

Development of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Services System:
Selected Information for the Journey
January 22, 2007

During the past decade, there has been an ever-increasing awareness of the long-term impact of the experiences a child has during his first years of life. Throughout the nation, this awareness has led to an unprecedented interest in plans to improve and coordinate early childhood services. The intended outcome is the creation of effective early care and education system at local, state and national levels. Foundations, state and national organizations, and government entities at all levels are now actively engaged in planning efforts to (1) determine the key elements of an effective system, (2) “de-fragment” existing services, and (3) identify a holistic approach to service implementation.

This document reflects information derived from a rather extensive internet search of “early childhood service systems” across the country. As with any such web search, one is constantly forced to choose among several divergent paths, as any one link leads to several more. At first, the information seems overwhelming. But as the journey continues, consistent patterns begin to emerge and landmarks (i.e., leaders in the field, key programming issues and common themes) become apparent.

The challenge – as in the “re-telling” of any trip – is to sort through the myriad of information (experiences) one has encountered along the journey and select the highlights that are of most use (and of greatest interest) to the intended audience. This reviewer has chosen to present information in the following categories (FACTS – current status of Birth to Five services, a Sampling of Quality Indicators of Programs and Key Functions/Components of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Services System, National and Regional Groups Housing Information Related to Development of Comprehensive Early Childhood Systems, Recommended Articles, Sampling of State Initiatives, and Summary. This approach will hopefully provide those interested in continuing the journey with a helpful course guide!

A FEW FACTS (Current Status of Birth to Five Services):

- Twenty-one (21) states have formed high level Children’s Cabinets or other overarching mechanisms to ensure coordination between child care and Early Education Systems. (ZEROTOTHREE Policy Report 7/24/06)
- In 2001 – 2002, 40 states had some form of state sponsored Pre-kindergarten. Thirty-eight (38) states have one or more Pre-kindergarten programs in at least one school. Thirty-eight (38) states have one or more Pre-kindergarten initiatives. Twenty-nine (29) states allow private providers in Head Start to delivery Pre-kindergarten services as well. (GAO Report on Four Selected States, 9/04)
- More and more states are moving toward Universal Pre-kindergarten (Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma and Wisconsin). Pre-k services are mostly limited to four year olds and operate part-day. Only four states currently offer universal Pre-k. (Child Care Exchange, May/June ’06)

- In Oklahoma, 95% of school districts offer Pre-kindergarten, enrolling nearly 70% of four olds. Georgia offers Pre-k to all four year olds, with 55% attending Pre-kindergarten. In 2004 – 2005, 900,000 children were attending state-funded Pre-kindergarten programs. (Committee for Economic Development, “Financing Public Preschool Programs: Current Practices and Future Possibilities. 2006.)
- State funding for early childhood programs grew 7.5% between 2001 – 2002 and 2004 – 2005, but budget shortages resulted in enrollment decline in some states. (NIEER, Early Childhood Report, 2006)
- Nationwide, only 3% of children and families eligible for Early Head Start are receiving EHS services.
- By 2004, there were at least 40 state level Early Childhood Planning groups for Early Childhood career development.
- Forty-two (42) states have early-learning standards aligned with the academic expectations for elementary schools and 13 states have a formal definition of school readiness. (EPE Research Center, www.edweek.org)
- The 2005 State Preschool Yearbook (Annual Report) shows that state funded programs increased enrollment but state spending per child is down. (www.nieer.org/yearbook/)
- Results of a study conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (2005) found that children attending state-funded pre-k programs in the five states studied made significant gains regardless of ethnic background or economic circumstances. (NIEER: Hot Topic: The Effects of State Pre-kindergarten Programs on Young Children’s School Readiness in Five States.)

SAMPLING OF QUALITY INDICATORS of PROGRAMS and KEY FUNCTIONS/COMPONENTS of a COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SYSTEM

A number of organizations have identified quality indicators deemed essential to the implementation of an early childhood services system and quality programs within that system. Some lists reflect the target population of the organization’s mission. They are listed below as a frame of reference for the goals and objectives identified in the Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Plan as well as those identified by Visioneering Wichita’s Birth to K Strategic Alliance.

Ten Quality Benchmarks – National Association for the Education of Young Children.

1. Early Learning Standards
2. Lead Teacher/bachelor degrees
3. Teachers – pre-k training
4. Assistant teacher certificates
5. Teacher in-service
6. Maximum Class size
7. Staff/child ratios
8. Screening, referral and support services
9. Meals provided one time per day
10. Site visits

Developmental Assets for Children Ages 3 – 5

(Developmental assets - positive experiences young children receive from the world around them). The Search Institute is an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge and resources to promote healthy children, youth and communities. This list can be accessed at the Search Institute website (www.search-institute.org).

Indicators of Success – Quality Counts 2007: From Cradle to Career, Connecting American Education from Birth to Adulthood. State findings are available through the website (www.edweek.org/go/qc07).

1. % of children in families that earn decent wages (above 200% fed. Poverty index)
2. % of children with at least one parent with post-secondary degree
3. % of children with one parent working full-time
4. % of children whose parents are fluent English speakers
5. % of three and four year olds who are enrolled in preschool
6. % of eligible children who are enrolled in kindergarten

Eight Essential Components of an Early Care and Education System (Not By Chance, Kagan and Cohen, referenced in “Back to Basics: Essential Components of an American Early Care and Education System, Columbia University, Sept. 2001)

1. Quality programs
2. Child-based, results-driven system
3. Parent and family engagement
4. Individual licensing
5. Professional preparation
6. Program licensing
7. Funding and financing
8. Governance, planning and accountability

Quality Indicators – National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. (www.nccip.org)

1. Teacher-child interactions
2. Child-focused teaching
3. Content-driven classroom instruction

Elements of High Quality Infant and Toddler Child Care - ZERO TO THREE Policy Center (www.ZEROTOTHREE.org)

1. A safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate environment
2. Attentive, well-prepared caregivers who provide consistent, reliable and loving care
3. Small group sizes and high staff to child ratios
4. Culturally and linguistically responsive interactions between provider/child and provider/parent

Program Strategies for Prevention – Early Intervention – (“Babies are our Business, Families are our Focus. Santa Barbara, CA.)

1. Relationship based
2. Family centered
3. Natural environments
4. Transdisciplinary team
5. Infant/Preschool/Family Mental Health
6. System of Care Continuum

Five Essential Functions of Early Childhood System (Qualitative 2000 Initiative 1993)

1. Collaborative planning and cross-system linkages
2. Consumer and public engagement
3. Quality assurance
4. Professional and work force development
5. Financing

Four Parts of Comprehensive Early Childhood Systems Plan (Rhode Island)

1. Parent education and family support
2. Early care and education
3. Medical homes
4. Social and emotional support

Components of Early Childhood System – Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

1. Infrastructure
2. Communication
3. Innovation
4. Evaluation
5. Accountability

Essential Elements of Public/Private Partnerships in Early Care and Education Systems (National Child Care Association, Conyers, GA.)

1. Parent choice
2. Deliberate planning
3. Continued collaboration
4. Full continuum of services
5. Public/private partnership
6. Accountability

Components of Early Childhood Mental Health System – New York

1. Identification (clinics)
2. Training and treatment (centers)
3. Increased capacity (waivers)
4. Rural access (telepsychiatry)

Focus Areas of State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grants (ECCS) from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (all states)

1. Health insurance and medical and dental home
2. Mental health and social/emotional development
3. Early care and education
4. Parent education
5. Family support

Features Connecting Programs Across a State - ZERO to THREE Policy Center:
Birth to 5 and Beyond: A Growing Movement in Early Education:
(www.zerotothree.org/policy)

1. Supportive government structure
2. Public-private partnerships
3. Professional development
4. Quality rating systems
5. Early learning guidelines
6. Pre-kindergarten funding
7. Infant and toddler initiatives

Findings of four State Study – Building Bridges from Pre-k to Infants and
Toddlers – Recommendations: www.zerotothree.org/policy

1. Provide states with information and technical assistance about promising linkages between Pre-k and IT policies (i.e., GA, IL)
2. Develop IT policy agenda and effective communication (i.e., Better Baby Care Campaign, Zero to Three)
3. Encourage cohesive efforts to ensure system building leadership and development of outcomes across program types (i.e., BUILD initiative)
4. Conduct research on how to structure policies and ensure continuity from birth to five.

United System Framework Requirements (Community Institute for Early
Childhood , University of Memphis, Memphis, TN). The Framework must:

1. Generate, leverage and maximize resources
2. Have strong leadership
3. Be successfully implemented
4. Address fundamental system components and issues
5. Work well with other strategies in a systemic approach, and
6. Have potential for sustainability.

**NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GROUPS HOUSING INFORMATION RELATED
TO DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS**

Government Accounting Office (GAO): Pre-Kindergarten – Four Selected States Expanded Access by Relying on Schools and Existing Providers of Early Education and Care to Provide Services: Given the level of investment and the variety of preschool programs receiving federal and state support, there was a concern about whether these programs were well-coordinated. There was also interest

in documenting lessons learned from implementing broadly based state programs. The GAO was therefore asked to review programs in selected states that had expanded their pre-kindergarten efforts. Four states were selected (Georgia, New York, New Jersey and Oklahoma). States chosen had similar features in that each offered services at no direct cost to parents and emphasized preparing children for school and preventing failure in the early grades. At the same time, program designs were unique to each state.

A report detailing findings was submitted to Congressional Requesters in 2004. The report contents provide useful information in detailing each state's approach to early childhood services as well as the relative strengths and limitations of each program/system. The full report is available through the following website (www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-852).

Build (Strong Foundations for our Youngest Children) Initiative: This is a multi-state partnership that helps states construct a coordinated system of programs, policies and services that responds to the needs of young children and their families. Build serves as a catalyst for change and is a national resource for early learning. The Build Initiative currently funds work in five states – Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania. These states were selected based on a number of criteria, including their readiness to construct comprehensive systems for early care and education.

The Build Initiative is also facilitating opportunities for development of EC systems in four other “learning community” states – Hawaii, Michigan, Oklahoma and Washington. The web site (www.buildinitiative.org) provides a wealth of information related to early childhood systems, and is an excellent resource for pursuing any number of related topics. One particularly relevant document is titled Building Connections: Six State Case Studies of Early Childhood System Building at the State and Local Levels. States and their programs which are highlighted in this paper are:

- Colorado Consolidated Child Care pilots
- Iowa Community Empowerment Initiative
- Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative
- North Carolina Smart Start
- Smart Start Oklahoma, and
- Vermont Building Bright Futures

The documents outlines the work of each state in the following sections: Background, State Structure and Role, Local Structure and Role, Communication, Technical Assistance, Advocacy, Successes, and Lessons (learned). (See the summary section of this document (Development of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Service System: Selected Information for the Journey) for a listing of common themes.) Descriptions on what has worked elsewhere can also be found at www.pathwaystooutcomes.org.

SECPTAN (State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network): SECPTAN (www.finebynine.org) is a network of experts (researchers, consultants, policy makers and practitioners) on early childhood issues available to help state decision makers (governors and their staff, legislators and their staff and agency heads) in the seventeen-state School Readiness Initiative design early childhood policies. SECPTAN provides current information about early childhood policy initiatives and

assists policy makers in assessing the best available evidence and information about effective policies and practices in early childhood. SECPTAN also produces more general publications for the field. The network is managed by the Child and Family Policy Center, based in Des Moines, IA (www.cfpiowa.org).

Many of the publications can be directly accessed on the SECPTAN website. Publications reviewed for this document include Up and Running: A Compendium of Multi-Site Early Childhood Initiatives, Second Edition, July 2004, and Seven Things Legislators (and Other Policy Makers) Need to Know about School Readiness. Other publications of interest include Building an Early Learning System: The ABCs of Planning and Governance Structures, and Financing School Readiness Strategies: An Annotated Bibliography.

Pre-K Now (<http://www.preknow.org/>): ***This is a jewel of a find!*** Pre-K Now is a public education and advocacy organization that advances high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds. It supports state-based children's advocates, educates policy makers about the need for Pre-k and raises public awareness about the need for Pre-k for all children. Based in Washington D.C., the organization is supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts and is a project of the Institute for Educational Leadership.

The website includes a collection of original reports and links to other studies for a deeper view into Pre-k policy. One of the organization's claims as a "differentiating" feature is that it "Provides the most up-to-date gauge of the Pre-k pulse in any state. This (Key State Profiles) is found in the website's Resource Center. The Key States are listed (AL, GA, LA, NY, SC, Wash D.C., AR, IL, MA, NC, TN, WV, CA, IA, NJ, OK, TX, WI, FL, KY, NM, OR and VA). Clicking on any one, brings up a description of that state's history and Key Milestones in the Pre-k field, and other relevant information.

ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families (www.zerotothree.org): ZERO TO THREE is the leading non-profit organization and national resource for the first three years of live. The organization is dedicated to promoting the healthy development of infants and toddlers. The ZERO TO THREE Policy Center is a research-based, non-partisan program that brings the voice to babies and toddlers to public policy to promote good health, strong families, and positive learning experiences. The Center

- Translates scientific research into language that is more accessible and provides tools that policymakers can use to inform more effective policies,
- Partners with states and communities to build effective early childhood systems
- Cultivates leadership in states and communities, and
- Studies and shares promising state and community strategies.

The Center coordinates the ZERO TO THREE Policy Network, a vehicle for professionals to use their knowledge and expertise to impact public policy. The forerunner of the Network was the Baby Care Campaign (often referenced in other publications).

The National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative at ZERO TO THREE is a project of the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, Department of

Health and Human Services. It supports Child Care Development Fund administrators in efforts to effect system-wide improvements in infant and toddler child care. Twenty states and Territories (including KANSAS) have participated in the Initiative to date.

The State Early Childhood Policy Leadership Forum is a joint initiative of the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center and the National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices that seeks to build state capacity to develop and strengthen statewide, cross-system early childhood (birth – 5) policies and programs by supporting leaders actively guiding statewide comprehensive early childhood policies initiatives. A small group of leaders are working to integrate diverse federal and state funding streams and forge new partnerships with the business, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors (the first class of Fellows was launched in the fall of 2001.)

RAND Corporation: This is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. One of the Corporation's major research divisions is Education. Here can be found research studies related to early childhood. (See Articles Section of this "Journey" document for a technical report on the consequences of Universal Pre-K efforts from a an eight state review.) (www.rand.org/research_areas/education)

Search Institute: (www.searchinstitute.org): The Search Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge and resources to promote healthy children, youth and communities. At the heart of the institute's work is the framework of the 40 Developmental Assets (concreted, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people). The Assets are divided into two categories – external and internal. The website provides additional information on the Developmental Assets, including a list of 40 Developmental Assets specifically for children ages 3 – 5. The Search Institute is also responsible for the Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth National Initiative.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org): This is one of the largest organizations committed to quality in early care and education. It promotes national, state and local public policies that support a system of well-financed, high quality early childhood education programs in a range of settings. NAEYC has the jurisdiction to accredit high quality care facilities and programs. NAEYC has a comprehensive list of organizations that promote early childhood, offering direct access to information through links on its website. (www.NAEYC.org/ece/links.asp)

National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) (www.nccic.org): The NCCIC was created by the Child Care Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families. It provides practical information toward improving the child care delivery system. The NCCIC maintains references regarding the relation of cost-benefit analysis to quality child care. The Child Care Partnership Program offers resources to facilitate public-private partnerships in child care.

National Center for Children in Poverty (<http://www.nccp.org>): The NCCP is a non-profit, nonpartisan research and policy organization at Columbia University in the Mailman School of Public Health. Its mission is to identify and promote strategies

that prevent child poverty in the United States and improve the lives of low-income children and families. The NCCP concentrates on links between family economic security and child development, researching policies that promote the goals of (1) Economically secure families, (2) Children entering school ready to succeed, and (3) Stable, nurturing families.

Among other things, the NCCP analyzes the system building efforts of states related to the care and education of young children, ages 0 – 5. Map and Track: State Initiatives for Young Children and Families (2000) divides state approaches into four groups: comprehensive, incremental, limited collaboration and multi-age.

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP): The organization focuses on issues affecting low-income and disadvantaged persons, and promotes progressive policies on welfare reform, child support, early education, work force development, child welfare, low income fathers, disconnected youth and ex-offenders re-entering society. CLASP's child care and early education work focuses on promoting policies that support both child development and the needs of low-income working parents, and on expanding the availability of resources for child care and early education initiatives. Their website (<http://www.clasp.org>) includes policy briefs, articles, fact sheets, testimonies, etc. and is a good source of information on child care government funding sources and allocations.

The CLASP article "Starting Off Right" (see Articles section of this "Journey" document) provides helpful information on State Strategies to promote child development birth to three and to financially support Birth to Three policies. Also identified are key steps and considerations for State Leaders.

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) (www.nieer.org): NIEER provides nonpartisan early education research to policy makers, journalists, researchers and educators to promote educational opportunities for children ages three and four. NIEER has developed a ten point checklist of key components of quality early childhood programs. NIEER sponsors an Annual State of Preschool Report that compiles data nationally. State by state data is also available. (www.nieer.org/yearbook/)

Also available on the NIEER website is the recent testimony of NIEER Director Steve Barnett appearing before the Wisconsin Speaker's Task Force on four year old pre-kindergarten. His talk, titled "Economics of Early Education: Benefits and Costs of Quality Early Childhood Education" cites evidence to support cost-effective access to preschool for all.

NIEER has also recently completed a five state study on the effects of Pre-k programs on young children's school readiness in Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina and West Virginia. There are links to the summary and full study on the NIEER website.

National Center for Early Development and Learning: The NCEDL is part of the Frank Porter Gram Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina. The organization focuses on enhancing the cognitive, social and emotional development of

children, birth through eight. It is a collaboration with the University of Virginia and the University of California at Los Angeles. (<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/>)

Committee for Economic Development (www.ced.org): This is a nonpartisan organization of business and education leaders dedicated to policy research on the major economic and social issues of our time and to implementation of its recommendations by public and private sectors. The CED has produced an Issue Brief on “Financing Public Preschool Programs: Current Practices and Future Possibilities.” The report states “Indeed, establishment of a broad preschool education system today may be one of the best improvements we could make to improve the performance of our middle schools and high schools over the next decade and beyond.” This issue brief is an excellent resource for additional information on financing of early education. The extensive bibliography provides “branching out” opportunities for gathering more information on this topic.

The Finance Project (www.financeproject.org): The Finance Project provides research, analysis and technical assistance to improve policies, programs and financing strategies that affect children, families and communities. Program areas include child care, child welfare, early learning and school readiness.

New America Foundation: This is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit public policy institute dedicated to supporting a new generation of public intellectuals and public policy thinkers. Their mission is to produce solutions-oriented research and writing on our nation’s most difficult policy challenges. In 2005, it launched an Early Childhood Initiative with the goal of expanding and improving services to children in pre-kindergarten through third grade. Their intent during 2006 – 2007 is to produce policy papers outlining innovative policy changes and political factors needed to build a PK-3 early education system in the country. Their first policy paper “Building a 21st Century Economy: The Case for Investing in Early Childhood Education Reform, can be downloaded at their website (<http://www.newamerica.net>).

Maternal and Child Health Bureau – State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grants (<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/>): These grants are available to Title V agencies. The intent is to support states in planning, developing and implementing collaborations and partnerships that support families and communities in development of children who are healthy and ready to learn at school entry.

Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center (<http://www.smartstart-nc.org/national/main.htm>): Grants are provided for technical assistance in up to ten communities and States to support the development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives. Current grantee states are Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Vermont. Memphis is also funded in the category of “community.”

National Organizations for State, County and City Officials have developed supports for members interested in improving early care and education services in their jurisdiction. Among them are:

National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices (NGA): The NGA Task Force on School Readiness produced a report with recommendations for developing a “vision and strategic plan for school readiness that considers the role of families, schools and communities and addresses the developmental needs of children beginning before birth to kindergarten (and beyond).”

National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL): The NCSL provides assistance to state legislatures on child care and early education issues through policy analysis, technical assistance, meetings and response to requests for information from legislators and their staff.

National Association of Counties (NACO): The NACO provides resources to county officials interested in innovative and collaborative strategies to address the needs of children birth to five and their families. A publication titled Model Program Strategies: County Early Care and Education Programs recommends that counties use long-term planning to ensure the effectiveness and quality of services.

National League of Cities (NLC): The Institute for Youth, Education and Families, an entity of the National League of Cities, provides resources to municipal officials to promote early childhood system development, including a community assessment tool and action kit.

ARTICLES (Sampling)

Barnett, S., Lamy, C. and Jung, K. (2005). “Hot Topic: The effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children’s School Readiness in Five States.” NIEER (www.nieer.org) (States studied were MI, NJ, OK, SC and WV)

Bruner, C., Coffman, J., Wright, M. (2006). “Building Connections: Six State Case Studies of Early Childhood System Building at the State and Local Levels.” Build Strong Foundations for Our Youngest Children, Child and Family Policy Center.

Christina, R., Nicholson-Goodman, J.V. (2005). “Going to Scale with High Quality Early Education. RAND Education Technical Report (www.rand.org)
The report is “an initial effort to describe efforts in a number of states that are seeking to create statewide systems of high-quality pre-kindergarten services, as well as some of the progress they have made in doing so.” (States studied were IL, LA, MI, MN, NJ, OH, OK and WA)

“Financing Public Preschool Programs: Current Practices and Future Possibilities.” (2006) An Issue Brief prepared by the Committee on Economic Development.

Floyd, S. & CFPC Staff (2004). “Up and Running: A Compendium of Multi-Site Early Childhood Initiatives,” Second Edition. State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTAN).

Galinsky, E. (2006). "The Economic Benefits of High-Quality Early Childhood Programs: What makes the Difference?" New York, NY: Committee for Economic Development.

Gallagher, J. & Rooney, R. (1999). "Early Education and Development. Policy Options for Early Childhood: A Model for Decision Making." University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Heckman, J. and Masterov, D. (2004). "The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children." Working Paper #5. New York, NY: Committee for Economic Development.

Kagan, S.L. & Cohen, N. (1997). "Nothing By Chance: Creating an Early Care and Education System for America's Children." New Haven, Yale University Bush Center.

Kagan, S.L. (2001). "Back to Basics: Essential Components of an American Early Care and Education System." Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y.

Karoly, L., Kilburn, M.R., Bigelow, J., & Caulkins, J. (2001). "Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions." Research Brief. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Karoly, L. Kilburn, M.R., & Cannon, J. (2005). "Proven Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention." Research Brief. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Katz, C., Hoene, C., and deKervor, D.N. (2003). "Strengthening Families in America's Cities: Early Childhood Development." National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education and Families.

Kerschner, S. (2006). "Supporting Young Children to be Healthy and Ready to Learn: Lessons from State and Local Collaborations." (Presentation at AMCHP Annual Conference), Division of Health Improvement, Vermont.

Klein, L., & Knitzer, J. (2006). "Pathways to Early School Success, Issue Brief #2. Effective Preschool Curricula and Teaching Strategies." National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, N.Y.

Lucas, K. (2006). "Investing in Infants and Toddlers: The Economics of Early Childhood." ZERO TO THREE Policy Center. Washington D.C.

Norton, Y. (2006). "State Policy Roundup: Progress on Infant-Toddler Issues Across the United States." ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, Washington D.C.

Olson, L. (2007) "Paying Attention Earlier On." Quality Counts 2007: From Cradle to Career. Education Week.

Rolnick, A. and Grunewald, A.J. (2007). "Early Intervention on a Large Scale:" Quality Counts 2007: From Cradle to Career. Education Week.

Schumacher, R., Hamm, K., Goldstein, A., & Lombardi, J. (2006): “Starting Off Right: Promoting Child Development from Birth in State Early Care and Education Initiatives.” Center for Law and Social Policy.

Stoney, L., & Mitchell, A. (2006) “Emerging Entities to Govern and Manage Early Care & Education at the Community and State Levels.” Smart Start Technical Assistance Center, Alliance for Early Childhood Finance.

Tullis E., Sutherland C., Uyeda K., Halfon N. (2004) “From Resources to Results for Children and Families: A Strategic Planning Guide for State Level Early Childhood System-Building Initiative.” In Halfon N., Rict T., and Inkelas, M., eds. “Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive System Series , No. 6,” National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
(www.healthychild.ucla.edu/NationalCenter)

SAMPLING OF STATE LEVEL INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

(The following list is by no means comprehensive. It merely reflects information gathered from the internet-based literature review conducted for the purposes of this report.)

Alabama

Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives)

Arkansas

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Only state that met all 10 NAEYC Benchmarks of Quality

Arizona

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Early Childhood Development and Health Initiative (First Things First)
(Birth to Three services are an integral part of the Gov.’s initiative.)

California

School Readiness Initiative
First Five (county level commissions – accesses additional funds for ECMH and IMH programs – Requires local decision making)
Offers Paid Leave to families (parental leave policy)

Colorado

Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives)
Enacted law in 2004 establish new entities or direct current entities to conduct early care education planning or studies.
Consolidated Child Care Pilot Programs (see Building Connections

Cross-State Summary Matrix attachment for more information)

Connecticut

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Connecticut Early Childhood Partners
Gov. created Early Childhood Research and Policy Council

Delaware

Early Success – a long range blueprint

Florida

Has acted to make preschool services available to four year olds

Georgia

Pre-K Program – universal approach – has acted to make preschool available to four year olds
*A leader in development of Pre-k standards
Enacted law in 2004 establish new entities or direct current entities to conduct early care education planning or studies
Undertaking focused and longitudinal examination of the state’s Pre-k programs.
Created Bright from the Start – Department of Early Care and Learning
0 – 3 Initiatives – IT Quality Initiative, IT Stipend, Part C Services
0 – 5 Initiatives – Standards of Care Initiative, Georgia Early Learning Initiative, Smart Start Georgia, ACT Project
(See Smart Start TA Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits and Challenges) attachment for more information)

Hawaii

Build Initiative (0 – 5) Learning Partner
Good Beginnings Alliance
* A leader in “systems model” of governance

Indiana

Building Bright Beginnings – a government initiative

Illinois

Early Learning Council
Set-Aside Programs
Growing Pre-k program
Strong IT Advocacy Community – (0 – 3 Initiatives include IT credential, Better Baby Care Campaign, Parents Too Soon, 0 – 3 Program Standards, Part C services)
0 – 5 Initiatives include Early Learning Council, EC Block Grant, Early Learning Access, Options and Opportunities Campaign, Healthy Families, Build Initiative, Tiered reimbursement for Providers

Iowa

Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and

implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives)
Iowa Community Empowerment Initiative (see Building Connections Cross-State Summary Matrix attachment for more information)

Kansas (Several of the below taken from Integrated Initiatives Platform – Kansas Smart Start)

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Funding Increases for Early Head Start
Smart Start Initiative
Early Childhood Initiative
School Readiness Indicators Project
Kansas Health Foundation Leadership Institute (Early Childhood)
Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Strategic Plan
Kansas Action for Children
Developing Early Learning Guidelines (0 – 3)
Kansas Early Intervention Longitudinal Study
Child Care and Early Education Advisory Committee
Professional Development Initiative for Early Care and Education (KACCRRRA)
Kansas Children’s Campaign – “Good Beginnings Last a Lifetime”
Early Education Quality Improvement Project
Maternal and Child Health Five Year Needs Assessment
Therapeutic Services to Preschool Children Initiative
Quality Standards

Louisiana

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Enacted law in 2004 establish new entities or direct current entities to conduct early care education planning or studies.

Maine

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)

Massachusetts

Community Partnerships for Children Initiative
Enacted law in 2004 establish new entities or direct current entities to conduct early care education planning or studies.
Department of Education – has a comprehensive plan
Dept. of Early Education & Care (to develop staff core competencies)
(See Smart Start T.A. Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits and Challenges) attachment for more information

Maryland

See Smart Start T.A. Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits and Challenges) attachment for information.

Michigan

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)

Build Initiative (0 – 5) Learning Partner
0 – 3 Secondary Prevention Program (an integral part of the Governor’s Initiative)
Local Great Start Collaboratives

Minnesota

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Build Initiative (0 – 5 Planning Initiative)
Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative (See Building Connections Cross-State Summary Matrix attachment for more information)

Missouri

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Enacted law in 2004 establish new entities or direct current entities to conduct early care education planning or studies.

Montana

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)

Nebraska

New funding mechanisms for infants and toddlers and those at risk
Already has an expansive Pre-k system
Nebraska Early Childhood Coalition
Nebraska Early Childhood Endowment Fund

New Jersey

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Undertaking focused and longitudinal examination of the state’s Pre-k programs
Court ordered mandate
0 – 3 Initiatives – Campaign New Jersey: Better Baby Care, Coalition of IT Educators, Children’s Futures, Participant in the National IT Child Care Initiative, Healthy Child Care N.J./Quality IT Initiative, IT Credential (in progress), IT Specialist Position, Tiered reimbursement for child care programs, Part C services
Pre-K Initiatives – Abbott and Non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid, Working to expand access, Improving Abbott preschool Implementation
0 – 5 Initiatives – Build Initiative (Build N.J. Partners for Early Learning), Creating a professional development system, Improving program quality, N.J. Child Advocacy Council (0 – 13), Family and Children Early Education Services (FACES), State Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant

New York

Mandate to move to Systematic Long Range Planning
Achieving the Promise of NY Children and Families Initiative
(Strategies to support children’s mental health and well-being)

*Ground-breaking model for other states in Early Childhood Mental Health

Goal of Universality

0 – 3 Initiatives – IT Specialists, Part C Services

Pre-K Initiatives – Experimental Pre-K and Universal Pre-K

0 – 5 Initiatives – N.Y. State Blueprint for Action, Winning/Beginning N.Y., Center for Early Care and Education, State Credential and Certificate Program, Better Baby Care Campaign, Even Start Family Literacy

North Carolina

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)

T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$

See Smart Start North Carolina (See Building Connections Cross-State Summary Matrix, and Smart Start T.A. Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits and Challenges for more information)

Ohio

Build Initiative (0 – 5 Planning Initiative)

Funding of Head Start

Early Care and Education Campaign

Action for Changes – CCR&R – launched Centers that Care (Regional Care Alliance)

Oklahoma

Build Initiative (0 – 5) Learning Partner

Smart Start Oklahoma (See Building Connections Cross-State Summary Matrix attachment for more information)

Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives)

Has acted to make preschool available to four year olds

Undertaking focused and longitudinal examination of the state's Pre-k programs

Pennsylvania

Build Initiative (0 – 5 Planning Initiative)

Collaborations between Department of Education and Public Welfare

See Smart Start T.A. Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits and Challenges) Attachment for more information.

Rhode Island

Early System Plan – Successful Start

(*Leading the way in building bridges among state systems, according to Zero to Three Policy Network) – Attention paid to capacity, access, coordination, quality and financing

Rite Care Health Insurance

South Carolina

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives)

South Dakota

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Enacted law in 2004 establish new entities or direct current entities to conduct early care education planning or studies.

Tennessee

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
“First Years Last a Lifetime”
Community Institute for Early Childhood – **near term goal is County level** (Memphis/Shelby County) – long term goal is statewide
Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives) – in MEMPHIS

Texas

San Antonio – local example of model Head Start program

Vermont

Smart Start National TA Center grant (supports development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based early childhood initiatives) – See Smart Start TA Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits and Challenges) attachment for more information
Building Bright Futures (See Building Connections Cross-State Summary Matrix attachment for more information)

Virginia

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Smart Beginnings – VA New Commitment to Early Childhood – attentive to varying social, emotional, physical, cultural and intellectual needs of young children and their families
Gov. launched a Smart Beginnings blitz (50 activities between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day)
Early Childhood Foundation

Washington

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)
Build Initiative (0 – 5) Learning Partner
Seattle – local example – “Safe, Healthy and Ready to Learn”
Department of Early Learning (legislation passed for Thrive by Five)
Washington Learns – A governor initiative
Also See Smart Start T.A. Center Issue Brief 2007 (Benefits & Challenges) attachment for more information.

Washington D.C.

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)

West Virginia

Participant in Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative (Zero to Three)

SUMMARY - SELECTED INFORMATION FOR THE JOURNEY:

The vision of the **Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems** plan is to make Kansas the best place to raise a child. The five goals for Kansas children ages birth to five are:

1. Ensure that all Kansas children have health insurance and access to medical providers.
2. Fully integrate mental health and social-emotional development into the early childhood system in Kansas.
3. Develop a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood care and education system in Kansas Birth – 5.
4. Educate and mentor parents about childhood health, development and education.
5. Promote a system that helps families develop and utilize both intellectual and material resources to prepare their children for school and life. (The Full Plan is available on the keccs website {www.keccs.org})

The **Visioneering Wichita** plan (www.visioneeringwichita.org) reflects the vision of citizens in the Wichita MSA (Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey and Sumner counties). Six building blocks (i.e., Foundations) comprise the framework for achieving the Plan's vision. The **Birth – K Strategic Alliance** is located within the Education Foundation. Strategies identified in the Visioneering Wichita document for Birth – K are:

Expect all children to enter kindergarten ready to learn at the kindergarten level by:

- a) Identifying reading deficiencies early and help birth-K parents and teachers with programs that result in each child being ready for kindergarten,
- b) Improving access to birth-K programs including Headstart, educational daycare, etc.,
- c) Including programs for parents and children to address language skills and social development of birth-K within the community,
- d) Providing more qualified preschool teachers in daycare and birth-K programs.

It is the charge of the Birth-K Strategic Alliance to develop an action plan that is aligned with the KECCS plan and the strategies identified in the Visioneering Wichita document.

A variety of **Community and State needs assessments and “status” checks** are available for review. Among these are:

State level data from Quality Counts 2007, EPE Research Center,
(www.edweek.org)

Kansas Kids Count 2007 (Annie E. Casey Foundation (www.kac.org))

Kansas Action for Children 2007 Legislative Agenda (www.kac.org)

Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment for State of Kansas, 2006 - 2010
(Kansas Department of Health and Environment)

Quality Improvement Coalition (working on statewide expansion
strategies for KQRS)

Children and Families Impact Council (Draft Plan – United Way of the
Plains, June 2005)

Kansas Kindergarten Readiness Project: Student Readiness for School
(Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies, Dept. of Psychology,
University of Kansas (2005 -06?))

Kansas Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Environmental Scan and
Early Childhood Environmental Scan (www.keccs.org)

Downing Foundation research (aided in development of The
Opportunity Project)

Sedgwick County “Fishbone” (background for Resources/Asset map)

Kansas Health Institute and Kansas Department of Education (source
for School Readiness Data)

National Gov. Association Committee on Early Childhood (Gov.
Sebelius, chair)

Children’s Mental Health Study (Sedgwick Co.), 2002 – 2004 (presented to
Children’s Mental Health Task Force of UWP)

State level data on child care can also be accessed through:

National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative at ZERO TO
THREE: <http://nccic.org/itcc>

National Child Care Information Center:
<http://nccic.org/statedata/index.html>

Child Care & Early Care Research Connections:
<http://www.childcarefresearch.org>

National Center for Children in Poverty’s CCDF Subsidies
Database: <http://www.nccp.org/policy> index 13.html.

So Where Are We?

A number of common themes emerge from a review of available information. **System** is described as “a set of independent elements that together, perform some function – a change in one causes change in all of the others. The System is comprised of two components – the **infrastructure**, and **direct services (programs)**).

Experts in the field stress the importance of developing a solid framework (infrastructure) that will sustain program innovations and expansion for the long haul. “Without a focus on high standards of quality, vision is an empty promise.” (Bodrova, Leong and Shore {2004}, “Child Outcome Standards in Pre-K Programs” NIEER). Kagan, in “Back to Basics: Essential Components of an American Early Care and Education System” identifies eight components, of which seven are “Infrastructure,” and

the remaining one (the core) is “Programs.” She maintains that the infrastructure is the essential ingredient that enables expansion and excellence of direct services and programs. She further asserts that an effective system must have all eight components. These are:

1. Quality programs
2. Child-based, results-driven system
3. Parent and family engagement
4. Individual licensing
5. Professional preparation
6. Program licensing
7. Funding and financing, and
8. Governance, planning and accountability

With the focus on Universal Pre-K, a decision States (and communities) must make is that of defining the service parameters. Some states have “set the bar” at pre-K for all four year olds in the state. Others have established target populations of children identified as being at risk for school failure. Research studies have found that high quality preschool programs (i.e., intentional curriculum and professional development) are especially important for children in poverty, and that the learning gap between low and middle income children is real and significant. (National Center for Children in Poverty) Available funding may dictate what a state or community can do at any given time, but needn’t dictate the vision for the future.

A related decision for Universal Pre-K is intensity and age range (part-day or full day, and does it extend to three year olds?). Again, funding may be the driving force in the short term for the service delivery model selected.

The GAO Four State Study found that “Collaboration between school districts and community-based organizations facilitate the coordination of child care and early learning for preschoolers and can provide additional classroom capacity.” Such collaboration permits rapid program expansion and is viewed as beneficial to the early childhood community.

University of Chicago economist and Nobel Prize winner James Heckman researched government spending on human capital programs and used a cost benefit analysis to determine what types of programs produced the most benefit and savings to society. He concluded that

- the returns on human capital investments are greatest for the young, and
- traditional views of learning {in early childhood programs} should be broadened to encompass informal and non-cognitive skills (in addition to formal learning that measures cognitive skills).

These findings support the need to take a holistic approach in designing early childhood systems, and incorporate program components that address development of social/emotional skills and attend to mental health issues in young children, while supporting their families to promote healthy and enriching home and community environments.

Consistent throughout research studies and planning initiatives is affirmation of the importance of providing high quality learning experiences for young children. Findings documenting positive outcomes are based on children's experiences in programs that consistently met standards of high quality. A **National Evaluation of Early Head Start** concluded that the program is making a positive difference in areas associated with children's success in school, family self-sufficiency and parental support of child development. "Key to the program's success is its emphasis on the implementation of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (Early Head Start Works, Policy Brief." January 2005, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center). The NAEYC identifies ten benchmarks as critical quality indicators for early childhood programs. (www.naeyc.org)

Authors E. Bodrova, D. Leong and R. Shore of the **National Institute for Early Education Research**, addressed the issue of standards in a 2004 article titled "Child Outcome Standards for Pre-K Programs: What are Standards, and What is Needed to Make Them Work?" Simply put, NIEER stated that it is important to take into account today's best understanding of how young children develop and learn. The following NIEER Policy Recommendations are ones the Birth – 5 Strategic Alliance may choose to embrace. They are:

1. Because standards reflect the values of the people who set them, collaboration with families and communities is a key to the successful design and implementation of preschool standards.
2. Standards documents should distinguish clearly between program standards and child outcome standards.
3. Outcome standards need to be written in ways that take into account the unique ways that young children develop and learn, considering all aspects of school readiness identified by the National Education Goal Panel.
4. Standards that address physical health, social-emotional development, and approaches to learning need to have as much emphasis and specificity as those that address cognitive and language development.
5. Standards should allow for a coherent educational experience. Preschool standards should allow continuity with kindergarten standards, but not at the expense of attention to physical and social-emotional development.
6. Standards should be written in ways that allow for appropriate, effective assessment. Assessment policies and practices should go beyond accountability to foster program improvement.

A reoccurring theme in the literature review is the role of government (i.e., support and involvement) in the development of early childhood systems. The research shows that "by investing in early childhood education, governments - in partnership with private firms and nonprofit foundations – can reap extraordinarily high economic returns, benefits that are low-risk and long-lived." (Rolnick, A. and Grunewald, R. "Early Intervention on a Large Scale:" Quality Counts {2007}). The Birth – K Strategic Alliance recognizes the value of engaging local and state government officials and business leaders. It is important not to lose sight of this goal in moving forward.

An issue confronting all states is the development of a comprehensive and seamless system that incorporates features that reflect the needs of infants and toddlers and their families as distinct from services designed for 3 – 5 year olds. In a 1999 Public Policy Report (Young Children September 1999), authors Clifford, Early and Hills pointed out

that “Schools constitute a major new force in the early childhood field, a force whose presence has both positive and negative implications for the field.”

States and communities are recognizing that a holistic and responsive system of early education must start with a healthy pregnancy and birth, and that young children need access to health care, strong families, and positive learning experiences from birth to five and beyond. (ZERO TO THREE). All parts of the governance structure must complement rather than conflict with one another, and account for both horizontal alignment across systems that serve the same age children and vertical alignment. In creating such a system, it is important to “connect the dots” across the entire birth to five spectrum. The Birth – K Strategic Alliance is not alone in addressing the challenge of developing a system that incorporates services that reflect both the differences and similarities among infants, toddlers and preschoolers into a seamless service system. Neither is it alone in its efforts to effectively and actively engage families in the planning process.

Moving Right Along!

This document may understandably raise more questions than it answers. Its intent is to provide a helpful tool (somewhat akin to the AAA Tour Book describing location highlights) to the Birth to K Strategic Alliance as it moves forward. Referenced documents will hopefully enable task groups to expedite the development of a comprehensive plan that incorporates lessons learned from researchers, early childhood experts, and state and community planning groups across the United States. Our common goal – “to provide children birth through five with the resources they need to succeed in school and life (KECCS)” will only be reached with sustained effort, dedication and commitment among a broad spectrum of key stakeholders, decision-makers and constituents.

Prepared by Benith MacPherson,
Director of Special Projects, Rainbows United, Inc., Wichita, KS

For use by
Birth – K Strategic Alliance of Visioneering Wichita

