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# THE NEXT STEP IN SYSTEMS-BUILDING: Early Childhood Advisory Councils and Federal Efforts to Promote Policy Alignment in Early Childhood

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EDUCATION POLICY PROGRAM

*Early Education Initiative*

*[www.EarlyEdWatch.org](http://www.EarlyEdWatch.org)*

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Today, preschool and other services for young children are delivered through what is widely recognized as a non-system, with programs like child care, pre-kindergarten, special education services and Head Start operating in separate policy silos, each with differing objectives and different funding streams. This uneven and uncoordinated character of early childhood policy can impede access, quality, and return on investment to these programs. Indeed, stories of avoidable dysfunction—of low-income parents who are unaware that their child is eligible for Head Start or Medicaid, of duplicative paperwork that child care providers must complete to receive reimbursements, of kindergarten teachers knowing nothing about the educational background of their incoming students—are too common to be ignored.

The Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 mandates that governors designate an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to develop a coordinated system of early childhood education and care.<sup>1</sup> These state councils went unfunded until a \$100 million investment arrived in February 2009 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the “stimulus”).<sup>2</sup> In June 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services began accepting applications for grants to support the councils, and states are now working to bring them into full existence. Applications are being accepted through August 1, 2010.

Based on interviews with representatives involved in ECAC development in all 50 states, this report provides a snapshot of where states stand now. It also offers recommendations for how to ensure that the councils make a positive impact on the lives of young children and their families. The success of the ECACs will be crucial, as their work will lay the foundation for future investments in early childhood, such as the Early Learning Challenge Fund—a proposed federal grant program that is part of a bill moving through Congress in the coming months.<sup>3</sup>

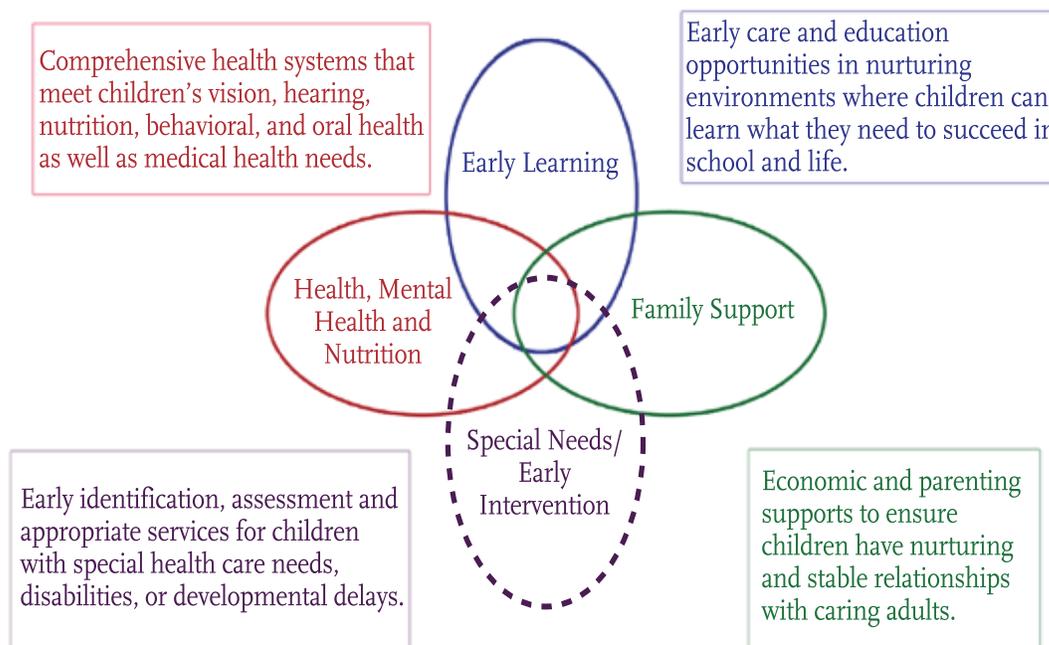
Guidance released by the Department of Health and Human Services in June 2009 lists nine representatives that must be on each state’s ECAC.<sup>4</sup> These required members include individuals who represent Head Start, state departments of health and education, local schools and the Interagency Coordinating Council for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C. Beyond this mandatory membership, governors are allowed to add members as they see fit. Reports so far show that the number of people on each ECAC varies greatly, ranging from 12 in Arizona to more than 60 in Iowa.

The federal government already funds multiple initiatives to promote alignment and systems-building in early childhood, but these initiatives have had mixed results. ECACs are designed to be different, with more influential governance structures and substantial funding that could help jump-start and improve policy alignment in the states. But they also present challenges for states, not least because they require a 70-30 percent match, with states required to fund 70 percent of the ECAC’s costs and federal dollars covering the other 30 percent. ❖

## What Are ECACs?

ECACs are state-level councils whose purpose is to support and advise state policymakers as they work to create strong, aligned, and comprehensive systems of services for young children aged birth to 5, and their families. ECACs are more than groups of people convening for regular meetings. They are a way to develop and implement an actionable plan to achieve a common goal: to ensure that all children in the state are healthy, thriving, and ready to learn.

Fig. 1. State Early Childhood System: Families Supported and Children Thriving



Source: National Early Childhood Systems Work Group

## A State-by-State Update on ECAC Development

Until recently, ECACs have been relatively low-profile entities, and in many states it wasn't clear whether they even existed. In fall 2007, just prior to the enactment of the Head Start reauthorization, the National Governors Association surveyed governors' offices about the presence and structure of state advisory councils for early childhood.<sup>5</sup> Of the 38 states that responded, 31 reported the existence of at least one ECAC.

In the two years since, several new ECACs have been announced or are in development, and several councils are being re-formed to comply with the Head Start mandate. (See Appendix I for details by state.) As of November 2009, the New America Foundation has determined that:

- 19 states have councils that have been announced by the governor as the state's ECAC, either through an executive order or other communication.<sup>6</sup>
- 30 states are in the process of developing their ECAC.
- 1 state—South Dakota—has officially decided not to apply for ECAC funding and will not have an ECAC.<sup>7</sup>

In the 30 states where governors have not yet designated a council as their state's ECAC, most representatives interviewed for this report could confidently predict whether an existing council will likely be named the ECAC, or whether the state will likely create a new council. From this reporting, we have found that (including both announced and likely councils):

- 18 states have created or will likely create a new council.
- 27 states have designated or will likely designate an existing council.
- 4 states are undecided as to whether they will use a new or existing council.

Governors must officially designate an ECAC by August 1, 2010, the application deadline, if they want to receive federal ECAC funding. ❏

## ECACs' Place Within State Systems

A state's ECAC will not act alone. Instead, the ECAC will sit at the nexus of interconnecting areas of early childhood services, such as health/mental health, early learning, family support, and special education (see Figure 1). The ECAC will be uniquely positioned to coordinate the work of these

component areas, and to connect them with higher-level policy discussions.<sup>8</sup>

In several states, the ECAC will sit within a larger network of coordination efforts and councils. In 26 states, particularly those with systems modeled after North Carolina's Smart Start initiative, there is a network of local councils that can advise and implement the work of the statewide council, though many of these networks are not necessarily linked to the ECAC in a formal way. Many states also have larger councils, often called Children's Cabinets, that focus on children from birth through college. Six planned or existing ECACs will themselves be a sub-council to these larger bodies.

ECACs will often work parallel to and in close collaboration with a second council comprised of representatives from business and community organizations that serve as early childhood advocates. ECACs may also work alongside the advisory council to statewide early childhood initiatives that have their own dedicated funding stream. Examples of such parallel councils include the Maine Business Roundtable (made up of local business leaders), the California First 5 Commission (which disburses funds from a tobacco tax), and the Kentucky Child Development Authority (which disburses funds from a tobacco settlement). ❖

## Ongoing Initiatives to Support Early Childhood Systems-Building

This is not the first time the federal government has promoted coordination of early childhood policy at the state level. In addition to the new ECAC mandate, there are six other federal mandates or programs designed to help states create comprehensive, aligned systems of early childhood services.

In 1990, the federal government began funding state Head Start Collaboration Offices that work to improve collaboration among Head Start and related child development services. Since 2003, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (ECCS) has provided grants to almost all the states to support systems development. Both Head Start Collaboration Offices and ECCS Initiatives often have advisory councils or task forces that advise and help implement their work. The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA mandated that states establish an interagency coordinating council to advise them on the implementation of the law's Part C programs for infants and toddlers.

In 2008 six states received federal grants to support systems-building and child wellness through Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health). In FY 2009, Project LAUNCH grew to make 12 state awards available. Also in 2008, Congress authorized the creation of a grant program to support Early Childhood Education Professional Development and Career Task Forces. Though these task forces have not yet received funding, several states do have an interagency group that focuses on professional development for early educators, and many states plan to have a professional development subgroup to their ECAC that could potentially serve as such a task force.

Several representatives interviewed for this report also cited the importance of non-federal and private initiatives that help states with building early childhood capacity. One is the Build Initiative, a national program supported by philanthropic foundations that spends \$1 million to \$2 million annually to provide technical assistance to eight "Build" states.<sup>9</sup> The Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center, which is part of the North Carolina Smart Start program, has provided technical assistance to nearly all states and has a total value of several hundred thousand dollars per year.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the National Governors Association (NGA) works with governors' offices to provide technical assistance to state advisory councils. In June 2006, NGA awarded grants of up to \$50,000 each to three states to fund in-state meetings and consultants, followed by smaller grants of \$10,000 each to 12 states to hold early childhood summits.<sup>11</sup>

While this proliferation of collaboration initiatives and councils may seem counterproductive to a goal of creating a unified system of early childhood, the efforts can work in harmony, and in many states, they do. Many individuals interviewed for this report said they found it productive to have multiple councils as long as each one focused on a specific issue, such as special education or professional development. These issue-specific councils can be effectively integrated into the work of the ECAC either as a sub-council or by including a representative of the council on the ECAC. In other states, councils that support two different initiatives—such as an ECCS task force and an advisory council to the Office of Head Start Collaboration—are in fact the same body, and have been identified as a logical candidate to be the ECAC. ❖

Table 1. Federal Initiatives That Promote Early Childhood Systems-Building

Program/Initiative	Description	Funding
Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCOs)	State offices that work to foster state-level and local collaboration among Head Start and relevant early childhood programs. The federal government began funding selected HSSCOs in 1990, with funding for every state since FY 2007.	Total funding for 50 HSSCOs in FY 2009 is \$8.2 million.
Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (ECCS)	States use ECCS grants to develop and implement plans for a comprehensive system of early childhood education and care. Begun in 2003, 49 states and 5 territories have participated in ECCS.	States receive annual grants of up to \$140,000. The FY 2009 appropriation is \$5.46 million.*
IDEA Part C Interagency Coordinating Council	The 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required states to maintain councils with representatives from state agencies and parents of children with disabilities to advise the state on implementation of IDEA programs for infants and toddlers.	Drawn from Part C grants to the states.
SAMSHA Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health)	A collaborative partnership of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, Project LAUNCH gives grants to states to support systems that promote wellness among children birth through age 8.	12 States receive grants of up to \$850,000 over 5 years. The FY 2009 appropriation is \$11 million.
Early Childhood Education Professional Development and Career Task Forces	The Higher Education Act of 2008 authorized a competitive grant program to help states develop professional development programs, including scholarships, for early childhood providers.	Unfunded.
Early Childhood Advisory Councils (ECACs)	Mandated by the Head Start Reauthorization of 2007, governors in each state are required to designate advisory councils to support early childhood policy coordination. Minimum membership requirements were outlined by the Department of Health and Human Services.	The ARRA ("stimulus") appropriates \$100 million to support ECACs over three years, with a minimum grant of \$500,000 per state.
Early Learning Challenge Fund (proposed)	Included as part of a reconciliation bill currently under consideration by Congress, the proposed Challenge Fund would include two grant programs to support early childhood programs and coordination efforts in the states.	The current House bill (HR 3221**) proposes \$1 billion per year for 8 years to support competitive grants to states.

\* This represents a 25% reduction from the announced level of funding for ECCS, which was comparable to previous years' funding levels.

\*\* As passed by the House of Representatives on September 17, 2009.

## A Sobering History of Collaboration

While all representatives interviewed for this report cited many positive results from these previous or ongoing efforts at early childhood collaboration, most could also cite disappointments. Several initiatives or councils showed promise in the beginning but today are effectively defunct or ignored. Others were eliminated entirely due to budget constraints or a change in political leadership. Most of all, many were unable to live up to high expectations to both develop plans for coordination *and* implement them.

Take, for example, the ECCS program. Its impact in some states has been limited, mostly because those states were unable to independently develop a high-functioning system within the loosely defined “go forth and prosper” federal guidelines for the program, which do not include any governance structure or timelines. In some states, the ECCS initiative retreated from its “comprehensive” goal and became focused more on one component area of early childhood, such as early education or mental health. Other states suffered the same fate as councils lost energy due to frequent staff turnover and low attendance at meetings. When state leaders in Kentucky solicited testimony from a diverse early childhood stakeholders about systems-building efforts in their state, they were told that while the state has a long history of collaboration in early childhood, some efforts became dominated by a small group of people who felt an intense degree of ownership, preventing other parties from taking part in the statewide dialogue.

Other states, however, are home to very successful ECCS initiatives that work to bring together stakeholders and help them develop and implement a framework for an early childhood system. Almost all states report that they will incorporate ECCS into the functioning of the ECAC. In many states, the ECAC will assume responsibility for the ECCS grant, adopt the ECCS logic model or, as is the case in Kansas, even appoint an ECCS-affiliated council to be the ECAC. In Colorado, the work of Smart Start, the state’s ECCS program, is “table setting” for the state’s ECAC and future systems-building plans, said Jodi Hardin, the initiative’s director. ■

## Designed for Bigger Impact: The Innovation of ECACs

Not only will ECACs build upon previous and ongoing systems-building efforts, they are structured in a way that

should make them more effective. All representatives interviewed for this report say they are particularly optimistic about the prospects for their ECAC, in part because the establishment of the council may lead to key reforms in the design, focus, and pace of collaboration efforts in their state. In particular, the following four characteristics make a difference:

**Membership.** While early childhood multi-stakeholder collaboration exists, either formally or informally, in all states, a key innovation of the ECAC is that its membership requirements will bring new stakeholders on board. An overwhelming majority of the 27 states that are tapping existing councils to become ECACs report that they will have to alter their membership slightly to comply with the requirements. The most frequently cited additions to existing council membership are the State Director of Head Start Collaboration, a representative from Migrant/Indian Head Start, and a representative from higher education. Beyond the federal membership requirements, many states are choosing to invite representatives from philanthropy and law enforcement, as well as state legislators, to join their ECAC.

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**Visibility.** Responsibility for establishing an ECAC and appointing members lies in the hands of governors, bringing early childhood to the attention of the state’s top policymaker. In most cases, the ECAC will include cabinet-level representatives (or their delegates), such as the head of a state’s education department or department of health. These high-level officials will be meeting with local providers and private citizens, all of whom have a voice at the

table. “The biggest problem with ECCS was that many of these groups didn’t have leverage with the governor or other agency heads or superintendents,” said one state official. “Now you have people who are in positions of authority to make those decisions.” Illinois, for example, plans to move its already successful Early Learning Council, currently housed in the nonprofit Ounce of Prevention Fund, to the planned Governor’s Office of Early Childhood, where it will have more clout.

**Structure.** In many states, early childhood stakeholders get together only for specific occasions (such as to prepare a report) or around a single issue (such as professional development). With official and higher-level designation, ECACs are more likely to have regular meetings of all stakeholder groups; most functioning ECACs now meet quarterly, with issue-specific subgroups meeting more frequently. The council meetings are also likely to cover a broad swath of early childhood issues and less likely to inadvertently ignore specific issues or stakeholders. “Oftentimes, if it weren’t for the council, [diverse stakeholders] wouldn’t be talking,” said Janet Carter, an education specialist at the Delaware Department of Education, and a member of Delaware’s ECAC. “Council meetings serve as a time to really have a conversation, not just among the state officials, but the nonprofit community, too.”

**Vision and Re-evaluation.** In many states, the grant application process is spurring a re-evaluation of the focus and effectiveness of current early childhood systems as well as an opportunity to lay out an interagency vision for the whole early childhood system. “This is a good opportunity to add governance and to give structure across early childhood programs, and to give it more focus so that we can speak with one voice,” said Linda Hampton, Director of Head Start Collaboration in Alabama. “Early Childhood will become more of an agenda item.” In a majority of states, representatives expect the ECAC will broaden their vision of the early childhood system beyond the current standards, rules, policies, and procedures used by early childhood sub-systems (such as child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten). By taking a larger view of early childhood services and how they are, or are not, connected, ECAC members will not only be better able to identify gaps and overlaps in existing services for young children and their families but will also be better positioned to craft new policy, finance, and accountability measures aimed at improving the system as a whole. ■

## Funding: Stimulus vs. Sustainability

Currently states fund their systems-building initiatives with a blend of the above-cited federal program funding, Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding, state general funds, and private donations. With stimulus funding, each state is now eligible for a minimum \$500,000 grant to be spread over three years. (According to the ECAC guidance, 13 small states can apply for no more than \$500,000; larger states are eligible for more funds based on population.<sup>12</sup>) This funding will be invaluable for many states, especially those where the work of councils has gone unfunded, or is funded significantly below this amount. These funds will be used to conduct periodic needs assessments of early childhood programs and teacher training programs and to fund early childhood systems-building initiatives identified by the states themselves.

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Beyond supporting the administrative costs of the council, representatives said their ECAC is most likely to direct the funds toward projects to create and implement professional development systems and longitudinal data systems—priorities both for states and the federal government.

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While states have yet to outline priorities for the grants, representatives in several states said that one will be to hire a full-time staff person to support the work of the council. Sandra Murphy said that members of the West Virginia PIECES Advisory Council, the state’s likely ECAC of which she is chair, are stressed because they are all volunteers. (She herself has a full-time career as a private-sector lawyer.) Hiring a staff member, she said, would help sustain the energy of the council, bring more timely information to its members, and help maintain day-to-day communication among members and relevant organizations.

Beyond supporting the administrative costs of the council, representatives said their ECAC is most likely to direct the funds toward projects to create and implement professional development systems and longitudinal data systems—priorities both for states and the federal government. Many states also plan to invest in initiatives to develop or expand

a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which can serve as an important framework for the early care and education system as a whole. These improvement and rating systems could become a mechanism through which to deliver professional development and quality supports; a structure for system-wide program accountability; and an effective way to gather the data needed to track programs, results, accessibility, and service gaps. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia already operate a QRIS, and 28 other states report that they are exploring or preparing to launch a QRIS.<sup>13</sup> ❖

## Funding Challenges

For states that have already made significant investments in early childhood systems-building, such as Pennsylvania and Illinois, the stimulus funding will help move up timelines on planned projects or enhance existing efforts. For states that have not been as deeply engaged in cross-system early childhood planning and implementation, this funding presents an important incentive to launch efforts. “Money talks,” was a common refrain from these ECAC representatives, who hope that the availability of funding, absent until now, will create a real purpose for stakeholders to come together and develop common initiatives. “We are used to doing things for practically nothing,” said Dan Haggard, Deputy Director of New Mexico’s Early Childhood Services Division. “This really is going to propel us forward.”

One challenge facing many emerging states is the required 70 percent match to the 30 percent federal grant. However, the Department of Health and Human Services has released fairly liberal guidelines on what can count toward this match, including existing investments in early childhood services, private contributions, and in-kind staff time. While a handful of states have expressed concerns that the size of this match (for which there is no waiver authority) may preclude them from applying for federal funds, only one—South Dakota—has officially decided not to apply because of the state’s inability to make the match.

The match requirement may be a significant hurdle for smaller states. Because of the \$500,000 minimum grant level, the 13 smallest states (plus the territories and the District of Columbia) will get proportionally greater federal funds to support their ECAC. This also means that they will have to generate a proportionally larger match. For example, both Wyoming and Idaho will receive

\$500,000 and will each be required to match that with approximately \$1.17 million in state funds, despite the fact that Idaho’s Head Start population is more than double that of Wyoming’s, and the state’s overall population is three times larger.<sup>14</sup>

While the match requirement ensures that states will continue to put their own funds toward systems-building over the next three years, it does not appear that states are planning to launch any significant programs soon, largely due to tight state budgets. Yet as part of the stimulus application, states must outline plans for how they will sustain funding beyond the three-year grant cycle. It is everyone’s hope that the increased activity and visibility of the ECAC will help make this happen, but nothing is certain. Several representatives remarked that they are “counting on” funding from the proposed Early Learning Challenge Grants, but expressed frustration that unless the program is authorized soon, they cannot include these grants in their long-term funding projections.

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In several states, policymakers are trying to avoid any new investments until their fiscal circumstances improve, a fact that will require creative thinking by ECAC members. Yet states are already learning that strong collaboration can reveal low-cost opportunities for systems development. For example, Tennessee’s Office of Early Learning recently surveyed all school districts in the state on kindergarten readiness assessments they use. The office found that of the 110 that responded, 54 were using the same instrument. Bobbi Lussier, the office’s director, said one focus of the ECAC will be drawing data from these

common assessments and using the data to design effective instruction.

A second challenge for state leaders, especially as they try to develop long-term visions for early childhood systems-building, is the insufficient, uneven, and unpredictable nature of funding for early childhood. At the state level, funding for early childhood programs that don't serve children directly (such as councils or professional development) are often targeted for budget cuts. One sobering example is Connecticut, where this year Gov. M. Jodi Rell cut the FY 2010 budget of the state's Early Childhood Cabinet by 75 percent and eliminated an associated Early Childhood Research and Policy Council as a part of sweeping cuts to trim administrative councils' expenses. 📌

## Recommendations

In theory, the idea of planning and collaboration is simple: just get the right people around a table and their collective thinking will produce solutions that could not otherwise have been realized. In practice, effective, interagency collaboration and planning is a slow, complex process that involves steep learning curves, strong and persistent leadership, long discussions, and a heavy dose of patience. "It takes a lot of steps and a lot of people," said Lorena Lowell, a private child-care provider and co-chair of Washington state's Early Learning Council, who says she is just starting to see the council's impact in her centers, two years after it was established. "We are moving more towards a direct impact, but it takes time. Just the fact that we are at the table and we are voicing concerns and options, that is a huge step."

The following are our recommendations—based on the experience of states with the most successful early childhood systems—to ensure that a state's ECAC truly builds a system of services that improves the lives of young children and their families:

### Recommendations for State Policymakers

**Keep your eye on the prize: focus on building leadership and a broad vision.** In many states, members of ECAC have historically been focused on a single component area of early childhood and, consequently, are meeting each other for the first time. An effective ECAC needs a broad view and collaborative leadership. ECACs must recognize that it will take time for members to learn about one another's work, acknowledge shared goals and values, recognize gaps and overlaps, and develop a collective vision and iden-

tity that can translate into a unified voice in policy discussions. "It is important to cultivate good leadership," added Harriet Dichter, Deputy Secretary of Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning. "People need to feel empowered, that they are part of something bigger."

**Nurture leadership, relationships, and communication among mid-level managers.** Moving toward higher-level membership on the ECAC means that the work of the council is further distanced from those individuals responsible for day-to-day implementation of policy. It is important for members to understand one another's work not only on an individual level but also to develop regular communication processes to share information about the ECAC's work with staff at their home agency. This not only helps to support the vision but will also help ensure a smooth transition when organizational leadership changes.

**Position the ECAC as a key player in the policy process.** ECACs can be established but they can just as easily be ignored. Successful ECACs not only perform delineated duties, but reach out to key policymakers and legislators to establish themselves as a critical resource for early childhood policy by supplying new ideas and timely information. Many planned or established ECACs do not include a state legislator, but they should consider doing so, because a legislator could be an important partner in policy coordination.

**Extend the definition of early childhood through third grade.** The Head Start legislation defines the focus of the council as "children from birth to school entry." Yet the imperative for coordination extends through the early elementary school years, as standards and curricula must be aligned with early childhood programs to nurture and support early growth. The mandate for representation of local and state educational agencies presents an important opportunity for states to build upon successful PreK-3rd reforms at the district level.<sup>15</sup>

**Ensure that both public and private early childhood services are considered when crafting policies and funding strategies.** Early childhood is a unique sector because it is primarily funded by parent fees. Too often, systems-building efforts focus only on the publicly funded programs (such as school-based pre-kindergarten or Head Start), assuming that this is the appropriate arena for a publicly funded endeavor. Yet thousands of children are served

by community-based programs whose primary funding source is tuition or public subsidy in lieu of tuition (e.g. Child Care Development Fund certificates), and many families rely on a mix of public, private, and family providers to care for and educate their children. Thus, it is imperative for policymakers to consider the diversity of the early childhood marketplace when crafting effective policies. To achieve results, standards, supports, finance, and accountability strategies need to include *all* of the settings families use.

**Focus on system alignment.** The ECAC can make the greatest impact only if the government it advises, and which implements policy, is just as coordinated and integrated. Even when representatives from different government offices meet on a regular basis, the system as a whole often maintains a “separate silos” approach (e.g., each administrative entity has its own standards, rules, policies, procedures). Separate silos are not only an inefficient use of scarce resources, but also pose serious barriers for children, families, and their early childhood providers. One way to encourage internal integration is by co-locating related early childhood programs in a single office or department. Currently, 27 states have an office or division of early childhood (usually housed in departments of education, health, or children’s affairs); three states have full departments devoted to early childhood services; and others have strong organizations, such as the Michigan Early Childhood Investment Corporation and Arizona First Things First, that house multiple early childhood programs. Another approach is for the ECAC to facilitate Memoranda of Agreement across multiple agencies, aimed at ensuring that even if funding or policy is administered by different agencies it is implemented in a similar fashion using similar quality standards, accountability measures, and data elements.

### Recommendations for Federal Policymakers

While the building of systems is best done by the states themselves, the federal government should:

**Lead by example.** The federal government can affirm the importance of systems-building by encouraging internal collaboration (such as through the Federal Partners’ Early Childhood Systems Work Group) and publicly showcasing collaboration among the numerous federal programs that serve young children as well as alignment between these programs and the K-12 system.<sup>16</sup>

**Sustain current investments in early childhood over the long-term.** Systems-building takes time and requires ongoing funding and support if it is to be sustained for future generations of children. The federal government can match ongoing funding with wise new investments that both support new systems-building and encourage states to increase their own investments in early childhood.

**Emphasize the role of ECACs in future programs and rule-making.** The federal government can help ensure sustained impact of the ECACs by requiring states to include a plan to coordinate with ECACs in future applications for federal early childhood grants, as is already the case with the Early Childhood Education Professional Development and Career Task Force and the proposed Early Learning Challenge Fund.

**Align federal data and reporting requirements in early childhood.** The federal government can encourage and support unified data collection at the state level by directing the various federal agencies responsible for administering early childhood funding to request the same data, using commonly agreed upon data definitions and equivalent fiscal and program reporting documents. When the federal government begins to request data on *all* early care and education establishments in a state—regardless of funding stream—and *all* children served by the system as a whole (not just those served by a particular program or initiative), then the states will have the impetus they need to begin collecting these data. Building and updating current data systems will not be easy or inexpensive. However, so long as early childhood data are reported to each funding stream separately, using different data definitions, we will continue to struggle with duplicative, misleading numbers that are simply inadequate for effective planning.

The ECAC provision of the Head Start Act, and the significant funding that accompanies it, has spurred important discussions among early childhood stakeholders across the country about the future of early childhood services in their states. These discussions come in response to growing recognition among policymakers, educators, and the scientific community of the need for adequate *and coordinated* investments in young children. The ultimate product of these discussions—both the councils and the ideas and plans that result from them—will be critical to the success of ongoing and future investments in early childhood. ✦

## Appendix 1. The Status of States' Advisory Councils as of November 2009

State	Council Name (and Status)*	New or Existing Council?	Existing Local Network? **	Potential ECAC Federal Grant (30%) ***	Required State Match (70%)
Alabama	Alabama Early Childhood Advisory Council (Likely)	New	No	\$1,797,985	\$4,195,298
Alaska	Unnamed	New	Yes	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Arizona	Early Childhood Development and Health Board (also known as First Things First, Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$2,325,469	\$5,426,094
Arkansas	Early Childhood Commission (Announced)	Existing	No	\$1,174,518	\$2,740,542
California	State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (Announced)	New	Yes	\$10,653,958	\$24,859,235
Colorado	Unnamed (Likely revised Early Childhood State Systems Team)	Existing	Yes	\$1,329,635	\$3,102,482
Connecticut	Unnamed	Undecided	No	\$582,974	\$1,360,273
Delaware	Early Care and Education Council (Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Florida	Unnamed Subcommittee of Children and Youth Cabinet (Likely)	New	Yes	\$4,818,802	\$11,243,871
Georgia	Subcommittee to Children's Cabinet (Likely)	New	Yes	\$3,476,312	\$8,111,395
Hawaii	Hawaii Interdepartmental Council (Announced)	Existing	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Idaho	Early Childhood Coordinating Council (Likely)	Existing	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667

Source: New America Foundation. The above information is based on ongoing discussions and does not necessarily reflect official announcements.

\* Those listed as "announced" include those that have been formally designated as the ECAC through a letter from the governor to the Dept. of HHS and those states where the council has been designated as the ECAC by executive order or legislation.

\*\* The network of local councils is not always directly affiliated with the ECAC.

\*\*\* Applications for these grants are being accepted through August 1, 2010.

Appendix 1, continued. The Status of States' Advisory Councils as of November 2009

State	Council Name (and Status)*	New or Existing Council?	Existing Local Network? **	Potential ECAC Federal Grant (30%) ***	Required State Match (70%)
Illinois	Early Learning Council (Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$3,584,080	\$8,362,853
Indiana	Unnamed	Undecided	No	\$1,911,431	\$4,460,006
Iowa	Early Childhood Iowa Council (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$705,525	\$1,646,225
Kansas	Early Learning Coordinating Council (Likely)	Existing	No	\$811,043	\$1,892,434
Kentucky	Kentucky Early Childhood Task Force/attached to Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$1,565,631	\$3,653,139
Louisiana	Bright Start Steering Committee (Likely)	Existing	No	\$2,000,023	\$4,666,720
Maine	Children's Growth Council (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Maryland	State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care/part of Children's Cabinet (Likely)	New	No	\$895,886	\$2,090,401
Massachusetts	Department of Early Education and Care Board (Likely)	Existing	No	\$1,137,560	\$2,654,307
Michigan	Unnamed (Likely within the Early Childhood Investment Corporation)	New	Yes	\$2,893,552	\$6,751,621
Minnesota	State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (Announced)	New	No	\$1,046,290	\$2,441,343
Mississippi	State Early Childhood Advisory Council (Announced)	New	No	\$1,521,067	\$3,549,156

Source: New America Foundation. The above information is based on ongoing discussions and does not necessarily reflect official announcements.

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Appendix 1, continued. The Status of States' Advisory Councils as of November 2009

State	Council Name (and Status)*	New or Existing Council?	Existing Local Network? **	Potential ECAC Federal Grant (30%) ***	Required State Match (70%)
Missouri	Coordinating Council for Early Childhood (Likely)	Existing	No	\$1,810,733	\$4,225,044
Montana	Unnamed (Likely within existing Early Childhood Advisory Council)	New	Yes	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Nebraska	Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Nevada	Early Childhood Advisory Council (Announced)	New	No	\$623,467	\$1,454,756
New Hampshire	Unnamed	New	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
New Jersey	Early Learning Council (Likely)	New	No	\$1,594,234	\$3,719,879
New Mexico	Child Development Board (Announced)	Existing	No	\$857,642	\$2,001,165
New York	Early Childhood Advisory Council/ part of Gov.'s Children's Cabinet (Announced)	New	No	\$5,424,273	\$12,656,637
North Carolina	Unnamed	Undecided	Yes	\$3,053,061	\$7,123,809
North Dakota	Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (Likely)	New	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Ohio	Early Childhood Advisory Council/ part of Early Childhood Cabinet (Announced)	New	Yes	\$3,511,771	\$8,194,132
Oklahoma	Smart Start Oklahoma Board (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$1,506,605	\$3,515,412
Oregon	Early Childhood Council (Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$1,000,761	\$2,335,109

Source: New America Foundation. The above information is based on ongoing discussions and does not necessarily reflect official announcements.

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Appendix 1, continued. The Status of States' Advisory Councils as of November 2009

State	Council Name (and Status)*	New or Existing Council?	Existing Local Network? **	Potential ECAC Federal Grant (30%) ***	Required State Match (70%)
Pennsylvania	Early Learning Council (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$3,020,281	\$7,047,322
Rhode Island	Unnamed	Undecided	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
South Carolina	First Steps to School Readiness Board (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$1,628,299	\$3,799,364
South Dakota	No advisory council planned	N/A	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Tennessee	Unnamed (Likely revised Pre-K Advisory Council)	Existing	Yes	\$2,254,123	\$5,259,620
Texas	Texas State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (Announced)	New	Yes	\$11,274,474	\$26,307,106
Utah	Early Childhood Commission (Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$695,884	\$1,623,729
Vermont	Building Bright Futures Board (Announced)	Existing	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
Virginia	Governor's Working Group on Early Childhood (Likely)	Existing	Yes	\$1,645,761	\$3,840,109
Washington	Early Learning Advisory Council (Announced)	Existing	Yes	\$1,542,064	\$4,598,149
West Virginia	PIECES Advisory Council (Likely)	Existing	No	\$642,214	\$1,498,499
Wisconsin	Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (Announced)	New	Yes	\$1,272,323	\$2,968,754
Wyoming	Unnamed	Existing	No	\$500,000	\$1,166,667
District of Columbia	Unnamed	New	N/A	\$500,000	\$1,166,667

Source: New America Foundation. The above information is based on ongoing discussions and does not necessarily reflect official announcements.

\* Those listed as "announced" include those that have been formally designated as the ECAC through a letter from the governor to the Dept. of HHS and those states where the council has been designated as the ECAC by executive order or legislation.

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## Appendix II: Interviews

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted by the New America Foundation with the following individuals in July and August of 2009. Information is updated as of November 17, 2009. Views expressed herein reflect those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of individuals interviewed for this report.

**Alabama:** Linda Hampton, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Alaska:** Shirley Pittz, ECCS Program Officer; **Arizona:** Karen Woodhouse, Dep. Dir., First Things First; **Arkansas:** Ann Patterson, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **California:** Mike Zito, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab., and Roberta Peck, Consultant to Calif. Dept. of Education; **Colorado:** Jodi Hardin, Early Childhood Systems Specialist, Office of the Lt. Gov.; **Connecticut:** Grace Whitney, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Delaware:** Janet Carter, Education Specialist, Dept. of Education; **Florida:** Lilli Copp, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Georgia:** Justine Strickland, Ass. Comm. of Child Care Policy; **Hawaii:** Ed Yonamine, David Tom, and Liz Chun, Good Beginnings Alliance; **Idaho:** Lorraine Clayton, ECCS Program Manager; **Illinois:** Nancy Shier, Dir. of Kids PEPP, Ounce of Prevention Fund; **Iowa:** Jenny Hodges, Project Assistant, Early Childhood Iowa; **Kansas:** Jackie Counts, ECCS Project Coordinator, and James Redmon, Exec. Dir., Children's Cabinet; **Kentucky:** Joe Meyer, Dep. Secy., Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet; **Louisiana:** Kahree Wahid, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Maine:** Sheryl Peavy, Dir., Maine Early Childhood Initiative; **Maryland:** Patricia Foerster, Staff to Children's Cabinet; **Massachusetts:** Jennifer Amaya-Thompson, Ass. Dir, Office of Head Start Collab.; **Michigan:** Jeremy Reuter, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Minnesota:** Mary Vanderwert, Dir., Office of Head

Start Collab.; **Mississippi:** Stacy Callender, Exec. Dir., Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi; **Missouri:** Karen Bartz, Chair, Missouri Coordinating Council for Early Childhood; **Montana:** Mary Jane Standaert, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Nebraska:** Terry Rohren, Career Development Coordinator and Facilitator, ECICC; **Nevada:** Margot Chappel, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **New Hampshire:** Pat Cantor, Chair, N.H. Child Care Advisory Council; **New Jersey:** Cecelia Zalkind, Exec. Dir., Association for Children of New Jersey; **New Mexico:** Dan Haggard, Dep. Dir., Early Childhood Services Division; **New York:** Robert Frawley, Dep. Dir., New York Council on Children and Families; **North Carolina:** Khari Garvin, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **North Dakota:** Linda Rorman, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Ohio:** Alicia Leatherman, Dir., Early Childhood Cabinet; **Oklahoma:** Susan Illgen, Exec. Dir., Smart Start; **Oregon:** Dell Ford, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Pennsylvania:** Harriet Dichter, Dep. Secy., Office of Child Development and Early Learning; **Rhode Island:** Blythe Berger, Chief, Office of Perinatal and Early Childhood Health; **South Carolina:** Mary Lynne Diggs, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **South Dakota:** Deb Barnett, Dep. Secy. of Education; **Tennessee:** Bobbi Lussier, Exec. Dir., Office of Early Learning; **Texas:** Denise Brady, Project Coord., Raising Texas, and John W. Gasko, Ph.D, Dir. of State Initiatives, Children's Learning Institute; **Utah:** Janna Forsgren, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Vermont:** K.C. Whiteley, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Virginia:** Kathy Glazer, Dir., Office of Early Childhood Development; **Washington:** Lorena Lowell, Co-Chair, Early Learning Advisory Council; **West Virginia:** Sandra Murphy, Chair, PIECES Advisory Council; **Wisconsin:** Linda Leonhart, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.; **Wyoming:** Pat Walker, Exec. Dir., Kids First; **District of Columbia:** Aisha Ferrell, Dir., Office of Head Start Collab.

## Notes

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- 1 *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act*, Pub. L. 110-134, 110th Cong., 1st sess.
- 2 *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, Pub. L. 111-5, 111th Cong., 1st sess.
- 3 *Student Aid and Financial Responsibility Act*, HR 3221, passed by the House of Representatives on September 17, 2009.
- 4 Department of Health and Human Services, “State Advisory Councils: Application and Format,” June 17, 2009, [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/sac/state\\_advisory\\_councils.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/sac/state_advisory_councils.html).
- 5 “Survey on Early Childhood Advisory Councils” (Washington, DC: National Governors Association, Fall 2007).
- 6 As per the ECAC guidelines, governors are required to officially designate their state’s ECAC through a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services, though the number presented here includes official designations through other communications such as executive orders, because many governors are waiting to submit an official letter until they complete their ECAC grant application.
- 7 The Department of Health and Human Services has not yet indicated what will be done regarding those states that, despite the federal mandate, decide not to establish an ECAC. States have until the August 2010 deadline for funding to submit final decisions to the department.
- 8 See Charles Brunner, “Building an Early Learning System: The ABCs of Planning and Governance Structures,” State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network and Build, 2004, [http://www.finebynine.org/uploaded/file/SECPTAN\\_Build\\_PROOF.pdf](http://www.finebynine.org/uploaded/file/SECPTAN_Build_PROOF.pdf); “State of the State’s ECCS Initiatives” (New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, November 2007), [http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text\\_748.pdf](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_748.pdf).
- 9 The eight “Build” states are Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and New York. The Build Initiative is a project of the Early Childhood Funders’ Collaborative. Funding information provided by Geritt Westervelt, Executive Director of the Build Initiative.
- 10 The Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center administers a \$2.5 million grant (over five years) to provide out-of-state technical assistance, in addition to technical assistance to local Smart Start Collaboratives in North Carolina. Funding information provided by Gerry Cobb, Director of the Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center.
- 11 The three states awarded the \$50,000 grant were New Jersey, South Carolina, and Montana. These grants were funded by the Office of Head Start. The \$10,000 summit grants are part of the NGA Center’s activities with the Birth to Five Policy Alliance and are supported by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. Funding information provided by Rachel Demma, National Governors Association.
- 12 The District of Columbia, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Territories of Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands of the United States are also eligible for a \$500,000 grant.
- 13 Christina Satkowski, “A Stimulus for Second-Generation QRIS” (Washington, DC: New America Foundation, April 2009), [http://www.newamerica.net/publications/policy/stimulus\\_second\\_generation\\_qris](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/policy/stimulus_second_generation_qris).
- 14 2008 data from “The State of Preschool 2008” (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2009), <http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf/yearbook.pdf>; U.S. Census.
- 15 See Kristie Kauerz, “Ladders of Learning: Fighting Fade-Out by Advancing PK-3 Alignment” (Washington DC: New America Foundation, January 2006), [http://www.newamerica.net/files/archive/Doc\\_File\\_2826\\_1.pdf](http://www.newamerica.net/files/archive/Doc_File_2826_1.pdf); “Fighting Fade-Out Through PreK-Third Reform” (video), New America Foundation, June 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htWklcEoIhA&feature=channel>.
- 16 The Federal Partners’ Early Childhood Systems Work Group consists of Office of Head Start, Child Care Bureau, Children’s Bureau, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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