



June 2024 Council Meeting

Date/Time: June 19, 2024, 9:00-11:00am

Location: NH Department of Education, 25 Hall Street, Concord

Participants (11 voting members):

- Christine Brennan
- Michelle Lewis
- Jane Bard
- Kate Baker
- Dr. Steven Zdravec
- Christina D'Allesandro (nominee)
- Christina Lachance (Director)
- Tricia Tilley
- Shawn Jasper
- Dr. Kimberly Nesbitt
- Matt Rowley
- Athena Cote
- Jessie Davis

Council Business (Christina Lachance, Christine Brennan)

- The NH Child Care and Development Fund Plan will be presented today. There is a federal requirement that the Council for Thriving Children review and have an opportunity for input on the state plan before it is submitted to the U.S. Administration for Children and Families. Additionally, NH's legislature requires the plan to be reviewed by the NH Child Care Advisory Council, with an opportunity to make recommendations.

Motion to approve 2.22.2024 minutes (Christine Brennan)

Seconded (Jane Bard)

Motion approved by consensus. Kate Baker and Shawn Jasper abstain.

- Council will not meet in July or August unless a need for a subcommittee arises - Council members are invited to start a subcommittee too consider the large number of early childhood tuition assistance programs currently available.
 - Early Childhood Governance and Finance Project work continues in NH. Christina D'Allesandro, Christine Brennan, and Christina Lachance participated alongside Jake Stewart. Jake is embedded jointly in NHED and DHHS to continue to support this work. He'll serve as a consultant to support the development of NH's CCDF plan, supporting the departments as they move through operationalizing programs and services aligned with NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood, and the moving of the Council into the departments by 2025. Thank you to the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation for their support with this.
- Several federal grant opportunities have arisen recently, but there isn't always capacity to apply for and manage these grants. The departments have decided, that at this time, they do not have the capacity to apply for the next round of the Preschool Development Grant or the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant
 - Christina Lachance has resources for other grants available to support early childhood initiatives, if anyone is interested.

Legislative Updates

- No legislators present
- Christina Lachance: the legislative session is now over – it was an eventful session. Shawn Jasper remarked here.

Measures of Success (Christina Lachance, Athena Cote)

- Metrics categorized by 5 Priority Outcomes from the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan
- The intention is to provide the Council with annual updates on these metrics. We currently have baseline data from the 2023 calendar year.
- Determining which metrics to include
 - The Strategic Plan subcommittee and others voted on the most relevant data points to include.
 - There are some duplicate data points that apply to 2 Priority Outcomes – the voting group knew this and felt it was important to include these metrics multiple times due to their importance
 - Once metrics were reviewed by the departments, some clarifying phrases were added (shown in red on tables).
- Questions – Priority Outcome 1
 - Kate Baker: do we have a total population to compare these stats to?
 - Christine Brennan: it would be helpful to have a denominator or more information on what we're talking about – for example, "number of children enrolled in public preschool programs" includes 3's and 4-year-olds, and it would be helpful to have that noted so we're consistent year to year.
 - Christina D'Allesandro: can we disaggregate preschool enrollment by age?
 - Christine B: not currently. Our data system is clunky, and we're hoping for a better system soon.
 - Kim Nesbitt: the current Preschool Development Grant needs assessment will break down current enrollment by 3's and 4's, but the sustainability of these type of primary data collection year after year is up for debate.
 - Jessie Davis: Why isn't Head Start disaggregated?
 - Christina L: the metric was not previously available from the state.
 - Jessie: a recent update should make it easier to pull this information in the future.
 - Kate Baker: does preschool special ed. enrollment sound low (2,741)?
 - Michelle Lewis: some parents opt out of part-day public preschool programs for scheduling reasons.
 - Jessie Davis: many might receive services in other settings as well.
 - Athena and I are talking about tracking/reaching out to families who opt out of Part B after being involved in Part C.
 - Christine B: This points to the need for a mixed delivery system with a variety of opportunities and settings for families.
 - Christina D'Allesandro: Who does the preschool special ed. number include?
 - Christina L: Any child with an IEP. They may be receiving Part B in a child care, Head Start, preschool setting or a public preschool.
- Questions – Priority Outcome 2
 - Christina D'Allesandro: the Child Care and Development Fund scholarship number (2,744) is low, but as we know we can expect that to go up with recent changes in eligibility as a result of 2023 legislation.
 - Christine B: Can we get a definition of CCDF Scholarships?
 - Christina L: Jessie Davis will cover this in more detail during the CCDF presentation

- Shawn Jasper: seeing this over the last 3-5 years would be helpful. We need to start analyzing whether the state's investments in literacy have made a difference.
 - Jessie: it would be helpful to have this side by side with language acquisition screenings for 3-year-olds.
 - Steve Zadavec: the largest gain in 3rd grade reading we saw as a district was when we went to full-day kindergarten.
 - Christina L: In the future we could look for presentations from specific districts or schools to share examples of successful programs.
 - Kim Nesbitt: the Ages & Stages Questionnaire metric might be more relevant and may need to change year to year if the screening tool changes, or if we want to include children who are screened or assessed using other tools.
 - Michelle: agreed. And we should keep in mind that screening and assessment are two different things.
- Shared visuals to make Measures of Success more relatable.
 - Michelle Lewis: if presenting this to the broader public, the term special education is not usually associated with children enrolled in birth-3 Part C services
 - Michelle will look into a better descriptor of families/children receiving Family-Centered Early Supports and Services (Part C/Early Intervention).
 - Update to CCDF Scholarship usage numbers from Jessie Davis:
 - Utilization in January 2024 was 2737
 - Utilization currently (June 2024) is 3225

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan (Jessie Davis)

- Preface: there will be a lot of changes to the way the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaborative operates
- Priorities from US Administration for Children and Families for the CCDF Plan this year include:
 - Improve access, affordability and stability
- Key activities:
 - Quality Programs
 - Support a mixed-delivery system
 - Qualified Workforce
 - Elevate professionalism and expertise of the workforce
 - Access to Services
 - Families have access to services of their choosing that best meet the needs of their families
- Under each activity, program promotion and engagement will be a focus.
- Responsibilities: to equip families with resources and support and form collaborative relationships
- Section 1: Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan – there will be a public hearing: 6/27/24, 5pm, Brown Building. Electronic feedback can also be given.
- Section 2 Priority areas: Reach individuals with disabilities, reach families with limited English proficiency, unhoused families, continuity of care (grants and contracts for child care slots)
- Section 3 Priority Areas: market rate survey (better response rate is needed), adequate payment rates (currently 75% of the cost of care based on the most recent market rate)

survey), payment practices (payment up front), supply building (expanding family child care)

- Section 4: Priority Areas: enrollment based prospective payment, look at grants and contracts for focus areas (infant-toddler care, children with disabilities, underserved areas, build nontraditional hours)
- Section 5 Priority Areas: Health and Safety (largest number of non-compliances in this section), rule changes are needed to specifically state safety regulations and to include volunteers and substitutes, background checks need to be improved, professional development need updating and improvement
 - Will be looking into knowledge areas that are not being put into practice currently and whether we need better modes of professional development to improve the actual health and safety of our child care settings.
- Section 6 Priority Areas: intent of this section is to increase compensation for child care workforce. We don't have a lot of concrete plans for this in NH. One priority will be providing professional development incentives for the workforce.
 - Kim Nesbitt: does tuition assistance count toward compensation?
 - Jessie: Yes, and another option is to pay for pre-service training so that cost doesn't fall on centers or new staff to complete after hours. We're looking at a number of innovative ways to make training and professional development better, more affordable/accessible.
- Section 7 Priorities: Quality improvement initiatives: Needs assessment updates, improvements to Granite Steps for Quality, DRDP included in Granite Steps for Quality, improving the supply and quality of infant and toddler care, expanding statewide Child Care Resource & Referral services, facilitating licensing compliance, evaluation and effectiveness of child care services (this is related to the Quality Recognition and Improvement System/Granite Steps for Quality)
- Section 8 Priorities: new requirement to collaborate with a set of required partners and a set of optional partners, will also coordinate with Child Care Resource and Referral Systems, Resource Specialists, Health Consultants, and will form public-private partnerships (engagement of business sector, potential pilots for contracts to blend funding to support child care supply)
 - How is this leadership team different from the other councils, teams and advisory boards? = We need to have people who are doing the work at the table.
- Section 9 Priorities: RFP for new website development, increase access to information (scholarship marketing campaign, etc.)
- Section 10 Priorities: organizational structure, fiscal management practices, identify risk, training on CCDF requirements and program integrity (specifically for people who are determining program eligibility), internal control activities
- Questions?
 - Christina L: the lack of compliance with health & safety is surprising and it seems so important to address these things.
 - Jessie: child care is not necessarily unsafe, but we are not compliant with all the requirements of CCDF.

Public Comments:

Shannon Tremblay – Director NH Child Care Advisory Council

Katie Brissette – Early Learning NH – there is a campaign happening on early childhood workforce compensation.

- Sad to hear that we're not going for the next PDG. Is that a done deal? What's the deadline?

- Christina L: Yes, the decision is final, NH will not be submitted an application.; the deadline is July 31.

Jake Stewart – the CCDF presentation was exciting to see. It takes a village to accomplish all things in the plan, and garnering support and motivation to accomplish the plan is an important next step.

Sarah Fox – NH Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions

Motion to adjourn (Kate Baker)

Seconded (Christine Brennan)

Motion approved by consensus.