

***Early Childhood Advisory Council
(ECAC)***

***Strategic Planning Meeting
September 20, 2018***

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FUNNELING IDEAS INTO ACTION

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Meeting Participants

Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)

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ECAC Staff and Invited Guests

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Meeting Facilitator

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Participants reviewed the initial SWOT analysis created during the June 14, 2018 meeting. Ideas in italics were added or edited and those struck through were removed or deleted. Opportunities and threats denoted with an asterisk (*) indicate the greatest opportunities and threats identified during the June 14th meeting.

Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

1. What are the internal strengths of the ECAC?

- Available research and data
- Blended program implementation
- Centralized office coordinates with other agencies
- Conducted Leadership Training
- Coordinated efforts across the state
- Coordinated state conference
- Data profile
 - Dedicated funding = Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, Pre-K, HANDS; ECAC's existence and precursor; Readiness screener; STARS Quality Rating System; KCEWS
- Diverse backgrounds on ECAC
 - ECAC has strong geographical representation
- *Early childhood education and early brain development always at forefront of our work*
- Focus on quality, not just access!
- Helpful staff
- High quality Early Childhood Institute and School Readiness Summit fill need
- Intentional planning
- Kentucky Strengthening Families launched and now part of ECAC
- Leadership of Linda Hampton
- Part of bigger picture, from child care to Pre-K
 - Good energy, feels celebratory
- Partnership and coordination of Early Childhood Education data with other data
- Public/Private partnerships and bringing community in decreases silos
- Race to the Top – ELC provided for updating of Quality Rating System (QRS)
- Race to the Top created foundation upon which to build (curriculum, assessment, etc.)
- Readiness definition
- *Representation from both the Senate and House*
- *Strong history of progress, even with no funding*
 - A lot has been accomplished since 2000 (Kids Now) and 2010 (ECAC)
- Sub-committee work promotes information sharing and stakeholder involvement
 - Data, professional development and mobilizing

2. What are the internal weaknesses of the ECAC?

- Communication between meetings, feedback loop with subcommittees
- Could make better, data informed decisions on budget priorities for better advocacy and influence
- Current meeting structure doesn't allow us to take advantage of the expertise of the ECAC members
 - Not enough time for ECAC to do its work; So much to cover in the agenda that there is not enough time for discussion. Presentations need to clearly tie into the work of ECAC.
- Don't know leading indicators from other states
- Don't promote positive policy progress
- Early childhood data and reports are not being mined or used effectively
- ~~• ECAC lacks parent representation~~
- ~~• ECAC lacks race/ethnic diversity (moved to external threat)~~
- ECAC members don't understand their roles, responsibilities and authority
- ~~• ECAC missing higher education and adult education representatives~~
- Defining roles and purpose of Community Early Childhood Council (CECC) versus ECAC so not operating in silos
- Lack of structure to bring new members up to speed (orientation)
- *Lack experience seeking private funding*
- Membership turnover
- Sustained, agreed-upon focus of the ECAC and subcommittees
- Tendency to rubber stamp instead of initiating leadership
- Underutilized oversight role of ECAC

External Opportunities and Threats

3. What external opportunities could benefit the ECAC?

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES:

- ~~Race to the Top created foundation upon which to build (curriculum, assessment, classroom materials)** (moved to internal strength)~~
- Expand and identify best practices in public and private pre-school partnerships*
- *External funding available, including federal***
 - Grant/Funding opportunities
- Increase influence of tobacco money and use*
- *Unifying QRIS among agencies (e.g., processes, consistency)**

OTHER IDEAS:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) training/promoting practices
- Collaboration and communication among early childhood has improved and creates opportunities
- Early child care is a priority for this Administration
- Effective use of statewide early childhood data
- Effectiveness of Post-secondary early child care programs
- ~~Improve QRS~~
- ~~Increase Readiness Summits~~
- Involved in discussion around federal money for early childhood
- Kentucky Strengthening Families
- Lakeshore partnership/relationship – new facility in Kentucky
- Legislative support for early childhood initiatives
- *Need/Desire for children to be ready for school*
- Positive relationship with Administration, Executive Branch and key state individuals, such as Derrick Ramsey and Wayne Lewis
- Shared agencies adopt Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for early childhood goals for more seamless focus (i.e., KDE)
- *Need more customized training, such as STARS leadership training*
- ~~Take CECC's to the next level~~

4. What external threats could harm the ECAC?

GREATEST THREATS:

- Bureaucracy****
- Lack of awareness by public and policymakers on the return on investment of early childhood education*
- Lack of funding*
 - Funding cuts – Flex focus and grants running out

OTHER IDEAS:

- Comprehensive support: housing, nutrition, wages, etc.
- Early childhood education's impact on learning from birth to third grade
- *ECAC lacks race/ethnic diversity*
- *Evaluation reported CECC's are not being used effectively*
- ~~Engaging those who utilize services (Empowerment through agency)~~
- Failure to hold state organizations accountable
- HANDS – not enough money, expansion
- *Higher education training is inconsistent*
- ~~Lack of effective communication with critical external partners~~
- *Lack of professional knowledge and development of early childhood educators*
 - Low awareness and support for early childhood learning differences and disabilities
- *Needs of children change with crisis*
 - Family stability, increase in autism, toxic stress/ACE's scores, vulnerable populations
 - Learners with communication challenges, such as visually/hearing impaired, learning differences, physical disabilities, and English as a second language; also lack peer support and social/emotional issues
- No seamless path to certification to increase workforce pool
- *Not all local leadership in school districts don't make collaboration a priority*
- Not enough infant-toddler care
- Pay equity issues in early child care
- *Recruiting/Retaining quality workforce*
- ~~Scholarship fund was lost~~
- ~~Trained workforce is hard to find~~
- Uninformed stakeholders (Competing regulations – legislation)
- ~~Unknowns – what challenge is next?~~
- ~~Unraveling coordination and relationships with KDE, Workforce Education and Cabinet~~
- ~~We don't know what to do about ACES~~

Draft Goal Areas: Key Actions Activity

The prioritized opportunities and threats were given to participants to brainstorm key actions that would answer the following questions:

- **How can we seize/leverage opportunities and strengths?**
- **How can we reduce/minimize the impact of threats and weaknesses?**

Participants then clustered the key actions into common themes, which generated the following goal areas. Goal areas are denoted in bold with the brainstormed key actions listed beneath. The goals are alphabetically ordered and the brainstormed actions have not been vetted.

Advocate for Early Childhood Education

- Ask key state leaders to continue to advocate for early childhood – spread message
- Form partnership/collaboration – “Make the Ask”
- Formulate and submit a collaborative legislative agenda
- Vision communicated in easy, clear message

Promote the Importance of Early Childhood Education

- Continue to grow Kentucky Strengthening Families
- Educate everyone on the return on investment of early childhood education and early brain development
- Focus efforts on helping parents to grow

Provide Families with Early Childhood Education Choices

- Expand within all models – don’t forget FCCH
- Sharing evaluations of public/private grants

Secure Funding

- Preschool Development Grant (PDG)
- Review and align tobacco money to emerging strategic plan
- Secure grants to combat opioid crisis – state and local
- Seek and secure new (federal) early childhood expansion dollars (OCC and OHS) for both state and local

State and Local Collaboration

- Annually review and promote MOU across agencies
- Be intentional – CECC/SR Summit
- Better collaboration between all agencies – share
- Build on relationships at all levels
- CECC's charged with ACE's training, referrals, and supports
- Continue to grow relationships
- Demonstration of collaboration with positive spill-over – education and pay
- Encourage collaboration and transparency
- Gives us a business partner (reliable and appropriateness)
- Integrate better communications with CECC's
- Make more mandatory requirements around collaboration
- Mobilize sub-committee of ECAC
- Restructure CECC's to take them to the next level to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Wrap around services (social/emotional)

Workforce Development

- Clearinghouse for best practices; push into field
- Create incentives to build consensus to improve accountability
- New directors provided mentorship through practices like early language, literacy, and numeracy (ELLN)
 - Lead Education Agency (LEA) → CC
- Prepare early childhood educators for the system
- Recruitment and retention