

Section 1: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LEVER

Strategic Position

The NYS ECAC's commitment to build a comprehensive early childhood system to support New York families is anchored and guided by its four key principles: equity, whole health, parental involvement and public good. We work to maximize parental knowledge, choice and access to comprehensive, high quality and accessible services, and in doing so, will fulfill these intentions:

- ◆ **Equity:** New York's plan will encompass all young children and families, addressing equity and honoring diversity of race, culture, language, ability, and family structure.
- ◆ **Whole Health:** Healthy development begins before birth and includes physical, oral, cognitive, and social-emotional health.
- ◆ **Parental Involvement:** Parents and families play the most influential role in a child's life. The term 'parent' includes all people with primary responsibility for nurturing children.
- ◆ **Public Good:** Families are best supported by strong public policy and services, promoting economic stability, self-sufficiency, and strong and resilient relationships.

Goal 1

Embrace the leadership opportunity for the ECAC to serve as a vehicle to raise 'parent voice' at the state and local level, and to encourage partners and others to include family engagement strategies as regular practice.

Objective A

Amplify and expand parent voices within the ECAC and its reach.

Activities:

1. Enhance ECAC structures and practices to make it easy for parent leadership and voice to contribute by engaging parents in ECAC meetings ([21: Parents Will Attend ECAC Meetings](#)) and creating a parent and family advisory group. ([7: Parent leadership conference](#))
2. Partner with organizations working in family engagement across the state, including the Family Resource Center and NYSPEP, to be a voice in developing an aligned statewide system.

Objective B

Develop a plan to affirm an ECAC racial equity lens, protocol and practices

Activities:

1. Learn resources and develop strategies to enhance the ECAC membership's understanding of strategies to strengthen and implement race equity systematically, to positively impact underserved communities across the state.
2. Collaborate with agencies and organizations who are currently creating opportunities for learning about parent cultural lens to support culturally appropriate practice.

Objective C

Encourage best practices that elevate parent voice and promote family choice.

Activities:

1. Promote the family engagement practices currently used by Head Start for all ECCE settings.
2. Connect and strategize with workforce development initiatives that promote all professions who serve children to embody family centered practice.
3. Gather research and develop thought papers on family centered, two generation frameworks to support families across systems.

Objective D

Career Center pilot (initiated in year 1 of the PDGB5 grant) is expanded in other parts of the state ([10: Developing Career Pathways for Early Childhood Educators](#))

Activities:

1. _____

Objective E

Early Childhood Leadership Mentoring (initiated in year 1 of the PDGB5 grant) will be expanded to additional areas of the state is expanded in other parts of the state. ([23: Early Childhood Leadership Mentoring](#))

Activities:

1. _____

Goal 2

Increase the number and impact of partnerships for family engagement that align and enhance policies and practices in the early childhood system.

Objective A

Learn from successful collaborations on family engagement currently underway, and identify potential partnerships to lend support or initiate discussions.

Activities:

1. Support collaboration among teacher education and professional development to incorporate family engagement and support. ([13: Pyramid Model Parents Interacting with Infants \[PIWI\] trainings](#))
2. Support efforts for infant mental health, maternal mental health, and home visiting services to streamline services and support family choice. ([4: Home Visiting Coordination Initiative](#))
3. Work with the Council on Children and Families, the Child Care Availability Taskforce, and Regional Economic Development Councils to produce regional maps on the need and availability of child care. Collaborate with leaders in family engagement, data, and CCF to utilize maps, information, and resources that have been collected and developed to support family voice and choice.

4. Collaborate with leaders in family engagement, data, and the Council on Children and Families to utilize maps, information, and resources that have been collected and developed to support family voice and choice.
5. Initiate conversations on the integration of family engagement and support competencies and systems for workforce development (Child Protective Services, health care, Office of Mental Health, and Judicial).
6. Identify and promote parent information and education in collaboration with others, such as NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP). Invite ideas from parent and family collaborators through focus groups, surveys, and parent cafés. Use the ECAC website and network to disseminate information.
7. Target efforts to support new parents (including birth, adoptive, and foster) with parenting information by announcing the new Parent Portal (2: [Online Parent Portal](#)), enhance parent kit, and collaborating with the Department of Health to disseminate parent kit at pediatric practices, and with prenatal and postnatal Home Visiting programs.
8. Target efforts in infant and maternal mental health to develop family engagement strategies, resources, and materials with NYS Association of Infant Mental Health and others.

Section 2: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE LEVER

Strategic Position

Our vision is that every child in New York State be healthy, learning and thriving in a family that is supported by a full complement of services and resources essential for successful development. To make that so, we will seek and support opportunities for collaboration and coordination across state agencies and departments, and among local agencies and providers, to result in many more successful examples of mixed-delivery approaches using federal, state, local, and non-governmental resources.

Nearly all states have implemented a child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in order to better measure quality and help providers meet higher quality standards. The NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council has been the driving force behind QUALITYstarsNY (QSNY) for the past seven years. Currently a voluntary 5-Star system, QSNY uses evidence-based practices to ensure more children, including infant and toddlers and especially those who are most vulnerable, have access to quality early childhood programs. We believe that substantially expanding the reach of this proven model, currently funded with a combination of federal, state, and private funds, is one of our greatest opportunities to positively impact young children across the state.

GOAL 1

All New York State ECCE programs and schools are prepared to provide the children and families with high quality settings and best practice resources to help children reach their full potential.

Objective A

Work to expand QUALITYstarsNY across the system, making it available to all providers who choose to participate. (20: QUALITYstarsNY)

Activities:

1. Ensure that the ECAC is at the ready to support the QUALITYstarsNY standards review when necessary as the QUALITYstarsNY leadership team requests.
2. Review QUALITYstarsNY data twice a year to determine progress and specific levels of support.
3. Develop guidelines to provide families, including those using legally exempt care and other options, with user friendly, culturally relevant and linguistically responsive information and materials to inform their choice.

Objective B

Informed by a parent and family advisory group, create materials to support parent choice, and disseminate widely using the ECAC website, Parent Portal and other vehicles.

(2. Parent portal) (7: Parent Leadership Conference)

Activities:

1. Create an inventory of materials that are currently available for families.
2. Identify gaps in information and resources, offer modifications to existing materials where needed, and create new materials to fill gaps. Translate materials as needed.
3. Develop a checklist for families to identify areas of quality they want to look for in early childhood programs.
4. Offer recommendations and support for the implementation of communication efforts to inform parents of the importance of quality in early childhood learning environments, and widely disseminate resources across the state.

Goal 2

All system building efforts are informed by a whole child perspective, that includes mental health and health, as integral for high-quality early care and education.

Objective A

Support the implementation of the Pyramid Model, a framework for teaching social and emotional skills to children, teachers, families and other staff that interact with children.

(13: Pyramid Model Trainings) (14: Pyramid Model Community-wide Leadership teams and Pyramid Model pilots) (15: Pyramid Model: Positive Solutions for Families parent workshops)

Activities:

1. Work in partnership with the Pyramid Model State Leadership Team (SLT) to support and expand future cohorts of implementing programs/schools/family child care with leadership coaches and data collection. Present data at state conferences and to stakeholders at annual SLT meeting.
2. As a thought partner, offer funding strategies for multi-agency collaboration to offer Pyramid Model module trainings across the state. (13: Pyramid Model Trainings)

Objective B

Create partnership forums with the Office of Mental Health and the Department of Health to address ways the ECAC can support whole-child strategies and meet unmet needs.

Activities:

1. Identify and prioritize system level strategies to help identify solutions.
2. Support collaborative efforts to disseminate resources widely to families and communities.

3. Examine policies and practices to ensure early auditory screening, obesity prevention, oral health, public health challenges (e.g. measles, Adverse Childhood Experiences), as well as developmental screenings.

Goal 3

An increased number and impact of partnerships for high quality early care and learning in the early childhood system.

Objective A

Learn from successful partnerships underway, actively support newly funded initiatives, and identify stakeholder interest for specific alignment opportunities, such as when children and families experience system transitions.

Activities:

1. Raise awareness of and promote the establishment of local Kindergarten Transition Teams to help bridge the transition from early care and education or home into kindergarten. [\(5. Strengthening Kindergarten Transition\)](#)
2. Support the alignment early intervention, preschool special education and special education to ensure optimal transition. [\(1: Supporting Transition Practices from Early Intervention to Preschool Special Education into Kindergarten\)](#)
3. Work across agencies to ensure developmentally appropriate standards. [\(9. New York State Education Department \[NYSED\] P3 Summer Institute 2019\)](#)
4. Explore cross-agency coordination of training and technical assistance.
5. Identify opportunities to align and enhance existing regulations among agencies to ensure that the system is transparent and user friendly to parents and providers.
6. Support the implementation of inclusion practices through an ECAC position statement, and inform training for early childhood educators across New York State to ensure our workforce is equipped to support children with special needs. [\(1: Supporting Transition Practices from Early Intervention to Preschool Special Education into kindergarten\)](#)

Objective B

Engage stakeholders to enhance system level policies, practices and collaborative activities for high quality care settings.

Activities:

1. Research and develop a system building framework, prepare examples of administrative and programmatic alignment, and define impact of leveraging resources within and across services.
2. Engage the Council on Children and Families, Department of Health, Office of Mental Health, New York State Education Department, Office of Children and Family Services (Division of Child Care), and others to examine and adopt shared approaches to system building.
3. Offer support to the Office of Children and Family Services for implementation of new federal regulations for legally exempt child care providers.

Section 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Position

Well-educated, well-compensated and committed early childhood educators are one of the most valuable resources New York can offer young children. The ECAC has committed to promoting professional development practices and materials that are equitable, culturally relevant, and linguistically responsive.

The launch of New York's Aspire Registry for Early Childhood Professionals in 2012 established another cornerstone in the New York State's early childhood system workforce efforts. The ECAC recognizes that Aspire not only supports practitioner's professional growth, but also helps assure program compliance, and provides the state with critical early childhood workforce data. The full utilization of this online platform is a key to our workforce system's development success.

Goal 1

Systems and scaffolding are in place to grow the workforce, teach best practices, provide professional development, engage partners to leverage resources and include attention to infant and toddlers.

Objective A

Support needed agreements to require Aspire registry for all ECCE programs locations to support practitioner's professional growth and program compliance. (18: [Aspire Registry Expansion](#))

Activities:

1. Support the development of linkages between the SED TEACH and Aspire registries to help streamline professional development requirements and ease for registering the workforce.
2. Offer recommendations using Aspire workforce data to inform policy, practice, and resource development.

Objective B

Provide guidance and support for developmentally appropriate expectations for all professionals working in contexts with infants, toddlers and young children and their families. (12: [Professional Development Capacity Expansion](#))

Activities:

1. Within the workforce model, recognize that in schools there are leaders, staff, principals, health professionals, family support specialists, school nurses, school secretaries, bus drivers, security guards, resource offices, and others who interact with children and contribute to environments that are healthy and thriving.

2. Inform the distribution of the state early learning documents to new child care providers (DAP Briefs, ELG, CBK) as part of a “Welcome Kit” for new ECCE providers.
3. Provide guidance on career pathways that support the infant and toddler workforce.
(10. Developing Career Pathway for Early Childhood Educators)
4. Pritzker activity to be added.

Objective C

Offer strategies and recommendations to assure skill-building across all early care and education settings, on models for new child care providers to sustain their businesses, and mechanisms for informal caregivers to be included and successful in their business.

Activities:

1. Support recommendations for required foundational professional learning across schools, centers, and home-based providers. (12: Professional Development Capacity Expansion)
2. Promote training all ECCE practitioners on foundational concepts that cut across systems including health, mental health, and special education. (11. Strengthening Protective Factors TOT)
3. Research and financing strategies for new Family child care providers to successfully enter the ECE workforce using sustainable business models.
4. Offer guidance and strategies for informal caregivers to access to coaching and comprehensive professional development, and to be integrated into the early childhood professional system.
(10. Developing Career Pathway for Early Childhood Educators)
5. Explore partnerships to create simple, clear, and financially feasible pathways for informal caregivers to get licensed if they are interested in pursuing this pathway.

GOAL 2

An increased number and impact of partnerships for workforce development that leverage resources to attract workers, improve access to training, and reach underserved communities.

Objective A

Support policies, practices and resources that improve statewide access for workers to degrees and certifications, best practice guidelines, and community support.

Activities:

1. Support current and new strategies for worker access to degree and certification opportunities.
(10. Developing Career Pathway for Early Childhood Educators)
2. Promote increasing the new CUNY & SUNY scholarship for individuals working 20 hours or more in licensed early childhood settings to include public funding.
3. Offer research to identify viable residency models and recommend strategies.
4. Promote system-wide messaging for providers to access to professional development through the Aspire calendar.

5. Provide guidance to ensure that professional development materials and practices are equitable, culturally relevant, and linguistically responsive.
6. Identify strategies to connect professionals across the field of early childhood to relevant resources that support programs, staff, educators, families, and the children in their care.
7. Support strategies to co-train with staff, parents, and families to spread knowledge, learning, and resources as far across the community as possible. (15: Pyramid Model: Positive Solutions for Families Parent Workshops).

Objective B

Look for opportunities across all state agencies and systems where successful early childhood workforce strategies can be adopted, integrated or hosted.

Activities:

1. Offer thinking and promote strategies for Career Centers and leadership initiatives to be available in all regions of the state, and to incorporate pathways for recruitment of the workforce. (10. Developing Career Pathway for Early Childhood Educators)
2. Inform strategies for recruiting and incentivizing a range of early childhood specialists and therapists (e.g. early interventionists) in underserved areas to meet unmet need.
3. Support partnerships to share the ECE career ladder in college and university programs.
4. Explore ways to align professional learning and training requirements across funding streams to identify similar roles and scope of practice for practitioners across the state.
5. Explore the strategy of a comprehensive fiscal analysis to determine what it would take to make meaningful change to compensation in NYS. Use Aspire data to establish baseline and to help project cost of increases.

Objective C

Engage stakeholders to develop policies, practices and collaborative activities that align higher education and early childhood workforce development strategies and best practices.

Activities:

1. Inform efforts to identify strengths and supports needed to meet the responsibility/scope of practice for teacher preparation, professional development, and credentialing, and ensure that all teachers and practitioners are prepared to support young children. (10. Developing Career Pathway for Early Childhood Educators)
2. Support collaboration with higher education institutions across the state to align efforts and better serve the current and future workforce in early childhood; include an audit of early childhood courses across the state.
3. Promote the use of current research to inform the revision of infant and toddler courses and field experience.
4. Offer ideas on strategies to implement yearlong teacher residencies in teacher training.
5. Support the recruitment and professional development of new faculty across the state.

Section 4: FINANCE LEVER

Strategic Position

The ECAC promotes a mixed-delivery system in early care and education settings that has as its core a commitment to innovative thinking and financing models. Financing strategies for system level change include to blend or braid multiple funding sources; to intentionally secure resources in collaborators; to implement shared administrative strategies; and, to support common policies and practices.

We believe that coordination and collaboration at the state levels will create a more flexible and dynamic system to maximize resources from federal, state, local, business, and community partnerships. In addition, the ECAC highly values and supports partnerships among New York's Head Start programs, Prekindergarten, child care, state and local governments, tribal communities, business and faith leaders, and community organizations.

GOAL 1

Actionable short and long-term strategies to fund essential elements for NYS early childhood system.

Objective A

Join with partners to develop and recommend strategies to fully fund The Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).

Activities:

1. Recommend an analysis and the creation of a fiscal plan to fund the ECIDS in New York.

Objective B

Join with partners to develop and recommend strategies to fully fund QUALITYstarsNY statewide; ensuring that all children have access to high quality care and education.

(20: [QUALITYstarsNY](#))

Activities:

1. Work with the Child Care Availability Task Force to submit a request to the Governor's office for an increased allocation in year one of the plan.
2. Create three fiscal plan scenarios that explore approaches to full implementation over 5 years.
3. Develop a fiscal agenda to increase and sustain high quality infant and toddler programs in a mixed delivery system, beginning with data review to gain a nuanced understanding of challenges and strategies to sustain infant and toddler programs, and ultimately a plan to implement a sustainable system of infant and toddler care.

Objective C

Join with partners to develop and recommend funding strategies for statewide enrollment in Aspire, and a three-year sustainability plan. (18: [Aspire Registry Expansion](#))

Activities:

1. Identify the total costs for full workforce participation by current member participation (percentage of workforce by regulatory agency), cost to recruit and enroll new Aspire members, and the cost of retaining current Aspire members. Promote the buy in and commitment from city and state agencies to continue funding Aspire, and consider future financial plans.

GOAL 2

An increased number and impact of partnerships that blend and braid funds to better meet the needs of families.

Objective A

Propose methods to review program funding for identifying blending and braiding options that will make it easier for child care providers to manage their budgets.

Activities:

1. Convene a cross-agency team to design the financial analysis steps, and identify program funds to braid or blend (such as Universal Home Visiting, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Center-based child care, Head Start), and recommendations for training and technical assistance to child care businesses to successfully manage the resources.

Objective B

Design and support analyses of current governance, laws, funding, regulations, and policies that present barriers to funding, to inform specific improvements or replication of successful strategies.

Activities:

1. Convene a cross-agency team to identify the full list or key early childhood investments for analysis, methods for review, and a priority order.
2. Develop a new funding option that allows philanthropic organizations and businesses to contribute funds as a method to support mixed delivery services.
3. Develop infographics for employer tax credit and the New York State Child and Dependent Care Credit. Explore tax credit options for providers, professional development, and parents (Enhanced Child and Dependent Care Credit), facilities tax credits, ECE business loans, facility bonds (for building improvements) (6. [New York State Early Childhood Tax Credits](#))
4. Investigate social impact bonds for early child care; funds for a feasibility study for ECE and the Pyramid Model to examine how it can work in New York.
5. Work with the business community on funding strategies. Utilize the Regional Economic Development Council and the Child Care Desert report. (19: [Addressing Child Care Deserts](#))
6. Develop a funding infrastructure like the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership. This may require legislative changes or waivers to existing regulations.

Section 5: DATA LEVER

Strategic Position

NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

NYS is lacking in an integrated data system for tracking outcomes and system performance

GOAL 1

New York State agencies can easily analyze the impact of early childhood programs to inform decisions for improvements or changes to policy, practice, organization, and funding to meet the needs of all young children and to better inform parent and family choice.

Objective A

Support building an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) that tracks all children from birth regarding the services/supports they receive, the programs that provide the services, and the staff and administrators who work in those programs.

Activities:

1. Work with representatives of all state and New York City early childhood related data systems develop a plan to build an Early Childhood Integrated Data System. Be informed by the Data System Feasibility Study results. ([22: Data Feasibility Study](#))
2. Add to existing data systems a child-based registry to collect information on all children receiving early childhood education services that are not funded through public funds. Provide New York policy makers and program managers data about the children and families we aim to serve.
3. Recommend that each child has a unique identifier at birth to ensure that service delivery tracking translates and transfers across systems, with a family “opt out” feature.

Objective B

Share requested data with the Governor’s office and appropriate public agencies to inform policy making.

Activities:

1. Aspire currently supports programs and agencies to track and maintain records with special attention placed on background checks. In collaboration with OCFS and SED, determine the value add and the costs to add a feature to Aspire for users to track, search and retain background checks and fingerprints for the early childhood workforce.
2. Analyze key data, coordinate a communication’s plan, and make recommendations for the governor to support and implement this new feature of Aspire.

Section 6: RESEARCH AND EVALUATION LEVER

Strategic Position

INSERT INFO

GOAL 1

An increased occurrence and impact of using research findings and evaluation results to recommend policy, statutory, and regulatory changes, as well as structures and best practices to strengthen the NYS early childhood system.

Objective A

Develop a new generation of research analysis to strengthen our ability to disseminate useful research, policy information and resources to inform recommendations and decisions.

Activities:

1. The ECAC reviews and shares currently available primary research to support recommendations to change or improve policy, regulation, and statute.
2. Identify partners and opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders to support the expansion of research and analysis.
3. Collect and generate research questions for undergraduate and graduate level research scientists, students, and institutions. Develop strategies and funding streams to match graduate students with public and nonprofit agencies to embed and fund their research and secondary analyses.
4. Collaborate with workforce and professional development colleagues to develop strategies and funding streams that consider issues of equity in access to funds and research opportunities to ensure students from diverse communities access professional development. This could include requests for funding student internships, fellowships and research in every research and grant proposal.

Objective B

Strengthen capacities to effectively promote research and evaluation findings, to provide guidance to agencies and individuals on methods, and respond to requests for primary research on emerging issues.

Activities:

1. Identify other state and national models we can learn from and collaborate with to strengthen our use of in leading edge research and evaluation.
2. Utilize the ECAC website and platforms to identify and promote professional development opportunities and resources to educate families, early childhood providers, programs, organizations and agencies around evaluation, data collection, and analysis. (3: [Statewide Media Campaign: Talking is Teaching](#)) (16: [Early Childhood New York Shared Services](#))

3. Provide technical assistance to agencies and individuals to provide information on how to design and implement evaluation.
4. Design measures and methods to evaluate the effectiveness of ECAC projects, initiatives and structures to streamline efforts and maximize impact.
5. As ECAC workgroups identify considerations for change/improvement, identify research to inform recommendations for policy, statutory, or regulatory changes. Examples may be to address the large numbers of family child care providers leaving the field and identify ways to support retention in the field; or the impact of the expansion of school-based Pre-kindergarten for three and four-year-olds on community based child care and Head Start is explored across the state.

DRAFT

Section 7: ECAC STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS

Strategic Position

INSERT INFO

GOAL 1

The Early Childhood Advisory Council strengthens its structures and capacity to provide strategic direction and recommendations to the Governor of New York, focusing on coordination and collaboration among state agencies.

Objective A

Organize the ECAC membership meetings and design workgroup structures of the ECAC to effectively and efficiently accomplish goals, to successfully engage agency stakeholders in collaborative approaches for system building, and broaden its coordination with other initiatives to leverage efforts across the state.

Activities:

1. Implement the strategic plan through organized leadership assignments and coordination among the teams and groups, and lead robust meetings (calls or webinars) that focus on specific goals and objectives.
2. Prioritize coordinated activities within and across the ECAC groups and teams to ensure efforts are aligned, efficient and results-oriented.
3. Prioritize coordinated activities with other initiatives as appropriate.

Objective B

The ECAC successfully models an active commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its structure and its work.

Activities:

1. Co-chairs recruit a membership that is diverse and representative of New York State and supported to accomplish all goals and activities, and targets the involvement of parents at ECAC meetings and activities.
2. Membership is supported to use a diversity, equity and inclusion lens in structuring policies, positions, and practices.

Objective C

The ECAC develops structures and resources to implement a comprehensive communications strategy. (16: [Early Childhood New York Shared Services](#)) (17: [Early Childhood Best Practices Sharing and Distribution of Resources](#))

Activities:

1. Create a communication plan and update communication protocols for dissemination to members
2. Expand the ECAC website and utilize it along with social media, print materials, and events (state conferences, NY State Fair etc.) to communicate with the wider public about the work of the ECAC.

GOAL 2

The Early Childhood Advisory Council offers thoughtful and informed recommendations on emerging issues, targeted approaches and fostering innovative ideas for building a comprehensive and sustainable early childhood system that will ensure success for all young children.

Objective A

The ECAC develops recommendations to the Governor's office for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations

Activities:

1. Work with the Governor's Child Care Availability Taskforce on these recommendations.
2. Establish ad hoc teams to address challenges families of young children face such as homelessness, parental incarceration, and immigration. (8. [Life Skills Workers Pilot at Homeless Shelter](#))

Objective B

The ECAC recommends strategies for establishing a business leaders group to inform economic and financial strategies to support large scale system building, and management strategies for small business success by child care providers in local communities.

Activities:

1. Research and develop plans and tools for business engagement to increase awareness across the state using return on investment literature, to promote cost benefit of investments in learning, and to host economic summits on early childhood investment.
2. Prompt ideas and innovative strategies from business leaders to support small businesses in early childhood to develop materials for managing a child care center budget and run a sustainable business model for early childhood.
3. Solicit input on tax credits and other options to support families, programs, and organizations.