

Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood
Early Childhood Advisory Council
Draft Strategic Plan

Plan Length

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2024

Vision Statement

All children in Kentucky will have the foundation that enables school and personal success and are supported by strong families and communities.

Mission Statement

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) provides leadership and direction for the Commonwealth of Kentucky by providing a comprehensive and sustainable prenatal to age five early childhood system that will ensure a strong foundation for all children.

Draft Goal Statements

Listed in alphabetical order.

- Goal 1:** Advance comprehensive early care and education through strategic messaging.
- Goal 2:** Grow and strengthen the early care and education workforce by providing a career pathway for advancement and professional learning opportunities.
- Goal 3:** Increase coordination, program quality, and service delivery by fostering effective collaboration between agencies and stakeholders.
- Goal 4:** Promote a comprehensive framework to effectively partner with families.
- Goal 5:** Inform funding and resource allocations, policy recommendations, and programming by consistently applying data driven systems and processes.
- Goal 6:** Secure new, diverse funding and utilize existing resources more effectively.

Draft Goals & Objectives

GOAL 1: Advance comprehensive early care and education through strategic messaging.

Objective 1.1: Conduct an outreach and education campaign on the importance of early childhood.

Objective 1.2: Promote and increase engagement of family members in the development and education of their children.

GOAL 2: Grow and strengthen the early care and education workforce by providing a career pathway for advancement and professional learning opportunities.

Objective 2.1: Support and expand pipeline for early care and education professionals.

Objective 2.2: Revise career lattice to encourage advancement and longevity in the early care and education workforce.

Objective 2.3: Reduce turnover by enhancing supports for professionals in early care and education.

Objective 2.4: Align training and technical assistance for early care and education professionals across state and local agencies.

GOAL 3: Increase coordination, program quality, and service delivery by fostering effective collaboration between agencies and stakeholders.

Objective 3.1: Effectively implement a cross-agency, state-level structure to ensure high quality.

Objective 3.2: Reduce barriers and increase support for blended service delivery models.

Objective 3.3: Strengthen the collaborations within local communities to foster school readiness and better address specific community needs.

Objective 3.4: Facilitate collaboration and increase coordination of state and local health, mental health, and wellness systems to support children and families.

GOAL 4: Promote a comprehensive framework to effectively partner with families.

Objective 4.1: Promote ongoing family education opportunities.

Objective 4.2: Expand Kentucky Strengthening Families into more communities.

Objective 4.3: Provide quality resources that promote and support the family's role in child development.

Objective 4.4: Promote an early care and education transition framework.

GOAL 5: Inform funding and resource allocations, policy recommendations, and programming by consistently applying data driven systems and processes.

Objective 5.1: Establish data and process systems for early childhood care and education.

Objective 5.2: Increase awareness and use of early care and education data reporting among state and local decision-makers.

Objective 5.3: Increase capacity to use early care and education data at the state and local levels through effective training and support.

Goal 6: Secure new, diverse funding and utilize existing resources more effectively.

Objective 6.1: Prioritize tobacco dollars to align with the strategic plan.

Objective 6.2: Conduct fiscal mapping to identify gaps and opportunities to prioritize funding.

Objective 6.3: Secure new grants to support vulnerable children and families.

Objective 6.4: Track and monitor funded services that impact early childhood.

Draft Strategies & Measures

GOAL 1: Advance comprehensive early care and education through strategic messaging.

Objective 1.1: Conduct an outreach and education campaign on the importance of early childhood learning.

Strategies

1.1.1. Develop a comprehensive, strategic communications plan that tailors a unified message regarding the importance of early childhood learning to specific audiences (e.g., families, elected officials, business leaders, etc.) at the state and local level, as well as, targets specific geographic and vulnerable populations.

1.1.2. Develop a systematic process for the effective distribution of evidence-supported informational materials and guidance to local partners.

1.1.3. Develop a systematic process for the effective distribution of evidence-supported informational materials and guidance to state elected representatives.

Measures

1. Annual 5% increase of 1) parents of young children and 2) state and local community stakeholders who report awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood learning, as assessed using a statewide parent and stakeholder surveys.
2. At least 51% of identified vulnerable children will be enrolled in high quality early care and education programs. (Total pool of Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP), Head Start and Preschool students enrolled in 3 Stars or higher.)
3. 100% of counties will increase high quality placements by 5% each year.

Objective 1.2: Promote and increase engagement of family members in the development and education of their children.

Strategies

1.2.1. Identify barriers to family engagement, noting any differences based on geographic location or vulnerabilities and distribute this information and suggested strategies through state and local partners.

1.2.2. Develop a comprehensive engagement plan that targets specific audiences (e.g., families with special needs children, families impacted by Opioid use, birth to three, etc.), as well as, targeted geographic and vulnerable population groups.

1.2.3. Provide guidance and support to local programs to encourage effective recruitment of all qualifying children, maximize parental choice and promote family partnerships.

Measures

1. Majority of parents report more than one family member is involved in the development and education of their children, as assessed using a statewide parent survey.
2. Majority of parents of vulnerable children report they are actively engaged in the development and education of their children, as assessed using a statewide parent survey.

GOAL 2: Grow and strengthen the early care and education workforce by providing a career pathway for advancement and professional learning opportunities.

Objective 2.1: Support and expand pipeline for early care and education professionals.

Strategies

- 2.1.1. Connect early childhood educators with early care education programs, apprenticeship programs and scholarship resources and encourage active participation.
- 2.1.2. Partner with Community Early Childhood Councils to implement and share plans for addressing their community's specific early care and education professional needs.
- 2.1.3. Expand financial resources available for early childhood educators to pursue credentials.

Measures

1. Annual 5% increase in the individuals who complete early care and education credentials programs, as assessed by program graduation rates at Kentucky education institutes.
2. Annual 5% increase of individuals who participate in Apprenticeship programs for the early care and education profession, as assessed using a survey of participation in Apprenticeship programs.

Objective 2.2: Revise Career Lattice to encourage advancement and longevity in the early care and education workforce.

Strategies

- 2.2.1. Collaborate with key partners and stakeholders to update the Career Lattice and Professional Development Framework for all early care and education professionals.
- 2.2.2. Promote and disseminate information on the updated Career Lattice and Professional Development Framework.
- 2.2.3. Support early childhood educators in developing and using individualized professional development plans to inform their professional development choices.

Measures

1. Annual 10% increase of early care and education professionals advancing at least one-step on the state's career lattice, as assessed using a review of professional records.
2. At least 75% of early care and education teachers have at least 5 years of experience, as assessed using a statewide workforce survey.

Objective 2.3: Reduce turnover by enhancing supports for professionals in early care and education.

Strategies

2.3.1. Distribute resources for recruiting and retaining qualified early care and education professionals.

2.3.2. Develop a compensation plan for facilitating sustainable, competitive pay and benefits for qualified professionals.

2.3.3. Strategically address hot spots within the state where employee shortages are likely, as identified through the community needs assessment (e.g., locations where demand is projected to grow, etc.).

Measures

1. Decrease state average turnover rate by 3% annually, as assessed using a statewide workforce survey.
2. Each county experiences a decrease in the average turnover of its early care and education professionals at or below 2%, as assessed using a statewide workforce survey.

Objective 2.4: Align training and technical assistance for early care and education professionals across state and local agencies.

Strategies

2.4.1. Create uniform standards across agencies for training and technical assistance staff.

2.4.2. Create uniform standards for early care and education content.

2.4.3. Facilitate consistent trainings and technical assistance to early education professionals in all settings to meet identified professional development needs.

Measures

1. There is a uniform statewide process/system for assessing training and technical assistance staff based on state standards of practice, as assessed using staff observations and evaluations.
2. All B-K curricula across Kentucky colleges and universities meet state standards for content, as assessed through review of curricula.

GOAL 3: Increase coordination, program quality, and service delivery by fostering effective collaboration between agencies and stakeholders.

Objective 3.1: Effectively implement a cross-agency, state-level structure to ensure high quality programming for children and families.

Strategies

3.1.1. Redesign and institute a cross-agency, state-level structure that aligns with local Community Early Childhood Council's.

3.1.2. Provide technical assistance plans for advancing to the next STAR level for sites rated as a 4 STAR or below.

3.1.3. Implement a state-level, continuous quality improvement process for All STARS to review data, assess system, identify areas for modification and make recommendations for improving policies, practices and programs.

3.1.4. Review and support the delivery of developmentally appropriate and quality state approved trainings.

Measures

1. At least 50% of early care and education programs will provide high quality programming, as assessed using KY All STARS.
2. At least 50% of early care and education programs will provide high quality programming across all age groups, as assessed using KY All STARS.

Objective 3.2: Reduce barriers and increase support for blended service delivery models.

Strategies

3.2.1. Design blended service program guidance on how to effectively use blended service delivery models.

3.2.2. Create and align policies across programs by reviewing descriptive data on blended model programs annually to identify trends and areas for technical assistance.

Measures

1. At least 25% of sites that blend funds will report increased levels of technical assistance in support of blended funding, as assessed using an annual survey.

Objective 3.3: Strengthen the collaborations within local communities to foster school readiness and better address specific community needs.

Strategies

3.3.1. Annual training and technical assistance will be available and completed by Community Early Childhood Council's and intensive training and technical assistance available where needed.

3.3.2. Educate community partners through school readiness summits.

Measures

1. 100% of Community Early Childhood Councils report receiving technical assistance in support of school readiness and community needs, as assessed using an annual survey.
2. Fewer than 10% of counties will have a childcare desert for one or more age groups, as assessed using a review of the population of young children and available placements per age group.
3. At least 25% of Community Early Childhood Councils report increasing the total amount of financial and tangible resources devoted to early childhood or school readiness, as assessed using an annual survey.

Objective 3.4: Facilitate collaboration and increase coordination of state and local health, mental health, and wellness systems to support children and families.

Strategies

3.4.1. Collaborate with each community/Community Early Childhood Council to create a local coordination plan of state and local health, mental health and wellness systems.

3.4.2. Implement evidence-based services/supports at the county level to educate parents about physical and mental development, wellness, and how to connect families with a medical home and developmental screenings.

3.4.3. Collaborate with state partners to develop and distribute materials and supports for families on important wellness factors (e.g., screenings, mental health, immunizations, etc.).

3.4.4. Collaborate with state and local partners to develop local early care and education resource and service listings (in-home and out-of-home) that address general and vulnerable population needs.

Measures

1. At least 25% of community's document improved coordination of local services, as assessed using a review of service participation and waiting list statistics.
2. 100% of Community Early Childhood Councils receive technical assistance in support of their local coordination plans.

GOAL 4: Promote a comprehensive framework to effectively partner with families.

Objective 4.1: Promote ongoing family education opportunities.

Strategies

- 4.1.1. Identify current successful family education opportunities (adult education, parent education, early childhood development, communication, conflict resolution).
- 4.1.2. Disseminate successful/evidence-based family education services and opportunities to every county via printed materials and/or through a clearinghouse.
- 4.1.3. Disseminate customized successful/evidence-based family education services/supports, targeting the specific needs of vulnerable children, children in rural communities and children in child care deserts.
- 4.1.4. Collaborate with state partners to increase the perceived value of education for young parents and the impact it can have on their children.

Measures

1. Annual 5% increase in the families who report involvement in at least one education opportunity, service, or support that addresses their family's specific interest(s) or need(s).
2. At least 75% of families with vulnerable children, rural communities, and child care deserts report involvement in at least one education opportunity that improves their parenting skills or knowledge of child development.

Objective 4.2: Expand Kentucky Strengthening Families into more communities.

Strategies

- 4.2.1. Increase the number of trainers who can provide KY Strengthening Families Training of Trainers to build capacity within local communities.
- 4.2.2. Provide local early child care directors with training to recognize and become more acquainted with ACES and both the short term and long term impacts on child development.
- 4.2.3. Provide expanded support for the Kentucky Strengthening Families strategic goals and initiatives, including integration, evaluation, learning communities, partnerships and communication.

Measures

1. At least 85% of counties sponsor a Strengthening Families initiative.
2. Annual 5% increase in early childhood system professionals (e.g., health departments, child protective services, etc.) receiving Kentucky Strengthening Families training.

Objective 4.3: Provide quality resources that promote and support the family’s role in child development.

Strategies

- 4.3.1. Review, revise, and promote KY’s Parent Guides and publications to encompass child developmental Prenatal-5yrs old.
- 4.3.2. Establish an Early Childhood Clearing House to identify, collect, and promote developmentally appropriate family engagement practices.

Measures

- 1. At least 5% annual increase of parents reporting sufficient knowledge of child development and parenting skills.

Objective 4.4: Promote an early care and education transition framework.

Strategies

- 4.4.1. Provide technical assistance to the early childhood system professionals (e.g., HANDS, early intervention services, classroom to classroom, etc.) on the development of individualized transition plans.
- 4.4.2. Develop guidance and best practices on identifying and responding to transition experiences.
- 4.4.3. Work with state and local partners to assist families in successfully transitioning children from early childhood and education programs to school entry.

Measures

- 1. An annual 5% increase in the number and type of transition activities occurring at the county (or district) level, as assessed using a Transitions survey.
- 2. At least 80% of counties are implementing a locally designed Early Childhood Transitions plan, as assessed using an annual report on activities.
- 3. At least 5% annual increase of parents reporting they have the information and resources they need to support their child in making the next transition, as assessed using statewide parenting survey.

GOAL 5: Inform funding and resource allocations, policy recommendations, and programming by consistently applying data driven systems and processes.

Objective 5.1: Establish data and process systems for early childhood care and education.

Strategies

5.1.1. Create a long-term data plan that aligns with the state’s strategic plan and ensure that it:

- Identifies necessary data that are either absent (when referenced against the state’s strategic plan or other work plans) or only available at the state level;
- References data that can be frequently updated (e.g., every year or every other year);
- Directs or informs the development of new data collections or data sharing agreements;
- Contains benchmarks, to inform state progress on its strategic plan;
- Contains leading indicators that inform other strategic systems (e.g., education, workforce development); and
- Contains lagging or coincident indicators that inform an assessment of the impact (or results) of investments in the early childhood system.

Measures

1. The state’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System incorporates additional data strands, relevant to the state’s strategic interests.

Objective 5.2: Increase awareness and use of early care and education data reporting among state and local decision-makers.

Strategies

5.2.1. Evaluate the current awareness and use of early childhood reports or data products.

5.2.2. Use findings to create an action plan that targets the awareness and use of data reporting that:

- Disaggregates findings and action plan items by regions, districts, Community Early Childhood Councils, or stakeholder groups.
- Informs upgrades or the development of new data products such that

5.2.3. Create and distribute guidance on available early childhood reports or data products to ensure each major stakeholder group or location has a data product that is accessible and meaningful.

5.2.4. Develop customizable templates (i.e., for state or local stakeholder use) targeting the marketing and use of reports or data products (e.g., a sample marketing or distribution plan; sample agenda items for Community Early Childhood Council or stakeholder meetings).

Measures

1. Ongoing improvements to the functionality and use of the Early Childhood Profiles, as assessed using evaluations of users/target audience.
2. A majority of Community Early Childhood Council’s demonstrate using early childhood data in making decisions and planning activities.

Objective 5.3: Increase capacity to use early care and education data at the state and local levels through effective training and support.

Strategies

- 5.3.1. Evaluate data fluency and capacity among state and local stakeholders.
- 5.3.2. Use findings to create an action plan that targets improvements in data use and capacity that disaggregates findings and action plan items by regions, districts, Community Early Childhood Councils, or stakeholder groups.
- 5.3.3. Create and continue to improve data tutorials that focus on the nature, scope, and limitations of data contained within the Early Childhood Profiles and related data products.
- 5.3.4. Host annual or bi-annual, statewide, data summit for local community stakeholders.
- 5.3.5. Host annual or bi-annual, statewide, data summit for state stakeholders and elected representatives.
- 5.3.6. Create guidance, templates, or sample action plans that exemplify how data reports can be used to respond to state or local needs.
- 5.3.7. Strengthen the state’s clearinghouse of best practices to include best practices for data use as well as linkages between community needs to evidence-based solutions.

Measures

1. At least 75% Community Early Childhood Councils have at least one member who has participated in data training, as assessed using a review of training records.
2. 100% Local Education Agencies have at least one member who has participated in KY Early Childhood Data Training (to be developed), as assessed using a review of training records.

Goal 6: Secure new, diverse funding and utilize existing resources more effectively.

Objective 6.1: Prioritize tobacco dollars to align with the strategic plan.

Strategies

- 6.1.1. The ECAC will review triangulated early childhood data sets at least six months before budgets are due to the governor.
- 6.1.2. Using all relevant early childhood data sets and in collaboration with key state partners, the ECAC will reprioritize the tobacco dollars at least four months before budget are due to the governor.
- 6.1.3. The ECAC, along with its key partners, will share all relevant data that supports their proposal for use of the tobacco dollars with key decision makers.

Measures

1. 100% of the tobacco settlement dollars allocated to early childhood are in alignment with the ECAC strategic plan goals and objectives.

Objective 6.2: Conduct fiscal mapping to identify gaps and opportunities to prioritize funding.

Strategies

6.2.1. The ECAC uses tobacco dollars to fund the on-going gathering of agreed upon data and analysis.

6.2.2. The ECAC reviews the triangulation of fiscal and relevant early childhood data sets to understand trending data in gaps as well as emerging opportunities.

Measures

1. All Early Childhood Tobacco Settlement funds will be allocated and prioritized based upon relevant and reliable data sets.

Objective 6.3: Secure new grants to support vulnerable children and families.

Strategies

6.3.1.: The ECAC will identify and support Community Early Childhood Councils and local communities that leverage additional local resources to meet the EC needs of vulnerable families locally.

6.3.2. The ECAC will work with their state partners to leverage additional resources and reduce duplication of effort.

6.3.3. The ECAC will support the Office of Early Childhood in submitting applications. and seeking additional grants from both national foundations and the federal government.

Measures:

1. Twenty-five Community Early Childhood Councils and/or local communities will have increased their early childhood funding for vulnerable families.
2. The funding for early childhood in Kentucky will be better utilized through reduction of duplicative efforts.

Objective 6.4: Track and monitor funded services that impact early childhood.

Strategies

6.4.1. Adhere to the KRS related to the accountability process for all entities that receive tobacco dollars which details all relevant information needed to effectively monitor the agreed upon use and outcomes to be achieved.

6.4.2. At least annually all tobacco funded entities must provide a detailed written report indicating their success at meeting their proposal that they submitted during the initial accountability process.

6.4.3. Annually the ECAC will meet with its key state wide partners who provide key support services in health, mental health, child welfare, etc. to look for opportunities to support their work.

Measures

1. At least 75% of Community Early Childhood Councils and 90% of state partners will demonstrate that they met their goals annually.