

HHS/ED COMMITTEE #2
January 14, 2016
Update

MEMORANDUM

January 12, 2016

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
Education Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Update: Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative Implementation**

The Joint Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education Committee will receive an update on the implementation of Bill 13-15, Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative. Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children, Youth, and Family Services, DHHS, will present the update to the Joint Committee.

Bill 13-15 was enacted by the Council on May 12, signed by the Executive on May 20, and went into effect on August 19, 2015. The bill requires the Executive to designate a Child Care and Early Education Officer, specifies the duties of the Officer, creates a Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative, and establishes an Early Childhood Coordinating Council. A written update summarizing the Department's efforts to implement the initiative to date is attached at ©1-8.

The following summarizes key points from the update materials and includes follow up questions that the Committee may be interested in asking:

- **Hiring of the Child Care and Early Education Officer:** The position was posted on December 31, 2015, and the announcement will close on February 4, 2016. **The Committees may want to understand when the Department anticipates that the person will be officially active.** In addition to the leadership, strategic planning, and coordination responsibilities described in the update, the officer will also have the opportunity to provide input on the implementation of regulation governing the selection of before and after school child care providers in public space.

- **Early Childhood and Child Care Strategic Plan:** HHS is in the final stages of a competitive solicitation to select an Early Childhood Consultant to research evidence-based practices to inform the creation of a strategic plan prior to the end of FY16.
- **Formation of the Early Childhood Coordinating Council:** The Early Childhood Advisory Council is in the process of transferring membership to the Early Childhood Coordinating Council. The work of the Council is ongoing with no gaps.
- **Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative:** With no additional appropriation for expansion and enhancement of early childhood services in FY16, the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (R&R) is supporting the objectives of the Initiative through its existing work and level-funded appropriation. Between July and November 2015, the R&R has trained 4,000 providers, including 1,500 Family Child Care providers, 2,000 center staff, and 182 directors. DHHS reports that the R&R manager, three of the R&R staff trainers, a nurse consultant, and two consultant trainers are fluent in Spanish, and the R&R has trained 10 peer-to peer coaches fluent in Spanish. Consequently, the R&R has expanded its capacity to reach Latino providers and potential providers through the offering of training classes and other supports in Spanish. The Department is also working with the Washington Area Women's Foundation and the Funder's Collaborative to develop a regional collaborative and coordinated approach to increasing quality and access to early care and education.

Barriers: The Department highlights two barriers to providing supports to family child care providers: (1) the lack of staff who can translate training in languages spoken by family child care providers other than English and Spanish, and (2) the need for a social security number to become a registered family child care providers in Maryland for undocumented immigrants (State issue). **Additional information about the number of limited English proficient providers broken out by native language along with the cost of strategies to meet the needs of these populations would be useful.**

- **Early Childhood Expansion in the Kennedy Cluster:** The current fiscal year is the first year of expansion of Early Childhood Services as part of the Kennedy Cluster Project. The expansion will implement a referral structure for families in the cluster, family engagement activities, and training and technical assistance for child care providers in the target area. Specific action steps are described on ©5.

Update on Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative

January 14, 2016

Since the passage of Bill 13-15, HHS Office of the Director and Children, Youth and family Services have been working on various components to ensure that we are able to put forth a strong and innovative approach to Early Child Care and Education beginning in FY16. Funding for FY16 has essentially been half year funding and we are providing updates on the following areas:

- Hiring of the Early Care and Education Policy Officer
- Initial preparation for an Early Childhood Strategic Plan
- Formation of the Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC)
- Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancements
- Early Childhood Expansion in the Kennedy Cluster project

Hiring of the Early Care and Education Policy Officer:

Human Resources and OMB paperwork for this position was initiated in the early fall of 2015. The position was actually posted on December 31, 2015 and the announcement will close on February 4, 2016. The individual selected for this position will serve as the advisor and liaison between County government and the public on early childhood education policy in Montgomery County as well as being a member of the Department of Health and Human Services Senior Leadership Team. The employee will develop relationships and promote coordination and collaboration among County agencies, our department and Montgomery County Public Schools to expand early childhood educational opportunities throughout the County. They will lead the work of Montgomery County's Early Childhood Coordinating Council to develop and implement a strategic plan for early childhood education that builds on previous County work developing a system of early care and education, and develops strategies for improving readiness for children entering kindergarten and for closing readiness gaps. They will support the implementation of the Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative (outlined in County Council Bill 13-15). They will produce an annual report by February 1st of each year – submitted to the County Executive and the County Council. This employee will supervise the work of a Planning Specialist in collecting and analyzing data related to child care and early childhood education and supervise the work of an Office Services Coordination in monitoring contracts related to strategic planning and other projects. Experience, education and preferred criteria for this Officer position can be found in the posting on the OHR website.

Initial preparation for an Early Childhood Strategic Plan

Because the hiring of the policy officer would not occur until the second half of the Fiscal year, HHS decided to bring on an Early Childhood Consultant to begin research evidence based practices to inform the strategic plan. In September 2015, we submitted a request for a non-competitive solicitation to bring on a consultant that was familiar with the national research, regional practices and had experience working with diverse communities. It was determined that our request did not meet the criteria for a noncompetitive award. We therefore, immediately started the process for a competitive informal solicitation. Responses to the solicitation were received in October 2015 and a vendor was selected. The contract is in final stages of approval, pending submission of information from the selected vendor. The vendor cannot be announced until the solicitation is complete. This vendor will complete the following tasks to assist the Policy Officer in the creation of a Strategic plan prior to the end of FY16.

1. Collection of national research on evidenced based practice methods for the improvement of Child Care and Early Education and outcomes for diverse populations.
2. Identify and research options used internationally to reduce the cost of child care to low income families.
3. Assist with planning and creation of a strategic plan as required by Bills and 13-15 to support the work of the HHS Child Care and Early Education Officer.
4. Assist with initial establishment of the Early Childhood Coordinating Council as required by Bills and 13-15.
5. Assist HHS Early Childhood Services Administrator with planning for the FY17 budget for creating a child care expansion and quality enhancement initiative.
6. Assist Early Childhood Services Administrator with the development of models for public-private partnerships to expand child care in public and private spaces.

Formation of the Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC):

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is in the process, with the Executive's Office, of transferring membership from the ECAC to the ECCC. An advertisement was run for public members and the Ex-Officio and invited members have sent memos requesting their membership on the ECCC. The membership list will be submitted to the Council for confirmation once the process is completed.

Work of the Council is ongoing with no gaps.

Child Care Expansion and Quality Enhancement Initiative in FY16 there was no additional appropriation for expansion and enhancement of early childhood services. The Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (R&R) under Early Childhood Services, DHHS currently supports this initiative through their existing work and our level funded appropriation. Below we highlight the accomplishments for the first half of FY16 focusing on the family child care provider:

- R&R staff present at Regional Office of Child Care (OCC) Orientations for Family Child Care twice a month/Only OCC can offer these orientations (a State function).The HHS presentations include information on the training: *Starting Your Family Child Care* and the 10 hours of technical assistance which is offered in English and in Spanish at the OCC orientations. Other information about services through the R&R and information about LOCATE are also shared at the orientations.
- The R&R does not require licensing or registration of a child care program for enrollment in training classes or to receive technical assistance services at the R&R (help with registration paperwork, business supports, etc.).
- Once family providers have completed the two required orientations and turned in their paperwork to OCC the R&R can provide the 10 hours of technical assistance in the program in connection to the *Starting Your Family Child Care Course* which may include setting up the environment, health and safety consultation and provide additional technical assistance as requested and available.
- Expansion of our capacity to reach Latino providers and potential providers by offering many training classes in Spanish to the extent possible (see barrier#1 below)
- Three of the R&R staff trainers are fluent in Spanish (as is the R&R Manager); a nurse consultant and two consultant trainers are also fluent in Spanish and the R&R has trained 10 peer-to-peer coaches who are also fluent.
- Between July 2015 and November 2015 the R&R has trained 4,000 providers (1,500 Family Child Care; 2,000 center staff; 182 Directors; 230 additional providers who did not list their role)
- State required training materials are copyrighted by and owned by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and are only developed in English. Due to the efforts of our R&R Manager, we now have explicit permission to translate any State approved training. The Montgomery County R&R has recently translated 3 State required trainings into Spanish. Our staff are translating these and providing the materials **in kind** to the State R&R Network and to MSDE. Our staff does these translations through a system of three reviewers from three different Spanish speaking countries to assure accuracy of the translation. These trainings are being implemented in Spanish at this time.
- Currently all family child care providers that have been accredited (90% are Spanish speaking providers) have been supported by the R&R work through training, technical assistance and/or financial support for the accreditation process and costs. 30 Providers are waiting for their accreditation to be processed by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC); most are Spanish speaking and in Title I school communities.
- All licensed child care programs (family and center) that accept State subsidy payments are registered in EXCELS and all of these programs have been supported by the R&R in reaching at least level one of that program.

Current Barriers:

- In Montgomery County, there are many languages spoken by Family Child Care Providers and we do not have staff who can translate training into all languages. Many providers are either English Language Learners or speak dual languages. (Data generated from the *Maryland Locate database* in summer 2015 shows that in Montgomery County Family Child Care Providers who speak English as a second language is at 46% of all family providers in Montgomery County and half of those speak Spanish.) We need to develop materials and approaches to support the other languages.
- To become a registered Family Child Care Provider in Maryland a provider must have a social security number. This is used to confirm the provider's name with the background check/fingerprints. This is an obstacle for undocumented immigrants in obtaining registration for Family Child Care homes. We need advocacy at the State level to change this requirement.

Regional Early Care and Education Funder's Collaborative

- HHS' Children, Youth and Families and Early Childhood Services leadership is working with the Washington Area Women's Foundation and the Funder's Collaborative to examine and implement recommendations from the report published in 2015 by the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council: "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation and to examine pressing issues in early childhood education." The Collaborative's mission is to increase the quality and capacity of, and access to, early care and education in the Washington region. In support of this mission, the Collaborative serves as a regional convener and grant maker, supporting systemic approaches to improving the quality of early care and education in the Washington region. We have participated in regional discussions of critical issues facing child care and families of young children in the region and are looking at possible regional solutions.
- The Foundation has created a Steering Committee and a Core Group of government professionals in early care and education to examine the possibility of a regional approach to implementing one or more of the report's recommendations. HHS is represented on the steering committee and the core operations subcommittee. The current focus for the group is the development of a competency-based system for the preparation and for the ongoing professional development of early childhood educators preparing for work with children birth through age 8.
- The Steering committee and the Women's Foundation view this collaborative work across the region as potentially groundbreaking and an opportunity to create a national model on coordination and collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries.

Early Childhood Expansion in the Kennedy Cluster project

FY16 is in the first year of this expansion using half of the intended project funding. The Early Childhood Services Project for Kennedy Cluster focuses on three areas that promote a community strengthening approach:

1. A referral structure for families in the cluster
2. Family Engagement Activities
3. Training and Technical Assistance for Child Care Providers in the target area

Specific action steps include:

- Training ChildLink staff in the Kennedy Cluster model to increase referral to the program; a system has been developed to track calls by zip code and field calls from the Kennedy Cluster.
- Outreach to the Kennedy Cluster Community has been carried out by both ChildLink and Early Childhood Mental Health Staff.
- In order to build a parent engagement component, Early Childhood Services (ECS) staff and partners, including staff from MCPS, have been trained by Maryland Family Network as facilitators for Parent Cafes, a research based family engagement activity based on resiliency and focused on building resilient families and resilient communities. Two facilitator trainings were held in Montgomery County in June of 2015 and in December of 2015 with a total of 65 facilitators trained to date.
- ChildLink staff has been developing partnerships with MCPS elementary schools in the Kennedy Cluster to offer Parent Cafes at these schools and in the community. Several cafes were implemented in the County in 2015 to build an infrastructure for the Café model and several more are planned for the Kennedy Cluster this school year.
- ChildLink and other Early Childhood Services staff and partners have collaborated with the nurse at Kennedy High School to provide resources for existing teen parenting classes – currently working with 15 teens.
- Staff from the Resource and Referral Center and consultants are developing and implementing a L.E.A.R.N.* project in the Kennedy Cluster elementary school catchment area with 18 child care programs (family and center) – with a goal of 20 programs - that includes:
 - Outreach to family and center providers that connects them with the services of the R&R, State credentialing, accreditation, scholarships and more;
 - Training for all child care providers in the area – offered in the community;
 - The development of a Learning Community of both center-based and family providers;
 - Free site visits, technical assistance and mentoring; and
 - Early Childhood Resources that support quality assurance.

*see attached flyers

Strengthening Families Maryland Parent Café Facilitator Training Institute

December 3 & 4 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Johns Hopkins University Montgomery County Campus
9601 Medical Center Drive, Rockville

This FREE TRAINING includes all materials plus
complimentary continental breakfast and lunch.

MSDE Office of Child Care Core of Knowledge (COK) training hours are available.

To receive registration information, please contact Nathalia Gordon at Maryland Family Network, ngordon@marylandfamilynetwork.org, 410-659-7701, extension 255

Strengthening Families Maryland Parent Cafés are peer-to-peer learning opportunities where parents come together for structured, meaningful conversations on topics related to the five Protective Factors which can help strengthen families. The Parent Café model helps to build relationships while providing opportunities for parent engagement and parent leadership.

The Parent Café Facilitator Training Institute will teach you how to provide Parent Cafés for parents of children birth through age five in your community, center, school, or organization, and will also qualify you to receive FREE resources for providing Parent Cafés.

Strengthening Families Maryland Parent Cafés are coordinated by Maryland Family Network  and are a Be Strong Families Parent Café model. 



Sponsored by

The Early Childhood Services Division of
Children, Youth and Family Services of
Montgomery County Department of
Health and Human Services

and

Maryland Family Network 

Questions? Contact Nathalia Gordon
ngordon@marylandfamilynetwork.org, 410-659-
7701, extension 255 or Gail Guillard at 443-873-
5819, gguillard@marylandfamilynetwork.org

Training participants will commit to providing three qualifying Parent Cafés in the six months following the training complete details will be sent as part of the registration information.



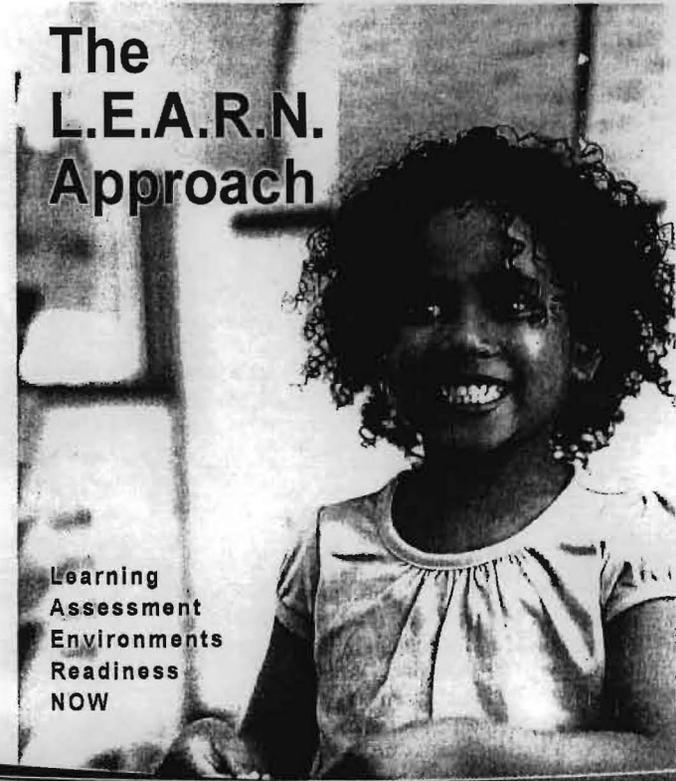
QUALITY EARLY LEARNING MATTERS

The L.E.A.R.N. approach is our signature program that brings together center based and family child care programs committed to raising the quality of early learning. Montgomery County has established resources dedicated to helping child care programs raise the bar...one community at a time! A learning community is brought together for training on topics that expand their skills while receiving individualized coaching focused on providing a safe and nurturing learning environment. This year we are focusing our efforts in the Kennedy High School community. Programs located in the following school districts are eligible to participate:

- Bel Pre Elementary
- Brookhaven Elementary
- Georgian Forest Elementary
- Glenallen Elementary
- Glen Haven Elementary
- Strathmore Elementary

The L.E.A.R.N. Approach

Learning
Assessment
Environments
Readiness
NOW



Montgomery
County Child
Care Resource
& Referral
Center

Individualized solutions that work for your program.

PROMOTING QUALITY PRACTICES FOR ALL

MEET OUR STAFF
LEARN ABOUT L.E.A.R.N.

WHEATON LIBRARY
OCTOBER 7, 7:00-8:30 PM
- OR -
NOVEMBER 7, 10:00-11:30 AM

L.E.A.R.N. is specifically designed to provide support to center based and family child care programs using a community based approach. We bring together public schools, community partners and local resources focused on key elements that raise the quality of child care. A subject matter expert will support you in meeting licensing standards, guide your movement up the ladder of MD EXCELS, provide tips on how to grow your business, and help you protect the health and well being of children in your care.

Individualized solutions for your program's needs!

FREE CLASSES

- Positive Guidance in Young Children, DATE, TIME
- Health & Safety 101, DATE, TIME
- Creative Lesson Planning, DATE, TIME
- Child Development 101, DATE, TIME
- Marketing FCC, DATE, TIME

MEETINGS

In addition to on-site visits, you will also come together for networking

- MD EXCELS, DATE, TIME
- MD Child Care Credential, DATE, TIME
- Healthy Practices, DATE, TIME



LEARNING COMMUNITY

Educators participate in a variety of free MSDE approved training and networking opportunities focused on topics that support the health, social, emotional, language and cognitive development of every child as well as the business side of child care.



SITE VISITS

The quality of each program is assessed using valid and reliable tools that focus on what research shows are the key components of quality early care: adult-child interactions, learning environments, staff qualifications and health practices. Based on these assessments, your and your coach will develop an individualized action plan with clear goals for success.



RESOURCES

As a participant in the L.E.A.R.N. community, you will have access to scholarships, program materials, nurse consultation, and coaches. Together we will work towards achieving quality assurance, implementing best practice, and engaging in professional development.



QUALITY EARLY LEARNING MATTERS

Giving children a good start to succeed in school and life!