

Collaborations to Promote Early Childhood Education and Childcare

September 9, 2008

Audience Q&A Session

Fran Simon - 12:16 pm

Q: What do you mean by "good enough?" Is there a definition?

Harriet Dichter

A: We have a study, known as the Reach and Risk Study, in which we define which programs meet our quality standards for "good enough." This is an objective standard and for child care, it has to do with the STAR level of the program. You can take a look at our approach by going to the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality web site, http://www.pakeys.org/reach_rpt.aspx. We are currently updating the report but this gives you a good idea about how we approach this particular problem and definition.

Alicia Santamaria - 12:15 pm

Q: Raising A Reader, (Bay Area) San Mateo, CA. Question for Sarah: What is the difference between a dept., cabinet, office, division, & council - in terms of their activities & efficacy?

Sarah Daily - 12:22 pm

A: The mission, scope and activities all vary by state. The ability for each entity to impact systems change really depends on the level of authority given and how accountable the organization is for the activities for which they are charged.

Harriet Dichter

- Department- an independent agency, i.e. a freestanding structure
- Cabinet- a coordinating body, does not usually have jurisdiction over particular program but brings together high-level decision makers.
- Office/Division- these often mean the same thing and are usually an entity within a freestanding department.

For PA, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning is part of both departments of education and welfare. In MD, the division is part of the education agency but encompasses many programs that were transferred from their human services agency.

Kelly Wussow - 12:19 pm

Q: Are public libraries included in the early learning programs listed?

Harriet Dichter

A. We do a lot of collaboration with the public libraries. In particular, there is a children's "one book" initiative through which we go into early childhood programs and hand out the book, read it, and build connections. Libraries are often collaborative partners as well.

Patty Archer-Ward - 12:24 pm

Q: To Harriet Dichter: In your framework for Systems Building, what outcomes were you tracking, and what are they?

Harriet Dichter

A. We are most interested in the outcomes that are related to children's educational achievement and their economic contribution over time. We are using developmentally appropriate assessments to measure early childhood education (ECE) progress across all domains as we feel that educational achievement is related to all domains of development.

Patty Archer-Ward - 12:25 pm

Q: I would appreciate more information regarding the Keystone STARS

Harriet Dichter

A. Please go to the PA Keys web site, at www.pakeys.org, to learn more. If you have questions, please email me directly and we will get you additional information.

Barbara Evans - 12:27 pm

Q: Robert Goerge: Why do you think you are only reaching half of the eligible children?

Robert Goerge

A: For 3- and 4-year olds in Chicago, about half of those who are eligible for Head Start are participating in Head Start. Additional children cannot be served simply because there is no additional funding from the U.S. DHHS for this program in Chicago. In addition, many families might prefer that their child get care in another setting (child care center, family day care home, with a relative) or stay at home with a parent.

Mike Johaneck - 12:33 pm

Q: How should the preparation and support of educational leaders change so as to enable them to better support an integrated local approach to early childhood?

Harriet Dichter

A. This is a very important topic and one that must be addressed so that new school leaders have a good knowledge base of early childhood education (ECE) and do not have to be educated on the job. School board members should be encouraged and approached to get the information that they need through their leadership networks and local ECE people. We have found that as we built our pre-k program with a diverse delivery model that it is helping the school district leadership be more embracing of community ECE.

Robert Frawley - 12:35 pm

Q: Harriet: Could you talk more about your Community Engagement Initiative?

Harriet Dichter

A. We have Community Engagement Groups organized by county. They are provided with very modest funding of about \$45,000 or \$50,000 and have to contribute a local match. Their work on educating community members and leaders about ECE and also work on transition issues between school and ECE programs.

We offer ongoing supportive technical assistance and materials to help with communications and messaging: i.e. postcards, monthly calls, a calendar of potential outreach and advocacy activities (we are happy to share that), leadership/capacity building meetings, and other strategies to enable these groups to develop their skills and confidence level on educating community members and leaders. Please email me if you want more information on this and I will get you in touch with the staff members who have day-to-day responsibility for this work.

Lois Hutter-Pishgahi - 12:40 pm

Q: Indiana Institute on Disability and Community/Early Childhood Center, Bloomington, IN. Are there classrooms in which children are funded by two or more sources? Are children in the full-day collaboration settings in Chicago attending a full-day program in one setting?

Harriet Dichter

A. Yes, we have classrooms with many funding streams.

Robert Goerge

A. Yes. The full-day collaboration settings are in one setting.

Sherry Linton - 12:43 pm

Q: In a time of limited resources, to what extent are services for infants and toddlers integrated into these early care and education systems building? Especially with the research indicating that the earlier we begin the better.

Harriet Dichter

A. We have included infants and toddlers in Keystone STARS and we have other programs just for this population, especially Nurse Family Partnership and the Parent Child Home Literacy Program.

Hillery Gladden - 12:44 pm

Q: For networking and partnership purposes, do you know of a resource that lists early childhood related orgs/foundations? Perhaps by state?

Sarah Daily

A: I am not familiar with any resource that lists such organizations by state. Local United Ways may have a better sense of resources pertinent to your area.

Fran Bernstein - 12:46 pm

Q: To all panelists: How have you involved unions in your collaboration efforts?

Harriet Dichter

A. Some of our staff members are unionized so we work with those unions. In addition, we have an Executive Order for family child care and regulation-exempt child care unions and we work cooperatively with the group that does the organizing.

Vinetta Freeman - 12:45 pm

Q: What type of assessment tool is used? Is school readiness the assessment tool used in pre-K or Kindergarten or both?

Harriet Dichter

A. In Pennsylvania, we are using Work Sampling on-line and Ounce as our assessment conduit.

Suki Graves - 12:53 pm

Q: Have any states reached out to include Native American Tribes? (Beyond the required participation of the Tribal HS)

Sarah Daily - 12:56 pm

A: Yes, though there may be others, I am most familiar with efforts in Arizona, Montana and Washington that have all made tribal involvement a focus of their early childhood systems efforts. Each of these states held Governor's Summits on Early Childhood which included tribal leadership. You can read more about these summits on our web site: www.nga.org/center/earlychild

Tamara Kramer - 12:58 pm

Q: Are there any states that have adopted a strong strategy to view Early Childhood Education as a system instead of many different silos of programming based on the particular federal funding stream?

Harriet Dichter

A. I hope that you see that this is the PA approach.

Sarah Daily

A: We are actually in the process of developing an issue brief which highlights state efforts to develop systems within and across the domains of early learning, health, family supports and special needs. We hope to release the brief this winter. In the meantime, I would point to states like North and South Carolina, Arizona, Michigan, Virginia, and Washington. These states are working to create an early childhood system at both the local level and state level.

Mike Johaneck - 1:00 pm

Q: With the range of factors affecting early childhood educational outcomes, local school leaders ask us: 1) how do I determine the 2-3 factors that most affect my local students' educational outcomes? and 2) what are the most promising models to integrate?

Harriet Dichter

A. I believe that the evidence is clear about the need for high-quality, classroom-based programming to prepare children in the years prior to Kindergarten entry and that you can make this case clearly to school districts. There are immediate impacts for districts on attendance, achievement and special education placements.

Christina Bruhn - 1:01 pm

Q: Bob, is there any information available about how many children in foster care are actually enrolled in pre-k opportunities, how they are screened for development, and how many are assessed for/eligible for/receive early childhood special education services?

Robert Goerge

A. I am not aware of any such information.