income families losing opportunities to increase their economic independence.
- ⊖ Eliminating *health* insurance coverage for more than 56,000 low-income people has been recommended in this budget proposal. This includes coverage for 21,000 parents whose family income is between 100% and 200% of poverty.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Some leaders in the Legislature are strongly opposed to Head Start and other early childhood programs
- Governor LePage is passionate about ending domestic violence but has not yet demonstrated an understanding of the connections between domestic violence, toxic stress, and the impact of high quality Early Childhood Education programs.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Maine Development Foundation and the Maine Chamber of Commerce recently released a report supporting the economic benefits of investing in Early Childhood
- Maine still has a significant number of both Republican and Democratic legislators who understand the value of quality early childhood.
- The local chapter of Fight Crime Invest in Kids/Mission Readiness/America's Edge has been very active in engaging unlikely messengers in sending Letters to the Editor and Op-eds consistently, and also has had a presence with key members of the Appropriations Committee.
- Strong advocacy push from United Ways statewide.
- The Legislature is taking a very deliberative approach to the supplemental budget proposed by the Governor, giving advocates more time to suggest alternatives

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Michigan

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Continued reform of state early childhood system through the new Michigan Office of Great Start-Early Childhood to improve coordination and impact, and to better integrate early learning with K-12 education.
- Ensure that early childhood investments are a top priority as the Governor and lawmakers work to balance the state budget.
- Make as a top priority investments in what all young children need to thrive, including:
 - Expanded access to high quality *child care* and early learning programs for at-risk children;
 - Improved access to preventive and primary *health* care through the expansion of pediatric medical home models; and
 - Increased access for parents and caregivers of young children ages 0 to 3 to needed supports, including home visitation services for at-risk children and families.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



A supplemental appropriations bill signed by the Governor will provide \$12.5M to support a kindergarten entry assessment (\$3.25M) as well as the state's *Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System* (\$9.25M).



The Governor released his proposed FY2013 budget on February 9, 2012. His budget includes new money to expand the Healthy Kids Dental program (\$25M/\$8.4M general fund), which increases the provider reimbursement rate for Medicaid-eligible children.



The governor proposed new money to expand Medicaid and MICHild coverage to include treatment for autism spectrum disorders for children under the age of six (\$34.1M/\$10.1M general fund).



The Governor's budget does not include any other new money for early childhood, though all early childhood programs are preserved. Budget language directs the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to develop a plan for a multi-year, phased-in approach to transfer funding for the Great Start Readiness Program, Great Parents/Great Start and Great Start Collaboratives into an early childhood block grant that would allocate funds to Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) that would act as fiduciaries and administer the funds in conjunction with local Great Start Collaboratives.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



In June 2011, the Governor issued an executive order creating the new Office of Great Start within the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The Office of Great Start (OGS) is initially responsible for early learning programs listed below and overtime will begin to reach to other departments for a shared early learning agenda.

- Great Start Readiness program,

- Great Parents/Great Start,
- Preschool special education,
- Early On,
- Head Start Collaboration, and
- Child Development and Care (CDC) program.

In January of 2012, Susan Broman, formerly the President of the Steelcase Foundation, became the MDE Deputy Superintendent overseeing the OGS. With the CDC program moving from the Department of Human Services (DHS) into the OGS, the best approach for eligibility determination for CDC programs is being reviewed, along with other CDC policies. Also underway is the ongoing transfer of responsibility for the GSRP to Intermediate School Districts, and the development of plans to create an early childhood block grant.



In October 2011, Michigan fully launched its *Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System* known as Great Start to Quality (GSQ). While GSQ previously existed as a tiered system for unlicensed *child care* providers, in October 2011, all licensed providers were included into GSQ with the first star level being basic licensing. Providers' GSQ ratings will become public in fall 2012 through Great Start CONNECT to provide sufficient time for providers to move up the star levels.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Michigan has a Republican majority in both chambers of the Legislature, which has been concerned about tax incentives for business as well as the expansion of the state's "rainy day fund". Thus, despite a modest budget surplus, the Legislature has not shown significant willingness to expand funding for early childhood education and care, in part because they have not fully grasped the return on investment and the long-term economic benefits.
- The K-12 education community has experienced significant budget cuts and will focus their political and other resources on their immediate survival and not expansion of early childhood efforts.
- The Administration is still determining what its priorities will be for re-investment as Michigan's economy rebounds.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- A potential change in the kindergarten eligibility date could free up significant money to be invested in early childhood programs.
- As Michigan's economy continues to recover, the state will have substantial revenue to invest.
- Certain key legislative leaders and administrative officials that have become strong supporters of investment in early childhood.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- With broad support for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application, Michigan will continue to utilize the proposal as a roadmap for advancing the State's early childhood system. While Michigan failed to receive the federal grant, early childhood advocates are

working to pass a supplemental appropriations bill through the Legislature that would fund a kindergarten entry assessment as well as help fund GSQ.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Mississippi

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

Determine key policy possibilities that can be carried forward based on Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge proposal, which include (*outcomes in italics*):

- Centralizing more functions impacting early childhood within the Department of Human Services (DHS). One key target is moving licensing from **Health** to DHS –*this measure failed in the legislature*
- Implement inter-departmental liaisons between DHS and other areas – key target is liaison with MS Department of Education – *talks underway with local funder to support this position*
- Exploring how to engage local communities in ongoing early education program coordination – the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) is using Public Consulting Group (PCG) for recommendations – *initial possibilities outlined, final recommendation due in June*
- Exploring most effective early childhood **health** services infrastructure – PCG also preparing recommendations for SECAC – *recommendations due in June*
- Development of statewide kindergarten assessment tool and supporting system – *a more streamlined approach is being discussed with key stakeholders; SECAC-MS was invited by MDE to join the research to identify the tool by 2014 and as a result has a committee appointed for this task*
- SECAC positioned as key oversight body for early education systems building –*this has taken place with SECAC executive director serving as key resource for governor on early childhood issues*
- Given emerging charter school legislation, it remains to be seen how early education will be impacted; the current House and Senate bills do not address early education

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



Quality Rating efforts continue to receive \$3M in state support.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



Eligibility period increased from six months to one year; if there are no major changes in annual review, subsidies stay in place until child is five years old.



Subsidy management moved from Designated Agents, which include Planning and Development Districts and a Head Start Agency, to DHS. Cost savings will be generated by moving from paper to electronic ledgers.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Impact of charter school legislation
- Reaching consensus with business sector on systems-building
- Creating revenue streams for early education

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Newly elected governor is receptive to early childhood
- State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) is firmly entrenched
- DHS divisional staffing has remained stable despite change in administration

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

See "Birth to Five Policy Priorities" above

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Nebraska

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Promote an amendment to Legislative Bill (LB)1015 that would require any provider taking the *child care* subsidy as payment has to be listed in the early childhood quality registry. LB 1015 was introduced to reinstate the *child care* subsidy provider rates back to the 60th percentile after having been frozen last year at the 50th percentile.
- LB 601 introduced last year and carried over to this session would increase quality in *child care* environments by instituting a tiered reimbursement system within the *child care* subsidy. Providers who participate in only the minimum training requirement (12 clock hours of training annually) would receive the base reimbursement amount, whereas providers who participate in 24 hours of annual professional development training would receive a higher subsidy reimbursement.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ➕ Reinstating the *child care* subsidy reimbursement rate to the 60th percentile. (State fiscal impact: \$2M)
- ➕ Reinstating prenatal services (through SCHIP) to unborn children of low-income women who are not eligible through Medicaid. (State fiscal impact: \$2M)

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- Ⓟ Nebraska is struggling with the effects of the privatization of child welfare, which happened in 2009 due to national statistics listing Nebraska removing children from their homes at double the national average. All five private agencies selected in 2009 to oversee services have withdrawn from the effort. The Nebraska Department of *Health* and Human Services is in crisis mode to cover the services previously provided by private agencies. There are currently 20 child welfare-related bills being considered that would directly or indirectly impact children in the child welfare system, including those ages 0-5.
- Ⓟ *Child care* regulations have been in the process of being updated for a number of years. Prior to final approval, the proposed regulations were sent back to the Department to remove a list of felonies that would permanently disqualify a person from working in a *child care* center (including offenses such as child abuse, sexual abuse of a minor, and first degree murder). This change will require the proposed regulations to undergo another public hearing, so the process remains lengthy and stalled.
- Ⓟ There is some discussion about school entry assessments in the larger context of school performance and accountability. Policy changes regarding school entry assessments (initiating them statewide, using them for school performance data, etc.,) are not likely to occur this year.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Term limits for legislators remains a political challenge. Legislation has been introduced this year that would increase the number of terms from two consecutive four-year terms to three consecutive four-year terms. It has cleared the first out of three rounds of debate. If passed and not vetoed, it will be put on the ballot in Nebraska's November election.
- Advocates must further educate the Governor on the importance of early childhood.
- Child Welfare Reform requires immediate attention in Nebraska as a crisis issue.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Leveraging relationships with key senators in the Nebraska Legislature: 1) the Chair of the Appropriations Committee; 2) the Chair of the Education Committee; and 3) the Speaker of the Legislature to get early childhood designated as a priority in the next round of designations of lottery dollars (2016).
- The University of Nebraska Department of Economics and Bureau of Business Research will conduct a Nebraska-specific economic analysis of early childhood investments. This study will lay out the actual payback period and how many years it will take until Nebraska starts to see the return on investments. This study will be valuable in communicating with business leaders and for developing messaging strategies.
- The Early Childhood Business Roundtable is gaining momentum. This, coupled with a statewide media campaign using business messengers and key influencers talking about the importance of early childhood, has been tremendously successful. The Chambers of Commerce are gaining an interest in early childhood.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Momentum is building to continue the discussion regarding school entry assessment (appropriate use, importance of data, etc).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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New Mexico

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- The bulk of our work remains focused on **establishing stable and adequate long-term funding** through the broad-based campaign to pass legislation that sends voters a constitutional amendment question. During the 2012 session, the Senate and House Joint Resolutions each passed two committees and each fell one vote short in a third committee. The proposed constitutional amendment would increase the distribution from the Land Grant Permanent Fund by 1.5% to support early childhood education services. With the second highest permanent fund in the country, valued at more than \$10 billion, New Mexico would potentially triple funding for early childhood programs. Separate, enabling legislation would define cross-agency eligible programs, such as **Home Visiting**, quality **child care** assistance, **pre-k**, and professional development, training and quality support. Services will be delivered by both public schools and private entities.

SHORT TERM FUNDING for FY 2013:

- The State added \$9.4M to early childhood services, which backfills the federal funding cuts that reduced critical services to children and families since 2010. Yet these birth-to-five services still receive ~ 1% of the overall state budget and **Child care** Assistance still falls short – putting low income working families on a waiting list as eligibility remains at the reduced level of 100% FPL. The Birth to Five NM team was successful at getting \$150k added to the T.E.A.C.H. program in committee though it wasn't originally in the legislative or executive budget proposal.
- The Birth to Five NM team will continue to advocate for additional revenue from the state General Fund be allocated to early childhood care and education.
- Recognizing the importance of providing a continuum of services from birth through third grade, we do not wish to dilute the attention to preventative services for children prior to entering school as contrasted with remediation services from K-3rd grade. The Governor and legislature are claiming higher amounts of funding to what they are describing as “early childhood” while much of that funding is targeted to remediation rather than prevention.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊕ \$150k was added to the budget for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships
- ⊕ \$3.6M added for **child care** assistance
- ⊕ \$900k added for **Home Visiting**
- ⊕ \$4.7M added for **Pre-k**
- ⊕ \$5.7M added for Kindergarten through Third Grade Plus
- ⊕ \$8.5M for a new reading initiative calling for intervention and coaches in the early grades of elementary school

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- P** New Mexico passed the Early Childhood Care and Education Act in 2011 and Birth to Five NM is actively involved in planning next steps for implementation of a system of systems to align and coordinate early childhood programs across agencies and help strengthen a high-quality continuum of services for children from birth through third grade.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- **Short-term funding:** Reinstating funding to pre-recession levels is the most immediate challenge. While the state has increased some allocations to early childhood programs, they have not been able to fill the gap left by reductions in federal funding. Many families and *child care* providers are struggling with the low eligibility levels and reimbursement rates.
- **Developing stable, adequate funding levels for the long-term:** While legislators on both sides of the aisle seem to understand the value of early care and education, there has been little will to fully fund these programs out of the state's General Fund budget (hence the challenge of short-term funding, above). The constitutional amendment campaign is well underway and building strength. The future is difficult to predict at this writing as all legislators are up for reelection and many supporters have chosen not to run for another term.
- **Changes in the NM Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC):** As part of the Early Childhood Care and Education Act of 2011, membership in ELAC was reduced and the mission was altered. The new ELAC has finally been appointed, but does not include advocates to represent the need for funding or improved quality.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- **Candidate education:** We will continue to advocate for early childhood care and education to be a priority for legislative candidates.
- **Public opinion:** One of our partner organizations commissioned a public opinion poll this past autumn by a well-respected and well-known local polling firm. The results showed great public support not just for early care and education, but for funding these programs out of the school permanent fund. We are using the poll results to convince educate legislators about the wishes of their constituents.
- **Community meetings:** During the interim period, NM Voices for Children and Decade of the Child plan to hold meetings in statewide communities to increase awareness of early childhood issues and unmet need and creating a dialogue to involve local initiative to pursue advocacy.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- The Race to the Top application process resulted in making plans for many important early childhood system development elements, such as quality, pedagogy, data collection, and alignment between early learning systems and guidelines. While resources are not currently in place to implement those plans, work toward them will proceed more slowly; however,

the RTT application does set some important goals and directions that will influence work in NM.

- Investment Zones: Support and outreach to at-risk, under-resourced areas of the state, which was part of the RTT proposal, now has some traction for short-term funding.
- FOCUS – **T-QRIS**: Described in the RTT application as a way to strengthen the current **QRIS** system. The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) is still moving forward on this, however, much more slowly in the absence of the RTT funding.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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New York

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

Early Learning:

- Invest \$20M for Year 1 implementation of QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY) to provide direct and indirect program improvement supports.
- Make an advance on the proposed \$215M in *child care* preservation funds for FY2013-2014.
- Explore setting consistent statewide standards for eligibility, co-pays and provider reimbursement rates.
- Invest \$53M in Universal *Prekindergarten*, as recommended by the Board of Regents, to restore and sustain services for four-year-olds across the State.
- Adequately and equitably fund K-12 education aid to prevent districts from reducing access to Kindergarten for five-year-olds.

Home Visiting:

- Maintain the \$23.3M for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) proposed in the Executive Budget.
- Establish a dedicated line item of \$5M to help support the sustainability of Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP).
- Support the Medicaid Redesign Team's recommendation to make NFP a fully covered preventive service for first-time, high-risk mothers and their children.
- Establish a dedicated line item of \$2M for evidence-based *Home Visiting* programs to fill gaps in services for families that are not eligible for HFNY and NFP.

Early Intervention:

- Reject the proposals in the 2012 Executive Budget, protect access to EI (Early Intervention) services, and ensure that EI services are driven by the child's needs, not by the child's *health* insurance coverage.

Afterschool:

- Restore the Advantage After School Program to the FY 2010-11 funding level of \$22.5M, as well as support the priorities of the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN).

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



Board of Regents has proposed investing \$53M in *Pre-k* programs.



Budget proposes cutting funding for afterschool programs by \$5M



Budget maintains funding for Healthy Families NY (\$23.3M), following a hard-fought battle to preserve that funding for *Home Visiting* last year.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



As part of New York's Early Learning Challenge Grant application, the State defined a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework comprised of:

the newly revised Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) and the New York State Teaching Standards; New York's Early Learning and Development Standards (newly developed *Early Learning Guidelines*, the *Head Start Frameworks*, and the *Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core*). The CBK was developed concurrently with *New York's Early Learning Guidelines* and *Prekindergarten Foundation to the Common Core*, and is explicitly designed to support educators in utilizing the standards. The ECAC is currently developing a dissemination plan, professional development modules and web-based tools to support implementation.



The Governor's Medicaid Redesign Team has recommended making Nurse-Family Partnership *Home Visiting* services a fully covered preventive service for first-time, high-risk mothers and their children.



The 2012 Executive Budget includes a number of recommendations pertaining to the Early Intervention (EI) program, including giving *health* insurance companies an unprecedented role in determining a child's EI services.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Advocates need to harness the motivation and commitment built during the application processes for the Early Learning Challenge Grant and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood *Home Visiting* (MIECHV) Program competitive grant, even though New York did not receive them.
- Limited resources make funding "new" initiatives, such as QUALITYstarsNY, challenging.
- Securing bi-partisan support for early education and cultivating new champions has been challenging with an unstable Senate.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The lack of a *Quality Rating and Improvement System* contributed to the state not receiving an Early Learning Challenge Grant, so advocates are leveraging that argument in the hope of ensuring an investment in QSNY, thereby making our State eligible for federal funding in the future.
- One of the Cuomo Administration's top priorities is economic development. Advocates hope to tie early learning and development programs, particularly *child care*, to his plans for job creation.
- Another of the Administration's priorities is increasing high school graduation rates. Advocates continue to make the connection between those rates and investments in early learning and development.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- New York now has a blueprint for moving forward with the development of an early learning and development system. The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is determining next steps in a number of areas.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Oklahoma

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Develop recommendations for a unified data system
- Improve access to quality *infant and toddler* programs, including revisions to the state *Quality Rating System*, Reaching for the Stars
- Increase utilization of the Professional Development Registry and align training to early learning guidelines
- Pilot a school readiness assessment and develop recommendations for a statewide assessment
- Maintain current levels of funding for all early childhood programs within the state, inclusive of federal, state and private funding
- Ensure all day Kindergarten requirements are not further delayed from implementation, and assure that current age of school entry requirements are maintained

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



The 2012 budget resulted in cuts to programs, but no programs were eliminated

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



DHS to introduce minor changes to Quality Rating System in the 2012 session



Delay entry to *Pre-k*, Kindergarten and first grade to July 1 birth date



Transfer of *child care* licensing to the State Department of Education



Requirement of liability insurance for all licensed *child care* center/family *child care* homes.



The IT Consolidation Act, which is aimed at streamlining the technological systems of state agencies was signed into law.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- State legislative leaders have concerns about governmental involvement with families of young children; less governmental intrusion and more family responsibility is widely supported.
- Oklahoma recently settled a civil rights lawsuit that will require our child welfare program to significantly ramp up training, staff, etc. The cost for such improvements may be borne by existing programs.
- Last session was relatively quiet on early childhood issues, but this session there are several bills filed this session that impact *child care*, education reform, etc.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The process of completing the Early Learning Challenge application provided an opportunity for the state agencies that hold primary responsibility for early childhood programs and the Governor's office to develop a common agenda
- Positive relationships have been forged with the new Governor and State Superintendent that are supportive of the state's early childhood initiative
- The long-time director of the Department of Human Services announced his retirement on February 29th. This is a combination of a challenge and an opportunity as new leadership over our *child care* and child welfare systems will likely result in new policies and practice.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Collaboration and partnership between Oklahoma Department of Education and the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council has strengthened since the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application. There is now strong support from leaders in the Department of Education to move forward with a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and a unified data system that will link early childhood, K-12, and higher education.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Oregon

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Support statewide re-design of Oregon’s early learning system spearheaded by Governor Kitzhaber under auspices of newly formed Early Learning Council.
- Support development and implementation of new statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.
- Support development, implementation and funding for statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS).
- Create more intentional linkages between early childhood and K-12.

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



The legislature budget passed in early March restores the \$600k shortfall for Oregon funded Early Head Start.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



The Legislature passed HB 4165. HB 4165 follows up on SB 909, passed in June 2011, and institutionalizes the early learning system reforms that Governor Kitzhaber had launched at the beginning of his term. HB 4165 includes the following provisions:

- Puts into motion the Early Learning Council (ELC) process for better coordinating and streamlining state services for children 0-6.
- Ensures that the ELC conforms to the membership requirements for ECACs specified in the 2007 Head Start Re-authorization Act.
- Directs the Child Care Division to develop and implement a statewide **Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System** for all early learning and development programs.
- Abolishes 36 county-level commissions on children and families by June 2013.
- Establishes a request-for-proposal process for “Accountability Hubs” to convene and coordinate early learning services in a defined area.
- Reiterates that federal Head Start Performance Standards apply to all Oregon **Pre-kindergarten** Programs (OPK).
- Directs ELC to work with Oregon Health Authority, the Department of Education and communities to select screening tools for use in all settings serving children.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- While the early learning system redesign that is currently underway is a tremendous opportunity, it is also generating uncertainty and some unease, particular among service providers who are unsure of what it means for their programs.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The Governor’s proposed redesign of Oregon’s early learning system has put early childhood at the forefront of the state’s policy agenda as never before, and is the context for almost all work in early childhood in Oregon at the moment. Governor Kitzhaber has also launched

major reforms of Oregon's health and education systems. The work of the Early Learning Council is closely tied to both these health and education reforms.

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- The key components of Oregon's RTT-ELCG application were imbedded in HB 4165, including the development of new statewide *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment*. The application is also serving as the blueprint for the work that is being currently done around these components.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Washington

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Take a balanced approach to the budget that acknowledges the impact of deep cuts over the past few years by including new revenues and maintaining critical programs for children and families.
- Pass Substitute House Bill 2448 - Measured implementation of high-quality *Prekindergarten* with targeted support for **infants and toddlers** most at-risk for academic failure
- Pass Substitute House Bill 2569 - Ensuring that parents have the information they need to make the best choices for their kids by implementing a voluntary *Quality Rating and Improvement System* for *child care* centers and early learning programs
- Pass Senate Bill 6226 – Increasing continuity of *child care* for families by expanding 12-month authorization periods to all families receiving *child care* assistance

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES

- ⊖ Governor Gregoire's Budget proposes a \$50M reduction to Working Connections *Child care*, which would lower the number of low-income children whose families can receive subsidized *child care* by 4,000.
- ⊖ The proposed budget includes a \$2.1M reduction to Seasonal *Child care*. This would eliminate state funding through nonprofits to administer *child care* subsidies for seasonal agricultural workers. Maintains federal funds, which may not be used for undocumented children of seasonal workers.
- ⊖ The proposed budget includes a \$1.3M reduction to the *Child care* Resource & Referral Network, which would terminate state funding to provide *child care* resource information to parents and training to *child care* professionals. As federal funds are the predominant funding source, the state cut reduces services by 11 percent.
- ⊖ The proposed budget includes a cut of \$300k to the Reach Out and Read Program. This loss in state funds puts at risk Reach Out and Read's public and private support, since ROR leverages \$6 for every \$1 of state funds, and \$8 million in donated professional services by medical providers for the state's \$300 thousand investment.
- ⊖ The proposed budget includes a \$400k reduction to Family Friend and Neighbor Care and would eliminate all state funding for culturally relevant programs.
- ⊖ The proposed budget includes a \$900k reduction to Agency Administration.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

- Ⓟ The Department of Early Learning (DEL) has adopted final rules for licensed family home *child care* providers. DEL filed the final rules on November 14, 2011; the rules took effect in March 2012. In the interim, DEL will provide training to licensed family home *child care* providers and licensors on key changes in the new rules. The proposed rules:

- Increase education, and training standards for licensed providers and their staff. The pre-license education and training standards generally conform to the December 2010 [Professional Development Consortium](#) recommendations.
- Enhance standards for playground safety, food service, cribs, emergency preparedness, nurture and guidance, and screen time.
- Provide an annual non-expiring full license process in accordance with [Senate Bill 5625](#), which replaces the three-year license renewals.
- Include new background check requirements that start in July 2012 under [House Bill 1903](#).
- Are less prescriptive regarding how the licensee meets standards.
- Clarify confusing fire escape provisions in the current rules.
- Require a higher level of communication with parents regarding the child's development and the licensed providers' *child care* philosophy.
- Provide more clarity for consistency in interpretation and application than the current family home *child care* rules.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Slow economic recovery continues to pose budget challenges, including protecting existing investments and the ability to move forward with improvements and/or expansions
- 2012 elections will mean shifts in the House and Senate and a new Governor, which will likely also mean a new Director of the Department of Early Learning.
- Identifying revenue/funding sources for early learning

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- A recent supreme court decision that Washington is not upholding its constitutional requirement for basic education may reopen the door to talking about early learning as necessary to meet the state's obligation and a tie to larger funding conversations about education
- A bipartisan cohort of freshman Senators have shown leadership potential in early learning
- Opportunities to educate new candidates and newly elected officials about the importance of early learning

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Implementation of WaKIDS (Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) and *QRIS* are moving more quickly than originally anticipated due to RTT – ELC.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Wisconsin

BIRTH TO FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

- Build a statewide system for early learning
- Prevent further erosion from *child care* payment policies
- Strong and effective implementation of YoungStar, Wisconsin's *QRIS* program
- Expand evidence-based *Home Visiting* programs
- Support tax credits that support higher-quality *child care*

RECENT/PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CHANGES



A bill for greater authority and more staff positions to address illegal *child care* programs required to be licensed.

RECENT/PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES



The Department of Children and Families instituted a policy in August 2011 to pay licensed family *child care* providers for attended days only to save money (Wisconsin paid based on enrollment for the last 15 years). Advocates fear the policy may be extended to center-based *child care*.



Dept of *Health* Services requested a federal waiver that would result in over 64,000 Wisconsinites losing Medicaid coverage, and in a raise in premiums for over 100,000 in the program. Waiver approval is pending.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Maintaining early learning programs at a time of declining state revenue due to (1) lower tax revenue caused by the economic downturn and (2) new tax cuts recently enacted.
- Demonstrating that the YoungStar *Quality Rating and Improvement System* is making progress in improving *child care* quality prior to the next biennial budget (July 1, 2013- June 30, 2015). In the first year 3,156 programs were rated.
- Maintaining funding for our strong set of early learning and development programs: *child care* subsidy, 4-year-old kindergarten, Head Start/Early Head Start, YoungStar, *Home Visiting*, services to children with disabilities, T.E.A.C.H scholarships and wage supplements, and training and technical assistance efforts.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Building on the planning for Race to the Top- ELC. Wisconsin just missed getting funded, ranking 11th among applicants. The plan is becoming a blueprint for action in 2012.
- YoungStar has the potential to demonstrate that a system change can transform *child care* quality.
- The possibility of launching a Early Childhood Public-Private Partnership, after months of planning with the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC).

RACE TO THE TOP EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE IMPLEMENTATION

- Planning by the ECAC and state departments, based on Wisconsin's Race to the Top application approved by the Governor, has proceeded with tentative priorities for 2012 including: increasing and improving professional development opportunities, public funding for a public-private partnership, development of an early childhood longitudinal data system, improving Wisconsin early learning standards.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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