

# Preliminary Findings

Stakeholder Survey  
and  
Discussion Groups

## Survey Participation

- 781 Responses – 54 counties represented
- 91.4% Female
- 41.3% are parents of young children or expectant parents
- 49.4% work for a local program that provides services to young children
- 17.6% work for a state agency that funds or oversees early childhood programs
- 14.1% are people who do not currently use or provide early childhood services

## Discussion Group Participation

- 19 Discussion Groups convened
- 290 Participants in discussion groups
- 243 Exit surveys completed by discussion group participants – 88% Female
- Most discussion group participants were either:
  - Parents who use early childhood services
  - Providers of early childhood services
- Some representation from other stakeholders including healthcare professionals, educators, other community agencies, and business community.

## Key Themes

from the discussion groups and survey

- Improve Quality
  - Higher Standards
  - Qualified Staff
  - Increased Monitoring
- Increase Awareness of Services
  - Parents (and healthcare professionals) are often not aware of the range of services available
- Expand Access
  - Lack of transportation limits access for many families
  - Some services are not available in large parts of the state (Home Visiting and High Quality Child Care)

## Survey Findings

consistent opinions by all types of respondents were noted

- 75% or more of all survey respondents think:
  - Programs for young children should be required to meet high standards.
  - Salaries and benefits of the early childhood workforce need to be increased.
  - Public funds should be used to assist low income working families with high quality childcare.
  - Employers should provide special types of support for workers with young children.

65% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:

*“I would support a small increase in state taxes or fees if the funds were used to provide high quality early childhood programs”.*

Only 15.7% of survey respondents disagreed with the statement.

Users of early childhood services indicated they have had the “following types of problems when trying to find programs and services for young children in the area where they live”.

- 32.3% had concerns about the quality of the program or service.
- 23.6% had a hard time finding out what services were available.
- 17.4% indicated the needed program was too expensive.
- 16.4% said the hours the program was available did not meet their needs.

### Discussion Group Findings

Systemic issues that need to be addressed:

- Local coordination among services and programs serving young children.
- Screening of young children for special needs.
- Integrated data system that allows for sharing of information across programs and services.
- Improved quality standards and program evaluation.
- Ongoing staff training and certification.

### Current Challenges

- Availability of services in some areas
- Lack of transportation
- **Affordability** (some families can't afford quality programs)
- Need improved collaboration between early childhood programs and child's medical home
- Different pay scales for the same work
- Gap in services for 3 yr. olds
- Need for more specialists
  - (Speech, PT, OT, Behavioral/Mental Health)

### Current Strengths

- Universal Pre K, Birth to Three, and research-based home visiting programs
- Caring and committed early childhood workforce
- Good working relationship among state level program administrators
- Attention being paid to improving early childhood system
- Broad recognition of importance of early years of life to later success