NEW YORK STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN
November 2019
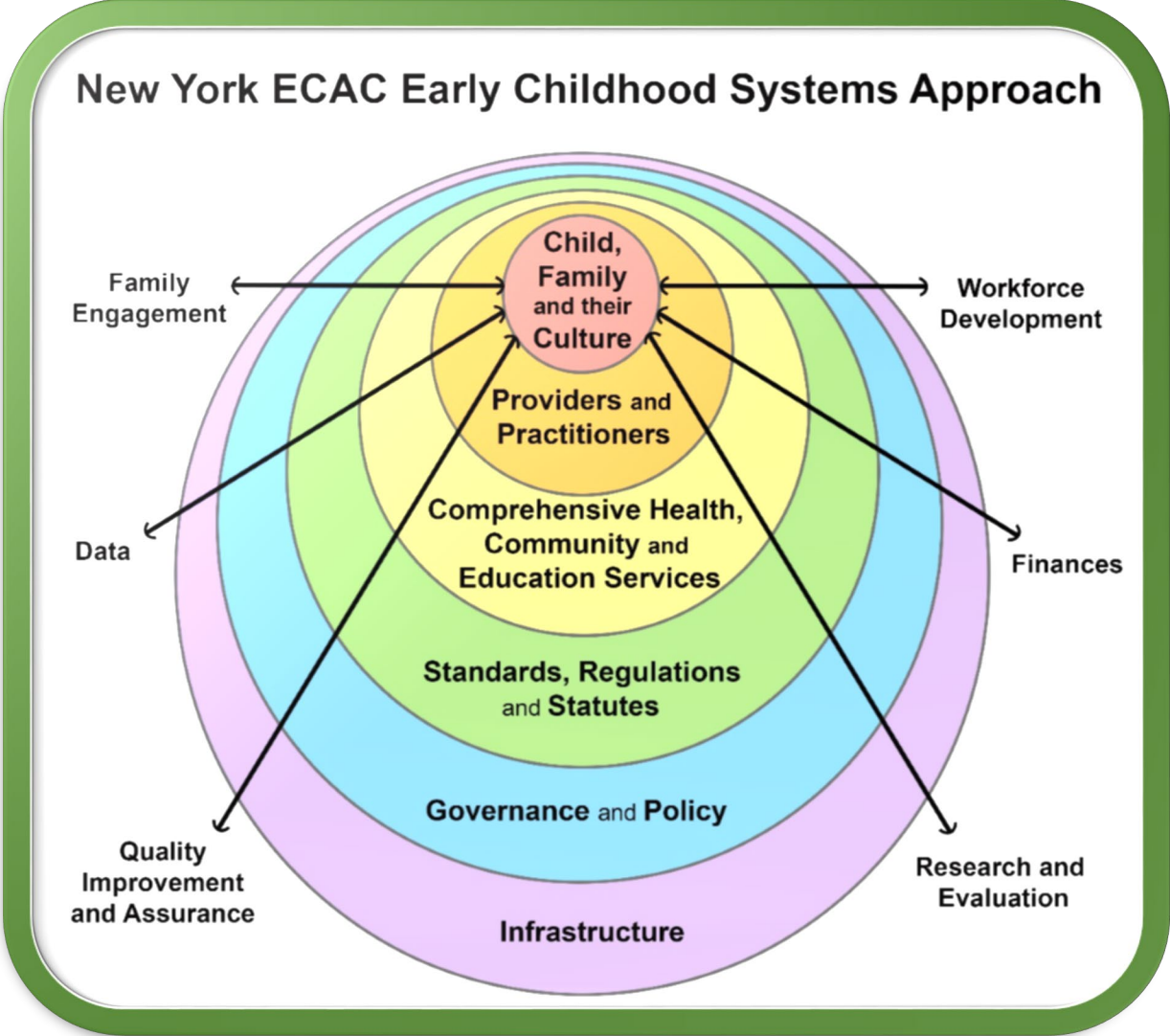
New York ECAC Early Childhood Systems Approach

Early Childhood Advisory Council Vision and Mission

Vision: The ECAC believes every child in New York State should be healthy, learning and thriving in a family that is supported by a full complement of services and resources essential for successful development.

Mission: The ECAC will provide strategic direction and advice to the State of New York on early childhood issues. By monitoring and guiding the implementation of a range of strategies, the ECAC supports New York in building a comprehensive and sustainable early childhood system that will ensure success for all young children.

Strategic Plan Goals

The ECAC developed a set of ten Goals, listed below. Each Goal has related Objectives and Activities, as well as Performance Measures and Progress Indicators that span three years.

GOAL 1

The ECAC strengthens its structures and capacity to provide strategic direction and formal recommendations to the Governor, while communicating to and engaging with its stakeholders and other agencies and organizations to ensure that every young child thrives in early childhood, particularly the most vulnerable populations.

Objectives

1-A: The ECAC makes recommendations to the Governor's Office to inform and support policy, funding, and innovation that insures a comprehensive early childhood agenda.

Activities

1. Support workgroups/teams to prioritize recommendations.
2. ECAC staff models a data informed and evidence-based approach by supplying supportive research and available NYS specific data in an accessible manner to accompany each recommendation.
3. Coordinate ECAC activities with statewide initiatives (and local initiatives where appropriate).
4. Establish topic-specific teams as needed to address challenges families of young children face such as homelessness, parental incarceration, and immigration and to make meaningful recommendations to the Governor.

1-B: Operationalize the ECAC commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in all ECAC structures, strategies, and engagement with stakeholders across the state.

Activities

1. Conduct an audit of the ECAC membership with regard to dimensions of diversity (race, gender, geographic representation, role and function) and design a recruitment plan to create a more inclusive body, per leadership from the ECAC Co-chairs.
2. Membership is committed to using an equity, diversity and inclusion lens in recommending policies, positions, best practices, and collaborative efforts.
   - Research resources on approaches and strategies for the ECAC to strengthen its use of a racial equity lens to positively impact underserved communities across the state.

3. Design ECAC meetings and workgroup structures to accomplish each of the Strategic Plan goals using these methods:
    – Establish leadership assignments among ECAC teams and groups, provide staffing and support, and prioritize coordinated activities within and across the ECAC teams and groups to ensure efforts are integrated, aligned, efficient and results-oriented.
    – Establish special topic teams to address challenges families of young children face such as homelessness, parental incarceration, and immigration to make recommendations to the Governor.

1-C: Promote a constant focus among state agencies to enhance system level policies, practices and collaborative activities that will ensure that every young child thrives in early childhood, particularly our most vulnerable populations.

Activities

1. Research and develop a system building framework, prepare examples of financial, administrative and programmatic alignment for 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 system building approaches that includes a racial equity lens to inform policy and practice.
3. Collaborate with agencies and organizations currently working with parents through a cultural lens to support culturally relevant practices.

1-D: Enhance the ECAC's role as a communication hub for sharing information with members, state agencies, organizations, families and the general public.

Activities

1. Develop structures and resources to implement a comprehensive communications strategy and update communication protocols for members in their role as ambassadors.
2. Expand the ECAC website and utilize it along with social media, print materials, and events to communicate with the wider public about the work of the ECAC.
3. Inventory statewide and community-based initiatives working across sectors to strengthen and expand services for young children and their families and use the ECAC website to highlight innovative strategies and promising 'scalable' practices that have been developed to improve child and family outcomes. Coordinate with other initiatives to leverage efforts across the state.

1-E: Convene an ECAC council for business leaders and philanthropists to inform economic, financing, and communication strategies for large scale system building, developing champions across the state, and inviting significant investments in early childhood.

Activities

1. With ECAC partners, research and develop tools for business and philanthropic engagement and awareness, such as return on investment literature that explains the cost benefit of investments in early learning.

2. Host an economic summit on early childhood investments, such as the benefits of a children's trust endowment.
3. Gather advice on business strategies for early childhood education programs, especially family and group family child care. Include stakeholders from unions representing family childcare, the Early Care and Learning Council, and QUALITYstarsNY to support the development of innovative strategies.

Performance Measures that will indicate that the goal has been achieved:
A. The ECAC membership will be geographically and racially diverse. Parents and business leaders will be added to the membership of the ECAC. Member voices will represent a wide range of expertise, are valued and contribute to successful implementation of the Strategic Plan.
B. Issues of equity will be elevated and supported through increased coordination and collaboration.
C. Communication strategies will be comprehensive and accessible.
D. Recommendations for the Governor's Office will be developed with appropriate evidence-based support.

Progress Indicators		
Year One	**Year Two**	**Year Three**
- ECAC co-chairs are analyzed current membership and recruit new diverse members as needed. - Workgroups are established to represent Strategic Plan sections and model cross-functional approach. - Website is updated. New materials are developed as needed to support workgroup products. - Recommendations are submitted to the Governor's Office. - Business leaders are added to the ECAC and plan summit. - ECAC writes and disseminates a paper on equity in a mixed-delivery system. - Outreach plan has been made to share resources with underrepresented and vulnerable populations.	- Co-chairs continue to seek a diverse membership. - Recommendations are submitted to the Governor's Office - Website analytics indicate a 50% increase in visits and views. - ECAC writes and disseminates a white paper on a topic determined by the membership (home visiting, developmental screening, early intervention and inclusion etc.). - A toolkit has been designed and disseminated to all early childhood education small business in collaboration with state partners. - Plan has been implemented to share resources with underrepresented and vulnerable populations via website and other communication vehicles.	- Recommendations are submitted to the Governor's Office. - Co-chairs continue to diversify membership. - Website analytics indicate a 75% increase in visits and views. - Outreach plan has been executed and resources have been shared with underrepresented and vulnerable populations. - ECAC writes and disseminates policy brief and recommendations building on the white paper developed and disseminated in year two.

GOAL 2

Family engagement and leadership are essential to inform ECAC early childhood system building efforts.

Objectives

2-A: Expand and amplify parent voices within the ECAC.

2-B: Encourage best practices in the field to elevate parent engagement and promote family choice in early care and education.

2-C: All New York State agencies model best practices in family engagement and support.

GOAL 3

All New York State early childhood care and education programs are prepared to provide children and families with high quality settings, and have supportive services and resources in place to improve quality.

Objectives

3-A: Work to expand QUALITYstarsNY across the early childhood system, making it available to all providers who choose to participate.

3-B: Informed by a parent and family advisory group, create materials to support parent choice of early childhood education programs, and disseminate widely using the ECAC website, Parent Portal and other vehicles.

GOAL 4

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

Objectives

4-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.

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

GOAL 5
An increased number of successful partnerships will further develop the mixed-delivery system of high-quality early care and education programs.

Objectives

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

5-B: Engage early childhood programs and agencies in pursuit of partnership opportunities.

5-C: All families have knowledge and choice in high-quality early care and learning programs to meet their needs in health, education, mental health, disability, and family support.

GOAL 6
Comprehensive interdisciplinary strategies are in place to grow the workforce and to support children from birth through age five and their families.

Objectives

6-A: Provide guidance and support for developmentally appropriate and culturally-responsive expectations for all professionals working in contexts with infants, toddlers and young children and their families.

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

GOAL 7
The State's early childhood education workforce system, New York Works for Children, is fully implemented.

Objectives

7-A: Support agreements to require the Aspire Registry for all ECCE programs to enhance practitioner's professional growth and program compliance.

7-B: Offer strategies and recommendations to assure a system of competency-based workforce and professional development across all early care and education settings.

7-C: Career Center satellites, and the Early Childhood Leadership Initiative satellites, are expanded to all 10 Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) regions in the state.

7-D: Support policies, practices and resources that improve statewide access for the ECCE workforce to earn degrees and certifications and model best practice guidelines.

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

GOAL 8

Actionable short and long-term strategies are in place to fund essential elements for New York State's mixed-delivery system.

Objectives

8-A: Develop and recommend strategies to fully fund the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).

8-B: Create a new fiscal analysis of all allocated resources dedicated to young children in NYS to determine duplication, unmet need, and make new funding recommendations that include an emphasis on providing more responsive services to infants and toddlers.

8-C: Continue collaborative efforts to develop concepts and white papers for innovative funding strategies, including issues addressing compensation for the early education workforce.

8-D: Develop and recommend strategies to fully fund QUALITYstarsNY statewide; ensuring that all children have access to high quality care and education.

8-E: Join with partners to develop and recommend funding strategies for statewide enrollment in the Aspire Registry, and a three-year sustainability plan.

8-F: Develop and implement an infrastructure of funding and support that incentivizes community partnerships and allows programs to blend and braid all applicable funding to increase access for all families.

GOAL 9

An Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) is created for tracking service delivery, outcomes and system improvements to drive accountability, policy development, funding and best practices across the state.

Objectives

9-A: Support the development of 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.

9-B: Use newly available data to inform public policy, communications, and collaboration.

GOAL 10

Research findings and evaluation results are used to recommend policy, statutory and regulatory changes, as well as structures and best practices to strengthen the NYS early childhood system.

Objectives

10-A: Develop research and evaluation capacity to strengthen our ability to process and disseminate useful research, policy information and resources to inform recommendations and decisions.

10-B: Provide guidance to agencies and individuals on methods and respond to requests for primary research on emerging issues.