



NH Early Childhood Strategy Team 5– Meeting 2 Notes
Strategic Theme 5: Office of Early Childhood
August 5th, 2022 9:00-11:00am

GSG Facilitator: Margaret Brackett

GSG Notetaker: Olivia Gunthert

Participants:

- ❖ Jeanne Agri
- ❖ Jane Bard
- ❖ Athena Cote
- ❖ Christina D’Allesandro
- ❖ Debra Nelson
- ❖ Molly White

Summary of team purpose:

This team is focused on the Strategic Theme: Office of Early Childhood and on developing strategic initiatives for the two objectives under this strategic theme. The team purpose today is to review and discuss how to define success on the objectives, then discuss resources that have been reviewed in preparation for the next meeting when we will brainstorm potential initiatives. The team is going to prepare 1-3 initiatives per objective by the end of August so they can be presented to the strategic planning subcommittee.

I. Discussion of Objectives and Success Definitions:

The group discussed the success indicators identified last meeting and commented on any remaining questions or issues.

Objective 1: Ensure a cohesive and collaborative approach to a mixed-delivery, early childhood system

- How are we defining students in the second bullet?
 - In early childhood, we use the term children
 - Remove the word “students” fully from bullet 2
- Adding the following success indicator: Establishing a governing structure with recognized elevated authority
 - What are the next steps?
- If the office was appropriately financed, what would we see?
 - Needs to be State-funded, not only funded through federal funds
 - Office would have operations and functions funded through state and federal resources, but can leverage other funds, including local funds, philanthropy, businesses, etc.
- If the authority is working successfully, what would we see?

- OEC has some control over their funds/office budget
 - Funds can't be easily cut off
 - Recognized as legitimately equal to any other dept, office, agency etc. & funds cannot be readily pulled from this office to support any other state agency functions
- Have to ensure that we have an organizational structure will enable us to do this
- The piece that we are missing is that the delivery of supports and services will be nonduplicative, leveraged, working together, cross delivery at the service level

Objective 2: Expand public understanding of the importance of quality early childhood experiences for all children

- Legislation and public policy would support early childhood
- Leadership in early childhood would cultivate political will
 - Ex: public breakfasts with legislators, other examples of educating
- Increased participation in existing programs and services
- Increased use of scholarship and other tools we have to serve every child and family
 - Spark NH
- Expanding public understanding → targeting areas of no early childhood facilities (aka child care and early childhood deserts)
- Expanded equitable access across all populations in NH
 - Improved data collection across the state
- Importance of early childhood workforce is recognized and acknowledge and supported and adequately compensated; wages matter and workforce is valued
 - Lift ALL boats – early childhood, out-of-school workforce, summer care, all working to support young children and families

II. Discussion of Research and Effective Approaches:

The team discussed examples of how the objectives are currently being addressed effectively.

Objective 1: Ensure a cohesive and collaborative approach to a mixed-delivery, early childhood system

- Establishing a governance structure with sufficient authority
 - National Institute for Early Education Research
 - Regional lead community structure – seven of them established through a PDG-funded grant
 - Kindergarten Entry Assessment and Transition Practice Final Report December 2020 – December 2021:
<https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/final-kindergarten-entry-assessment-and-transition-report.pdf>
 - Spark NH: State-level coordination collaboration
 - Strengthening Early Childhood Governance in New Hampshire: Approaches to Consider – *Initial Report of the Early Childhood Governance Task Force*
 - Thinking about what are the gaps in the current governance structure

- Look at what we currently have and where are the gaps, where do we go from here
 - Quadrants have been meeting but haven't evaluated how it is going, are things working better etc.
- Family provider focus – adding any additional entry points
 - Impacts of moving programs from one department to another
- Child care also has child care licensing
- There is a lack of clarity for providers regarding funding
- Leader friendly by intended audiences
- Removing silos or barriers to certain likes like background checks – important piece of building up our workforces= understanding our process
- Many programs and services are under the auspices of DHHS → accomplished through partnerships with families, community groups, private providers, other state and local government entities, and many citizens throughout the State who help make NH a special place in which to live.
- Alabama and Connecticut stand out as examples
 - CT: articulates their CD plan and funds 9 minutes
 - AL: liked the way they structured the state agency; secretary that reports to the Governor
 - Pros: slowly grow high quality and services
 - Seemed to define their components of the agency
- From focus groups/ interviews:
 - organized as a collaborative effort is more successful to obtain funding from the federal government and from national agencies
 - consolidated structure with direct line to Governor

Objective 2: Expand public understanding of the importance of quality early childhood experiences for all children

- Have seen success in bolstering relationships by having a non-monitoring entity as an educational consultant in the NH DOE
 - A mechanism for not entering with any monitoring in mind
- Folks in the field (service providers, families, etc.) need to feel a strong relationship with the office; not just another entity
 - Lots of people don't know what is happening with the Council or with the current Governance structure
- There are populations that are underrepresented
- Cross-agency collaboration with stakeholder engagement

How can we move further down the path of thinking about how we can pull together initiatives?

- Need sustained, prioritized funding to help elevate
 - Federal gov in terms of biggest funding they release (PDG, etc.) had to get support for your council before you could submit

- Strong leadership
 - Have to be insulated against the changes of political whims

III. **Research and Meeting Notes:**

The team is going to send potential research articles and reports to Olivia Gunthert to be posted in the strategy team folder on the Council of Thriving Children’s website: <https://councilforthrivingchildren.org/what-the-experts-say>. Meeting notes will also be posted the council’s website: <https://councilforthrivingchildren.org/past-meetings>.

IV. **Next Steps:**

The team’s homework is to review resources, with a focus on:

- What works in these other states, current practices in NH, etc.? Be as specific as you can.
 - For example, today we heard about one state whose Early Childhood Entity has a consolidated structure with a direct line to the Governor.
 - Another has a clearly articulated plan for the Child Development funding.
- Think about what a potential project would be (i.e. initiative) that you would like to implement in NH that would help NH progress on either or both of these objectives:
 - Objective 1: Ensuring a cohesive and collaborative approach to a mixed-delivery, early childhood system
 - Objective 2: Expanding public understanding of the importance of quality early childhood experiences for all children
- Come to the meeting prepared to share your thoughts about what works and to listen to others. We will then brainstorm about potential initiatives. At the end of the next meeting, we will ask everyone to select an objective and an initiative (or two), with your homework before Meeting 4 (August 19th) to refine the initiative in the template format.

V. **Important Dates:**

- August 12th, 9-11am: next team meeting – <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2622399395>
- August 19th, 9-11am: team meeting – <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2622399395>
- September 6th, 10am-12pm : Subcommittee of Council for Thriving Children
- September 7th, 3:00-4:00pm: team meeting – <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2622399395>
- September 13th, 9-11am: Council for Thriving Children