

Remarks: Dr. Ellen Hall

To: Early Learning Listening Forum on Work Force and Professional Development

Date: April 26, 2010

I would like to begin by thanking you for the opportunity to contribute the views of the Boulder Journey School learning community to the Early Learning Listening Forum on Work Force and Professional Development. I am the Executive Director of Boulder Journey School, a school of children, 6 weeks to 6 years of age, their families and faculty. The school's educational philosophy has developed through our ongoing study of the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy as well as the work of world-renowned educators, David and Frances Hawkins. My colleagues and I educate Master's level teachers at Boulder Journey School, in partnership with the University of Colorado Denver and the Colorado Department of Education. I represent the school as a member of the International Organizing Committee of the World Forum on Early Care and Education, board member of Hawkins Centers of Learning and the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance and, most recently, as a member of the Colorado P-3 Subcommittee's Professional Development Task Force.

At Boulder Journey School, professional development is viewed as a process for creating and maintaining a professional learning community. This means that members of the faculty work collaboratively; we mentor, coach, assess, encourage and support one another in our work with children, families and colleagues.

Collaboration has been identified as a 21st century skill, along with critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation and communication. If the attainment of 21st century skills is a desired goal for children, then educators' professional development must also focus on these skills. With 21st century skills in mind, we think that professional development should provide educators with the space and time to engage in a sharing of experiences and ideas with other adults as they engage in investigations of the materials that the children utilize to construct and communicate their learning.

We think that educators who continue their own learning about the physical and social world are better able to understand, support and extend children's learning. Further, we think that professional development should be closely connected to the ongoing explorations and investigations of children and adults in the school. In other words, educators must have a voice in shaping professional development that is relevant to their daily experiences with children and colleagues. As an example, during the past several years at Boulder Journey School, professional development groups have worked with materials to better understand scientific and mathematical concepts related to balance, light and shadow, rolling, weaving and drawing. In essence, we think that professional development must be ongoing, providing a forum through which educators are able to gain competency as well as the feeling of competency, the empowerment and enthusiasm that is necessary to venture into a place of authentic inquiry with children and other adults.

Documentation of our experiences at Boulder Journey School provides support for our thinking. However, anecdotally I would like to add that my many roles have offered me opportunities to visit schools throughout our nation and the world. During these visits, I have witnessed something powerful: when teachers are engaged in meaningful and relevant professional development, the children are likewise engaged, joyful and learning.

In this time of great opportunity for our nation to make innovative and transcending choices that can alter the trajectory of our educational system, it is relevant to revisit the time enduring statement made by David Hawkins in May, 1970 (40 years ago) in his testimony before the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, U.S. Senate Education Subcommittee: "The basic innovation we need to support is that of exploring, with and through innovative teachers, all the means through which children can be brought into a different way of learning. The very phrase 'teacher training' implies a style of innovation in which

teachers are being shown the way when in fact teachers must be part of every effort to find the way – with help, with moral and material support, through teachers of teachers who value their minds and respect their innovative capacities, who are prepared to receive as much as they give.”

SEIU's Comments for Early Learning Listening Tour – Workforce and Professional Development

April 26, 2010 Denver, CO
Delivered by: Karen Hoerst

On behalf of our 2.2 million members we thank the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services for this unique opportunity to share our thoughts about Workforce and Professional Development in the early care and education industry.

SEIU members have a strong stake in early education programs. Over 300,000 members work in the k-12 and early education systems in schools, child care centers, Head Start Programs, and home-based settings across the country. Our members are also janitors, security guards, nurses, home health care workers, and firefighters; many of whom are parents. Many work late nights and irregular hours and depend on quality early learning programs so their children can get the best start possible.

As public investment in early education has remained stagnant and even decreased in recent years, our early childhood members have struggled to provide quality services that help children get ready for success in school and beyond.

Now, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have an opportunity to develop high quality professional development systems that invest in adults so that our children can realize the greatest gains. We greatly appreciate the commitment that the Obama administration has already shown through increased funding for child care and Head Start in The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the funding increases proposed in the FY 2011 budget. We urge both Departments to build upon this progress by investing in the early childhood workforce.

Research shows that in the early education industry, adequate compensation and access to benefits are linked to higher employee morale, making it easier to attract and retain qualified teachers who offer stable, high quality services for children and families.¹ But early childhood educators (who are overwhelmingly female) are among the lowest paid workers in our society, earning about \$20,000 annually.² Head Start teachers fare only a little better, making about \$25,000 a year, still far less than what public school kindergarten teachers earn (at around \$47,000).³ Not surprisingly, more than one-third of child care providers leave the industry each year.⁴ compared to 7% turnover among elementary school teachers.⁵

Similarly, research shows that formal education and specialized training in early education are linked to quality care.⁶ However, most family child care providers and centers assistants have no education beyond high school. In Head Start, only 35 percent of teachers have a BA, and 53 percent have at least an

¹ Barnett, W. Steven, (2003) NIEER Policy Brief, *Low Wages = Low Quality; Solving the Real Preschool Teacher Crisis*

² Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), Occupational Employment Statistics, available at <http://www.bls.gov/OES/>.

³ CLASP (October 23, 2009), Head Start by the Numbers, 2008 PIR Profile, available at <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/headstartdata2008us.pdf>.

⁴ NACCRRRA, Child Care Workforce, available at http://www.naccrra.org/randd/child-care-workforce/cc_workforce.php.

⁵ Whitebook, M. & Sakai, L. (2003). *Turnover Begets Turnover: An Examination of Job and Occupational Instability Among Child Care Center Staff*, Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley.

⁶ Bueno, M. et al, (2010). *A Matter of Degrees: Preparing Teachers for the Pre-K Classroom*, The Pew Center on the States

Associate's degree or Child Development Credential.⁷ Increased public investment in this workforce is urgently needed.

While early childhood programs such as Head Start and state pre-k programs are emphasizing increasing teacher qualifications as a way to improve program quality, current federal funding for professional development is not nearly enough. To retain a stable, well-trained early education workforce, educators must have access to incentive-based training programs and increased compensation.

Federal investment should include significant funding specifically for workforce development and training for all early care and education providers in all settings. The existing, diverse early childhood workforce should be supported to become qualified to provide pre-school. The Departments should develop policies which encourage states to invest in quality improvement and workforce development for all settings through incentives such as stipends, tiered reimbursement, and access to health insurance for increased education, accreditation, and training . Other programs to improve compensation could include graduated salary supplements tied to a living wage based on longevity, or marked to the pay and benefits scale for local public school teachers. These initiatives must be designed to include and support caregivers who are Limited English Proficient or license-exempt as these providers often care for our most vulnerable children.

Training and education should be offered in convenient community-based locations through diverse providers such as child care resource and referral agencies, community colleges, and union training funds. Trainings should be held when providers are not at work and/or offer substitute care, be affordable, and be carefully designed to meet the needs of providers, recognizing the value of their experience on the job and bridging . the gap from community based-training to college coursework. Any degree or certification requirements should be phased in and financially supported.

In conclusion, thank you again for this opportunity to address workforce development needs of the early education field. More and more business leaders, policymakers, scientists and economists are recognizing the importance of investing in our young children. We must understand that these jobs are not “babysitting,” but critical to the “real” education of young children. Now is the time to give early educators the tools they need to support high quality development for all children.

SEIU's hundreds of thousands of early care and education providers and the working families who rely on quality early childhood services look forward to working with the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other willing partners to strengthen professional development opportunities for this workforce.

⁷ CLASP (October 23, 2009).

Listening and Learning about Early Learning – Workforce and Professional Development **By Nancie Linville, Vice President of the Clayton Early Learning Institute**

I'd like to thank the U.S. Department of Education and the Dept. of Health and Human services for organizing these important Listening and Learning about Early Learning series. I'm Nancie Linville, Vice President at Clayton Early Learning and I have the privilege today to represent the 100+ teachers and child family educators from Clayton Educare and the 40+ coaches and researchers from our Institute.

Clayton Early Learning is a powerful model offering what very few other organizations can -- a continuous loop linking research, practice, and professional development that garners the most effective, proven methods for preparing young children for success in school. The three major components include:

- **Research**: The Clayton Institute researches, develops, and evaluates new and effective methods of training early childhood professionals and educating young children.
- **Practice**: On a daily basis at Clayton Educare, we employ research-based, outcome-focused early learning methods to close the achievement gap for over 400 prenatal to age five Head Start eligible children. Our main goal is for children to arrive at kindergarten prepared for academic success.
- **Training**: The Clayton Institute offers evidence-based training, coaching and education to better prepare early childhood educators. Our practices indicate that teachers and other early childhood professionals are more successful when coaching is part of their on-going professional development.

At Clayton, our current research to practice agenda is focused on answering the following questions:

What practices support building attachment and trust in young infants and help toddlers learn to regulate behaviors and emotions? What's the best way to engage four-year-olds in developing reasoning and problem-solving skills? How do teachers and families support the early literacy skills of children learning more than one language? How do we encourage parents to partner with schools? Which coaching methods work to engage teachers in increasingly effective practice? What are the key elements of effective early childhood leadership development? How do you build a credentialed and effective EC workforce? This model linking research with hands-on practice needs to be the foundation for teacher/leader preparation in early childhood.

Clayton Early Learning extends its work beyond our campus – through innovative public and private partnerships. As Colorado works to better understand the links between program quality and teacher preparation, we have forged strong partnerships with higher education to raise quality standards and push for systemic change in our early childhood professional development system. I'd like to highlight 2 innovative programs:

1. Buell Early Childhood Leadership Program: Research recognizes the need for additional professional development of those in leadership roles. Clayton Early Learning partners with the Morgridge College of Education at University of Denver to create and offer a unique program. funded by the Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation. As the first of its kind in the nation, the statewide program offers graduate-level certification to a cohort of 20 fellows annually. The standards-based curriculum prepares students to address critical issues in the field by applying multiple leadership dimensions, including among others Pedagogical, Strategic and, Political. By the end of May 2010, 59 graduates of this unique leadership development program are on the forefront of resolving critical early childhood issues in Colorado – with another 20 fellows beginning the program in June.
2. Recognizing that the majority of early childhood teacher preparation is provided through community colleges – Colorado launched the Strengthening Early Childhood Professional Development through Colorado Community Colleges initiative. Fourteen of our sixteen community college Early Childhood Departments are working as a cohort (?) toward national accreditation or program improvement of their degree program from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Boettcher Foundation has funded this statewide initiative through Clayton Early Learning with \$750,000. The opportunity to impact Colorado’s professional development system is immense – and most importantly – the impact for our children is immediate. Due to new state licensing requirements, enrollment in our early childhood classes at community colleges has increased 120%. These students – early childhood teachers by day, students by night – teach almost half of the 233,000 children in Colorado’s licensed early care and education settings.

Clayton Early Learning urges the following action be taken:

- Aligning the intended outcomes and quality standards of EC systems at the federal level – Head Start, p-3 (Part C, Part B, etc.), Child Care Development Block Grant programs. States including Colorado are working within the disparate regulations of these programs to bring alignment to the greatest extent possible and we could use your help.
- Continue your emphasis on funding opportunities through the reauthorization of ESEA and another run at the Early Learning Challenge Grants to support teacher preparation models linking research to practice – giving increased hands-on experience in high-quality classrooms supported by master teachers/coaches.

The following is the content from my statement during the Public Comments at the April 26th Listening and Learning about Early Learning conference in Denver.

I own and am the director of two small child care centers in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Most of my budget goes to salaries. My source of income comes from state subsidized care contracts and parent paid tuition. Parents are losing jobs and subsidies are frozen.

My teachers are good people, but it is difficult for them to understand and provide the kind of care we would like to see. Just this morning, I got a call that one of the infant teachers quit. She is moving to California to escape a violent relationship. Retention is an ongoing problem.

I see two solutions to help small centers and family homes:

Ongoing financial support for salaries to those teachers who achieve educational goals

Coaches or mentors in the classroom to provide relevant teaching in a hands-on setting to help bridge the gap between education and practice.

My centers are part of the New Mexico Project PLAY. Mentors are in the classroom with teachers of infants to age 3, teaching and role modeling language acquisition for the teachers. This has made a huge difference in how teachers teach. This kind of support is what we need.

Thank you.

Marlene McKitrick

Thank you for this opportunity.

Recommendations for Federal Action on the Early Learning Workforce

By Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D.

1. Preparation Matters

- Invest federal financial resources in a coordinated effort to revamp higher education program content and method of delivery and to support faculty professional development.
- Provide resources and guidelines to build an early learning leadership pipeline in institutions of higher education for college instructors, mentors and supervisors, administrators, principals and other field leaders.

2. Support for **Ongoing Learning** Matters

- Develop guidelines for effective content and approaches for professional development initiatives supported by federal dollars.
- Develop promising practices for training mentors and coaches and require training for all mentors and coaches paid through federal dollars.
- Encourage states to focus attention on improving adult work environments through convening experts to recommend criteria for QRIS ratings, supporting use of federal dollars for improving work environments, developing better measures of the adult learning environment, and requiring focus on the adult environment as a condition of federal funding for QRIS.

3. Workplace **Reward** Matters

- Establish a federal task force to address compensation crisis.
- Support creative use of federal subsidy dollars to promote better compensation.
- Strengthen the link between degree attainment and higher salaries in Head Start and federally funded professional development initiatives.
- Link federal resources for QRIS to improving compensation.



Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.

My name is Kathy Giordano. I am the Education Specialist for the national Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc. TSA recognizes the critical and positive impact that professional development has on all children with Tourette syndrome and has established an Education Committee which provides education in-services to schools all over the country at no cost.

By providing information to educators, diagnoses increase for children with this highly misunderstood, complex neurological disorder. Additionally, the number of children who are provided appropriate, positive and effective supports increases significantly.

For the past 5 years, TSA has received funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide professional development for educators and allied professionals. Since Tourette syndrome symptoms typically first emerge prior to the age of seven, providing accurate information to early learning teachers is a commitment that we take very seriously. Feedback from educators who attended these education in-services has consistently demonstrated that the information they receive changes the manner in which they teach their students in a positive fashion. They report that because of the training, they understand that appropriate supports for children with Tourette syndrome are positive, proactive, and more effective than negative consequences which often is the intervention used prior to their attending our education in-services.

Providing professional development to early learning educators, results in more positive outcomes when developing the foundations for learning that are essential in the early years of education. For example, a large number of students impacted by Tourette syndrome have difficulty with written language. By making this information available, they are able to teach youngsters keyboarding at an early age which make available the skills that will be necessary for the student's future success.

Educators generally are not taught as college students how to recognize or how to support students with Tourette syndrome. Often they learn about rewards and consequences which work for many students but which typically are not effective for students with Tourette syndrome, and actually often make matters worse.

Many schools for whom we have provided these educational in-services have expressed their gratitude for providing information and strategies that assist teachers support children with many disabilities, not just Tourette syndrome. The professional development that we provide includes information and strategies for many of the related difficulties that are commonly associated with Tourette syndrome. These include, attention deficit disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, executive functioning deficits, dysinhibition, sensory issues, social skills deficits, to name a few.

As an example of why the Tourette Syndrome Association recognizes professional development as a priority, after attending an education in-service a 2nd grade teacher understood the symptoms that made it necessary for a bright third grade student to read everything that was hanging on the walls before he was able to begin his math assignment.

As another example of the importance of Tourette syndrome professional development programs, one MAY have prevented the third grade teacher from asking every child in her class to take turns telling their classmate who had Tourette why his tics bothered them. I am confident that the teacher did this with the best of intentions and believed that this would provide the boy with the motivation needed to stop his involuntary vocal tics. Unfortunately, because she was misinformed, her actions only served to increase the child's stress which increased his symptoms.

It has been our experience that by providing professional development for everyone who comes in contact with a student who has Tourette syndrome, the probability of that child experiencing future behavior issues is reduced. When adults see the child as HAVING a problem rather than a child who IS the problem, the adults are much more likely to be nurturing rather than punitive toward the child. Children with Tourette syndrome that are constantly punished for their involuntary symptoms become frustrated, discouraged and often angry. Relations between the school and the child's parents frequently become adversarial instead of collaborative. However when a youngster receives acceptance and assistance at an early age, parent/school relationships are more likely to be positive and the child's self esteem is bolstered rather than damaged. Additionally, by assisting the child at an early age to develop strategies to help manage his symptoms, it increases the likelihood of this child being open to using other strategies as he progresses to middle school and beyond.

The Tourette Syndrome Association thanks you for the opportunity to share our commitment to Professional Development for early learning educators. We have experienced firsthand the positive outcome of professional development and request that the United States Department of Education provide the necessary supports and incentives that will allow Professional Development programs to be available to every early learning professional so that all youngsters receive support from well-informed educators.

42-40 bell boulevard bayside, new york 11361-2820 tel: 718 224 2999, ext.235 fax: 718 279 9596

Date: April 26, 2010

Event: Early Learning Listening Tour – Workforce and Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

I am an Educational Audiologist for Denver Public Schools, and the Audiology Coordinator for the Colorado Department of Education. In these roles, I advocate for the hearing, listening, and learning needs of all of Colorado's children, but especially early learners. Early learners are the most likely of all children to experience reduced hearing sensitivity, under-developed listening skills, and a less than ideal acoustic learning environment. The earlier that hearing and communication problems are prevented and/or identified, the greater the chances for school and life success.

REPRESENTING

I am here today as a concerned resident of the Denver community, a Denver Public Schools educator, a voice on behalf of my fellow Colorado school-based audiologists and speech-language pathologists, and lastly, a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

ISSUES

The title of today's event aptly describes the underlying basis of our educational system. What we are doing here today – "listening and learning" – is what children do every day in school settings everywhere. Think about it: how did each of us learn to speak? By hearing those voices near to us – our mother, father, siblings, family members, and teachers. Hearing and auditory function have significant impact on the development and use of language and communication, which are fundamentals to academic achievement, social well being, and lifetime opportunities.

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists are key professionals within the education system who guard these pillars of learning and literacy – hearing, language and communication. They play

unique roles in supporting early identification and early intervention. We must continue our efforts to value these professionals, and to explore effective recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain such highly qualified experts.

Audiologists

Federal special education legislation has provided the underlying support for audiology services in the schools for more than thirty years (PL94-142, 1975; IDEA 1997; IDEA 2004). Additional education and civil rights legislation (e.g. No Child Left Behind, 2001; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990) require schools to provide all students with access to the educational environment and to incorporate accommodations and modifications for students who need assistance in order to access general education instruction and curricula.

Good hearing is critical for school readiness, and hearing loss is one of the most prevalent childhood disorders and barriers to learning. In Colorado, I am proud to say that every school district and/or BOCES employs or contracts the services of audiologists to facilitate support for students with hearing difficulties within their LEA. In addition to identification of hearing loss, audiologists have specialized knowledge and skills regarding the impact of hearing loss on learning, relevant educational goals and benchmarks, and experience with strategies and technology for support within the classroom for both the student and the teacher. Audiologists regularly participate as collaborative members of early learning teams. Here in DPS and in many districts throughout Colorado, educational audiologists are active members of Child Find teams and IEP teams and help to ensure that children are ready to learn.

Speech-Language Pathologists

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) have extensive education and experience recognizing and understanding individual differences in typical language development and disorders. SLP's are often the first professional to identify the root cause of reading and writing problems through a child's difficulty with spoken language. They are instrumental in designing emergent and early literacy programs in phonological awareness, sound-letter correspondence and other fundamental skills needed for children to learn to read. Effective communication skills are essential for school success and have a strong influence on learning, social interactions and behavior. A great example of how SLPs collaborate with teachers can be witnessed at Carson Elementary School's auditory-oral deaf education preschool (here in DPS). The teacher of the deaf is responsible for delivering the preschool curriculum but has daily, inclusionary support from a speech-language pathologist. The two work together to support the auditory, speech, and language needs of 17 deaf and hard of hearing students. Each of whom have significant hearing and communication barriers.

Challenges to Colorado's Audiologist and SLP Workforce

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists, in addition to other related service providers in special education, as you know, are in critical shortage around the state and country. There has been a concerted effort on behalf of recognizing the importance of recruiting and retaining these professionals to the school community and in Colorado our administrators are working together to address the challenges as well. The challenges are many, but I have personally witnessed most of the following:

- Lack of visibility and understanding about the professions
- Geographical challenges (rural, urban)
- Lack of coordination/collaboration with other decision makers, including administrators
- Lack of funding
- High caseloads and workloads
- Schools unaware of how to recruit, high costs of ads

The Colorado Department of Education in conjunction with several directors of special education throughout the state have formed a committee and are collecting data to better understand the problem and to find solutions. They are particularly exploring the areas of tele-services and distance education for professional development. There have been some promising developments in both areas.

I could tell you countless stories of rural school districts in Colorado who have difficulty hiring and keeping audiologists and speech-language pathologists. I have consulted with several of them and offered suggestions around many of the challenges above. One particular situation resulted in a collaborative solution. Special education directors in two BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) in southwestern Colorado teamed up to provide educational audiology services to their districts. These directors first of all placed a high value on these services and then figured out how to utilize two local audiologists, to share testing equipment, and to navigate the geographic isolation in order to ensure provision of services required by law.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In advocating for audiologists and speech-language pathologists, I am ultimately advocating for a knowledgeable and competent workforce to serve early learners. By reducing the barriers that hearing and

communication disorders bring to this susceptible group, these professionals help our country's kids reach their educational and life potential.

2010 U.S. Department of Education Meetings on Early Learning
Denver, Colorado
April 26, 2010

Comments by: Beth O'Brien, MA, CCC-A, FAAA, Audiologist
Director of Children and Adolescent Clinical Services,
The Center for Hearing, Speech and Language

2010 President of the Colorado Speech, Language, Hearing Association
2010 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: Audiology Advisory Council Representative

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address the U.S. Department of Education this morning. It is my understanding that you are accepting comments on three specific areas related to early learning today: Understanding Preschool – Grade 3 Structures, Workforce and Professional Development and Standards and Assessments.

All three of today's focus areas relate to supporting and facilitating the development of language and therefore also to the building blocks of literacy development. Professionals in the fields of audiology and speech/language pathology are particularly concerned with the health and well-being of young children so that every child's language development will be sufficiently "on track" to meet the milestones in development that form the foundation for later academic learning and for interpersonal relationships. The development of these early skills is crucial for later success in life.

Issue 1: Understanding Preschool – Grade 3 Structures

There is a strong connection between language and literacy. Research has repeatedly documented the strong connection between the development of literacy and oral language skills. Although numerous studies describe the important role of the speech-language pathologist in facilitating reading development and the clear link between hearing and language development, it is still not clear to what extent educators are implementing the critical participation of the SLP and audiologist.

Effective communication skills are essential for literacy acquisition and learning in the primary grades. There is a strong reciprocal connection between an individual's ability to communicate and the successful outcomes of learning. It is critical that children have the opportunity to acquire a rich foundation of language starting in early childhood. When difficulties are noted, it is also critical that a team of well-trained professionals work with the child's parents and all primary care providers to intervene as soon as possible.

Through our newborn hearing screening program, Colorado has endeavored to assure that children with possible hearing impairments are identified early in life so that appropriate interventions can begin as early as possible. However, hearing loss may remain unidentified despite this initial assessment. Some children who do not pass their neonatal screening are lost to follow up assessment. Many children do not even receive additional hearing screening until they enter the school system.

Further, ear infections are the number one reason for "sick" child visits to physicians in early childhood (other than the common cold). Children with ear infections, particularly those with repeated or chronic infections, may have reduced hearing at various points during this critical language learning period and many do not receive the necessary treatment. The increasingly high numbers of unemployed individuals in our current economy have complicated access to timely medical care.

It is the position of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) that speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists play a critical and direct role in the development of literacy for all children. These roles are implemented in collaboration with others who have expertise in the development of written language and vary with settings and experience of those involved. I will speak to the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology individually although best practice indicates that related service professionals and educators must interact as a coordinated team with on-going interaction.

The connections between spoken and written language are well established in that (a) spoken language provides the foundation for the development of reading and writing; (b) spoken and written language have a reciprocal relationship, such that each builds on the other to result in general language and literacy competence, starting early and continuing through childhood into adulthood; (c) children with spoken language problems frequently have difficulty learning to read and write, and children with reading and writing problems frequently have difficulty with spoken language ; and (d) instruction in spoken language can result in growth in written language, and instruction in written language can result in growth in spoken language. Difficulty hearing in the early years can have significant impact on language development and literacy outcomes.

As with difficulty in learning to listen and speak, difficulty in learning to read and write can involve any of the components of language. Problems can occur in the production, comprehension, and awareness of language at the sound, syllable, word, sentence, and discourse levels. Individuals with reading and writing problems also may experience difficulties in using language strategically to communicate, think, and learn. These fundamental connections necessitate that intervention for language disorders target written as well as spoken language needs.

SLPs' knowledge of normal and disordered language acquisition, and their clinical experience in developing individualized programs for children, prepares them to assume a variety of roles related to the development of reading and writing. Appropriate roles and responsibilities for SLPs include, but are not limited to (a) preventing written language problems by fostering language acquisition and emergent literacy; (b) identifying children at risk for reading and writing problems; (c) assessing reading and writing; (d) providing intervention and documenting outcomes for reading and writing; and (e) assuming other roles, such as providing assistance to general education teachers, parents, and students; advocating for effective literacy practices; and advancing the knowledge base.

SLPs and Audiologists are critical team members in enhancing the speech and language skills of all children. They must be involved in the following ways:

- Providing information about developmental milestones so that families and teachers know what to expect at each grade. Helping families and teachers understand the relationship between hearing and language development as well as the distinction between language disorders and language differences for children who speak more than one language.
- Assisting teachers in general education classrooms by working with them to build spoken and written language skills that are essential for literacy and academic learning. The implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) models is increasing across grades in school districts across the country. RTI uses multi-tiered instruction to improve student performance, prevent learning and behavior problems, and more accurately identify those students who may be eligible for special education services.

Audiologists also have critical roles in the language to literacy link. While historically audiologists have been viewed as having key roles only for children with hearing loss, the current educational audiologist serves a more expansive role including:

1. Prevention
 1. Promotion of hearing wellness, as well as the prevention of hearing loss and protection of hearing function
 2. Participation in noise measurements of the acoustic environment to improve accessibility and to promote hearing wellness
2. Identification of individuals with hearing difficulties, including those at the levels of both the peripheral hearing mechanisms and at the central auditory processing level (i.e., the brain level),
3. Assessment of the above conditions,
4. Rehabilitation of the above conditions and
5. Consultation to effect the best possible acoustic input for ALL students

Good communication and literacy skills are fundamental to academic achievement, social well being, and lifetime opportunities. Speaking and understanding are the foundation for reading, writing, academics, and social relationships. Effective communication skills are directly linked to success in major life activities—thinking, learning, literacy, problem-solving, getting along with others. The ability to read and write advances higher-level language and communication in areas such as vocabulary, figurative language, and complex syntax.

RECOMMENDATION:

Involve SLPs and Audiologists in the provision of services to children in the general education setting (under ESEA), including pre-referral and consultative services. These services are in addition to SLP's more traditional role in the provision of special education and related services (under IDEA).

Issue 2: Workforce and Professional Development

There is a growing need for qualified personnel to serve early learners. Availability of qualified personnel is essential to prevent substandard services to early learners and their families. We need effective pre-service and in-service preparation of personnel who work with children in the early years. Qualifications for service providers have been well established by professional organizations, state education agencies, and licensure boards.

The fields of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology both require advanced degrees to assure the level of complex knowledge needed to effectively fulfill the roles as previously discussed. There is a personnel shortage in Colorado (and nationally) and we remain one of two states without licensure for speech-language pathologists.

There is continuing controversy about entry-level positions in these fields. Audiology is now an entry level doctorate profession. Speech-Language Pathology requires a master's degree minimally. Speech-Language Pathology Assistant programs are opening and expanding to allow individuals with bachelor's level college degrees to serve children in the previously described capacities. We are aware that rural areas are often struggling to obtain professionals to fulfill the needs in their communities. It is critical however that SLPA's receive supervision and on-going input from certified SLPs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Highly qualified, culturally competent personnel are needed to serve early learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Such personnel will help to reduce educational disparities among racially and ethnically diverse populations.

2. Paraprofessionals and assistants must be directly supervised by highly qualified personnel. Parameters need to be identified that specify how such personnel should be trained, used, and supervised. States need to develop and adopt rigorous training standards and verifications of competencies.
3. Implement effective recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain highly qualified service providers to serve early learners.

Issue 3: Standards and Assessments

In order to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children, assessments and services must be provided in the child and family's native language. This requirement is consistent with the Department of Education's regulations in 34 CFR part 100, implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that "no person in the United States shall; on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education."

Native language assessment is the only valid way to determine the presence of a speech or language disability. Assessments and evaluations should be conducted in a way that will yield the most accurate information for all children regardless of the language they speak. Assessments and evaluations must a) be conducted by qualified personnel; b) be administered in the child and family's native language (by qualified bilingual personnel or with the assistance of professional interpreters); and c) be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or linguistically discriminatory. Assessment tools that have been developed to assess only English speaking children carry an inherent linguistic bias.

Assessments and evaluations should be administered in a timely manner. Lead agencies need to contact families and set up appointments for the initial interview and/or evaluation following referral.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include provisions (in legislation and regulations) that

- Recognize the importance of providing assessments and evaluations in a child's native language. Language usage in the home environment by the child and family must be considered at all times. Assessment and evaluation tools should be carefully selected to eliminate bias.
- Highlight the right to culturally competent services that are responsive to cultural differences in family values and child rearing practices.
- Include timelines that avoid undue delays in assessments and evaluations.

Thank you.

Resources for additional information:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2001). *Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists With Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents* [Position Statement]. Available from www.asha.org/policy.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2004). *Scope of Practice in Audiology* [Scope of Practice]. Available from www.asha.org/policy



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Mayor's Office for Education and Children

201 W Colfax Ave Dept 1101

Denver, CO 80202

p: 720.913.0900

f: 720.913.0928

www.denvergov.org/education

Talking Points
Department of Education ECE Listening Tour
Presented by: Susan M. Gallo, Ph.D.
Denver, Colorado

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Dr. Susan Gallo and I'm the Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office for Education and Children (MOEC). I oversee Invest in Success, Mayor John Hickenlooper's initiative to increase access to and quality of, early childhood education in Denver. Professional development has been an important part of Invest in Success. Invest in Success has been critical to strengthening Denver's early childhood system in through the following:

- A 21-month convening of business and civic leaders co-chaired by Mayor Hickenlooper. This Mayor's Leadership Team on Early Childhood Education led to a recommendation that was approved in November 2006 by Denver voters and is now the Denver Preschool Program. It is funded through sales tax and provides both tuition credits for preschoolers the year before kindergarten and quality improvement and professional development funding.
- A 3-year Quality Improvement Fund which distributed \$5.65M in quality improvement funds. \$1.35M (24%) went toward professional development.
- The Mayor's Early Childhood Education Commission conducted provider surveys and scans of Denver's professional development sector.

These investments have allowed MOEC to collaborate with many diverse providers with varying levels of professional development. I would like to highlight 3 points in the area of professional development that MOEC has learned that will benefit those supporting culturally and linguistically diverse; and family, friend and neighbor care providers.

1. Return-on-investment is greatest when one uses culturally and linguistically appropriate approaches.

- During MOEC's 2008 funding cycle, 20 providers from small centers or licensed family homes stopped participating in the QI process, facilitated by a traditional quality improvement coach. These providers were all Latino, African-American or monolingual Spanish-speakers. All were committed to professional development.
- MOEC soon learned that providers were having problems with culturally insensitive coaches and preferred to turn away funding and resources rather than continue in an uncomfortable situation.
- In response, MOEC developed a community-based mentoring process. Three to six providers were lead by a mentor and learned about quality, shared experiences, and supported each other in improving quality. Mentors facilitated professional development opportunities within the group and connected providers to culturally competent professional development in the community.
- Providers who participated in the community mentoring program, despite being the same as providers who remained in traditional coaching made greater gains in the area of staff training than

Early Learning Listening Tour - Workforce and Professional Development

Bob Siegel

April 26, 2010 Denver, Colorado

Comments

Due to a myriad of reasons, creating and sustaining the skilled workforce necessary for our early education systems that educate and care for young children in the United States has been a challenge following the growth of our field over the last two generations. Rather than take time to explore the many economic, social, and political reasons why this is true now, let's focus on where we are and what needs to happen in the future.

Currently, we have differing systems operating in the world of child care, Pre-K programs, Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education, nursery school, Early Intervention, and other varieties of preschool programs. Together they serve many of our nation's children from birth through age 5. Since we as a group of professionals better represent the idea of First School in modern day America, moving past the concept of (only a Pre (school) experience, it would behoove us to create a system that contains and utilizes a better planned workforce that is ready to deliver what our children and families will need. The following are some of the current realities I urge you to consider in future planning

In many facets of our industries, there has been a rush to bring in more qualified teachers; an admirable goal in itself. That avalanche of effort has arrived with problems however. One is simply a focus on qualifications instead of looking at effectiveness. One can not simply substitute a credential and assume the skill goes along with it for every individual. Certainly there remains a good argument for this as a whole group and as a part of the solution regarding our early education system. It simply does not infer to each individual. Without taking this into account, we will lose the many highly skilled classroom staff that have been teaching our children for decades. There are concurrent issues of class built into this argument as well. We need a system that recognizes our historical and current group of highly skilled teachers and provides an alternative and equal path for them to remain as highly respected and engaged professionals serving our early childhood community.

One other unplanned (I would hope) consequence of this rush to degreed teachers is the pitting of one-half of our industry against another in competing for the qualified and degreed teachers. The problem is that it's an unfair competition in that each side has very unequal resources. Both child care and preschool programs now end up hiring degreed teachers to meet regulations, upgrade their programs, or attempt to meet quality and accreditation criteria. Within weeks or a few months, they then lose those teachers to either public school or Head Start/EHS programs that offer considerably greater salary and benefits, and often

a shorter school year. How does one compete with that? As a child care colleague of mine recently bemoaned, "I'm tired of being the training ground for our (public) schools". We need a more integrated and fair system of qualifications and rewards that will run across and through all of our early education programs.

In conjunction with that, I urge all of us to focus on providing a high level, both in quality and quantity of training for all our early ed teachers. This must include both pre-service and in-service efforts. In connection with the unequal system I described above, perhaps there needs to be an inverse correlation between training provided for staff and the qualifications each individual arrives with. Another training thought emanates from our knowledge within the child care field. There are three areas that continue to be either under or poorly served by the industry. Those are families needing alternative hour care, infant and toddler care, and finally, children with disabilities or special needs. I have no workforce ideas on the issue of alternative hours. However training can play an integral and essential role in our improved service to both other populations. Teachers now do receive some training on working with infants and toddlers, but the amount is sorely lacking. In many colleges and training programs the main emphasis continues to be on preschoolers, sometimes to the total exclusion of the zero to three population. For working with children with special needs or disabilities, the situation is worse. Between 50 and 70% of ECE teachers have had no training or education in this area at all. Certainly, we can make progress in these areas now and in the future.

Our efforts must be inclusive and exhaustive moving forward. Too many of what we've tried to change recently have been "special projects" where we tried new approaches involving pilot groups, consultation practices, career incentives, and much more. Some were inspired and effective ideas, some were not. Too often, what they had in common was not being real longitudinal and real solutions. In some cases the costs were high and unrealistic, there was no potential for sustainability, or its very uniqueness made these program efforts unable to be replicated. Let's begin with a blank page for our nation and fix this, for all of America's children in each and every First School.

Bob Siegel
National Director of Children's Services
Easter Seals Headquarters
233 S. Wacker Drive, #2400
Chicago, IL 60606
bsiegel@easterseals.com
312-551-7139

Early Learning Listening Tour

Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Amanda Moreno, and I am the Associate Director of the Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy at the University of Denver. I am here to represent the *earliest* segment of the early learning population, that is, infants and toddlers and those who care for and educate them. As someone invested in the unique safety, nurturance, and educational needs of infants and toddlers, I was very grateful to see that this Listening Tour specified an age-range of birth through eight. However, I also know that in many initiatives starting at birth, the quality and professional development needs that uniquely impact the birth through three group are still often an afterthought, if thought of at all. Thus, I am here today to try and clarify why we cannot just hope that infant-toddler programs will ride the coattails of initiatives for older children.

A perfect storm is brewing, due to the presence of at least four factors: 1) population statistics from 2002-2007 indicate that 73% of children birth-to-three have a primary child care arrangement that is not exclusively parental. 2) Now decades-old and widely accepted research indicates that brain development in the birth-to-three period is the highest-potential, highest-risk, most rapid, and most experientially-determined that it will be in the entire human life span. 3) Infant-toddler care is the least available, most expensive, and lowest quality care available. I am a parent too, and had an infant in full-time center-based day care not too long ago, and I can tell you that despite my privileged status, the choices in my commute area ranged from “no way” to just passable. 4) Federal sources of research funding for investigator-initiated innovations in this age-range are unacceptably unavailable. The Institute for Education Sciences, for example, defines early learning as ages 3-5. Research in the birth-to-three range is limited to Special Education or children explicitly at-risk for such conditions. This sends the message that infant-toddler care is not education, and disincentivizes well-trained researchers from pursuing these critical questions. It is not by accident that if you check the peer-reviewed literature, randomized controlled trials and other rigorous methodologies on infant-toddler educational enhancements and professional development approaches are quite literally, non-existent.

But if care at this level is merely a “parent replacement”, why do we need professional development at all - isn't it good enough to hire sensitive individuals with nurturing dispositions? Even if we had a field teeming with brilliant baby whisperers, that would still not be enough. Take, for example, the fact that child care operates with *groups* of children. But the brains of children at this age are really not designed to pick up information in the absence of direct eye contact with the deliverer – they just won't know it was meant for them. For this reason, the “primary care” model, in which a specific caregiver is assigned a very small number of specific children, should be as much of a given in best practice as low ratios. But if Directors and caregivers don't understand this underlying logic about brain development, they won't be passionate about practicing primary care, and they won't have a common language to discuss it competently with parents and other stakeholders.

Thankfully, Colorado is a state that recognizes these disconnects and has invested in substantial efforts to try and correct them. Most notably, we have the statewide “Enhancing Quality in Infant-Toddler” Care Initiative. On a more limited scope, my colleagues at Clayton Early Learning and I have developed and implemented “Learning through Relating”, a combined infant-toddler curriculum and professional development system, with initially encouraging evidence. But these efforts need further support and systematic evaluations if they are to meet their promise.

In an improved system of infant-toddler professional development, college courses are necessary, but not sufficient. Practicum experiences are non-negotiable, but not very practical if there are no model settings in which to intern. Cultural and linguistic *diversity* in staff is important, but cultural and linguistic *competency* in ALL staff should be a given. Performance-based standards should drive professional pathways and compensation levels, but we can't defend standards as evidence-based if no entity will own the mission of funding the research. Like it or not, infants and toddlers are increasingly in the care of professionals, and the time has come for a credible alignment between what we *know* about children in this high-risk, high-potential period, and what we *do* with them.



Remarks for USDE-ACF Listening Tour
Monday April 26, 2010, Denver CO

1. I'm Gerrit Westervelt, and I serve as Executive Director of the BUILD Initiative, a project created by a group of foundations to support the development of comprehensive early childhood systems in states. We work intensively in 8 states and less intensively in dozens of others.
2. Thank you so much for giving all of us this opportunity to talk with you about workforce and professional development and the many ways in which the USDE and the ACF can partner with states and communities to ensure that those caring for and educating young children have the skills and qualifications they need.
3. I also want to express the profound gratitude that many of us feel for your strong leadership on behalf of young children – on ARRA, on Title I, Head Start, standards-driven reforms in both systems, and in many other areas, your leadership is making a difference – and you are setting a wonderful example of collaboration at the highest levels.
4. My core message to you today is this: to urge you to continue to push for – and support financially – systemic changes across ECE, health, mental health, special needs and family support. Piecemeal approaches to Workforce and Professional Development, or anything else – won't work as well, or be as sustainable, as they will if they are done within the context of a larger systemic vision and plan for reform.
5. In the years that the BUILD Initiative has been working in states, we've learned a few lessons that I hope can inform your thinking and your work. Let me briefly outline a few of them:
 - a. **Incentives matter** a great deal: USDE and ACF should continue to link federal money to quality standards – standards for programs such as QRIS, standards for caregivers and teachers, and standards for children's development. Keep pushing for higher quality!
 - b. **QRIS**, for example, will drive more private as well as public money into ECE, and promote alignment of professional development and program standards. The Child Care Bureau has increased its focus on QRIS, and we hope that continues. BUILD and Smart Start nationally, along with NCCIC and other partners, have created the QRIS National Learning Network, a collaborative project to provide TA and learning opportunities to states to refine and expand QRIS.
 - c. Another step you can take is to give states **more flexibility if they improve the quality** of teachers and programs. Enhance states' ability to use federal funding in innovative ways to support the goals you've established. If you tie a greater share of federal ECE

and education dollars to quality, flexibility, and systemic change, you will galvanize state action and really move the needle on vulnerable children getting access to the best teachers and the best programs.

- d. As you do this, please continue to listen very carefully to what state leaders are telling you about which incentives will work. So far this administration has struck a pretty good **balance between flexibility and having strings attached**, and I hope you keep up the good work.
- e. Use your authority to create greater **incentives for K-12 and Higher Ed systems** to partner with early childhood organizations and programs. We need to engage K-12 and higher ed more fully in the early childhood enterprise. There is enormous untapped leverage in those two large systems, and the two departments need to figure out how to reward school districts, state education agencies and higher education systems for aligning what they do with ECE reform efforts.
- f. Finally, I think the federal government must take a more active role in helping states to plan and implement strategies to **serve culturally and linguistically diverse children and families**. Leaders in all of the eight BUILD states, and many others, are thinking and talking about the fact that their workforce doesn't look like many of the children they serve, and in too many cases does not have the skills and tools they need to serve diverse families well. They're talking and thinking, but they aren't sure what to DO about it. Use your bully pulpit, and ask states how you can help them on this front. BUILD and its foundation partners would be happy to work with you to promote the creation of culturally responsive early childhood systems.

This is a very exciting time in early childhood – and your leadership and support for comprehensive systems change and high quality is making a huge difference. Thank you for stepping up, and let us know how we can help.

Gerrit Westervelt

The BUILD Initiative

gwestervelt@buildinitiative.org

303-929-5011

Big Ranch



New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children
2201 Buena Vista, SE; Suite 424
Albuquerque, NM 87106
505-243-5437 [kids] (phone); 505-242-7310 (fax)
info@nmaeyc.org

Early Learning Workforce and Professional Development in NM

- Population of NM 1.8 million, with 125,000 children birth-to-five
- 54% of children birth-to-five live in families with low or poverty level income
- 54% high school graduation rate
- 63% of children birth-to-five live in families where all parents work
- Approximately: 680 licensed centers; 400 licensed homes; 4,500 registered homes.

STRONG STEADY ACCOMPLISHMENTS within PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

2004: T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarships began with 23 T.E.A.C.H. scholars

2004 through 2010: Over 800 T.E.A.C.H. scholars in these six years

FY 2009: Turnover among T.E.A.C.H. Scholars – 5%. 4,971 credit hours earned.

Degrees awarded since 2004:

Associates Degrees (44)	Masters Degrees (15)
Bachelor's Degrees (18)	Alternative Licensure (4)

CHALLENGES:

Approximately 20,000 teachers in birth-to-five programs in NM – 800 is 4% of 20,000

Turnover: 30 to 40%

State funds for early childhood have been cut.

Entry level workforce: majority with high school diploma / no college courses

NECESSARY:

Dedicated funding stream for professional development and compensation of the early childhood workforce

INNOVATIONS in NM – need support

SPANISH SPEAKING COHORTS: The two largest community colleges are offering early childhood courses in Spanish – to support the development of qualified teachers who can speak the home languages of the children

SMALL INCENTIVES PILOT (WAGES-TYPE) PROJECT for teachers of infants and toddlers in Santa Fe county funded by a private foundation

PROJECT PLAY (Play and Language Attunement for Young Children) providing mentoring, training and education and support for teachers of infants and toddlers.

Comments for the Early Learning Listening and Learning Tour

April 26, 2010

Dr. Virginia Maloney

Director, Marsico Institute for Early Learning and Literacy

Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

gmaloney@du.edu

My name is Virginia Maloney, and I am the former Dean of the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver and current Director of the Marsico Institute for Early learning and Literacy at the University. I am also serving as Chair of a recently established state task force charged with the development of a three year plan to guide the improvement of the professional development system for early learning professionals in Colorado.

I'd like to take my five minutes today to share with you how Colorado is approaching the task of improving the preparation and ongoing development of early learning professionals, and highlight the challenges we face in doing this work. I'll conclude by highlighting ways in which the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services could help support states in our efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of the people teaching and caring for our youngest and most vulnerable children.

Shortly after taking office, Governor Bill Ritter established a P-20 Council in the state, which he charged with the task of developing recommendations for improving education in our state from a child's earliest years through post-secondary education. One of the subcommittees of this Council was the P-3 Subcommittee, which focused on developing recommendations for improving education for children from birth through age eight. Last year, the P-3 Subcommittee formed a special Task Force to develop a three year plan to strengthen the professional preparation and development of the early childhood workforce. Members of the Task Force include representatives from Colorado's community colleges and four year teacher preparation programs, early childhood program directors and teachers, state agency representatives, Head Start and early Head Start agencies, Teach for America, and many other not for profit agencies dedicated to early childhood. We are truly an interagency effort. Because we believe that early childhood encompasses birth through age eight, we are addressing the needs of preparing and supporting professionals who work with children across this age range. This task force has devoted countless man and woman hours to the work of evaluating Colorado's current system (or lack of system in certain instances) for the professional development of EC teachers and leaders, developing a vision for the future, and establishing an achievable but ambitious plan for improving our current system. Our

goal is to present recommendations for a plan to Colorado's newly established Early Childhood Leadership Commission—Colorado's early childhood advisory council—by early July.

I don't think I'd be exaggerating by saying that all of us on the Task Force have been challenged to fully understand our current system for professional development. While the system for preparing, credentialing, and supporting the ongoing development of K-12 teachers and leaders is relatively well organized and straightforward, the system for preparing and credentialing Pre-K teachers and leaders is fragmented and confusing to navigate for individuals interested in working with very young children. Because early learning services are offered by multiple providers, including public school providers, private for profit providers, private not for profit providers, and Head Start, multiple requirements for teacher qualifications exist, ranging from little or no preparation to Head Start's new requirements for Associate's and Bachelor's degrees, to requirements from public schools for teacher's licenses meeting state standards. We have found wide variation among our early childhood programs at the state's community colleges, as well as wide variation among the content and requirements for early childhood teaching endorsements at Colorado's 4 year institutions. Ongoing professional development activities are offered by a dizzying array of providers, and funding for these efforts comes from an equally diverse group of funding sources. While Colorado has many high quality and innovative efforts underway to improve the skills and abilities of our early learning professionals, these efforts are piecemeal, often inaccessible to professionals in remote parts of our state, and uncoordinated with one another.

Our task force will be putting forward several major recommendations for improving our current system, while building on the very good work done by many organizations to date. We hope to develop a new set of competency or performance based standards that can provide guidance to both the preservice preparation of teachers and leaders and their ongoing professional development. We hope to create a state level system for organizing the variety of sources of financial aid for students interested in improving their skills in early childhood, so that individuals can easily understand what support is available to them and how to access it. We hope to fully align requirements between our two year higher education institutions and four year institutions, and align state teacher licensure requirements with requirements for EC program licensure and our quality rating and improvement system. We hope to develop a state wide registry for early childhood professionals to help us track our workforce, identify needs for further training, improve the diversity of individuals entering the field of early childhood, and eventually conduct research on what contributes to teaching effectiveness. We have high hopes, but we will need help to reach our goals.

Colorado is not alone in trying to tackle the job of improving the quality and effectiveness of the early learning workforce. Many other states face the same challenges we face in trying to make sense of and improve our current fragmented nonsystem for preparing and supporting early childhood teachers and leaders. As we work across agencies and across domains at the state level, we would like to advocate for a similar effort at the federal level. We would like to see the federal agencies who oversee national programs establish a collaborative birth to age eight agenda for children—a coordinated agenda to reduce duplicative and sometimes conflicting requirements for program standards and staff credentials, an agenda to support research that would help us identify the characteristics of effective teachers and the best programs to prepare and develop them, an agenda that would coordinate and enhance funding

streams for professional development and quality improvement initiatives; an agenda that would validate the idea that individuals who work with very young children need to be well trained, well supported, and fairly compensated professionals. We ask that federal agencies work together to forward a national agenda of improving services for children, birth through age eight, making young children a national priority as promised by President Obama. There are many opportunities for federal collaboration as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Workforce Reinvestment Act are reauthorized, the next round of the Race to the Top applications are reviewed, and the next round of Child Care Development Block grants are awarded. Interagency coordination of programs at the federal level would greatly simplify the work of state level interagency efforts, and enable us to focus on improving the content and delivery of professional development efforts rather than on addressing regulatory and policy barriers to coordination.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We look forward to joining our state and local initiatives with federal efforts to improve outcomes for very young children.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you today.

My name is Sheila Groneman. I am the Director of the Summit County Head Start program and also the President of the Colorado Head Start Association. The Colorado Head Start Association (CHSA) supports the work of over 40 Colorado Head Start programs serving over 12,000 children & their families. I would like to first take a moment to recognize that the presence of HHS and DOE here together today demonstrates the national consensus that has been building around the importance and impact of early education.

As you know Head Start programs have a long history of promoting school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of quality educational, health, nutritional, social and other services by engaging parents in their children's learning and in their child's early childhood program. Head Start has long recognized important school readiness outcomes also include children's motivation and engagement in learning. Behaviors and attitudes that show how children learn and not just what children learn have been present and incorporated approaches to learning have been a component of the Head Start Child Outcome Framework since 2001.

To give you a quick idea of the early childhood landscape across Colorado for Head Start, programs are working with many local partners - child care, local school districts including the state funded pre-K programs (Colorado Preschool Program – Colorado is one of eleven states that uses the state school funding formula for pre-K), early childhood councils, and local colleges. Head Start also plays an important role in creating a more integrated, effective and aligned early childhood system at the state level. Head Start partners with and participates in Colorado's P-3 Sub-committee work, the Colorado Association of School Board early childhood work, state early childhood partnerships, and most recently with the state Head Start Collaboration Office and the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (Colorado's Early Learning Advisory Council). Under the strong leadership of Elizabeth Groginsky, our HSSC Director, early childhood and Head Start also has a significant presence in Colorado recent Race to the Top application and will participate in NAEYC's National Summit for state professional development teams.

Our lives revolve around teaching, managing, parenting, and coping with daily stresses. We see increasingly diverse backgrounds of Head Start children and many other children in our early childhood programs and this is presenting daunting challenges for all educators. The NCLB Act calls for quality and accountability for all children in our schools – if all means all then accommodating those who speak a language other than English is one of the greatest challenges educators face today.

Today more than ever I feel a sense of urgency about improving conditions for Head start children and families, particularly those who face the challenges of poverty, those who speak a language other than English or those of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Our teachers and family workers show up every day and work tirelessly on behalf of young children. We need to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to implement effective practices and well-researched strategies and that they are compensated for these professional expectations. We need sufficient resource to ensure early childhood environments meet high quality standards t support children’s development and can serve all of the children who need to be involved in quality early learning experiences.

One of the most reliable ways I have encountered to tap into their existing collective knowledge and experience is in our Professional Learning Communities – coming together to consider the environment we create, the strategies we use, and the results we need for our children to grow and learn – focusing on what truly matters. As we work together we are able to discover greater wisdom. It is important to ensure teachers have authority over the work they do.

We know how to work together in healthy and productive ways yet what I often see is teachers and workers feeling more polarized, more overwhelmed, more easily frustrated by the increasing challenges that confront them and us. More and more teachers want to pay attention to the work just in front of them or focus only on the work that can be done on their own – with that we will lose courage and capacity.

In the work with their staffs Colorado Head Start programs are engaged in implementing a variety of quality initiatives to promote and improve positive,

sustained child outcomes for the children we serve. We recognize that a key factor in promoting positive outcomes for our young children is the dynamic interaction between a child and the caring adults in their lives. Programs are focused on increasing exposure to effective learning experiences in both the program and at home by raising the bar for teaching practices and family engagement. A snapshot of what many Head Start programs are doing includes:

- Implementing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System
- Developing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to examine practices
- Participating in state longitudinal child assessment and data collection system with Colorado Department of Education – Results Matter
- Implementing The Incredible Years program for classroom management and child skills training, and parent leader training (Summit County Head Start Program results attached)
- Implementing the CSEFEL Pyramid Model
- Credentialing Family Specialists – Family Development Credential offered through the state partner Colorado State University (Note: Workforce goes beyond the teacher – Family Service Workers, Early Childhood Special Educator for children with disabilities, Mental Health Consultants)
- Parent Engagement opportunities - Incredible Years parent sessions, Family Literacy, Parent Leadership Institute
- Rating classrooms through state-wide quality rating system with Qualistar

The challenge today in these times of daunting complexity is to find new and innovative ways to function and teach – to embrace our future and let go of the past.

Some challenges to address at the Federal level could include:

- Use of Title 1 funds to expand access to and support of quality pre-K (Federal policy could incentivize use with additional dollars if used)
- Aligning standards (new standards in Colorado include preschool) curriculum and instructional strategies to provide seamless early learning experience pre-k through 3rd grade.
- Common planning time to align vertically, horizontally, and temporally across all settings pre-k to 3rd grade.

The most challenging and important issues of our day are a subtle blend of science and society. Strategies and solutions will require integrated thinking and approached with social, political, cultural, and economic understanding. No doubt the policy challenge is large but boundaries are beginning to fade. Your dual presence together here today is testimony to that.

In the face of this complexity and change Head Start will remain constant. We don't put boundaries or limits around children and families. We continue to be more comprehensive, more responsive than most. Head Start is and will continue to be an integral component of a continuum of high-quality early care and education spanning from birth to age eight here in Colorado. We can help to lead the change helping to create better lives for all young children and their families.

I applaud you in your attempt here and across the county to learn more than you know now; and

Thank you for the opportunity to be one of the many voices to speak and thank you for your time and commitment to listen.

I am an Early Childhood Professor at a Community College. We need support for our students in the field to continue their education.

1. Family childcare providers need money to pay substitutes so that they can come to classes. Family Childcare Providers often work alone and long hours. They are not free to leave for classes.

2. The minimal standards for working in childcare need to be raised. In our state you can work with children having taken only an introductory course. They need to have Child Development, Guidance, and Children with Exceptionalities at the very least.

3. We need monies to fund developmental classes for our students. Most come to us needing those classes.

4. The salaries in childcare are dreadfully inadequate. The ability to offer financial incentives to continue education and professional development would help.

Peggy Johnson

Peggy Johnson
Associate Professor
Early Childhood Program
Sandhills Community College
3395 Airport Road
Pinehurst, NC 28374
(910) 693-2063

To the Office of the Secretary:

For the past thirty three years I have owned and taught in a child care/pre-school setting. The advances made in the last ten years in our state have been wonderful but I am not sure that other states are keeping up. The educational background of edu-caregivers in NC has steadily grown with the help of our state and now all early care teachers have some college and are being supported financially to encourage them to earn a degree. The danger of not doing this nationwide is serious. The lack of education of the caregivers who not only educate children but also support families, can cause a serious breeding ground for children who are not given the help that they need to become productive citizens. The opposite of productive citizens are not only non-productive ones who must be supported by the entire society but also those who become destructive citizens causing even more cost to the society in the form of incarceration, rehabilitation and remediation.

The ability of a society to provide the supports necessary for children to thrive while growing up and not just endure or survive is the mark of a mature and peaceful society. We must require that early childhood edu-caregivers are highly trained and that the numbers of children in groups is small enough to allow the edu-caregiver to do a proper job. Even the most highly trained teacher cannot do her job when there are too many children in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Isabel W. Taylor

Owner/Director

Bell's School, for people under six

31 Park Ridge Dr.

Fletcher, NC 28732

828-654-0664

bellsschoolforpe@bellsouth.net

Building Integrated Professional Development Systems in Early Childhood

Recommendations for States

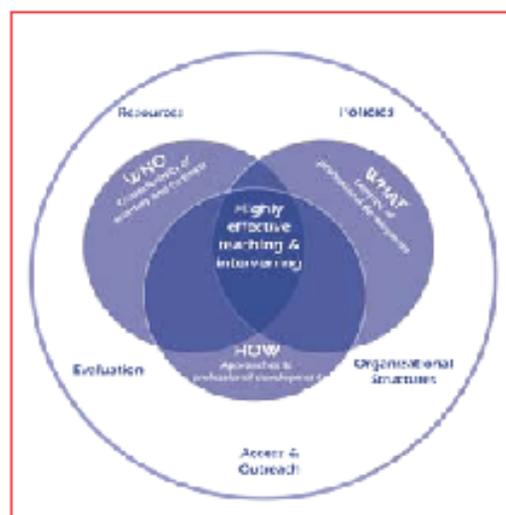
The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) is working with states to ensure that early childhood practitioners are highly effective in supporting the development and learning of every young child, including those with diverse abilities. The centerpiece of this effort involves supporting a state-level planning process that leads to a single, integrated professional development system that incorporates professional learning resources and opportunities across all sectors of early childhood (e.g., child care, Head Start, early intervention, early childhood special education, and public pre-kindergarten). The following recommendations grow out of this work and are relevant for other state-level efforts, particularly those related to federal initiatives reflecting the recent emphasis on early childhood cross-sector collaboration and planning to improve early childhood programs and services.

Recommendation 1.

States should create structures that support an integrated, cross-sector professional development system.

The cornerstone of these structures are heavyweight state-level teams—people who represent the various early childhood sectors who have the influence and authority to transcend traditional boundaries to create new ways of working together and innovating to transform professional development.

Figure 1
A Conceptual Framework for Professional Development in Early Childhood



Recommendation 2.

States should reach consensus on a single definition of professional development that emphasizes both the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions and the application of this knowledge in practice.

The NPDCI conceptual framework and definition of professional development (see Endnote) provides a common language around professional development issues that helps state planners frame the problem and generate effective solutions. (See Figure 1: A conceptual framework for professional development in early childhood)

Specifically, the *who*, *what*, and *how* framework helps planners identify pressing challenges related to creating cross-sector systems of professional development, to categorize these as either *infrastructure* issues (outer circle) or *core* to delivering professional development in terms of evidence-based content and methods (inner circle), and to begin to make connections across these dimensions.

Recommendation 3.

States should identify evidence-based practices that promote the development and learning of every child and make these practices the centerpiece of their professional development system.

Currently, too many professional development efforts in early childhood focus on general knowledge rather than the specific instructional and intervention approaches that respond to the most pressing needs of young diverse learners and their families. An evidence-based approach to professional development requires that state planners: (1) determine which educational programs and practices have been validated through research and found to be effective for use with young children with diverse learning characteristics; and (2) support practitioners in using research, along with other sources of evidence (including professional and family wisdom and values, and assessment information that practitioners themselves gather) to make sound decisions in practice.

Endnote

Professional development is defined as “facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice” (Buysse, Winton, & Rous, 2009; National Professional Development Center on Inclusion [NPDCI], 2008, p. 3). The key components of the PD definition include: (1) characteristics and contexts of the learners and the children they serve and the PD providers (the *who*), (2) the content focus of professional development (*what* professionals should know and be able to do), and (3) the organization and facilitation of learning experiences (the *how*, or the methods and approaches used to implement PD).

Resources

The Big Picture Planning Guide:

Building Cross-Sector Professional Development Systems in Early Childhood

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/files/NPDCI-ProfessionalDevelopment-03-04-08.pdf/view>

What Do We Mean by Professional Development in the Early Childhood Field?

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/files/NPDCI-ProfessionalDevelopment-03-04-08.pdf/view>

Buysse, V., Winton, P. J., & Rous, B. (2009). *Reaching consensus on a definition of professional development for the early childhood field. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 28* (4), 235-243.

CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect>

Suggested citation: National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. (2010). *Building integrated professional development systems in early childhood: Recommendations for states*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author.

This work was supported by the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion funded through a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The content is that of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding agency. Permission to copy, adapt, disseminate, or otherwise use information from this document for educational purposes is granted, provided that appropriate credit is given.

FPG is one of the nation's oldest multidisciplinary centers devoted to the study of children and families. Our mission is to cultivate and share knowledge that enhances child development and family well being.

FPG.

Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.