



Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet

Meeting of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet

November 15, 2012 • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Middletown State Office Building, SERC Classroom

25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown

ATTENDANCE

Member	Member Type Required by Federal Statute		Member	Member Type Required by Federal Statute	
David Title, Chair <i>Superintendent of Fairfield PS</i>	Representative of a Local Education Agency	X	Deb Johnson <i>Section Chief, Dept. of Public Health</i>	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	X
Catherine Abercrombie <i>State Representative</i>	Member of the House of Representatives	X	Michelle Maggio <i>Parent</i>	Parent	
Cathy Battista <i>President, FRC Alliance</i>	Representative from Family Resource Centers		Abel Padro (for David Morgan) <i>Vice President, TEAM, Inc.</i>	Representative from Head Start Agency	
Peter Palermino (for Claudette Beaulieu) <i>Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Social Services</i>	Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care	X	Joan Parris <i>Director, ECE, Norwalk CC</i>	Representative of Institutions of Higher Education	X
Marisol Estrada-Soto <i>Parent</i>	Parent	X	Edie Reichard <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>	Representative of a State-funded Child Care Center	X
Harriet Feldlaufer <i>Chief, Bureau of Teaching & Learning, Dept. of Education</i>	Representative of the State Education Agency	X	Andrea Stillman <i>State Senator</i>	Member of the Senate	
Lynn Johnson (for Linda Goodman) <i>Director, Birth to Three, Dept. of Developmental Services</i>	Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor	X	Maria Synodi (for Chief of Special Education Bureau) <i>Chief, Special Education, Dept. of Education</i>	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Programs under 619 or Part C of the IDEA	
Vacant	Representative from the Business or Philanthropic Community		Eileen Ward <i>Director, Children's Community Development Center</i>	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	X
Leah Grenier <i>Budget Specialist, Office of Policy & Management</i>	Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee	X	Grace Whitney <i>Director, Head Start Collaboration Office</i>	State Director of Head Start Collaboration	X
Stephen Tracey (for Janice Gruendel) <i>Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Children & Families</i>	Commissioner of the Department of Children & Families		Elaine Zimmerman <i>Exec. Dir., Commission on Children</i>	Executive Director of the Commission on Children	X

Documents Received:

- Minutes from the September 27, 2012 meeting
- Project Director's Report
- QRIS for Connecticut PowerPoint Presentation
- Connecticut's Draft CCDF Plan
- Connecticut's Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

A. Welcome and Introductions

David Title opened the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September 27, 2012, meeting were approved.

C. Work Group Updates

Data Systems:

The work group met on November 5, 2012, to review details for the data demonstration project. This project uses software similar to the Child Health Information Network (CHIN) that is being piloted by the P-20 Council and will be used to link state agency data systems together. The group has also met with Mark Raymond from the Bureau of Enterprise System and Technology (BEST) to discuss using the birth certificate state file number as a unique identifier.

Early Learning Standards:

Reviews by in-state experts of the draft standards are being compiled to inform the content validation of the new standards. The group is also finalizing an age validation prospectus for funders.

Professional Development/Workforce:

The work group is updating the Planning Team on the mandates for ECE teachers as outlined in legislation PA 11-54 which states that all teachers hold an Associate's Degree by 2015 and a Bachelor's degree by 2020.

Family Involvement/Home Visitation:

The Home Visitation subgroup is developing recommendations to the Planning Team on the integration of home visiting into early care system. These recommendations reflect partnerships in home visitation models through layering of services from a variety of models in order to provide services that best meet the needs of young children and their families.

Representative Abercrombie expressed concern about the method of distribution of home visitation grant funds. Further discussion will take place with Representative Abercrombie and the co-chairs of the work group, as well as with Commissioner Jewel Mullen. Donna Maselli has withdrawn from the Family Involvement/Home Visitation work group, a new representative from DPH will need to be named.

Health Promotions:

The work group had their first meeting on October 2, 2012. The focus of the meeting was to orient members to the roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet as outlined in the 2007 Head Start Act. Additionally, work group goals and a Health Promotions work plan were discussed.

Public/Private Partnerships:

The work group will be co-chaired by Leah Grenier of OPM and Richard Sussman from the Hartford Foundation. Prospective members have been identified and are being contacted for an initial meeting in January 2013.

For more detailed updates and full summaries of work group meetings, membership and future work group events, visit the Cabinet’s website: www.ctearlychildhood.org

D. Updates from Planning Team

Myra Jones-Taylor stated that the Planning Team has held three of the six statewide parent forums. Additionally, a seventh parent forum in New London is being planned.

\$3 million in funds for Quality Enhancement (QE), \$1.4 million has been set aside for scholarships. Teachers in both state-funded and non-state-funded centers will be eligible. This money supports Connecticut’s commitment towards having an early childhood workforce that is prepared for the 2015 legislation.

Myra Jones-Taylor thanked members of the QRIS work group for setting aside a significant time over a brief time period to prepare draft recommendations on a for QRIS plan. These will be included as a part of the Planning Team recommendations to the Governor.

E. Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in Connecticut

Deb Flis and Eileen Ward, co-chairs of the QRIS work group presented the recommendations of the QRIS work group. This work group was charged with development a framework for a QRIS system. Operational details are to be developed.

QRIS Work Group Membership

Deb Flis, Co-Chair <i>Dir. of Accreditation & Quality Initiatives, Charts-a-Course</i>	Eileen Ward, Co-Chair <i>Director, Children’s Community Development Center</i>
Margaret Freidenfelt <i>Child Care Licensing Supervisor, DPH</i>	Gerri Rowell <i>Consultant, SDE</i>
Paulette Grondin-Cardillo <i>Early Childhood Liaison, Westport PS</i>	Jessica Sager <i>Co-Founder & Exec. Dir., All Our Kin</i>
Michelle Meace <i>Regional Manager, Apple Tree Children’s Centers</i>	Susan Sponheimer <i>ECE Spec./Manager, Region 1 Head Start T/TA Network</i>
Karen Rainville <i>Executive Director, CAEYC</i>	Sherri Sutera <i>Senior VP of Child Care Services, United Way</i>
Edie Reichard <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>	Elena Trueworthy <i>Director, Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative</i>
Deb Resnick <i>Personnel & Practice Office, CT Birth to Three</i>	

The goals of a QRIS in Connecticut is to give families the information they need to make informed choices and, to provide programs with the tools needed to improve quality for **all** children. The intent of these recommendations are to reach **all** providers.

Main Recommendations of QRIS Work Group:

- Develop criteria and indicators that define Connecticut's five standards of QRIS which include: (1) Learning Environments; (2) Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; (3) Family Engagement and Support; (4) Leadership and Management; and (5) Health and Safety.
- Utilize a block system for rating and improvement
- Include licensed and licensed-exempt, center and family-based providers
- Conduct an assessment of the ability of license-exempt programs to achieve regulatory compliance in order to determine barriers to licensing
- Study the feasibility of the current child day care licensing system to act as mechanism for communication to all licensed programs regarding the QRIS
- Establish separate entities to:
 - o Monitor (assess and rate)
 - o Provide technical assistance (plan and implement program improvement)
- Determine the threshold for classifying non-publicly funded child care providers that enroll children receiving Care4Kids funding
- Review and update reimbursements of all public funding streams to increase the base rate of subsidies to 75 percent of the current rate as defined by the CCDF plan
- Establish a subgroup with knowledge of federal and state mandates related to child care subsidies, taking into account pending collective bargaining agreements
- Establish a process for review and approval of accreditation/approval bodies
- Fund the build-out of entities required to address data, monitoring and technical assistance needs of a successful QRIS

Details on the recommendations of the QRIS work group as well as the full presentation can be found on the Cabinet website: <http://www.ctearlychildhood.org/qrisk.html>

F. Public Comment on QRIS

There are concerns regarding the cost of a QRIS in Connecticut. Representative Abercrombie suggested preparing two sets of recommendations for the Governor, one that includes a long-term plan including legislative changes, and a second that includes recommendations that can be implemented immediately at little to no-cost.

Cyd Oppenheimer of Connecticut Voices for Children asked for further clarification on Level Four criteria for those NAEYC- and Head Start-approved. There will be no substitutions for levels. You must start at the entry level and meet criteria with each standard.

Elizabeth Aschenbrenner of EASTCONN asked if there was research compiled from other states on the impact of QRIS. There is a limited body of research with most focusing on the internal impact of a state's system. Most research is conducted through a director's perspective of the program.

George Hesinger of Connecticut Parent Power asked about other national standards (e.g. Montessori) in regards to QRIS. It was recommended within the work group that a system be established to address assessments of other national entities.

Maggie Adair of the Early Childhood Alliance asked if there was a link to workforce compensation in terms of reimbursements. This issue is part of the financial incentive package that requires further examination.

Jillian Gilcrest of CAHS asked if there could potentially be funds for non-publicly funded centers available through the subsidy subgroup. It was stated that this was in fact a possibility.

Deb Johnson of DPH shared concern regarding categories of license-exempt. There are many non-public school programs that are license-exempt and the fear is that including them in this system without knowing anything about them could result in many programs operating illegally. This concern was raised within the work group itself. There will need to be further discussion and planning in regards to including license-exempt programs.

Deb Johnson asked if programs have to register to remain at a level or to request assistance. It was stated that a program must be registered in the data system in order to receive access to systems, forms and tools for technical assistance.

Deb Johnson also asked if other states sought legal advice and wondered if Connecticut should, as well. The work group was unaware if other states sought legal advice and did not believe Connecticut was at a point where legal advice was necessary.

Representative Abercrombie stated that urban districts need to be included in a pilot program, suggesting that many centers not included in the Registry could be found in the urban districts. There must be an understanding of cost-per-family and the financial impact this could have on vulnerable districts. Representative Abercrombie shared concern that if families are unable to afford this type of system, they may gravitate towards programs operating illegally. She suggested selecting a rural, urban and suburban district in the pilot system.

Marion Calderon of Connecticut Parent Power emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive learning environments in a QRIS. Cultural competency will be woven throughout all five standards.

A forum is available on the Cabinet's website at www.ctearlychildhood.org. Comments, questions and suggestions are welcome.

G. CCDF Plan

Peter Palermino distributed copies of the draft CCDF plan and thanked the co-chairs of the Cabinet's work groups for their work in gathering information. The goals of the Cabinet's work group directly align with the CCDF plan which brings \$50 million to the state of Connecticut.

In July 2013, Connecticut must submit its next two-year plan. Public hearings will be conducted in the spring of 2013.

The draft CCDC plan and executive summary can be found on the Cabinet's website under November 15, 2012 meeting documents.

H. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood Cabinet will be held on Thursday, December 20, 2012, at the State Office Building in Middletown, SERC Community Room, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.