

2014-15



NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR  
YOUNG CHILDREN

# Strategic Plan



*Aligning and coordinating early care and education systems to support quality services to children and families.*

## **Introduction**

In 2010, the New Jersey Council for Young Children was created by Executive Order to serve as the Governor's State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care as authorized under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The Council's first strategic plan set the stage for the initial work for each of its six committees and established overall goals for the three-year grant period. Since that time, the Council has made steady progress toward creating a more aligned system of early care and education to improve the lives of New Jersey's young children and their families and help ensure that they enter school ready to succeed. This third edition of the strategic plan proposes a slightly different roadmap to creating deeper and more meaningful coordination of state systems of early education and care that will contribute to the well-being of all New Jersey's children and families, especially those most vulnerable.

The Council has been instrumental in identifying barriers to quality and responding in ways that build bridges and work to maintain quality in early care and education systems. With the grant funding provided to State Advisory Council, the Council conducted research to better understand the status of early care and education in New Jersey. With the funding the Council:

- Commissioned a study to determine the state of New Jersey's infant and toddler care and education,
- Conducted several studies on the early care and education workforce and its professional development and higher education opportunities, and
- Examined various aspects of parent/family communication and engagement for hard to reach families.

With a focus on infant toddler care and education, the Standards committee developed the New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards, and the Infant and Young Child Health and Wellness committee brought in the Michigan Mental Health Endorsement to further promote and support the development of infants and toddlers. In addition the Workforce committee used the information gathered from the early care and education workforce studies to revise the Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework for Early Childhood Professionals.

Findings from the various studies have been the guideposts to the Council's continued work. Although the Council commissioned the studies and/or led the efforts on the creation and revisions of standards and guiding policies, these findings and documents are shared with various groups to inform and support quality care and education from the state level to the local level, benefiting the entire system of early and education.

## **Early Care and Education Systems and Services**

In New Jersey, the bulk of early education and care services for infants and young children are administered through four state departments. The *Department of Education* administers the state's preschool program, Title One, and preschool special education programs (IDEA Part B). The *Department of Human Services* oversees the Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies, child care subsidies, and First Steps initiative, among other programs. The *Department of Children and Families* is focused on family-oriented initiatives like Family Success Centers, Home Visiting and Strengthening Families in

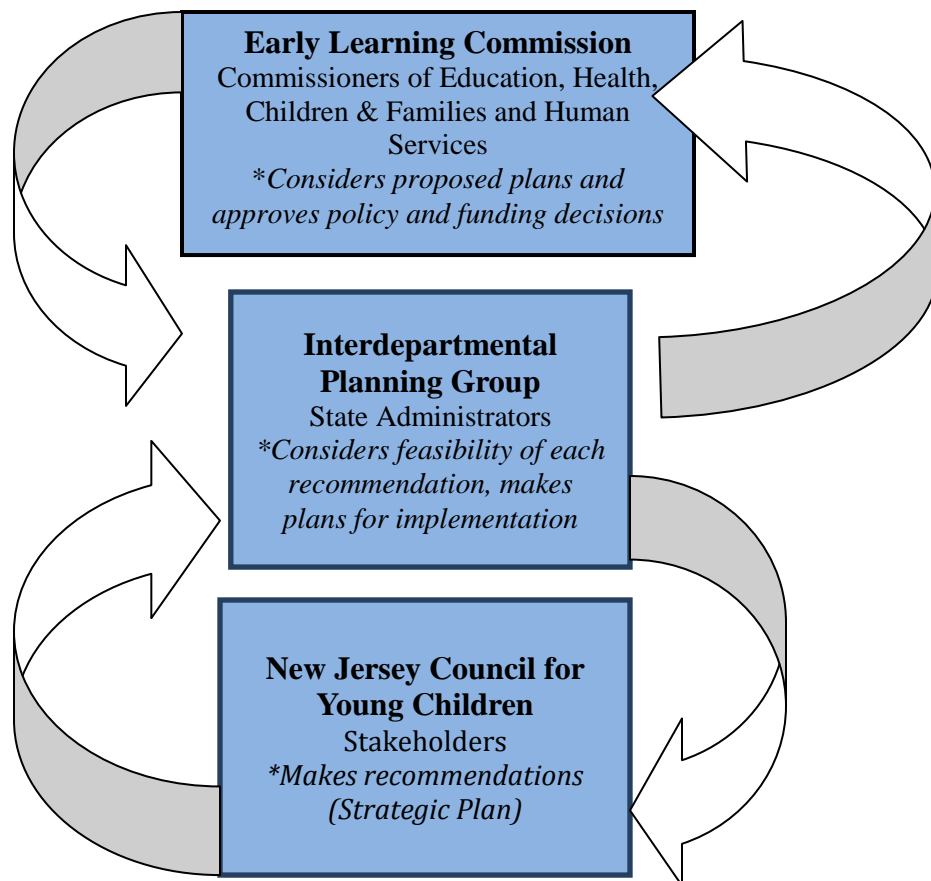
Early Care and Education, while the *Department of Health* has oversight of programs designed for early care and education disease prevention, children with health and developmental risks like early intervention (IDEA Part C), Child Lead Poisoning, NJ MIECHV Home Visiting Competitive Grant and Special Child Health Services.

<b>ELC Departments Providing Early Childhood Services &amp; Supports</b>			
<b>Education (DOE)</b>	<b>Human Services (DHS)</b>	<b>Children &amp; Families (DCF)</b>	<b>Health (DOH)</b>
Division of EC	Subsidized child care	Child Care Licensing	Title V Maternal Child Health Block Grant
Education (P-3)	Child Care Development Block Grant	Family Child Care Registration	Perinatal Risk Assessment—
State Funded Preschool	Wraparound care	NJ Home Visiting Program	Addiction/Depression Screening/Referrals
Head Start Collaboration	NJ First Steps- Infant Toddler	Central Intake	Improving Pregnancy Outcomes
Teacher Credential & Licensing	Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R)	Help Me Grow-NJ	Central Intake Expansion
Preschool Special Education (IDEA Part B)	Child Care Workforce Registry	Project LAUNCH	Community Health Workers
Federal Title I services for low income families	NJ School Age Child Care (SACC)	Infant/EC Mental Health	WIC Services/Breastfeeding
Regional Achievement Centers (RAC)	NJ Inclusive Child Care (NJICC)	Strengthening Families (SF Protective Factors Framework	Maternal and Child Health/Immunizations
Migrant, Homeless Education	WorkFirst NJ-TANF/GA SNAP	Pregnant/Parenting Teens	Home Visiting (admin lead)
Bilingual Education	Emergency Services-Addiction & Mental Health	Parent-Linking/School-Based	Early Intervention (IDEA Part C)
Parent Training and Information Center (SPAN)	Disability Services (parents)	Project TEACH-Teen Parents	Special Child Health Services
NJCYC	NJ Medicaid/NJ Family Care	Family Success Centers	Shaping NJ
	PINJ (Workforce Registry)	NJ Children’s Trust Fund	Lead Poisoning
		Federal Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Funds	Indoor Environments Program
		Children’s System of Care Child Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities	NJ Early Care & Education Learning Collaborative
		Child Protection & Permanency	

## New Jersey Council Organization and Systems

New Jersey has made great strides in its efforts to reduce the “silo effect.” Prior to the formation of the Council, the Inter Department Planning Group and the Early Learning Commission, many departments worked within their own area and expertise. Opportunities to “reach across the aisle” were few and far between. However, since the implementation of the Council and its organizational system the culture of work has shifted. At least for the departments involved in the Inter Department Planning Group and the Early Learning Commission, the idea of working in a silo has become a construct of the past. Work within the state and ideas used to respond to federal grants are all approached as a group. The New Jersey Council for Young Children, the Inter Department Planning Group and the Early Learning Commission work together to move the early education and care agenda forward.

Specifically, the Council is the group that collects the background information about optimal programs and services, develops materials, makes policy recommendations, and sets the early education and care agenda. The Council is made up of the state’s early education and care stakeholders across disciplines of education, health, and human services. The Inter Department Planning Group consists of the administrators from each of the state’s departments with oversight of programs and services for children from pregnancy to age eight. This group considers the feasibility of each recommendation, makes plans for implementation and ultimately carries out the plan, in collaboration with other state organizations and agencies. Finally, the Early Learning Commission is made up of the Commissioners of the Departments of Children and Families, Education, Health, and Human Services, as well as the Council’s Chair. The Chair brings Council recommendations to the Early Learning Commission for its consideration. Ultimately, the Commission makes the final decision about funding allocations and significant policy decisions.



The New Jersey Council for Young Children's focus is to align and improve New Jersey's numerous and complex early childhood programs and initiatives into a coordinated system of early care and education programs and services for infants, toddlers and young children from birth to age eight. The 25-member Council is in, but not of, the Department of Education, and represents all state agencies with oversight of programs for families and children from birth to age eight. Aside from the required membership of the state advisory council, the New Jersey Council for Young Children membership also includes: Head Start agencies and organizations, advocacy groups, child care organizations (for-profit, non-profit, private and public), school districts, universities and foundations.

### **New Jersey Council Committees and Workgroup**

The overarching goal of the New Jersey Council for Young Children is to increase the quality of early learning and development experiences for the infants and young children of New Jersey in a coordinated system of comprehensive services. Each Council committee/workgroup is charged with a different aspect of this goal. However, the success of each committee, and ultimately of the Council, is dependent upon effective collaboration and communication among committees, and integration of each task. Each committee works individually and together to improve early childhood program quality throughout the State of New Jersey.

The New Jersey Council for Young Children has identified focus areas where additional support and resources are needed to deliver the promise of quality early learning and development experiences that are responsive to New Jersey's culturally and linguistically diverse population from pregnancy to age eight. These areas of focus are:

- Data
- Early Care and Education Workforce
- Family & Community
- Early Care and Education Standards
- Infant-Child Health

The areas of focus organize the Council's work, which is conducted by committees and workgroup members. The committees and workgroup are: Data Committee, Early Care and Education Standards Workgroup, Family & Community Engagement Committee, Early Care and Education Workforce Committee, and the Infant-Child Health Committee. The following sections highlight the focus and work of each of the Council's committees and workgroup.

## **Data Committee**

The importance of having a coordinated data system that is able to provide information across program delivery services is crucial to high quality early care and education systems. There are significant questions about our existing programs and services that will remain unanswered until data is shared across programs and agencies. Following longitudinal data for groups of children will allow state agencies to assess the efficacy of existing programs, identify underserved populations, and target struggling programs for additional support and professional development. Integrating data from each of the state's early learning and development programs will meet the ultimate goal to be able, for the first time, to view the state's approach to reaching our youngest children. More importantly, questions about the impact of the state's early childhood programs on children will be answered.

The Data Committee has been steadily working toward its goal to create a coordinated data system. In 2010 the Council identified two priorities that were considered essential steps to unify New Jersey's data systems across state agencies:

1. Mapping who has what data and how it can now be accessed and used for systemic analyses, strategic planning, service improvement and public accountability. Also, real and perceived barriers to data sharing and release posed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) were addressed, with available national technical assistance.
  
2. Exploring how to design a proper, timely and regular process of matching data sets on vulnerable children and families (and the services that support them) across state agencies and extant data systems.

Findings from the mapping project organized the "next steps" for the committee. Although funding for this project had not been secured, the committee kept pushing forward towards its goal. In 2013, New Jersey was awarded the Race to The Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) which included funding to support a high quality data system. As the committee never stopped moving ahead, the funding came through at the perfect time for the committee to engage the next group of stakeholders. These stakeholders are the technology leads of the four departments involved in the Inter Department Planning Committee: Department of Education, Department of Children & Families, Department of Health and the Department of Human Services, in addition to representatives from stakeholders such as Advocates for Children of New Jersey, Professional Impact New Jersey and the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

### **Current Work of the Data Committee**

The committee, in their work pre-RTT-ELC funding, had identified and refined questions that would generate the type of data needed. They already knew the data systems currently being used by the four state departments and they knew the type of data system they wanted to create. The RTT-ELC funding was a catalyst for the linking of the data system. The technology leads were able to dig deeper into the creation of this system and ask more technological questions about the infrastructure of the system. This of course opened an entirely new dialog which quickly switched to being very technically oriented. The Chair and Co-Chair of the committee felt it was time to repurpose the committee and create different groups as the work had changed. These groups are:

- The *Data Working Group* (DWG) will include individuals who have direct knowledge of specific data systems. The DWG will be responsible for providing technical support to the contractor as the system is being built.
- The *Data Management Council* (DMC) will include individuals with decision-making authority regarding each data system. The DMC will be responsible for making decisions about duplicate data elements, conflicting data definitions, etc.
- The original *Data Committee* (DC) will continue, however their role will change but from a working committee to a feedback and reflection role. The DC members are mostly program people who will be probably be users of the data.

The following provides, at-a-glance, work being conducted by the Committee. Dates of completion will be determined with input from the Data Project Manager and the Committee. Data questions have been provided in Appendix A.

<b>Determine the capacity of existing data systems to answer key questions</b>
<b>Step by Step Tasks</b>
Identify data elements needed to answer each critical question
Identify which data system(s) collect each necessary data element
When multiple data systems collect the same necessary data element, determine which data system should be the authoritative source for that element
Identify any necessary data elements that are not yet collected and a data system that can collect them
<b>Work with NJ's Office of Information Technology (OIT) to develop data system</b>
<b>Step by Step Tasks</b>
Meet regularly with OIT to establish requirements and business rules associated with data system
Meet regularly with other state agencies to identify data elements and discuss requirements for data system
Produce a functioning system, using real data, including DOE and DCF data systems, providing answers to as many key questions as possible
Present data system prototype to Council for comment and feedback
<b>Hire permanent staff person to oversee final development of data system</b>
<b>Step by Step Tasks</b>
Continue to include the necessary data elements from each of the state's early learning databases in order to answer each of the key questions
Develop a plan to systematically include more data elements in the data system to answer each of the key questions
Develop a plan for the upkeep of data elements in the data system with respect to when data elements are updated, etc.
Hold a data summit to introduce the data system to, researchers, practitioners, family leaders, family associations, and legislators, gathering feedback for any necessary changes
Establish a data governance council to make policy recommendations regarding future changes to and/or growth of the data system

## **Early Care and Education Workforce Committee**

Preparation of a competent and prepared early childhood workforce is paramount in the movement toward quality early learning experiences for all children. Qualified practitioners who have received specialized training in child development and early childhood education must be able to ensure that young children:

- Develop who they are as learners in a world full of curiosities,
- Learn how they should treat others and how others should treat them,
- Engage their environment using various skills and abilities, and
- Experience learning opportunities that support, stimulate and expand their development and thinking.

The Workforce committee has been focused on three questions.

- 1) How can we ensure that each and every caregiver/teacher receives the needed information and skills required to create high quality learning opportunities and experiences for every child?
- 2) Are formal and informal professional development experiences grounded in early childhood research?
- 3) What does the early care and education workforce need to provide quality learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically sound and intentionally implemented to promote curiosity/critical thinking in young children?

### **The Making of a Quality Early Care and Education Workforce**

Various research studies have shown the connection between quality child outcomes and learning experiences that are intentionally planned, implemented and evaluated by quality teachers and caregivers. This means that teachers and caregivers of young children must have access to professional development opportunities that are research driven in content and are delivered in a manner that stimulates quality teaching and learning practices.

The New Jersey Council for Young Children's Early Care and Education Workforce Committee has conducted several studies and projects in an effort to support an aligned and articulated system of high quality professional development and preparation for those working in all levels of early care and education. Specifically, the intended outcome of these studies was to allow all members of the early care and education workforce, i.e., leaders, practitioners, etc., professional development opportunities that would allow for continuous learning and improvement in their skills and practices. The studies and projects engaged by this committee over the past two years include:

- Mapping of New Jersey's preparation and professional development systems and higher education offerings (study). Six issues were identified.
- Higher Education Inventory (study). Five recommendations were outlined.
- Assessing the quality of New Jersey's preparation and professional development systems (study). Eight recommendations were outlined.
- Strategies to increase the collection of data on New Jersey's early care and education workforce (project)



- Revision of New Jersey’s early care and education core knowledge and competencies document (project)

**Current work of the Early Care and Education Workforce Committee**

The Early Care and Education Workforce Committee is working on completing major revisions of the *Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals: New Jersey’s Unified Professional Development System*, which should be completed by January, 2015. The Core Knowledge and Competencies document will be vetted by members of higher education institutions, early care and education experts and early care and education practitioners. Feedback from these sources will be reviewed by the Committee members to determine whether changes should be made to the document.

Upon completion of the document, the committee will turn their attention to creating a dissemination plan that will include training and technical assistance opportunities to various audiences. In order for the dissemination plan to reach the broadest population, it is imperative that the Committee have broad and diverse representation. For this reason, the Committee will be looking to expand its membership by inviting representatives from higher education institutions (4- year and 2-year institutions), early care and education training and technical assistance providers and early care and education practitioners (public and private). In addition, the committee will revisit the issues and recommendations raised in the three commissioned workforce studies and review the need and implementation of an infant/toddler professional development infrastructure.

The following will provide, at-a-glance, work being conducted by the committee:

<b>Step by Step Tasks</b>	<b>Expected Date of Completion</b>
<b>Core Knowledge and Competency - Revision</b>	
Designate a writer to give the document a single “voice” and finalize the document for distribution.	January 2015
Complete review and/or addition of glossary, crosswalks, and other unfinished components of the framework.	February, 2015
Solicit feedback from professional development providers such as Child Care Resource & Referrals, trainers, and faculty from two- and four-year institutions of higher education through a survey and interviews.	March, 2015
Finalize the revisions of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition NJ Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework and Career Lattice.	December, 2017
Create a document that describes the changes to the Framework, related background information, and resources for all sectors of workforce preparation providers.	April, 2015
<b>Core Knowledge and Competency - Integration</b>	
Use the Workforce Registry to track the content being taught and to determine the extent to which it is aligned with the Framework.	May, 2015
Integrate the 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition NJ Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework and Career Lattice into both credit and noncredit	January, 2017

bearing professional development and coursework across all sectors.	
<b>Core Knowledge and Competency - Dissemination</b>	
Engage higher education in using the Competency Framework as guidance for coursework by linking the Competency Framework to the review process that is part of the NJ Department of Education credentialing requirement.	May, 2015
Hold four regional meetings with early childhood workforce preparation providers to introduce changes to the Framework.	April, 2015
Conduct a follow-up Higher Education Inventory to examine the impact of NJ's alignment and integration effort on the state's course offerings and make any necessary adjustments.	September, 2015
<b>Preparation</b>	
In partnership with the NJCYC Early Care and Education Standards Workgroup, prepare early childhood educators serving high needs infants and children to utilize the standards, with a particular emphasis on reaching NJ's culturally and linguistically diverse population and infants and young children with disabilities.	December, 2015
<b>New Areas of Focus</b>	
Revisit the 6 workforce issues raised in the professional development mapping studies and the 13 recommendations in the Assessing Quality Professional Development and Higher Education Inventory	To be determined by Committee
Review plan to expand the infant/toddler professional development offering and provide feedback to the benefits to the field and the overall professional development system.	To be determined by Committee

## Family & Community Engagement Committee

The Family & Community Engagement Committee (FCEC) is a newly created committee. This committee evolved from the Coordinated and Targeted Outreach Committee (CTOC). The primary goal of this committee was to find ways to meaningfully engage families in decision making roles around their children's care and education. The Council charged the committee with developing recommendations for increasing overall participation and engagement of children and families in existing federal, state, and local early care and education programs, with particular attention to children and families in underrepresented and special populations.

In order to fulfill this charge, the committee needed to know what methods (e.g., marketing, procedures, policies, strategies) early care and education programs were using to recruit families and children. The CTOC commissioned two studies to be conducted on outreach to families: *More Than Marketing: A New Jersey Study on Outreach to Underserved Population's Ages Birth to Five*, and *Interim Focus Group Analysis and Recommendations*. The *More Than Marketing* study synthesized a collection of research on effective outreach strategies for each of the targeted populations. These populations included: low income families, immigrant families, military families, homeless families, migrant families, families with dual language learners, families with children who have special needs and families involved in Child Protective Services. The study focused on two objectives:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment and outreach strategies carried out by early childhood providers, state government agencies, and intermediary organizations based on research, best practices, and interviews.
2. Develop recommendations for optimizing recruitment and outreach efforts for early childhood services for under-represented, at risk, and special populations in New Jersey.

The following recommendations were made:

- Strengthen Public Education and Social Marketing
- Utilize Procedures and Practices that are Welcoming to Targeted Populations
- Focus Services on Children's Success
- Value Staff and Promote Staff Development
- Engage and Support Families
- Local Collaboration and Coordination to Better Serve Target Populations

Although the *More Than Marketing* study yielded valuable information, the information provided was solely from programs. The CTOC wanted to provide a platform for parents, in the aforementioned identified target populations, to give voice to this topic from their perspective. The CTOC decided to commission another study that would allow parents/families the opportunity to provide feedback on their preferences and opinions regarding receiving information about early care and education programs and services in their communities. This study, *Interim Focus Group Analysis and Recommendations*, invited parents/families from across the state to participate in focus groups which were held in North, Central and South Jersey. Many of the programs who participated in the *More Than Marketing* were also involved in this study as they encouraged participation of their parents/families and some provided physical space for these focus groups to occur.

The following recommendations were the broad themes heard throughout the various parent/family focus groups:

- Promote literature where parents congregate (supermarkets, doctor's offices, laundry mats);
- Establish a web based Early Child Hood Center Resource Directory based on zip code to determine what Centers are in a geographic region;
- Conduct open houses with cohorts of early child care providers in specific locals;
- Establish behavioral health, child development training and support groups for parents.

In addition, the CTOC also supported the creation of a parent-led, parent council that was piloted in Cumberland County (New Jersey). The parent council structure was loosely based on Head Start's Parent Council (Head Start Program Performance Standards), with majority parent representation. Various stakeholders from county and local programs and direct service delivery programs in Cumberland County are part of the parent council membership. The purpose of creating this parent council was to create a space for parent/families and communities come together to discuss "goodness of fit" in service delivery systems and community resources. The parent council was very successful and resulted in continued funding beyond the New Jersey Council for Young Children funding by the Department of Children and Families. New Jersey's successful award of the 2013 Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant provided support for parent councils to be created in each county across the state. This expansion will also be implemented and supported by the Department of Children and Families.

### **The Birth of a New Committee**

The recommendations and findings from these studies resulted in the Inter Department Planning Group with the NJCYC Steering Committee agreeing to fine tune the focus of this group, which resulted in a name change to better reflect the committee's revised purpose, Family and Community Engagement Committee (FCEC). The FCEC's purpose is to make recommendations that would support New Jersey's young families to be knowledgeable about comprehensive early childhood systems and services. The change in focus also required the committee to recruit additional members. The FCEC needed members who could specifically identify the strengths and needs of parents/families in the target populations used in the studies discussed earlier in this section.

The newly designed committee includes early care and education administrators, regional representatives from the Administration for Children and Families, school district family liaisons and Family Worker Supervisors, representatives from the library association, and Title 1 to name a few. The first order of business for this committee was to define the term family and community engagement. The committee agreed on the following definition:

*Family and Community Engagement is defined as parents, families and communities working in partnership for the purpose of: (1) building strong relationships to ensure access to resources and services that promote family well-being; (2) foster educational success at home and at school; and (3) encourage lifelong learning opportunities with families, caregivers, and children.*

The committee, again based on findings from the studies, determined that New Jersey's parents/families needed a set of guidelines that would help them understand how to best engage and interact with early

care and education systems and services as well as provide them information on “best practices” regarding meaningful roles and opportunities that should be provided to them as parents/families. In the committee’s search for parent standards and/or guidelines, they noticed that one important perspective in these standards/guidelines was missing. None of these standards/guidelines were written from the perspective of parents/families. Instead, they were all written from the program/agency perspective. The FCEC felt strongly that parent guidelines should be written from the parent/family’s perspective if they were going to be meaningful to parents/families.

The following will provide, at-a-glance, work being conducted by the FCEC:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Expected Date of Completion</b>
<b>Identify Framework</b>	
Create a parent standard document to support parents in preparing their child for school success	January 2015
Establish parent focus groups to get feedback on draft parent standard document.	February 2015
Revise parent standard document using feedback and finalize.	March 2015
<b>Training</b>	
Design modules that can be implemented with fidelity	April, 2015
Train cohort 1 in modules	July, 2015
Train cohort 2 in modules	December, 2015
Train cohort 3 in modules	December, 2016
Train cohort 4 in modules	December, 2017
<b>Evaluation</b>	
Develop work group to construct evaluation plan	December, 2014
Implement evaluation of Family Engagement training	December, 2017

To read the studies discussed, please visit the Council’s webpage  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/njcyc/committees/family/reports/>

## **Early Care and Education Standards Workgroup**

The Early Care and Education Standards Workgroup (ECESW) is a newly named workgroup with a slightly different focus than previously. This Workgroup was previously the Council's Learning and Development Standards Committee. As part of the Council's reorganization, this Workgroup was changed to reflect the shift in perspective of their new work.

The goals of the Learning and Development Standards Committee were: (1) to develop the Birth to Three Early Learning Standards (BTTELS), which they accomplished, and (2) to align the early learning standards across the early childhood age range, birth to five years old. With the first goal being completed, this Workgroup has turned its attention to the second goal of aligning the BTTELS and the revised New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards to create one set of early care and education standards for children birth through age five.

### **New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards**

The New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards (BTTELS) document was finalized in June, 2013. The standards reflect widely accepted expectations of learning for children birth to three years old. The document provides:

- Provides guidance and recommendations to support providers to be appropriately responsive to the individual needs of very young children,
- Informs adults working with infants and toddlers about how and what very young children can learn, the natural progression of learning in the first three years of life,
- Describes realistic expectations for young children to develop academic readiness at various rates, levels and across domains, and
- Reflects the importance of adult-child interactions and appropriate expectations, respecting the development of cultural identity in infants and toddlers, and the unique needs of very young children.

BTTELS has been included in the state's QRIS (Grow NJ Kids), instruments and technical assistance modules to ensure that early childhood professionals, in all early learning settings, have an understanding of the developmental continuum that occurs across infants, toddlers and preschool aged children. The workgroup will also create a comprehensive dissemination plan for these newly aligned standards that will include: training of higher education faculty, development of a formal training package, and the creation of a family-friendly document to name only a few of the dissemination strategies.

### **Current Work of the Early Care and Education Standards Workgroup:**

The newly created ECESW members represent a mixture of state-level education offices and divisions, school districts, higher education, Head Start/Early Head Start and child care, including public and private child care programs and schools. The expertise of the membership reflects the tasks to be completed, which is the alignment of learning standards for infants, toddlers, with the standards for preschool children.

The tasks of the workgroup are comprehensive. They include creating an actual draft of the alignment, a corresponding family-friendly document and a diverse dissemination plan. The training and technical

assistance of the standards will eventually be the responsibility of the Early Learning Training Academy, which is funded through the Race to The Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. However, the Early Care and Education Workgroup will create the alignment draft, secure an editor, vet the document, review and revise, as necessary needed changes, and provide a solid foundation of dissemination to ensure the success of the standards.

The following will provide, at-a-glance, work being conducted by the Workgroup:

<b>Step by Step Tasks</b>	<b>Expected Date of Completion</b>
<b>Family-Friendly Document</b>	
Create a family-friendly document that reflects the aligned standards.	April – December 2014
Arrange meeting with NJ DOE’s graphic artist to design an attractive and colorful layout for the family-friendly document.	January 2014
Submit finalized document for Spanish translation, initially, then Arabic translation.	February 2015
<b>Integration &amp; Collaboration</b>	
In partnership with the NJCYC Early Care and Education Workforce Committee to prepare early childhood educators to utilize the standards, with a particular emphasis on the appropriate use of the standards with regard to culturally & linguistically diverse populations and young children with disabilities.	October – December 2015
In partnership with the NJCYC Early Care and Education Workforce Committee to ensure that the standards are included in all workforce preparation documents.	October – December 2015
In partnership with the NJCYC Early Care and Education Workforce Committee to encourage integration of the aligned standards into teacher and caregiver preparation coursework and credentials.	October – December 2015
In partnership with the NJCYC Family & Community Engagement Committee to ensure the family-friendly document is culturally and linguistically appropriate.	October – December 2015
In collaboration with the DOE-DECE design a crosswalk between the aligned standards and Creative Curriculum, High Scope and Tools of the Mind.	September – December 2015
<b>Training &amp; Technical Assistance Plan</b>	
Research training exemplars from other states.	September – October 2015
Design training package to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation</li> <li>• Sample training outlines</li> <li>• Talking points for various audiences</li> <li>• Handouts</li> </ul>	September – December 2015
Identify supplemental materials relevant to the aligned standards content and compile resource list.	September – December 2015
Present standards at statewide professional conferences.	June 2015 – December 2015
Create pre-service training outlines to support higher education faculty in using the standards in their ECE courses. Content will include:	June 2015 – December 2015

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research information on standards</li> <li>• Strategies to use in courses/classes.</li> <li>• List of resources</li> </ul>	
Create in-service ideas and strategies to continuously maintain standards use with caregivers/teachers in their practices and in their rooms/classrooms.	September – December 2015
Provide training and technical assistance to Training Academy staff as a transition to their role in providing continued training and technical assistance to core trainers.	September – December 2015
Integrate the aligned standards in regulatory and contractual documents that are relevant for integration.	May – July 2015
Create 1-pager that illustrates seamless alignment between age groups and developmental progression.	November 2015
Merge the aligned standards (B-4) with the K – 3 standards.	January 2016
Complete articulation and alignment of NJ Birth to Third grade standards with the Head Start Program Improvement Standards (HSPIS), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) standards.	December 2016
Promote use of the standards by using them to inform NJ Child Care Licensing regulations.	December 2016



### **Infant-Child Health Committee**

The Infant-Child Health Committee (ICHC) is an expanded and reorganized committee for the New Jersey Council for Young Children (NJCYC). Previously, this committee was the Infant Mental Health Committee. The need for a broader focus on health beyond mental health was identified by the Council. In response to this recommendation from the Council, the committee was repurposed to support the alignment of health systems that affect to pregnant women/expectant families, young children and their families.

The ICHC has three priorities: 1) child/family health and wellness; 2) infant/early childhood mental health; and 3) children and families with special needs. This approach also ensures the coordination of services and systems without duplication. In this way, programs and services come together to provide a coordinated approach to health service delivery to young families and children.

Listed below are the priorities and the initiatives/programs that support this alignment:

<b>Priority #1 Infant/Child/Family Health &amp; Wellness</b>	<b>Priority #2 Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health</b>	<b>Priority #3 Children/Families with Special Needs</b>
Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Help Me Grow (HMG) Project LAUNCH Essex LAUNCH Home Visiting Central Intake	IMH Endorsement NJ Pyramid Model	Community of Care Early Intervention Preschool Special Education Special Child Health Services

The ICHC held several meetings to explain this new approach and get feedback from the various initiatives/programs as to the actual functionality of this committee. The full committee meets quarterly while the different initiatives/programs meet in between these times. The quarterly meeting allows for groups to report back to the full committee where other collaborative arrangements or supports can occur. Also, different groups that are represented around the table are asked to present on their programs providing information and allowing for a better understanding of the service/program. These exchanges have resulted in the committee membership having a broader perspective of “health.” For example, the conversation around the table not only includes home visiting but will also include questions or resources around mental health as well.

As this is a newly expanded and reorganized committee, the ICHC has proposed the following pertaining to a strategic plan and accompanying activities. The detailed plan for this committee is in Appendix B.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Expected Date of Completion</b>
Share information to strengthen coordination of direct services that improve pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infant-child growth and development.	Family/Child Health Wellness  Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health  Children and Families with Special Needs	Develop strategies for ongoing information sharing across sectors, agencies, departments and programs at the state and local level.	June 2015
Continue to build state and local partnerships to strengthen integration, and align related early childhood priorities.	Family/Child Health Wellness  Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health  Children and Families with Special Needs	Development of an integrated EC system of care that connects children and their families with needed services.  Continue to identify EC partners to connect, collaborate and integrate services (state and local level).	December 2015
Improve access for parents, families and caregivers to inform education about child health and wellness	Provide input/feedback for strategies that will help to improve systems linkages and access to care for families and children at the local level.	State Central Telephone Line Local Central Intake hubs County Councils NJ's Early Intervention System	December 2015
Strengthen education and training related to health and wellness for early childhood professionals	Provide input for NJ Early Learning Training Academy core training topics to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant/Child Health &amp; Wellness</li> <li>• Infant &amp; Early Childhood Mental Health</li> <li>• Children with Special Needs</li> </ul>	Infant/Child Health & Wellness systems and supports local system linkages (cross sector)  Child Development Screening  Well Child Care – Medical Home  Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Foundational Training (across sectors)  Children with Special Needs	Ongoing