TO: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education

FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.

DATE: October 30, 2013

SUBJECT   Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant: Progress Report

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to provide progress regarding the first year of implementation of the *Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant*.

BACKGROUND:

Maryland has received one of nine *Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund Grant (RTTT-ELC)* award for a total of $50 million over four years. The *Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge* program is co-managed by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

MSDE has been designated as the lead agency to coordinate a multi-agency approach to submitting Maryland's state plan. The current Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education, functioned as the lead team for this project, established a core working group, and worked with staff at MSDE, namely the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) and the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS), to coordinate all aspects of submitting a competitive State Plan.

Maryland's application included 10 thematic projects, designed to improve the school readiness results from 81 percent in 2010 to 92 percent in 2015, the last year of the grant. In addition, it strives to reduce the readiness gap for low income children, English language learners, and young children with disabilities.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

Both lead divisions, the Divisions of Early Childhood and Special Education/Early Intervention Services, have embarked on implementing the ten projects which are broken down into 698 specific tasks which have been outlined in Maryland's approved Scope of Work (SOW). As of September 30, 2013, after 18 months of implementation, 68 percent of all tasks have been completed or are in progress. The remaining tasks will commence in late 2013 or later. While some tasks had to be extended, for which the U.S. Department of Education gave approval, all projects are currently on time. The U.S. Department approved five (of six) budgetary amendments to the approved RTT-ELC plan.

The major milestones since July 2013 are:

- Completion of the planning phase and leadership program of all 24 local early childhood advisory councils;
- Participation of more than 1,000 early childhood programs in Maryland EXCELS since it opened in July 2013;
- Expansion of Judy Center site in Baltimore City as a result of a unique public-private partnership model;
- Remarkable gains in vocabulary knowledge for English Language Learners who participated in the Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment Through Stories (VIOLETS);
- Preparation for field test of the Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) and receipt of a Federal award to establish a state consortium of enhancing the current version of CAS;
- Completion of *The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Children*. (ATTACHMENT A)
- First Early Childhood Leadership Academy with 30 school teams from 21 local school systems.

A detailed accounting of the progress for each of the ten projects (ATTACHMENT B) indicates the progress of scheduled project activities that have been initiated and were underway toward meeting the set of milestones and deliverables by December 31 of this year.

The Board is being asked to formally approve the *Early Childhood Engagement Framework*. The Family Engagement Coalition plans to continue its work on the framework's implementation strategies.

ACTION:

I am requesting that the State Board of Education approve the *Early Childhood Engagement Framework.*

ATTACHMENTS (2)

LL/rg 103013

The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework:

Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children

WORKING DRAFT[1]

DEVELOPED BY:
THE MARYLAND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COALITION

[1]This draft represents the work of the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition as of August 14th, 2013

DRAFT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
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Introduction

Family engagement is a critical component of high-quality early care and education. When done well, family engagement practices can support the healthy social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of young children, regardless of ethnic or socioeconomic background.[2] Similarly, families—particularly those with limited income—benefit from family engagement practices when early care and education providers link them to support in times of need, help build their peer networks, increase their understanding of child development, and provide classes and training to enhance parenting practices and improve job skills.

At the same time, research has documented the negative impact of socioeconomic and demographic variables like poverty and low levels of parental education on school readiness outcomes.[3] No less impactful are the more immediate family and household conditions that can negatively affect school readiness like maternal depression; child hunger; abuse and neglect; and family instability caused by divorce, military deployment, and any termination in relationships or change in family dynamics. Although often correlated with poverty, these proximate factors can either directly impact school readiness or give rise to other conditions—like behavioral problems—that then affect a child's ability to meet key developmental and learning milestones.

Given the importance of family engagement in promoting positive outcomes for children, and given the negative school readiness outcomes that can result from certain socioeconomic conditions, it is imperative that Maryland's early childhood community works not only to promote family engagement in early care and education settings, but also to improve a child's home environment when necessary. Equally important, it is critical that the state lead a coordinated effort to support early care and education providers as they implement family engagement strategies that promote both child and family well-being.

Maryland early childhood stakeholders have developed innovative strategies to support vulnerable families, providing opportunities for parents to develop their parenting skills, learn about child development, and become more socially and financially self-sufficient. Currently, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) funds 22 Family Support Centers as part of the Maryland Family Network, 27 Judy Center Partnerships, and a statewide network of family support services for children with disabilities. Home visiting programs in every jurisdiction—supported by MSDE and the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene and Human Resources—work with thousands of families each year, focused on parent–child health and wellness. These programs work in combination with the state's 19 federally funded Head Start grantees to provide a wide array of community supports for families of young children. In addition, federal and state funding is often combined to support families in Maryland. This has occured, for example, when state-funded Judy Center Partnerships supplemented federal Head Start and Early Head Start programs to increase the hours and days of program operation.

This Framework builds on Maryland's commitment to supporting young children and their families by outlining goals and strategies to support family engagement initiatives implemented by early care and education providers.

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

Maryland's *Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework* is designed to support intentional thinking and action regarding the implementation of family engagement policies and practices both at the state level and among early care and education providers who serve young children, including children from poor families, children with disabilities and special health needs, and dual language learners. The Framework should be used to assess current family engagement activities and promote policies and practices that

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[2]See Christenson, S.L. (2000). Families and schools: Rights, responsibilities, resources, and relationships. In R.C. Pianta & M.J. Cox (Eds.), *The transition to kindergarten* (pp.143–177). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. and McWayne, C., Hampton, V., Fantuzzo, J., Cohen, H.L., & Sekino, Y. (2004). A multivariate examination of parent involvement and the social and academic competencies of urban kindergarten children. *Psychology in the Schools*, 41(3), 363–377.

[3]See, for example, Duncan, G.J. and Brooks-Gunn, J. (1997). *Consequences of growing up poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Yeung, W. J., Linver, M. R., Brooks-Gunn, J. (2002). How money matters for young children's development: Parental investment and family processes. *Child Development*, 73(6),1861–79.

support families. More specifically, the purpose of this document is to:

1. Recognize the importance of family engagement as a core component of early care and education;

2. Put forth a set of common goals for family engagement across the early childhood system and within individual early care and education providers; and

3. Offer family engagement strategies for early care and education providers and identify resources that support the implementation of those strategies.

It is important to note that a number of community organizations in addition to early care and education providers offer family engagement initiatives in Maryland. Although this document is written with early care and education providers in mind, museums, public libraries, medical offices, hospitals, community colleges, and other community organizations work on a daily basis to support the goals outlined in this Framework. Examples of the work from these organizations are also highlighted here.

DEVELOPING THE MARYLAND FRAMEWORK

Maryland's Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant provides an opportunity to coordinate the state's early childhood family engagement practices and identify a common set of goals for the state's family engagement initiatives. At the federal level, the *Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework*, published by the Office of Head Start, and the draft of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) family engagement framework contain organizational structures that can be adapted and used for this purpose. Maryland's vision for family engagement is informed by both of these federal resources.

Maryland's *Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework*, while informed by both federal resources, utilizes the overall structure of the *Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework* published by the Office of Head Start. The Maryland Framework adopts the Head Start outcomes (referred to as goals in this document) with goal definitions and strategies tailored for the state. The strategies contained within this Framework are organized into "program foundations" and

"program impact areas" categories similar to the Head Start Framework. It is important to note that not all strategies in the Maryland Framework will be applicable for every early care and education provider, and the strategies are not additional program requirements, but rather guidelines for helpful practices.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Prior to the development of the Maryland Framework, the Coalition agreed on a number of core principles that guided the work. These guiding principles are:

- Positive, respectful, and empathetic relationships between providers and parents are the foundation for successful family engagement strategies.

- Family engagement strategies must be appropriately resourced and designed to meet the specific needs and constraints of Maryland's low-income population. From the parental perspective, the stresses associated with economic hardship, language and cultural barriers, raising a child with disabilities, and inflexible work hours, among other factors, can make family engagement difficult. From the provider perspective, the demands that accompany being a small business or a federal or state grantee can also make the implementation of family engagement strategies difficult.

- Family engagement practices operate within a larger state system and can be enhanced or inhibited by other early childhood policies. Current and proposed state-level early childhood policies should be evaluated for their potential impact on the family engagement goals articulated in this document.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

Maryland's *Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework* is organized in a way that best supports the document's overall goals of: (1) recognizing the importance of family engagement as a core component of early care and education; (2) setting forth common goals for family engagement efforts; and (3) summarizing effective family engagement strategies and resources. The first substantive section of the document defines "family engagement" in early childhood. This definition, adopted by the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition,

combines a number of different family engagement definitions in order to capture the unique thinking of the group.

After defining family engagement, the Framework presents a set of common goals for family engagement practices that are derived from the *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework*. The final section of the document offers a set of general strategies that early care and education providers can use to meet each of the goals. Like the Head Start Framework, these goals are organized around the key program foundational areas of leadership and professional development, as well as the program impact areas of program environment, family partnerships, teaching and learning, and community partnerships.

In addition to these sections, the document contains "call out boxes" that highlight examples of successful family engagement strategies in Maryland, as well as three appendices with additional information. Appendix A contains a crosswalk of the outcomes included in the U.S. Department of Education's Framework with the *Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework*. Appendix B provides national and state resources that can be used by early care and education providers to implement the strategies that support the goals contained in the document. Appendix C provides definitions of key terms used in the Maryland Framework.

Maryland's Definition of Family Engagement

The first step in uniting Maryland's early childhood community around a common set of family engagement goals and strategies was for Coalition members to agree on a definition of family engagement for the state. After consulting a number of definitions from well-known organizations in the field, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children; the Office of Head Start, the National Family, School, and Community Engagement Workgroup; and the Harvard Family Research Project, the Coalition constructed a hybrid definition from these existing definitions that best captures the state's vision. The definition is:

Family engagement is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement; it is continuous from birth into the school-age years; and it occurs across the various early care and learning settings where children are. Family engagement means building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent–child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of parents and children alike. It reflects cultural competent and universal design approaches, encompassing the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and activities of all families, as well as early care settings that support all children's positive development. Family engagement happens in the home, early childhood settings, school, and community. Sustainable family engagement operates with adequate resources, including public–private partnerships, to ensure meaningful and effective strategies that have the power to impact student learning and achievement.

THE MARYLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Family Well-Being

Promote Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Support Parents as Lifelong Educators

Support Educational Aspirations of the Family

Support Engagement in Transition

Connect Family to Peers and Community

Create Leaders and Child Advocates

STRATEGIES

PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS

Leadership

Professional Development

PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS

Environment
Family Partnerships
Teaching and Learning
Community Partnerships

SCHOOL READINESS OUTCOMES

The Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework puts forth a set of common goals for family engagement to be used across the Maryland early childhood system and within individual early care and education programs. These goals are realized by implementing family engagement strategies that focus on foundational areas like leadership and professional development as well as strategies that focus on the "points of impact" in early care and education settings. The successful implementation of the strategies promotes positive school readiness outcomes.

The Framework

GOALS OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family engagement practices must be initiated and implemented with clear goals in mind. Below are the seven goals that Maryland state family engagement initiatives and the family engagement practices of early care and education providers should target. These goals are consistent with Maryland's definition of family engagement and work to operationalize the vision articulated by the definition. As both the state and early care and education providers work to support families with young children, they should do so with these specific goals in mind.

Goal 1: Family engagement initiatives should promote family well-being.

Maryland's vision for family engagement is a two-generation strategy. Families are the key to a child's early development and learning. As such, a goal of family engagement initiatives must be to support family well-being. Maryland's

family engagement initiatives and the family engagement practices of early care and education providers should promote the safety, health, and financial security of families so that they can successfully parent their young children.

Goal 2: Family engagement initiatives should promote positive parent–child relationships.

Research clearly documents the link between competent parenting, strong parent–child bonds, and positive school readiness outcomes. Given the importance of parent–child relationships, it is imperative that Maryland's family engagement initiatives and the practices of early care and education providers have the goal, beginning with the transition to parenthood, of supporting parents and families in developing warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development. This begins with developing warm, nurturing relationships among adults, including between staff members, and between staff and parents and other adult family members.

Goal 3: Family engagement initiatives should support families as lifelong educators of their children.

Parents and family members are their child's first teachers. Maryland initiatives and the practices of early care and education providers should create collaborative relationships with a variety of service entities to support and empower the family in its role as first teacher.

Goal 4: Family engagement initiatives should support the educational aspirations of parents and families.

Research has documented the link between parental education—particularly maternal education levels—and positive school readiness outcomes. When parents and other adults in the family strive to achieve their educational goals, they become a positive example to their children about the importance of learning. Therefore, a goal of Maryland initiatives and the practices of early care and education providers should be to support parents and families to advance their own interests through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.

Goal 5: Family engagement initiatives should support families through the care and education transitions of early childhood.

When a child transitions to a new early care and education provider, or to the formal education system, the child and family changes setting, teacher, and learning culture. These transitions are challenging for parents and families—and often for providers and teachers—to navigate. Therefore, Maryland initiatives and the practices of early care and education providers should support families as they make transitions with their children to new learning environments.

Goal 6: Family engagement initiatives should connect families to their peers and to the community.

Personal networks are a key source of support for families with young children. Learning from one another and sharing common experiences can inform parents and families about resources, expand parenting strategies, and offer a source of comfort. Maryland initiatives and the family engagement practices of early care and education providers should support parents and families to form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and that enhance social well-being and community life.

Goal 7: Family engagement initiatives should support the development of families as leaders and child advocates.

When parents and families are empowered, they can be a strong force for positive change in their child's education and in many other areas of life. Therefore, Maryland initiatives and the family engagement practices of early care and education providers should support families to participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

PROGRAM/PROVIDER STRATEGIES TO MEET THE GOALS

The goals outlined above summarize the areas that family engagement initiatives at both the state and provider level should address. In this section, strategies are provided that can be used by early care and education providers to meet the goals. These strategies are organized in a similar way to the *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework*. Strategies are offered to support the *foundational* areas of a program, which include leadership and professional development. In addition, strategies are also offered to support family engagement initiatives at the program or provider's *"point of impact."* These impact areas include program environment, teaching and learning, family partnerships, and community partnerships. A wide variety of strategies are offered that are applicable in multiple settings, including for family child care, center-based child care, nursery schools, public prekindergarten programs, and Head Start programs.

Foundational Area: Program Leadership

- Ensure that systems, supports and resources are in place to address professional development, continuous improvement, provider environment, and partnerships related to supporting family well-being and positive parent–child relationships.

- Develop relationships with community members and community organizations that support families' interests and needs.

- Ensure staff members have appropriate training and effective supervision to support families and their relationships with their infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.

- Establish a reciprocal relationship with early intervention services and school systems to support and empower families in their continued role as their child's lifelong educators.

- Form agreements with education entities and organizations that support staff and families' education and training goals.

- Ensure that parents' opinions are heard and included in the program planning processes (e.g., policy council and parent committees).

MARYLAND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ACTION:
MARYLAND'S FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER NETWORK

Like two-generational approaches around the country, Maryland's Family Support Center (FSC) network is designed to strengthen families, linking family economic success strategies for parents with high quality early care and education for children. By their very nature Family Support Centers are of, by, and for both parents and children, all day, every day and **promote the well-being of the whole family** (Goal 1).

Parents and children come to a Family Support Center together because of the program's goal to foster and **promote positive parent-child relationships** (Goal 2). Children, ages birth to four, are cared for on site in a high quality early education program and/or through home-based services. The focus is on effective teaching, building trusting relationships between adults and children and among the adult staff and participants, and offering integrated, comprehensive services and supports for children, parents, and families, including health, nutrition, and mental health. The activities are designed to **support families through the care and education transitions of early childhood** (Goal 5) and **prepare families to be lifelong educators of their children** (Goal 3).

Parents' and families' educational aspirations are supported (Goal 4) with a "whatever it takes" approach, through training, education (e.g., ABE, GED, External Diploma, Alternative High School, ESOL), and job assistance that lead to family-supporting work. FSCs link parents to public benefits and work supports and may offer financial coaching, education and access to financial products and services.

Underpinning all services at Maryland's FSCs are strategies that engage mothers and fathers both as parents and workers by increasing their confidence, competencies, and resilience as individuals. FSCs support parents in their role as their child's best advocate in ways that build self-efficacy and empower parents through parenting education and health education. Developing parents as leaders through a number of strategies, including the Parent Leadership Institute, **supports the development of families as leaders and child advocates** (Goal 7). Helping adults in the family establish or enhance their social networks of support as parents and workers, **connecting families to peers and to the community** (Goal 6), is a goal of the FSCs reflected in the design of the program.

With Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funding, FSCs are adding services that provide training and technical assistance to child care providers in the community and smooth transitions for all children in the neighborhood, birth to five, to and from early care and education settings (Goal 5): elementary schools, private center- or home-based child care, family support, home visiting, or other family-chosen options.

For more information, see: http:/www.marylandfamilynetwork.org

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Foundational Area: Professional Development

- Develop knowledge of relationship building that is grounded in cross-cultural responsiveness and strengths-based perspectives.

- Reflect on daily practice and personal experience to increase self-awareness and effective relationship–building with families.

- Develop knowledge of professional ethics in the areas of confidentiality, boundaries, and self-determination.

- Develop skill in coordination and collaboration with community partners.

- Gain knowledge about: the needs of prenatal and postnatal women and their families; child development and parenting practices; family financial literacy and financial

MARYLAND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ACTION:
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE STATE'S JUDY CENTERS

A unique aspect of Maryland's early care and education system is the presence of Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers. Known as "Judy Centers," these entities are located at or near Title I schools, and provide access to high quality early childhood education programs, as well as comprehensive family support services. Judy Centers serve families with children birth through five years of age and typically services are available 7 to 12 hours a day, year round. The goal is school readiness.

Judy Centers are unique because they promote school readiness through collaboration with community-based agencies, organizations, and businesses. This integrated approach promotes program and service delivery that is conveniently located under one roof at or near the schools, ensuring that young children who may begin school at a deficit are given opportunities to start their formal education on a level playing field with their peers. The focus on **family well-being** (Goal 1) and an Adult Education Component (Goal 4) are key aspects of the Judy Center model.

Judy Centers must meet 12 Component Standards that are deemed essential to children's school readiness. Component V is Family Involvement. The Judy Center's role in family involvement is centered on the family's ability to participate in and support their child's early learning. Supporting **positive parent–child relationships** (Goal 2), **families as lifelong educators** (Goal 3), and **family engagement in transitions** (Goal 5) is accomplished through a host of different activities that may include Parent Cafes, programs for Dads and Other Significant Men in the Lives of Children, playgroups, puppet and children's theaters, story time, and family field trips. Activities and events are focused on the 7 domains of learning that are used to assess school readiness when children enter Kindergarten. Family activities provide social networking opportunities that **connect parents and caregivers to their peers and community** (Goal 6) and support **family empowerment and child advocacy** (Goal 7) through event planning, volunteer opportunities, and membership on Judy Center Partnership Steering Committees. The family engagement services provided at a Judy Center depend on the collaboration of all the partners and the specific needs of the children and families. Judy Center staff communicates on an ongoing basis with parents through face-to-face contact, home visiting, regularly published newsletters that include calendars of events, flyers and brochures that include information about their programs and services, and many have websites.

There are currently 27 Judy Centers and three satellites located throughout Maryland. Through the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant, two Judy Center satellite sites were established at Carmody Hills Elementary School in Prince George's County and at the DRU Judy Center located at The Historic Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School in Baltimore City. A satellite is an extension of an existing Judy Center. The partnerships formed by the existing Judy Center serve the satellite catchment area and the same Coordinator typically serves both sites.

For more information on Judy Centers, see: http://www.msde.maryland.gov/MSDE/divisions/child_care/early_learning/Judy.htm

stability; parenting a child with a disability; engaging fathers; how mental health and wellness affects families; trauma and its effect on relationships; communication styles; and relationship building.

- Include teachers/teacher assistants in parenting education sessions so parents and teachers can share information about child development and program curriculum.

- Create "learning communities" for staff.

- Develop staff skills to support families to meet their learning goals.

- Develop knowledge about different kinds of education and training opportunities available to families.

- Prepare staff to engage parents in appropriate ways at all times.

- Conduct joint transition trainings across provider and local educational agencies.

- Gain understanding about the operations of early intervention services, public schools and the child care provider community and acknowledge the constraints and opportunities in building local partnerships (differences in policy, regulations, budgets, organizational design, etc.).

- Conduct staff training about how to encourage parent leadership and advocacy and facilitate activities that help parents and families enhance parent–child relationships; strengthen their role as educators; reflect and set learning goals; and prepare for transitions.

- Create safe and respectful environments where adults—staff and parents—can learn from each other and ask for the kinds of information that they find helpful as individuals and members of a group.

- Provide space and resources for monthly events chaired by parents, for parents.

- Provide training on multicultural principles, leadership development, and advocacy for staff and families.

Impact Area: Program Environment

- Welcome all families—and all family structures, sizes, and arrangements.

- Initiate relationships with families that are receptive, responsive, and respectful.

- Include family-friendly spaces with pictures and materials that affirm, welcome and accept all families.

- Engage in honest dialogue with families about their expectations and staff/program objectives.

- Hold the child and family in high regard and partner effectively with all parents.

- Provide opportunities that support parents' needs to connect with other parents for reflection, information, ideas, and support.

- Support parent–child relationships in a way that values the culture and language of the family and recognizes how cultural influences impact family development.

- Welcome families to observe and participate in their child's classroom or home-based activities.

- Support and encourage parents to share tips on everyday learning practices with staff and other families.

- Make information available that supports adults' personal growth and career development.

- Ensure that parent meetings and trainings are announced routinely, that announcements are inviting, and that language is not a barrier to parent participation.

- Provide opportunities for families to connect with other families in the program or community who have similar personal or professional goals.

- Welcome and engage families as partners in transition planning.

- Help families identify and understand quality criteria in early childhood settings as children make transitions from prenatal to postnatal services, new service options, new classrooms, or new home visitors.

- Create an environment that welcomes and affirms parent leadership and advocacy in the program.

- Work with parents to arrive at agreed upon understandings of how to partner and how to collaborate with each other within the program.

Impact Area: Family Partnerships

- Help families identify their interests, articulate their strengths and needs, and accomplish and/or develop goals.

MARYLAND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ACTION:
LEARNING PARTIES

One effective family engagement initiative implemented in Maryland is *Learning Parties*, created by Maryland Ready At Five. Guided by a trained professional, the interactive, hands-on, parent–child "parties" promote **positive parent–child relationships** (Goal 2). Based on the belief that **parents are lifelong educators of their children** (Goal 3), Learning Parties teach parents how to make everyday moments learning moments through playing, singing, talking, reading, and engaging in fun, learning activities. Learning Parties also **connect families to their peers and community** (Goal 6) by cultivating social networks and enabling parents to meet, talk with, and learn from other parents/families. Often, Learning Parties are held in schools and bring preschool children and their families into a school environment prior to being enrolled. As such, they support the goal of **family engagement in transitions** (Goal 5) as well.

Ready At Five has developed a Learning Party Curriculum in six key Domains: *Language & Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Scientific Thinking, Social & Emotional Development, Physical Development (Play), and The Arts.* Additionally, the Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment Through Stories (VIOLETS) curriculum, also developed by Ready At Five, has a Learning Party component, and is often offered to children and their parents/families at programs implementing the VIOLETS Read Aloud Program.

The Learning Party series for each domain includes curriculum for four 90-minute Learning Parties (for a total of 24 across all domains) during which parents learn a variety of techniques and strategies for improving the skills and abilities of their children while children participate in activities on the same themes as their parents. At the Learning Party, parents have an opportunity to practice the activities with their child while trained Learning Party leaders provide positive feedback and constructive suggestions. Parents are also given a homework assignment, as well as a variety of books, developmentally appropriate materials, and educational toys to start an early learning library in their home.

Learning Parties have been offered to hundreds of parents and children at no cost to them throughout Maryland's 24 jurisdictions.

For more information, see: http://www.readyatfive.org/raf/programs/learning-parties.html

- Use goal-oriented home visits to establish relationships with families and to identify and support their interests and needs.

- Assist families in using resources and systems of support as necessary and appropriate.

- Provide opportunities for parents to learn about expectant parenting and prenatal health, the developing role of young parents (for adolescent parents), and/or about their roles as new mothers and fathers.

- Foster meaningful, reciprocal relationships between mother and child and father and child in a manner that is both culturally receptive and responsive.

- Help families identify appropriate practices that complement the stages of their developing child.

- Help parents and families ensure the health and safety of their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

- Support a father's efforts to connect with and be responsible for his child at all ages and stages of development.

- Support families as they seek support from mental health consultants or other community agencies when there are parent–child relationship challenges that require additional services.

- Foster strong co-parenting relationships as appropriate.

- Assist families to develop their own education and training goals and provide referrals to educational resources (GED, adult education, ESL, employment opportunities, workplace literacy, parenting skills, job training, job preparation skills, etc.) to link families to the necessary supports to further their education/training.

- Invite past program parents and community volunteers to share their educational and career experiences with families.

- Invite families to volunteer or apply for jobs in the program that support their parenting, career or life goals. Support parents' interests and goals by referring them to volunteer opportunities in the program and community.

- Help families develop transition plans for themselves and their children.

- Make sure that families are aware of services and know about their rights under federal and state laws, including their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- Facilitate or refer parents to parental support and/or educational groups where they can share their concerns (e.g., children's special needs, divorce, a death in the family).

- Talk with parents about their formal and informal social networks (family, neighbor, school, recreation, etc.) and explore interests or needs in forming new or renewing old social connections.

- Individualize opportunities for peer-to-peer connections for different groups of parents (e.g., fathers or grandparents).

- Provide opportunities for parents to identify their strengths as leaders/advocates and to use them in the program and community.

- Share information with families about existing parent-to-parent organizations, family peer networks and/or parent-initiated school-community efforts in order to foster continuity in leadership and advocacy roles.

- Provide mentoring opportunities for parents that could include staff, alumni parents/families, elders, and professionals in the community to serve as a resource and support for parent leadership development.

MARYLAND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ACTION:
EVERY CHILD READY TO READ @ YOUR LIBRARY

Public libraries in Maryland implement a number of strategies designed to meet the goals of the Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework. A signature initiative of the public libraries is *Every Child Ready to Read @ your library*, a research-based early literacy outreach education program for parents and caregivers. The program enlists parents and caregivers as partners in preparing young children to read and provides them with effective tools and strategies, thus **supporting families as lifelong educators of their children** (Goal 3). The program also puts library resources into the hands of parents, **connecting families to their communities** (Goal 6). Every Child Ready to Read @ your library supports families in engaging in meaningful learning activities that provide a unique context for **promoting positive parent–child relationships** (Goal 2).

Through a series of workshops, parents and caregivers learn strategies for developing emergent literacy skills through engaging parent–child activities that incorporate singing, talking, reading, writing, and playing. These practices are all familiar to parents and caregivers, which makes them easy to use and integrate into everyday life. Through the Every Child Ready to Read @ your library program, families gain access to knowledge, resources, and community supports that help them engage in positive parent–child interactions and foster their young children's emergent literacy skills.

Through the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant, every library system in Maryland received a copy of the Every Child Ready to Ready @ your library toolkit. Library staff are being trained on the program and parents and providers are encouraged to talk with their local librarian about how their library is making use of the resources that Every Child Ready to Ready @ your library provides.

For more information on the national program, see: http://everychildreadytoread.org/

- Partner with parents to engage advocacy groups that work on issues related to child, family, and community needs or on other issues of interest to parents.

- Form partnerships with parent-to-parent organizations to facilitate connections for families.

Impact Area: Teaching and Learning

- Approach parents as equal partners in learning about their child while acknowledging parents' premier role as their child's first teacher.

- Talk with families about their child's behavior and help them understand and respond appropriately to their child's behavior.

- Work with families to help children overcome behavioral challenges.

- Consistently gather child information from families and ask parents about their observations of their child to inform teaching.

- Encourage parents/caregivers to participate in training opportunities regarding social and emotional development, e.g., Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning.

- Exchange information with parents about their children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, and talk about the importance of the home language (with families

of children who are dual language learners).

- Use a management information system that is accessible to families and that assists teachers in sharing child assessment information with parents in an understandable, family-friendly format about children's progress.

- Ensure families have ongoing opportunities to discuss child assessment data so that families are prepared to initiate and/or participate in similar discussions with teachers in the formal education system.

- Support parents as learners in parenting education programs that help parents learn more about their child's learning, development, and behavior.

- Support family literacy activities.

- Encourage families to observe and participate in child learning and development during home visits and in classrooms.

- Ensure families have ongoing opportunities to discuss their observations and concerns about their child's strengths and challenges prior to transitions to and from early care and education settings and public schools.

- Share information with families about activities and everyday interactions with children that promote school readiness as outlined by the Maryland Early Learning Standards.

- Provide families with information about child development and the impact of transitions on children across early childhood and school settings.

- Encourage parent-to-parent support when participating in parent meetings about children's learning and development.

Impact Area: Community Partnerships

- Link families with support systems, peer-to-peer groups, and resources.

- Participate in community meetings and initiatives that increase program capacity to respond to the needs and interests of families.

- Support family experiences with community resources that support children's learning and development, such as libraries and museums.

- Share information with families about resources and services for children with disabilities and special health needs.

- Collaborate with community organizations that share parents' concerns and interests.

- Form partnerships with educational resources in the community and beyond, including higher education institutions, to support families' learning interests and educational goals.

- Form partnerships with adult educators who creatively enhance education and training opportunities for families.

- Coordinate services for children and families as they transition from one early childhood setting to another, private or public, child care or elementary school.

- Provide advocacy training and opportunities for families to develop and use advocacy skills in the context of their child's lifelong learning and in other ways of interest to the parent.

CHILD CARE AND PARENT CAFÉS

Child care is a diverse delivery and support system, mostly offered by private individuals and organizations and paid directly by families. Because the system is so responsive to the needs of working parents and adults in school who have young children – the busiest people in the State – child care providers report that supporting children's primary caregivers by offering parent engagement activities can be challenging. One promising approach being implemented through Maryland's Network of Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs) is the Strengthening Families Parent Cafés. These are guided conversations designed to share the collective knowledge of families and build a network of community support among them. These events **promote family well-being** (Goal 1) and **connect families to their peers and to the community** (Goal 6) by fostering social connections and parental resilience. Furthermore, Parent Cafés can **support the development of families as leaders and child advocates** (Goal 7) by engaging parents, child care professionals, and other community members in conversations about the needs of families, how to meet those needs, and the role each neighbor can play in strengthening families and communities.

In Maryland, staff from the CCRC network have been trained as Facilitators to conduct Parent Cafés for parents and providers of children from birth to age five, based on the five protective factors: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children.

During a Café, a group of 20-30 parents and other community members take seats, five at a table, set café-style. A unique question is posed at each table where it is discussed by the participants for approximately 20 minutes. Then participants move to another table, where the Table Host presents the question, brings the group up-to-date on what the last group discussed, and facilitates the conversation about the question available at that table. Participants visit at least three different tables. The process concludes with a list of themes identified by the participants and of next steps for future Cafés. The group may come up with some resources that meet identified needs, ideas or approaches that respond to common concerns, decide on a specific topic for the next discussion, or identify a speaker to invite to their next Café to address something they'd like to know more about. In this way, Parent Café conversations harness community knowledge.

Child care providers who facilitate Cafés report that the experience helps them understand what parents are facing and get useful ideas about how their programs can support families whose children are in their care. Facilitator and Table Host trainings are offered periodically by Maryland Family Network. Call (410) 659-7701, ext. 121 for the most recent schedule.

For more information about Parent Cafés, see: http://mfn.convio.net/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5235

Appendix A: Outcome Alignment of the ED and Head Start Family Engagement Frameworks

The *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework* includes a set of family engagement outcomes, strategies, and progress measures that promote and measure parent and family engagement at the program level. The Head Start Framework identifies seven family engagement outcome areas. To support programs in meeting the outcomes, the Framework provides strategies targeting the "program impact areas" such as the program environment, family partnerships, teaching and learning, and community partnerships.

The Department of Education (ED) Family Engagement Framework (still in development) also identifies desired family outcomes as well as program and staff outcomes. The ED Framework focuses on building the collective capacity across multiple stakeholders involved in supporting family engagement. It includes system (organizational) components for building capacity, process components to foster collaborative school/program and family partnerships, and desired outcomes for school/program staff and for families.

Department of Education's Intended Outcomes for Families (draft)	Head Start Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes
Families are actively engaged, from cradle to career, in their child's academic, social and emotional development	**Parent–Child Relationships:** Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development. **Families as Lifelong Educators:** Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
Work in partnership with school and Local Education Agency staff to support and share the responsibility for student achievement and school improvement	**Family Engagement in Transitions:** Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to Kindergarten through Elementary School.
Have developed the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to negotiate the multiple roles (supporters, encouragers, monitors, decision-makers, advocates, collaborators) of effective family engagement	**Families as Advocates and Leaders:** Families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.
Feel honored and respected by school staff	This is an overarching theme of the Head Start Framework and is included in the program environment section
	Family Well-being
	Families as Learners
	Family Connections to Peers and Community

Appendix B: National and State Family Engagement Resources

Title: The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Resource Catalogue 1.0

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/Resource_Catalogue_041112.pdf

Source: OHS National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE)

Description: *Annotated catalog of exemplary resources to promote effective parent, family, and community engagement in support of young children's learning, development, and school readiness. Organized according to The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE Framework). In this first edition of the catalog you will find books, articles, webinars, and other useful resources—most of which are available free of charge on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website.*

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Title: Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/Family%20and%20Community%20Partnerships/Family%20Services/Professional%20Development/ohs-rbc.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: *Technical assistance resource that outlines the knowledge, skills, and actions for staff working with families in Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs. This document is a tool to assist programs with implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. These competencies represent both research-based and best practices in the early childhood, human services, and social work fields. This resource was developed with broad input from Head Start and Early Head Start programs, parents, and the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement.*

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Title: Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series Positive Parent–Child Relationships

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/parent-child-relationships.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: *Aligned with related Head Start Performance Standards, this resource presents a selected summary of research, proven interventions, and program strategies intended to be useful for the Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) community.*

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Title: Using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework in Your Program: Markers of Progress

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/ncpfce-markers-of-progress.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: *This resource was created to help you recognize your program's accomplishments in engaging parents, families, and the community. It also offers you the opportunity to identify aspects of your work in this area that can be strengthened and offers ideas for new and innovative ways to enhance your efforts. The information you gather from your observations, conversations, and reflections is important data that can be incorporated into your decision-making about your whole program. In fact, this guide and the subsequent information you collect, could be utilized to inform the required annual program Self-Assessment.*

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Title: Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment: Responsibilities, Perspectives, and Strategies

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/family-engagement-and-ongoing-child-assessment-081111.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: *Addresses the perspectives of parents and program staff in the sharing of child assessment information through the*

formation of partnerships and suggests strategies for bringing those perspectives together. It outlines a framework for building partnerships between program staff and parents that establish ongoing communication, enhance teacher-child and parent child relationships, and help prepare children and families for transitions to later schooling.

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Title: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/Family%20and%20Community%20Partnerships/Parent,%20Family,%20and%20Community%20Engagement%20Framework%20Webcast%20Series/FrequentlyAsked.htm

Source: NCPFCE

Description: *Presents responses to common questions about the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.*

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Title: Engaging Families in Promoting Positive Health: Ideas for Events and Activities from NBCDI Affiliates

Link: http://www.nbcdi.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Family%20Engagement%20Event%20Handbook.pdf

Source: NBCDI

Description: *Describes innovative and culturally-relevant family engagement events and activities related to health and nutrition that our Affiliates have developed and implemented. We created this manual so that Affiliates and partners implementing the Healthy Practices Program – and other health education initiatives – will have tools to help them plan and evaluate meaningful workshops and events.*

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Title: An Activity Book For African American Families: Helping Children Cope with Crisis

Link: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/cope_with_crisis_book/pages/index.aspx

Source: NBCDI/NICHD

Description: *Developed in response to events of 9/11, but also designed to help families face everyday hardships such as crime and poverty. Includes information about how parents can help children cope with crises in a sensitive and responsive way, as well as a series of developmentally appropriate activities for parents and children to engage in together.*

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Title: Parent Teacher Education Connection Website

Link: http://tcet.unt.edu/home/pte.html

Source: Kansas Parent Information Resource Center

Description: *Developed by KPIRC and University of Northern Texas, this website provides six online modules for preparing teachers to work with families, based on the National PTA Standards. Each module contains goals, interactive content and activities, and several relevant program studies. The module topics are: 1) Welcoming, 2) Communicating, 3) Supporting Student Success, 4) Speaking Up for Every Child, 5) Sharing Power, and 6) Collaborating with the Community.*

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Title: Helping Parents Become Interventionists Through the Use of Child Assessment Data

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/helping-parents-become-interventionists-through-the-use-of-child-assessment-data

Source: Harvard Family Resource Project

Description: *Discusses sharing data with families and illustrates how program staff and parents can work as partners to review child assessment data and co-create goals for children.*

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Title: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Simulation

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/pfce_simulation

Source: National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement/Harvard Family Research Project

Description: *This simulation activity helps early childhood educators explore and practice everyday strategies to develop a positive, goal-directed relationship with a family in a virtual Head Start center. While the simulation was designed for Head Start/Early Head Start professionals, early childhood educators outside of Head Start can access the simulation and will find the relationship-building strategies useful in their own work.*

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Title: Harvard Graduate School of Education Pre K-12 Parent Survey

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/a-new-tool-for-understanding-family-school-relationships-the-harvard-graduate-school-of-education-prek-12-parent-survey

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: *The Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) research team recently developed a set of survey "scales"—groups of related questions that are analyzed as a whole to improve measurement precision—to assess family–school relationships in schools serving Pre-K to 12th grade students. The scales, designed to elicit input from parents, can help schools evaluate interventions that they are implementing to try to improve family–school relationships, see how family–school relationships develop as students advance from one grade to the next, or simply collect baseline information on their strengths and areas that need improvement in their family–school relationships. The tool is unique in that it is a rigorously developed, web-based set of survey scales that schools and districts can access online and administer to parents with school children of all ages.*

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Title: Family Engagement and Children with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Educators and Parents

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-engagement-and-children-with-disabilities-a-resource-guide-for-educators-and-parents

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: *A resource guide designed to help parents and special educators establish a comfortable and effective partnership in service of promoting successful outcomes for children with disabilities. Includes research reports, journal articles, examples of best practices, and tools that suggest methods for developing productive collaborations so that educators and families can, together, ensure better services for children in their care.*

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Title: Family Engagement in Early Childhood: A Resource Guide for Early Learning Challenge Grant Recipients

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-engagement-in-early-childhood-a-resource-guide-for-early-learning-challenge-grant-recipients

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: *To support RTTT–ELC grant recipients' efforts, Harvard Family Research Project produced this selective list of resources about engaging and supporting families with young children. This list includes journal articles, practical guides, webinars, and presentations that cover the topics of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement; training early childhood educators on family engagement; promoting family support and engagement statewide; sharing data with families; and creating programs that engage families.*

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Title: Teaching Cases on Family Engagement: Early Learning (Ages 0–8)

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/ECE-TeachingCases

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: *This set of teaching cases for early childhood education programs was developed by Harvard Family Research Project to highlight critical dilemmas in family–school–community relations, especially among low-income and culturally diverse families.*

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Title: Connecting with Parents in the Early Years

Link: http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/pubs/connecting.html

Source: Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP)

Description: *This seven-chapter e-book outlines effective ways to communicate with parents, including those who are hard to reach.*

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Title: Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library

Link: http://everychildreadytoread.org

Source: American Library Association

Description: *A parent education toolkit of resources to help public librarians and other early literacy centers present workshops that help prepare parent's/caregivers for their critical role as their child's first teacher.*

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Title: Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten: Linking Children, Families, & Schools

Link: http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Transition%20into%20Formal%20Schooling/Enhancing%20the%20Transition%20to%20Kindergarten%20rev.PDF

Source: National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL) Kindergarten Project

Description: *As part of the National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL) Kindergarten Project, Marcia Kraft-Sayre and Robert Pianta produced this manual on transitioning students from early learning centers to kindergarten through the use of social connections.*

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Title: Partnering with Families in Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Link: http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/family-engagement/index.html

Source: Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Description: *Early childhood mental health consultants can use information from this web-based tutorial to strengthen their understanding of how to facilitate strong partnerships with families within the consultation approach and overcome common barriers, building a framework within which the quality work begins and develops.*

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Title: Strengthening Families

Link: http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families

Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy

Description: *Offers many resources to help prevent child abuse and neglect by helping early care and education programs to assist families develop "protective factors" which contribute to child safety and well-being. Resources such as self-assessments, case studies of state implementation, and guides for early care and education programs are available.*

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Title: Every Child Ready for School: Helping Adults Inspire Young Children to Learn

Link: http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=3529

Source: American Library Association

Description: *Reflecting the combined expertise of a reading specialist, an outreach librarian, and an early literacy trainer, Every Child Ready for School keeps libraries at the forefront of early literacy and school readiness information delivery. Focusing on training the caregiver, this handbook explains how to help day-care providers, homeschoolers, and others who care for young children foster school-readiness skills among their charges; arms librarians with a step-by-step workshop model, with tips on implementing and evaluating the program; and provides guidance for coordinating workshops with other library early literacy initiatives. Includes resources and activities to share with participants.*

Presenting models which can be easily adapted to state-mandated school-readiness requirements, Every Child Ready for School helps libraries fashion their own innovative community early literacy outreach programs.

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Title: Tender Topics: Picture Books About Childhood Challenges

Link: http://www.ipgbook.com/tender-topics-products-9781937589349.php?page_id=21

Source: Huron Street Press

Description: *A reading specialist, an outreach librarian, and a children's librarian combine their considerable expertise in this essential guide for parents that brings reading, early literacy, child development issues, and picture books together. Advising parents who are wondering how to talk to their young child about difficult topics such as death, loneliness, or fear, this authoritative collection of appropriate picture books, Tender Topics: Picture Books About Childhood Challenges, makes broaching the subject easier. Authors Dorothy Stoltz, Elaine Czarnecki, and Buff Kahn have created an annotated listing that includes more than 300 high-quality, carefully selected picture books that are ideal for opening discussion about tender topics and establishing bonds between generations that can help parents and children better weather the challenges families face every day.*

Appendix C: Key Terms and Definitions

co-parenting relationship: a situation in which the parents of a child are not married, living together, or in a romantic relationship together, for example the relationship between two separated or divorced parents who are both involved in caring and parenting for their shared children.

dual language learners: children who are acquiring two or more languages simultaneously. These children are learning a second language (or more) while continuing to develop their first language.

family engagement: building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent–child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of parents and children alike. Family engagement happens in the home, early childhood settings, school, and community. (For a more complete definition, see page 3).

family partnerships: relationships in which programs and parents work together toward shared goals of facilitating child and family well-being.

family well-being: the safety, physical and mental health, and financial security of families so that they can successfully parent their young children

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: guiding document published by the Office of Head Start to serve as a "roadmap" for describing parent and family engagement outcomes that ultimately support children's learning and development. This document includes definitions of major outcomes as well as examples of strategies to promote progress toward these outcomes.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): federal law that ensures that all eligible children with disabilities receive appropriate early intervention, special education, and related services.

Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant: federal grant competition seeking to improve early learning and development programs by supporting States' reform efforts in providing integrated systems of high-quality early learning programs and services.

school readiness: a child's readiness to enter a social environment primarily focused on learning. Aspects that influence a child's ability to access and benefit from later educational experiences include cognitive, social–emotional, language and emergent literacy, and physical health and development. Other factors that should be considered include a child's early home and early childhood education experiences, the normal wide variation in children's learning and development, and the developmental appropriateness of kindergarten expectations.[4]

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[4]Rafoth, M.A., Buchenauer, E. L., Crissman, K. K., and Halko, J. L. (2004). School readiness— preparing children for kindergarten and beyond: Information for parents. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists

Progress Report (July 1, 2013 – September 30, 2013)[1]

Project 1	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Local EC Councils	$1,325,461	Local early childhood advisory councils will be operational in each jurisdiction	Met	All 24 jurisdictions established a local early childhood council. 22 Councils applied for and were awarded planning grants to develop long-term action agendas. Councils are eligible to receive implementation grant based on formula. In July, 2013, a joint meeting of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care and Chairs of the Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECAC) was held. Three (3) representatives from the LECACs (Charles County, Montgomery County, and Garrett County) presented on the accomplishments taking place within their jurisdictions (i.e. establishing the LECAC, current status, development of their action plans, and sustaining their councils beyond the ending of the grant period.

Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Local ECACs have been established and placed on MSDE website.
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/planning.html

Customized TA continues to take place on a rolling basis based on local need and at the Leadership Capacity Building Seminars. MSDE lead representatives attend many meetings to support the work of the local councils. |
| **Focus**

Promote school readiness for all children by narrowing the achievement | | Annie E. Casey Foundation will have developed the *Capacity Building Leadership Curriculum*, including a Results-based Accountability product. | Met | Curriculum was available July 15, 2012. Leadership training program is broken out into eight cohorts (with three jurisdictions each) and started in October 2012. The Results Based Accountability (RBA) and the Results Based Facilitation (RBF) Early Childhood Leadership Academies have been delivered to local early childhood advisory council teams of 4-6 council members from all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. The second stage of training contains 3 seminars which guide the local councils in the development of their governance plans and initial planning of their action agenda. All jurisdictions are participating in the Customized Cohort Seminars. An application packet was distributed to each |

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[1] Includes task and activities which were initiated or completed in 2012.

gap particularly for children with high needs				jurisdiction for funds to implement the activities in their action agendas. The agendas are being developed as local council representatives attend Cohort training by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Applications will be accepted from April until November 2013. Final leadership and training seminars began in August, 2013. In total, there were ten (10) days of training participation from each of the core planning teams. To celebrate their accomplishments each planning team has invited guests to attend their final leadership training to hear presentations of their LECAC's plans, and the plans of the two other jurisdictions who have trained with them as a Cohort throughout the trainings. During the final Annie E. Casey leadership and training seminars, MSDE is updating local early childhood advisory council representatives on all 10 Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Projects and sharing the link: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/planning.html Fifteen of the 24 customized core local early childhood advisory councils have completed their final Leadership Capacity Building Training and received technical assistance from MSDE as of September 27, 2013.
		Complete activities related to the Governor's Task Force on Maryland's Child Care Subsidy Program	Met	Task Force included representation from DHR, DHMH, and DBM to establish efficiencies in the child care subsidy program and to ensure access of low income children into high quality early childhood programs. Activities included MOA between MSDE and DHR, data tracking of eligibility cases, and consumer education.

Project 2	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Maryland EXCELS	$21,265,147	Complete pilot of 45 early childhood programs and develop analysis and recommendations for revisions to EXCELS	Met	Participation was strictly voluntary. Focus on licensed child care but EXCELS also included Head Start and Prek programs. JHU-CTE is administering EXCELS data collection system and providing program coordination (See Project 10).
Focus Quality rating and improvement system for continuous program improvement of early childhood programs. (Voluntary participation)		Initiate field test with 290 programs by November 2012.	Met	330 programs participated in the field test, including licensed child care, Head Start, nonpublic nursery schools, school age and prekindergarten programs. The field test began November 26, 2012 and continued through May, 2013. Participants were surveyed at the mid-point and end of the field test to gather their feedback on the processes and their experiences with the online system and supports. Field test feedback is informing modifications to standards and online processes, required evidence and efficiencies within the system to optimize participant experience and increase the quality of information provided to families and the public.
		Develop technology platform for EXCELS and launch EXCELS website.	Met	Information about Maryland EXCELS available on marylandexcels.org Pilot and field test participants use EXCELS portal. Maryland EXCELS was available for statewide participation effective July 1, 2013. There are 1038 programs registered and participating as of October 15, 2013.(Note that participating programs' information must be verified before they are "published" on the website.) Additional information on rated programs can be found by selecting the ***Find a Program*** button on the home page of the Maryland EXCELS website at http://www.marylandexcels.org/.
		Recruit, train, and determine reliability of	In Progress	Assessors are currently trained in accordance with business standards. MSDE will focus on the recruitment of assessors for two separate instruments, i.e.,

		assessors administering instruments to measure the quality of programs participating in EXCELS		Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Training for CLASS assessors occurred March 27, 28 and 29, 2013 and a second training was held for additional assessors on April 9, 10 and 11, 2013. A procurement solicitation to identify a pool of qualified, trained assessors for the ERS and CLASS is currently posted on eMaryland Marketplace and bids are due July 8, 2013.[2] Training of assessors will take place in the fall of 2013.
		Establish a workgroup to determine the timeline for requiring all publicly funded programs and programs accepting child care subsidy vouchers to participate in Maryland EXCELS and make recommendations to the State Early Childhood Advisory Council.	Met	The workgroup has been established and the first meeting took place on April 19, 2013. On May 15, 2013, the workgroup submitted recommendations to the Governor's State Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Council reviewed and approved the timeline that will require licensed child care programs accepting child care subsidy vouchers to participate in Maryland EXCELS by December 2015.
		Develop marketing plan and social networking protocols for EXCELS	Met	Marketing campaign for the field test is completed. Materials and communication protocols for early childhood and school age programs have been developed and disseminated. A public awareness campaign will begin in 2014 in order to allow time for capacity building of participating programs throughout the state. In addition to a "Find a Program" locator on the Maryland EXCELS website, a mobile app is in development to assist families searching for high quality child care and early childhood education programs by geographic area. [http://marylandexcels.org/]

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[2] Environment Rating Scales for preschool, family child care, and infant/toddler programs (ECERS/ITERS/FDCERS); Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

		Provide information about the Quality Awards incentives to field test participants	Met	The original Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) workgroup with stakeholders reconvened February 26, 2013 to finalize specialty designations (Additional Recognitions) for Asthma Friendly Child Care, Health and Wellness and Inclusive Program Practices. Quality Awards, Bonuses and Incentives for participation in Maryland EXCELS have been provided to field test participants and posted on the Maryland State Department of Education website at new links to new Branch page added: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/mdexcels.htm Quality Awards, Bonuses and Incentives for participation in Maryland EXCELS have been posted on the Maryland State Department of Education website at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/mdexcels.htm
		Engage experts in the Quality Awards endorsement areas to develop protocols, criteria verification, monitoring and technical assistance	In Progress	The Asthma Friendly Child Care and Health and Wellness Initiatives designations (also referred to as endorsements) are available to field test participants and have been publicized to all early care and education programs. The Multiple Language endorsement is being developed with a workgroup. The focus of the Program Administration Scale (PAS) and Business Administration Scale (BAS) has been re-directed to provide additional support to programs to improve their business practices and support their efforts in continuous quality improvement. Programs and providers who participate in the PAS or BAS will be recognized and financial incentives for participation will be determined.
		Submit draft of EXCELS validation study for review to U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.	Met	EXCELS validation study, developed by JHU-CTE, was internally reviewed by DECD's Research Advisory Group and national reviewers. It was submitted in December 2012 to the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services and comments have been received. Based upon review and comments, the plan was revised and it will be implemented in late 2013 through 2015.

Project 3	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Quality Capacity Building	$9,462,500	Establish master list of all early childhood programs located in the attendance areas of the state's e Title 1 schools.	Met	Use of GIS mapping to identify licensed child care, Head Start, prekindergarten, and nursery schools, including information about each program. Master list will be used for Projects 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.
Focus Coaching for child care and expansion of effective models (Judy Centers, Preschool for All)		Establish an Early Childhood Breakthrough Center infrastructure to build capacity among programs participating in EXCELS and to align early learning program with academic program at Title 1 schools.	Met	Modeled after MSDE's Breakthrough Center, the early childhood component uses the state's child care resource and referral agencies to work with early childhood programs in Title 1 communities. Completed pilot study in 12 regions. Established Cross Sectional Team with representation from several MSDE divisions as well as DHMH, and DHR. The members of the Cross Functional Team have been identified and the Team meets quarterly.
		Conduct pilot project, including evaluation, on the implementation of the Early Childhood Breakthrough Center in urban suburban, rural Title 1 attendance areas	Met	The pilot was conducted and sites are continuing to implement Breakthrough Services statewide. Center and family child care sites were identified in urban, suburban and rural Title 1 attendance areas. The evaluation report is completed. Child Care Resource Center staff (CCRCs) worked with center and family child care sites so that the sites progress through the levels of EXCELS. Early childhood programs are continuing to implement Breakthrough services statewide. Programs have registered for EXCELS and are beginning to work to progress through the levels of EXCELS. The sites are in urban, suburban, and rural Title I school attendance areas. Breakthrough Center customer satisfaction survey was sent to all participating programs. The surveys were returned by July 30, 2013. The survey will assist in determining service and professional development needs in 2013-2014. The respondents

			indicated that Breakthrough services were valuable; the staff was responsive to their needs; community resources were available; and the Center provided assistance with MD EXCELS.
Implement the EC Breakthrough quality capacity building process with 56 early learning and development programs	Met		Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs) have initiated EC Breakthrough Center activities which include coaching, consulting, capacity building and assisting centers in moving through the levels of EXCELS. CCRCS are adding sites as they determine the depth of capacity building that is needed for each site. CCRCs have established collaborative relationships with the child care centers and family child care programs that have volunteered to participate in the EC Breakthrough Center. Early Childhood Breakthrough Centers are providing coaching, consulting, and capacity building. Technical assistance was provided in July to the CCRCs through meetings and conference calls. Program assessment activities are being discussed so that we can provide assistance to programs in area. Strategies to encourage to articulation and transition services and collaboration with local schools are being discussed. Early Childhood Breakthrough Centers provided coaching, consulting, and capacity building to over 75 programs in 2012-2013 in all areas of Maryland. It will provide coaching, consulting, and capacity building to 225 programs by December 2013. Additional child care and family child care centers are being added.
Expand existing partnership with a high quality professional development organization to provide a mentoring and coaching training program to support increased participation of three and four year-old	In Progress		JHU School of Continuing Education is the primary vendor to pilot and implement the project. A second partner, the Abilities Network/Project Act, with extensive experience supporting inclusion of children with disabilities in child care programs, joined the project in April 2013. Abilities Network/Project Act will work with the JHU team to enhance online professional development resources for access by the project jurisdictions.

		children served through an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) in public and private community-based early learning and development programs.		Allegany, Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, and Wicomico have initiated the project. Jurisdictions for Phase 2 implementation have been identified: Frederick, Washington, Calvert, St. Mary's, and Charles Counties. Allegany County engaged in planning with schools who will be receiving students in need of inclusive support and the receiving teachers who will need to be provided with coaching and video support. Other schools will have the coaches who will be available to support teachers at other sites. Planning meeting held with Harford County Team to establish a plan for training and support of selected staff members, and to plan for sustainability and generalization of intended project outcomes. Carroll County Team completed their local needs assessment and is in the process of identifying next face-to-face planning for implementation meeting end of September, beginning of October.
		Establish 2 Judy Center satellites in Baltimore City and Prince George's County	Met	Judy Center satellites are based at BCPSS's Historic Samuel Coleridge Taylor and PGCPS's Carmody Hills Elementary Schools and are operational. The annual MSDE site monitoring visit was completed on May 13, 2013, at the Judy Center Satellite at Carmody Hills Elementary School in Capitol Heights, and on May 10, 2013, at the Judy Center Satellite at The Historic Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School in Baltimore City. Both new Judy Centers are progressing well.
		Establish 2 community hubs in Baltimore City	Met	Hubs are designed to coordinate social and education services for families of young children in under-resourced neighborhoods. The Hubs were established in the Park Heights

| | | | | and Cherry Hill neighborhoods and are operational. |
| | | Expand 5 *Preschool for All* sites in Title 1 communities. | Met | The early childhood sites are early childhood programs non-public school sites[3] and are operational. |

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[3] at Howard County and Washington County Community Colleges, Downtown Baltimore Child Care, King's Academy Child Care (Worcester Co.), and Montessori Charter School at Crossway Communities (Montgomery Co.)

Project 4	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Promoting the Use of Statewide Early Learning Standards	$1,146,904	Develop draft alignment document for Healthy Beginnings (Birth to 48 months), Common Core Standards for Prek, and Head Start Early Learning Framework	In Progress	Draft document was posted for public comment in August 2012. Need to develop prekindergarten State Common Core standards for Science, and the Arts. Revised the Social and Personal domain and renamed it Social Foundations Framework. The Early Learning Standards alignment document- *Working Off the Same Page* reflects the new Prekindergarten curriculum standards and frameworks in the areas that have been completed in the Division of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability. It will be updated again when all of the content areas have been completed.
Focus Prekindergarten alignment of Common Core Standards, development of Guide to Early Pedagogy, and dissemination of effective models in early reading and STEM		Complete *Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy* (Prek to 2)	In Progress	A statewide workgroup, in consultation with a national consultant, is developing the content of the Guide based on early childhood research, Maryland standards and evidenced based practices. The monthly workgroup met and completed the first draft of the Guide. The draft guide was reviewed by statewide focus groups of over 90 educators. The focus group members include educators in higher education, supervisors, early childhood and grades PreK-2 teachers, English Language Learner teachers, special educators, child care staff, Head Start staff and other non-public programs. The responses from the focus groups have been analyzed and a revised draft is being developed. A statewide workgroup, in consultation with a national consultant, is developing the content of the Guide based on early childhood research, Maryland standards and evidenced based practices. The draft guide has been reviewed by statewide focus groups of over 90 educators.

				The results of the review have been incorporated into the guide. When completed in December 2013, the Guide will be available in print and electronic formats on the web.
		Expand VIOLETS[4] to 150 additional classrooms	In Progress	Initiated training for first cohort (30 classrooms) in Title 1 communities. A total of 150 classrooms will be participating by 2015. The VIOLETS program is administered by the Ready At Five Partnership. VIOLETS has expanded to reach 30 additional classrooms in 2012-2013. This cohort (of classrooms) has completed VIOLETS. The cohort evaluation report was submitted to MSDE in September 2013. The evaluation findings indicated both English proficient students (EP) and English Learners (ELs) in VIOLETS experienced significant gains on both the standardized oral language measure and curriculum-based vocabulary measure. While EP students consistently outperformed ELs at pretest and posttest on both measures, EP students and ELs made comparable gains on both measures. This indicated that children participating in VIOLETS will have greater language literacy skills than those who were not served in this program. Further, it points to the fact that explicit and consistent language instruction builds language skills, vocabulary skills and overall literacy development. In 2013-2014 VIOLETS will reach an additional 50 programs. The early childhood programs for 2013-2014 cohort has been identified. (The training of the cohort program directors and teachers will be October 23and 29, 2013). http://www.readyatfive.org/raf/programs/violets.html

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[4] Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Enrichment Through Stories (VIOLETS) is promoting tier 2 vocabulary comprehension for ELL and children with language deficiencies

		Finalize Alignment Document by including Maryland Common Core Standards for Social Studies, Science, the Arts, and Physical Development and Health.	In Progress	DECD will work closely with the Division of Instruction (DOI) to participate in work groups in developing prekindergarten standards for Social Studies and The Arts after the State Board has adopted the new Maryland Social Studies Framework PreK-12 based on the recently released College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework and the National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning. DECD will continue to work closely with the Division of Instruction (DOI) to participate in any future work groups in updating prekindergarten standards for Physical Education and Health and The Fine Arts. DECD has also worked with Social Studies and Science to align our early learning standards with their work. In addition, DECD developed the Social Foundations Framework which was sent out for public comment and ended in May 2013. The Maryland Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Standards of Practice, as it concerns prekindergarten and kindergarten, are still going through final edits.

Project 5	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Professional Development (MMSR) **Focus** Dissemination of PD activities to licensed child care	$1,812,389	Revise existing MMSR PD program[5] to child care providers and provide five full-day sessions for 1,500 participants.	In Progress	The grantee, Maryland Family Network, completed the modules in March 2013. Two train-the-trainer sessions were developed and conducted in March and April 2013. Based on feedback from the MMSR trainers, MMSR 2013 FAQs have been developed and have been shared with the MMSR trainers on Wiggio, and on-line tool kit for team management. Maryland EXCELS, taking effect July 1, 2013, has identified the completion of MMSR training as an indicator of quality at the two through five checkmark levels in both the center and family child care standards in the domain of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Successful completion of the MMSR training, qualifies as approved training for the Maryland Child Care Credential. There are five sessions as part of the MMSR2013 Series taking place this summer. There are a total of 19 different training series) that are either currently being offered by 48 certified trainers. A third MMSR 2013 Training of Trainers that will be offered in October 2013, in Annapolis. There will be a "learning community" of MMSR 2013 trainers that meet regularly (sometimes in person, other times "virtually") as a way to discuss progress, share updates, discuss possible changes in response to participants' needs. An online survey of successful MMSR 2013 participants will be implemented in the fall of 2013 as a way to gain relevant information from participants.

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[5] Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) professional development includes knowledge and skill development in Maryland's early learning standards, instructional practices, formative assessment, and communication with families.

Project 6	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment System (EC-CAS)	$4,671,480	Establish governance and management structure for the EC-CAS project[6].	Met	The State Advisory Council which reports to the Governor's Advisory Council on Early Care and Education, meets quarterly. The national Technical Advisory Council (TAC) met with the Leadership Team (staff from JHU-CTE, MD, Ohio, and West-ED) July 23-24, 2013. The Leadership Team continues to hold monthly phone conferences and meets on location quarterly to update and monitor progress. The final report of findings obtained from data collected during the pilot test was submitted by WestEd to the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology Education (CTE) in July 2013. Data gathered from the pilot test is being used to revise existing items and develop the remaining items to be field tested in November 2013. These items went through a content, and bias/ sensitivity review process with experts in both states in September 2013.
Focus Development of a formative assessment (36-72 months) and a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)		Develop assessment framework (Conceptual Design Document) and the test blueprint for the KEA and the formative assessment.	Met	Completed assessment framework in October 2012. The cognitive interviews and Pilot Study were completed. The field test will take place in November-December 2013.
		Conduct formal field test of the KEA and formative assessments in selected sites in Ohio and Maryland.	In progress	Both Ohio and Maryland have finalized their sample for the field test of the remaining KEA items that will occur in November 2013. In Maryland, the final sample, which is representative of Maryland demographics, was selected in June 2013. A total of 81 teachers, from 28 schools and 16

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[6] The EC-CAS includes the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and formative assessment from 36 to 72 months

				LEAs, will participate in Maryland's field test, which will result in a state sample of approximately 1,800 children. Teachers who are part of the field test participated in two days of professional development training in August 2013 to prepare them to administer a portion of the KEA in the fall. Additional on-line modules have been developed to provide a refresher on implementing the field test and to orient teachers to the Teacher Administration Manual (TAM) and "Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Field test Administration of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment" which provides guidance for teachers on accessibility and "levels of support" for special education and ELL students. Teachers will receive these modules in October prior to the beginning of the field test in November 2013.
		Establish an ad hoc state work group of curriculum and assessment experts to participate in content validity and fairness bias and sensitivity review meetings.	Met	The Ad Hoc Committees included 18 early childhood experts, including representatives from local school systems and early childhood programs. In addition to the Item Content Review and Bias/Sensitivity ad hoc groups, five ad hoc sub-group committees were formed to review areas such as assessment technology, professional development, ELL, Special Education, and implementation policies in Maryland. The Ad Hoc groups will meet in September 2013 to review the remaining test items and learning progressions that will be tested during in November 2013.
		Schedule cognitive interviews and develop assessment items for the KEA and the formative assessments.	Met	The Cognitive Interview technical report was completed February 2013.
		Conduct extensive pilot test	Met	A report of the pilot has been completed. The information

		(Phase 2) of Kindergarten Entry Assessment and PreK/K formative assessments with samples in Ohio and Maryland		obtained from data collected during the pilot test is currently being analyzed and will be used to examine accessibility of the items to students and the feasibility of administration by teachers. Data gathered from the pilot test is being used to revise items and develop the remaining items to be field tested in November 2013.
		Develop professional development curriculum.	Met	MSDE is currently planning the professional development that will occur to support teachers participating in the field test in November 2013. The training modules were developed in July 2013.
		Conduct business analysis of existing Maryland technology and data infrastructure and identify needs for new infrastructure.	Met	Two documents have been developed by JHU-CTE detailing the technology and data infrastructure that will support the EC-CAS, the "Virtual Performance Assessment Functional Requirements" document and the "CAS Wireframes and Use Cases" document. Based on these documents and information gathered in the state's preparation for the transition to PARCC, CIO's and LEA's will be provided with information on requirements and specifications for the EC-CAS and a timeline for the development and implementation of the technology in July. A timeline and update on the development of the technology was be shared by CTE with school system CIOs on July 18, 2013. As part of co-planning meetings for the census administration in school year 2014-2015 with all LEAs, CIO's have been provided with information on the requirements and specifications for the EC-CAS and a timeline for the development and implementation of the technology. JHU-CTE has created documents with details

| | | | | regarding the data infrastructure that is being developed to support EC-CAS. Both states have reviewed the specifications, and the development is moving forward. |
| | | Develop technology platform to support development and use of assessment data. | In Progress | Tribal Nova[7] has been selected as the vendor to develop design style and the touch screen technology. |

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[7] Tribal Nova, based in Canada, is a leading developer and publisher of educational programs, games and apps for young children across several platforms, featuring many kid's favorite TV characters. The company operates the following online learning services for young children in partnership with major media partners in North America and Europe: PBS KIDS PLAY!, Kids' CBC Wonder World, and Bayam. The company also publishes the i Learn With educational program on tablets and touch devices.

Project 7	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Child Development Innovations	$1,354,099	Develop plan to train primary care providers to participate in the early childhood mental health consultation for pediatricians.	Met	Plan was completed in partnership with the University of Maryland-Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Training for 20 primary care providers from across Maryland started in February 2013. Established statewide early childhood mental health consultation hotline to provide immediate consultation to pediatricians and family practices for young children, birth to age 8, with social/emotional/behavioral concerns including psychotropic medication consultation and referrals to ECMH resources and services. The phone consultation line is operational.
		Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH) Training for Pediatricians: Develop curriculum and training plan for mental health professionals to support pediatric care practices	Met	In consultation with the Maryland Chapter of the Academy of Pediatrics, the Developmental Screening Workgroup identified training needs and existing resources of early childhood mental health consultation among pediatricians. A grant was awarded in May 2013 to the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to conduct training on the developmental screening instruments, *Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Third Edition (ASQ-3) and Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS).* Orientation meetings were held with 35 pediatric providers on the Eastern Shore to recruit them into the program; the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Competencies for pediatricians were presented at the Maryland chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Emotional Health meeting and at the Maryland ECMH Steering Committee meeting. As of September 2013, 88 developmental/educational

				resources and 12 Early Childhood Mental Health resources from 23 counties across Maryland have been gathered. These resources will be used to assist pediatricians in helping and guiding families. In total of 685 resources for children and families across the state. Many of these referral resources are identified as serving very young children.
Focus Addressing developmental and behavioral needs of young children		Develop on-line training modules for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)	In Progress	Scripts for the online training have been developed and are being reviewed. Anticipated completion of the online training is September 30, 2013. The website has been constructed and went live in January, 2013. The website is housed on the University of Maryland Innovations Institute Training Server and the web address is https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/SEFEL/. The online Infant and Toddler training modules are updated with new scripts and formatted for online learning. These modules are posted to the site. Links are being updated, revisions being made to the new top navigation menu, the site template was changed, and new photos were added. The online Infant and Toddler and Preschool training modules were approved for online learning. These modules are posted to the site and can be found at http://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/sefel/
		Finalize statewide developmental screening process and professional development plans. (This activity experienced significant delays which have been	In progress	Developmental Screening Workgroup has been formed to preliminarily recommend developmental screening tools[8] to align with the Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) and meet psychometric properties. DECD issued a Request for Information (RFI) as a means to review additional nationally validated screening instruments.

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[8] The screening instruments are ASQ, ESI-R, PEDS, and Best Beginnings.

| | | adjusted in the RTT-ELC project management plan) | | Workgroup will be working on business rules impacting early childhood programs such as costs of screening tools, when to screen, how to monitor, report, and design referral form. Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education will assist in building the online Professional Development modules. Programs in Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement System will begin implementation by July 1, 2014; Center based programs by January 1, 2015 and family child care providers by December 1, 2015. Collaboration continues with the developers of the screening instruments to draft online training modules and face to face training sessions. |

Project 8	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Family Engagement Support	$2,180,387	Establish Coalition for Family Engagement and develop the Maryland Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework	Met	Eight meetings have been held and a consultant has been recruited to write the document. The core planning group has been expanded to include representatives of direct service providers, such as child care, Head Start, school systems, social services, early intervention, and other family and child serving state and local groups. At the meeting in February, 2013 the draft was reviewed, subsequently revised, and redistributed to a wide audience. The draft is being finalized by adoption of the Governor's State Early Childhood Advisory Council at its meeting on October 10, 2013. The Family Engagement Coalition will continue to meet beginning in the fall to develop an implementation plan for developing a guide and a distribution/professional development plan. Comments and revisions from the Family Engagement Coalition and other early childhood stakeholders have been completed. The State's early childhood advisory council approved the Framework at its last session on October 11, 2013.
Focus Development of the Maryland Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. Establishment of Family Councils at		Conduct, at a minimum, 12 community meetings to solicit recommendations and articulate needs related to the family engagement framework.	Met	All 12 meetings with families and providers were held across the state and informed the Coalition on its work.
		Learning Parties: Selection of Learning Parties program in Title I Elementary Schools	Met	Criteria were identified to select programs for participation. Twenty-two classrooms in 11 schools have been selected to participate for this year. Training was conducted February 2013. Learning Parties Training is

public libraries, expansion of Reach Out and Read, , and dissemination of learning parties (i.e., parent, child, school transition activities before kindergarten)				underway for the first cohort of Title 1 schools. The four sets of Ready At Five Summer Learning Parties have been completed. The first year Family Engagement Learning Parties are complete. The most popular Learning Party Domain was Language and Literacy, followed by Science and Math.
		Establish leadership, governance and statewide infrastructure for Reach Out and Read (ROR).	Met	The Maryland Chapter of the AAP assumed leadership in establishing a statewide ROR project in all 24 jurisdictions. Local literacy councils are being incorporated in the local early childhood advisory councils (Project 1). The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics created informational material and started distribution of books to new pediatricians. ROR representatives are conducting outreach to local pediatricians and creating connections to local councils. To date, 26 practices are enrolled with 20,405 children.
		Develop mechanism for book distribution to local literacy councils and establishing training opportunities for pediatricians.	Met	The Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has started to distribute books to pediatric practices.
		Establish Family Library Councils and parent information centers at five library systems.	Met	Designed to plan for space, outreach, meeting agendas, speakers, and parent/child activities. Under the leadership of the Maryland Public Library Association, resources are being identified for new parent information centers, and recruitment of parents for the library councils is underway. A total of 11 library systems in Title I areas have established Family Library Councils, set up parent information centers, and conducted library parent cafes. Eleven library systems have incorporated *Parent Café* networking model into the planning and work of their Parent Library Councils.

Project 9	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Workforce and Leadership Development	$1,052,628	Establish committee to review and revise the current Core of Knowledge and Workforce Competency Framework (i.e., knowledge and skills of what early childhood educators should know and be able to do.)	Met	The Workforce Competency Committee aligned the competency framework with the Early Learning Standards, Common Core Standards, and the *Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy* (Project 4).
Focus Projects that strengthen the career pathways of those working in child care. Establish Early Learning Leadership Academies (Prek-2)		Establish the first cohort of 15 candidates to participate in the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program for Early Childhood Education (MAAPP-ECE)	Met	Contracted with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to conduct the 2-year preparation work leading to state certification of teaching. Completion of Praxis II is required in order to be certified. Support has been provided to participants by sharing Praxis II registration links and information regarding Praxis Prep courses offered by community colleges. Memorandum of Understanding is being written by legal consultant for TNTP for submission. Applications are being accepted for the second cohort to begin in January of 2014. Recruitment of candidates for second cohort will continue. First cohort candidates are continuing to take classes in the program. Classes will be complete in December and candidates will be eligible to apply for the Resident Teacher Certificate.
		Conduct Early Childhood Leadership Academies (Prek-2) for 60 Title 1 schools	In Progress	The first Academy with 30 teams of 6 participants from Title 1 schools and early childhood partners representing 21 jurisdictions was scheduled on August 9, 2013. Continued planning with MSDE staff involved in the 2013 Educator Effectiveness Academy so that our academies are aligned in purpose and support. The content of the sessions focused on developing

				knowledge of executive functioning, learning about resources that are available in the state to support early childhood programs, and developing relationships between child care and elementary school staff to support quality teaching and learning for these shared students. Evaluation feedback will be used to inform planning for the 2014 Academy.

Note that two activities related to Project 9 will be incorporated in the <u>State Superintendent's Task Force on Teacher Education of Early Childhood Education</u> which began its work in September 2013. The activities are: (1) Developing an articulation agreement for pre-service courses between MSDE approved trainers and the state's community colleges, and (2) strengthen pathways for teacher education by improving the access to and transfer out of the Associate of Arts Degree in Teaching (AAT) in Early Childhood Education.

Project 10	RTT-ELC Funding	Milestone/Deliverable	Status (as of 9/30/13)	Comments
Early Childhood Data System	$4,764,115	Establish Early Childhood Data Warehouse (ECDW) interfaces with the Division's Child Care Administrative Tracking System (CCATS), Electronic Licensing Inspection System (ELIS), and MMSR Kindergarten Assessment datasets.	Met	The CCATS database includes all child care provider data, provider staff credentialing data, program accreditation data, and child care subsidy program data. The ELIS database provides detailed compliance data from child care provider licensing inspections. The annual MMSR datasets provide individual performance scores for children enrolled in public kindergarten. Established interagency governance committee for Project 10. In August 2013, the agency received the following final documents from the eCCATS vendor: Project Management Plan Supplement, Initial Test Plan, Work Breakdown Structure, and a related work schedule, and Project Risk Register. The functional requirements are being gathered and documented. With respect to the entire ECDW project, the end date of the activity has been pushed back to May 2014 due to a delay caused by having to issue a new procurement for RTT-ELC grant work. The activity product will be rolled out in a series of releases. The first release of the CCATS public portal is in progress; this will include the child enrollment/attendance tracking component. The target date for design of the final release is July 2014.
Focus Integrates various data systems into the Early Childhood Data Warehouse as		Establish ECDW interfaces with non-Division early childhood data sources maintained by MSDE.	In Progress	Other MSDE data sources include the DSE/EIS Infants and Toddlers Program, Public Pre-K site and enrollment files, and the Child Food and Nutrition Program.
		Establish ECDW interfaces with early childhood data sources maintained outside of	In Progress	Non-MSDE data sources include the Maryland EXCELS maintained by Johns Hopkins/CTE, and the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) program maintained by

| part of the MLDS | | MSDE. | | the University of Maryland-School of Social Work. The interface with the Maryland EXCELS database became operational in June 2013. The interface with the ECMH database has been operational since August 2013. Arrangements are also underway to interface with Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) data sources pertaining to child immunizations and health screenings, and with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) data sources on foster care and child adoption data. New data sources for the ECDW are being developed in connection with other Division RTT-ELC projects. The data output file layout for Maryland EXCELS was put into final format. Test output file was transferred to the EC Data Warehouse environment for data modeling purposes. |
| | | Establish the Child Enrollment and Attendance Record System (EARS) within the ECDW. (This project experienced significant delays but it was adjusted on the RTT-ELC project management plan.) | In Progress | The EARS application, as a modification in CCATS, will capture continuing, real-time child enrollment and attendance data and staff-child assignment data from licensed child care programs. It will interface with MSDE's data systems to permit unique student identifiers to be assigned to all children identified within EARS so that their status and performance can be tracked throughout K-12. In January 2013 it was transferred to the CCATS project where it was developed as part of a more comprehensive public portal that will include child care subsidy program voucher issuance, tracking, and payment. All EARS data will therefore be captured directly within the CCATS database, which is interfaced with the ECDW. The CCATS public portal is currently scheduled to become operational by the end of May 2014. |

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