

State of Connecticut

STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CABINET

*****DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT*****

This strategic report serves to:

1. describe the current early education and care programs and services available to children and their families in Connecticut; and
2. detail the priority areas designated by the Cabinet for action over the next three years.

In December 2009, Governor M. Jodi Rell re-established the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet and designated this body as the State Advisory Council on early education and care. The Cabinet consists of 17 members, including representation from the Head Start Collaboration office. In addition to meeting the membership requirements set forth in the Head Start Act of 2007, the Cabinet also requires representation from The Connecticut Commission on Children, the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, state legislators from both the House and the Senate, a parent of a child from a priority school district and a representative from business or philanthropy.

The table below compares the membership requirements of the State Advisory Council of the federal Head Start Act with Connecticut's public act.

Table 1 – Federal and state membership requirements for State Advisory Council

Section 642B(b)(1)(A) of the Head Start Act of 2007	Connecticut Public Act 09-6
Representative from the State agency responsible for childcare	Commissioner of Social Services/Designee
Representative of the State educational agency	Commissioner of State Department of Education (SDE)/Designee
Representative of local education agencies	Representative from a public elementary school with a prekindergarten program
Representative of institutions of higher education in the State	Representative from an institution of higher education
Representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services	Representative of a local provider of early childhood education
Representative from Head Start agencies located in the State, including migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start programs	Representative from a Head Start Program
State Director of Head Start Collaboration	Project Director of the CT Head Start Collaboration Office
Representative of the State agency responsible for programs under Section 619 or Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	Representative from SDE who is responsible for programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
Representative of the State agency responsible for health or mental health care	Commissioner of Public Health/Designee
Representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the Governor of the State	Commissioner of Developmental Services/Designee Executive Director of the Commission on Children/Designee Member of the State House of Representatives Parent of a child attending school in a priority school district Member of the State Senate Representative from the business or philanthropic community Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management /Designee Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services/Designee

Early Education and Care Programs and Services

Connecticut estimates the population of children from birth to three years old at approximately 120,000 and the population of students eligible for preschool at approximately 80,000; this number is based on approximately 40,000 students that register for public school kindergarten each year. This number underestimates the population given that some students attend private school.

Table 2 shows the state and federally funded early care and education programs and services and the number of children served. These programs and services include:

Connecticut Birth to Three System: Connecticut's Birth to Three System provides services to families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities. Services are provided in natural environments by a network of 44 local programs throughout the state. The state cost of services is offset by parent fees, commercial health insurance, IDEA Part C and Part B, and Medicaid.

Child Care Assistance Program: Connecticut's Child Care Assistance Program, *Care 4 Kids*, is funded by the Child Care Development Block Grant. Care 4 Kids helps low to moderate income families in Connecticut pay for child care costs. This program is sponsored by the State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services (DSS). Working families in Care 4 Kids are required to pay a family fee. This sliding fee scale is set by the program based upon guidance from the Department of Social Services. In addition, DSS, provides funding for child care centers throughout the state.

Child Care Infoline: 2-1-1 Child Care is a confidential and free child care referral telephone service in Connecticut - just dial 2-1-1. Child care referral specialists assist parents and child care providers in locating appropriate resources and referrals. Each child care setting is surveyed every six weeks to determine available capacity.

Early Head Start: Early Head Start (EHS) is a federally funded program for low-income infants, toddlers, pregnant women and their families. EHS programs enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward economic self-sufficiency. Programs are center-based or home-visiting or both.

Early Childhood Special Education: Early childhood special education as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Part B) serves children ages three through five who require special education. Special education and related services are available to eligible children by age 3 and are provided by local and regional school districts.

Family Resource Centers: Family Resource Centers (FRCs) provide access, within a community, to a broad continuum of early childhood and family support services which foster the optimal development of children and families. They offer parent education and training; family support; preschool and school-age child care; teen pregnancy prevention (positive youth development services); and family day-care provider training. There are 61 FRCs in Connecticut.

Head Start: Head Start is a federally funded, national program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families. In addition, supplemental state funds are available to federal Head Start grantees to increase the number of children being served, extend the program day for children being served, and enhance program quality as specified by legislation (CGS §10-16n).

Nurturing Families Network: The Nurturing Families Network is a no-cost, voluntary program that provides information, guidance and assistance to first-time parents whose children are at risk for abuse or neglect. Available through some 33 community agencies and birthing hospitals throughout Connecticut, the network offers three distinct, yet interwoven services: Home visiting, parenting groups and connecting parents with other services in the community.

Parents as Teachers (PAT): ConnPAT provides the Parents as Teachers National Center certification both for prenatal to Three Institutes and Three to Kindergarten. In addition, PAT provides technical assistance to over 120 PAT programs. In Connecticut these include Family Resource Centers, the Nurturing Families Network, and Early Head Start programs. These PAT-certified staff members provide technical assistance in a variety of ways, including individual home visits, group meetings, health and developmental screening and resource/referral services to over 4,000 children.

School Readiness: In 1998 the School Readiness grant program was funded through legislation, Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §160-§164, to provide spaces in community childcare programs and public school classrooms for 3- and 4-year old children in over 300 programs. Communities receiving this grant are eligible by virtue of being a priority school district, a municipality with a priority school, or ranked as one of the lowest 50 towns in wealth. School Readiness Councils consisting of co-leadership from the chief elected official and the superintendent of schools are charged with coordinating a School Readiness program network. This initiative is jointly funded by the State Departments of Education and Social Services.

Table 2 – Early Education and Care programs and services

State or Federal Program	Infants/Toddlers	Preschool	Totals
Birth to Three	4,700	n/a	4,700
Care4Kids	7,000	7,400	14,400
Child Care Infoline	14,900	34,300	49,200
DSS Centers	1,200	2,800	4,000
Early Head Start	700	n/a	700
Family Resource Centers	3,200	3,800	7,000
Head Start	n/a	6,100	6,100
Nurturing Families Network	4,700	n/a	4,700
Parents as Teachers	3,700	n/a	3,700
SDE/DSS School Readiness	n/a	10,100	10,100

There is a high degree of overlap in the counts represented as many children are funded through multiple sources. Most of this data is point-in-time, although some figures are yearly and/or monthly aggregates.

Connecticut's Early Childhood Education Cabinet

As detailed in the 2006 publication *Ready by 5 & Fine by 9*, Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework, the State has built on over a decade of attention to meeting the needs of Connecticut's young children. The Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet, established by law in 2005, worked to identify a set of agenda items designed to promote the development of all of the state's youngest children. The Cabinet proposed three goals for all young children:

- reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age 5;
- begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school; and
- have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

Funding for the Cabinet was eliminated in 2008. In a special legislative session in September 2009, the Early Childhood Education Cabinet was re-established, and in February 2010, was designated by Governor M. Jodi Rell as the State Advisory Council on early childhood education and care. Upon receipt of this designation the new Cabinet formulated four priorities based on the work of the previous Cabinet. These priorities were translated

ed into four goals for Connecticut’s vision for early care and education. The strategies for each goal describe what can realistically be accomplished over the next three years to promote an aligned and coordinated early education delivery system in Connecticut. The Cabinet’s four goals are:

- Adopt comprehensive and multi-domain early learning standards that reflect a progression of skills birth through age 5 aligned with the K-12 standards.
- Increase integration, quality, and accessibility of Connecticut early childhood data for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- Develop a highly qualified and effective workforce for all children birth to 5 in all settings.
- Foster a partnership among families and communities in the early years.

Work groups for each priority were formed by publicly posting a request to all interested stakeholders. Four work groups met for two, half-day sessions to develop strategies, activities/actions, timelines, and deliverables in order to carry out the work to meet these goals over the next three years.

Table 3 shows members of the work groups represented the following agencies, individuals and organizations:

Table 3 – Members of work groups

CT State Department of Education	Charter Oak State College
Head Start	ConnPAT (Parents as Teachers)
Greater Hartford YMCA	Birth to Three (early intervention)
United Way/211 Child Care	CT Family Resource Centers
CT Voices for Children	Coordinating Council for Children in Crisis
CT Department of Social Services	CT Department of Public Health
Family Resource Center Alliance	School Readiness Councils
Child Health and Development Institute	CT Department of Higher Education
Hope Child Development Center	Commission on Children
CT Parent Power	Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Center
The Charter Oak Group	Independent Consultants
CT Association for Human Services	CT Association for the Education of Young Children
CT Charts-A-Course	Providers of early childhood education programs
Eastern CT State University	UConn Health Center
Local School Districts	Regional Educational Service Centers
Accreditation Facilitation Project	William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
Eastern CT Health Network	CT P-20 Council
Norwalk Community College	

Priority Areas

GOAL: EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Adopt comprehensive and multi-domain early learning standards that reflect a progression of skills birth through age 5 aligned with the K-12 standards.

STRATEGIES:

- Conduct a review of existing standards and research on early learning.
- Involve and engage cross-sector stakeholders throughout the process.
- Engage leadership to ensure the promotion of the understanding and buy-in of the early learning standards and their relationship to K-12.
- Develop a document outlining early learning standards for children ages birth to five, in all areas of development designed for appropriate use with all children, including those with disabilities and dual-language learners.
- Plan for implementation and professional development.

Background:

Connecticut's Preschool Curriculum Framework was last reissued in 2006. The Preschool Curriculum Framework is organized into four domains of development:

- personal and social
- physical
- cognitive creative
- expression/aesthetic

The Curriculum Framework is guided by the following principles:

- early learning and development are multidimensional;
- developmental domains are highly interrelated;
- young children are capable and competent;
- there are individual differences in rates of development among children;
- children will exhibit a range of skills and competencies in any domain of development; knowledge of child growth and development and consistent expectations are essential to maximizing educational experiences for children and to developing and implementing programs;
- families are the primary caregivers and educators of their young children; and
- young children learn through active exploration of their environment through child-initiated and teacher-selected activities.

The Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework is a curriculum-embedded tool developed to be a companion to *The Preschool Curriculum Framework*. These curriculum and assessment frameworks provide a system for using standards in both planning curriculum and assessing children's progress.

In 2009 Connecticut published *Guidelines for the Development of Infant and Toddler Early Learning*. This publication is intended as a handbook for infant and toddler caregivers. This work was sponsored by the Department of Social Services with the assistances of a broad range of constituents, representing Head Start, family childcare, special education, public schools and health care. These guidelines, based on principles consistent with the Preschool Curriculum Framework, are designed to inform and support infant and toddler primary caregivers, including parents and childcare providers. These guidelines do not articulate early learning standards. The Cabinet intends to use these guidelines and the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework as a foundation for adopting early learning standards birth to age 5.

In addition, the Connecticut State Board of Education will be adopting the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics developed by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO). Connecticut's new early learning standards will be aligned with these K-12 standards.

GOAL: QUALITY DATA SYSTEMS

Increase integration, quality, and accessibility of Connecticut early childhood data for the benefit of all stakeholders.

STRATEGIES:

- Assign unique identifiers to all young children, early childhood programs, and early childhood staff.
- Develop (or use an existing) data architecture project that will enable data to be matched in an unduplicated manner across agencies, while still respecting all privacy requirements.
- Facilitate a multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding concerning the deliverables and standards of data accessibility.

Background:

Connecticut has engaged in various efforts to forge an early childhood data system. Although there has been some success, we are still working with fragments of a truly integrated system.

In 2004, The Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut launched an effort called Early Childhood DataCONNECTIONS with funding from Health and Human Services, the Children's fund of Connecticut and the Connecticut Dept. of Social Services. The result, in addition to a mapping of which state agencies were collecting which information, was a toolkit called "Putting Administrative Data to Work" issued in April, 2005. It was the vision of the team that developed the toolkit "that all state agencies serving children and families will be able to creatively and cooperatively develop a culture and infrastructure that values and supports research and ultimately, evidence-based decision making on public policy issues."

In July 2006, the process for obtaining Department of Education's State Assigned Student Identifiers was expanded to all publicly-funded preschool programs. This included the state's early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

In July 2008, The Public Consulting Group, under contract with the former Early Childhood Investment Initiative, reviewed data collection efforts from seven state agencies to identify opportunities for improved data development, management and use. Recommendations were made to develop a data sharing agreement among agencies, improved efficiency of collections, storage, management and sharing data.

In 2010, the newly formed Cabinet (State Advisory Council) chose "early childhood data" as one of its four priorities. A committee composed of 17 members from six state agencies and four private agencies came together to consider the need for unduplicated and longitudinal early childhood data across agencies. The data workgroup identified key needs for early childhood data at both the state and local level:

- Inform public policy
- Allocate funds
- Improve programs
- Provide data to researchers
- Identify children at risk
- Coordinate services across agencies

- Enhance parents ability to make informed choices
- Support collaboration within and across systems and programs
- Improve public access
- Improve State and Federal accountability

Figure 1 – Timeline of Connecticut’s data efforts in Early Care and Education in the State of Connecticut

2004	April 2005	July 2006	July 2008	Sept. 2009	Fall 2009	Feb. 2010
Child Health and Development Institute of CT launched Early Childhood DataCONN- ections Funded by Health and Human Services, The Children’s Fund of CT and CT Dept. of Social Services	Putting Administrative Data to Work Tool Kit issued by DataCONN- ections.	Development Plan for Early Care and Education Data research Systems issued by DataCONN- ections SDE expands the use of State Assigned Student Identifiers to include children in publicly funded preschool and Part B Early Intervention.	CT Early Childhood Investment Initiative contracts to review early childhood data collec- tions by key state agencies.	Office of Early Childhood Planning Coordination and Outreach created by the CT legislature. Responsi- bilities include coordinating the enhance- ment and implementa- tion of an Early Childhood Information System.	Governor Rell’s deficit mitigation plan elimi- nates funding for the Early Childhood Cabinet and all Cabinet- related activities.	Governor Rell designates the Early Childhood Education Cabinet as the State Advisory Council detailed in the Head Start Act of 2007.

GOAL: WORK FORCE/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Develop a highly qualified and effective workforce for all children birth to age 5 in all settings.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a scholarship system available to staff in all settings from multiple public and private funders.
- Propose revisions to the Department of Public Health (DPH) licensing requirements regarding the qualifications of newly hired teachers who work in programs licensed by DPH.
- Improve access to higher education for a greater number of early childhood staff. Increase the capacity of higher education to deliver bachelor and associate degrees.

Background:

Significant efforts have been made to strengthen Connecticut's early childhood workforce. In the fall of 2007, a workforce subcommittee was convened by the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council whose charge was to develop a plan to raise the educational qualifications of early childhood teachers to meet requirements of Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-16p (b) which requires all teachers in preschool programs receiving public funds to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development or a related field, or holding state teacher certification in early childhood or special education by 2015. This workforce was co-chaired by the Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education and the Director of the Office of Workforce Competitiveness. The Office of Workforce Competitiveness is focused on preparing Connecticut's workforce for the rapidly changing and competitive economy of the 21st century. The subcommittee membership included 43 representatives from state agencies, higher education, business, job training from programs, philanthropic and advocacy organizations.

The workforce subcommittee analyzed data from Connecticut's Professional Registry administered by Connecticut Charts-a-Course (CCAC). This registry offers program administrators a way of tracking the qualifications of their staff and can be used to create staff development plans to assist in meeting staff credentialing requirements. The data from the Registry showed the qualifications of the current workforce and capacity of the higher education system. Based on this data, it was determined that the goal of bachelor's degree for all teachers was not feasible. This data indicated that 378 or 31% of the teachers in publicly funded programs have (at a minimum) a bachelor's degree and 12 credits in early childhood education. The majority (69%) of the current teachers (857 individuals) are well below this degree requirement. (See Table 4 below for a summary of this data.)

Based on this data, the subcommittee developed a multi-year plan to increase both the size and qualifications of the workforce in publicly funded school- and center-based early childhood education programs. This plan targets public preschools, Head Start, School Readiness programs, and Department of Social Service child care centers. In addition, recommendations were made to increase the minimum requirements for the staff in publicly-funded early childhood education programs. This plan is designed to be aligned with the National Association for the Education for Young Child (NAEYC) State Policy Blueprint, NAEYC Public Report. (LeMoine, 2008).

Table 4 – Registry Data for Staff Qualifications (2007-08) (Includes DSS, School Readiness, and some Head Start programs)

Percent of staff with:	Teachers		Assistant Teachers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
BA or > + 12 ECE credits	378	31%	79	6%
AS + 12 ECE credits	307	25%	89	7%
CDA + 12 ECE credits	212	17%	149	12%
Less than a CDA + 12	338	27%	935	75%
Totals	1,235	100%	1,252	100%

An outcome of this work an alternative credential which calls for 50 percent of the teachers to have a bachelor's degree and the remaining to have an associate's degree by 2015. In addition, there was a recommendation that all of the associate degree programs be NAEYC-accredited.

Other recommendations to support the attainment of the credential include:

- **Worksite practicum:** A process for those in the workforce earning bachelor's and associate degrees to do their Student Teaching Practicum at their work sites.
- **Seamless articulation:** An articulation plan to ensure that students completing an approved associate degree can continue at a four-year institution without losing credit or repeating work.
- **Alternative pathways:** An Expedited Pathway to ensure that teachers currently in the workforce with associate or bachelor's degrees in the appropriate discipline and three-years of experience will be awarded the Early Childhood Teacher Credential.

GOAL: FAMILY INVOLVEMENT/HOME VISITATION

Foster a partnership among families and communities in the early years

STRATEGIES:

- Create a continuum of home visitation services.
- Provide a comprehensive system of parent education.
- Educate professionals in the importance of parents as partners.
- Promote parent leadership.

Background:

Connecticut leads many states in its strong commitment to parents as partners in learning. Proven models include the People Empowering People, The Parent Leadership Training Institute and Parents Supporting Educational Excellence. These model leadership initiatives teach parents how to lead for the next generation in program and policy.

A Parent Trust was established by the state legislature to create a competitive grant program in family civics so parents could learn to lead for their young throughout the state. This Trust has been matched in funds by philanthropy including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund.

Connecticut's model home visitation programs include Birth to Three/IDEA Part C, Child First, Nurturing Families, Parents as Teachers and Healthy Families. These programs are all research-based and evaluated for effectiveness. These home visiting programs are based on the concept of "family centered practice." This practice is designed to engage families as partners. Using a home visitation model, parents gain the knowledge to be caring and successful parents in strong families. Skilled home visitors work with parents – often beginning in pregnancy – to enhance their strengths, provide education, and create community connections. The home visitor and the family work together to create an action plan that meets the needs and priorities of the family, drawing on the family's strengths, community resources and the skills of the home visitor.

Areas of focus generally include health behaviors during pregnancy, enhancing qualities of family care giving of infants and toddlers, and linking families with needed health and human services. For many families, receiving information and assistance regarding parenting and child development can help anchor family development.

Home visitation provides safety and information to eager and often vulnerable families. For example, the Hartford Young Parent Program provides home visitation for teen parents. The program assists teen parents in adjusting to parenthood while completing the requirements for their high school diploma. Among teen parents in the program:

- 88 percent of teens chose to initiate breast feeding for their babies;
- 92 percent of the babies born weighed 2500 grams or more at birth;
- None of the teen parents smoked during the pregnancy or after delivering their babies.

New federal interest in home visitation will be incorporated into the work of the Cabinet. Connecticut is applying for federal Maternal, Infant and Childhood Home Visitation Program dollars to create a comprehensive system of home visitation for our families that addresses the diverse and salient needs of new parents.

Needs Assessment

Each State Advisory Council is required to conduct a periodic needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low income children in the State.

Currently, Connecticut does not have a comprehensive statewide needs assessment for early childhood. However, there are numerous reports and initiatives that assess many aspects of Connecticut's early childhood landscape. These include:

Annual National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) State of Preschool Yearbook: In the recently released State of Preschool 2009, Connecticut met six out of the 10 quality standards including early learning standards, teacher specialized training, minimum class size, staff/child ratio, screening/referral and support services, and monitoring. Connecticut's School Readiness program has one of the highest cost-per-child of all the 38 states with state-funded preschool programs in the country (Connecticut is ranked #3 in state funds per child enrolled in prekindergarten, and ranked #2 in all reported funding per child enrolled in prekindergarten).

Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement: This voluntary and privately funded commission, composed primarily of business leaders and other professionals, was established by Governor Rell through Executive Order. This group will research why Connecticut has one of the largest achievement gaps between low-income students and their more affluent peers, and make recommendations to the Governor, lawmakers, relevant state and local institutions and the public on how to close the gap.

Early Childhood Workforce Subcommittee of the Research and Policy Council: This subcommittee collected and analyzed data on the qualifications of the current workforce and capacity of the higher education system and determined that the goal of bachelor's degrees for all teachers by 2015 was not feasible and therefore developed an alternative proposal to be taken under consideration in an upcoming legislative session.

Head Start Collaboration Office – Report of Progress: In January 2010, the Connecticut Head Start Collaboration Office issued a progress report on goals, objectives, activities, timelines, and resources. Priorities areas included in this report are: healthcare, welfare/child welfare, child care, education partnerships, community services, family literacy, services children with disabilities and homeless, professional development and Head Start involvement in state and local planning and policy making. This summary of needs assessment will inform the ongoing work of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and is congruent with its four goals.

Maternal, Infant, and Childhood Home Visitation Federal Grant Application: As part of this federal grant application, a comprehensive needs assessment is being completed across state agencies and programs. Upon completion, the information gathered from this needs assessment will be used to inform the work regarding home visitation for infants and toddlers.

Results-based Accountability (RBA): In 2006, the Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee implemented RBA as a framework for making policy and fiscal decisions based on desired outcomes for the children and families of Connecticut being served by state funds. Two years later, the RBA methodology was expanded to include nine state agencies, covering 26 programs, birth through age 9. Report cards on child and adult nutrition programs, Early Reading Success (ERS), Adult Education, Family Resource Centers, School Readiness, Special Education, Birth to Three, and Head Start provide information on a range of programs and services and inform the work of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet.

Ready by 5 & Fine by 9: This publication prepared by the Governor's Early Childhood Research & Policy Council in February 2007, identified the need for additional state-funded, School Readiness program spaces for three- and four-year olds within the state of Connecticut. This information has been updated annually in the School Readiness Unmet Need and Expansion Report.

School Readiness Unmet Need and Expansion Report: This annual report to the Connecticut General Assembly provides an estimate of the number of three- and four-year-old children who are not being served in a preschool program in priority districts; the percentage of children whose parents would not seek preschool programs; the number who will need preschool programs; and the estimate of operating and capital costs that will be required to serve such children.

State Board of Education's 5-Year Comprehensive Plan 2006-2011: Connecticut General Statutes requires the Connecticut State Board of Education to develop a comprehensive plan every five years. Priority I of the current plan is to "provide high-quality preschool education for all students." This priority was selected due to the large disparity of access and quality to preschool which contributes significantly to the uneven preparation of young children and the resulting achievement gap.

The Early Childhood Education Cabinet will incorporate the data from these various sources into a comprehensive needs assessment during 2011 and 2012. Additional areas of data will be identified that will achieve the goals of the four priority areas that have been selected by the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet.