

GOVERNOR'S SUMMIT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD REPORT TO SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

Part I: Summary and Highlights

On October 16, 2006, Governor Blagojevich's Summit on Early Childhood was held at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The meeting was attended by over 100 stakeholders, and included members of state government, health and education agencies, community-based organizations, foundations, and advocacy organizations.

The Summit, funded by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, focused on four critical issues for successful *Preschool for All* implementation:

- **Space Capacity:** Increasing the space capacity in communities to serve children in high-quality preschool classrooms and infant-toddler care and education settings
- **Linguistic and Cultural Diversity:** Increasing early childhood educators' knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to the needs of bilingual/bicultural children and families to ensure that children are well-prepared for school
- **Public Awareness:** Enrolling new children in Preschool for All programs by engaging in effective outreach strategies
- **Infants and Toddlers:** Assisting communities to develop plans for child development services for at-risk infants and toddlers and their families

Summit participants met in Issue Area Groups to identify and prioritize strategies and develop consensus on specific action steps necessary to successfully implement Preschool for All, which offers high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-olds whose parents want them to participate and expands research-based child development programs for at-risk infants and toddlers and their families. A complete list of Summit priorities, goals, and accomplishments thus far can be found in Part II of this report.

Highlights include:

- After the passage of Preschool for All, which has been the major focus of the Illinois Early Learning Council over the past three years, Council members participated in a process to develop priority goals to guide the work of the Council over the next four years, as well as a new Council committee structure to achieve the priority goals. The priorities and committee structure are based on a review of recommendations that resulted from the Summit's issue area work groups, outstanding work plan items from current

Council committees, and individual summit survey responses. The Council will continue its focus on Preschool for All funding and program implementation issues, although the Council's scope encompasses all aspects of a state early childhood development system.

- The Linguistic and Cultural Diversity, Infant Toddler, and Space Capacity issue area groups all recommended that the Illinois Early Learning Council establish standing committees to continue work in these areas. This recommendation was considered by the Executive Committee of the Council in January 2007, which recommended that these new committees be formed as part of the Council's restructuring process.
- At its February 2007 meeting, the full Council voted on and approved the establishment of the new committees. Committee charges related to the Summit's issue areas of focus are:
 - **Space Capacity-** Increase the space capacity in communities to serve children in high quality preschool classrooms and infant-toddler care and education settings, especially where there are shortages.
 - **Infants and Toddlers-** 1) Expand access to high-quality early childhood development programs for all at-risk children under three years of age; 2) Improve the quality of infant toddler child care, and improve coordination across infant toddler programs and services at the state and local levels; and 3) Develop recommendations regarding the creation of an outreach system for all new parents to provide basic information and support and to identify and connect families who need more intensive services to appropriate programs and services
 - **Public Awareness-** Increase participation in high quality early learning programs by providing consistent, targeted and significant information, outreach and technical assistance to families, early childhood providers, and other stakeholders.
 - **Linguistic and Cultural Diversity-** Develop strategies for meeting the varied needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families and young children to ensure that they are well-prepared for school.

The Linguistic and Cultural Diversity committee has been conceptualized as a "cross-committee," which means that membership on this committee will include a representative of each of the other Council committees, in addition to others who wish to participate, in order to ensure that the issues concerning children and families who are linguistically and culturally diverse will be integrated into work across all committees of the Council.

- Those interested in serving on the committees should send an email with their contact information to ddurica@ounceofprevention.org.

Based in part on the priorities set by the Space Capacity Issue Area Group, the Illinois Early Learning Council made recommendations to the Governor's Office regarding establishing an early childhood capital initiative to provide access to capital funds by early childhood providers (both school and community-based) for building, expanding, or renovating facilities, especially in areas with documented high levels of demand and low levels of supply. The Governor's Fiscal Year 2008 budget proposes \$30 million over three years for this purpose.

- The Public Awareness Issue Area Group created goals for providing outreach and technical assistance to programs. Since the Council's Public Awareness Committee has met to review the Preschool for All Primer, an introductory document for providers, and established a Capacity Building work group to analyze data to find areas of high need in the state. Work group members developed a white paper describing their findings, which was approved by the Council to raise awareness of the areas in the state where more preschool program capacity is needed. As a result of these efforts, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies co-hosted informational meetings for providers in high need counties the week of March 19, 2007.

Part II: Summit Goals and Progress

GOAL 1: Expand access to high-quality preschool to all 4-year-olds and at-risk 3-year-olds whose parents choose to enroll them, including under-served and new populations, in order to serve at least 107,000 children by FY09.

Objectives	Indicators	Accomplishments/Progress
<p><u>Objective 1:</u> To increase the space capacity in communities to serve children in high-quality preschool classrooms and infant-toddler care and education settings.</p>	<p>1. Number of facilities/classrooms housing preschool for the first time in FY08</p>	<p>At the Summit, the Public Awareness Issue Area Group (PA) created goals for providing outreach and technical assistance to programs. Since the Summit, the PA group has met to review the Preschool for All Primer, an introductory document for providers, and established a Capacity Building work group to analyze data to find areas of high need in the state. A white paper describing their findings was approved by the Council to raise awareness of the areas in the state where more preschool program capacity is needed. As a result of these efforts, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies co-hosted informational meetings for providers in high need counties the week of March 19, 2007.</p>
	<p>2. Number of communities that have developed a local plan for expanding space capacity through new or renovated facilities</p>	<p>The Space Capacity Issue Area Group of the Summit (SC) recommended that a new committee or work group of the Early Learning Council be established in order to assist communities with facilities planning, and recommended conducting a survey of community space in high need areas. This recommendation has been considered by the Executive Committee and the full Council at its February meeting. The Council approved creating a Space Capacity committee. Those interested in serving on the committee should send an email with their contact information to ddurica@ounceofprevention.org</p>
	<p>3. Increased state support for creating space capacity in communities</p>	<p>The Space Capacity Issue Area Group recommended the establishment of a statewide funding stream for facilities planning and capital investments. This recommendation has been considered by the Executive Committee of the Early Learning Council, and was discussed with the Governor's Office. In his FY08 budget, Governor Blagojevich proposed appropriating \$30 million over three years for an early childhood capital initiative.</p>

Objectives	Indicators	Accomplishments/Progress
<p><u>Objective 2:</u> To increase early childhood educators' knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to the needs of bilingual/bicultural children and families in order to ensure that children are well-prepared for school</p>	<p>1. Development of a "best practices" document and/or training curriculum on how to support students who are English Language Learners</p>	<p>The Issue Area Group on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity (LCD) recommended that the final version of such a document be created by a committee or work group established by the Early Learning Council to work on issues of linguistic and cultural diversity. This recommendation has been considered by the Executive Committee and the full Council at its February 2007 meeting. The Council approved creating a new committee on linguistic and cultural diversity. Those interested in serving on the committee should send an email with their contact information to ddurica@ounceofprevention.org</p>
	<p>2. Development of a "best practices" document and/or training curriculum on how to effectively work with non-English speaking (and/or bicultural) parents</p>	<p>The group recommended that the final version of such a document be created by a committee or work group established by the Early Learning Council to work on issues of linguistic and cultural diversity. This recommendation will be considered by the Council's new Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Committee when it meets in the Spring of 2007.</p>
	<p>3. Documentation of efforts to increase the number of Type 04 certified teachers who are bilingual</p>	<p>The group suggested creating recommendations for programming and competency development in working with linguistically diverse children for teacher preparation and professional development programs. This includes planning for recruitment and retention, and education of bilingual professionals as well as professional development for monolingual practitioners to increase their skills in working with English Language Learners. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Councils' Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Committee.</p>
	<p>4. Increase in number of bilingual students enrolled in teacher certification preparation programs</p>	<p>See accomplishments listed above</p>

	5. Review the law used to determine inclusion in bilingual classrooms	This work would be completed by the new committee.
<u>Objective 3:</u> To enroll new children in Preschool for All programs by engaging in effective outreach strategies	1. Increase in the number of bilingual/bicultural children enrolled in PFA	The Public Awareness issue area group has included outreach to non-English speaking populations as a priority work item. In addition, areas serving families speaking languages other than English will be targeted for technical assistance as they are often communities in great need of high-quality early childhood programs.
	2. Increase in number of middle income families enrolled in state-funded preschool	The Public Awareness Committee has identified the need to offer technical assistance to programs serving middle-income families as part of the Preschool for All outreach plan. Additionally, efforts to support direct outreach to parents will be planned. The group is collaborating with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) on outreach activities, and is using data from the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) to determine areas of need in the state. IECAM has recently secured funding to hire demographers to assist in the identification of areas where outreach will be targeted.
	3. Increase in number of first-time applicants applying for preschool funding	Working with ISBE, and using data from IECAM, the PA group will help to support technical assistance to applicants in areas of the state where programs are lacking. In many cases, the technical assistance will be provided to first-time applicants, or those applicants who have not received funding in the past. Informational meetings, hosted by ISBE and INCCRRA were held in targeted counties the week of March 19 th .

GOAL 2: Improve access to high-quality services for expecting families and families with infants and toddlers by improving the quality of existing services for at-risk families and increasing the availability of research-based service models.

Objectives	Indicators	Accomplishments/Progress
<p><u>Objective 1:</u> To assist communities in formulating plans for Birth to Three services that meet the child development and family support needs of infants and toddlers who face the greatest challenges and their families</p>	<p>1. Increase number of communities with local community-based collaborations focused on early childhood care and education</p>	<p>The Infants and Toddlers Issue Area group of the Summit recommended that a committee focused on Birth to Three issues be added to the Council. This committee would then be responsible for creating plans around increasing local community-based collaborations as well as articulating a statewide vision for infant/toddler services.</p>
	<p>2. Increase number of children served in research-based birth to three programs</p>	<p>This recommendation has been considered by the Executive Committee and the full Council at its February 2007 meeting. The Council approved creating an ELC committee on birth to three issues. Those interested in serving on the committee should send an email with their contact information to ddurica@ounceofprevention.org</p>