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CEELO

Center on Enhancing  
Early Learning Outcomes



# CREATING COHERENCE IN STATE SYSTEMS TO ACHIEVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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# The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)

- Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of State Education Agencies and state Early Learning Agencies to lead sustained improvements in early learning opportunities and outcomes.



# My Talk Will Address

- Designing for Success
- Enabling Conditions
- Highly Effective Office of Early Learning
- Opportunities ~ ESSA, CCDF
- A Few States to Learn From



# The Paradox of ECE

- Why is it so hard to get the results we expect from ECE?
  - Best small scale study results are not reproducible
  - Luck (extreme outcomes receive undue attention)
  - Populations and contexts differ at scale
  - We underinvest for the intended goals



# Paradox, continued

- Costs are immediate, obvious, and concentrated
  - Benefits are long-term, hard to discern, and dispersed
- Two major problems result
  - Design failure
  - Implementation failure

*ECE needs major reform—2.0—  
transform the work and the workforce,  
we can work smarter at a feasible cost*



# Design for Success

- What is your theory of action to improving child outcomes?
- Do you feel like your agency is well designed to achieve its mission?
- Do you feel like you have the capacities and skills needed to achieve the mission?
- Are kids better off? Do you have markers that you're heading in the right direction?



# Design for Success

## Focus MUCH More on Implementation

- Sustained attention—avoid constantly shifting priorities & approaches
- Build state and local leadership capacity for system change, CQI not monitoring
- Use data to inform policy and practice—everyone needs a GPS—good measures of child well being and progress P-2



Your system...any  
system is perfectly  
designed to  
produce the  
results you are  
obtaining.

(Adapted from Carr, 2008)




# Goal: **Coordinate state systems** to be greater than the sum of their parts

## Enabling Conditions:

- Robust, aligned early childhood system infrastructure at the state and local levels enables coordinated service delivery, uses data to support ongoing improvement and efficient resource allocation
- Accountability systems align with evidence and best practices, drive improvement, and assess programs based on outcomes.
- *Funding is adequate **(and stable)** to ensure access for at-risk children and cover the costs of quality programs*





*There is only one way to achieve **greater coherence**, and that is through purposeful action and interaction, working on capacity, clarity, precision of practice, transparency, monitoring of progress, and continuous correction.*



# *What would it take to improve outcomes for all children?*

*A vision for a Highly Effective Office of Early Learning (OEL)*

- It takes strong leaders, highly capable staff, and effective and efficient functions within state agencies to achieve the goal of enhanced early learning outcomes.



# Organizational Capacity: What Highly Effective OELs Look Like

OELs with organizational capacity have sustained leadership driving a coherent early childhood vision and strategic plan

- bolstered by a capable team, well-managed infrastructure and
- external momentum generated by cross-agency collaboration, external funding and advocacy partners,
- gubernatorial and legislative backing and funding.

In 2005, Rolf Grafwallner lead the reorganization of the MD Division on Early Childhood in 2005, with the support of Supt Nancy Grasmick, the Early Learning Advisory Council, private orgs, and staff within and across the agency.



# Organizational Effectiveness: Highly Effective OELs Seek to Achieve

To reach an ambitious vision for young children that drives toward outcomes, highly effective OELs align many complex purposes and processes and direct them toward clear operational goals and objectives:

- sound operations, systems implementation and performance management processes that drive toward evidence-based results.

Louisiana's Early Childhood Care and Education Network created by Act 3 to unify the state's early childhood education programs. Each network receives state funding and resources, and data is collected on every PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE.



# What Leaders and Staff of Highly Effective OELs Know and Are Able to Do

- Highly effective OEL's have strong leadership and sufficient staffing to develop and implement policies and programs designed to improve outcomes for young children. They work effectively with advocates, and local leaders.

CEELO State Leadership Academy has supported 21 State Early Childhood staff in a year long professional development. Alabama has had staff from the Office of Child Development in 3 cohorts.



# Cross-cutting Issues

- State advisory council
- Regional governance
- Public-private partnerships
- Changing practice, not just arrangements – managing the transition



# The Opportunity in ESSA Implementation

- The incentive structure operating on K-12 (accountability and school improvement)
- The importance of early learning in ESSA implementation (Reardon data)

## **New Mexico ESSA Plan:**

Policy priorities include improving kindergarten readiness, and closing achievement gaps as emphasis in early elementary schools.





# LEAs Will Drive Implementation

- LEAs are required to create agreements to coordinate services with Head Start agencies
- LEAs can use Title II funds for PD for principals, teachers and community based providers on early learning
- LEAs can use Title IV funds for community school models to support school readiness
- LEAs can use school improvement funds for Birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade approach



# Opportunity to create greater system alignment

- ❖ *New* Preschool Development Grant in ESSA - Assist States to develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early childhood care and education in a mixed delivery system



# CCDF State Plan and ESSA both are focused on equity for ALL children

Each Plan asks states to:

- Engage stakeholders and coordinate EC services
- Define Goals for Children
- Improve Quality of Programs and Schools
- Engage Families
- Ensure a Highly Qualified Workforce
- Use Resources Accountably



# A Few States to Learn From

These states have coherent policy alignment, political will, and leadership capacity.

- Very Strong Currently: AL, GA, NJ
- Most likely to be very strong: AR, MD, MI, NY, WV
- To Watch: WA, PA, MA





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