

Development Plan for Early Childhood in West Virginia

Planning Framework

Purpose

Nothing matters more than the well-being of our youngest children. It is the truest measure of our humanity and the foundation of our collective future. If we attend to children’s development in the earliest years, their ability to learn, love and contribute will amaze us.

We have a highly favorable environment at this time to intensify our early childhood efforts in West Virginia. We have strong local collaboration among schools, Head Start, child care and other programs. We have state-level leadership from the Early Childhood Advisory Council and its member organizations. Our state’s Pre-K program is rated among the best in the nation. We have substantial federal support for home visitation and other early childhood programs, with expertise from national organizations about best practices.

In order to take full advantage of this opportunity, Governor Tomblin issued Executive Order No. 5-13 to create a nine-member West Virginia Early Childhood Planning Task Force and designated Robert S. Kiss as its chairperson. The Task force is charged with producing a Development Plan for Early Childhood in West Virginia by December 31, 2013. The plan will define the components, priorities and costs of a quality early childhood system and strategies for its implementation and governance. The Task Force will include extensive involvement of state and local agencies and organizations, as well as parents, professionals and the public, in its work.

People

- Parents, relatives and other caregivers of young children
- Councils, coalitions and associations with an interest in early childhood development
- Business community, including employers of low- and moderate-income parents
- Public and the media, including social media
- Policymakers

Perspective

- Pre-natal through Pre-K, and through third grade for services needed beyond the school day
- The primary role of parents in the care, nurturing and development of young children
- “Whole child” orientation, including all areas of development, with early learning standards for infants and toddler and for ages 3 to 5.
- “School-readiness” framework that encompasses the child, family, school and community
- Equity and cultural sensitivity across income, race, urban/rural and other dimensions

Process

- Broad-based and transparent
- Both comprehensive and strategic
- Builds on what we have
- Includes the activities identified in the Executive Order:
 - a. Identify those services currently available in the State for improving the health, development and school readiness of children birth to five and, where advisable, identify new services with the same purpose; and
 - b. Review services available to new mothers regarding pre-natal preparation to improve health, development and school readiness of children at birth; and
 - c. Prioritize each service by analyzing the potential impact of each service on early childhood health, development, and school readiness; and
 - d. Identify the costs associated with implementation of the identified priority recommendations; and
 - e. Recommend strategies for improving, coordinating and, where advisable, implementing services in the State which improve early childhood health, development and school readiness; and
 - f. Analyze the value of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) with respect to child care services in the State as a critical element of a comprehensive system of services for young children; and
 - g. Recommend a plan by which West Virginia could fund the identified priority services; and
 - h. Recommend a plan for implementation; and
 - i. Recommend whether changes should be made to the governance of State administration of services pertaining to early childhood and to families with young children, with the steps needed to implement any changes in governance; and
 - j. Recommend strategies to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of early childhood services and recommend changes with respect to those services.

Products

- A Development Plan for Early Childhood in West Virginia, as well as related recommendations as described above, by December 31, 2013
- Summaries of the Plan and related documents, as appropriate
- A companion web page
- Presentations of Plan and related recommendations