

Early Care and Education Work Group Update 10.22.2018

Strategy: Glass Doors <i>(Access)</i>	Ensure that the early care and education system is easier to access for families, by creating <i>better processes to assess eligibility for services</i> and ensuring more <i>targeted engagement of families not currently reached</i> by early care and education services		
Key Activities	Timeline	Progress	
Develop a universal eligibility screening tool that will enable families to have a more transparent understanding of their eligibility for various programs, and potentially also reduce the enrollment administrative burden	February --June	<p>VPI programs have worked together to create a shared information flyer for parents in four languages – Eng., Span, Amharic and Arabic. While there have been collaborative versions in the past, they were largely spearheaded by outside project consultants, whereas this year marked true collaboration amongst all of the programs who have been working collaboratively on the pilot shared enrollment form and process.</p> <p>This past spring, VPI programs piloted a shared information/enrollment form and process, and have been meeting regularly since then to share information and practices. Enrollment coordinators have been in communication this fall about enrollment trends and openings.</p>	
Explore the creation of two large scale Early Childhood Centers in Alexandria	February--ongoing	<p>The first ACPS Early Childhood Center opened at John Adams elementary school, serving more than 300 students under the leadership of new principal Heidi Haggerty. The first stage in the modernization of the new pre-K facility has been completed, with new bathrooms within a set of classrooms with new flooring, ceilings, lighting and paint. The new shared Welcome Center entrance serves both the existing John Adams Elementary School and the Early Childhood Center students and staff, and includes a new health suite. The new administrative suites include areas for each administrative team and for counselors, social workers and psychologists. And new for this year, ACPS is able to offer encore classes such as music, physical education and library time to PreK students with disabilities and greater inclusion with students from VPI classrooms.</p>	
Develop stronger feedback mechanisms for families to engage with providers in a culturally and geographically accessible way	TBD	<p>Expanding on a pilot from 2017, collected surveys from over 250 families enrolled in VPI and Head Start programs to get feedback about knowledge and accessibility of services in the city.</p> <p>Additionally, hosted a table at Neighborhood Health’s recent</p>	

		“Uninsured Health Fair”, with bilingual volunteers to distribute similar surveys to families with young children who may not be connected to a city program. With each survey, we are learning more about the best ways to access families. For example, we provided a box of brand new books to give a new book to each family that completed the survey. We plan to do similar surveys at other city events.	
Create a neighborhood-level interactive systems map of providers and services in any particular geography	TBD	Plans for a project are underway.	
Strategy: Seamless Support	Ensure connections among the prenatal to third-grade provider community so that families receive coordinated and comprehensive support, especially when it comes to <i>health in the early years</i> and the ability to more easily <i>refer families</i> to fitting support services		
Key Activities	Timeline	Progress	
Forge connections among health and education providers, especially in the prenatal to 3-year-old space, in order to identify specific ways the ECEW can support comprehensive pre-natal care, a comprehensive medical home approach, and more referral conduits between health-focused and other programs	March--Ongoing	This past spring, we applied for a grant for communities seeking to strengthen health and wellbeing outcomes for the youngest population. The application made it through the first round, and while it was not ultimately funded, we have established a new 0-3 committee under the workgroup’s new committee structure. A revamped 0-3 committee with members from health and other organizations is meeting this Friday to discuss potential next steps based on the planning the earlier group did for the grant application.	
Ensure stronger transitions for pre-K, grades K-3, with greater information-sharing across early learning pathways	Ongoing	The ECEW plans to do a deep dive into kindergarten readiness data this fall to better understand and inform and support transitions from PreK to Kindergarten. Data should be available Nov 1 and will be included in the ECEW Dec 1 report.	
Strategy: QuALLity:	Ensure that our services reflect the highest quality standards of local, state, and national evidence-based best practices by providing more <i>professional development for early care and education personnel</i> as well as by <i>aligning curricula and assessment practices</i> .		
Key Activities	Timeline	Progress	
Continue to implement the new CLASS professional development tools through the Quality Collaborative grant, which will support improved teaching practices in early childhood classrooms across Alexandria	Ongoing	The Quality Collaborative was awarded an additional grant from the AFHS to continue offering collaborative PD. Our MMCI course just began October 18 th , and for the first time was open to all ECE programs/providers in the city (vs just those partnering on the grant application) and as a result, this year’s class includes multiple home daycare providers who rarely have access to such robust professional development.	

		<p>We also plan to continue and strengthen our offerings around trauma-informed care, beginning with a set of workshops in December. We are also in the process of developing local capacity to support programs that want to become “trauma-responsive” and designing support to build on the trauma-informed work we did this past year and go deeper in supporting staff.</p> <p>Finally, we are also offering collaborative training, particularly focused on supervisors/managers around Creative Curriculum, which is being used in the majority of the VPI programs, and the first will be offered Nov 28-29.</p> <p>We are also in the process of establishing an early childhood professional development council to weigh in on decisions around ECE professional development in the city, with leaders from the city Early Childhood division and ACPS. This should launch later this year.</p>
Understand the current professional development offerings for providers and professionals	TBD	The PD council we are establishing will include a broader set of ECE providers than in the past to ensure that PD offerings address needs of a range of providers.
Align curricula and assessment practices amongst pre-K providers	TBD	Additional programs have adopted the Creative Curriculum, which is adopted by ACPS this past year, and there were multiple training activities this summer. We are also hosting a collaborative training in November for supervisors who are supporting teachers implementing the curriculum.
Strategy: Data Stewardship	Ensure that the system is surfacing and sharing data that enables a <i>deeper understanding of progress, trends and gaps in the system collectively</i> , as well as the ability to track <i>longitudinal data for children individually</i> to better understand the impact of our services.	
Key Activities	Timeline	Progress
Develop a learning and evaluation plan that outlines the outcomes and indicators the ECEW will track to measure its progress over time	Completed	Work on our Learning and Evaluation plan is ongoing. Results of our family surveys (see above) will be available in November and we are actively working on our December 1 Annual report.
Assess what data is currently being collected and what additional data needs to be collected in order to effectively track outcomes for children and families, for the system, and for the ECEW	Ongoing	See above.

Strategy: Community & Funder Mobilization	Ensure that the <i>community understands the importance</i> of the early care and education system as well as better understanding what the potential options are to <i>grow resources</i> dedicated to service provision for children and families in the early years	
Key Activities	Timeline	Progress
Make the case for early childhood investment to the community through clear, consistent messaging about the ECEW's work externally	Feb--May	We have launched an official ECEW Community Awareness committee that is currently developing a communications plan, including development of a website and other communications tools to help share information and messaging with various audiences. The group has made the decision to join the Virginia Smart Beginnings network (through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation) and we are in the process of negotiating what that would entail, including access to additional funding streams and resources.
Strategy: System Alignment	Ensure that progress is made on system-wide issues, such as <i>understanding the resource requirements needed</i> for realizing our mission across the city and enabling <i>funding to be braided</i> so that needs can be more equitably met in all geographies and across income levels.	
Key Activities	Timeline	Progress
Design and implement an effective project coordination infrastructure to help execute the ECEW's work and the Children & Youth Master Plan's work more broadly	Ongoing	The ECEW is in regular contact with the CYMP Project Coordinator and many members of the CYFCC/Youth Master Plan work overlap with the ECEW.