

**April ELC Meeting
4-4-16
Core Considerations for OECD Governance Planning**

Note: the discussion synthesized below followed a conversation on 4-4-16 among the Executive Committee of the ELC about potential scenarios for OECD governance. The options discussed centered around consolidation via an embedded entity within an existing state agency or straddling two existing agencies. The elements of this scenario that were shared in the meeting are included on page 4 of this document.

Purpose of this document: as internal discussions about the future governance of OECD proceed, the ELC has been asked to provide comment and recommendations that can help shape a future scenario. The synthesis below is our first stab at articulating core considerations.

Key Considerations in an ‘Embedded’ Scenario

How does this improve outcomes for children and families?

How do we ensure children and families, particularly those hardest to reach or most at risk, are at the center of our attention in any entity created?

How do we stay accountable to delivering comprehensive services?

Does this move us towards a more integrated system?

How do we ensure ongoing relevance & centrality of early childhood?

Will we be able to continue to prioritize key work streams, even in a scenario in which early childhood is just one priority of many? How do we refrain from being lost in a larger agency?

Isn't change more fundamentally about where early childhood figures among other commitments at the state level, rather than about where OECD sits?

What does this mean for and among state agencies?

How do we make a transition in a way that adds capacity rather than taking capacity (or funding) away from agencies?

How do we help agency heads buy into an embedded scenario?

What has to change inside the existing structure in order to enable OECD to continue to be the keeper of core early childhood strategies that are then adopted across agencies?

In order for this to work, state agencies must play in the sandbox effectively on behalf of children and families.

What does this mean for OECD?

How do we maintain the sense of innovation and entrepreneurship currently in the office, even within a larger agency or more bureaucratic structure?

Can we create a strong enough MOU to support true integration of the work?

Articulated Problems with Current Scenario

Right now it's a constant push from the outside (OECD) rather than from the inside (internal to agencies) to make change.

Some perception that OECD has made things more difficult at state agencies.

Questions about where vision should be set versus where grant management should occur.

Questions about whether state agencies and OECD are on the same page—some feel great progress has been made but some feel there is a lack of high level agreement.

Sentiments Suggesting Value in an Embedded Scenario

It improves outcomes:

We still haven't figured out how to reach the most at risk children and families, and build a system that enables that—how can we do business as usual when this is the case?

In a clear way, it positions the success of children and youth as being rooted deeply in early childhood. The success of *all* children begins here.

It ties with our original intentions:

The goals of the embedded scenario are the same ones that inspired the origins of the OECD—to enable greater collaboration and align implementation across the system. But there was never enough capacity or will to prioritize this goal. Eventually the federal funding became the focus. But the original intention still holds value.

It invites needed change:

I default toward change because it will force us look across agencies in a different way, evaluating roles, responsibilities, shared aims, etc.

It's a good opportunity to re-evaluate all the roles—across ISBE, DHS, and OECD. We're not just throwing existing roles into a new environment—we are creating something that works better as a whole than any of its piece-parts.

As a provider, interactions across local, state, and federal bureaucracies combined is overwhelming. There is duplication of effort, rules, requirements, hoops to jump through...tremendous pressure and wasted resources and energy that should be focused on families and children.

I am open to a different approach. But let's make sure it is comprehensive and not just cosmetic. Even if the benefits are incremental, maybe that is ok—but doing nothing is not an option.

Sentiments that Question an Immediate Move to Embedded Scenario

Does this solve the problem we have, of coordination across programs? Creating a seamless experience across funding streams?

Symbolically, having an early childhood office inside the Governor's office is huge—do we want to risk losing that? Does our value-add change—is our ability to make something a priority disappear because we're not longer sitting in the Governor's office?

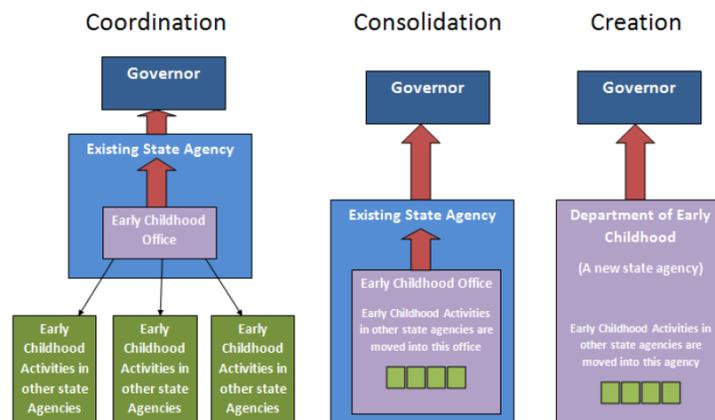
Shouldn't we set our priorities and strategies and let the structure follow that?

Illinois Early Childhood System Governance

Shared with Early Learning Council on 4-4-16

As the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant comes to an end, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood must evolve in order to sustain cross-system leadership and support and strengthen governance to achieve the goals of our early childhood system: equitable access, effectiveness, and sustainability. Identification of a new structural model for OECD is not intended to fix a broken system, rather to enhance performance by creating a more integrated, sustainable force for change in our early childhood system.

Three Early Childhood Governance Models as identified by the BUILD Initiative:



Challenges of Existing Coordination Model

- OECD is positioned to identify and capitalize on opportunities for the state agencies/programs/funding streams to work together more effectively and efficiently, however OECD lacks the formal authority and accountability to enact changes. Uncoordinated efforts lead to inefficiencies for providers and difficulty for the state in knowing what is or isn't effective.
- Coordination of siloed early childhood care and education programs can prove particularly challenging in the midst of strained resources, limited funding and limited capacity within individual state agencies.
- Sustainability of system wide initiatives is at greater risk if stakeholders are fragmented and early childhood programs then face competing priorities within the system.

Proposal for Consolidated Governance Model

- Imbed OECD into state agency (ISBE, DHS, or both) and consolidate all respective early childhood care and education programs within OECD. OECD is responsible and accountable for all programs, as well as infrastructure components (e.g. workforce, data integration and analytics, evaluation, etc.).
- Consolidated structure drives enhanced policy coordination, greater accountability for shared early childhood goals, and streamlined decision making.
- Reflects role of Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth to promote higher degree of coordination between agencies, working together differently, and enhancing the effectiveness of our state investments.