



State Early Childhood Policy  
Technical Assistance Network



in collaboration with the Build Initiative

# **Building an Early Learning System:** The ABCs of Planning and Governance Structures

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## Introduction

Currently, many states and communities are exploring how they can build early learning systems to help them achieve the first national education goal: that all children start school ready to learn.<sup>1</sup> This work is based on greater understanding of the importance of the first years of life to lifelong learning and the changes in society that have meant many more parents are working while their children are very young.

Developing an early learning system involves multiple strategies and service components, including ones to ensure that:

- Children’s health care needs are addressed
- Parents can provide the nurturing and stability young children need to grow and develop
- Early care and education settings meet children’s supervision and developmental needs

There is no single answer to the question: What governance structure can create an early learning system and manage the system efficiently and effectively? What works in one state and for one system-building purpose may not work in another state, or in the same state for a different system-building purpose. In fact, to truly build an early learning system, multiple planning and governance structures are likely to be needed—at the state level, at the community level, and over time.

While there is no single answer, there are rules of thumb to consider and helpful models to examine in developing these planning and governance structures.

## Defining and Describing an Early Learning System

The first important rule of thumb to consider is that **form follows function**.

An important step in the process of developing any planning and governance structure is to determine that structure's functions and goals. This requires at least a rough conceptualization of what an early learning system that could ensure all children start school ready to learn would be. The process must start with agreeing on some definitions—of what “early learning” for children entails and what a “system” represents.

Chronologically, “early learning” covers the first years of a child's life, usually spanning at least the time from birth to school entry, but often defined to cover the prenatal (and even pre-conceptual) period and the early elementary grades as well. The broader the age range covered, the larger the actual early learning system will need to be. The research base on early learning offers a solid picture of what all children need to ensure their growth and development:<sup>2</sup>

- Health and nutrition—adequate and nourishing food and exercise for physical and mental growth, protection against and response to disease and injury, and regular check-ups and well-child visits that result in early identification of and response to health and developmental risks
- Competent and confident parenting—at least one, and preferably two, parent figures who provide nurturing, protection, and stimulation; with whom the child bonds and forms attachments; and who are constant and consistent through the early years
- Constant, stable, and appropriate supervision—continuous adult oversight and support that enable and guide the child in safely exploring the world

- Guidance and instruction—help and practice in developing large and small motor skills, language, pre-literacy and numeracy concepts, cognitive development, socialization with adults and other children, and early identification and treatment of special developmental issues and concerns
- Safe and supportive communities—safe conditions within the child's immediate environment, including environmental and physical safety, and supportive social networks, including relatives, friends, and neighbors who contribute to a positive, language- and experience-rich environment for all young children
- Ready schools (if the focus extends to school transitions or the early elementary school years)—schools that provide the learning environment and special attention that children need to grow as unique human beings

These universal needs are defined here generically. They can be met in a variety of ways. Most children receive most of what they need most of the time, through non-governmental programs, services, and voluntary supports.

At the same time, each of these also has program or service counterparts that need to be in place to contribute to meeting these needs, for at least some children at some times. Table One shows these universal child needs and their program or service counterparts.

Clearly, this is an expansive list of program and service areas. Efforts to build an early learning system need to determine where their focus will be. Usually, these efforts choose not to concentrate, at least at the

<b>TABLE ONE: UNIVERSAL CHILD NEEDS AND THEIR PROGRAM OR SERVICE COUNTERPARTS</b>	
<b>Universal Child Need</b>	<b>Program or Service Component</b>
Health and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Basic health and nutrition services (including prenatal/preconceptual care, depending on chronological focus)</li> <li>B. Special health and developmental services to address identified special needs</li> </ul>
Confident and competent parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Services supporting and strengthening parenting (family support programs, home visiting, parenting education, family planning, family literacy, fatherhood support groups, public education campaigns, marriage counseling)</li> <li>B. Supports for safe, stable, and economically viable families</li> <li>C. Child protection and welfare services, including foster placement and adoption</li> </ul>
Constant, stable, and appropriate supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Family-leave policies and services</li> <li>B. Child care and respite care services</li> </ul>
Guidance and instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Developmentally appropriate child care services (early care and education)</li> <li>B. Early detection and special education programming and treatment of developmental delays and risks (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)</li> <li>C. Enriched child care environments for vulnerable children, birth to school age</li> <li>D. Universal and/or targeted pre-school programs for 3- to 4-year-olds</li> </ul>
Safe and supportive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Recreational programs and activities, including libraries, parks, and activities for families with young children</li> <li>B. Housing, policing, and community development programs</li> <li>C. Community-building strategies, particularly focused on poor, disinvested neighborhoods</li> </ul>
Ready schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Transition services and strategies for kindergarten entry</li> <li>B. School reforms and community school approaches</li> </ul>

outset, on building safe and supportive communities, tackling broad issues of school reform, addressing family income and housing issues, or addressing such issues as family leave.

Generally, however, most formulations of an early learning system (or system of systems) for young children include these specific child and parent developmental services:

- Health and nutrition (particularly as they relate to ensuring access to health care)
- Early care and education (developmentally appropriate child care and pre-school)
- Family involvement and support (including some family support, home visiting, and parenting education activities)

- Early intervention (including early detection and treatment of developmental and parenting issues, through IDEA and child protection services)

It is hard to imagine achieving the first national education goal without having these services in place for all children who need them. Clearly, some are normative in nature. Others are more preventive or respond to special needs.

This brings us to defining the term “system.” A dictionary definition of a system is:

a set of connected elements, forming a complex unit with some overall purpose, goal, or function that is achieved only through the actions and interactions of all the elements.

Under this general definition, states already have a health system, a special education system, a school system, and a child welfare system, although each may only partially address the early learning needs of the young children they serve. Each has a purpose or function addressed through multiple elements that are consciously connected and work together.

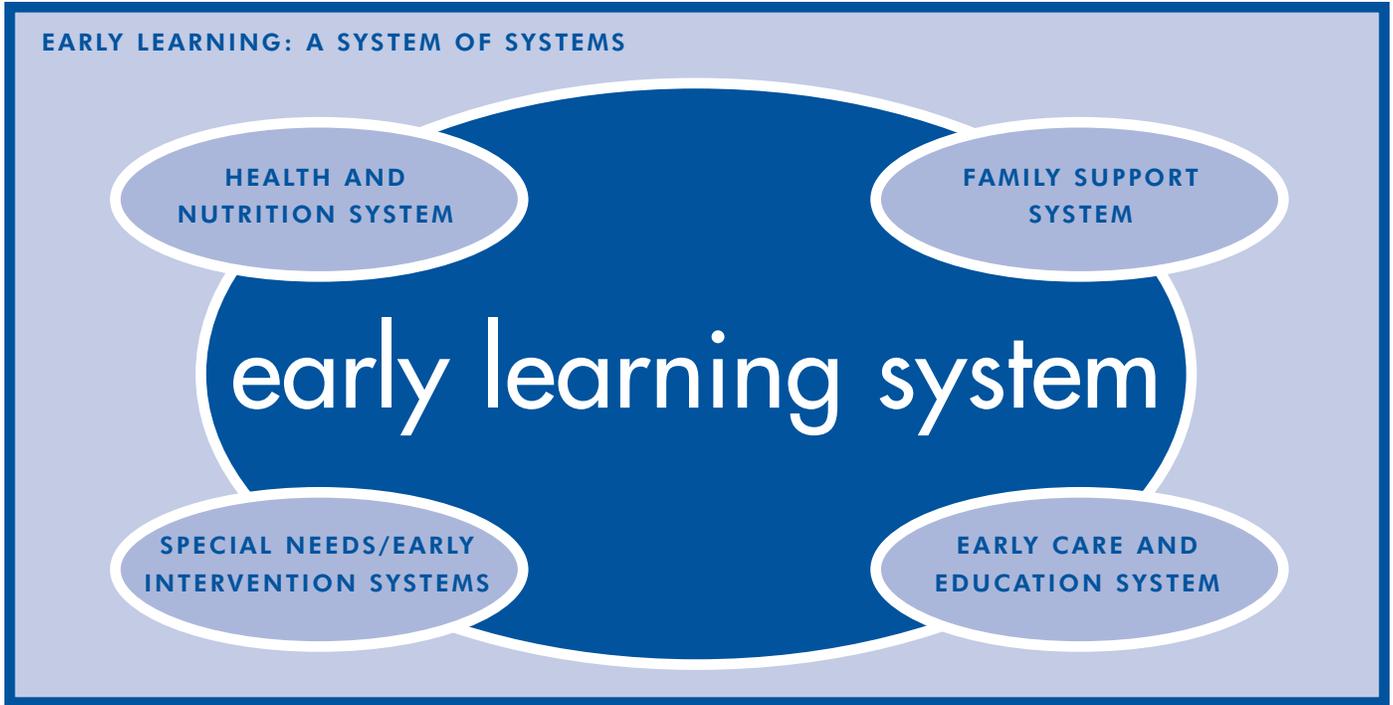
At the same time, while states may have a set of early care and education and family involvement and support programs, these very rarely can be considered to be a system. They usually lack strong connections with one another. They often are supported on a small-scale, demonstration basis, available in only certain localities and for certain people. They are not established with a recognized overall goal or function.

In most states, developing an early learning system requires “systems building,” which actually involves building a “system of systems.”

Some systems—health care, child welfare, and special education—already exist but need to be better coordinated or take on new roles in order to be part of an overall early learning system. Their actions and interactions need to contribute to the overall goal of school readiness. For instance, almost all of the young children who come into the child welfare system through reports of abuse or neglect have some unmet needs (for health and nutrition, consistent parenting, safe environments, developmental supports, and/or supervision and guidance) that jeopardize their school readiness. The child welfare system, as one element of the larger school readiness system, is not equipped to address all of these needs itself, but must connect and coordinate with other systems to ensure they are addressed. This requires agreements and protocols among, as well as referral and follow-up arrangements between, the child welfare and other systems.<sup>3</sup>

Other systems—including early care and education (child care and pre-school) and family support—must be constructed as systems. For instance, existing administrative units that fund and regulate child care and pre-school programs and services must be coordinated—across Head Start and state pre-school and child care subsidies. They must be supported and financed so they are available throughout the state, to all those who need them, with clearly defined state contributions. Parents of young children should be able to navigate this system readily. In the cases of both early care and education and family support, states must invest in expanding the size of available programs and in creating a system out of them.

The early learning system, as a system of systems, is shown in the figure on the following page.



States can seek to build aspects of a system of systems—for instance, concentrating only on building an early care and education system or even more narrowly on building the pre-school aspects of that system. In the end, however, any pieces of the system that are built will need to be connected to and coordinated with other elements of the system in order to achieve the overall goal of school readiness. All elements will need to be developed as system components—in the case of existing systems, through enhancements that improve their coordination and attention to early learning; in the case of non-

systems, through investments in their actual construction.

Each state has chosen a unique approach to building an early learning system, with much recent effort focused on building universal pre-school. Even when starting with one element of the early learning system, however, it is important to recognize how that element must connect with and relate to other elements of the early learning system—or there can be unintended, often negative, consequences to the overall system.<sup>4</sup>

# Financing an Early Learning System

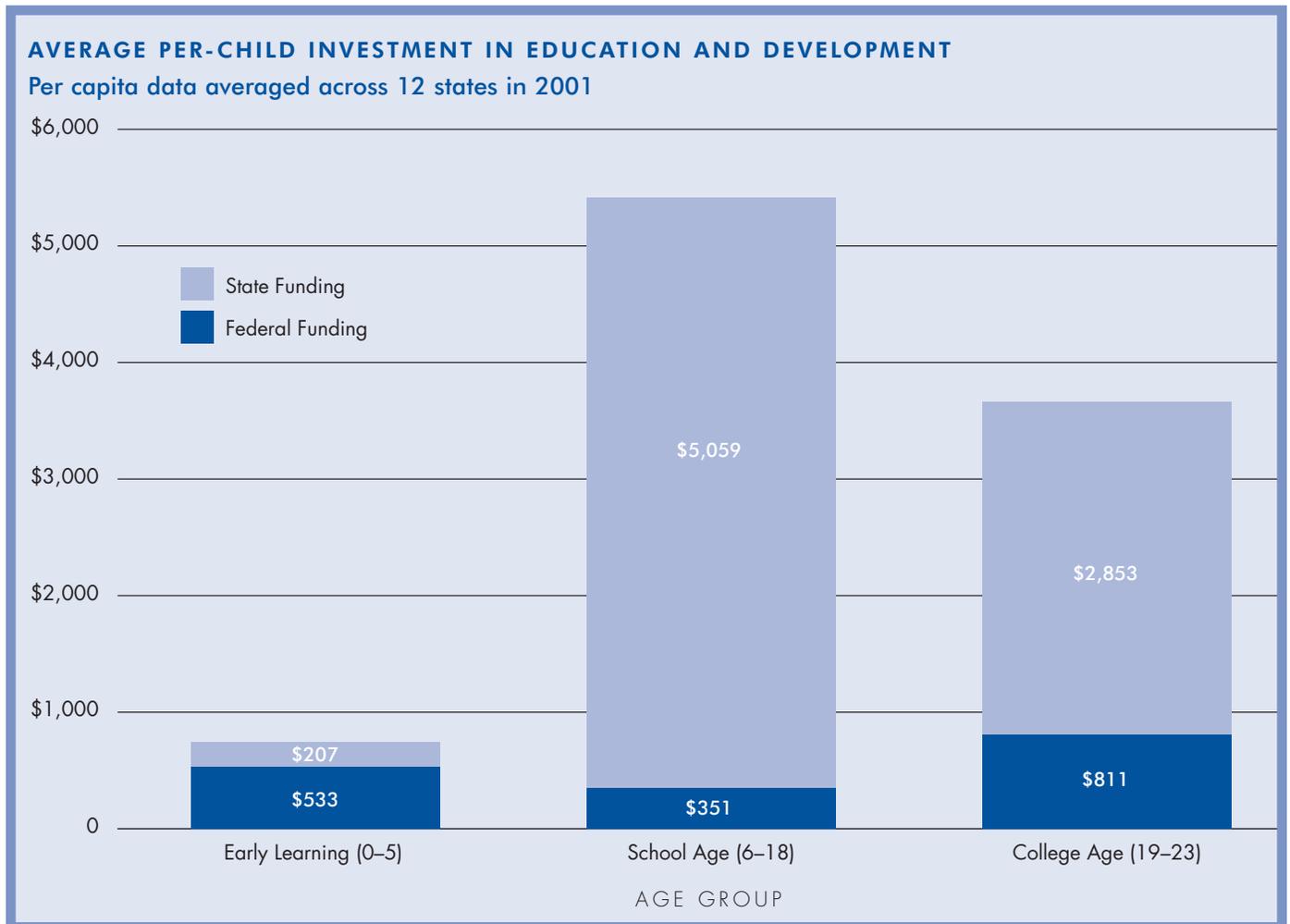
A second important rule of thumb to consider is: **follow the money.**

Prior to reforming or building a system, it is essential to have a good understanding of the current resources being used to support that system, the authority over those resources, and the conditions placed on their use.

A recent 12-state report analyzed public investments in early learning activities, focusing on the amount of state, federal, and school district resources devoted to both early care and education and family support (the

two areas in the overall “system of systems” where actual systems need to be built). The report, *Early Learning Left Out*,<sup>5</sup> provides a 12-state composite picture of per-capita public investments by child age, as shown on the chart below.

The obvious message from this chart is that the amount invested in education and development in the early years is tiny in relation to that invested in the school- or college-age years. This again points to the need for investments in building a larger array of education and development programs and in constructing a system from them.



## ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND SUPPORT COMPONENTS AND CURRENT FUNDING SOURCES FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Essential Service/Support Components	Federal Funding Sources
Health	XIX/CHIP, (esp/EPSTDT), Title V, CHCs
Nutrition and nutrition counseling	WIC, EFNEP (Cooperative Extension), Child Care Food Program
Early intervention	Part B and C of IDEA
Child welfare and child mental health	Title IV-E, Title IV-A, CAPTA, Medicaid
Parenting education, family support, and family literacy	Early Head Start, Even Start, CAP
Child care	CCDF, TANF (transfers), child care tax credits
Pre-school	Head Start
Transition and early elementary education	Title I, 21st Century Learning Centers, IDEA
Planning of comprehensive services	MCH Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant

The less obvious message is that most of the current funding for early learning comes from federal, not state or school district, sources. At the federal level, the largest single source of funding is Head Start, a federal program administered through a federal system rather than through the states. The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which provides funding for state child care subsidy programs, represents a second large block, which is usually administered through welfare or human service departments in states. The third large segment is through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, which usually is administered in states through their welfare or human services departments and often is used for family support programs as well as child care subsidies and cash payments for TANF recipients. Additional federal funding comes through Even Start and Title I funding, which usually is administered through the public school system and state departments of education.

Each of these federal funding streams has its own set of rules, regulations, and reporting requirements. While states have substantial administrative control and decision-making authority over many of these federal funds (within federal parameters), they have no direct authority over the largest funding source—Head Start.

When it comes to funding for existing systems, such as health care and child welfare, federal funding requirements may include complex restrictions instructing how funding can be used, particularly in providing child development–related services. The chart below shows some of the major federal funding sources that can help to finance state and local elements of an early learning system. State and community sources of funding are available as well.

It is important to identify existing funding for early learning and the current requirements regarding the use of that funding, for two reasons:

1. Existing resources and investments must become part of the early learning system, so it does not duplicate something already in place.
2. System builders need to develop planning and governance structures that recognize the limitations that federal and other funding requirements may place on the use of these resources, and must construct those structures to ensure that they can be coordinated to the maximum degree possible.

States have significant delegated authority to administer most federal funds and can do so in ways that support most activities to build an early learning system. It is important for planning and governance structures to have influence over those state administrative activities. In the case of funds that do not go through the state, such as Head Start, it is important to involve administrators in planning and governance activities to help align and coordinate those programs with the larger agenda to build an early learning system.

# Planning, Implementing, and Managing an Early Learning System

The preceding sections have emphasized the need to think of planning and governance structures in the context of a “system of systems.” This requires some individual systems as well as an entire system of systems to be built.

A third important rule of thumb to consider is that **building is done in stages.**

These stages often require different workers with various skills, talents, and resources. Architects are needed at one stage of building a house or school, while plumbers and painters are needed at another stage. Building an early learning system can be thought of in terms of general stages, too, although at all stages multiple activities may occur at the same time (in other words, states may be “building a plane while flying it”).

In the planning or design stage, building an early learning system requires:

- A credible overall design or blueprint
- An estimate of the resource needs for implementing the system
- A compelling business or marketing plan for securing those resources
- Buy-in and support from parents, agencies, service providers and other constituencies, and members of the system

In the initial implementation stage, building an early learning system requires:

- A work plan to develop the system
- Resources to execute that work plan
- A structure for making decisions to carry out the work plan and to maintain the system once created
- An accountability system to ensure that each aspect of the work plan is completed and responsibilities are met

In the ongoing operational or management phase, sustaining and improving an early learning system requires:

- A structure for making decisions and holding each part of the system accountable for meeting its responsibilities
- A set of measurable performance standards to identify where the system and its elements are and are not operating according to their objectives
- A quality assurance structure to continually adjust and maintain the system, which may include monitoring and accountability standards
- The professional development and infrastructural support necessary to operate the system
- Resources to perform these functions

These stages will be discussed in more detail in the section that begins on page 13, “State Experiences To Date.” Each stage has a unique function and involves different stakeholders in different roles.

## The Role of Governance

A fourth rule of thumb to consider is that **governance requires consent of the governed to endure.**

Each of the three general stages described previously not only requires somewhat different skills, talents, and individuals but also may require different organizational or governance structures. The planning or design stage may require internal rules that members agree use to govern their own actions and operations, but usually not to make direct decisions over allocating or deploying resources. The latter two stages involve actual decision making and a governance and management structure, which involves some amount of authority for allocating and deploying public resources. All of these structures have been employed by states, although not all necessarily meet most people's definition of a true "governance structure."

"Governance" most often has been used to describe:

- organized structures charged with certain responsibilities by state or local government (state law, executive order, local statute, or ordinance) to
- achieve a goal that requires collaboration or integration of activities across existing organizational structures that normally have separate lines of decision-making authority

Governance structures may be constructed with the power to make decisions directly, or they may be constructed only to seek collaborative solutions and voluntary compliance through other existing lines of decision-making authority, usually those used by participating members of the governance structure.

While it is theoretically possible to construct a single, unified governance structure for early learning—such

as a Department of Early Learning—this has proved difficult to do in practice. While such a department might be able to integrate all services for early learning under a single decision-making authority, this also would fragment existing services—such as health, special education, and child welfare—that have been based on service needs rather than age. For instance, if the department had authority over Medicaid for children ages 0–5 and special education and child welfare services for pre-school children, a different department would have authority over Medicaid, special education, and child welfare services for older children. A cross-departmental governance structure would be needed to ensure alignment of rules and regulations across age groups and to ensure seamless transitions from the early learning years into school. Service integration from one perspective can become service fragmentation from another.

This is the reason for an "early learning system of systems" and for "collaborative governance structures" that provide connections and accountability across systems, rather than a single, all-inclusive early childhood or school readiness system.<sup>6</sup>

Ideally, a governance structure should be:

- Representative—involving those whose perspectives, talents, and positions are needed to make effective decisions
- Legitimate—regarded as a fair and appropriate locus for decision making by those affected by the decisions made
- Enduring—sustainable across changes in membership and in state or local political leadership

- Effective and flexible—organized and structured for continuous learning and quality improvement
- Authoritative—capable of holding all elements of the system accountable to achieving their objectives, through rules, policies, and practices and through marshalling resources across relevant agencies, departments, and funding sources

Getting to this point, however, is dependent as much on individual leadership as on official structure or ceded authority. As a governance structure evolves, it will gain a sense of legitimacy, representativeness, and effectiveness through what it is able to produce and how its actions are perceived by its members, by policy makers, and by the public. As Sid Gardner, a student of service integration, has noted, “structure matters a lot less than strategy” in building more

integrated service systems. Governance structures generally have to earn the legitimacy they need to endure and be effective through their actions, not through the statutes or rules that create them. This is achieved through the vision and leadership exhibited by the members of the governance structure.

While the long-term goal may be to establish an early learning system governance structure with all of the above characteristics, states have generally chosen to start with something much less expansive. In particular, the ceding of decision-making authority from existing agencies or departments to a new governance structure has been rare. Most have only the power to encourage collaboration and voluntary compliance. Governance structures are more likely to have authority over new funding than over existing funding streams.

## Governance and Devolution

A fifth rule of thumb to consider is: **think globally and act locally.**

In the end, any early learning system needs to be rational and coordinated at the local level, as seen through the eyes of its users. This involves state as well as local coordination. While there is one state government (albeit with many agencies and departments), there are several local governments. Usually, there is a school district, a city government, and a county government, all of which support some school readiness activities. In addition, United Way and other charitable and civic organizations and community foundations often provide substantial additional support. Most foundation and charitable giving occurs at the local, rather than the state or national, level.

While state departments may have local offices, purely local institutions also need to be part of any integrated approach to building an early learning system. For this reason, a number of states have developed local governance structures, as well as state governance structures, to move early learning systems building forward. At a minimum, state governance structures need to pay attention to local early learning efforts. This is particularly true when developing family support and parenting education programs, which often are locally based and build on such natural support systems and community resources as local faith and civic institutions.

As state governments develop their structures at the state level, they need to determine which structures—and what level of planning and decision-making flexibility—they want to provide at the local level. Some states—such as Iowa, with its Empowerment Boards, and North Carolina, with Smart Start—have delegated substantial authority over new funding decisions to local governance structures. Such strategies have helped build ownership and support at the local level, although the flexibility also means that system building can look quite different in each jurisdiction.

No matter how well planned the effort or how strong the state-level leadership, effective system building also requires ownership and leadership at the local or community level. This is particularly true where natural networks of support are incorporated and working agreements and protocols are reached across different agencies and organizations so that referrals from one agency or system to another go smoothly. Not all decisions can be made effectively at the state level, and states need to examine how much planning and decision making should “devolve” to the community level. In doing so, they also need to determine what parameters, training, support, and oversight is necessary at the state level to ensure that the discretion provided at the community level is exercised effectively.

## State Experiences To Date

A final rule of thumb for planning and governing an early learning system is: **there is no magic bullet or magic structure that substitutes for passion and leadership.**

Ultimately, an effective system relies on people and relationships—planning and governance structures need to attract people with passion and vision. At the same time, states can learn from examining planning and governance structures in other states. No state wants to “reinvent the wheel” in developing its early learning system and the planning and governance structures to operate it. However, each state must consider its unique characteristics when developing its system.

This section describes some states’ experiences and existing planning and governance structures, which can be used as points of reference in building an early learning system. They also point to the fact that such structures evolve, and need to evolve, as system building develops.

Particularly over the last decade, states have taken a variety of actions to begin to build early learning systems. Some have not required any new planning or governance structures. Many states have funded or expanded specific early learning programs. This has included funding new home visiting and family support programs, family literacy efforts, and pre-school and transition-to-kindergarten programs. It has also included establishing rating and reimbursement systems to improve the quality of child care and supporting public education campaigns to raise awareness of young children’s growth and development. These efforts all represent programmatic components of what can become parts of an overall early learning system.

At the same time, states also have created broader planning efforts and specific initiatives designed to

take a more comprehensive approach to early learning. Sometimes, these efforts have been established with a goal of better coordinating and integrating existing services. Other times, they have been established with a goal of creating new components of an early learning system.

States have developed planning and governance structures that include:

- Task forces and commissions to identify early learning needs and develop a plan for addressing them, frequently by mobilizing public will to that end
- Specific governance bodies for managing new early learning initiatives
- Cross-agency groups for improving coordination and integration of programs and services serving young children and their families, both at the top departmental level and at the program administration level
- New agency or departmental structures to encompass multiple early learning programs and services within a single decision-making structure<sup>7</sup>

In many respects, these structures relate to achieving different system-building goals or functions and represent different stages in a state’s development of an early learning system. While the term “stages” is used, this does not necessarily mean that states progress through the stages in any linear or sequential manner. States often are in the process of planning, implementation, and management at the same time. These stages, the structures states have employed at each stage, and the goals or functions of each stage are shown in Table Two [on the next page].

**PLANNING STAGE**

This stage is comprised of envisioning and planning a comprehensive system, and it includes designing such a system and building public will. State policy makers—in both the executive and legislative branches—generally recognize that the current array of programs and services supporting the early learning of

young children is fragmented and does not operate as a functional system in addressing young children’s early learning needs. The failure to have a functional system results in many children who could start school “ready to learn” starting behind, at significant costs to themselves, their families, society, and government. While different agencies, departments, and levels of government are involved in each aspect of what could

TABLE TWO: PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR EARLY LEARNING SYSTEMS

Stage	Structure	Goals/Functions
Planning	Task force, commission, public-private partnership, private sector advocacy coalition	<p>Jointly envision, plan, and design what a comprehensive (and less fragmented) system would be</p> <p>Make recommendations for changes in current programs and services to move toward a more comprehensive system</p> <p>Generate public (and policy maker) support to secure the resources to build the system</p>
Implementation	Initiative governing board, new or newly authorized agency	Oversee new or re-deployed resources to develop a comprehensive system, generally with funding earmarked for this purpose and under the board’s control, but without board control over all programs serving young children and their families
Management	<p>Governor’s sub-cabinet or other top-level, cross-agency structure</p> <p>Inter-agency coordinating group</p> <p>New overarching agency</p>	<p>Set policies on interagency collaboration; redirect resources when necessary; and ensure coordination, integration, and accountability</p> <p>Align specific programs and services to coordinate with one another and provide seamless services, and streamline rules and procedures across programs and services</p> <p>Consolidate decision making through a single entity with authority to make decisions across all (or most) early learning-related programs</p>

be an early learning system, their work is not sufficient to achieve early learning goals.

At the same time, these policy makers often do not have confidence that simply expanding existing programs and services will be sufficient to produce a system that will achieve school readiness.

For these reasons, state leaders, through gubernatorial executive orders, legislative special committees, and state laws or resolutions, have created task forces, commissions, and public-private partnerships to envision, plan, and design early learning systems.

These entities can help establish state early learning agendas for subsequent legislative action and funding. They usually include both representatives from major program and service areas serving young children and “public representatives” who can be allies in achieving reforms. Increasingly, they have included representatives from the business community, often in leadership roles.

Membership generally is broad based and designed to get all “players at the table,” which makes envisioning and planning a challenge, particularly when members have different backgrounds and experiences. Often, members must be educated about the current status of programs and services in the state and about child development in general. Some may begin the process believing that fragmentation and lack of coordination among early learning programs result in inefficiencies that need to be resolved before any new funding is considered. These can be legitimate concerns, but they need to be examined in the context of the extent of existing funding and service provision. What can appear to be fragmentation may simply be the existence of many small programs that serve only a small fraction of the population they could serve.

At the same time, membership is likely to include advocacy groups with substantial expertise and well-formulated strategies who want to move forward quickly. It is likely to include individuals representing groups with existing agendas of their own related to early learning, sometimes ones that have been the source of conflict and have not been resolved, particularly around provider licensing or regulation issues. There can be tensions in getting such members to the point of really performing as a cohesive group, which requires attention to group dynamics.<sup>8</sup> The group must resolve, or agree to set aside, some of these issues and competing agendas if it is to move forward.

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## SELECTED PLANNING STAGE STRUCTURES

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- [Arizona Governor’s Office for Children, Youth and Families State School Readiness Board](#)
- [Idaho Early Care and Learning Cross-Systems Task Force](#)
- [Oklahoma Partnership for School Readines](#)
- [Oregon Partners for Children and Families](#)

SEE APPENDIX ONE FOR DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE STRUCTURES.

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Keys to the effectiveness of such planning groups are:

- Establishing a credible vision and consensus around what is needed to build an early learning system that gains commitment and ownership from most of the members
- Being sufficiently inclusive to ensure that the credibility of the group as a representative body will not be subject to serious challenge

- Using the credibility of the group to build sufficient public and policy maker will and momentum to move forward on those recommendations

It is generally recognized that leadership is key to success, with the governor’s visible support particularly important. Just because a governor establishes such a group does not guarantee gubernatorial leadership, however. A governor may establish a commission or task force because the she or he wants to promote an early learning agenda and sees such an entity as helping to build political visibility and support for action. Alternatively, a governor may establish one because of constituent, agency, or interest group recommendations and pressures to do so and see the structure as a way to manage or deflect that pressure. In either case, a gubernatorial task force needs to keep the governor engaged while recognizing that, for sustainability purposes, an effective agenda must be broader than the goals of any one governor.

In short, to be effective, a planning group needs to create a credible vision and plan and enlist sufficient political support to make it a high priority among state policy makers, including the governor and top-level administrators.

A task force, commission, or public-private partnership established through government is not the only way to design a system or build public will, however. A governor or a general assembly may independently establish an early learning agenda, building coalitions of support while at the same time making decisions regarding the elements of the agenda. Alternatively, advocacy can occur outside government, with individuals and organizations building a coalition to press for change from the outside.<sup>9</sup>

Still, a task force, commission, or public-private partnership is a particularly promising method for building ownership and accountability across different systems and engaging and educating policy makers in the process. When people are at the planning or decision-making table, they are most likely to become truly invested in the decisions that are reached. In several instances, task forces have given rise to or transformed themselves to become governance structures for the early learning initiatives they have recommended and promoted.

## IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

The planning stage can lead to securing new resources for early learning and school readiness. Sometimes, this can simply involve creating a new program or service or expanding an existing one, such as developing a universal pre-kindergarten program through the school system or expanding on the work of early intervention programs under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In those instances, existing state structures may already be in place or designated for the implementation or expansion of such programs.

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## SELECTED IMPLEMENTATION STAGE STRUCTURES

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- [First 5 California Children and Families](#)
- [Commission Florida Partnership for School](#)
- [Readiness Iowa Community Empowerment](#)
- [Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund](#)

SEE APPENDIX ONE FOR DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE STRUCTURES.

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In a number of instances, however, states have established new funding streams to achieve a more general cross-agency goal rather than funding a specific program or service. That goal may be related to achieving either:

- Systems objectives (creating an early learning system that is coordinated across health, child care and early education, and human services) or
- Child and family results (achieving the goal of school readiness)

The rationale for a new governance structure often has been to establish decision-making authority that extends across existing programs and services and that is not controlled or unduly influenced by one agency or department.

These initiative governance structures generally include membership from various departments and agencies and from the public, to ensure that goals related to coordination and integration of services are met. They generally have sought to use the new funding to increase coordination and integration across existing programs and services and to fund new programs and services in ways that fill gaps and best meet their overall goals and objectives. One rationale for including agency and departmental representation is to bring those with authority over other early childhood funding to the table so these resources can be integrated into the new funding.

In some instances, states have redirected existing funding—such as federal TANF or CCDF and state child care funds—into the new funding stream. In most instances, however, states have incorporated

only a small portion of these current funds into new funding streams. (As stated earlier, since states do not have direct control over Head Start funding, these funds cannot be directly incorporated into new systems, although they constitute a significant current investment in early learning.)

Many of the other programs and services that contribute to early learning and school readiness—such as health insurance funding under Medicaid and SCHIP, child welfare funding under state and federal Title IV-E and Title IV-A, and special education and education funding under state and school district and federal special education and Title I—are part of larger systems that serve a population base much broader than young children and their families alone.

Incorporating the portion of this funding that serves early learners into an initiative's funding and regulatory base could better integrate early learning funding, but it also could fragment funding and regulation of the systems from which it is drawn.

To ensure that early learners entering school would continue to receive those services in a seamless manner would require other collaborative arrangements. For this reason, most state initiative governance structures have taken a collaborative, rather than an integrative, approach to utilizing funding streams.<sup>10</sup>

These structures also generally incorporate some devolution to community governance, establishing an overall state governance structure that then provides funding support to local governance structures, which make and manage actual allocations of funds. The state governance structure sets overall guidelines and directions for the local governance structures and the parameters under which they allocate and manage funds.

Particularly for early learning, where many of the resources families and young children need are locally based and involve voluntary supports and organizations as well as public services, flexibility in program or service allocation is needed at the local level. Moreover, local decision making generally helps build ownership and commitment for early learning and for collaboration across systems. The challenge for the state structure is to ensure consistency and quality (adherence to minimum standards), while providing for local flexibility in design and implementation.

Much of the ability of these governance structures to build comprehensive early learning systems is based on the overall resources devoted to them. The more extensive the funding and resources, the more able they are to fill gaps and reach families and young children who can benefit from additional services and supports. In addition to the level of funding, however, the following components are key to the structures' effectiveness:

- Ensuring sufficient power (which may be due to strong leadership and direct access to the governor or to the strong commitment of all members) to exact cooperation and coordination across programs, services, and funding that are not under the direct control of the governance structure
- Providing sufficient resources and capacities to oversee and direct new and redirected investments to ensure the quality of implementation and use of best practices and evidence in the field and to continually learn and improve

- Defining and effectively balancing state versus community roles in system building
- Maintaining visibility and public support for the initiative

### MANAGEMENT STAGE

While a new initiative requires management as well as implementation, management often develops as the implementation itself proceeds, adding new elements and features as needs and opportunities arise. These sometimes occur on an ad hoc basis, and often involve technical assistance and problem solving with those who are subject to management and oversight. Over time, however, many of the processes that may have started as ad hoc decisions reach a point where they should be subject to some consistency in application, if the system is to operate the same way across jurisdictions and over time. The existence of statutes, administrative rules, and policy manuals to guide program administrators and direct service workers are all part of that management structure.

Much of this management within state government is divided across departments or agencies, and across divisions and administrative units within those agencies. While most fall within the executive branch<sup>11</sup> and therefore are ultimately under the direction of the governor and state laws enacted by the general assembly, they generally have separate lines and layers of authority. Making sure that they align with one another and are not duplicative requires cross-agency management.

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## SELECTED MANAGEMENT STAGE STRUCTURES

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- Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- Hawaii Good Beginnings Initiative
- Maryland Governor’s Subcabinet for Children, Youth and Families

SEE APPENDIX ONE FOR DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE STRUCTURES.

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These cross-agency management structures can take several forms—from high-level executive bodies to mid-level administrative councils—depending on their functions. A few states have sought to develop high-level sub-cabinets or inter-departmental bodies, usually composed of directors of departments and often including representatives from the office of the governor, to better align separate lines of authority. These sub-cabinets may have some authority to redirect funds or change regulatory policies. They sometimes have been used as points of access for local governance initiatives to address state regulatory barriers. Although most such sub-cabinets have stopped short of ceding authority from individual department heads, the presence of departmental heads means that agreements reached have the backing of the top official within the department.

These high-level bodies may cover more than early learning and school readiness agendas, instead addressing the whole range of children and family services. A number were established in the 1980s and 1990s to improve child and family services generally; since 2000, more have been established to address early learning specifically. Their function in developing a more integrative accountability and management structure around broad system goals

continues to be both a major challenge and opportunity for state systems.

More common than top-level sub-cabinets that focus on cross-system coordination and integration are inter-agency coordinating groups composed of administrators who have expertise and responsibility over specific programs or agencies. Administrators in these positions generally have responsibility for many of the day-to-day management decisions over programs and services and are key to developing and enforcing administrative rules and policies that govern program operation. There may be multiple cross-system coordinating groups operating in a state at any one time, some developed to address a specific issue of concern across two or more programs or services. They may or may not involve public representatives, although increasing attention is being paid to including or at least receiving input from service “consumers” and frontline staff who are responsible for carrying out policies and procedures. These cross-agency councils may have various goals or tasks, such as:

- Developing management information and client intake systems that reduce duplication and increase coordination and sharing of information across systems, particularly for children and families who are served by more than one system
- Establishing joint training opportunities and protocols for referrals and follow-ups across systems, so that service provision is more seamless (in terms of both continuity and culture) as children and families move from one system to another, and that children and families find “no wrong door” when seeking help
- Developing financing systems that fairly apportion funding and services when children and families

need combined support (such as enriched pre-school programs with full-day child care or early intervention services or nutritional counseling at child care and pre-school settings)

- Revising rules, eligibility, and monitoring criteria to be more consistent across systems and to avoid duplication and excessive paperwork, particularly for children and families receiving services or funding from more than one system
- Creating accountability based on achieving results rather than simply adhering to procedures, with recognition that some results are dependent on multiple actions in multiple systems

In general, the keys to designing effective governance structures for such cross-system management purposes are:

- Maintaining a broader vision for cross-agency or cross-departmental coordination to achieve broader early learning results (such as some collective accountability for achieving goals that cannot be achieved through independent work)
- Providing incentives and supports to participants that enable them to see a benefit to their own program's operation and effectiveness, rather than simply an additional burden attached to their work
- Involving frontline staff and consumers in the design and management of this coordination to ensure that it also meets child, family, and worker needs

State governments often are subject to reorganization. Sometimes, related programs and services are brought together under one administrative roof; other times, large agencies are separated into smaller defined units



with more discrete responsibilities. To date, only a few restructuring efforts have placed most early learning programs and funding streams within a single state department or under a single new structural entity, and these have not been particularly successful. As stated earlier, the challenge of trying to incorporate all programs and services relevant to early learning within a single department or entity is that many are designed to serve broader populations or to serve children across broader age ranges. One person's integration can be another person's fragmentation.

## **EVOLUTION AS A CHARACTERISTIC OF SUCCESSFUL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

A central point of this paper has been that no single governance structure will either guarantee success in creating an early learning system nor be able to address all the planning and decision-making needs entailed in constructing and operating that system. Structures need to be created, adapt, and change as understanding and development of the early learning system proceed. In essence, they must be part of an overall learning system that continually responds to new opportunities and learns as it goes along.<sup>13</sup> This evolution can take different forms, but it really does constitute “learning by doing.” It also may involve different structures existing simultaneously, with various roles and responsibilities. The key is to create planning and governance structures that meet their objectives and are aligned with one another by consciously connecting and linking these different structures and their activities, as shown by the figure on the previous page.

## Conclusion

This discussion of planning, governance, and management structures has outlined the variety of ways states can work to develop early learning systems that better address young children's needs. It also emphasized the need for governmental form to follow function, and for the use of different structures at different times for different purposes, particularly as states move from planning to implementation and management.

Clearly, each structure has its own strengths and limitations. States can learn from one another's experiences in establishing structures, particularly to identify the challenges and opportunities they are likely to face. At the same time, planning and governance structures are made up of individuals. Two state legislatures with similar organizational structures can enact very different and even diametrically opposed legislation. Political climate

and culture, as well as which individuals are chosen as members of a governance structure, can be as or more important than the formal structure in determining end results.

The most common conclusion of those who have studied collaborative governance structures is that a certain form of leadership is required to produce real change. While structures can provide the opportunity for new approaches to occur, they will only happen where leaders with vision and a collaborative approach<sup>14</sup> exist to carry change forward. While it is exceedingly helpful to have the enlightened leadership of the governor or other high-ranking officials to produce initial results, leadership also needs to come from the many participants on planning or governance bodies. The types of skills those leaders possess or can be trained to develop may be the most critical factor in moving an early learning agenda forward.

# Appendix One

## STATE STRUCTURE DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Almost every state has some planning or governance structure designed to improve services to young children. Many states have multiple planning and governance structures. Some are formed as time-limited task forces or councils to bring recommendations back to policy makers. Others are designed as more permanent cross-system entities to ensure coordination across different levels of government.

The following appendix is a description of current state planning and governance structures established either through executive orders of the governor or through state statute. In addition to these governmental entities, states may also have nongovernmental planning entities.

While the 1970s and 1980s saw the establishment of a number of children's cabinets and councils, emphasizing cross-system collaborations in meeting child and family needs, the trend in recent years has been to establish governance structures with a specific focus on young children and school readiness. Both types are represented here, provided the more general ones specifically address young children's needs. In many instances, the planning resources provided through Early Childhood Comprehensive Services grants have been integrated into the work of the governance structures.

A second trend has been to include a broad range of private sector members in the governance structures. The table in Appendix Two describes the membership of each of the structures listed in this appendix.

The information in these appendices was developed from reviews of a variety of earlier efforts to describe significant early childhood governance activities in the states and from web searches for each state. This research for Appendix One and Appendix Two was performed by Michelle Stover Wright, from CFPC's Build Initiative and Sheri Floyd from CFPC's State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network, along with assistance from an Iowa education consultant, Anita Varne. The descriptions compiled were reviewed by someone in each state. During this process, a few structures may have been missed; over time, many also will change. Still, these descriptions point to the rich variety of state efforts to build early learning systems and address school readiness—usually through broad stakeholder involvement, a commitment to results, an emphasis on cross-system coordination, and attention to quality, evidence-based practice.

### ALABAMA

#### (1) Alabama Partnership for Children

The Alabama Partnership for Children is a public/private partnership started in 2001 under the governorship of Don Siegelman. It continues under Governor Bob Riley to address the early childhood needs identified for Alabama by government officials, service providers, advocates, and business leaders. The primary focus of the partnership is to “develop, design, and implement a unified approach for improving outcomes of children from birth to age 5 in Alabama” and to “develop and strengthen systems, forge strategies, and increase public awareness.”

The partnership is governed by a 26-member board of directors appointed by state officials, including the governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives and the pro tempore of the Senate. In addition to eight

state agency heads, other members include representatives of the business community, Head Start and child care, public and higher education, community-based agencies, health care providers, and parents.

The Alabama Partnership for Children focuses on:

- Improving the quality and availability of early care and education and developing a highly trained and well-educated early childhood workforce by supporting the T.E.A.C.H. Alabama scholarship and support program for early childhood teachers
- Increasing the access to and availability of parental resources by making available the Alabama Kidstuff Parenting Kit, a resource packet delivered to parents of newborns
- Creating state and local structures (Kidstuff Partnerships) to identify needs and coordinate resources at the local and state levels
- Working to increase public awareness regarding the importance of early childhood education
- Better coordinating federal, state, local, and private funding through greater system planning and development in coordination with local and state partners

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#### **(2) Alabama Office of School Readiness**

The Alabama Office of School Readiness (AOSR) was formed by former Governor Don Siegelman during the 2000 legislative session and continues under present Governor Bob Riley with the purpose of establishing collaborations at the state and local levels to provide universal pre-kindergarten in Alabama focusing on 4-year-old children. The AOSR works in collaboration with several local and state agencies and makes decisions that are reviewed by an advisory committee and evaluation task force.

The functions of the Office of School Readiness are:

- Funding programs that provide quality pre-school experiences to 4-year-old children in Alabama that prepare them for school
- Providing quality training to pre-kindergarten teachers and administrators that help them better meet the needs of children
- Increasing local and statewide collaboration among early care providers, parents, and advocates

During the 2003–04 school year, 52 pre-kindergarten sites were funded, down from a high of 70 sites during the previous school year.

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## ARIZONA

### **Arizona Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families State School Readiness Board**

The Arizona State Board on School Readiness was established by executive order in 2002 by former Governor Jane Dee Hull.

The board is made up of 17 members who serve three-year staggered terms and 21 additional appointed members. Members include the directors' designees from the Department of Education, the Department of Economic Security, and the Department of Human Services; a member of the state Senate and of the House of Representatives; experts in the field of early care and education; and community and business leaders.

The board's charges include:

- Advising and making recommendations to the governor, superintendent of public instruction, and legislature on the most effective policy direction and methods to improve the coordination, quality, and delivery of early care and education services—including pre-school child care and family support services
- Recommending, through a multi-year plan, how current functions in state government relating to early care and education can most effectively be coordinated and integrated to improve service delivery and quality of care, avoid duplication and fragmentation, and enhance public and private investment
- Identifying and recommending methods for measuring quality, availability, and effectiveness of early care and education programs
- Identifying and measuring indicators of school readiness

Present Governor Janet Napolitano's 2004 five-year School Readiness Action Plan was developed from recommendations made by the School Readiness Board and is the starting point for building a high-quality early childhood education system that supports the learning and development of Arizona's youngest children. The plan focuses on increasing the quality and accessibility of early childhood education, increasing the pool and retention of qualified early childhood professionals, improving access to health care, and helping low-income families to remain employed with support to afford the cost of child care.

During the first year of implementation of the School Readiness Action Plan, the governor began voluntary full-day kindergarten for 134 schools, with 90 percent or more of their children on free and reduced lunch; increased child care assistance to low-income families and cut the current waiting list for subsidies in half; improved the safety of child care with the addition of five health-and-safety-licensing workers; and expanded the Healthy Families program, which helps to prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families.

The governor is also currently establishing an Early Education Fund (\$2 million in private donations by November 2004), which will be allocated to local communities to enhance high-quality early childhood development.

The School Readiness Board is working to increase the number of children receiving well-child health screens in the state; and the governor's office and Arizona State University are utilizing a federal grant to educate 300 early childhood education teachers.

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## ARKANSAS

### **Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education**

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education within the Arkansas Department of Human Services was established by Governor Mike Huckabee in 1997 to enhance the coordination of child care and early childhood education programs within the state.

The creation of the division consolidated three existing boards—the Child Care Facility Review Board, the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, and the Child Care Provider Training Committee—into the new Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, which advises the division and has regulatory approval for all minimum licensing standards.

The division houses the Child Care Licensing Section, the Compliance Unit, the Family Support Section (which supports services to transitional and low-income working families by providing subsidized child care services on a sliding fee basis), the Special Nutrition Program, and the Program Development Section (which is responsible for the Arkansas Better Chance program, the state's public pre-kindergarten program funded through the Department of Education and administered by the DHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education).

A primary focus of the department is the seamless delivery of services to low-income families and those moving from welfare to work.

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## CALIFORNIA

### **First 5 California Children and Families Commission**

California's Children and Families Act of 1998 is designed to provide all children prenatal to 5 years of age with a comprehensive, integrated system of early care and education services. Through Proposition 10, a ballot initiative approved by California voters in 1998, the act established the state commission and authorized the creation of local commissions in each of California's 58 counties. The name First 5 California, which refers to the first 5 years of life, is the public identity of the state commission; the majority of county commissions precede their county's name with "First 5" as well. First 5 California and the state's 58 county commissions are carrying out the work of the initiative, the overarching goal of which is school readiness.

The governor, the speaker of the assembly, and the Senate Rules Committee appoint the seven state commissioners. The secretary for education and the

secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency also serve as ex-officio members. At the local level, each county board of supervisors appoints a five- to nine-member commission, which includes a member of the board of supervisors and two members from among those who manage county functions (public health, behavioral health services, social services or tobacco prevention, or treatment services). The remaining members can be drawn from the county functions or organizations that work in the early childhood development arena.

The School Readiness Initiative is First 5 California's largest investment. The initiative engages families, community, and educators to provide the following five coordinated elements, required of every First 5 California school readiness program:

- Early care and education (ECE): This element includes ECE services; improved access to quality ECE through referrals, information, and outreach to parents and providers; and improved implementation of effective practices through training of ECE providers. Periodic school readiness assessments for children are part of this element
- Parenting and family support services: This includes services to improve literacy and parenting skills, home visitation, employment development, and family court services
- Health and social services: This includes services such as health plan enrollment; provision of and/or referral to basic health care, including prenatal care, mental health counseling, and services for children with disabilities and other special needs; nutrition; oral health; drug and alcohol counseling; child abuse prevention; and care management
- Schools' readiness for children / school capacity: This includes communication of kindergarten standards; schools' outreach to parents; kindergarten transition programs; and cross training, shared

curricula, and planning for early care and education providers and early elementary teachers. A seamless provision of health, social services, after-school programs, and other supports for children and families are also included. School readiness assessments for schools are part of this element

- Program infrastructure, administration, and evaluation: This element includes participant/site/district/county coordination and staff training and development. Program evaluations aimed at continuous program improvement, fiscal accountability, and collaborative governance (with families and community members) are also included

In addition to the School Readiness Initiative, First 5 California works in partnership with First 5 county commissions, foundations, state and local agencies, and other partners to create local projects that develop and disseminate information and resources to promote pre-school for all and enhanced efforts to serve children with disabilities and other special needs. Other partnerships focus on improved health access for all children through expanded health insurance and strategies to promote high-quality, comprehensive health services, plus improved access and retention. First 5 California funds broad public education campaigns focusing on early childhood development and anti-tobacco messages, a kit for new parents that provides all new parents with a resource library for their children during the critically important 0–5 years, and a statewide evaluation of First 5 programs.

First 5 California established an Advisory Committee on Diversity, charged with helping to ensure that statewide programs meet the needs of California's ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse population and children with special needs and disabilities.

First 5 California and county commissions are funded through the tobacco revenues collected pursuant to Proposition 10, which added a 50-cent-per-pack tax to cigarettes and a comparable tax to other tobacco products in California, through which about \$600 million is generated annually. The state commission receives 20 percent of the revenues; 80 percent is allocated to county commissions based on the number of births in the county.

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## COLORADO

### **(1) Colorado Department of Education Consolidated Child Care Pilots**

The Consolidated Child Care Pilots were established by the Colorado General Assembly in 1997 under former Governor Roy Romer and continue under Governor Bill Owens. The pilots use a statewide blueprint authored by the Colorado Child Care Commission to guide their work toward the creation of a coordinated early child care system.

Members of the Consolidated Child Care Pilots include the business community, faith-based initiative staff, city and county government staff, educators, police/sheriffs, school-age care providers, Head Start staff, medical/nursing staff, chamber of commerce representatives, and parents.

The pilots were designed to help meet the need for full-day, full-year, quality early childhood services as a partner to welfare reform. The program focuses on quality, comprehensive services for low-income children and their working families to support school readiness and success throughout their lives.

Seventeen pilot communities in 30 counties have been designated and asked to:

- Consolidate funding sources to create a seamless system
- Ensure collaboration among public and private stakeholders in the delivery of early childhood care and education services
- Include program components of consistent quality
- Be responsive to the needs of parents

The pilots have become a central component in the process of developing an early childhood system for the state of Colorado. In addition to early care and education, their focus includes school readiness, health care, mental health, and family support. The pilots not only look at the needs and available resources of the community, but also at the barriers presented by the state and federally funded programs and services. The pilots then suggest ways to streamline those programs and increase their effectiveness.

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## **(2) Colorado Child Care Commission and State Systems Work**

In 1999, the Colorado State Legislature established an interim committee to study the role of state government in the provision of early childhood care and education (ECCE) services. The committee found that the issues of ECCE were too vast and intricate for it to fully understand the complexities in its short period of study and concluded that a full-scale commission was warranted. In 2000, the Colorado Child Care Commission was established through House Bill 00-1020 to continue investigating the critical issues found by the interim committee.

The Child Care Commission was made up of nine governor appointees representing business, child care providers, parents, county administrators, higher education, and state administrators, and six legislators (three from each chamber, with no more than two from each chamber appointed from the same political party). The new commission determined that developing a blueprint for an early childhood care and education system was an important first step.

The outcome of the commission's work has been a blueprint with nine goal areas, rationales and strategies for policy makers, and strategies for other stakeholders. The blueprint was developed over a two-year period through the work of a Blueprint Task Force working closely with the Consolidated Child Care Pilots, the Colorado Early Childhood Summit, and other state-wide stakeholders. The blueprint envisions the creation of a comprehensive partnership of families, businesses, communities, early childhood professionals, and policy makers to promote a child-centered school readiness system.

Since the blueprint has been finalized, Colorado, through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, has utilized the Maternal and Child Health, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant to strengthen and enhance the state's collaborative efforts in creating an early childhood system. Working with technical assistance from North Carolina Smart Start and building on past work, an Early Childhood State Systems Team (ECSST) was established. The ECSST has representatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies, the Colorado Children's Campaign, Educare Colorado, and other organizations focused on statewide systems work. The ECSST has taken the blueprint and the work of the Child Care Commission, combined with the charge of the MCH grant, to create a statewide comprehensive strategic plan for early childhood in Colorado that is inclusive of children's health, mental health, family support services and early care and education. The ECSST currently has task forces that include members from across the state to focus on creating a comprehensive system of early childhood.

The Child Care Commission sunsetted in June of 2004. However the Colorado Children's Campaign, along with members of ECSST, the Early Childhood Summit, and other stakeholders, were able to pass new legislation in the 2004 legislative session to create an expanded commission with a new title. The new Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission is now in statute and will be involved in taking recommendations from the ECSST and the School Readiness Indicators project (of which Colorado was one of 17 states) and turning them into policy for Colorado's kids. The Early Childhood and School

Readiness Commission will present its first report to the General Assembly of Colorado on or before November 1, 2005.

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## **DELAWARE**

### **Delaware Early Care and Education Council**

The Delaware Early Care and Education Council was established in 2001 by an executive order of Governor Ruth Ann Minner on the recommendation of an interagency group of early care and education stakeholders. This group outlined recommendations to improve the quality of child care and early education programs in Delaware, one of which was to create a Delaware Early Care and Education Council. The group also made recommendations concerning quality programs, professional development, family engagement, public will, program licensure, governance, financing, and results.

The Delaware Early Care and Education Council serves as a resource and submits an annual report to the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC), which meets annually concerning early care and education services in Delaware. The IRMC approves budgets for early childhood programs.

The council consists of 12 members appointed by IRMC and staffed by the Delaware Early Care and Education Office (DECEO). It is composed of private sector members and includes: one licensed center provider; one licensed family-home provider; two parents; one Head Start representative; one school district representative; one higher education representative; two business representatives; two community members; and one chairperson. DECEO is an interagency office located in the Department of Education; the departments of health and social services; services for children, youth and families; and education each fund a staff position to support the work of the office.

Funding to operate the Delaware Early Care and Education Council comes from the Delaware Department of Education, while all three state departments noted above, as well as private sources, provide funding for special initiatives.

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## FLORIDA

### Florida Partnership for School Readiness

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness was established by legislative order in July 1999 by Governor Jeb Bush to establish a unified approach and specific strategies for systemic change through local school readiness coalitions and interagency partnerships. The partnership was established to oversee the School Readiness Act and provide governance at the state level to recommend policy and bring resources and expertise together.

Partnership board members include representatives from a variety of areas and groups, including the business community; health care; early childhood; the departments of education, health, and children and families; the executive branch of Florida government; and others.

The state now disperses funding to the local partnership boards through the Florida Partnership, allowing the local members to use the funding in the manner that most appropriately serves their locality. There are currently 49 local boards covering 67 Florida counties.

The Florida Partnership oversees these local boards and the Florida School Readiness Act by:

- Providing final approval and review of coalition plans
- Providing leadership for enhancement of school readiness in Florida by establishing a unified approach to the state's efforts in school readiness and providing independent policy analysis and recommendations to the governor, the State Board of Education, and the legislature

- Safeguarding the effective use of federal, state, local, and private resources to achieve the highest possible level of school readiness for Florida's children
- Providing technical assistance to the coalitions and multi-county coalitions
- Overseeing the use of public and private funds in the areas of school readiness in accordance with legal and contractual agreements

The partnership was also charged with adopting a system for measuring school readiness and developing school readiness performance standards and outcome measures. It formed a Performance Standards and Outcomes Measures Workgroup and Advisory Committee, which produced performance standards for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children that represent the partnership's common vision for children in the state and laid the foundation for an accountability and implementation system.

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## GEORGIA

### Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning was created in the spring of 2004 when the Georgia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 456. The department replaces and expands the Office of School Readiness, created in 1996 primarily to administer Georgia's universal pre-kindergarten program. The department will reduce bureaucracy, eliminate duplication of services, blend resources, and coordinate efforts between early care providers to help ensure that every child in Georgia enters kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.

The department will be supported by a governing board and an advisory board, both of which will be made up of key stakeholders, legislators, child care providers, Head Start representatives, parents, and teachers. It will be responsible for:

- Overseeing Georgia's universal, voluntary pre-kindergarten program for 4-year-olds
- Licensing child care centers, including home-based centers, day care centers, family day care homes, group day care homes, and child care learning centers
- Administering federal nutrition programs
- Housing the Head Start Collaboration Office
- Implementing the Standards of Care Program to enhance the quality of care provided in classrooms for infants, toddlers, and 3-year-olds
- Implementing the functions of the existing Georgia Child Care Council, including the distribution of 4 percent of the federal Child Care Development Funds allocated to Georgia to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of early childhood and school-age care, to influence public policy and appropriations, to increase public

awareness, to administer the child care resource and referral agencies, and to encourage collaborations with other child care programs and initiatives

- Distributing federal Even Start dollars for early literacy
- Working collaboratively with Smart Start Georgia to blend federal, state, and private dollars to enhance early care and education

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## HAWAII

### Good Beginnings Initiative

The Good Beginnings Initiative was established under former Governor Benjamin Cayetano by legislative action in 1997 with the purpose of coordinating an integrated early childhood education and care system. It continues under present Governor Linda Lingle. The Good Beginnings Alliance was formed as a management structure to coordinate the Good Beginnings Initiative, a statewide, public/private partnership that connects community efforts with public and private policies and financing strategies.

The initiative includes a statewide board of directors, an interdepartmental council representing Hawaii's state agencies, philanthropy, business, the governor's special assistant on children and families, county councils (staffed by local coordinators), and a core

Good Beginnings Alliance staff. It focuses on five primary areas:

- Advancing public policy by promoting policies to positively impact children ages birth to 8 by making recommendations to the state administration and legislature
- Investing in professional development to improve the performance of qualified providers and educators for young children by providing scholarship opportunities, partnering with the Hawaii Department of Human Services to provide a registry regarding child care licensing regulations, and designing a training quality assurance system
- Building community-based capacity by helping grassroots communities to educate parents and childcare providers. The alliance also serves as a point of information and technical assistance exchange to address local needs at the state level and make state resources available at the local level through Good Beginnings county coordinators and other means
- Raising public awareness through the media, print publications, issue briefs, community fairs, and local play groups
- Maximizing resources by recommending public and private financing strategies to support early childhood education

The Good Beginnings Initiative also includes a School Readiness Task Force, which was established in 2001 to identify outcomes and make recommendations regarding school readiness for Hawaii's children. The task force is staffed by Good Beginnings and includes representatives from the departments of education, human services, and health, as well as from the governor's office, the legislature, state policy organizations, Head Start, and others. Along with incorporating the School Readiness Task Force, Good

Beginnings has also entered into the Hawaii P20 Initiative, which is bringing together the State Department of Education and the University of Hawaii to address the way education is delivered and received in Hawaii with the goal of creating a seamless educational system to ensure life-long learning (pre-k through graduate level). A key component of this partnership will be to seek voluntary statewide access to early learning opportunities.

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## IDAHO

### Idaho Early Care and Learning Cross-Systems Task Force

The Early Care and Learning Cross-Systems Task Force was created by executive order in February 2004 by Governor Dirk Kempthorne on the recommendation of the Governor's Coordinating Council for Families and Children to develop a state systems early childhood plan.

The task force includes representatives from state departments, the governor's office, and the legislature, as well members of the business community, child care providers, child advocacy groups, and others. Its functions and responsibilities include:

- Developing a sustainable and coordinated statewide plan to achieve mutually defined goals for early care and learning, with evidence-based outcomes and

approval and support from stakeholders and the governor by:

- Establishing an ongoing communication network between state agencies, policy makers, families, stakeholders, and communities for the purpose of planning and implementing this system
- Developing multi-agency state partnerships among critical stakeholders
- Compiling resources and identifying information on the current best practices in building early learning systems
- Providing comprehensive statewide mapping of existing early care and learning programs and resources as well as existing gaps
- Supporting partnerships to align current initiatives in support of a comprehensive system of early childhood professional development
- Increasing public awareness of quality early care and learning programs
- Aligning policy and funding systems to develop and support integrated early care and learning system development
- Implementing the statewide plan once it is completed

The task force has made some progress in these areas, including planning regional input-gathering meetings and starting the work of identifying indicators and data sources in the state.

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## ILLINOIS

### Illinois Early Learning Council

The Illinois Early Learning Council was created in 2003 by Governor Rod Blagojevich to provide support to ongoing early learning planning efforts and initiatives as well as to work toward planning and establishing a statewide 0–5 early learning system.

The council has been charged with:

- Reviewing recommendations of previous and ongoing early childhood efforts and initiatives and overseeing implementation
- Developing multi-year plans to expand programs and services to address gaps and insufficient capacity to ensure quality
- Reducing or eliminating policy, regulatory, and funding barriers
- Engaging in collaborative planning, coordination, and linkages across programs, divisions, and agencies at the state level
- Reporting to the governor and general assembly on the council's progress toward its goals and objectives on an annual basis

The voluntary membership of the Illinois Early Learning Council includes a mix of representatives from the private and public sectors, including appointees from the governor's office, the Illinois Senate, and the Illinois House of Representatives, along with community members from area foundations, government agencies, the provider community (including health care, early care and education, family support, and child welfare), the private sector, parents, and child advocacy organizations. There are currently 44 members.

The council began meeting in early 2004 to consider and address through actions and recommendations five primary issues and areas identified by the council:

- Evaluation and assessment—How can Illinois ensure programs are providing effective, high-quality early learning opportunities? How can programs appropriately assess and support children’s readiness to succeed in school?
- Expansion—How can Illinois expand access to high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds by building on and enhancing existing programs, beginning with those children most at risk for school failure? How can Illinois expand access to high-quality early childhood programs for all at-risk children under 3 years of age?
- Linkage and integration—How can Illinois improve coordination and integration across early childhood programs and systems to address the comprehensive nature of children’s healthy development and readiness for school?
- Quality—How can Illinois enhance the quality of existing early childhood programs for children birth to 5 years of age, and design a high-quality, voluntary, universal pre-school program model for all 3- and 4-year-olds?
- Workforce development—How can Illinois develop a statewide workforce development system to enable more early childhood practitioners to improve their skills through training and higher education?

The council has approved goals and objectives and has formed committees to address each of the five specific areas of focus. The Early Learning Council has also made recommendations in several areas, including the implementation of the Child Care Strategic Plan and prioritization of the Early Childhood Block Grant expansion.

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#### INDIANA

##### Indiana Commission for Early Learning and School Readiness

The Indiana Commission for Early Learning and School Readiness was established by Governor Joe Kernan in May 2004. The public/private partnership was formed to advise the governor and the superintendent of public instruction on the most effective policy direction and methods to improve the quality, coordination, delivery of, and access to early education and school readiness services.

The commission is made up of 32 governor appointees, including representatives of the governor, the Department of Public Instruction, legislators, parents, business leaders, and others. Its areas of focus include:

- Focusing on implementation strategies for the early learning and school readiness goals of the Indiana Education Roundtable’s “P16 Plan for Improving Student Achievement”
- Developing an inventory of early learning and school readiness services and resources available in the state and providing recommendations to make these services and resources more effective and efficient and to better promote them
- Identifying and recommending methods to strengthen the transition between the early learning system and the K–12 education system

- Identifying and recommending methods to strengthen communication with parents, pediatricians, and others who work with children regarding the critical role of early learning and school readiness
- Identifying and building on successful early learning and school readiness initiatives already in place in order to expand collaborative partnerships
- Identifying and recommending methods to measure the quality, availability, and effectiveness of programs in Indiana
- Identifying special efforts and resources needed in low-income and/or rural areas of the state

The Indiana Commission will issue a report on its initial work to the governor and the superintendent of public instruction by December 31, 2004.

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## IOWA

### (1) Iowa Community Empowerment

Iowa Community Empowerment was established by legislation during the 1998 session in an effort to create a partnership between communities and state government with an emphasis on improving the well-being of families with young children. Its purpose is to empower individuals and their communities to achieve desired results for improving the quality of life in the communities in Iowa.

The state board consists of 18 voting members—13 citizen members and 5 state agency members. The 13 citizen members are appointed by the governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate, and are selected from individuals nominated by Community Empowerment Area boards. The 5 state agency members are the directors of the departments of education, economic development, human rights, human services, and public health. A state empowerment team consisting of staff from these departments was established to provide technical assistance to the local empowerment areas.

There are 58 Community Empowerment Areas statewide representing all 99 of Iowa's counties. These areas enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human services programs on behalf of children, families, and other citizens residing in the area. By the end of the year 2005, every community in Iowa will have developed the capacity and commitment for achieving these results:

- Healthy children
- Children ready to succeed in school
- Safe and supportive communities
- Secure and nurturing families
- Secure and nurturing child care environments

Currently, statewide indicator data has been adopted by the Iowa Empowerment Board and is linked to each of the result areas.

The Iowa Empowerment Board has been charged with:

- Facilitating state and community efforts involving community empowerment areas
- Strategic planning
- Funding identification and guidance
- Supporting state and community partnerships by promoting collaboration among education, health, and human service systems

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### (2) Early Childhood Iowa

Early Childhood Iowa was originally started under a Smart Start National Technical Assistance Grant. The planning group continues under federal Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems funding.

Early Childhood Iowa's purpose is to be a catalyst in the development of Iowa's comprehensive, integrated early care, health, and education system. It serves in an advisory capacity to the Iowa Empowerment Board; the state departments; and other identified early care, health, and education planning boards, commissions, and initiatives. Early Childhood Iowa works to:

- Understand all parts of the early childhood system
- Ensure seamless services to children and families through braided funding streams
- Encourage personal relationships across disciplines
- Maximize resources and expertise across systems
- Assess, understand, and respond to internal and external threats to the system
- Advocate for the integrated early care, health, and education system

The membership includes personnel from such groups as: education, special education, higher education, Head Start, health, mental health, human services, human rights, social services, child care, empowerment areas, private citizens, business, private foundations, and the governor's office.

Upon receiving much statewide input, ECI has developed an early care, health, and education vision statement as well as identified goal statements for the system. Its vision statement is, "Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful." Currently, more than 30 agencies have endorsed this vision and the group's identified goal statements.

The components of Iowa's early care, health, and education system consist of:

- High-quality services and programs
- Accountability for results
- Public engagement
- Professional and workforce development
- Resources and funding
- Governance, planning, and administration

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## KANSAS

### Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Created in 1999 under former Governor Bill Graves, the Kansas Children's Cabinet was established to oversee expenditures from the Master Tobacco Settlement. Ninety-five percent of the state's portion of the Master Tobacco Settlement was dedicated to improving the health and well-being of children and youth in the state.

The 15-member cabinet includes five members appointed by the governor (including the First Lady of Kansas), four members appointed by legislative leadership, and six ex-officio members (including a supreme court justice designee and a representative from the Commission of Education).

The Kansas Children's Cabinet has been directed by statute to undertake four overarching responsibilities:

- Advising the governor and the legislature regarding the uses of the moneys credited to the Children's Initiatives Fund
- Evaluating programs that utilize Children's Initiatives Fund moneys
- Assisting the governor in developing and implementing a coordinated, comprehensive delivery system to serve the children and families of Kansas
- Supporting the prevention of child abuse and neglect through the Children's Trust Fund

As part of the cabinet's work and recommendations, Smart Start Kansas was established in 2001. Smart Start Kansas includes funding for early childhood discretionary grants. These community-based grants were awarded to support efforts to ensure school readiness for children entering school in Kansas.

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## KENTUCKY

### Kentucky Division of Early Childhood Development

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development was established in April 1998 by former Governor Paul Patton. In July 2003, the governor's Office of Early Childhood Development became the Division of Early Childhood Development in the Kentucky Department of Education. The Division of Early Childhood Development continues under Governor Ernie Fletcher to coordinate and plan for ways to ensure the health and success of young children in the state.

The division provides leadership for and coordination of the Early Childhood Development Authority and the Early Childhood Business Council. Membership on the two bodies includes representatives from state-level agencies, the Kentucky legislature, higher education, the medical community, labor, city/county government, advocates, and the Urban League, as well as business and foundation representation.

The functions of the division include:

- Building on existing resources in Kentucky
- Fostering public-private partnerships
- Ensuring collaborative planning and implementation
- Mobilizing communities to support and strengthen families, provide high-quality and accessible child care and education, and promote public awareness of the importance of early childhood health and education through Community Early Childhood Councils
- Providing guidance and recommendations in the area of professional development through the Professional Development Council

The 1999 Governor's Task Force 20-year Comprehensive Plan provided the base for the KIDS NOW legislation passed in the 2000 General Assembly, and has been revised as progress in child outcomes are made by the state. The plan focuses on four key areas:

- Ensuring maternal and child health
- Supporting families
- Enhancing early care and education
- Establishing a support structure

The division is also involved with the KIDS NOW Initiative, which is funded by 25 percent of Kentucky's Phase I Tobacco Settlement Dollars. In addition, the division provides the leadership in the development and implementation of the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, the Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide, and the Kentucky Quality Self-Study.

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## LOUISIANA

### Louisiana Children's Cabinet

The Louisiana Children's Cabinet was formed in 1998 by the Louisiana legislature and then Governor Murphy J. Foster and continues under Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. Its mission is to coordinate children's policy across the five departments that provide services for young people in Louisiana including the departments of education, health and hospitals, labor, public safety and corrections, and social services.

Cabinet members include representatives from the four state departments, the governor's office, and legislators. The advisory board includes a wide array of community representatives as well as parents and providers in the state.

The cabinet makes annual recommendations to the governor on funding priorities for the Louisiana Children's Cabinet and includes new and expanded programs for children and youth. The primary charge of the Children's Cabinet is to coordinate and focus programs and funding for the children of Louisiana to increase effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in the areas of prevention and early intervention. The Children's Cabinet Advisory Board was also created to provide information and recommendations from the perspective of advocacy groups, service providers, and parents to the Children's Cabinet.

The Children's Cabinet has adopted several guiding principles:

- Funding of primary prevention services should be aggressively pursued
- Existing services should have proven measurable and positive outcomes for children in the state

- Future programs should be based on scientifically evaluated models
- A seamless system of care for children should exist.
- Services for children should be provided through aligned regional offices
- A comprehensive plan that brings together statewide strategic plans of the state departments should be developed
- Barriers to coordination and collaboration need to be addressed by the cabinet

The Children's Cabinet has prioritized early childhood issues through its goals and agendas. High-quality day care, pre- and post-natal health care, and early childhood supports and services are some of its highest funding priorities, based on the Louisiana Cabinet's new and expanding programming recommendations.

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## MAINE

### (1) Maine Children's Cabinet

In 1995, former Governor Angus King established the Children's Cabinet to oversee and coordinate the delivery of services to children in Maine. The cabinet continues under Governor John Baldacci, with First Lady Karen Baldacci appointed as chair.

The Children's Cabinet is composed of the departments directly related to children and families: corrections, education, and health and human services, which includes mental health, labor, and public safety.

In his charge to the Children's Cabinet, the governor emphasized the important leadership role of the commissioners to collaborate and promote the concept of a seamless service delivery system for children and families through interagency coordination and the need to pool funding to maximize limited resources.

The primary functions of the cabinet include:

- Collaborating actively to share resources and remove barriers
- Supporting collaborative initiatives that promote building assets to prevent health and behavioral problems in children and youth
- Conducting long-range planning and policy development, leading to a more effective public and private service delivery system
- Coordinating the delivery of residential and community-based children's services among the agencies
- Assessing resource capacity and allocations
- Improving policies and programs through the review of specific case examples

The Maine Children’s Cabinet oversees the Maine Task Force on Early Childhood. The task force was created in 1998 as an outgrowth of the successful START ME Right legislation, through which voluntary home visiting for new parents and child care supports are enhanced and coordinated. The task force has been awarded a two-year planning grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau to further its work in building an early childhood system in the state of Maine. It now reflects a broader focus on comprehensive early childhood systems, policy change, and service coordination to include the participation of more than 90 stakeholders statewide.

The Maine Task Force is focused on developing specific recommendations based on the four key national recommendations from the Neurons to Neighborhoods research:

- Strengthening and expanding commitments to assist parents of young children
- Securing needed resources for young children
- Balancing cognitive development with the emotional and physical needs of young children
- Guaranteeing effective service systems for young children by improving collaboration between families, programs, and systems

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## (2) Governor’s Educational Task Force

In March 2004, the Governor’s Educational Task Force was established by Governor John E. Baldacci to “create a seamless pre-kindergarten through sixteenth grade education system” in the state of Maine. The focus of the task force is to connect all levels of education.

Commissioner of the Department of Education Susan Gendron chairs the task force. Its members include educators from varying fields (such as community colleges and universities, career centers, and public schools), employee associations, union representatives, and legislators from the education sub-committee.

The task force is charged with:

- Examining options for planning, efficiencies, and spending reform across pre-kindergarten through 16th-grade educational systems
- Examining all components of pre-kindergarten through 16th-grade educational systems in Maine to remove barriers to student movement between the sectors, including strategies for sharing academic performance data across sectors
- Examining pre-kindergarten to public school transition issues, the educational aspirations of Maine students, and the needs of students who are first in their families to seek post-secondary education
- Examining finance models for systems with universal access
- Identifying strategies that promote college readiness and college success for all

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#### MARYLAND

##### **Maryland Governor's Subcabinet for Children, Youth, & Families**

Former Governor William Donald Schaeffer created the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families in July of 1989 as an advisory body to the governor for issues related to children, youth, and families. In 1993, it was established in statute and is continuing under Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.

The sub-cabinet consists of the secretaries of Maryland's child-serving agencies and seven ex officio members. It is tasked with:

- Maintaining a comprehensive, coordinated interagency approach to addressing child, youth, and family issues that emphasizes prevention, early intervention, and community-based services
- Promoting interagency collaboration among child-serving agencies, advocacy organizations, nonprofits, the business and private sector, and community members on behalf of children and families
- Promoting and developing increased partnership opportunities across the state
- Providing leadership and policy direction to the governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature

The sub-cabinet has created the Leadership in Action Program (LAP), which is made up of a group of Maryland leaders to help achieve the state's school readiness goals. Based on recommendations from the LAP, a permanent school readiness committee (Early Care and Education Committee) was established by the sub-cabinet in August 2003. The Early Care and Education Committee is charged with monitoring the progress of the 5-Year Action Agenda for Maryland in achieving school readiness. The cabinet also houses an early childhood mental health steering committee and a home visiting consortium.

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#### MASSACHUSETTS

##### **Massachusetts Council on Early Education and Care**

Three agencies—the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Education (DOE), and the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS)—administer and provide oversight to the early education and care system in Massachusetts.

In 2003, the Massachusetts legislature and the governor created a Council on Early Education and Care and appointed the three commissioners from these agencies to coordinate resources and public funding streams for early education. The council is committed to developing a comprehensive, high-

quality, accessible system of programs and services for young children and their families in collaboration with other involved agencies and groups.

In 2004, the legislature passed legislation creating the Department of Early Education and Care under the new Board of Early Education and Care. The legislation requires the Council on Early Education and Care to develop a plan for the transfer of early education and care programs, services, and funding from DPH, DOE, and OCCS to the new Department of Early Education and Care over the next year.

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## MICHIGAN

### (1) Michigan Children’s Cabinet and Children’s Action Network

The Michigan Children’s Cabinet was formed by Governor Jennifer Granholm to “improve interagency work with regard to children’s issues.” As an addition to the Children’s Cabinet, the Children’s Action Network was asked to focus on prevention and early intervention services for children birth to age 5. The specific charges were to implement universal services for all children birth to age 5 in Michigan by 2007, provide a unifying voice for early childhood, and integrate birth-to-5 services with family resource centers in priority schools and other community services throughout Michigan.

The 2004 Children’s Action Network consists of representatives from a variety of areas, including members of the Michigan Children’s Cabinet, members of the child advocacy community, and other governmental staff. The Children’s Action Network makes regular reports to the Children’s Cabinet, which in turn makes regular reports to the Governor’s full cabinet.

To be successful with its charges, the network is focusing on completing six actions in 2004:

- Defining universal pre-kindergarten services
- Evaluating the quality and scope of existing birth-to-5 programming in Michigan
- Addressing gaps and barriers to the implementation of community-based, collaborative early childhood systems
- Developing a three-year business plan for the Children’s Action Network with clear priorities and strategies and a specific timeline for implementation
- Overseeing implementation of the blueprint developed by the Early Childhood Comprehensive System Project Grant and the Early Childhood Core Team
- Identifying existing and potential funding sources

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## **(2) Ready to Succeed Partnership**

The Ready to Succeed Partnership was established legislatively in 1999 to develop a system that ensures every child is ready to enter kindergarten successfully. This public/private partnership was charged with:

- Bringing together leaders working on behalf of the Ready to Succeed vision
- Examining successful early childhood education and care practices and making recommendations to the Michigan governor and legislature regarding these practices
- Consulting with leaders in business, education, faith, government, health, labor, media, philanthropy, and other sectors to garner their support in helping children enter school ready to succeed
- Organizing local community leadership to address the needs of families with young children and better coordinate local services

The Ready to Succeed Partnership is made up of an executive council, which includes representatives of the eight sectors mentioned earlier, an executive committee, and a media board.

The Ready to Succeed Partnership lost state funding in 2001 and continues to operate with foundation support.

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## **MINNESOTA**

### **Ready 4 K**

Ready 4 K, a Minnesota-based organization, focuses on “bringing people together to advance the early care and education movement” in the state.

Ready 4 K focuses on:

- Grassroots organizing to bring together a network of early childhood advocates
- Organizing locally to enable communities to engage in school readiness activities that will work locally
- Informing the public about the importance of early childhood education and care
- Expanding relationships with the business community
- Identifying cost-effective ways to enhance choices for partners in child care and school readiness options

Ready 4 K is in the process of developing a proposal for a public/private governance system and gaining legislative approval. Ready 4 K is a Build Initiative state, and those resources are being used in this process.

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## MISSISSIPPI

### Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council

Established in 2000 under former Governor Ronald Musgrove and continued under Governor Haley Barbour, the Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council was legislatively approved to coordinate early childhood services across agencies, to avoid duplication in services, and to improve overall quality of services in Mississippi.

The council is made up of the directors of state departments, including the departments of education, human services, health, rehabilitation services, and mental health. Among others, the council also includes representatives from educational television and higher education.

The functions of the council include:

- Serving as the interagency coordinating council for the various agencies and public and private programs serving pre-school children and their families in Mississippi
- Advising various state-level boards and departments regarding standards, rules, rule revisions, agency guidelines, and administration affecting child care facilities, pre-kindergarten programs, family training programs, and other programs and services for pre-school children and families
- Collecting, compiling, and distributing data relating to services and programs for pre-school children and families, including an inventory of the programs and services available in each county
- Identifying and making recommendations regarding unfulfilled needs in Mississippi
- Reviewing and analyzing spending priorities for each state agency that utilizes state or federal funds in the

administration or provisions of programs and services for pre-school children

- Publishing an annual comprehensive report of the state of all programs and services for pre-school children in Mississippi and distributing the report to the governor, the legislature, local school districts, and the general public
- Applying for, receiving, and administering funds for administration, research, pilots, planning, and evaluation for all programs serving pre-school children and their families

The Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council also receives and considers recommendations of the Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood Services. The committee was created to aid the work of the council in supporting programs serving pre-school children and their families. It includes agency and departmental representatives as well as parents, child care providers, advocacy organization, and others.

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## MISSOURI

### Missouri Family and Community Trust

In November 1993, former Governor Carnahan established the Family Investment Trust as a state-level public/private entity. The name of the organization was changed to Family and Community Trust (FACT) by executive order of current Governor Bob Holden on April 2, 2001.

The departments of corrections, economic development, elementary and secondary education, health and senior services, public safety, labor and industrial relations, mental health, and social services are each partnering in the system reform initiative. This board also includes nine private sector members.

The Family and Community Trust's charge is to provide leadership in collaboration with Missouri's Community Partnerships to measurably improve the condition of Missouri's families, children, individuals, and communities and to encourage collaboration among public and private community entities to build and strengthen comprehensive community-based support systems.

The six core results for the Missouri Family and Community Trust are:

- Parents working
- Children safe in their families and families safe in their communities
- Young children ready to enter school
- Children and families that are healthy
- Children and youth succeeding in school
- Youth ready to enter the work force and become productive citizens

The trust has established a cross-agency structure to work together to measurably improve the condition of Missouri's families and their children, to establish greater collaboration among agencies, and to implement the broad-based systems management reform initiative.

Missouri's policy directions are:

- Being accountable for achieving results
- Bringing services closer to where families live and children attend school

- Ensuring active community involvement in decisions that affect their well-being
- Using dollars more flexibly and effectively to meet community needs

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## MONTANA

### Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council

The Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council was created in 1997 to work within the Department of Public Health and Human Services to implement, maintain, and evaluate the effectiveness of the state's early care and education programs.

The membership of the council includes parents, child care providers, the business community, Head Start staff, representatives of the Department of Public Health and the Office of Public Instruction, and others.

The council has evolved by combining with the Governor's Child Care Advisory Council and has expanded to include the responsibilities of the state coordinating council for Head Start and Child Care in 1999.

The council is responsible for implementing, maintaining, and evaluating:

- Montana’s Best Beginnings quality child-care initiatives
- The child care scholarship program
- Head Start state collaboration efforts
- The Montana Early Childhood Comprehensive System efforts
- The Governor’s Initiative on School Readiness

It is composed of three committees, which advise in the areas of program policy, quality, and public policy.

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## NEBRASKA

### Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council

Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns created the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) in 2000 as an advisory body to state government.

The current representation of organizations on the council is as follows: 10 service providers, two Head Start providers, four higher education personnel, five state agency representatives, five parents, two mental health representatives, two child care center providers,

two public schools representatives, one state senator, one physician, and two family child care providers.

The Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council provides assistance and advice to the co-lead agencies in the policy development and implementation of a statewide system for serving infants, toddlers, and their families. The ECICC advises and assists the collaborating agencies in carrying out the provisions of the Early Intervention Act, the Quality Child Care Act, and other early childhood care and education initiatives under state supervision.

The charges of the council include:

- Identifying gaps and barriers in the service system
- Making recommendations and identifying issues that warrant state agency, gubernatorial, and legislative attention related to all early childhood services, including services to young children with disabilities and their families
- Identifying opportunities and resources for quality, integrated early childhood care and education programs that meet each child’s individual needs and maximize each child’s potential
- Reducing the number of state advisory committees and avoiding duplication of efforts

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## NEW MEXICO

### **New Mexico Children's Cabinet**

The New Mexico Children's Cabinet was created in 2003 by Governor Bill Richardson as a top-level, cross-agency structure to provide for closer coordination and cross-departmental communication between all state agencies charged with addressing the needs of the state's children. The cabinet focuses on improving the lives of New Mexico's children by increasing interaction among state departments in an effort to streamline and reduce bureaucratic red tape. It also tracks such child well-being indicators as teen birthrates, infant mortality rates, rates of crimes against children, dropout rates, and immunization rates.

The cabinet's goals are to:

- Strive for all children in New Mexico to achieve literacy by the end of third grade
- Strive to increase the availability of health insurance to children
- Strive to ensure that all children receive proper immunizations
- Strive to increase the availability of child care to parents working their way off welfare
- Remove administrative barriers to obtaining public assistance
- Track the State of New Mexico's indicators concerning children and their health, education, safety, and economic growth

The cabinet consists of the lieutenant governor (in the position of chairperson) and the agency heads of the following departments: children, youth and families, corrections, human services, labor, health, finance and administration, economic development, public safety, aging, and education.

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## NORTH CAROLINA

### **North Carolina Partnership for Children**

The North Carolina Partnership was legislatively created in 1993 under former Governor James Hunt and continues under Governor Michael Easley. The partnership oversees the Smart Start Initiative in the state.

The public/private partnership's 25-member board consists of representatives from institutes of higher learning, the departments of health and human services and education, the faith community, and health care, as well as business representatives, child care providers, local partnerships, parents, and others. All board members are appointed by either legislative or gubernatorial action.

Under the oversight of the partnership, local Smart Start partnerships plan and implement programs that support the development of local early childhood systems. There are 82 local partnerships; each is a separate 501(c)3 organization. Smart Start funds, appropriated by the state legislature, flow from the North Carolina Partnership for Children to each local partnership with the goals of improving child care quality, affordability, and accessibility and access to early childhood health services and other family support programs. In fiscal year 2004, the state

appropriation for Smart Start was nearly \$200 million in state funds. These “Smart Start” funds are in addition to separate appropriations for child care subsidy and other early childhood–related programs.

The goals of the North Carolina Partnership for Children include:

- Providing accountability for the local partnerships to ensure they operate in an accountable and results-driven manner as well as providing capacity-building technical assistance, a comprehensive training strategy, and best practices support for these local partnerships to strengthen their overall organizational, financial, and programmatic capabilities
- Leading the development of a statewide early childhood system
- Educating and mobilizing the public to build awareness and support for early childhood development and education, including the coordination of a statewide public awareness campaign, and developing internal and external promotional vehicles for Smart Start
- Advocating for and securing government and private resources for the Smart Start mission, including building the capacity of local partnerships to secure funding
- Maintaining a work environment that is responsive to change, is customer service–oriented, and operates efficiently and effectively
- Providing national leadership in the development of early childhood initiatives, including the development and implementation of a menu of services under a National Technical Assistance Center, providing support and technical assistance to other states and communities, and providing support to local partnerships through the developed programs

Smart Start has been used as a national model for early childhood initiatives and has shown success with fund raising, the establishment of a National Technical Assistance Center, the launching of an early childhood ad campaign, the creation and implementation of a performance-based incentive system to evaluate partnerships based on statewide standards, and the demonstration of successful approaches in improving the quality of child care and early learning systems.

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## OHIO

### Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council

Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) is a partnership of government agencies and community organizations committed to improving the well-being of children and families. The OFCF cabinet council and 88 local county Family and Children First councils were created to streamline and coordinate government services for families needing help for their children (Ohio Revised Code 121.37). The cabinet council coordinates strategies and activities among Ohio’s departments of alcohol and drug addiction services, budget and management, education, health, job and family services, mental health, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and youth services.

In 2000, the governor and the council, along with citizens around the state, identified a set of six commitments to child well-being, including three specifically addressing early childhood in the state. The commitments are designed to drive policy development, align program efforts and resources, and serve as a gauge as to whether the state is making progress in improving outcomes for children. Ohio's commitments to child well-being are:

- Expectant parents and newborns thrive
- Infants and toddlers thrive
- Children are ready for school
- Children and youth succeed in school
- Youth choose healthy behaviors
- Youth successfully transition into adulthood

These commitments have encouraged the development of integrated early childhood programming, such as the Help Me Grow and Head Start Plus programs. Help Me Grow integrates several birth-to-3 programs. It provides home visiting for newborns and services to infants and toddlers with or at risk for developmental delays. The Head Start Plus program, new in state fiscal year 2005, integrates the educational and comprehensive services of the Head Start program with subsidized child care to improve school readiness while meeting the child care needs of working families.

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## OKLAHOMA

### Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

In April 2003, Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry signed House Bill 1094—the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act. The legislation established the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR), a 28-member public-private partnership to promote school readiness in Oklahoma.

The new partnership is composed of 13 state agency directors and 15 individuals from the private sector. Its responsibilities include:

- Conducting a thorough assessment of the existing public and private programs to determine their effectiveness and to maximize the use of current state funds
- Implementing a public engagement campaign and establishing a structure to facilitate communications between communities
- Providing leadership at the state level to encourage communities to develop and improve school readiness opportunities at the local level
- Encouraging public and private programs, services, and initiatives to provide coordinated, community-based, effective, and cost-efficient programs
- Maximizing the extent to which private sector funding is leveraged and federal, state, and local funds are coordinated with private funds
- Establishing standards of accountability for school readiness programs and policies and recognizing and promoting best practices
- Reporting annually to the governor and the legislature

In the fall of 2003, the Oklahoma State Department of Health was awarded the federal Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant designed to support the

work of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness. Initial steps have been taken to inventory current Oklahoma early childhood programs and to identify where the service gaps exist within the state. In May 2004, the OPSR received a \$2 million appropriation from the state legislature to continue with early childhood systems building and to help sustain the work being implemented at the community level across the state.

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## OREGON

### **Oregon Partners for Children & Families**

Oregon Partners for Children & Families, a public-private partnership, was enacted by the Oregon legislature and signed into law by former Governor John Kitzhaber in 1999. It continues under Governor Ted Kulongoski and represents a collaboration of state and local agencies that are involved in planning, policy making, and providing services for children and families from birth to 18.

The membership includes local governments, tribal governments, service providers, educators, the private sector, citizens, and youth in Oregon's 36 counties.

Oregon Partners for Children & Families is charged with:

- Creating a plan that focuses on developing a comprehensive system in each county for services for children from birth to 18 years of age

- Working to complete legislative mandates for outcomes, targets, and accountability for expenditures
- Providing support to counties

Oregon Partners for Children & Families is led and facilitated by the Oregon Commission on Children & Families. The state commission ensures accountability, helps evaluate progress in the counties, and builds the policy framework for the work of local commissions. It supports local commissions on children and families in each county as they lead and facilitate the development of plans for children and families in their communities. The partners, together with the commission, review the plans and use the information in each of their respective budgets and design of their work.

Early childhood has recently been included as an additional focus for the partnership. In 2001, the Oregon Legislature passed a companion piece of legislation called "The Oregon Children's Plan," which established a statewide early childhood system of services and supports policy for Oregon's youngest children from birth to 8 years of age and their families, beginning with first-born children.

The legislation directed the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the Oregon Department of Education, and the Oregon Department of Human Services to lead a joint effort with other state and local partners to establish an early childhood system of services and supports at both the state and local levels. This included development of an early childhood systems plan.

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## PENNSYLVANIA

### **Pennsylvania Governor's Early Learning Team**

The Early Learning Team was formed in the spring of 2003 by Governor Edward Rendell to bring together key decision-making and frontline staff to develop and clarify the governor's Early Childhood Agenda and ensure that policy and program development would come from this common agenda and set of goals.

The team consists of representatives of the departments of public welfare, education, and health and human services, as well as the governor's office and Head Start. The Early Learning Team is designed to use the resources and expertise from all of these areas (in particular, education and public welfare) to provide the most effective and efficient way to implement the governor's agenda in the area of early childhood. The agenda includes:

- Establishing and supporting early learning programs through voluntary pre- and full-day kindergarten supported by early learning standards and incentives for small class size in early education classrooms from kindergarten through 3rd grade
- Improving professional preparation for early learning educators, expanding Keystone Stars and T.E.A.C.H initiatives, and increasing the capacity of early learning programs to effectively address the behavioral problems of young children

- Ensured access to early childhood programs by consolidating child care subsidy programs within the Department of Public Welfare, removing barriers to participation for families, and expanding subsidized child care services
- Engaging and educating parents regarding the importance of high-quality child care and pre-school programs
- Achieving systems coordination and integration between the departments of public welfare and education to ensure systemic support and public leadership for quality early childhood programs in community and school settings

The Early Learning Team and the present administration have made progress in several areas, including the high priority of early childhood programming in funding decisions, the development of early learning standards, the expansion of Keystone and T.E.A.C.H to improve capacity, shortened waiting lists for child care, and joint professional development opportunities coordinated between child care providers, Head Start, and the public schools.

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## RHODE ISLAND

### Rhode Island Children’s Cabinet

The Rhode Island Children’s Cabinet was created in 1991 under former Governor Bruce Sundlun and is continuing today under Governor Donald Carcieri. It functions as an interdepartmental policy planning and development structure for state agencies serving children and families.

The cabinet brings together the directors of all child and human service state departments, as well as other key state agencies. It is composed of the directors of the state departments of: human services; health; children, youth and families; labor and training; administration; mental health, retardation and hospitals; higher education; and elementary and secondary education. The cabinet also includes the governor’s policy director, the managing director for the newly appointed Office of Health and Human Services, the director of the Department of Administration, the state’s chief information officer, the director of the Department of Elderly Affairs, and the child support enforcement administrator.

The cabinet is responsible for:

- Providing leadership to the structures and mechanisms by which collaboration among state agencies is implemented, including dedicating personnel and other resources
- Being the vehicle by which department leaders interact and interface around children’s issues
- Making statements and policy decisions regarding the needs of children and families

The Rhode Island Children’s Cabinet is committed to working toward four broad outcomes:

- All children will enter school ready to learn.
- All youth will leave school prepared to lead productive lives
- All children and youth will be safe in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods
- All families will be economically self-sufficient yet interdependent

The Children’s Cabinet created “Starting Right,” a three-year initiative enacted in 1998 to address the access, affordability, and quality of early care and education services across the state. The initiative funded Comprehensive Child Care Services networks to provide developmentally appropriate early education and a range of social services to 3- and 4-year-old children who were not being served by Head Start.

The cabinet also expanded eligibility for child care subsidies, raised reimbursement rates, subsidized health insurance for child care providers, and increased resources for provider training.

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## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

### **South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees**

The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees was signed into law in 1999 by former Governor Jim Hodges, and is continuing under Governor Mark Sanford to administer a comprehensive long-range initiative for improving early childhood development and promoting school readiness.

The First Steps Board of Trustees established and now oversees the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (First Steps). First Steps is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach first grade healthy and ready to succeed. Through county partnerships, First Steps provides public and private funds and support for early childhood development and education services for children. First Steps serves children pre-first grade and their families, and provides support for families' efforts enabling their children to reach school ready to learn.

The First Steps Board of Trustees is chaired by Governor Sanford, and must include the state superintendent of education. The board is composed of 20 appointed voting members, including: parents, the business community, early childhood educators, medical or child care and development providers, and members of the general assembly, as well as directors of departments or their designee.

The Board of Trustees is charged with carrying out activities necessary to administer the fund, including:

- Assessing service needs and gaps
- Soliciting proposals to address identified service needs
- Establishing criteria for the awarding of grants

An Office of First Steps to School Readiness was established within the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees. The office promulgates regulations and establishes guidelines, policies, and procedures for implementation of the First Steps initiative. Local boards direct school readiness efforts through local staff and their school readiness partners in all 46 counties.

The First Steps Board of Trustees employs a director of the Office of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness and other staff as necessary to carry out the First Steps initiative.

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## **VERMONT**

### **Building Bright Futures: Vermont's Alliance for Children Transitional Board**

Vermont's Early Childhood Work Group is a consortium of agencies, organizations, programs, and individuals concerned about the healthy development and well-being of young children and their families. Formed in 1992 under Governor Howard Dean, it continues under the present Governor, Jim Douglas, to create a unified early care, health, and education system.

The Early Childhood Work Group and its steering committee laid the foundation and developed the components and standards for a unified system, but

lacked the authority to establish and oversee an integrated system of early care, health, and education services. Recognizing the need for a governance structure that unifies and is accountable for these diverse pieces, the Early Childhood Steering Committee applied for and received an Intensive Technical Assistance Grant (ITAG) from North Carolina's Smart Start program in 2002.

At that time, a sub-committee of the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth created by Dean and continued by the Douglas administration took on the leadership and oversight for the grant, establishing a broad, thoughtful process to develop a strategic plan for the overall coordination of Vermont's early care, health, and education system, named Building Bright Futures: Vermont's Alliance for Children. The goals for this system are to:

- Ensure equitable access to quality services for all children and families seeking them
- Maximize existing resources in the system
- Align resources with desired outcomes in a consistent, measurable manner
- Validate outcomes through a formal evaluation system linked to continuous improvement and quality assurance

In August 2004, Douglas issued an executive order establishing a state public/private partnership—Building Bright Futures: Vermont's Alliance for Children Transitional Board. The board is made up of the secretary of the Agency of Human Services; the secretary of Commerce and Community Development; the chair of the State Board of Education; commissioners of the Department for Children and Families, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health; three business representatives; three parents, one with special health needs and one

from a children's advocacy organization; two representatives from Vermont's regional partnerships; two representatives from the Early Childhood Councils; and two legislators, one representative appointed by the speaker of the house and one senator appointed by the president pro-tempore.

Standing committees of the state board include:

- Professional development
- Standards/accountability/evaluation
- Public engagement
- Health (includes disabilities)
- Finance and development
- Family/consumer participation
- Planning/priority services
- Community and state partnerships

Local Building Bright Futures affiliates are also being established that mirror the state board in composition and committee structure and will be responsible for the coordination and accountability of community-based services for all young children and their families.

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## WASHINGTON

### (1) Washington State Child Care Coordinating Committee

The Washington Child Care Coordinating Committee was formed in 1988 under former Governor Booth Gardner and continues under Governor Gary Locke today. The purpose of the committee is to provide and promote coordination and collaboration among policy makers, state and local agencies, community partners and families in early care and education as well as advising policy makers in the areas of early child care and after-school programming.

The Child Care Coordinating Committee is composed of 33 members, including 23 specified constituent community and state department representatives. Its work is focused through nine broad-based subcommittees targeting career development, health and safety, partnership, school-age care, systems, inclusive child care, licensing, public policy, subsidy, and tribal issues.

Along with the administration of the Child Care Coordinating Committee itself, the committee is charged with five primary functions:

- Raising the level of commitment to early care and learning as well as after-school services through education and public awareness
- Connecting the birth-to-5 systems, K-12 schools, families, and communities by connecting the early childhood and school systems; in-school and out-of-school learning; and related local, regional, state, and national initiatives; and defining this “system”
- Improving coordination across early care and learning as well as across school-day and after-school systems in the state by better aligning education and welfare foci, as well as related comprehensive services such as higher education and professional development, and minimizing fragmentation

- Working to plan a stable and sustainable early care and learning and after-school system
- Improving the overall quality of services through professional development and standards

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### (2) Washington State Family Policy Council

Established in 1992 under former Governor Booth Gardner and continuing under Governor Gary Locke, the Washington State Family Policy Council was formed to make systemic changes to improve outcomes for Washington’s children and families. The council works with the state’s Community Public Health and Safety Networks, which are community-based volunteer boards focused on the needs and programming available at the local level as well as empowered to make recommendations to the state through the council.

The council members include representatives from the state departments of social and health services, community, trade and economic development, health, and public instruction, as well as legislators and a representative of the governor.

Currently, there are 36 fully funded local networks. The networks focus on:

- Raising money and mobilizing volunteers
- Ensuring that money is distributed locally to those who need it through research-based programs and activities and building bridges between communities and disciplines to find solutions to local issues

- Making recommendations for policy, promising practices, and funding changes to the council, which then shares it with state-level decision makers

The council provides cross-system cohesiveness and independent facilitation in Washington state by utilizing and overseeing these local networks and working with other agencies to coordinate the work being done in the state.

The council focuses about half of its efforts in early childhood, including successful policy work regarding methamphetamine labs, child endangerment, and the availability of respite care in Washington. The council has also focused its statewide conferences on areas relevant to early childhood matters, such as parenting education and other local technical assistance efforts.

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## WEST VIRGINIA

### **West Virginia Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Families and West Virginia Family Resource Networks**

The West Virginia Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Families was established in 1990 under former Governor Gaston Caperton III. The cabinet was created to “establish a family-centered, comprehensive, community-based system for the provision of social services, programs, and facilities for children and families overseen by the highest level of

state government ... focusing on prevention, education, and early intervention.” The cabinet was created to include local family resource networks to provide a local perspective and insights regarding the needs of families and children within each locality.

The primary charges of the cabinet include:

- Establishing, overseeing, evaluating, and providing technical assistance and funding to the family resource networks
- Developing a cross-agency, multi-year state plan consistent with local priorities established by the family resource networks
- Promoting the work of the cabinet on children and families in order to create strong support from the community, the legislators, and business leaders

Between 1991 and 2002 the Children’s Cabinet was active in the area of early childhood policy and work. Among other accomplishments, the cabinet:

- Developed early learning program standards for the state of West Virginia
- Worked in the area of professional development for early childhood providers by linking with institutions of higher education in the state to establish core competencies for personnel, developing a career pathway, and implementing a training registry
- Coordinated early childhood–focused initiatives, including the development of Starting Points Family Resource Centers and the West Virginia Educare Initiative, which focused on establishing local collaborative systems for children birth to age 5 in a comprehensive way through local pilot projects

In 2002, West Virginia passed legislation that focused attention and available resources on universal pre-school for 4-year-olds through the public education system.

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## WYOMING

### Wyoming Early Childhood Development Council

The Wyoming Early Childhood Development Council was formed in 1997 by former Governor Jim Geringer and continues under Governor David D. Freudenthal to advocate for policies that provide a coordinated system of best practices in the area of early childhood in Wyoming.

The membership is appointed by the governor and includes early childcare providers, the first spouse of Wyoming, representatives of state departments (including the departments of health, education, and family services), faith-based organizations, the business community, parents, legislators, and others.

The council is charged with:

- Facilitating the completion of a comprehensive, statewide early childhood development plan that includes the partnership of statewide initiatives and agencies focused on early childhood development
- Promoting parent and family education programs and coordinating these with health, child care, and education services to enable families to provide appropriate developmental opportunities for their children

- Ensuring that every child from birth to age 5 has the opportunity for high-quality, universal early care and education through providers, public or private schools, and agencies with funding through public and private sources
- Ensuring that educational experiences are seamless as young children (ages 0–8) transition through early childhood programs, particularly pre-literacy preparation
- Strengthening early childhood program standards and accountability and improving assessment of child development and readiness
- Promoting new knowledge and improvement of early childhood care and education

Since 1997, the council has participated in the Early Learning Policy Academy, developed Wyoming's early learning childhood readiness standards, participated in a NASBE data collections grant, and collaborated with public television to develop a public awareness campaign.

The Early Learning Council has focused recently on a program to initiate reading readiness by making more than 2,400 books available to children in Wyoming during their well-baby checks and overseeing a Professional Development Task Force that includes the University of Wyoming to provide an early childhood professional endorsement and help with professional development in the area of early childhood.

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## Endnotes

1. In 1988, then-President George H. W. Bush and the nation's governors established seven national education goals. The first of these was that "all children start school ready to learn."
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3. McCart, L., Bruner, C., & Schene, P. (2003). *Child welfare and school readiness—Making the link for vulnerable children*. Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.
4. Segal, A., & Bruner, C. (2004). *One step on the path to school readiness: Key questions to consider before establishing universal pre-kindergarten*. Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.
5. *Voices for America's Children & Child and Family Policy Center*. (2004). *Early learning left out: An examination of public investment in education and development by child age*. Des Moines, IA: Child and Family Policy Center.
6. Given that the federal government is a major funder of early learning, some of this would be unavoidable even if a state were to seek to create a single state agency, since some significant programs (such as Head Start) do not have lines of authority that must go through the state.
7. There have been several efforts to develop typologies for these different structures, including work by the Finance Project, the Foundation Consortium of California, the Build Initiative states, work groups in Arizona and Pennsylvania, and the National Conference of State Legislatures. While there are slight differences in these typologies and in the nomenclature, they all include these same general structures among their different governance models. Bryant, E., & Cohen, C. (2003). *State networks of local comprehensive community collaboratives*. Washington, DC: Finance Project; Children's Action Alliance. (2002). *Growing Arizona: A report by the Arizona school readiness task force*. Phoenix, AZ: Author; Foundation Consortium. (2002). *Summary of results: Survey of county children and family members and policy councils*. (draft); Ounce of Prevention Fund. (n.d.). *Lessons learned from other states*. (unpublished); National Conference of State Legislatures. (2004). *Shifting roles in governance*. Washington, DC: Author. See also: Halfon, N., Inkelas, M., Kumar, V., Tulis, E., & Rice, T. (2002). *Planning for the state early childhood comprehensive systems initiative (SECCS): An environmental scan of opportunities and readiness for building systems*. Los Angeles, CA: National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
8. Groups frequently must develop their identity, which has been characterized as a process of "forming," "storming," "norming," and "performing." If the goal is for the entire task force or commission to take strong ownership of the recommendations, attention must be given to facilitating and managing the group process.
9. In some states, such coalitions or collaborations have been established by advocates in the private sector, without official state sanction and with or without membership from state government. Several of the Build Initiative planning bodies initially fell into this category. When a major goal or function is to build political will, private sector-supported planning groups have fewer political constraints in conducting advocacy campaigns, particularly ones that may go beyond the official position of the governor and administration.
10. In addition to the recognition that "one system's integration is another system's fragmentation," there also is the practical political consideration that these funds currently are being used and have their own political constituencies. Redirecting Title I funding that has been used for classroom reading instruction in the early grades to pre-school programming affects local elementary schools and Title I instructors who already likely have a constituency in their schools. While federal regulations allow for that use of Title I funding, there exists a constituency around its current use that does not yet exist for its potential use. While such redirection can and does occur, it usually requires engagement and accommodation of the Title I community to occur and is difficult to enforce from outside.
11. Some also fall within the judicial branch. With respect to early learning, decisions regarding placement and adoption of children are made by the court system, which also has the authority to order services. The juvenile or family court, and the judges or referees who make these decisions, ultimately are funded by state appropriations that must be enacted by the general assembly and approved by the governor, but their own actions are based on law and its interpretation by the state and federal supreme courts. They are not answerable, as state agencies are, to the governor.
12. Still, this does not guarantee that the executives can follow through on agreements. As Frederick the Great of Russia once said, "I do not rule Russia, ten thousand clerks do."
13. Weiss, H. (1999). *Fostering high quality programs: Partnerships among families, early childhood educators, and communities to promote early learning in science, mathematics, and technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project. See also Weiss, H. (2002). *Making progress: Learning and public accountability*. In Bruner, C., Greenberg, M., Guy, C., Little, M., Schorr, L., et al. (2002). *Funding what works: Exploring the role of research in effective programs and practices in government decision-making*. (pp. 23–30). Des Moines, IA: National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse and Center for Schools and Communities.
14. See, for example, Chrislip, D.D., & Larson, C.E. (1994). *Collaborative leadership: How citizens and civic leaders can make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

## **THE BUILD INITIATIVE**

The Build Initiative is a nine-state multi-year initiative, supported by a number of foundation funders through the Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative. Build supports teams of key state stakeholders in planning and mobilization activities directed to building comprehensive early learning systems in their states. Teams include both public and private members. The focus of Build is upon the first five years of life, with a broad conception of systems building that includes health, family support, early intervention, and early care and education. States are given the flexibility to meet their goals in diverse ways, based on each state's unique circumstances. Funds are not used to implement direct services but rather to connect programs and infrastructure into a coordinated system of policies and services.

The Build Initiative is constructed as a learning partnership across the nine states, contouring its technical assistance and peer learning activities to the evolving issues and opportunities identified by the states. The Build Initiative began with four states—Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Ohio—in May 2002. In 2003, Build added a fifth state—Pennsylvania, and four learning partner states—Hawaii, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Washington.

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### About SECPTAN

The State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN) provides current information about early childhood policy initiatives to state policy makers. It assists them in assessing the best available evidence and information about effective policies and practices in early childhood. The network is managed by the Child and Family Policy Center with funding from The Ford Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. For more information about SECPTAN, visit [www.finebynine.org](http://www.finebynine.org) or contact Charles Bruner, Network Director, at 515-280-9027.

### About this Series

This monograph is part of SECPTAN's series on early childhood issues, which also includes:

- **Beyond the Usual Suspects: Developing New Allies to Invest in School Readiness**
- **Up and Running: A Compendium of Multi-Site Early Childhood Initiatives**
- **Measuring Children's School Readiness: Options for Developing State Baselines and Benchmarks**
- **School Readiness Policy and Budgeting: Template for Collecting State Baseline Information**
- **Child Welfare and School Readiness—Making the Link for Vulnerable Children**
- **Financing School Readiness Strategies: An Annotated Bibliography**
- **Seven Things Legislators (and Other Policy Makers) Need to Know about School Readiness**

- **Health Care and School Readiness: The Health Community's Role in Supporting Child Development—New Approaches and Model Legislation**
- **On the Path to School Readiness: Key Questions to Consider Before Establishing Universal Pre-Kindergarten**

These publications are available online at [www.finebynine.org](http://www.finebynine.org) or by contacting the Child and Family Policy Center.

### About the Child and Family Policy Center

The Child and Family Policy Center (CFPC) was established in 1989 by former Iowa legislator Charles Bruner, Ph.D., to better link research and policy on issues vital to children and families, and to advocate for outcome-based policies to improve child well-being. CFPC is active both statewide and nationally. In Iowa, the Child and Family Policy Center assists the state and communities in developing integrated, community-based, family-focused, and results-accountable services, particularly for vulnerable children. CFPC also produces a variety of reports, case studies, concept papers, and technical assistance tools on systems reform and community building that are widely used across the United States.



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