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NEW HAMPSHIRE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

January 2023



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Introduction

The Council for Thriving Children (the Council) serves as New Hampshire's Advisory Council on Early Childhood Care and Education under the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2003, Public Law 110-134. Co-led by the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services, Council membership includes a cross-section of state leaders, legislators, higher education, parents, and early childhood stakeholders appointed by the Governor.

Established in 2020 by Executive Order 2020-03, the Council advises and makes recommendations on New Hampshire's Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) governance system and is informed by four main quadrants: Department of Education Early Childhood Integration Team, Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team, Birth-8 Parent and Community Advisors, and the Early Childhood Scientific Advisory Panel. Council members are listed in Appendix A.

Throughout this past year, the Council has been engaged in a comprehensive, inclusive strategic planning process designed to guide the collaborative work of New Hampshire's early childhood system over the next three years. Early childhood is defined as the period from prenatal care through age eight.

To support the strategic planning process, the Council voted to create a Strategic Planning Subcommittee. This Subcommittee included representation from the New Hampshire Child Care Advisory Council and the New Hampshire Wellness and Primary Prevention Council. The Subcommittee was co-led by a parent representative, and the Birth-8 Parent and Community quadrant. Subcommittee members are listed in Appendix B.

With an emphasis on engaging all of New Hampshire's key stakeholders; the Council engaged state legislators, state agency executives and staff, community nonprofits, advocacy groups, families, philanthropic leaders, and others through interviews, focus groups, design sessions, virtual idea exchanges, and open community forums to provide input and feedback throughout the process.



Strategic Planning Process

Figure 1.



I. Analysis Phase

The process began in early 2022 with an analysis phase, including a scan of the early childhood system and its environmental landscape. Extensive information was gathered and analyzed about the current performance of the early childhood system. Council and Subcommittee members submitted previous studies, surveys, and plans for inclusion in the analysis. A comprehensive list of the existing information considered in the analysis can be found in Appendix C.

Additionally, focus groups and interviews with stakeholders provided insights into the system’s strengths and assets, weaknesses and gaps, opportunities for enhancement, and barriers to change. Stakeholders were also invited to reflect on their perceived advantages or disadvantages of creating a state-level Office of Early Childhood.

Table 1. Organizations Participating in Focus Groups	
Council Quadrants	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B-8 Parent & Community Advisors • Department of Education Early Childhood Integration Team • Department of Health and Human Services Early Child Integration Team • Early Childhood Scientific Advisory Panel 	
Early Childhood Higher Education Roundtable	
Family Support New Hampshire	
Head Start Directors	
Interagency Coordinating Council	
New Hampshire Association for Infant Mental Health	
New Hampshire Child Care Advisory Council	
New Hampshire Early Childhood Regional Leads	
New Hampshire Family-Centered Early Supports & Services Directors (Part C)	
Regional Public Health Networks	
New Hampshire Wellness and Primary Prevention Council	

Table 2. Interview Participants	
Patti Baum	New Hampshire Children’s Health Foundation
Michael Bennett and Brooke Freeland	Couch Family Foundation
Jane Bergeron	Preschool Special Education
Christine Brennan	Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education & Council Co-chair
Jess Carson	University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy
Jackie Cowell	Early Learning New Hampshire
Joe Doiron	Office of Workforce Opportunity Department of Business and Economic Affairs
Frank Edelblut	Commissioner, Department of Education
Kim Firth	New Hampshire Endowment for Health
Lindsay Hanson	Save the Children Action Network
Katie Merrow	New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Moira O’Neill	New Hampshire Office of the Child Advocate
Meredith O’Shea	University of New Hampshire Preschool Development Grant
Christine Santaniello	Associate Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services
Cliff Simmonds	New Hampshire Children’s Trust
Tricia Tilley	Public Health Director, Department of Health and Human Services & Council Co-chair
Patrick Tufts	Granite United Way

The analysis findings were reviewed and carefully considered by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee and the Council.

II. Strategy Development Phase

Following the Analysis Phase, the Strategic Planning Subcommittee participated in an interactive strategy design session to craft a draft strategic plan framework, including priority outcomes, strategic themes, and objectives. The draft framework was presented to and approved by the Council in June of 2022.

Over the summer of 2022, Strategy Teams were formed of Strategic Planning Subcommittee members and a variety of statewide stakeholders to recommend system-level strategic initiatives to accomplish the objectives within each strategic theme. Through a series of meetings, the teams conducted research on local and national effective practices and promising approaches. This research was used as a basis for generating ideas for strategic initiatives. The initiatives deemed to be most impactful based on relevant criteria were recommended by the teams to be included in the plan. The teams documented the research, rationale, and implementation considerations for each of the recommended initiatives to support future implementation planning. Summary Strategic Theme Templates from each of the Strategy Teams are provided in Appendix D. Strategy Team Rosters can be found in Appendix E.

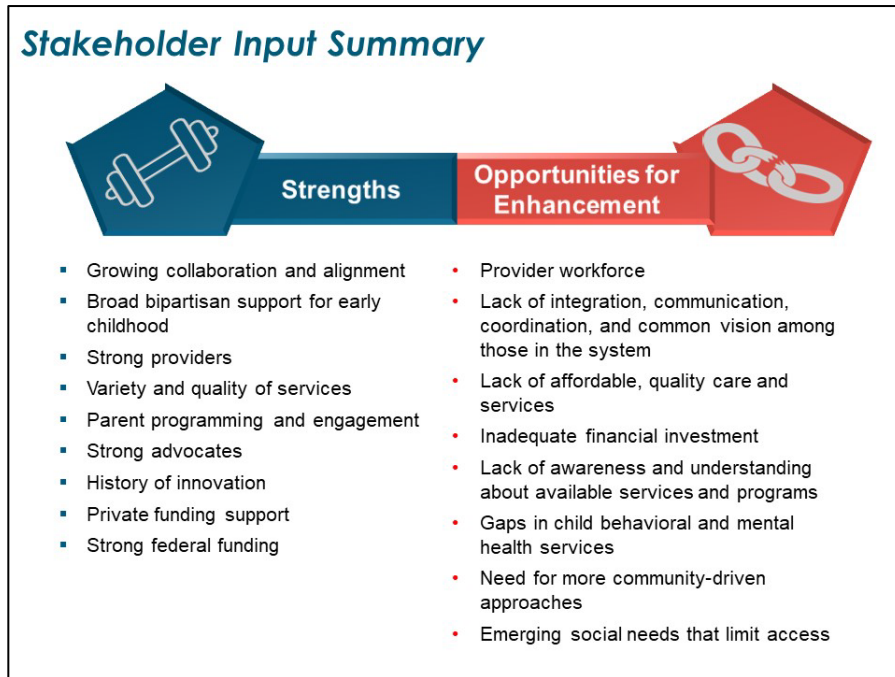
The strategic initiatives developed by the Strategy Teams were presented to the Council in September. The Council generally endorsed the recommended initiatives with some adjustments.

Subsequently, a series of community forums were held with early childhood stakeholders in order to ensure the strategic plan addressed their perceived needs and opportunities. Invitations were issued through a variety of mechanisms, including the networks of organizations represented on the Council, Subcommittee, and Strategy Teams. During these sessions, participants reviewed and provided feedback on the strategic plan framework including suggestions for effective implementation of the recommended initiatives. Two in-person forums were held in Concord and Gorham. An additional virtual session allowed stakeholders from across the state to provide input using a variety of technology tools. Participants universally affirmed the focus and direction of the strategic plan outcomes, strategic themes, and objectives. They offered critical and important points about implementation of the strategic initiatives within each strategic theme. These ideas are included in the Strategic Theme Templates in Appendix D.

The strategic plan was endorsed by the Council for Thriving Children in November of 2022.

I. Stakeholder Input

Figure 2.



In the winter and spring of 2022, focus groups and interviews with numerous stakeholders revealed insights about perceived strengths, as well as opportunities to enhance the early childhood system in New Hampshire. The participants in these sessions are listed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Figure 2 highlights the common ideas from these stakeholders, in order of the frequency of mentions.

A. Strengths and Assets

Almost every stakeholder mentioned the increasing levels of collaboration and alignment to serve young children and families in the state. The creation of the regional networks is one example of a positive development toward improved collaboration and alignment. In some regions of the state, there have been intentional efforts to develop a shared sense of purpose and to improve communication across the early childhood system. Stakeholders also expressed that broad, bipartisan support for early childhood opportunities and services in New Hampshire is an asset.

Other assets mentioned include the variety and quality of available services and service providers. For example, the home visiting program was cited as a high-quality program with positive results for families. Some stakeholders also noted that parent choice is taken seriously in New Hampshire and described the increasing strides in meaningfully engaging parents as partners. Programs such as the Kinship Navigator program—which connects caregivers who are also relatives to the services and supports their families need—were cited as examples of improved access for families to necessary services.

Additional strengths in the state include the passion of advocates for young children and the history of innovation in meeting the needs of young children and families in the state. Some of those interviewed described how the diversity of needs in New Hampshire has been met with increasingly flexible and innovative responses, including combining programmatic efforts across departments and fields such as education and health, when possible. A few stakeholders also noted that consistent philanthropic

support and recent federal funding through the Preschool Development Grant have enhanced the New Hampshire early childhood system.

B. Opportunities for Enhancement and Barriers to Change

Participants in the focus groups and interviews were also asked about their perceptions of opportunities for enhancement and barriers to change in New Hampshire. Stakeholders overwhelmingly described challenges with the provider workforce as the primary area where improvement is needed to better serve young children and families in New Hampshire. These challenges include low wages, difficulty recruiting workers, the lack of a pipeline for future labor, and insufficient funding to support quality education for workers. These obstacles were described for providers in childcare, as well as for other service providers such as home health visitors. Increasing wages for those working with young children would lead to higher regard for the workforce as well as improved retention of those in the field.

While organizations supporting young children are increasingly aligning their efforts and collaborating, which was highlighted as an asset—there is still a perceived lack of integration, communication, coordination, and common vision among those in the system that presents a major opportunity to elevate the work even further. The complex, decentralized system of multiple state, regional, and local service providers operates without centralized leadership, a unified vision, or a strategic approach to improvement. Siloed funding streams exacerbate the lack of coordination and integration. Without dependable long-term funding, service providers operate from a “deficit mentality” of getting by, rather than strategically assessing effectiveness and planning for long-term improvements. Without integrated data systems and data infrastructure, service organizations cannot accurately determine the capacity or availability of services or families’ wholistic needs.

While the variety of services and supports is viewed as a strength in some ways, the varying approaches across multiple regions adds to the complexity of the system. Additionally, services are not always affordable or accessible to all the families that need them. Access to services is not uniform throughout the state, with some geographic areas lacking strong connections between services and Family Resource Centers. Because programs such as developmental screenings and home visiting are universally available only to those with low incomes or on Medicaid, many families cannot utilize these services. This also creates an impression that such services are only appropriate for those with low incomes and not for all children. There is also a perception that this lack of affordable, accessible quality care and service is particularly acute in some more rural areas of the state and among specific populations, such as children with disabilities and non-English speaking families. It should be noted that this lack of access is exacerbated by the workforce issues noted previously.

Financial investment is another area highlighted by stakeholders as an opportunity for enhancement. While some suggested that philanthropic support and recent federal funding are benefitting the early childhood system, almost every stakeholder noted that inadequate financial investment at the state level is a significant challenge for the early childhood system in New Hampshire. The lack of consistent and sustainable funding, in conjunction with the lack of an integrated and coordinated system, hinder timely funding and reimbursement processes for the funds that are available. The lack of flexibility in how some funds can be used further exacerbates the challenges in this area.

In addition, stakeholders described how a lack of awareness and knowledge of available services and programs contributes to the difficulties in meeting the needs of young children and families. Parents of children with disabilities face a decentralized system with a limited number of specialized providers. Some services are not accessible to all families—as described above—and parents as consumers lack

information about assessing the quality of services that are available. Stakeholders described challenges with the availability of health services for children, particularly to meet behavioral and mental health needs. Educators and childcare providers reported that young children are demonstrating higher needs for behavioral health services in recent years, after extended time at home through the pandemic.

II. Data Analysis

This strategic plan for early childhood focuses on children from prenatal through age eight. Available data support the insights gathered from stakeholders through interviews and focus groups.

As demonstrated in Figure 3, young children are more racially diverse as a group in New Hampshire than the overall state population. This needs to be considered when designing family supports to meet the needs of young families in the state.

Figure 3.

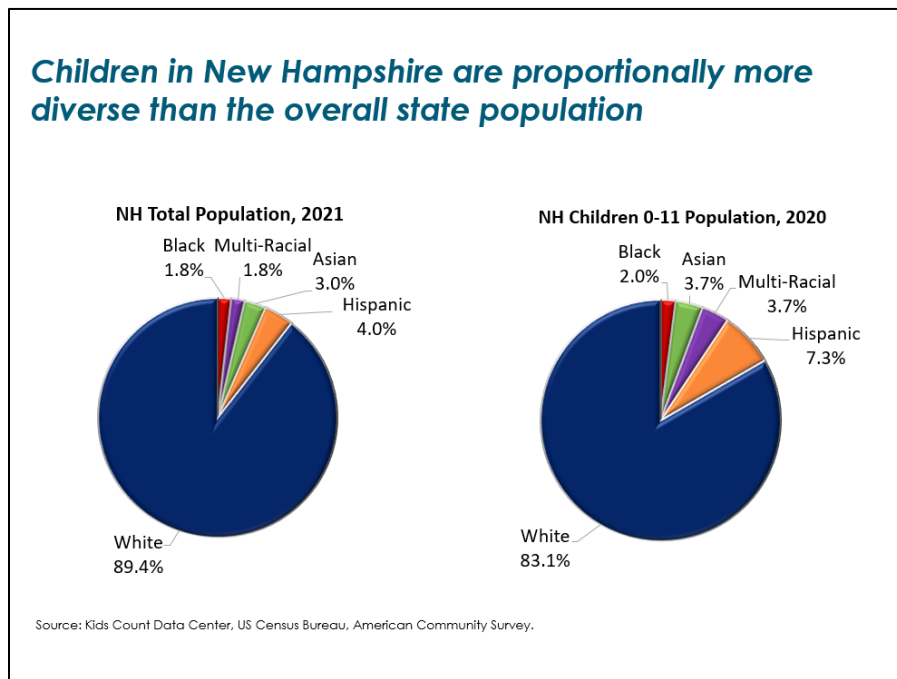


Figure 4.

Over the last few years, the percentage of New Hampshire children ages 3 and 4 who are not attending school – including preschool, nursery school or kindergarten, decreased slightly; therefore, more young children are attending some sort of school.

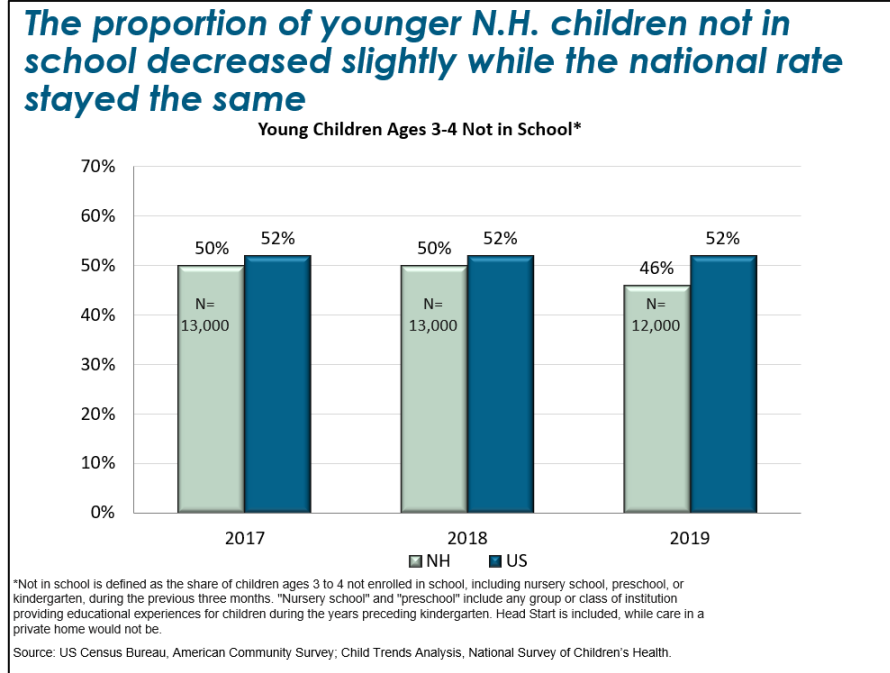
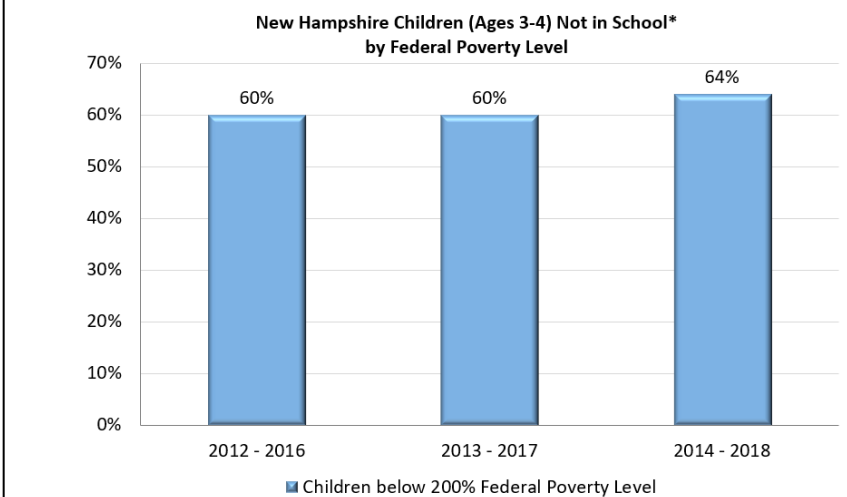


Figure 5.

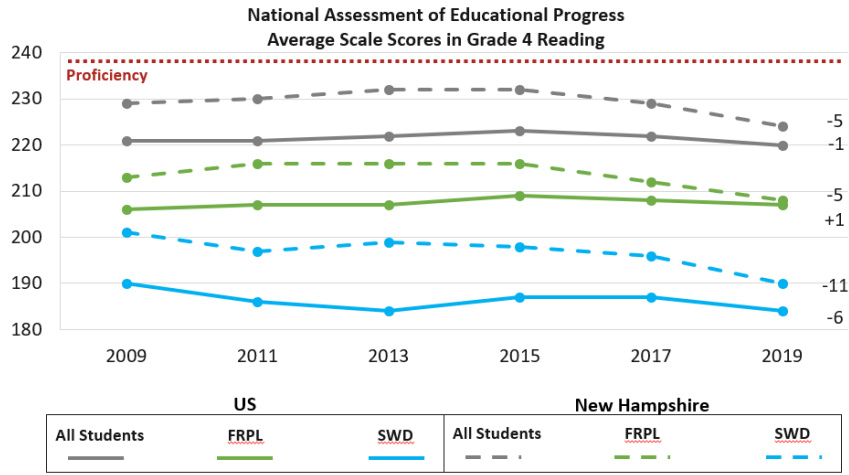
The percentage of lower-income young children not in school rose slightly



However, when these data are examined by income level the percentage of New Hampshire lower-income young children (as defined by income below 200% of the federal poverty level) who are not in school has actually increased.

Figure 6.

N.H. has seen larger declines in 4th grade NAEP scores than the nation overall, with 2019 NAEP scores much closer to the national average



Source: The Nation's Report Card, US Department of Education.

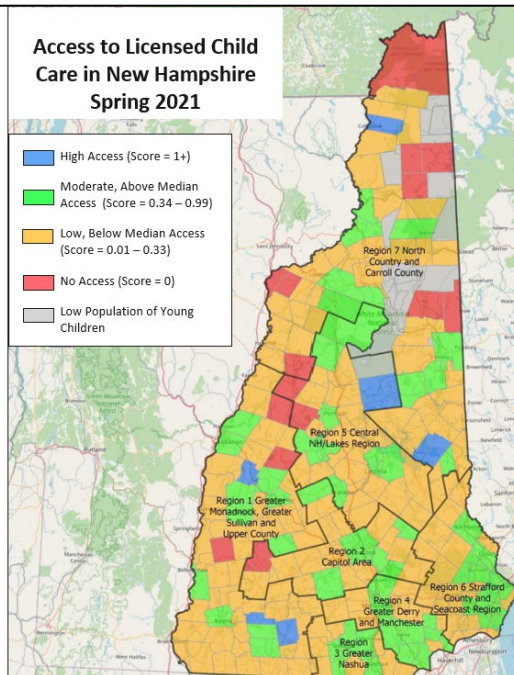
Measures of student achievement for young children in New Hampshire show some causes for concern. Fourth grade students in New Hampshire have scored above the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Reading over the last ten years – as demonstrated by the dotted gray line on Figure 6. However, the performance of New Hampshire fourth graders has been declining over

that time at a greater rate than the nation overall, and in 2019 was much closer to the national average.

For lower income students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL), the national reading scores actually increased over the past ten years while New Hampshire's declined, and New Hampshire's 2019 NAEP scores for students qualifying for FRPL were equal to the nation. Scores for New Hampshire students with disabilities (SWD) have also declined at a greater rate than the nation overall.

Figure 7.

Access to licensed childcare in New Hampshire is highest in urban areas, with about one licensed slot for every three children in the state within a 20-minute driving distance of their home.



Source: New Hampshire's Early Childhood System in the Time of COVID-19: Child Care Access and Regional Systems Coordination, October 2021.

Stakeholder feedback highlighted that the availability of childcare is an issue for young children in New Hampshire. The results of an analysis by Abt Associates validates this by demonstrating the variation in licensed childcare in the state within a 20-minute-driving distance of where young children live. The blue areas show the availability of licensed childcare spaces for children; the red areas show where no childcare is available.

A 2019 survey of New Hampshire families asked about their knowledge of support services for families and children. The survey results validate the stakeholder feedback that awareness of health care coordination, home visiting, parent education programs, and other family support programs is limited.

Figure 8.

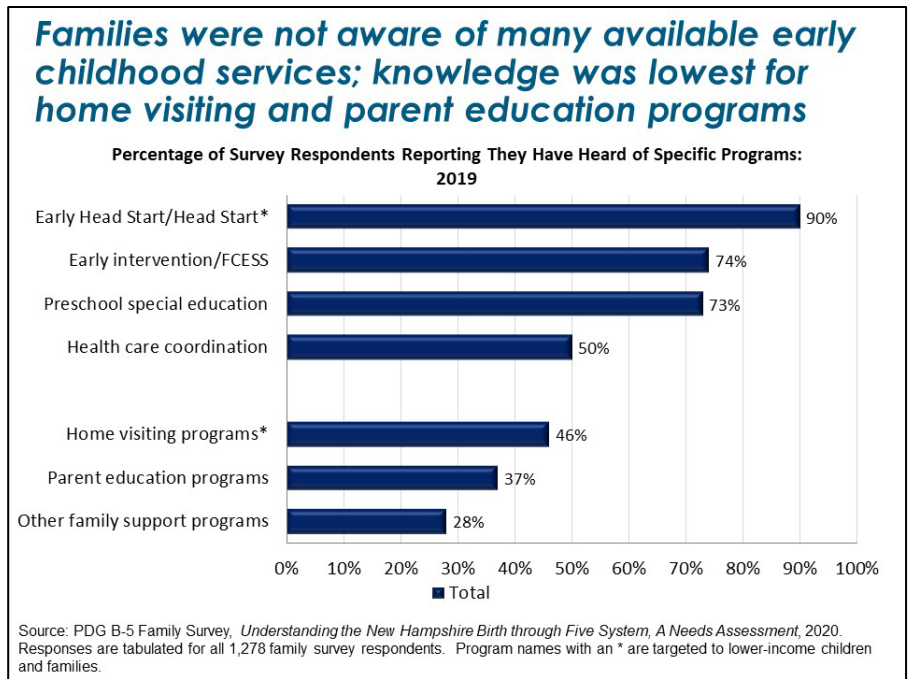
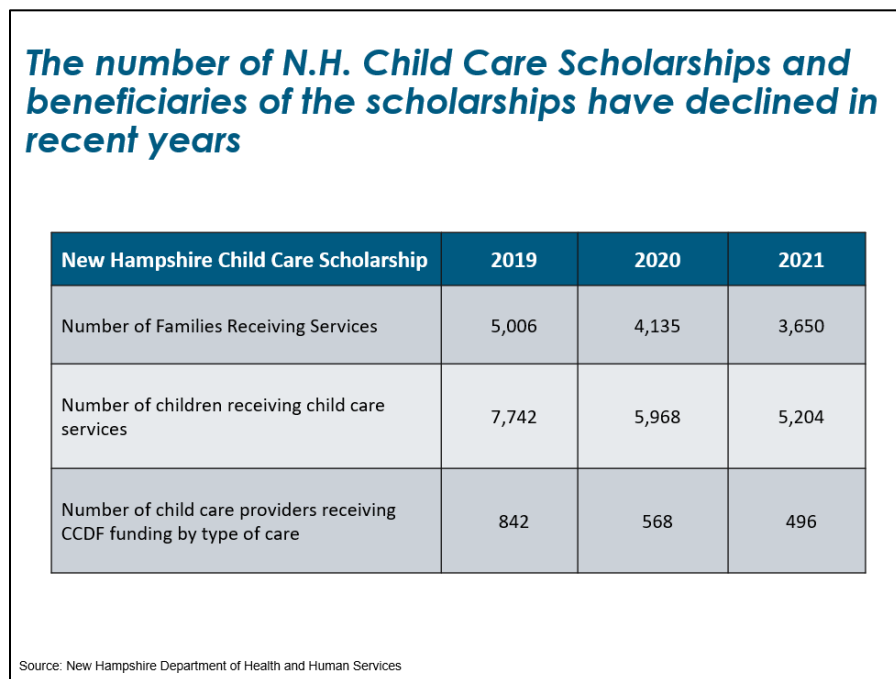


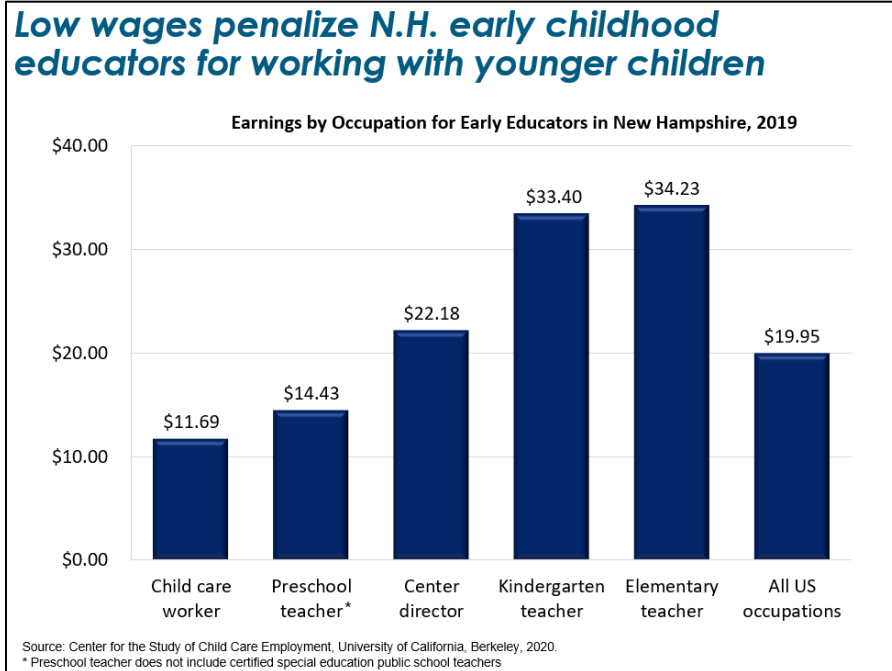
Figure 9.



Some of the available support services are not fully utilized. New Hampshire offers the Child Care Scholarship to help with the cost of childcare, but these data show that the number of recipients of these scholarships has dropped since 2019. The lack of affordable quality care is a concern in the state, but many families do not utilize this financial assistance. Some reasons that stakeholders report for the drop in Child Care Scholarships include the

lag in reimbursement time and the complicated rules for qualifying for and then receiving the scholarship funds. Further analysis needs to take place to understand the root causes of this decline.

Figure 10.



Stakeholder feedback and data analyses also found that low wages present a significant problem in the New Hampshire early childhood system. This chart demonstrates that earnings are very low for all positions working with young children. The average earnings of a childcare worker and a preschool teacher are much lower than that of the other groups working with children birth through eight, and well below the average for all U.S. populations.



The Strategic Plan

After reviewing the analysis and the stakeholder input, the Council determined that the existing vision for early childhood remains relevant and defines the intention of the strategic work for the future.

Vision for Early Childhood

All New Hampshire families are afforded comprehensive and responsive supports, so they are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.

The strategic plan focuses on six priority outcomes representing the greatest opportunity to improve the early childhood system for the key beneficiaries: children, families, and providers. These priority outcomes respond to the analysis findings that considered the performance trends for the early childhood system in New Hampshire, as well as stakeholder perceptions.

Priority Outcomes

- Increase families' partnership in, knowledge of, and choices for their child's development
- Increase families' access to integrated, quality early childhood opportunities and services
- Increase comprehensive wellness of young children
- Ensure children achieve early childhood developmental and educational goals
- Increase providers' and educators' knowledge and access to resources for quality programs and services

Each of these priority outcomes will be measured and monitored using state-level data. The Council will continue to review and refine the outcome measures and future targets. An initial list of potential outcome measures that align with previous plans and reports listed is included Appendix F.

To attain these priority outcomes, the Council has developed strategic themes that define the areas of work within the New Hampshire early childhood system that must be enhanced, created or redesigned. Each of these strategic themes has specific objectives representing the resulting changes in system practices and behaviors that need to occur. Strategic initiatives then detail the system-level work that needs to occur in order to achieve the objectives.



Strategic Theme 1

Quality, consistent, equitable access to opportunities and services for all NH families

As indicated in Figures 7, 8 and 9, the availability of programs for young children is uneven across the state. Stakeholder input from families and providers confirmed that this lack of universal availability extends to childcare, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, developmental and social activities, prevention services, and intervention. In some areas of the state these services and opportunities may be available but are not fully utilized due to lack of access, awareness, or acceptance, as confirmed in Figures 8 and 9. Several stakeholder groups commented that some of the available state and federal funding is not utilized in New Hampshire, because onerous requirements or inefficient processes inhibit distribution of funds to ready providers.

There is a common interest in ensuring quality of opportunities and services. However, there is also a need to balance formal assessments of quality with the wide variety of providers, particularly in more rural areas. Overly restrictive or culturally biased definitions of quality may eliminate effective but less formal early childhood programs and services.

The objectives and initiatives of this strategic theme are:

Objective 1

Increase early intervention and primary prevention

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Normalize utilization of early intervention and primary prevention services among all families
- b) Increase provider awareness of and collaboration with all available primary prevention and early intervention services

Objective 2

Increase accessible childcare and early learning options

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Expand eligibility for childcare assistance costs, increase the amount of assistance for each family, and increase awareness and utilization of NH Child Care scholarship assistance
- b) Expand options for and access to childcare and early learning statewide, particularly in areas where options are limited

Objective 3

Increase family awareness, voice, influence, engagement and knowledge

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Establish a Statewide Family Engagement Framework including feedback loops
- b) Expand universal home visiting to every baby in New Hampshire
- c) Expand NH parent/caregiver access to family support/Family Resource Centers (FRCs)

Objective 4

Enhance quality of early childhood programs and services

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Increase participation in NH Quality Recognition and Improvement System
- b) Increase family awareness of quality care and early learning options



Strategic Theme 2

Early childhood workforce capacity and quality

The workforce shortage is a root cause of the lack of availability of early childhood opportunities and services. This is not just an issue for New Hampshire, but the small population and number of rural communities exacerbates the limited early childhood employment base. Young people are discouraged from entering the field due to the perception of low wages and limited opportunities for advancement; which are also reasons that people in the field choose to leave. The low comparative wages are illustrated in Figure 10, which demonstrates that childcare workers and preschool teachers are paid well below kindergarten and other elementary level teachers. Additionally, there is a very limited career ladder for those in the field and few incentives for furthering education or professional development. While those working in the early childhood system are dedicated to advancing early childhood development, there are insufficient opportunities for them to enhance their skills. Addressing this strategic theme is fundamental to achieving many of the objectives across this strategic plan.

The objectives and initiatives of this strategic theme are:

Objective 1

Increase workforce

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Promote early childhood careers and career path
- b) Promote the availability of workforce incentives and tax credits and expand them beyond early childhood education to include family support and health

Objective 2

Increase workforce knowledge regarding early childhood development

Strategic Initiative:

- a) Equip the early childhood workforce with knowledge of child development and evidence-based practices to meet the needs of children and families



Strategic Theme 3

Investment in early childhood programs and services

Investment is key to the implementation of this strategic plan. A common concern among stakeholders was a lack of understanding of the totality of current investments in the New Hampshire early childhood system. There is also concern that systems and processes sometimes interfere with the efficient and effective use of available resources. Therefore, this strategic theme references leveraging existing funding in addition to increasing investment. The necessary investment goes beyond financial resources to include awareness and political will.

The objectives and initiatives of this strategic theme are:

Objective 1

Leverage and sustain new and existing funding

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Create and implement a comprehensive early childhood system funding plan including federal, state, local, and private sources
- b) Develop and implement a comprehensive study of compensation, benefits, and incentives across the various roles within the early childhood field

Objective 2

Increase business and community support for early childhood programs and services

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Create and implement a plan to increase businesses' financial investment in the early childhood system
- b) Create and implement a plan to increase community awareness of and engagement in building the capacity of the early childhood system



Strategic Theme 4

Systems integration

While stakeholders report an increase in coordination, collaboration, and communication among the various policy and program leaders in early childhood, systems integration remains one of the most commonly mentioned areas for improvement. This includes integration across state-level agencies; and alignment among state, regional and local organizations. This lack of integration creates barriers to family access, as the available services and opportunities are not commonly communicated across the entire early childhood system leaving families to navigate multiple, disparate organizations and processes.

The objectives and initiatives of this strategic theme are:

Objective 1

Increase state, regional, and local level collaboration and program integration

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Affirm and institutionalize the early childhood regions and networks, ensure ongoing support, and foster collaboration with families and local communities
- b) Formalize, strengthen, and broaden local early childhood coalitions that integrate with regional and state structures
- c) Establish a shared, compatible early childhood data system to inform decision-making

Objective 2

Enhance family navigation of integrated programs and services

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Establish and promote a comprehensive and inclusive system leveraging existing tools for families to navigate and access resources
- b) Increase individualized support for families in navigating the system
- c) Build cultural and linguistic competence of the early childhood system and professionals to better support families

Objective 3

Increase community voice and influence in design of programs and services

Strategic Initiative:

- a) Create approaches to specifically engage under-represented groups to influence decisions about programs and services that affect them



Strategic Theme 5

Office of Early Childhood

Stakeholders support the creation of a state entity focused on early childhood, provided that it actually streamlines and integrates state programs and services rather than adding another layer over and above existing structures.

The objectives and initiatives of this strategic theme are:

Objective 1

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

Strategic Initiative:

- a) Establish a collaborative process to define the role of the Office of Early Childhood, including authority, functions, structure, and resources

Objective 2

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

Strategic Initiatives:

- a) Coordinate messaging across key early childhood champions to ensure a diverse set of voices that will expand public understanding of the importance of early childhood experiences for all children and families
- b) Clarify and communicate roles and responsibilities of the early childhood system to include early childhood agencies, families, policy makers, and service providers

These strategic initiatives will be implemented in stages in order to ensure effective implementation and adequate resources. Table 3 includes the strategic initiatives to be launched in Stage 1 in 2023. The chart on the subsequent page illustrates all of the components of the New Hampshire Strategic Plan for Early Childhood.

Table 3. Stage 1 Strategic Initiatives		
Strategic Theme	Objective	Initiative
1. Quality, consistent, equitable access to opportunities and services for all NH families	2. Increase accessible childcare and early learning options	2a. Expand eligibility for childcare assistance costs, increase the amount of assistance for each family, and increase awareness and utilization of NH Childcare scholarship assistance
2. Early childhood workforce capacity and quality	1. Increase workforce	1a. Promote early childhood careers and career path
3. Investment in early childhood programs and services	1. Leverage and sustain new and existing funding	1a. Create and implement a comprehensive early childhood system funding plan including federal, state, local, and private sources
4. Systems integration	2. Enhance family navigation of integrated programs and services	2a. Establish and promote a comprehensive and inclusive system leveraging existing tools for families to navigate and access resources
5. Office of Early Childhood	1. Ensure a cohesive and collaborative approach to a mixed-delivery, early childhood system	1a. Establish a collaborative process to define the role of the Office of Early Childhood, including authority, functions, structure, and resources
5. Office of Early Childhood	2. Expand public understanding of the importance of quality early childhood experiences for all children	2a. Coordinate messaging across key early childhood champions to ensure a diverse set of voices that will expand public understanding of the importance of early childhood experiences for all children and families

Vision: All NH families are afforded comprehensive and responsive supports, so they are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.



**COUNCIL FOR
THRIVING
CHILDREN**

Early
Childhood
Strategic
Plan
Framework
2023-2025

Priority Outcomes

- Increase families' partnership in, knowledge of, and choices for their child's development
- Increase families' access to integrated quality early childhood opportunities and services
- Increase comprehensive wellness of young children
- Ensure children achieve early childhood developmental and educational goals
- Increase providers' and educators' knowledge and access to resources for quality programs and services

Themes	Objectives	Initiatives
<p>Strategic Theme 1 Quality, consistent, equitable access to opportunities and services for all NH families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase early intervention and primary prevention 2. Increase accessible childcare and early learning options 3. Increase family awareness, voice, influence, engagement and knowledge 4. Enhance quality of early childhood programs and services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Normalize utilization of early intervention and primary prevention services among all families 1b. Increase provider awareness of and collaboration with all available primary prevention and early intervention services 2a. Expand eligibility for childcare assistance costs, increase the amount of assistance for each family, and increase awareness and utilization of NH Child Care scholarship assistance 2b. Expand options for and access to childcare and early learning statewide, particularly in areas where options are limited 3a. Establish a Statewide Family Engagement Framework including feedback loops 3b. Expand universal home visiting to every baby in New Hampshire 3c. Expand NH parent/caregiver access to family support/Family Resource Centers (FRCs) 4a. Increase participation in NH QRIS 4b. Increase family awareness of quality care and early learning options
<p>Strategic Theme 2 Early childhood workforce capacity and quality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase workforce 2. Increase workforce knowledge regarding early childhood development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Promote early childhood careers and career path 1b. Promote the availability of workforce incentives and tax credits and expand them beyond early childhood education to include family support and health 2a. Equip the early childhood workforce with knowledge of child development and evidence-based practices to meet the needs of children and families
<p>Strategic Theme 3 Investment in early childhood programs and services</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverage and sustain new and existing funding 2. Increase business and community support for early childhood programs and services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Create and implement a comprehensive early childhood system funding plan including federal, state, local, and private sources 1b. Develop and implement a comprehensive study of compensation, benefits, and incentives across the various roles within the early childhood field 2a. Create and implement a plan to increase businesses' financial investment in the early childhood system 2b. Create and implement a plan to increase community awareness of and engagement in building the capacity of the early childhood system
<p>Strategic Theme 4 Systems integration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase state, regional, and local level collaboration and program integration 2. Enhance family navigation of integrated programs and services 3. Increase community voice and influence in design of programs and services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Affirm and institutionalize the early childhood regions and networks, ensure ongoing support, and foster collaboration with families and local communities 1b. Formalize, strengthen and broaden local early childhood coalitions that integrate with regional and state structures 1c. Establish a shared, compatible early childhood data system to inform decision-making 2a. Establish and promote a comprehensive and inclusive system leveraging existing tools for families to navigate and access resources 2b. Increase individualized support for families in navigating the system 2c. Build cultural and linguistic competence of the early childhood system and professionals to better support families 3a. Create approaches to specifically engage under-represented groups to influence decisions about programs and services that affect them
<p>Strategic Theme 5 Office of Early Childhood</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure a cohesive and collaborative approach to a mixed-delivery, early childhood system 2. Expand public understanding of the importance of quality early childhood experiences for all children 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Establish a collaborative process to define the role of the Office of Early Childhood, including authority, functions, structure, and resources 2a. Coordinate messaging across key early childhood champions to ensure a diverse set of voices that will expand public understanding of the importance of early childhood experiences for all children and families 2b. Clarify and communicate roles and responsibilities of the early childhood system to include early childhood agencies, families, policy makers, and service providers



Appendix A: Council for Thriving Children Members

Name	Title and Organization
Christine Brennan, Chair	Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education
Patricia Tilley, Chair	Public Health Director, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services
Jeanne Agri	CEO, Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. (Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc)
Hon. Susan Ashley	Deputy Administrative Judge, New Hampshire Circuit Court
Jane Bard	President & CEO, The Children's Museum of New Hampshire
Danielle Bishop	Procurement Counselor, Department of Business & Economic Affairs
Vicki Blanchard	Captain of Clinical Systems, Division of Fire Standard and Training & Emergency Medical Services
Athena Cote	Administrator, Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team Lead, Division of Public Health Services
Christina D'Allesandro	Director of Early Childhood and Family Supports, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Kate Baker Demers	Executive Director, Children's Scholarship Fund New Hampshire
Debra DeSimone	Representative from District 14, New Hampshire House of Representatives
Laurie Foster	Deputy Director of Community Corrections & Programs, Department of Corrections
Rebecca Fredette	State Director of Special Education, Department of Education
Patrick Herlihy	Director of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit, Department of Transportation
Shawn Jasper	Commissioner, Department of Agriculture
Richard Lavers	Deputy Commissioner, New Hampshire Employment Security
Christina MacDonald	Preschool Special Education Coordinator (Individual with Disabilities Education Act Part B 619), Department of Education
Debra Nelson	Director & Bureau Chief, Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration, Department of Health and Human Services
Dr. Kimberly Nesbitt	Assistant Professor, University of New Hampshire
DeeAnn Pouliot	Managing Director, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority
Lara Quiroga	Director of Strategic Initiatives for Children, Amoskeag Health

Name	Title and Organization
Kimberly Rice	Speaker Pro Tempore, District 37, New Hampshire House of Representatives
Christine Santaniello	Associate Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services
Sarah Stewart	Commissioner, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Becky Whitley	Senator from District 15, New Hampshire Senate
Rebecca Woitkowski	Parent Representative
Dr. Stephen Zdravec	Superintendent, New Hampshire SAU #52



Appendix B: Council for Thriving Children Strategic Planning Subcommittee Members

Name	Representing	Other Affiliations
Michelle Lewis <i>Subcommittee Chair/Council Member</i>	Quadrant Leads of New Hampshire Early Childhood Governance System: B-8 Parent & Community Advisors	Executive Director, Parent Information Center New Hampshire Family Voices™
Rebecca Woitkowski <i>Subcommittee Chair/Council Member</i>	Parent with children age birth-eight	Kid’s Count Policy Director, New Futures Board Member, Family Support New Hampshire Board Member, New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute New Hampshire Wellness & Primary Prevention Council (legislative)
Christine Brennan <i>Council Chair</i>	Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education	New Hampshire Board of Education
Patricia Tilley <i>Council Chair</i>	Public Health Director, Department of Health & Human Services	
Jeanne Agri <i>Council Member</i>	Head Start Agencies	Community Action Programs
Marianne Barter	New Hampshire Child Care Advisory Council	Executive Directory, Merrimack Valley Day Care Services Board Member, New Hampshire Hunger Solutions
Athena Cote <i>Council Member</i>	Quadrant Leads of New Hampshire Early Childhood Governance System: Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team Lead	Department of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health Community Collaborations Grant Lead Whole Family Approach to Jobs Integration Team
Christina D’Allesandro	The philanthropic community with expertise in early childhood care and education	Director, Early Childhood & Family Supports, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Krishna Dubreuil	Administrator, Department of Education	
Rebecca Fredette <i>Council Member</i>	Quadrant Leads of New Hampshire Early Childhood Governance System: Department of Education Early Childhood Integration Lead	State Director, Special Education, Department of Education

Name	Representing	Other Affiliations
Dylan Gatta	Council Staff	University of New Hampshire New Hampshire EC Data Integration Lead
Marti Ilg	Department of Health & Human Services Deputy Director, Division of Economic and Housing Stability	
Christina Lachance	Council Staff	University of New Hampshire New Hampshire Wellness & Primary Prevention Council Board Member, Granite United Way
Joelle Martin	Executive Director, Milford Thrives	Milford Kids Thrive (EC Coalition) Regional Early Childhood Coalitions (RECC) Greater Nashua Smart Start Coalition Steering Committee Board, Center for Trauma Responsive Practice Board, Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley
Debra Nelson Council Member	Department of Health & Human Services State Director, Head Start Collaboration	Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration Department of Health and Human Services
Kimberly Nesbitt Council Member	Quadrant Leads of New Hampshire Early Childhood Governance System: Scientific Advisory Council	Principal Investigator, New Hampshire Preschool Development Grant University of New Hampshire
Heather Patton	Head Start Directors	Belknap-Merrimack Community Action Program
Lara Quiroga Council Member	Local providers of early childhood education and development services	Director Strategic Initiative for Children, Amoskeag Health (Federally Qualified Health Care Center) LAUNCH Manchester Regional Early Childhood Initiative New Hampshire Early Childhood Regional Lead for Region 4
Senator Rebecca Whitley Council Member	President, Legislator appointed by the Senate	New Hampshire Wellness & Primary Prevention Council (legislative)

Strategic Planning Consultants: Greenway Strategy Group LLC



Appendix C: Reports and Data Informing the Analysis

Reports and strategic plan efforts that support families with young children for inclusion in NH Early Childhood Strategic Plan Analysis Phase

Report Title	Report Location
NH Strategic Plan for Early Childhood	https://chhs.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2021/06/nh_ec_strategic_plan_2020.pdf https://councilforthrivingchildren.org/uploads/attachments/ckvlq2q7m09oa6fkam4glkv5d-nh-strategicplan-mos-fnl-r2.pdf
DOE NH State ESEA Plan	essa-consolidated-state-plan.pdf (nh.gov)
Understanding the New Hampshire Birth through Five System – A Needs Assessment	https://chhs.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2021/06/nh_b-5_needs_assessment_pdg.pdf
DOE 603 Bright Futures Survey	Survey Home Page New Hampshire Department of Education Panorama Education
New Hampshire’s 2020-2021 Statewide Early Childhood Needs Assessment	2020-21_nh_needs_assessment_final_report.pdf (unh.edu)
Sharing Best Practices – Professional Development Recommendations	https://mypages.unh.edu/sites/default/files/pdg/files/pdgsharingbestpracticeprofdevelrec2020.pdf
All Whole Family Approach to Jobs: Parents Working, Children Thriving related reports, data, documents	Constraints on New Hampshire's Workforce Recovery - Econsult Solutions, Inc. PowerPoint Presentation (nh.gov) closing-cliff-effect.pdf (nh.gov)
NH Child Care Advisory Council Report	
Mapping New Hampshire’s Early Childhood System	https://chhs.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2022/02/mapping_new_hampshires_early_childhood_system.pdf
DHHS Maternal Opioid Misuse Model reports	https://innovation.cms.gov/innovation-models/map#state=NH https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-awards-funding-combat-opioid-misuse-among-expectant-mothers-and-improve-care-children-impacted



Report Title	Report Location
New Hampshire Title IV-E Family First Prevention Plan	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/dcyf-family-first-prevention-plan.pdf
DHHS MIECHV Home Visiting Program reports, data	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-12/title5mchplan-full.pdf https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-11/hfa-needs-assessment.pdf
DOE/DHHS Part B and Part C NH 2021 SPP/ARP	Part B State Performance Plan/Annual Report Part C SPP/APR
2022-2024 NH Child Care Development Fund Plan, data	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-11/ccdf-state-plan-2022-2024.pdf NH Child Care Development Fund Annual Report, ACF Form 800 for 2021, 2020, 2019
DHHS – DCYF 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-11/dcyf-cfsp-2020-24-report.pdf
All Community Collaborations Grant reports, data, related documents	Children’s Bureau Grantee Synthesis: Primary Prevention Themes From Fiscal Year 2018 Grantee Site Visits (childwelfare.gov) https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-11/communication-plan.pdf Y3 NH Community Collaborations Summary Report April 2021
NH 10-year mental health plan	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/10-year-mh-plan.pdf
New Futures 2021 Kids Count Report Kids Count 2021 data for New Hampshire	2020KC_profile_NH.pdf (aecf.org) https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#NH/2/0/char/0
NH DHHS Public Health Statewide Primary Care Needs Assessment	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents/2021-12/pc-needsassessment2021.pdf
NH DHHS Public Health Community Health Improvement Plans for all NH Regions	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/population-health/regional-public-health-networks
NH WIC State Plan	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/population-health/women-infants-children-nutrition-program/wic-state-plan
NH National Assessment of Education Progress data	https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-learner-support/bureau-of-instructional-support/national-assessment-of-educational-progress



Appendix D: Strategic Theme Templates

Strategic Theme 1: Quality, consistent, equitable access to opportunities and services for all NH families	
Team Members: Marianne Barter, Annie Censullo, Robin deAlmeida, Richard Lavers, Katherine Leswing, Joelle Martin, Aurelia Moran, Christine Morrissey, Shirley Tomlinson, Rachel Valladares	
Objective 1: Increase early intervention and primary prevention	
Success Defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in stigma for seeking support • Increased engagement in primary prevention services and screenings • Lack of waitlists • Decrease in child maltreatment cases 	
Strategic Initiative 1a: Normalize utilization of early intervention and primary prevention services among all families	Brief Description: Normalizing help-seeking—or reducing the stigma of seeking help—by engaging diverse individuals and families early in their experience as parents will ensure programs and services reach all children and families who might need these services. Diverse perspectives are crucial to shape program planning such as engagement strategies and marketing strategies to ensure that we are effective in reaching those who have historically had barriers to access. Examine whose input is included and who is missing, make efforts to reach those not represented (i.e.- LEP families, undocumented individuals, racially diverse families, fathers, LGBTQIA families, families with disabilities, step up families, teen parents etc.) Let’s be as inclusive as possible and work to recognize and alleviate barriers to being at the table, such as timing of meetings, technology access if virtual, transportation if in person, child care, lost wages and time and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all involved.
	Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Stakeholders in NH indicated that there was a need to improve access for all families, through trauma informed care, health, social supports, and education with barriers in mind such as zip code, impacts of housing insecurity, poverty, and lack of transportation. And indicated the need to reduce stigma and normalize help-seeking for families. Evidence has been compiled that demonstrates both the importance of utilizing an equity lens, and specific strategies to cultivate engagement and inclusion into early childhood programs. The Need to Intervene Early to Advance Health Equity for Children and Families - Vibrant and Healthy Kids - NCBI Bookshelf (nih.gov) The Next Generation of Fathers • ZERO TO THREE Manifesto for Race Equity & Parent Leadership in Early Childhood Systems - Center for the Study of Social Policy (cssp.org) , Research and Articles for Migrant Educators and Advocates — I2MPACT



	<p>Important findings for implementation: The social ecological model supports understanding the impacts of systems and the importance of feedback loops in creating responsive systems designed to grow with the changing needs of families, communities, and broader systems.</p> <p>There are a variety of evidence-based primary prevention practices that support family strengthening and support, this article provides highlights and case studies of what is working well in NH and challenges that were in existence a couple of years ago: Advancing Investments in the Early Years: Opportunities for Strategic Investments in Evidence-Based Early Childhood Programs in New Hampshire RAND. An example of an evidence based primary prevention service in NH is EB home visiting, as demonstrated here: New Hampshire 2021 - National Home Visiting Resource Center (nhvrc.org) only a small percentage of eligible families participate in these programs. Evidence based home visiting has demonstrated a reduction in child maltreatment, increased school readiness and achievement, and increased linkages and referrals, among other outcomes (What is Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness? Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (hhs.gov)), all of which could support metrics to demonstrate success defined.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 1b: Increase provider awareness of and collaboration with all available primary prevention and early intervention services</p>	<p>Brief Description: Increase coordination of systems at all levels that support primary prevention and early intervention, such as education, family support, and health. Offer training for providers in these domains to learn the services available in their communities, best practices for working with diverse families, and partners who are working with the same families. Develop trainings on topics important for all primary prevention early intervention providers and offer them in a way to support relationship building across domains. For example, a training in a specific community to support increasing knowledge in working with parents with language barriers, working effectively cross culturally, limited access/fluency with technology, Social Determinants of Health (SDoH), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and/or strategies to build resiliency. To support shared understanding, knowledge and opportunities to build relationships across these family serving systems. Which could facilitate collaboration between providers to establish effective strategies for warm handoffs or decreasing duplication, such as sharing needs identified by screenings (with appropriate permissions). It is important to start at the community level to understand how state systems could adapt to be more responsive to community level needs.</p>

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Reducing the burden of paperwork to allow agencies that serve similar populations to communicate more effectively and expanding referral systems- such as central intake systems will increase the ability of these agencies to help underserved families access all available supports. Increasing access to and functionality of electronic health records (EHRs) will help providers deliver more effective care.

Parents who have limited English, limited access to technology or fluency with technology- all can significantly impact access to programs and services, particularly if service providers have limited knowledge and or training in supporting LEP families, this can also be true in ensuring diverse representation to support planning, adapting, or improving future systems.

Undocumented individuals are highly underserved because they may not be eligible for services or programs, fear also plays a role- perhaps less likely to access services that they are eligible for.

In order for providers to ensure they are responsive to the needs of children and families, providers must be trained in and allow time for Universal SDOH (Social Determinants of Health) and ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Screenings along with universal access to home visiting programs.

[Research and Articles for Migrant Educators and Advocates — I2MPACT](#)

[2019-ACERT-Case-Study.pdf \(nhchildrenshealthfoundation.org\)](#)

[Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team \(ACERT\) | Amoskeag Health](#)

[nh-aces-full-report-2018.pdf \(nhpip.org\)](#)

[The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race or ethnicity - Child Trends](#)

[Universal Screening of Social Determinants of Health at a Large US Academic Medical Center, 2018 nh-aces-report.pdf](#)

Important findings for implementation: Research shows that buy in from a child’s primary care physician is crucial however lower socio-economic families may not have the financial resources to either consistently see the same provider or see a provider with any regularity.

Approaching this initiative may be needed to be broken into 2 or more steps (health care, education).

Increase provider knowledge around screenings and if they are validated for use in all populations, or if the efficacy decreases, or the tool is no longer valid if translated. Broader access to screenings based on cultural fit. Ensuring adequate time and resources particularly if providers are working with interpreters, as appointments could take more time. Hearing from providers about barriers and challenges will be important to create and refine systems that are better at working with diverse clients and having systems that are more inclusive to the unique strengths and needs of families and the providers they work with.



Objective 2:

Increase accessible childcare and early learning options

Success Defined:

- Elimination of waitlists at childcare centers
- More ECE centers per capita (< age 5)
- Childcare enrollment demographics reflect the community
- Childcare costs don't exceed 7% of a family's income
- Increased ECE workforce

Strategic Initiative 2a:

Expand eligibility for childcare assistance costs, increase the amount of assistance for each family, and increase awareness and utilization of NH Child Care scholarship assistance

Brief Description: The NH child care scholarship is underused and does not reflect the high cost of living in NH. Many of those who qualify for the program are not aware of it, and many others need assistance but do not qualify.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Child care scholarship is underutilized in NH. Many parents who qualify do not know about it unless they receive other state benefits, and there is no statewide system for marketing the program to low income families. Increased awareness would allow families to access these funds, giving the children opportunities to attend high quality, licensed, care.

The income levels are low and do not reflect how expensive it is to live in NH. Many states, such as New Mexico and Vermont, have raised the eligibility to 400% of poverty or 85% of state median income. This level of assistance would give families greater funds for other needs, such as rent or transportation costs. It would also eliminate the cliff effect for families because the point at which they would leave state assistance would truly be at a level that parents could afford the cost of care. Currently, at the highest level of assistance, families are expected to pay 20% of their income as their cost share, rather than the federal recommendation of 7%.

Important findings for implementation:

[At the Crossroads: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2021 - National Women's Law Center \(nwlc.org\)](#)

[The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final \(treasury.gov\)](#)

[Child Care Assistance | Early Childhood Education & Care Department \(nmececd.org\)](#)



<p>Strategic Initiative 2b: Expand options for and access to childcare and early learning statewide, particularly in areas where options are limited</p>	<p>Brief Description: NH has large parts of the state where child care deserts exist, with limited or no openings for children needing care.</p>
	<p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Portions of the north and west of the state have no access to licensed child care within a 20 minute driving distance. Places with the highest access have one licensed spot for every three children. Co-locating childcare centers in existing community resources such as assisted living facilities, schools, health care facilities, community colleges and other local organizations is a way to create licensed options given current geographic and economic challenges. Identifying and utilizing existing community space that might be appropriate for programs.</p> <p>Existing early learning opportunities do not necessarily meet the current needs of families, including spaces for children, availability of hours, or preferred early learning options.</p>
	<p>Important findings for implementation: New Hampshire’s Early Childhood System in the Time of COVID-19. October 2021. Joint Resource Guide To strengthen and expand child care facilities in rural communities Improving Access to Early Childhood Education</p>

Objective 3:

Increase family awareness, voice, influence, engagement, and knowledge

Success Defined

- Take a systemic approach to family engagement to ensure EC leaders and staff at all levels of the system have the support and resources they need to engage families authentically and boost parent/caregiver confidence
- Increase connections for NH families to community and provider services and supports
- Improve maternal and infant health and social gains

Strategic Initiative 3a:

Establish a Statewide Family Engagement Framework, including feedback loops

Brief Description: Build off the family engagement work done through PDG and establish a state-level Systemic Family Engagement implementation team consisting of a diverse group of local, regional, and state decision-makers, including the B-8. This team will establish a statewide family engagement framework, ensuring that family engagement is systemic, prioritized, and supported throughout our early childhood system. Implementing a statewide framework will provide early childhood professionals at all levels with the information and resources they need to engage families in meaningful and authentic ways to increase family awareness, voice, influence, engagement, and knowledge.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach):

- [PIC's Systemic Family Engagement Framework is adapted from PFCE which is the framework Head Start uses.](#) PIC/NHFV took the PFCE framework and cross walked it with Dr. Karen Mapp's Dual Capacity Framework (the two research-based frameworks endorsed by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education), then brought in an Implementation Lead from the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) to validate our work. This framework could provide the implementation team with a solid foundation to start from.
- [The US DHHS and US DOE joint policy statement on Family Engagement from the Early Years to the Early grades](#) This joint policy statement articulates that both the *U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) recognize the critical role of family engagement in promoting children's success in early childhood systems and programs. As such, both agencies have developed research-based family engagement frameworks to guide the development of effective family engagement policies and practices.* The two frameworks referenced, are the PFCE framework and the Dual Capacity framework. It also provides recommendations for promoting family engagement in early childhood at all levels.
- [Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide: Implementation Teams Research](#) This guide shares research that supports the use of implementation teams in early childhood systems.

Important findings for implementation: Research has shown that, without the use of implementation teams to keep a focus on implementation infrastructures (such as the family engagement one that has started to take form through PDG), it takes an average of 17 years to achieve full implementation in only 14% of places. However, with the support of implementation teams, systems can reach full



	<p>implementation in 80% of areas in only three years. That difference of 14 years is the whole educational career of a generation of children.</p> <p>Therefore, an implementation team that includes key decision makers is needed to connect evidence and research-based frameworks/practices to desired early childhood outcomes, including increasing family awareness, voice, influence, engagement, and knowledge. In addition, this team will streamline resources and support through formal communication loops at all levels (state, regional, and local).</p> <p>Note that additional information related to this initiative is included below, to inform implementation.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 3b: Expand universal home visiting to every baby in New Hampshire</p>	<p>Brief Description: Expand “Welcome Baby” program for all NH newborns and parents: offering a continuum from Welcome Baby Gift Bags/Boxes to Baby Showers to Welcome Baby Home Visiting.</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Welcome Baby Program: An Implementation and Outcomes Evaluation ● The baby box: Enhancing the wellbeing of babies and mothers around the world <p>Important findings for implementation: Broad implementation of Welcome Baby provides community connections and support for new parents, and in the long run, results in significant health and social gains for both mothers and babies. Whether new parents are invited to a Community Baby Shower, provided with Welcome Baby gifts/boxes, or ultimately, receive home visiting services, the benefits of Welcome Baby early connections are clear.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 3c: Expand NH parent / caregiver access to family support / Family Resource Centers (FRCs)</p>	<p>Brief Description: Increase NH parent/caregiver access to family supports/Family Resource Centers (FRCs) by extending the network of FRCs across New Hampshire. The network of FRCs might entail additional established urban/regional centers, more satellite locations, as well as increased ancillary FRC Family Engagement Coordinators (FEC).</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2019 Casey Family Programs Issue brief <p>Important findings for implementation: Family Resource Centers of quality and their family support staff provide parenting support and education, connection to critical services, strengthen protective factors and reduce the risk of child maltreatment. FRCs coordinate and make referrals to a multitude of services to address families’ complex needs, including a focus on concrete supports, healthcare and evidence-based practices. In NH, there is limited access to FRCs for most families. There are a number of promising models across NH that would expand the reach of FRCs, including satellite locations (i.e. Families First, Thrive/Barnstead), and as well as establishing FRC family engagement coordinators in neighboring towns (Waypoint/Milford Kids Thrive). Strategic investments in extending and strengthening the FRC network footprint, according to regional/local family need, would improve overall maternal and infant health as well as social gains for New Hampshire families.</p>

Objective 4: Enhance quality of early childhood programs and services	
Success Defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff retention • Children will strive academically • Parents can focus on their jobs while knowing their child is in a trusting and safe environment 	
Strategic Initiative 4a: Increase participation in NH Quality Recognition and Improvement System	Brief Description: With this Quality Recognition and Improvement System, Granite Steps for Quality already in place it is going to be more about increasing the participation of Early Childhood providers in NH to join. https://www.nh-connections.org/uploads/GSQ-Guide.pdf
	Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): This effort will bring about desired change because once participation is increased, more programs will be enhancing their quality through staff qualifications and learning environments. This is a system that recognizes program quality.
	Important findings for implementation: Trying to figure out what Early Child Care Programs are not part of the Granite Steps for Quality.
Strategic Initiative 4b: Increase family awareness of quality care and early learning options	Brief Description: Increase family awareness across NH starting at birth on the importance of quality care and how to identify it when searching for a child care program. https://www.childcareservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ChildCareCenterChecklist.pdf
	Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): This initiative will impact the objective because parents/guardians will know what to look for when seeking a quality child care provider and those are the providers with which they are more apt to enroll their child. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources such as “Watch Me Grow” videos can be found here: https://nhfv.org/ • The importance of primary prevention and early intervention services cannot be undervalued: The Need to Intervene Early to Advance Health Equity for Children and Families - Vibrant and Healthy Kids - NCBI Bookshelf (nih.gov)
	Important findings for implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits the child academically and prepares them as they enter school. • Being in a quality programs has many long term positive effects. • Evidence shows that children benefit from quality care. New parents especially may not know the benefits or may not know where to even begin in choosing a program for their child. https://www.childcareservices.org/families/child-care-quality/

Strategic Theme 1: Quality, consistent, equitable access to opportunities and services for all NH families

Community Input Sessions – Implementation Ideas

- Increase awareness, understanding, and access to early childhood programs, preschool in public schools, primary prevention, and home visiting
- Address the lack of transportation including transportation funding
- Broadcast awareness and importance of the early childhood field in order to target potential workers in high school and college via a marketing campaign sharing the importance of the early years and promoting early childhood in K-12
- Increase buy-in at the pediatrician level for primary prevention and home visiting
- Remove the stigma from seeking out programs/services via PSAs and provider awareness to normalize the utilization of services
- Allocate appropriate time and money to early childhood, relative to other programs and services
- Co-locate offices close together to decrease stigma around seeking services
- Have FRCs co-habitate in schools
- Develop a data system for child care slots and home visiting
- Expand available information at schools for staff in order for them to better aid families
- Make flexible offices that can move around so rural places don't always have to travel
- Increase access to preschool in the public schools
- Increase use of incentives to increase qualities, both with being a part of the Quality Recognition and Improvement System and with public schools having more preschools
- Increase state funding for infrastructure or primary prevention services
- Provide enough hours for workers and better funding
- Increase professional development: how to talk about services and to spread awareness
- Integrate services more
- Listen to the north country as there is a disconnect between what kids and families want and what is being offered
- Put brochures about available early childhood services into kindergarten registration
- Remove barriers to become licensed home care providers
- Remove the barrier of childcare centers not accepting the Child Care Scholarship
- Visit fairs across the state to find unlicensed family care providers and support them with resources to meet requirements for licensing
- Tap into existing entities for their knowledge
- Utilize a holistic approach including all families
- Create a strong workforce foundation
- Promote cross-collaboration for programs and services



Strategic Theme 2: Early childhood workforce capacity and quality

Team Members:

Dianne Chase, Kendra Dix, Jen Doris, Kristi Hart, Marti Ilg, Nicole Levesque, Gene Patnode, Sue Watson

Objective 1:

Increase Workforce

Success Defined:

- More early childhood system (early care and education, family support, early intervention, and behavioral and physical health) workers are entering the profession
- Early childhood services and supports are more readily available throughout the state
- The availability of early childhood services and supports is increased, which in turn increases general employment across the state
- More families are engaged in evidence-based and evidence-informed family support home visiting services as a result of increased workforce capacity
- There is more participation among early childhood workforce in educational opportunities, and more workers are advancing within the profession
- Early childhood services report that they are able to fill vacant positions and retain staff at increased rates

Strategic Initiative 1a:

Promote early childhood careers and career path

Brief Description: Coordinate efforts to promote the various early childhood careers across the early childhood system to the public. Educate education institutions (K-12, post-secondary) and workforce development institutions about the early childhood system and the various careers the field offers and provide guidance and support to students (youth and adult) into and through career education.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): To make better use of our limited resources and improve our recruitment and retention results, we need to collaborate in our efforts to attract workers to the field and keep them in the early childhood field. While COVID-19 has highlighted the limited capacity of the early childhood system to meet the needs of children, families, employees and employers. It is important to build this capacity by attracting workers into the field now and into the future, to create a system with adequate and sustainable supports and services. Further, recruitment efforts within and across the various components of the system (early childhood education, family support, early intervention, and behavioral and physical health) seem competitive with one another, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of recruitment efforts. Other systems (e.g., healthcare, advanced manufacturing) have been effective at addressing their recruitment needs by working collectively within their fields.

Important findings for implementation:

- Consider an “Industry Champion” model to facilitate this collaborative work (like how the K-12 system is approaching recruitment).
- Coordinate efforts across Departments (e.g., Department of Health and Human Services with American Rescue Plan Act – Discretionary funding, Department of Education) reflecting the interrelated nature of the early childhood system’s various components (early care and education, family support, health).



- Unify messaging across the system’s various marketing efforts, promoting the various career opportunities across the system (e.g., early childhood education, family support, health and behavioral health workers) as well as career scaffolding/advancement opportunities.
- Promote the benefits of the field. (e.g., career path, increased pay along the career path, career satisfaction and feeling a sense of contributing to the common good, growing our future leaders, flexible schedules, a supportive work environment, etc.)
- Engage youth as early as possible within the K-12 system (through career exploration, guidance counselors, etc.) to explore various career opportunities within the early childhood field.
- Engage adult learners and retirees to explore the early childhood field as a career.
<https://www.nhes.nh.gov/services/job-seekers/dislocated-worker.htm>
- Better data is needed to understand the workforce landscape. (e.g., wages, gaps in early childhood services, etc.)
- Low entry wages are a barrier to attracting people to the workforce.
- Being thoughtful about the amount of professional development and certification requirements that are taxing on the field in addition to the work.
- Low wages are a challenge to recruit and retain the early childhood workforce.
- Collaborate across the spectrum of education and workforce development institutions, such as the K-12 system (e.g., guidance counselors, Job Corps), post-secondary institutions, Career and Technical Education, New Hampshire Works system, etc.
- Incorporate the broad array of early childhood careers and pay scales into the O*NET online occupational system.
- Focus on a pipeline of youth from K-12 (with emphasis earlier in the K-12 space) into post-secondary as well as adult learners retraining for a new career.
- Take a multi-level approach (e.g., Provider/Teacher Education for Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary) to early childhood career education.
- Institutionalize American Rescue Plan Act – Discretionary funding-type efforts and expand beyond early childhood education into family support and health components of the early childhood system.
<https://councilforthrivingchildren.org/uploads/attachments/cl6utfds70fpwktka46aiw6rt-nh-dhhs-arpa-discretionary-plan-for-ctc-sp-purposes-8-6-2022.pdf>
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/documents2/dhhs-child-strengthening-plan.pdf>
<https://legiscan.com/NH/text/SB446/2022>



<p>Strategic Initiative 1b: Promote the availability of workforce incentives and tax credits and expand them beyond early childhood education to include family support and health</p>	<p>Brief Description: Promote the various incentives and tax credits that are available in support of the early care and education workforce and create opportunities to expand/tailor them to be available/used by the entire early childhood field (e.g., family support, health).</p>
	<p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): The field is experiencing increased costs due to inflation, including utilities, occupancy, supplies, wages, advanced training to ensure a high quality of care, volume of services and supports needed, increased need for enrollment, etc. However, the families served can't afford to bear the true costs associated with these beneficial and necessary services. While there are subsidies available to some now through American Rescue Plan Act – Discretionary funding, additional revenues are needed to support the system (including the retention of the workforce) when subsidies are no longer available and going forward. Tax credits and incentives are one way to sustainably increase revenue coming into the system, maintaining the availability and accessibility of needed quality services and supports.</p>
	<p>Important findings for implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of workforce projects underway supported through one-time funding opportunities (e.g., current American Rescue Plan Act – Discretionary funding-supported efforts, additional American Rescue Plan Act – Discretionary funding-supported efforts to be selected through a Request for Proposals process set to launched in December 2022). • Senate Bill 446 includes a number of pieces related to workforce, which this work group supports backing. • In addition to accessing tax incentives and tax breaks, there are more ways that business can support the workforce. (e.g., employer-sponsored education and training, education cost forgiveness/reimbursement, scholarships, job sharing, benefit bundling, flexible schedules.) • Tax incentives and credits list attached (e.g., Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Career and Technical Education Tax Credit, etc.) <p>https://www.nhes.nh.gov/services/employers/documents/nhes-0328.pdf</p>

Objective 2:

Increase workforce knowledge regarding early childhood development

Success Defined:

- More quality early childhood supports and services (early care and education, family support, early intervention, and behavioral and physical health) are available
- Early childhood (early care and education, family support, early intervention, and behavioral and physical health) job applicants are better prepared for the jobs they are applying for
- There are more credentialed early childhood (early care and education, family support, early intervention, and behavioral and physical health) workers and/or more credentials per worker in the state
- More early childhood (early care and education, family support, early intervention, and behavioral and physical health) workers are staying and/or advancing in the profession
- Childcare providers are improving their GSQ or Quality Recognition and Improvement System rating
- More family resource centers obtain the designation of Family Resource Center of Quality (FRCQ)
- Children are achieving their developmental and educational milestones
- Children have increased social emotional coping strategies to be successful academically and building on life skills

Strategic Initiative 2a:

Equip the early childhood workforce with knowledge of child development and evidence-based practices to meet the needs of children and families

Brief Description: Create more access to evidence-based education/training opportunities for aspiring and current early childhood workers. A coordinated array of education/training opportunities should be created in K-12 through post-secondary, workforce development, and continuing education/professional development.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Providing potential and current workers with high-quality and continuous early childhood development education/training builds the capacity of workers to support the early childhood needs of families and children confidently and effectively. It also promotes a qualified, satisfied, and stable workforce.

Important findings for implementation:

- Emphasize early childhood development and evidence-based practices within the multi-level approach (e.g., Provider/Teacher Education for Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary) to early childhood career education.
- Incorporate social emotional learning into training and education requirements and opportunities for early childhood professionals.
- Expand the Pyramid Model beyond early childhood education, into the family supports and health components. Expand the Pyramid Model statewide.
- Expand quality recognition programs such as the Granite Steps for Quality recognition system and the Quality Recognition and Improvement System beyond the early childhood education into the family supports and health.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional committed funding is needed to incentivize workers (e.g., paid tuition, loan forgiveness, wage increases) to engage in education/professional development. Examples - Ohio, Colorado, and Massachusetts • Promote TEACH Program through New Hampshire College System and IV-E Funds, and expand the model across the early childhood field. • Promote industry-related post-secondary credentialing, certifications, and continuing development. • Build cross-field training opportunities. • Promote and support career advancement through education/training. • Offer more experiential opportunities for potential and current workers (e.g., internships, apprenticeships, etc.) • Provide the support needed for workers to participate in education/training (e.g., paid training time, qualified pool of substitutes, adequate time during the work day, bonus upon completion of all annual required training hours, tuition assistance, etc.)
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Strategic Theme 2: Early childhood workforce capacity and quality

Community Input Sessions – Implementation Ideas

- Expand apprenticeships and educational opportunities for early childhood professionals or those interested in early childhood (i.e. innovative ways to be accredited)
- Professional Development specifically focusing on mental health; offer competitive benefits and professional development support
- Address hiring and retention of staff (i.e. funding to fulfill hiring needs); recruit and retain qualified personnel
- Increase awareness of early childhood in order to value the field as a whole and improve the early childhood workforce pipeline via PSAs and promotion
- Address state contracting system, focusing on a self-sustaining wage
- Increase pay for early childhood providers; increased wages signal value of workforce; wages must be liveable
- Address Familial Needs
- Address the wage gap so that the early childhood workforce pipeline can improve
- Expand incentives to all providers in the system
- Fund need for professional developmental opportunities
- Mentorship program for early childhood professionals
- Subsidize the early childhood system



Strategic Theme 3: Investment in early childhood programs and services

Team Members:

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Objective 1:

Leverage and sustain new and existing funding

Success Defined:

- We know what early childhood services are needed, and there is timely and adequate funding and resources available, accessed, and sustained to support them
- Increased access of available funding and resources that haven’t been used before (public, private)
- Coordination of funding and resources across sources to support needed services (public, private)
- Services are sustained beyond the Preschool Development Grant and the American Rescue Plan Act grant with new and existing funding and sources (public, private)

Strategic Initiative 1a:

Create and implement a comprehensive early childhood system funding plan including federal, state, local, and private sources

Brief Description: Create a detailed plan with strategies and tactics designed to better use, leverage, and sustain existing funding, identify funding needs/gaps, and secure the new or existing funding needed to ensure that the array of early childhood services and supports are available to the families who need them.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): To ensure sufficient funding for the system, a coordinated effort is needed to better understand the early childhood system’s funding needs, utilization, and gaps. With this understanding, systems partners are better equipped to fully utilize funds, build efficiencies, and reduce duplication as well as secure needed additional funding. To ensure adequate, stable funding across the system, it’s important to better coordinate funding and diversify the system’s funding streams (public and private).

Important findings for implementation:

- Plan should include:
 - Completion of a Fiscal Mapping process so we know what funds are coming in, funds being expended or returned, and where there are gaps in funding.
 - New Futures is working with The Children’s Funding project as part of their State and Local Fiscal Mapping Cohort, website link: <https://www.childrensfundingproject.org/>
 - Requires access to quality data.
 - Development of a Spending Plan for existing funding, including unexpended funds.
 - Creation of a Development Plan to fill funding gaps, including from public and private sources.
 - Establish a process for regular updates to the comprehensive funding plan.
 - Resource: https://www.nmecccd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/P5FS_NMReport_v.3d_forWeb.pdf
 - Be mindful to:
 - Facilitate and leverage cross-Departmental investment in the system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify system-wide efficiencies and ways to maximize resources (funding, data, training, etc.) ▪ Work closely at all levels of the system – grass tops to grassroots. ▪ Use data-driven decision making regarding the allocation of funding and resources. ▪ Maintain a constant understanding of the funding landscape and be forward thinking, anticipating future needs. ▪ Be collaboratively minded, working as a partner with the State Departments, regional coalitions, local communities, funders, business, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the nature of Federal funding, securing State funding is essential to augment those funds and to create funding stability for the early childhood system. • Education of legislators, funders, systems partners, providers, and others about the true funding landscape of the system is important to raising additional funding. • Education about how public funding works is important to ensuring the full expenditure of funds. • Identification and resolution of funding/contract systems barriers is essential. • Innovate with how funding is secured and used across funding sources (private and public, including businesses) is vital. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider a Children’s Trust Fund-type vehicle to secure and diversify early childhood funding
<p>Strategic Initiative 1b: Develop and implement a comprehensive study of compensation, benefits, and incentives across the various roles within the early childhood field</p>	<p>Brief Description: We need to better understand the current compensation, benefits, and incentives structure for roles across the field (e.g., child care and education, family support, physical and mental health), determine roles with below livable compensation, benefits, and incentives, and develop strategies to increase and sustain livable compensation, benefits, and incentives for those roles.</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): We’re experiencing tremendous difficulty recruiting and retaining workers across the field, impacting the availability and accessibility of supports and services to families and children. This difficulty has been greatly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, this is not a new issue. We want key stakeholders (e.g., legislators, business, community, families) across the state to understand the importance of early childhood supports and services for children and families and value its impact. We want these key stakeholders to be informed supporters of early childhood services and supports; and we want to equip families to make well-informed decisions about their child’s education and care throughout their child’s development. With key stakeholder support, we can build the capacity of the early childhood system to provide early childhood workers the compensation, benefits, and incentives needed to create a stable workforce providing quality supports and services to children throughout their developing years.</p>

Important findings for implementation:

- Look at early childhood roles working with children birth through 3rd grade.
- Be sure to look at data at the state and regional levels.
- Anyone who works directly touches children and families.
- Look at the pathways within the field and how compensation, benefits, and incentives change.
- Increase capacity to fill positions that are narrowly focused (require unique skill sets) and difficult to fill.
- Create messaging to promote the need to increase the compensation, benefits, and incentives for workers for these valuable services, and the benefit to families (continuity across the state).
- Modernize our system of supports and services based on family and children’s needs, and update our antiquated compensation, benefits, and incentives structure within the field to meet those needs.
- Provide workers the compensation, benefits, and incentives possible under Federal limits. (Above state restrictions)
- Funding would be needed to conduct the study.
- Resources:
 - Look at Wisconsin’s work on business investment for child care: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/projectgrowth>
 - Berkley study on Educator Workforce Pay: <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/the-early-educator-workforce/early-educator-pay-economic-insecurity-across-the-states/>
 - True cost of childcare: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/true-cost-high-quality-child-care-across-united-states/>
 - True cost of childcare <https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/school-age-child-care-overlooked-and-under-resourced/?emci=2d093e46-8eae-eb11-85aa-0050f237abef&emdi=24caa181-46af-eb11-85aa-0050f237abef&ceid=2835262>



Objective 2:

Increase business and community support for early childhood programs and services

Success Defined:

- Businesses are more family-friendly
- Communities are more supportive of families

Strategic Initiative 2a:

Create and implement a plan to increase businesses' financial investment in the early childhood system

Brief Description: Create a detailed plan outlining a comprehensive and collaborative approach to engaging businesses, by raising their awareness of the importance of early childhood supports and services for families and children, determining ways in which businesses can invest in the early childhood system, and engaging businesses to invest at state, regional, and local levels.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Business is a key beneficiary (and thus key stakeholder in) the early childhood system. With adequate early childhood support, parents can work, and their children (the future workforce) can thrive. Given the resources that businesses have and the needs of the system, they are a partner that needs to be more fully engaged in supporting the system.

Important findings for implementation:

- Use a multi-sector, collaborative approach to implement the plan.
- We need to build the capacity of businesses to fully understanding the importance of early childhood health and education and its impact on the workforce.
- Work with businesses to identify how they can support families/early childhood (financial and nonfinancial).
- Engage businesses broadly (individually and through business associations), providing them with a menu of the ways in which they can support families/early childhood (e.g., invest in a Children's Trust Fund, tax incentives to subsidize childcare, scholarship match, flex schedules, on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships, etc.).
 - Dartmouth (Lebanon area) businesses are subsidizing childcare centers at the local level, grow this to a more systemic level.
 - Impact Monadnock Business Ambassadors: <https://www.muw.org/imba>
 - Vital Communities as an example of a regional approach <https://vitalcommunities.org/early-care-education/>
 - United Way community initiatives engage businesses to support the workforce (e.g., <http://www.graniteuw.org/our-work/granite-united-way-initiatives/work-united>)
 - Make it easy for businesses to engage
 - Provide businesses with information/feedback on the positive impacts of their engagement.
 - Establish a network of business "peer champions" who support to families/early childhood to talk with businesses that are considering becoming engaged in these efforts.



<p>Strategic Initiative 2b: Create and implement a plan to increase community awareness of and engagement in building the capacity of the early childhood system</p>	<p>Brief Description: Create a detailed plan designed to raise community awareness of the importance of early childhood supports and services for families and children, determine ways in which the communities can help build the capacity of the early childhood system, and engage communities in those capacity-building efforts using a collaborative approach.</p>
	<p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Communities are a key support for families and a key partner in the early childhood system. With community support, families and communities thrive. Given the resources of communities, they are a partner that needs to be more fully engaged in supporting the system.</p>
	<p>Important findings for implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a multi-sector, collaborative approach to implement the plan. • Educate communities about the importance of the early childhood system as well as the availability of quality services and support, how to access supports and services, the benefits (to families and the community) of using the supports and services, as well as system needs. • There are many awareness campaigns currently underway, it’s important to created unified messaging across campaigns. • It’s important to explore opportunities for communities to help build the capacity of the early childhood system, through investment and other innovative means. The opportunities will be as unique as the communities themselves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unique partnerships (e.g., municipalities offering building space in-kind for early childhood services) ○ Making community connections through Community Liaisons, Community Health Workers, etc.

Strategic Theme 3: Investment in early childhood programs and services

Community Input Sessions – Implementation Ideas

- Streamline bureaucratic processes and eliminating restrictions and administrative barriers to make funds more accessible - such as through different accountability processes or reducing restrictions on funds
- Target employers to offer benefits like stipends, resources for childcare, on-site childcare, and supplemental wages; and to invest in early childhood
- Educate legislators about early childhood so they can make better funding decisions and minimize duplication
- Figure out how to make benefits accessible for small businesses to offer them and how to keep businesses engaged in this work
- Increase business and community support with funds at the local level; partner with businesses
- Address gaps in what should be funding
- Business investment is not consistent; support should be state funded
- Centralized access points in more places
- Colocation and cohabitation of services/programs to foster integration
- Define the leadership structure
- Evaluate how funds are spent
- Increase state funding for infrastructure or primary prevention services
- Leverage the unemployment rate with employers and the government supporting childcare spots; connect ECE workforce crisis to role in the economy
- Utilize a gap system to address the cliff from the subsidy
- Comprehensively study funding and wages in the system of early childhood
- Elevate stakeholder voices
- Support staff who work to increase funding
- Specify and clarify the roles of each part of the system in order to improve



Strategic Theme 4: Systems Integration

Team Members:

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Objective 1:

Increase state, regional, and local level collaboration and program integration

Success Defined:

- Structures, councils, and committees' ability to participate in the program integration including public and private entities; If there is a way to streamline it would be productive and fruitful for those attending
- Increased regular and consistent communication -people, groups and community know what's happening
- Streamlined forms since they all collected the same data
- To resolve disconnect between K-2 and early childhood at the state and local level
- Build a stronger alliance with all the providers; including for students with special needs
- Clear, consistent communication between providers and between providers and the school system
- Students will be well prepared for success
- Common training and professional development

Strategic Initiative 1a:

Affirm and institutionalize the early childhood regions and networks, ensure ongoing support, and foster collaboration with families and local communities

Brief Description: The existing regional structures would be better aligned geographically and integrated across disciplines and functions. There would be fewer meetings involving the same people, which would be replaced with meetings that brought all groups addressing early childhood together. These regional bodies would be supported by an infrastructure with resources to build the capacity for effective collaboration and systems changes to include communication, professional development, facilitation, tools, and resources.

Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Milford Thrives; Project LAUNCH/LAUNCH Manchester, Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families; Collective Impact Model
<https://collectiveimpactforum.org/what-is-collective-impact/>

Lack of integration across systems is one of the most frequently mentioned opportunities for improvement among stakeholders.



	<p>Important findings for implementation: If the regional bodies and local coalitions were fully developed and supported, that would be the most promising initiative for increasing collaboration and integration. Collaboration starts with communication. The state should facilitate and establish avenues for communication such as calendars to create awareness. There hasn't yet been enough attention on how to build those skills and mechanisms within these communities. We must build the capacity to do the work. There are principles of collected impact that must be understood and evaluated. These principles and practices need to be institutionalized. Shared measurement systems should be established for data collection to better monitor collaborative efforts.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 1b: Formalize, strengthen and broaden local early childhood coalitions that integrate with regional and state structures</p>	<p>Brief Description: This is similar to strategic initiative 1A but for local level coalitions. This would include public and private providers. This would also go beyond providers to include family, municipal, business, civic and faith, cultural organizations.</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Georgia Family Connection Model https://gafcp.org/</p> <p>Important findings for implementation: See 1A above. Additionally, the integration of the local coalitions vertically with the regional and state organizations is essential for sharing of information in both directions.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 1c: Establish a shared, compatible early childhood data system to inform decision-making</p>	<p>Brief Description: The lack of shared data definitions and lack of integrated data is a barrier to understanding the early childhood system in New Hampshire. It is possible to integrate data from multiple agencies while protecting individual privacy that allow key indicators to be viewed across state agencies. This is essential to understanding the needs, gaps, service patterns and program effectiveness of the early childhood system.</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach) Arizona's First Things First Data Tools: https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/data-tools/</p> <p>Important findings for implementation: It is important that data collection systems remain independent so that agencies can meet funder requirements and capture data that may be unique to their organization. An extraction tool should be used to pull key indicators into a shared data system. This will require investment but will result in a comprehensive understanding of how New Hampshire resources are being utilized, and allow for program improvement resulting in greater impact.</p>

Objective 2: Enhance family navigation of integrated programs and services	
Success Defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined experience accessing services, receiving services more quickly Better outcomes such as fewer referrals to DCYF, fewer kids waiting in emergency departments, increased access to early intervention Families knowing what's available, providers know what's available and can direct families to services according to their needs 	
Strategic Initiative 2a: Establish and promote a comprehensive and inclusive system leveraging existing tools for families to navigate and access resources	<p>Brief Description: This system would serve as an umbrella for all early childhood programs and services. It would have structures for integrated family information, eligibility assessment, application, and referral. Having multiple systems increases the burden on organizations to stay updated and valid. Maneuvering the Maze is a document that outlines the family needs of those with health needs. Families were having to share their stories multiple times during intake processes, therefore, we want to incorporate information releases to avoid this reoccurring issue.</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family facing website (SC has this system where families can check eligibility for 40 services at a time and shows them how to connect with those services – https://first5c.org/. Service providers have access to the system in order to reach out to families who could benefit from their services. Child Care Aware of NH hosts the federally mandated consumer education website for child care in NH https://www.nh-connections.org/ Family Support New Hampshire https://www.fsnh.org/ The Build Initiative is a model the alliance is striving to achieve as a fully integrated system First Things First from Arizona has a very comprehensive website that is a nice example https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/ <p>Important findings for implementation: A number of resources already exist in the state, but they are not part of a comprehensive system. These existing resources should be integrated into this strategic initiative. These include Welcome Families, NH Easy, NH Connections, Children's System of Care, UniteUS, 211, NH Parenting. Child Care Aware of NH. Families and providers should be able to use the new system to assess eligibility and apply for programs and services. The system should communicate with providers so that they can follow up with referrals or applicants.</p>
Strategic Initiative 2b: Increase individualized support for families in navigating the system	<p>Brief Description: NH has been good about supporting family navigation in the form of kinship navigator. The navigators need to be available in all parts of New Hampshire. Additionally at the local level, there has been work to build communication between health centers and students/families. For example In Manchester, Amoskeag Health has Community Health Workers (CHWs) based in 7 of the 13 elementary schools so far.</p>

	<p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts has a strong community outreach program. This includes a Community Health Worker Coalition and established mechanisms to pay for the work CHWs do in the community, CHWs are eligible providers under the Affordable Care Act. • There is a growing evidence base for kinship navigation and CHWs/patient navigators since the ACA in particular. <p>Important findings for implementation: These should include kinship navigators and health navigators. Effective approaches already exist in parts of the state that can be used as a model.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 2c: Build cultural and linguistic competence of the early childhood system to better support families</p>	<p>Brief Description: Building cultural and linguistic capacities and confidence to improve access to service is imperative. This would include kindergarten teachers, early learning teachers, child care center owners, healthcare providers, family support workers, among others.</p> <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): Stakeholders identified this as an opportunity to better support families who are non-English speaking, have low to moderate income, are Indigenous, and/or live in rural and urban communities.</p> <p>Important findings for implementation: Building cultural and linguistic capacities and confidence to help better service people is imperative. The cultural norms and practices are important to understand in addition to language.</p>

Objective 3: Increase community voice and influence in design of programs and services	
Success Defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State talking w/ communities to find out what they need • Create community plans on how to address issues and concerns • Base programs on community input and allow communities flexibility as they are implemented • Proactive effort and open pathways to engage communities in creating local solutions • Communities mean geographic areas, affinity populations, demographic groups; community means whoever is relevant for a particular program or service • Community engagement is accessible to everyone (rural, non-English speaking, etc.) 	
Strategic Initiative 3a: Create approaches to specifically engage under-represented groups to influence decisions about programs and services that affect them	Brief Description: Underrepresented and underserved groups include but are not limited to BIPOC, LGBTQ, speakers of other languages, people with disabilities, people of low and moderate income, rural, indigenous peoples. This initiative requires proactive effort to engage these groups based upon a specific understanding of their cultures, assets and barriers to access. This is not solely about engagement but also about responsiveness. The input and feedback from under-represented groups must be utilized to make programmatic decisions.
	Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders frequently mentioned that certain populations were under-served in New Hampshire. These populations face numerous barriers, physical and cultural, to accessing needed services. • Additionally, stakeholders indicated that greater awareness and skills for working with these populations is needed among providers and policy-makers. • In addition to being underserved and having more extensive unmet needs, these families are not intentionally engaged in designing programs and services or influencing how they are communicated and delivered.
	Important findings for implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create avenues for those served to submit feedback in ways that are accessible to them linguistically and logistically. • Look beyond the typical advocates and representatives when forming advisory groups and councils to ensure that many voices are included. There are often a few people speaking for these groups who are invited repeatedly to participate in formal meetings and structures. • Enhance the skills of individual professionals in this area, but also ensure that systems and organizations are culturally and linguistically competent in communications, service delivery, program design and feedback mechanisms. • To respond to local needs, utilize the regional leadership teams and engage local leaders from all sectors and understanding. Municipalities need to have a sense of what their communities' needs are.

Strategic Theme 4: Systems Integration

Community Input Sessions – Implementation Ideas

- Expanding, streamlining, integrating, and updating inter-referral and reference systems and data bases
- Better coordinated services, more easily navigated at the local level
- Colocation and inclusion of all services and supports
- Evaluating programs and services
- Examining and utilizing what already works well
- Meeting needs of stakeholders including listening to families
- Be sensitive to working individuals' capacity to be involved in various collaborative meetings and organizations
- Communication with state when it comes to SPARK, forming of Council, and Preschool Development Grant
- Direct funding for Family Resource Center staff including ASL interpreters
- Strengthening connection of Family Resource Centers to local organizations
- Increasing direct state support of paternal care
- Assessing the regions, including the extent of natural versus forced partnerships
- Engage and include private, nonprofit providers



Strategic Theme 5: Office of Early Childhood

Team Members:

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Objective 1:

Ensure a cohesive and collaborative approach to a mixed delivery, early childhood system

Success Defined:

- Established Governance Structure to include an Office of Early Childhood with authority and full resources (budget, positions) to convene Departments
- Partners to support collaboration and coordination and make recommendations - providing greater access to decision makers, stable funding and visibility within the state

Strategic Initiative 1a:

Establish a collaborative process to define the role of the Office of Early Childhood, including authority, functions, structure and resources

Brief Description: A process will be established to define what is the Office of Early Childhood, scope, responsibilities and an analysis of the optimal structure to define the Office.

The process to establish the Office would ensure that the Office would consider the following:

- Understanding that many programs and services are under the auspices of DHHS because the New Hampshire Legislative and Executive branches have recognized over the years that the majority of people who access Department services have multiple needs that require coordinated assistance from more than one program area.
- Understanding that many programs under NHED span beyond early childhood.

An established office of Early Childhood will have the governance, authority, fiscal and identified positions needed to complete the following:

- An assessment/evaluation on the impact of moving any programs from one Department to another or to a stand-alone Department and how the programs will continue to coordinate across the lifespan of family need.
- Review of current positions within NHED and DHHS that are part of this new governance and whether Supplemental Job Description are updated to help support the Office of Early Childhood.
- An evaluation of the current structure and effectiveness of governance in early childhood in the state (evaluating the impact of the Core Support Team's work, regional lead and data integration work) and make recommendations regarding if, when and how to consolidate functions, details on programs, and DHHS/NHED sections related to early childhood.



	<p>The responsibilities and authority of the Office would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the implementation of any recommendations from assessments outlined above. • Convene and communicate data, evaluation, assessments, key findings to all stakeholders across the Early Childhood Governance including NHED and DHHS and legislature and executive. • Act as a champion for early childhood within and outside of New Hampshire, with the focus on early childhood. • Act as the authority and communicator regarding early childhood services, issues and programs in New Hampshire. • Bring Departments together, not to oversee any individual program but seek to improve cohesion and consistency across funding streams. <p>Key positions within the Office would be established and maintained to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Early Childhood Lead (title to be determined): hierarchy of early childhood will have the authority to convene state and external partners and communicate to the Legislature and Executive (independent stake in early childhood) • Communication • Family Leadership: we service population identified as at risk and how do we meet the needs of all early childhood families in NH • Evaluator: Data-cross dept reporting is identified as initial team
	<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of actions have occurred to revise the current early childhood governance structure since January 2020, including the Governors executive order: https://www.governor.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt336/files/documents/2020-03.pdf • It is important to evaluate what has been implemented since the executive order including any revisions to the governance such as adding the CORE support team and what elements should be added, removed, enhanced in support of an Office of Early Childhood. • A review of program consolidation within each Department has not been assessed. • An assessment/evaluation on the impact of moving any programs from one Department to another or to a stand-alone Department and how the programs will continue to coordinate across the lifespan of family needs. • Review of current positions within NHED and DHHS that are part of this new governance and whether Supplemental Job Description are updated to help support the Office of Early Childhood.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluation of the current structure and effectiveness of governance in early childhood in the state and make recommendations regarding when and how to consolidate functions, details on programs, and DHHS/NHED sections related to early childhood. • Full sustainable protected funding needed to accomplish its responsibilities. • Much of the early childhood governance has also been leveraged with Preschool Development grant funds, which potentially end June 2023. Future funding from this and other sources are uncertain, yet it is important to continue to support the early childhood governance work, NH needs dedicated resources (funds, staffing, etc.).
	<p>Important findings for implementation: All considerations listed above are of major concern, as programs do not clearly stop or cut off at early childhood, and funding streams that span beyond early childhood, as well as fiscal, contracts, policy, legal, technology and data and eligibility systems, payment systems, and impact of those resources, must be considered.</p> <p>The Office of Early Childhood would need to establish protocols to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a champion for early childhood within and outside of New Hampshire, with the focus on early childhood. • Determine and maintain full, sustainable, protected funding needed to accomplish its responsibilities. • Act as the authority and communicator regarding early childhood services, issues and programs in New Hampshire. • Bring Departments together; not to oversee any individual program but seek to improve cohesion and consistency across funding streams. • Leverage and utilize fiscal mapping and reports that exist and have been developed for early childhood is critical. (Note that there are efforts currently underway (Children Funding Project) to complete fiscal mapping)

Objective 2: Expand public understanding of the importance of quality early childhood experiences for all children	
Success Defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public understanding, communication and data will increase support for programs and services that optimize the health, development, education and wellbeing by creating a more cohesive, equitable, and effective early childhood system in New Hampshire by coordinating a continuum of programs from prenatal 8 and ensuring that families in every corner of the state can access the services they need 	
Strategic Initiative 2a: Coordinate messaging across key early childhood champions to ensure a diverse set of voices that will expand public understanding of the importance of early childhood experiences for all children and families	<p>Brief Description: NH has a number of early childhood champions with a diverse set of voices and expertise. For the entire state it is important that there is clear communication about importance of quality early childhood experiences. Expanding and sustaining high-quality programs requires a diverse set of voices, especially those that might not typically have their voices heard. Philanthropy, Department leads and Advocates are critical partners—but not the only—in garnering public support and funding. This does not fall solely on the Office of Early Childhood, but the Office supports communication.</p> <p>Implement strategies to enhance coordination of existing coalitions and communication, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading a Public Awareness campaign including toolkits that can be used by advocates. • Working in close coordination with early childhood advocates. • Communicating and enhancing communication both vertically to the Governor's office and to families/clients and horizontally across DHHS and NHED. • Ensuring that reports, evaluations, and recommendations are comprehensive and intentionally communicated across the Board. • Communicating positive approaches to quality family support. • Communicating the need for services that improve equity and access for all NH families. • Communicating and engaging with business partners and identifying additional partners not currently engaged. <p>Rationale: Reference April 2022 Greenway Strategy Group analysis presentation: Summary of Findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of high cost of living in NH, families up to 300% of federal policy level are barely able to meet basic needs, which includes almost half of the state’s children. • Higher proportions of NH children have conditions requiring supportive services than nation overall. (1 or more emotional, behavioral or developmental condition) • Math and reading proficiency sharp decline 2021, potentially loss of learning during pandemic, fewer students participating in the assessments. (lower for Hispanic and Black students, English language learners, students disabilities and lower income students) • Child care- access- 1 slot for every three children and 20 minute drive and high costs.



	<p>Implementation: This initiative will need to establish the role of the Office as it relates to public understanding.</p> <p>Important considerations for implementation for this initiative :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use modes of communications parents use (various options such as social media, podcasts, streaming, text). • Communication ensures that all families have equitable opportunities to support their child’s development and optimal health. (Families’ needs are unique.) • Utilize and enhance available public awareness campaigns, data, evaluation and reports from early childhood champions. • Change the narrative for families about seeking services, normalizing seeking support. • Increase public awareness across communities, stakeholders about the importance of early childhood 0-8 years through strategic messaging.
<p>Strategic Initiative 2b: Clarify and communicate roles and responsibilities of the early childhood system to include early childhood agencies, families, policy makers, service providers</p>	<p>Brief Description: The current system and governance structure has been implemented in a number of phases and still developing. It is important that all the partners are able to communicate the structure and have tools to reference that will help to describe and speak to the structure. The Office will assist with helping communicating strategies to the public. It will be important to know where you can go to access supports and where you can find information about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office will clearly articulate the governance structure, how families access, to promote equitable access, provide input, and define roles of programs that are part of structure. • The use of data and program outcomes and Best Practices to support communication about the importance of early childhood to all audiences. <p>Rationale (summarize research supporting this approach):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have clarity and understanding <i>within</i> the system, before we can effectively expand public understanding. • It will be important to know where you can go to access supports and where you can find information about services. <p>Important findings for implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote joint clearinghouse for program reporting, new funding opportunities, reporting. • Create two-way communication loop within agencies and services, families, prioritizing family engagement across the structure. • Ensure that the Office of Early Childhood will have a dedicated communications function that is staffed and resourced.



Strategic Theme 5: Office of Early Childhood

Community Input Sessions – Implementation Ideas

- Concentrate and consolidate the focus on ECE at state-level and with legislators, connecting to the local level, and including rural areas; without creating additional work or an additional layer of bureaucracy or oversight
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all the parts of EC system, including the role of the Office, the role of the FRCs, and connection to the Council
- Integrate services / Coordinate across EC, with communication and also with data
- Streamline with existing partnerships and build on what is already working (i.e., don't undo what is working)
- Streamline; avoid an additional layer of bureaucracy or oversight
- Increase investment in EC
- Learn from previous efforts to consolidate
- Create an Office that is separate from DHHS and DOE
- Coordinate across EC
- Learn from other states
- Office should be sustainable
- Office needs to be staffed adequately
- The Office should be transparent
- Consolidate and oversee ECE funding streams
- Development of Office requires input from multiple parts of EC system
- The Office should subcontract





Appendix E: Strategy Team Members

Strategic Theme 1 Quality, consistent, equitable access to opportunities and services for all NH families	
Name	Organization
Marianne Barter	New Hampshire Child Care Advisory Council
Annie Censullo	Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Economic & Housing Stability
Robin deAlmeida	Parent Information Center
Richard Lavers	Department of Employment Security
Katherine Leswing	Office of Social Emotional Wellness, Department of Education,
Joelle Martin	Milford Thrives, Milford Kids Thrive
Aurelia Moran	Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team, Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting Program, Division of Public Health Services
Christine Morrissey	Child Protection, Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team
Shirley Tomlinson	Office of Health Equity, Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team
Rachel Valladares	Migrant Education Program, Department of Education
Margaret Brackett	Greenway Strategy Group

Strategic Theme 2
Early childhood workforce capacity and quality

Name	Organization
Dianne Chase	Bureau of Child Development
Kendra Dix	B8 & New Hampshire Family Voices
Jen Doris	Office of Social Emotional Wellness, Department of Education,
Kristi Hart	Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting Program, Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team, Division of Public Health Services
Marti Ilg	Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Economic and Housing Stability
Nicole Levesque	Bureau of Career Development
Gene Patnode	Department of Health and Human Services
Sue Watson	Comprehensive Family Support Services
Christine Koehn	Greenway Strategy Group

Strategic Theme 3
Investment in early childhood programs and services

Name	Organization
Christine Brennan	Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education
Christina D'Allesandro	New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Joelyn Drennan	New Hampshire Children's Trust
Ben Hoffman	Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration, Division of Economic and Housing Stability
Debra Nelson	Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team
Terry Ohlson-Martin	New Hampshire Family Voices
Melissa White	Department of Education, Division of Learner Support
Becky Whitley	New Hampshire Senate
Christine Koehn	Greenway Strategy Group

**Strategic Theme 4
Systems integration**

Name	Organization
Sandy Alonzo	NAMI New Hampshire (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
Sarah Fox	New Hampshire Alliance of Early Childhood Coalitions (representing the EC Regional leads on B8)
Stefanie King	Office of Social Emotional Wellness, Department of Education
Michelle Lewis	B8 & Parent Information Center
Claudette Mallory	Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration, Department of Health and Human Services
Hannah Maynard Yung	Department of Health and Human Services
Lara Quiroga	Amoskeag Health
Molly White	Office of Social Emotional Wellness, Department of Education
Heidi Young	Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team
Steve Zdravec	SAU 50
Martha Greenway	Greenway Strategy Group

**Strategic Theme 5
Office of Early Childhood**

Name	Organization
Jeanne Agri	Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack
Jane Bard	Children's Museum of New Hampshire
Athena Cote	Department of Health and Human Services
Christina D'Allesandro	New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Krisha A Dubreuil	Department of Education
Debra Nelson	Department of Health and Human Services Early Childhood Integration Team
Colleen Popores	Parent Representative (Employee at Department of Health and Human Services, but on Team as representative of Parents)
Molly White	Office of Social Emotional Wellness, Department of Education
Rebecca Woitkowski	Parent Representative, New Futures
Margaret Brackett	Greenway Strategy Group



Appendix F: Potential Priority Outcome Performance Measures

Priority Outcome

Increase families' partnership in, knowledge of, and choices for their child's development

Potential Performance Measures

Percentage of families aware of early childhood services for families with young children

Percentage of eligible families receiving state-funded Department of Health and Human Services Home Visiting*

Number of families who receive home visiting through Department of Health and Human Services Maternal Infant and Early Childhood, through Healthy Families America, Family-Centered Early Supports and Services*

Number of children enrolled in preschool special education*

Number of children ages 3-5 enrolled in special education*

Percentage of families who understand the process for special education services*

* Denotes a "Measure of Success" from 2020 NH Strategic Plan for Early Childhood

Priority Outcome

Increase families' access to integrated quality early childhood opportunities and services

Potential Performance Measures

Ratio of the average cost of childcare to median income for families with young children (or for two parent family with two young children)

Number of licensed childcare providers*

Number of Department of Health and Human Services-licensed childcare providers, by county*

Ratio of the number of spaces to enrollment in Early Head Start and Head Start, for the state and by county

Number of children receiving Child Care Scholarships*

Percentage of childcare programs rated highly on the Quality Recognition and Improvement System
Percentage of licensed "plus" providers" *

* Denotes a "Measure of Success" from 2020 NH Strategic Plan for Early Childhood

Priority Outcome
Increase comprehensive wellness of young children

Potential Performance Measures
Percentage of women receiving prenatal care*
Percentage of children born with low birth weight
Percentage of children with asthma problems
Percentage of children with one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions
Percentage of children with special health care needs
Percentage of young children who have experienced two or more adverse experiences

* Denotes a “Measure of Success” from 2020 NH Strategic Plan for Early Childhood

Priority Outcome

Ensure children achieve early childhood developmental and educational goals

Potential Performance Measures

Percentage of young children not enrolled in nursery school, preschool or kindergarten, by poverty status

Number of children enrolled in preschool special education*

Number of children ages 3-5 enrolled in Special Education*

Percentage of children performing well on Kindergarten readiness assessments

Percentage of 3rd grade children proficient or above proficient on state Reading and Math assessments

Percentage of 4th graders scoring proficient in 4th grade Reading on NAEP assessments

* Denotes a “Measure of Success” from 2020 NH Strategic Plan for Early Childhood

Priority Outcome

Increase providers' and educators' knowledge and access to resources for quality programs and services

Potential Performance Measures

Number of Pre K – 3rd grade staff with certifications*

Percentage of childcare providers participating in the Quality Recognition and Improvement System

Percentage of childcare providers meeting qualifications outlined as steps in the Quality Recognition and Improvement System, including a high-quality Learning Environment

* Denotes a "Measure of Success" from 2020 NH Strategic Plan for Early Childhood