

Taking the Temperature of Career Development

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Acknowledgements

We want to thank the many people who have supported our efforts to “take the temperature” of our career development colleagues throughout the United States, and who contributed so much to our understanding and thinking --in Baltimore and in telephone and e-mail conversations over the past year.

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Taking advantage of the climate created by the research results and policy changes of the 1990's, highly effective planning groups in more than 40 states helped to create some remarkable changes in the systems that affect young children and their families. The special focus of their work on professional growth of the adults in the field resulted in new strategies and opportunities for change. Now, in a different policy climate, they are trying to determine whether they can continue to make changes and work toward institutionalizing them. The authors met with a number of these individuals in June of 2004 to "take the temperature of career development". They are proud of their achievements and have a clear sense of the barriers and challenges that still face them. They expressed determination rather than discouragement, but also identified a need for a range of supports to bolster their efforts. Their climate has changed but their temperature was normal.

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I. A brief history of career development (1992 to the present)

For some seventy years, the field of early care and education has been active in efforts to improve the quality of programs for children, and to raise the level of professional knowledge and skills. . The past 15 years have brought significant changes to the vision, coherence, and direction of the field. As our nation entered the last decade of the 20th century, several key events converged to bring the importance of quality programs and services for young children and their families to the forefront of public attention at the national level:

- ❖ Federal census data in the year 2000 revealed that most American children under the age of six spend most of their waking hours with adults other than their parents in a variety of care and education settings; (Bureau of Labor Statistics (1997)).¹
- ❖ Major national research studies established the lasting impact of the quality of early childhood experiences outside the home on the development and school success of young children. (CQO Study Team, 2000) The pre-eminent role of parents was already well established.
- ❖ National studies of the factors affecting the quality of early childhood programs and services pointed to the critical importance of the educational levels and specialized early childhood knowledge (Saluja and Clifford, 2002) of the adults working with young children. Teachers with coursework specific to working with young children were more likely to support child-initiated learning (such as allowing children to select some of their own activities, valuing active exploration in children's learning, and respecting students' individual differences when planning curricula.) (McMullen and Alat, 2002
- ❖ Brain development research (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000) now makes clear that relationships with adults and their peers form the essential base for learning and other development during the early years of life, making it clear that the pedagogical approaches that are accepted for older children will not produce the important results that policy-makers want to achieve through the current (2004) emphasis on preschool.

¹ See also *National Center for Education Statistics. NCES 95-824. Oct. 1995. Data on the number of individuals employed in care and education of children and projections of the needed workforce vary, depending on how roles are defined and counted, ranging between one and a half million to over three million needed workers. The DOL's occupational titles list two different descriptions for one role: the person in charge of an early childhood classroom: preschool teacher and child care worker. The DOL description of the child care worker's role accurately describes the role of an assistant or aide. As workforce needs grow, and the need for accurate data increases, it is hard to believe that these two categories can continue to be used without confusion and inconsistent survey responses.*

- ❖ The federal Child Care and Development Block Grant was passed in 1991 with bipartisan support through the efforts of an unprecedented coalition of private agencies, public schools and local and national advocacy groups. It established funding for children's services and created a "quality set-aside" as part of the funding to emphasize the priority that must be given to the quality of programs for young children;
- ❖ Several influential national foundations² funded key initiatives to determine the condition of state quality efforts in licensing, professional development, and comprehensive planning, and to support their improvement. Two of these initiatives established The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, and the Professional Development Institute of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- ❖ The business community, with leadership from a few large national corporations, either established their own Funds for dependent care services and/or joined in the American Business Collaboration. (Fredericks, Morgan, and Sprague, in draft) They brought to the table a strong interest in expanding the availability of quality programs for children of their employees in a large number of communities. These companies reached an unprecedented level of corporate dollar commitment to quality in early care and education, providing millions of dollars to fund new programs, program expansion and quality efforts, including support for the TEACH scholarship model in North Carolina and its exportation to other states.
- ❖ Federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) legislation in 1996 permitted states to transfer their welfare savings into CCDBG, committing them to spend a percentage of these funds on quality initiatives.
- ❖ The Head Start Bureau began to experiment with the creation of Head Start Collaboration Offices in the states to provide a state level policy connection with planning efforts in the states. By the end of the decade, these offices had been established in every state.
- ❖ The establishment of the Child Care Bureau provided a Federal base for coordinated data gathering and policy-making concerning the distribution of federal funds for child care.
- ❖ The US Department of Labor re-energized an existing early childhood apprenticeship training model and credential and funded programs in state after state to link Federal DOL resources and credibility to quality efforts in states. Today almost every state in the US has an active apprenticeship program leading to the national DOL credential of Early Childhood Specialist.
- ❖ The U.S. Census of 2000 revealed major growth in diversity of the child population, a fact that challenges the early childhood field to diversify its teachers, caregivers and other workers. (US Census Bureau, 2002)

²The Carnegie Foundation, The Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and others.

A key element in the drive for quality has been the development of a systems approach to planning for early childhood programs and services, particularly in the area of career/professional development. A national study published by The Center for Career Development in 1993 (Morgan et al) depicted the hodgepodge of differing licensing standards, training requirements and training programs throughout the country, and the lack of a coherent framework to use resources effectively to improve skills and knowledge of the adults who work with young children and thereby the quality of the learning experiences provided for those children.

Over a period of ten years, from 1992 to 2002, planning groups of key stakeholders organized within almost all of the states. With the involvement of this range of key stakeholders at the national, state, and local levels and the availability of funding for quality and system improvement, comprehensive planning at the state level for all forms of early childhood programs and services³ has been firmly established over the past decade. These groups had a vision of what systems changes were needed in order to have a high quality workforce in the early childhood field. Statewide initiatives addressing financing, professional development, licensing standards, and community development have been underway in almost all of the 50 states. Stakeholder participation in early care and education has included players from state agencies including licensing, CCDBG and/or TANF administrators, and Departments of Education, higher education, public schools, health professionals, and the private sector, as well as Head Start, childcare, resource and referral, professional associations, and other community agencies that are the mainstay of the field of early care and education.

This comprehensive planning has led to the creation of systems and policies in the states to:

- ***raise training and education standards for practitioners;***
- ***monitor the coherence and quality of the training provided at all levels of professional development;***
- ***develop financial incentives and rewards for practitioners who enter and complete training and education programs; and for the programs in which they work;***
- ***increase access to training and education leading to professional credentials and degrees;***
- ***provide higher levels of state funding for higher quality child care;***
- ***support collaboration between the state licensing agency and the state funding agency to develop and implement policies such as tiered reimbursement that encourage and reward defined levels of quality; and***

³ The range of programs and services in these planning efforts included all forms of early childhood group programs for children outside their own families, including non-profit and for-profit child care centers, chains, and associations, Head Start, family child care, early intervention, special needs, and out-of-school-time programs.

- ***establish registries to document the training levels of individuals, the overall early care and education work force, and provide data on training needs to ensure the most effective use of training funds.***

States were supported initially in working on the key elements of comprehensive career development through the work of the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College. The effort began with a survey in all the states in 1991 and 1992. The interest aroused in the states by this activity led to an all-day meeting of multi-sector teams from 40 states held in June 1992 in conjunction with the first NAEYC Professional Development Institute. For more than a decade, these groups continued to receive support for their work from the Wheelock Center through strategic initiatives, technical assistance, dissemination of collected data, analytic reports, and technical manuals, networking opportunities, and structured opportunities to review, assess, and share information about their efforts, their progress, and their questions with Center staff and leaders from other states.

Today the field of early care and education is facing a changing policy and funding context that will have direct bearing on quality efforts at state and national levels:

- ❖ More than 20 States are currently involved in drives to establish universal pre-kindergarten for four year olds and the number is growing. (NCES, 2002)
- ❖ The Bush administration and the Congress have been examining strategies to de-federalize the Head Start program and blend it with other block grant funding administered by the states;
- ❖ The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is implementing significant changes in its program accreditation standards;
- ❖ Newly revised guidelines for NCATE approval of baccalaureate and graduate teacher preparation programs leading to state teacher certification for pre-kindergarten to third grade are being issued;
- ❖ The NAEYC Board has formally adopted a model for accrediting college Associate Degree Programs, and the implementation of this program is about to begin.
- ❖ State licensing requirements for the training and credentialing of early care and education practitioners are being raised; (NCCIC, 2004)
- ❖ The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program has been adopted in twenty-two states and brings its own policies and standards for implementation (T.E.A.C.H., 2004)

Each of these new initiatives, although welcome, will need to be integrated with the new policies and systems that key stakeholders in states have thoughtfully and laboriously crafted. In a climate of competing priorities for funds it will be a challenge to ensure that the new policies and initiatives do not replace the very

systems that were designed to provide a coherent and coordinated infrastructure for the field of early care and education.

There seems to be little or no understanding at the Federal level of the states' comprehensive quality efforts. A recent GAO report (Shaul, 2002) of the quality set-aside funds from the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) revealed extensive and varied initiatives in the states, as if they were separate programs, lacking in evaluation.

Just as early childhood planners in states are faced with new policy challenges and demands for still more coordination of diverse initiatives, they are finding less organized support than was available to them in the past. State-level planners and policy-makers are expressing concern that they will be unable to maintain and continue to implement the comprehensive strategies and systems they have worked to develop over the past decade. In addition to an overall concern for the continued financial support for early childhood programs in schools, Head Start, and community agencies, there is particular concern that the infrastructure that supports all these programs may be inadvertently destroyed by the multitude of individual programs' requirements and there will be a return to the previous fragmented system.

II. A Look at policy change.

A concept of systems change

The literature on change (Weick, 1984) makes it clear that a change process moves in anything but a straight line. Instead, the graphic that would characterize the reality of policy and systems change would look more like the trail left by an airplane doing a series of barrel loops. While there is forward movement, there is also looping back to engage new stakeholders, correct failed strategies, and if necessary, re-align the course of the process. The same literature describes five essential stages in a change process:

- Planning
- Early implementation
- Self-assessment and correction
- Further implementation
- Institutionalization.

These stages, however, are not quickly or easily accomplished, and for a range of policy, political, and financial reasons, institutionalization is not automatically achieved.

The career development planning groups have been addressing policy change from the perspective of qualifications for those who work with young children. This perspective assumes that there is an early childhood knowledge base and a research base for work with young children that is not the same as the knowledge base and skills required for work with school children. From their perspective, the profession for working with young children needs strengthening, in higher education degree programs, in articulation, in Department of Education certification, and in career paths that enable members of children's own community to enter the field in assisting roles and pursue their further college-based education while they are employed. That is a long process, encompassing the entire field of early care and education.

What is the System We Are Trying to Change?

One of the barriers to systems and policy change in any field is the fact that since the 1960's Congress and state legislatures have taken a vertical "program" approach to social and educational problem-solving. Essentially this approach can be characterized as "if there's a problem start a new program to fix it". The program usually consists of a funding source, a delivery system, an administrative system, monitoring for quality a support system, and the actual service program itself, where the children and the families are. The program approach to problem-solving creates competitiveness, divisiveness, duplication, overlaps and gaps in services, major inconveniences for families, and a lack of

any overall data on where the children are and whether all their needs are being met.

A policy approach, on the other hand, first identifies all existing service programs for young children and their supports, the amounts and sources of their financial support, and the children served in each age group by geographic area. Then it identifies elements of a supportive infrastructure that might be available for all of these programs.

A study by Lynn Kagan (Kagan, 1999), identified a useful formula:

$$\text{Programs} + \text{Infrastructure} = \text{System}$$

In this formula, the word “programs” is used horizontally. It means all the individual child care centers, Head Start programs, school-age programs, infant-toddler centers, family child care, and preschool classrooms in public schools. Currently there is not much infrastructure that spreads across all programs. Public schools, which are a system, have very little contact with other systems. They are funded by a combination of local property taxes and state appropriations, rely on a teacher certification system defined by the state and delivered in higher education that is primarily geared to elementary education. Schools receive very little quality monitoring. Head Start is a federal program that has built all its infrastructure support vertically into its program. Child care programs are paid for either by parents, by the state government, or both. They are inspected and licensed, whether funded or not, making licensing one important infrastructure support that can in the future relate to all the service programs.

If we use the word “program” horizontally to mean each of the services, rather than their individual vertical “stovepipe” administrative supports, there is no reason to change their auspices. The changes that are needed apply to all programs: improved quality, incentives to move to higher standards of quality, better qualified staff, directors who have knowledge of administration, funding formulas that enable programs to pay the cost of higher quality. These changes are made primarily through infrastructure functions. To change the programs, we need to broaden some of the infrastructure pieces, little by little, wherever it is feasible.

What is our vision for systems change?

Who has the vision for systemic change? The career development groups and professional development groups have deliberately created cross-agency membership and promoted inter-related changes across agencies, particularly across licensing and administration of CCDBG funding. Sometimes it is one of the funding agencies or a foundation, or some technical assistance from another place that has the policy vision.

The vision describes the early childhood field, with changes in the current system to allow the fuller vision to evolve. Wherever the vision emerges, it is a vision of early childhood educators that provides coherence to the particular changes the group is able to implement. Without the vision, the changes may appear to be separate “programs,” or as unnecessary “frills.”

In order to understand what is needed to create an infrastructure that encompasses the entire field of early care and education, we need to identify the elements that exist partially or in some form in each of the individual systems that address segments of the population of children and families needing services and portions of the work force/practitioners that provide those services. Infrastructure functions (Morgan, 2004) include:

- Funding for direct services
- Preventing any harm to children
- Access to health, and social services for children in direct service programs, and technical support for the program itself
- Quality improvement of the overall infrastructure
 - Identifying levels of quality that can apply to all programs
 - Accreditation and other quality assurances
 - Monitoring to assure quality, as well as to prevent harm.
- Consistent qualifications standards and credentials
 - Defined qualifications requirements that are recognized throughout the field
 - Credentials that are recognized throughout the field, such as
 - director credentials,
 - infant-toddler specialist credentials,
 - family child care credentials,
 - after school credentials,
 - state teacher certification that focuses on the birth to 5 age range
- A coherent set of work force development policies and strategies:
 - Defined core knowledge and competencies used to structure the content of all levels of training, including non-credit training and credit-bearing courses that lead to degrees
 - Articulated levels of training and degree programs to provide continuous professional development pathways
 - Degree programs at all levels that focus on children birth to five
 - Scholarships to increase access to professional training

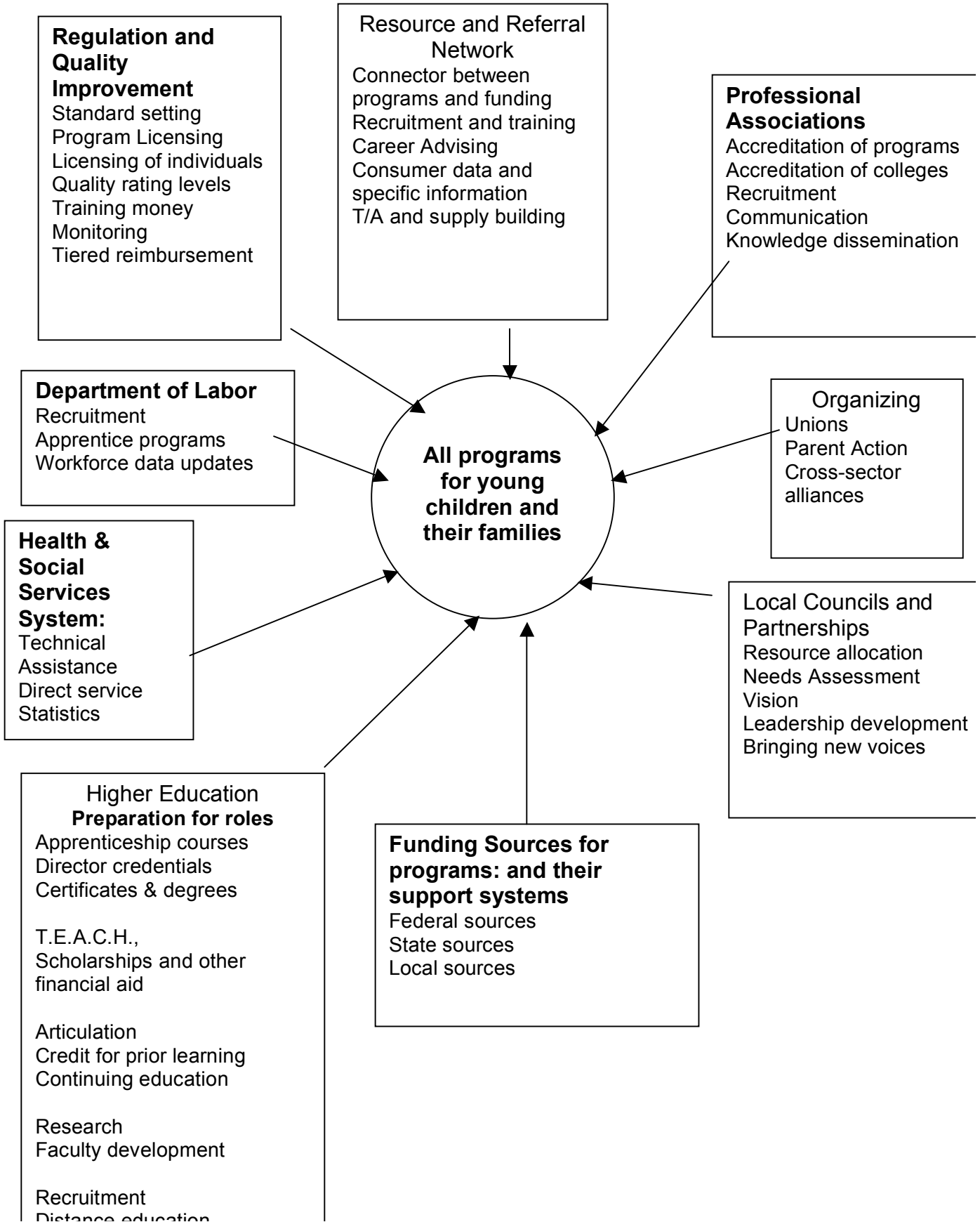
- Career advisement and counseling
- Recruitment of newcomers into the field

Finding the best base for each of these functions does not have to mean creating something entirely new, like an early childhood castle in the air. Infrastructure already exists in the community, or in local or state government, but it often needs to be broadened to serve all programs. We need to develop a broader perspective of the early childhood field to see the need and value of a broader infrastructure.

Career Development planning groups are not on the graphic shown below because their role varies according to the structures and political climate of each state. In one state these groups may be change agents, helping to create new entities where necessary, or they may become an actual piece of the infrastructure depending on what exists in the community.

Most early childhood professionals expect that as soon as the vision is articulated the changes will be made. It always takes much longer. The vision is articulated, and the destination is lettered on the front of the bus. The group, satisfied with their work gets on the bus. Almost immediately the bus encounters a series of detours, sometimes looping back to where they started. The bus resumes its trip, stopping for a large pile of brush, and later for a log across the road. The bus gets mired in mud and the passengers have to get out and push. More passengers get on the bus, but they're not sure they're on the right bus, or that they want to go to the destination. Now the driver discovers that the map is out of date, and there are some new roads that prevent continuing on the planned route. When the group finally arrives at the destination that is just the first stop on a longer journey. It's a long road from the articulation of some of the vision to the institutionalization of all of the vision - but each step takes us closer to our goal and makes the next one easier.

SYSTEMS: A COMMON INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTS ALL PROGRAMS



III. Convening Career Development activists and policy-makers

Starting with the NAEYC national conference in Chicago in Fall, 2003, career development stakeholders around the US have been talking with Gwen Morgan and Joan Costley and with one another about the need for some new sort of connection and possible centralized support at the national level for career development efforts in the states.

In response to numerous suggestions and requests, we organized a two hour meeting for career development stakeholders in June at the NAEYC Professional Development Institute in Baltimore. This Institute attracts leaders and policy-makers from all areas of the US. It has also been a setting for ongoing meetings and encounters where career development stakeholders shared information and ideas with one another, and with staff from the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock, during the 1990s. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Lesley University Center for Children, Families, and Public Policy and Wheelock College, with additional funding from the Mailman Family Foundation.

Career development leaders from all states were invited to attend the meeting. The outreach effort represented the first effort since 2001 to re-create and update a data base of career development leaders and activists from all of the sectors involved in the efforts, including state officials, representatives of community colleges and public and private colleges offering baccalaureate degrees, staff of Resource and Referral agencies, community service providers, leaders of early childhood professional associations, out-of-school time program providers, and advocacy groups.

Invitations and dissemination of information about the meeting were distributed primarily by e-mail to about 400 persons. An additional group of invitations was mailed to about 80 people. Additional information was distributed to participants at the NAEYC Professional Development Institute. In addition to yielding attendees for our meeting, the responses are being used to update contact information, and to create a distribution list for this report.

IV. Participants in meeting and sessions in Baltimore

Over one hundred representatives of states participated in the meeting organized by Morgan and Costley at the NAEYC Professional Development Institute on June 22nd and at a conference session called “Assessing etc” led by Morgan and Costley and including representatives from three states, Twenty-five states, the District of Columbia, and a US territory were represented at the two events including:

Arkansas	Florida	Massachusetts	Ohio	Washington
Arizona	Iowa	Michigan	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
California	Kansas	Nebraska	Oregon	
Colorado	Kentucky	New Hampshire	Pennsylvania	
Connecticut	Maine	New Mexico	Texas	
District of Columbia	Maryland	New York	Virginia	
		US Virgin Islands		

At the same Professional Development Institute, the National Child Care Information Center also organized a half-day session presentations from three states on aspects of their work, which drew many of the same participants.

The comments and ideas outlined in the following sections were obtained from notes on comments from the participants from large and small group discussions during the morning Morgan/Costley conference session as well as from the afternoon meeting.

Participants were asked to describe accomplishments and successful change strategies in their states, and to identify remaining challenges and barriers to further progress. They were also asked to list the issues and types of support needed to further their efforts.

V. Career Development accomplishments seen by participants

There have been clear and widespread changes in approaches to professional development in the early childhood field since 1992. Participants felt that in most states the quality money set-aside provided through the Child Care and Development Block Grant legislation in 1991 and the transferability of funds from state welfare savings into CCDBG, (bringing with it a requirement of the quality set-aside) passed in 1994 had three significant effects:

- ❖ In states that had already begun to work on comprehensive planning, the funding provided the fuel to move forward; and the planning provided a framework for coherent action.
- ❖ Money for quality initiatives acted as a catalyst to spur the creation of career development planning groups in states where none had existed;
- ❖ It has provided some of the new funding for activities and strategies that had not previously been part of state budgets – such as scholarship funds, creation of infrastructure for career development, personnel registries, career development management/coordination staff, reorganization of licensing agencies' functions and standards to add levels of standards and expand licensors' roles to include quality improvement, assessment and monitoring.

There have been many indications of progress across the states:

- ❖ The creation and maintenance of new collaborative relationships among stakeholder groups has frequently led to the re-organization of public and private agencies. In a number of states inter-agency planning councils and/or joint budgets for early childhood services have been created by executive or legislative mandate. These have typically included the state licensing agency, Departments of Health and Human Services, Social Services, and Education.
- ❖ Licensing requirements for initial and on-going training of staff working with young children have been raised;
- ❖ Increased federal and state funding has been made available to provide training;
- ❖ Non-credit training has been completely re-organized in many states according to a collaboratively developed and officially recognized core knowledge framework, with defined steps and levels of difficulty.
- ❖ New credentials have been created in states to require and recognize specialized training for entry-level staff, infant-toddler teachers, program directors, special needs, and diversity issues. These credentials are designed to articulate with existing state and national credentials such as the Child Development Associate (CDA), and state teacher certification for pre-K to grade 12.

- ❖ More than 30 states have defined levels of program licensing tied to quality standards, often with accompanying tiered reimbursement strategies;
- ❖ States have been creating pathways for career development by establishing articulation agreements to award college credit for specified non-credit training and for the CDA credential that can then be applied toward an Associate Degree. Work is also progressing to establish articulation agreements between Associate Degree and Bachelor's degree programs in a number of states.

Participants felt that at the state level, a variety of strategies have been successful for generating funding and structural support for career development efforts, and for identifying and removing barriers to progress. The key has been to identify the arena with the greatest potential for access and movement within each state. These varying political climates have shown the best approach in some states to be through the Governor's Office, while in others it has been through state agencies, and in others through the legislature.

VI. Challenges and barriers seen by participants

Participants made it clear that with the successes, a great deal of work remains to be done. Many of the barriers and challenges they face stem from pre-existing structures and definitions within the field of early care and education; such as the divisions between the functions and clout of agencies funding and supporting child care and Head Start, and those supporting public schools and school-based programs. In many states this division has blocked options for comprehensive planning for young children that involves both the Department of Education and the agencies that fund child care services., even though in other states there has been collaboration that help move their work forward.

Other barriers represent the older perceptions and thinking within the higher education system about the professional development needs and potential of practitioners in early care and education. Specifically states cited the continued existence in some states of “terminal” degrees in Early Childhood at the Associate Degree level that make it virtually impossible to secure articulation agreements with Bachelor’s Degree programs.

Another issue has been the historical and ongoing focus at the Bachelor’s level on preparation of teachers for the public school system. Generally course work in Bachelor’s degree programs, even in those described as having an early childhood concentration or emphasis, covers the age range from four years old to third grade, rather than a focus from birth to age 5. Student teaching placements are usually in public school kindergarten and primary classrooms, rather than community-based early childhood programs.

The resulting alternatives for people who want to work in community-based programs and/or with children younger than four years old have been to earn a degree that focuses on pre-K to third grade or kindergarten to sixth grade or to seek a degree in early childhood development and family studies in different majors and departments such Child Psychology, Human Services or, or Family and Consumer Sciences Such degree programs usually most or all of the professional knowledge and skills needed to work with young children the possibility of achieving state teacher certification is automatically eliminated.

Recent changes in federal policy with the “No Child Left Behind” legislation have shifted the focus of action toward school readiness in many states. The growing phenomenon of efforts to create “universal pre-kindergarten” for four and sometimes also three year olds has generated fears that such programs will further split the field of early care and education by housing all or most of such programs within the public school and thereby shifting funds away from the system changes that have focused on creating a coherent system of programs and services for children from birth to five. Another concern is that pre-K programs will not stress the necessity of hiring teachers with sufficient early childhood knowledge and skills, especially if a state’s teacher certification system

does not include an early childhood credential that requires emphasis on children under the age of five.

Finally, but not least, these planners are concerned with the challenge of continuing to build and maintain a professional development infrastructure that will coordinate and provide funding for the kinds of training and credentials that have been developed over the past dozen years. They are keenly aware of the political and policy shifts that may affect them and are looking for ways to institutionalize what they have built. Increasingly they see the need for evaluation and assessment of the status of their efforts: to document changes in policy and progress in system-building, and their impact on early care and education practitioners. They also feel that assessment can identify remaining challenges and unmet needs. They have become convinced that in order to secure continued funding and support for this work, they must be able to provide data that will prove both the validity and success of their efforts, and the areas of need that remain.

The challenges fall into four areas of concern:

- Funding
 - ✓ Developing techniques to identify the actual cost of professional development; spread as it is across other agencies and other budgets.
 - ✓ Finding a means to stable funding identifying effective mechanisms such as the general fund, a dedicated tax, tobacco money, or other new ideas

- System-building
 - ✓ Building a coherent finance system
 - ✓ Institutionalizing professional development systems;
 - ✓ Institutionalizing higher salaries to reduce turnover, through higher reimbursement for higher quality or other compensation initiatives;
or
 - ✓ Extending the scope of comprehensive planning
 - ✓ Examining the role and relationship of universal pre-kindergarten efforts to the current status of the early childhood system

- Capacity-building in higher education
 - ✓ Expanding the available of courses and programs through distance learning;
 - ✓ Increasing access to college courses through a range of scheduling options, locating courses in community settings;
 - ✓ Increasing the availability of English as a Second Language (ESL) support

- ✓ Expanding the range of options at the Bachelor's degrees level to include majors and concentrations that do not necessarily lead to state teacher certification
 - ✓ Expanding the number of academic institutions that offer a degree with a concentration in early education and child development.
 - ✓ Assuring articulation among early childhood programs offered at different levels.
- Increasing awareness and support for systemic approaches to professional development
- ✓ Increasing public awareness and support for professionalization of early care and education;
 - ✓ Increasing the understanding and engagement of practitioners in professionalization and quality initiatives;
 - ✓ Generating legislative support to build a base for long-term funding and policy change
 - ✓ Assisting planning groups to add representatives of new stakeholder groups.
 - ✓ Mentoring new activists to keep the work moving forward

VII. Needs for continuing support seen by participants

Participants in the meetings identified a variety of issues that reflect the fact that career development efforts have achieved some policy and systems changes, but are by no means institutionalized in most states. Some of the needs they described speak to a desire to break through a systems “ceiling” that is the product of structures, funding patterns, and concepts that do not fit the reality of early care and education, and in fact, continue to generate policies and initiatives that undercut efforts to unify the field and move it forward.

They identified needs for:

❖ Continuing Consultation

This might take the form of direct consultation with individual state groups, experimental projects involving several states to test and compare strategies, and/or structured “think tanks involving state planners. The issues participants said they need to address include:

- How to think across systems – to build new collaborations, to reach out to the “unlikely partners” (e.g., medical, mental health, early intervention)
 - How to create new language –to “repackage the message” to be more effective in reaching a broader range of constituencies
 - How to re-conceptualize the scope and boundaries of early care and education and therefore create a unified coherent approach to professional development
 - How to continue to build comprehensive planning
 - How to develop collaboration across states
 - How to develop a focus on 0-5, and address needs of 0-3
- ❖ How to create a unified approach to assessment that can affect policy and funding;
- system assessment;
 - early care and education program assessment;
 - child assessment
- ❖ How to generate information and data that can be used by the early care and education field to influence the general public

❖ An ongoing process of face to face networking

- More opportunities to meet at national and regional levels to share information and generate new ideas
- Opportunities to explore how state groups can help one another with the issues identified above

❖ Information and data about developments

- Policy bulletins
- Case studies
- Analytic reports
- Progress and outcome data

VIII. Assessment and the building of career development systems

Why do we need to think about assessment of career development efforts?

Although assessment has become a buzz word during the past year or two, most of the ideas of assessment that are being put forward are appropriate to the task of individual and program assessment rather than a way to look at systems change. Instead of rejecting the idea of the relevance of assessment for career development efforts and other efforts at system change we need to see how and why it is not only useful but also essential to support the continuation of these efforts. Instead of seeing assessment only as a strategy for evaluating final outcomes, we can instead use it for several purposes:

- To document early and interim outcomes
- To document the impact of policy changes
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of strategies
- To identify needed changes in strategies and activities

How do we approach assessment of career development efforts?

The key to the usefulness of assessment for career development and systems change is to identify our “theory of change” that underlies these initiatives. Doing so early has the value of bringing forth discussion of whether all members of the group agree that the desired change will result from the proposed action. Once we have done that we can identify our specific goals and objectives, the strategies we are using to achieve them and the impact of our efforts. We will be looking for outcomes and changes over a period of time, from the beginnings of the systems change effort, and continually at intervals as we continue the work. We will be thinking about “small wins” on the way toward our objectives.

We can assess the planning process itself as a means of developing new collaborations, involving new players, and generating new activities and strategies. Over time we will be able to look at the process of implementation of new policies, systems, and programs, and to assess their effects. Ultimately the question will be to determine the extent to which we have achieved sustainability and institutionalization of the changes.

What are the specific elements of a career development assessment model?

The framework for an assessment model for career development and systems change efforts is built on our specific theory of change: the elements of change needed to build career development (Morgan et al, 1993):

- Systemic planning
- Effective quality controls

- Progressive, role-related articulated training
- Recognition and reward systems
- Expanded and coordinated funding
- Equity and access

These elements become the components of our assessment effort, and enable us to use the questions we need to ask to see development and change in each area:

- ✓ What outcomes did you expect from your proposal, whether in the long run or the short run?
- ✓ Does your entire group agree with the idea that your proposed plan will bring the change you want?
- ✓ What has happened? (planning and implementation activities)
- ✓ What policy or systems changes have occurred?
- ✓ Who has been involved? (Does the list of planners reflect the full range of stakeholders needed to effect change?)
- ✓ Who has been affected?
- ✓ What external factors have affected the initiative? Were they anticipated? Could they have been anticipated?
- ✓ Do our strategies, activities, and policy changes move us toward goals and objectives for career development systems change?

The information/data gathered to find the answers to these questions will enable us to meet a range of challenges:

- Documenting successful change to influence continuing or new funding;
- Identifying and explaining problems or shortfalls and creating corrective strategies and actions;
- Describing and documenting the benefits of the changes you have made.

Rather than seeing assessment as a weapon that will be used against us, we can instead turn it to meet our own needs and ultimately use it to benefit our own efforts.

IX. Next Steps

Steps that local, state or national funding sources could take

Career development strategies in the states constitute the strongest elements in efforts to build a common infrastructure to achieve quality in early care and education. Without continuing sources of information and support planners and policy-makers may be unable to surmount the tide of new demands and policy changes because they may be unable to adapt their current strategies and structures to incorporate them. From the comments made by the group in June, we believe there are activities that could be a significant response to their expressed needs:

- ❖ Help states to do a self-assessment of their status and progress in career development efforts, including the implementation and operation of their systems. This might take the form of an initiative including a number of state groups selected from volunteers, or it might be demonstrated in a single state. Such an initiative would not only assist participating states, but would also make it possible to develop and disseminate a self-assessment model that could be used by other states.
- ❖ Gather updated information and publish analyses and strategy papers addressing the range of issues affecting quality and career development issues across the states.
- ❖ Provide an ongoing focus for the distribution of information and prototype materials describing and comparing the factors affecting the development and maintenance of quality efforts and systems;
- ❖ Provide technical assistance to address implementation issues; and
- ❖ Facilitate meetings of representatives from state groups that focus on specific aspects of career development efforts, such as licensing, Registries, career ladders, credentialing, higher education, funding and incentives, and infrastructure.

It is essential to understand and accept the idea that large scale change of the kind embodied in career development efforts in states must evolve through five essential stages: planning, implementation, self-assessment, correction, and further implementation (Weick, 1984). Most states are now in the midst of early implementation. The ability to self-assess and correct is intrinsic to the process of change and development. It would be tragic for states to lose what they have accomplished because they lack the help and resources to move ahead.

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