

Montgomery County Early Childhood Advisory Council

Report 2013-2014



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MEMORANDUM

September 10, 2014

TO: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Craig Rice, President, Montgomery County Council

FROM: Barbara Andrews, Ph.D., Co-Chair, Administrator, Early Childhood Services
Claudia Simmons, Co-Chair, Supervisor, MCPS Pre-K/Head Start Unit

SUBJECT: The Early Childhood Advisory Council 2013-2014 Report and 2014-2015
Priorities

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is pleased to submit its 2013-2014 report and 2014-2015 priorities. The role of the ECAC is to monitor, advocate, and make policy recommendations for developing a comprehensive, coordinated early care and educational system that supports school readiness, provides support to state and local initiatives, and builds on the existing efforts to improve the system of early care and education in Montgomery County.

The ECAC is comprised of a variety of stakeholders and professionals with expertise in the early childhood field including: County parents, business and foundation representatives, child care providers, Montgomery County Public School staff, Maryland State Department of Education staff, Montgomery County Libraries and County government representatives. Our collective knowledge and expertise about the early care and education system, the importance of school readiness, and children and families in Montgomery County allows the ECAC to examine, discuss, problem solve, and provide a complete perspective to County officials.

The first year of this council has been an important one as the ECAC focused on identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among child development, child care and early childhood education programs, services, and advocacy groups. The ECAC also focused on ways to increase the overall participation of children and their families in existing programs, including outreach to underrepresented populations. This report contains a summary of our work this past year.

We wish to recognize and thank those who participate in our meetings for their commitment and perseverance in developing a comprehensive coordinated system of early care and education in the County. We look forward to continuing the important work of this council and continuing our relationship with public officials at the County and State.

BA:CS:lf

Early Childhood Advisory Council

The Montgomery County Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) was formed in April of 2013 and the full membership held eight meetings in the last year, including two half day retreats. The overall goal for the ECAC's in each jurisdiction in Maryland is to reach 100% of children entering school "ready to learn" as measured by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) readiness assessment and statistics. Initial workgroups focused on developing a needs assessment, on community outreach and public engagement, and on identifying exemplary practices. In the fall of 2013 the MSDE requested that each Maryland jurisdiction apply for a non-competitive implementation grant that included support for the full development of the ECAC and a project aimed at eliminating the gaps in readiness for one or more of the identified groups of low-income children, English language learners and children with disabilities. Examination by the initial workgroups determined the direction of the implementation grant.

The ECAC implementation grant (February 2014-June 2015 for \$142,000) provides for four projects:

Project #1: Full development of the ECAC – meeting space and facilitation for a retreat and two follow-up sessions related to creating a comprehensive system of early childhood education.

Project #2: Development of a public outreach and media campaign related to ChildLink and aimed at parents, child care providers and pediatricians.

Project#3 : A community project in the Gaithersburg Elementary School community that includes Professional Development for child care programs (training, technical assistance and mentoring), a breakthrough center specific to collaboration with the elementary school and mentoring with family child care programs, and parent engagement activities. In choosing a school community the ECAC examined MCPS data on FARMS (over 50%), ELL (over 50%) and kindergarten readiness data (under 70%) and the number of licensed child care programs (both center-based and family child care) in the zip code.

Project #4: A new demographics report - related to families in the County with children under age six- and an analysis of access to early childhood data.

With the onset of the grant in February 2014 the ECAC formed three new sub committees, which have met several times between each full ECAC meeting: a literacy committee that will build a relationship with the national "Reach Out and Read" project and engage in outreach to the pediatric and family practitioner community; a family engagement committee currently implementing parent cafes in the Gaithersburg ES community and parent focus groups on readiness and family access to County services related to young children; a public outreach and media campaign committee developing a campaign focused on increasing awareness of ChildLink as the County's primary referral line for resources related to children birth to age 5 aimed at parents, providers and pediatricians.

Mission

To monitor, advocate, and make policy recommendations for developing a comprehensive, coordinated system of early childhood education that supports school readiness, provides support for state and local initiatives, and builds on the existing work of early childhood education in Montgomery County.

Purpose

Developed out of a requirement of the Maryland's Race-to-the-Top: Early Learning Challenge Fund, the Early Childhood Advisory Council was established by a County Council Resolution (Executive Order to follow) The purpose of the ECAC is to work collaboratively to plan, implement and assess activities focused on ensuring that all young children (birth through age 5) in Montgomery County enter school fully ready to learn. The ECAC builds on the longstanding work of Early Childhood groups and stakeholders in Montgomery County.

Meetings

The full Council meets on the second Thursday of each month, typically at Johns Hopkins University, Rockville Campus at 9:00 a.m. All meetings are open to the general public.

A significant portion of the Council's work is accomplished through Committees. Committee meetings take place at various times throughout the year. All meetings are open to the public.

Please call 240-777-1019 or visit
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/earlychildhood/ecac.aspx>
for more information regarding full Council and Committee meetings.

Membership 2013-2014

Barbara Andrews; Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Jennifer Arnaíz; Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Janine Bacquie; Montgomery County Public Schools
Harriet Berger; Peppertree Children's Center
Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta; Maryland CentroNía Preschool
Kathi Carey-Fletcher; Montgomery College
Robin Chernoff; Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families
Amy Cropp; Montgomery County Public Schools
Deborah Durham; Montgomery County Public Schools
Carl Eggleston; Maryland State Department of Education
Patsy Evans; Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Natasha Fields; Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Dianne Fisher; Public Health Services-Community Health Services
Kate Garvey; Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Kim Grant; Montgomery County Family Child Care Association
Michelle Green; Montgomery Child Care Association
Lynne Harris; Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA)
Keith Jones; Montgomery County Public Schools Principal
Carol Legaretta; Montgomery County Public Libraries
Judy McMillan; School Health Services/Head Start
Meredith Myers; Family Services, Inc.
Bernadine Occhiuzzo; Montgomery County Commission on Child Care
Linda Owen; Organization of Child Care Directors
Tobi Printz-Platnick; Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
Lois Stovall; Interfaith Communities
John Surr; Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children
Portia Willis; Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Vivian Yao; Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council

Staff to the ECAC

Verna Washington, Montgomery County Public Schools
Sarah Wilch-Spamer, Montgomery County DHHS

Council Activities 2013-2014

- ECAC Steering Committee attended 10 full days of Annie E. Casey Foundation training focused on starting an advisory council and results based facilitation and leadership; received an MSDE start-up grant for \$3,000
- Formed initial work groups that examined needs, exemplary programs and outreach materials
- Determined direction of State implementation grant, wrote application and received award and funds (\$142,000)
- Formed subcommittees (Literacy, Parent/Family Engagement, and Public Outreach/Media Campaign)
- Literacy committee initiated communication with “Reach Out & Read” (pediatric outreach) and contact with professionals training pediatric staff on State assessment tools
- Parent/Family Engagement committee scheduled, planned and will facilitate three parent focus groups in summer 2014 with more planned for fall 2014
- Public Outreach/Media committee reviewed current outreach materials and is developing concepts for the message for a media campaign focused on parents, providers and pediatricians.
- Initiated planning for fall 2014 focus groups with child care providers and MCPS educators.
- Initiated a demographics study and data analysis project.
- Held a retreat and one follow-up session (April and June 2014) facilitated by Stacie Goffin, Author of “Ready or Not: Leadership Choices in Early Care and Education” and “Early Childhood Education for a New Era” in order to examine barriers to the development of a system of early childhood education, to define the elements of a system and to create a shared vision statement for the ECAC membership. Additional follow-up planned for September 2014.

Priorities 2014-2015

- Complete facilitated process of developing a vision of the Montgomery County system of Early Childhood Education
- Complete a comprehensive plan for early childhood education in Montgomery County
- Complete all projects and requirements for the ECAC implementation grant including:
 - A Media and Outreach campaign aimed at parents, providers and pediatricians
 - A professional development and parent engagement project in the Gaithersburg Elementary School area
 - A report on changed demographics and analysis of access to current early childhood data
 - Focus Groups with parents, MCPS teachers and child care providers to inform comprehensive planning
- Review, discuss and plan implementation of the State Parent Engagement Framework

*Funding for comprehensive planning and all data work is supplemented by a grant from the Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families for \$50,000.

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Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call or write at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.

