

HHS Oversight, Subcommittee on Statewide Early Education and Family Support Programs

As a national model, North Carolina's early childhood system has consistently provided strong state level governance to local decision making, as well as leveraged a variety of funding streams to meet the different needs of our state's families and children. There is strong collaboration across public agencies and private organizations in key areas, including:

- Engaging key stakeholders and early education experts to identify key indicators or measures of success, beginning at birth, that lead to third grade reading success for all children.
- Maintaining and further developing a system to collect and maintain child level data from early childhood programs across multiple agencies that serve children and families from birth to eight.
- Building on the momentum of cross sector leaders, including philanthropists and the business community, in identifying the need for early education in the continuum of education strategies.

Recommendations from The North Carolina Partnership for Children

In order to build on this commitment to enhance the early childhood system and better align with the public K-12 system, we recommend:

- 1. Strengthening coordination of state level governance by formalizing collaboration of early education administrative leaders.** Create a formal structure for agency administrative leaders to come together on a regular basis to align system strategies and operationalize innovative ideas and a statewide vision for early childhood. This would include:
 - Creating cross agency accountability with a comprehensive set of data indicators to define child health and well-being. By agreeing on measures of success, setting targets for those measures, and sharing in results based accountability, the entire early childhood system would be aligned in a whole child approach, rather than specific or siloed outcomes of a particular service delivery.
 - Bridging early childhood education and the K-12 education system by aligning key strategies of both that have proven outcomes, including family engagement and developmentally appropriate education along the continuum. This would allow for the blending of what works well in early education and applying it to what works well in kindergarten through third grade and vice versa.
 - Ensuring a cross cutting, intentional focus on learning to read as a key element in the foundation for success in life.
- 2. Further streamlining application processes for families.** A significant step in better coordinating early education at the state level is developing the technology supports for service alignment. This includes:
 - Building on the statewide community-based data system that supports NC Pre-K to include Title I, Subsidy, and Head Start.
 - Improving local communities' ability to match families and children to programs and services.
 - Managing joint waiting lists.