

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

***Strategic Planning Kick-Off Meeting
June 14, 2018***

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FUNNELING IDEAS INTO ACTION

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Meeting Participants

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SWOT Analysis Activity

Participants were divided into groups to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the ECAC. Ideas denoted with an asterisk (*) indicate the number of people working on them within the small groups who believed them to be the greatest opportunity or threat.

Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

1. What are the internal strengths of the ECAC?

- A lot has been accomplished since 2000 (Kids Now) and 2010 (ECAC)
- Available research and data
- Blended program implementation
- Centralized office to coordinate 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
- Data profile – KCEWS
- Diverse backgrounds on ECAC
- ECAC has strong geographical representation
- 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)
- Readiness definition
- Strong history of progress
- Sub-committee work promotes information sharing and stakeholder involvement
 - Data, professional development and mobilizing
- This is critical to ROI from ECE and early brain development

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
- 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
- ECAC members don't understand their roles, responsibilities and authority
- ECAC missing higher education and adult education representatives
- How to link or define roles and purpose of Community Early Childhood Council (CECC) versus ECAC so not operating in silos
- Lack of family/consumer representation (child care, family child care homes)
- Membership turnover, lack of structure to bring new members up to speed (orientation)
- 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.
- 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)**
- Expand and identify best practices in public and private pre-school partnerships*
- Funding sustainability – intentionally seek private finding*
- Grant/Funding opportunities*
- Increase influence of tobacco money and use*
- Unifying QRS among agencies*

OTHER IDEAS:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) training/promoting practices
- Add higher education representative and one more local education representative to ECAC
- 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
- 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
- Positive relationship with Administration, Executive Branch and key state individuals, such as Derrick Ramsey and Wayne Lewis
- Post-secondary early child care programs effectiveness
- Shared agencies adopt Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for early childhood goals for more seamless focus (i.e., KDE)
- STARS Leadership training available to more people
- 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*

OTHER IDEAS:

- Comprehensive support: housing, nutrition, wages, etc.
- Crisis trends
- Early childhood education's impact on learning from birth to third grade
- Engaging those who utilize services (Empowerment through agency)
- Failure to hold state organizations accountable
- Family stability
- Funding cuts – Flex focus and grants running out
- HANDS – not enough money, expansion
- Higher education
- Increase in autism
- Lack of effective communication with critical external partners
- Lack of professional knowledge and development
- Low awareness and support for early childhood learning differences and disabilities
- No seamless path to certification to increase workforce pool
- Not enough infant-toddler care
- Pay equity issues in early child care
- Scholarship fund was lost
- Toxic stressors/ACES scores
- 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
- 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
- Vulnerable populations
- We don't know what to do about ACES

Key Data

The group briefly brainstormed key data that would need to be collected to inform their future planning.

- A current snapshot of All STARS
- CECC success stories and models that are working well
- Collateral data – how are other agencies impacting early childhood?
 - Agencies and factors
- How other ECAC's are structured
- Impact of School Readiness Summit
- Results/Evaluation of information from pieces we fund, such as usage, existing components of Kids Now
- Utilize NGA for examples from other states policy
- Where Kentucky ranks nationally on Pre-K and child care

Level of Support for Mission, Vision, Core Value Statements

Participants were asked to independently answer questions regarding their level of support for the current mission, and vision statements, as well as, any comments.

Mission Statement

Level of Support	Total	Percentage
Love it	3	30%
It's okay – No changes needed	6	60%
Not a fan – Needs to change	1	10%

N=10

Comments:

- The only thing I would add is something about collaboration among state agencies/cabinets – make that more specific
- While some elements need to remain, it does need to be updated
- Would be good to revisit this regularly or have front and center at meetings

Vision Statement

Level of Support	Total	Percentage
Love it	5	50%
It's okay – No changes needed	4	40%
Not a fan – Needs to change	1	10%

N=10

Appendix: Evaluation

Participants were asked to independently answer the following questions and return their responses to the facilitator. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times the same comment was shared.

What did you like or enjoy about today's session?

- Discussion, interaction, identification of strengths and weaknesses (internal and external)
- Focus on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Generally small groups, more freedom to be open and honest
- Group discussion, very informative
- Open communication about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- People said there needs to be an orientation to being on the ECAC. I still really don't know exactly what my role is
- Small group discussion on questions
- Stefanie did a great job of facilitating
- Time for discussion and small group work
- Very glad to be a part of strategic planning process
- Well facilitated, SWOT was perfect, very helpful

What would you change?

- Have more ECAC members present
- Nothing (2)
- Probably more time

What lingering questions or concerns do you have?

Participants were provided an opportunity to emphasize any points made during the session or provide new ideas or comments they weren't comfortable stating in front of the group.

- All good!
- Data and evaluation needed about representation of Preschool/partnership grant
- Need to make sure that children with disabilities are always included and not overlooked!
- Really need more parents involved
- Reiterating focus on quality
- Reiterating focus on statutory requirements of ECAC