

2010

New Jersey
Council for
Young Children

**STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE
NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR
YOUNG CHILDREN**

2010 Strategic Report of the New Jersey Council for Young Children

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2010 Strategic Report of the New Jersey Council for Young Children

Section I. Setting the Context

The Purpose of this Report

The 2010 Strategic Report of the New Jersey Council for Young Children is the Council's first report since its inception just four months ago. The purpose of the report is three fold: First, to provide a venue for the initial work of the Council's initial working committees; Second, to summarize for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services the state's progress and challenges with regard to the seven functions/areas of work assigned to each State Advisory Council under federal law; Third, to present these progress summaries and the first set of possible strategic goals for the coming three years to the public for review and comment.

Children are born learners. During the first five years of life, their bodies and brains grow faster than at any other time. Almost 90% of who we are — our intellect, personality, social skills — is developed by age five.

“Build the Future:
A Blueprint for Early Learning,
February 2006

This report is not the actual federal application for grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). That document will be submitted to the federal government in July 2010 and will be posted as well to the Council's website.¹

As required by law, the Council hosted a Public Hearing on the contents of the draft 2010 Strategic Report on April 21, 2010. Written testimony from that hearing has been posted on the Council's website and is summarized within this report as well. Council members gratefully acknowledge the thoughtful responses of individuals and organizations as part of that public hearing.

A Snapshot of the State of New Jersey and its Young Children

New Jersey is home to nearly 650,000 children under the age of six. This age cohort constitutes 33% of the 2.1 million New Jersey children under age 18. The US Census estimates the total population of New Jersey at 8.7 million as of July 2009.² Although New Jersey ranks 46th in size, it is now the 11th most populated state in the nation.

Like many states, New Jersey is becoming more diverse, with 46% of the state's children under age 18 identified as non-white, including African American, Hispanic, Asian or a combination of ethnicities.³ In 2008, Hispanic families accounted for 21% of the state's children, while 15% lived in African American families.

¹ Online at -- www.nj.gov/education/ece/njcyv/

² U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Population as of July 1, 2009

³ New Jersey 2010KidsCount report, The State of Our Children. Online at -- www.acnj.org

In addition to this increase in diversity, New Jersey is experiencing an increase in the numbers and percentage of low-income families (that is, families living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level). The Association for Children of New Jersey reports that, in 2008, 27% of the state's children lived in low income families.⁴ Among children under the age of six, 29% live in low income families.⁵

Of equal concern is the fact that between 2004 and 2008, the percentage of children living in extreme poverty (that is, less than 50% of the Federal Poverty Level) rose to 6% (116, 000 children). In 2008, the Federal Poverty Level for a family of three was \$17,600 and for a family of four was \$21,200.⁶ Of note, nearly one in four children lived in families where no parent held full-time employment, and there has been a "sharp rise" in the numbers of children receiving support from the federal food stamp program.⁷

Among children under the age of 18, there is a strong relationship between family race and ethnicity, and living in poor and low-income families. In 2008, as reported by the National Center for Children in Poverty, 5% of white children under the age of 18 lived in low income families as compared with 49% of African American children and 56% of Hispanic children. Among children under the age of six, 14% lived in low-income families (possibly the result of the nation's recession) as did 54% of young Hispanic children. Looking at the other side of the coin, 86% of white young children lived in families with incomes greater than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and when per capita income is considered, New Jersey ranks 2nd among states with a 2008 per capita income of \$70,378, an increase of over \$3,000 in 2007.

The Annie E. Casey KidsCount Data Center⁸ ranks New Jersey 9th in the nation in overall child well-being, and the National Survey of Children's Health⁹ reports that New Jersey exceeds the national average on such indicators as children in excellent or very good physical health (86%), school-aged children exhibiting two or more positive social skills (97%), children with a preventive medical visit in the past year (95%) and children current insured (92%).

A Snap Shot of New Jersey's Nationally-Acclaimed Preschool Program

New Jersey has been a national leader in the development of high quality, effective preschool programs through its 31 school districts formerly known as Abbott. In 2010, nearly 43,000 three- and four-year olds were enrolled in full day, high quality preschool programs.

A December 2009 report from the New America Foundation provides a succinct overview of New Jersey's leadership and progress in building a high quality, effective universal preschool program for children in the Garden State. "Today, New Jersey has built a robust, diverse

⁴ New Jersey 2010 KidsCount report, The State of Our Children. Online at -- www.acnj.org.

⁵ National Center for Children in Poverty. Online at -- nccp.org/profiles/NJ_profile_6.html

⁶ In 2009, the Federal Poverty Level for a family three was \$18,310; for a family of four was \$22,050.

⁷ The State of Our Children, pp. 7-12. Online at -- www.acnj.org

⁸ Online at -- www.kidscount.org

⁹ Online at -- www.nschdata.org/StateProfiles

provider system to deliver high-quality universal pre-K in the *Abbott* districts, has taken steps to expand pre-K services for at-risk children in the state's other 560 districts, and has done more than perhaps any other state in the country to link these early learning investments with early literacy reforms in the K-12 system, creating a seamless, high-quality PreK-3rd early learning experience for the state's most disadvantaged youngsters."

"These efforts have yielded real rewards. Pre-K programs in New Jersey have made dramatic quality improvements over the past decade. Research confirms that *Abbott* pre-K programs are producing significant learning gains for the state's children, and that children are sustaining them into the early elementary years. A higher percentage of fourth-graders read at grade level in New Jersey than in any other state except for Massachusetts, as measured by the federally administered National Assessment of Educational Progress. Poor and minority fourth-graders in New Jersey are also more likely to read proficiently than their peers in all but a handful of states. And the *Abbott* districts that have most aggressively implemented intensive literacy supports at the elementary level, while also aligning pre-K and the early grades, have closed the achievement gap for the disadvantaged and minority students they serve."^{10 11}

A 2009 study of New Jersey's *Abbott* preschool program (the *Abbott* Preschool Program Longitudinal Evaluation Study)¹², showed that the carefully designed program increased children's school success. The progress of three- and four-year-old children who participated in the *Abbott* preschool program for one and two years was tracked and compared to children who did not attend. The results, in brief, are below:

- *Abbott* preschool attendees perform better in oral language and conceptual knowledge
- Reading skills differences favor the preschool group
- High quality preschool attendance results in improved mathematics achievement
- Grade retention was cut in half for the *Abbott* preschool group
- Effects are greatest for children who started the program at age three.

New Jersey is also home to the highly regarded National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), dedicated to comprehensive early childhood systems building. Each year, NIEER tracks and reports on a set of access, quality and resource issues related to state preschool programs across the 50 states.¹³ In the 2009 Yearbook, New Jersey ranked first in the nation on overall investment in preschool programs but 16th in the number of children that participate in the high quality program. In terms of the nationally accepted 10 core indicators of preschool quality, New Jersey *Abbott* sites achieved nine of the ten, missing the requirement that

¹⁰ Education Reform Starts Early. A White Paper from the New America Foundation. December 2009. Online at -- www.newamerica.net/publications/policy/education_reform_starts_early_0

¹¹ The same report notes that, despite this success, "children in the state's 560 non-*Abbott* school districts—which serve half of all poor children in New Jersey—still largely lack access to the benefits of high-quality pre-K, full-day kindergarten, and other early learning interventions provided in the *Abbott* districts."

¹² *Abbott* Preschool Program Longitudinal Evaluation Research Study, 2009.

¹³ Results reported here are from the 2009 Annual Preschool Yearbook, online at -- [//nieer.org/yearbook/pdf](http://nieer.org/yearbook/pdf)

assistant teachers hold at least a Child Development Certificate.¹⁴ Preschool programs funded as part of the New Jersey Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI) achieved eight of the ten quality standards as did the Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) sites. In 2009, 70-71% of preschoolers served across these programs were served in Abbott programs.¹⁵

New Jersey's Vision for a Comprehensive, High Quality Early Childhood System

The New Jersey Council for Young Children's vision is to align and improve New Jersey's numerous and complex initiatives into a streamlined system of early care and education that reaches all infants and young children in need of services. This coordinated delivery system will focus on the whole child, optimizing all aspects of learning and development. A continuous system of evaluation and improvement will help the Council achieve its goals and objectives. The system will build upon the highly successful and nationally recognized state funded preschool program implemented in the state's most economically disadvantaged school districts, formerly known as Abbott.

The movement toward a collaborative, comprehensive and high quality early childhood system comes from a history of initiatives by state stakeholders invested in optimizing services for infants, young children and their families, particularly those that are most vulnerable.

Efforts to provide coordinated, comprehensive services have come in many forms. New Jersey hosts an Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) initiative, funded with federal public health resources, and has an active Head Start Collaboration Office and sector. The Head Start Collaboration Office is housed in the Department of Education, helping to ensure communication and collaboration with state-funded preschool programs. Although these two important initiatives originate in different sectors – early health and early childhood education – they both strive to move the State of New Jersey toward coordinated and integrated services for young children and their families.

New Jersey's early childhood systems building began in 2003 with the New Jersey BUILD Initiative – coordinated by the Association for Children of New Jersey. This broad group of citizens and organizations worked for several years to produce a landmark report entitled *Build the Future: A Blueprint for Early Learning in New Jersey* (February 2006). This report articulated three goals to move a birth to five early learning agenda forward in New Jersey. Each goal is consistent with the role, functions and goals of the New Jersey Council for Young Children further referred throughout this document as the Council:

¹⁴ The ten indicators are: Comprehensive learning standards; Teacher has BA and specialized PreK training; Assistant teacher has a CDA; Annual PD (in-service) of 15+ hours; Class size 20 or less; Staff-child ratio 1:10 or better; Vision, hearing, health services; At least one meal and site visits or other monitoring. For more information, see the Annual Preschool Yearbook, op cit

¹⁵ Further detail on each of these programs is provided later in this document. Of note, the Abbott districts served 38,800 students in 2008 as compared with 660 served by the ELLI and 7,500 served by the ECPA program.

- **Strengthen a Good Foundation** by investing in preschool, creating a competent early childhood workforce through better professional development and adequate compensation, and improve the quality of the child care system.
- **Construct a Better Framework at the State Level** by improving service coordination , making early learning a priority for state policy and funding, ensuring that families are engaged in policy and program decisions, and mounting a statewide education campaign on the importance of early learning for families and the public.
- **Develop an Infrastructure at the Community Level** by supporting and educating infant/toddler caregivers to improve the quality of early care and education and supporting families in effective parenting through education, support and access to services.¹⁶

In addition to building a comprehensive system that is responsive to the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse population from birth to five, the Council believes that the emerging early childhood system must reach into the early elementary school years as well. The expansion of focus from a birth to five to a birth through eight framework reflects currently evolving research and best practices, including linking and aligning the preschool experience to formal early schooling in kindergarten through grade three.¹⁷

Working with preschool through third grade programs across the New Jersey Department of Education's, the Division of Early Childhood Education is now responsible for the development, implementation, and alignment of preschool through third grade program (PK-3) components with a focus on standards, curricula, and assessment. Creation of this division acknowledges that a continuum of developmental stages constitute what is traditionally known as early childhood, further supports New Jersey's investment in high quality preschool by providing high quality kindergarten through third grade educational experiences for young children. The preschool through third grade work is organized within a framework that includes structural (administration, class size, teacher-child ratio, etc.), process (quality of classroom environments, family involvement, teacher-child interactions, etc), and alignment (standards, curriculum, assessments, etc.) components that impact children's development and learning.

In their commitment to a birth through age eight system of services, New Jersey policy makers and practitioners also understand that a comprehensive early learning and development system is, in reality, a "system of systems" that includes four core service domains:

- **Physical, oral and mental health services**, such as health insurance coverage, prenatal care, developmental and behavioral screenings, well child visits and other primary and

¹⁶ Build the Future: A Blueprint for Early Learning in New Jersey, February 2006. pp. 5-15

¹⁷ Cite from the Foundation for Child Development, PreK-3

prenatal care, programs to support maternal and infant, and child mental health, nutrition and food programs, early dental care

- **Family supports and services**, including safe and stable housing, family literacy, parenting education, financial literacy programs, access to specific services for families with parental mental health challenges, domestic violence, substance abuse or incarceration, and supports resulting in economic self-sufficiency, family and work policies that support healthy child development and sound family engagement
- **Early education and care**¹⁸ including licensed and unlicensed family-based child care, center-based child care, preschool and Head Start, and
- **Early intervention**, including Early Head Start, Early Intervention and other birth to three programs and preschool special education.¹⁹

In New Jersey, the services necessary to build a comprehensive and well-coordinated early childhood system for all of the state's young children exist and are administratively managed and funded by a broad array of public-private, state and local agencies. No single department or agency exists in New Jersey with the authority to manage, coordinate and evaluate an early childhood system. For this reason, the Council places a high priority upon continuing to build strong, honest, respectful and accountable relationships as part of the core mission and operational principles of governmental agencies at the state, county and local levels.

"This is a unique moment in time when early learning is no longer an afterthought, but has come into its own and is recognized as the first and most critical stage in human development..."

Arne Duncan
US Secretary of Education
November 2009

At the same time, the early childhood sector recognizes the need to continue to advance program quality and access, and to make the essential connection between program access, program quality and demonstrable child and family outcomes, as frequently been articulated by the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Speaking at the annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Duncan asserted, "For decades, early learning programs have been judged primarily by their inputs—by teacher/child ratio, by the educational credentials of their caregivers and teachers, by the cost of services provided. Inputs are important—and we absolutely have to continue to pay attention to basic indicators of program quality and safety...Yet, ultimately, teachers, parents and policymakers also need to know if young children are healthy, that they are developing essential social and emotional skills such as self-regulation and cooperative play,

¹⁸ NOTE: The Council's Collaboration Subcommittee on Participation uses the term "early learning" rather than early care and education.

¹⁹ Building Brighter Futures, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

ESEA Priorities for Investment	
College- and Career-Ready Students Standards/ Assessments; Data systems/ use; Challenge Schools; Turnaround school grants; Resource equity	Successful, Safe, Healthy Students Cradle to Career continuum in high poverty communities Redesign & expand school schedule, quality afterschool, comprehensive supports
Effective Teachers & Leaders RTTT effectiveness definitions Student growth measurement T & P Evaluation Systems Public reports on T & P performance Teacher/Leader Innovation Fund Teacher pathways Transformation leaders for Turnaround Schools	Fostering Innovation & Excellence Race to the Top Investing in Innovation Supporting Effective Charters Promoting school choice Magnet school assistance program
Programs for Diverse Learners English Learner education...Students With disabilities, Migrant education...Homeless, neglected & Delinquent student, Impact Aid	Cross-Cutting Priorities 1 ESEA funding flexibility Expansion funding for success Evaluation and Knowledge Base Cross-Cutting Priorities 2 Technology, Evidence, Efficiency English Learners/ Special Ed/ Rural

As can clearly be seen in the schematic above, at least one of these priority areas is explicitly anchored in a “cradle to career” context for children growing up in high poverty communities, and almost all of the other priorities have an analog in the provision of early education programs.

Reauthorization of ESEA is now on the congressional agenda and deliberation will clearly take months, during which time national early childhood organizations from many sectors are advocating strongly for even greater attention to high quality early care and education and its critical role in school success. The Council, led by a senior leader in the New Jersey State Department of Education, recognizes this potential opportunity and has included attention to PreK-3 issues as part of its birth through eight strategic agenda.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education’s announcement of the Promise Neighborhoods²³ grant program under ESEA affords one more opportunity for the community sector to partner with the public education sector to plan for, build, evaluate and sustain a truly comprehensive system to meet the needs of the nation’s most vulnerable children and students.

Finally, the Department of Human Services administers federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) that includes state maintenance of effort and matching funds totaling \$274.2 million. These funds support the delivery of subsidized child care series through contracts and vouchers for families at or below 200% of the federal Poverty index (FPI) that need child care while they work or attend school. CCDF funds also support activities and services to improve the quality and availability of child care services. The President’s proposed budget includes a \$1.6 billion increase in these funds.

²³ Online at -- //promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org

Section II: The New Jersey Council for Young Children

Creating the Council and Putting it to Work

The New Jersey Council for Young Children was created by Executive Order on January 8, 2010 to serve as the State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care as authorized under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.²⁴ As required in federal law, the Council has a diverse membership of 25 leaders representing the state's child care, education, disability, health and mental health sectors as well as the state's academic, research and philanthropic sectors. The Council is chaired by Dr. Ellen Wolock, Director of the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Preschool Education.²⁵ Of note, the Council is a "separate entity located in, but not of," the New Jersey Department of Education. Five New Jersey state departments also serve on the Council as ex officio members: the Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Senior Services, Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. A complete listing of members is included as Appendix A.

Members are appointed for three-year terms (except for some first appointments), and vacancies must be filled by gubernatorial appointment. The Council must adopt by-laws and must meet at least four times a year. At least once a year a public hearing must be held. Each July an annual plan is to be provided to the Governor. For 2010, the Council has presented the *2010 Strategic Report* to the Office of the Governor.

The Council is charged with assuring "collaboration and coordination among the various early childhood programs in the state for children from birth to 'school' entry."²⁶ A first key task of the Council has been to complete an application for one time, three-year \$1.6 million in federal funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to support its work in developing and coordinating a comprehensive system of early education and development services. While the state's fiscal situation creates a challenging environment for the continuation of this work, New Jersey has a solid framework to build upon.

To facilitate this work, committees were established to correspond to the seven functions assigned to State Advisory Councils under the Head Start Act.²⁷ Initial meetings generated updates in each of the seven areas of work and along with recommendations for priority actions that are being reviewed for inclusion within the Council's application for three-year ARRA funding. A detailed report on this work is provided in Section III and a listing of Council committees is provided in Table 2(a) below along with charge given to each.

²⁴ Online at -- [//eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc)

²⁵ Online at -- www.state.nj.us/education/ece/njcyc

²⁶ Online at -- www.state.nj.us/education/ece/njcyc/overview.pdf

²⁷ Online at -- www.state.nj.us/education/ece/njcyc/committees.htm

Table 2(a). Committees of the New Jersey Council for Young Children

Needs Assessment	Conduct a needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children, birth to school entry (kindergarten)
Collaboration and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Work to improve interdepartmental communication, within and across both governmental and private agencies, including the mapping of formal Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) across agencies and recommendations for additional MOA's where system building, data development, and service quality and access be improved. (b) Create a public cross-walk of early learning and development program standards (including home visitation) that is utilized across agencies. (c) Support the coordination of professional development offerings across public and private agencies, beginning with a full alignment and articulation of early childhood offerings across all systems including higher education.
Early Care and Education Outreach and Enrollment	Develop recommendations for increasing overall participation of children in existing federal, state and local child care and early childhood education, including outreach to under-represented and special populations
Program Quality Standards and Improvement	Develop a plan for implementing a unified data collection system for program quality and improvement state-wide
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Support establishment of a centralized, web-based database of all early childhood professional development opportunities (b) Evaluate and make recommendations for minimum standards for early childhood staff that are not already regulated (c) Support development of an administrator's certificate with particular training in child development, including infant and toddler development and the importance of brain development and mental health in early learning
Early Education-Higher Education Workforce Preparation	Review existing early childhood education programs along to establish program clarity and articulation agreements across New Jersey institutions of higher education
Early Learning and Development Standards	Make recommendations for improvement in state early learning standards (birth to 5)

From March through May 2010, Council members met in committee to create a series of progress reports and to identify areas of work for possible inclusion in the Council's application for federal ARRA funding. On April 21st, the Council met as a whole to review

recommendations from each committee, discuss emerging priorities, and review a first draft of this report.

On May 21st, the Council hosted its first annual public hearing to receive comments on this report and the five initiatives selected as priorities for inclusion in its July application for federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Thirty five New Jersey citizens attended this meeting held in Trenton. Comments and suggestions were recorded, and all written testimony is accessible online.²⁸ Key points are summarized below.

Council Membership. Several speakers requested that organizations be named to the Council rather than individuals and that the NJ Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies be included as a member organization.

More Funding Needed. Speakers noted the need to restore funding for specific services, including Child Health Care Consultation, parent leaders, and child care subsidies and to continue to invest in the expansion of preschool programs and home visitation. It was also noted that adequate funding is required to delivery high quality services, including as related to implementing a quality improvement system for early care and education.

Single Entity to Manage an Early Childhood System. It was recommended that a single entity – a department, agency or office – be established to “manage, coordinate and evaluate” New Jersey’s evolving early childhood system.

Areas That Need More Attention in the Coming Year. The following areas were highlighted as needing more attention than given in the 2010 Strategic Report: (a) infant/toddler services; (b) transitions throughout a PreK-3 system; (c) the importance of wrap around services; (d) young children’s health, nutrition and need for physical activity; (e) the continued under-representation of certain groups of young children in essential services.

Key Infrastructure Priorities. Development of a quality assurance system and a well-functioning cross-agency data system, training for child care in better serving children with special needs were all noted.

Curriculum and Staffing Requirements. Several speakers were concerned that a possible policy to require a high school degree before working with young children in formal settings could eliminate opportunities for high school students in summer, afterschool and part-time child care roles. There was concern over the status of curriculum use, in terms of what curricula are in use across the early care and education sector and the degree of fidelity involved in its use. It was also noted that costs will be involved if the proposal to require early education and care leaders to have training in child development and early education content.

²⁸ Online at -- www.nj.gov/education/ece/njccyc/

Results of the Initial Review of Council Functions

In the working session on April 21st, Council members reviewed materials gathered for each of the seven Council functions specified under the law. During this review, and often impassioned discussion, several themes and priorities emerged *and* converged to point the Council toward a set of strategic priorities for its first three years, 2010 through 2013.

First, the Council has determined elements of program quality and improvement will be consolidated as an eighth area of work. This will allow the Council to look in a more systemic *and* systematic way at program quality standards and quality improvement strategies across the service sectors that comprise an early childhood system.

Second, seven themes emerged from the discussion of Council functions. Each will be included in the work of the Council going forward.

1. Issues of collaboration, coordination and governance arose as critical to the mission and charge of the Council. Even across such related services as child care and early education, programs are funded and managed across multiple agencies at the state, county and local level. In addition, when – as the Council has determined – the system to build is one directed at a birth through third grade span of development, issues of collaboration and coordination become required not elective obligations.
2. The absence of an interoperable data system that is vertically integrated with kindergarten-12 and horizontally linked across services in the birth to five years present a major drawback to strategic planning, service coordination for children and families, and management accountability in general.
3. Critical issues of program quality must now be connected in some way to the emerging science of child outcomes.
4. Because young children learn in the context of relationships with adults, characteristics and needs of the workforce of people serving them are paramount to ensuring optimal child development.
5. The needs of some children and families place the children at greater risk of poor developmental outcomes. These children require special, persistent focus and they include very young children, at risk and special needs children, English Language learners and those in linguistically diverse families, homeless and migrant children who have no stable residence.
6. New Jersey's mixed services model that conjoins public and private services (as in child care and early education) and that crosses levels of government (state, county and local) adds a real level of complexity for families and policy makers. However, children and

families have both benefitted from the multiple perspectives and services that are attached to this collaborative model.

7. Systems building work requires various levels of support, including human resources, information resources and fiscal resources. The need for this critical infrastructure is as important in the near term as pressing for service expansion.

From these themes, Council members identified five potential areas for attention over the coming three years, 2010-2013

First, identify existing programs, overlaps and means of increased collaboration and coordination through a data mapping effort built on existing work already undertaken through the ECCS process, the NGA grant, and BUILD that will identify gaps in services and access by age of child, family income status and geography. This work will begin with a close look at outreach services directed at identifying and serving under-served populations.

Second, create a crosswalk of existing program and learning standards for each childhood (including Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, preschool, health and mental health services) and develop a coherent set of model standards that will lead to positive outcomes for young children and families.

Third, develop a model for coordinating career and professional development with the higher education system, beginning with a full assessment of early childhood preparation programs including those provided by colleges and universities and professional organizations, with the goal of better preparing early childhood practitioners to optimize the results of their engagement with young children.

Fourth, develop a plan for continued efforts at quality improvement in each childhood program, beginning with the further development and adoption of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and an assessment of quality and access in infant/toddler care and education.

Finally, fundamental to work on each of these priority areas is development of a more robust and interoperable data/information system capable of providing information about children and their families, the programs in which they are served, and the workforce that actually provides the service(s).

From these priority areas, the Council has crafted a set of five goals to serve as the foundation for its ARRA grant request to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These are summarized briefly below and developed in significantly more detail in the actual grant application. Additional information provided in the ARRA grant submittal includes objectives, work activities, products/results, responsible parties and funding allocated.

**Table 2(b). Strategic Goals for the New Jersey Council on Young Children's
ARRA Grant Application 2010-2013**

Goal 1: Coordinated Information System Development and Use, Including Needs Assessment

Develop a coordinated system of early childhood programs and services statewide with a data information sharing system that meets the early care and education needs of infants, young children and their families throughout the state, from birth through age eight.

Objective 1.1: Map data sets, develop framework and implement information

Objective 1.2: Implement unique child ID and link to data on learning at key developmental points.

Objective 1.3: Implement coordinated data system to assess needs of infants, young children and families

Objective 1.4: Improve interagency communication and collaboration by mapping regulations and creating information sharing agreements across agencies.

Goal 2: Coordinated and Targeted Outreach

Identify and improve services for infants, young children and families by coordinating outreach efforts across state agencies, school districts and community and faith-based organizations, including but not limited to, underserved populations.

Objective 2.1: Evaluate and improve outreach through partnerships

Objective 2.1: Target outreach to underserved populations

Goal 3: Early Learning and Development Standards and B-8 Program Standards

Develop coherent set of early learning and development and program standards that address all areas of development for ages birth through eight that lead to positive outcomes for infants, young children and their families.

Objective 3.1: Develop infant/toddler learning and development standards, and align with preschool through grade 3.

Objective 3.2: Adopt Kindergarten program standards and align with preschool program standards.

Objective 3.3: Create a cross-walk of existing program standards.

Goal 4: Workforce Professional Development

Strengthen the preparation and ongoing professional development of all early education and care professionals to optimize their positive impact on the development and learning of young children, ages birth through eight.

Objective 4.1: Map current professional development opportunities and expand the Professional Workforce Registry

Objective 4.2: Review and improve articulation between New Jersey institutions of higher education.

Objective 4.3: Expand requirements and learning opportunities for early childhood leaders in public and private settings.

Goal 5: Program Improvement System

Identify and plan a system of comprehensive aligned program quality improvement processes for early care and education from birth through eight

Objective 5.1: Develop a continuous quality improvement system.

Objective 5.2: Map and assess the quality of early care options for infants and toddlers.

Objective 5.3: Employ unique child identifiers to track impact of various components of program quality.

Goal 6: Strategic Communication and Information Exchange

Objective 6.1: Ensure that all stakeholders and partners in the early care and education system for children from birth through age eight have the opportunity to be informed and have input into the goals and outcomes of the Council

Objective 6.2: Ensure that families are informed and have input into the work of council and the early care and education system.

Objective 6.3: Develop and implement a public education campaign about the value of early care and education for infants and children ages birth through eight and the state as a whole.

Goal 7: Council Support and Public Accountability

Ensure that the work of the Council is supported, that progress is documented and challenges identified and brought to the Council and its members for resolution, and provide periodic reports and presentations to key stakeholders in the State of New Jersey

Section III: Findings in Detail

In developing the content for this part of the Strategic Report, Council members determined that it would be useful to add one additional focus area to the seven required areas: Program Standards and Quality Improvement. This realization occurred as members reviewed each of the existing seven sections and determined that issues of program quality and standards were included in most of them. It was determined that consolidating that information in a single new section would bring coherence and emphasis to a highly important component of early childhood systems building.

Recommendations for action over the coming year, developed within the Council's working committees, are summarized and prioritized in Section IV of this report.

A. Needs Assessment

Each State Advisory Council is required to "conduct a periodic needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low income children in the State."

In this section of the report, we summarize four studies that speak to issues of the quality and availability of early services in New Jersey, with a focus on early education and care. Across the four reports, issues related to needs assessment are raised and noted. In addition, we provide one case example that illustrates service needs for one particularly vulnerable population: homeless children. At the conclusion of this section, we present a set of findings and the course of action selected by the Council for the period 2010-2013.

Results of the New Jersey Head Start Collaboration Office Needs Assessment

In late 2008, the New Jersey Head Start Collaboration Office began planning for the required needs assessment of Head Start grantees and the children and families that they serve. The survey, conducted in March 2009, was completed by 24 grantee agencies, representing a 93% response rate. The Collaboration Office has contracted with the National Institute for Early Education Research to write the final report for Council review. A draft of the report was received on June 1, 2010.

Table 3(a) presents a summary of preliminary findings of the federally mandated 2009 Head Start Needs Assessment. Issues for children and families involve access, availability and timeliness of services. Barriers appear to involve issues that should be explored within the Council's three strategies for action in 2010-2013: Additional mapping and analysis to promote "systems" improvement, coordination and collaboration to improve program quality and the link to child outcomes, and developing and sharing information and assets.

Table 3(a): Preliminary Findings from the Head Start Collaboration Office Needs Assessment

Top Issues Facing Families Receiving Head Start	Top Issues Facing Children in Head Start Families	Barriers to Service Provision
Lack of affordable housing	Mental health services	Timeliness of service access and coordination of services, including transportation
Help in emergencies, e.g., crisis intervention	Timely evaluation and treatment of special conditions (e.g., speech/language; OT/PT; learning disabilities and autism)	Shared training and technical assistance across agencies
Mental health services	Nutrition services	Release time for staff
Unemployment assistance	Oral health care	Formalizing MOUs with LEAs
Parenting education		Meeting the 10% disability requirement and the availability of infant/ toddler training & course offerings
		Data sharing

Studies of Early Education Quality and Availability in New Jersey

The annual NIEER Preschool Yearbook includes the most recent data collected on both quality and availability of state funded prekindergarten across the nation. The 2009 Yearbook was released in May 2010. Results for New Jersey are mixed. The 2009 Yearbook reports on three state funded preschool programs mentioned earlier: Abbott preschools, the non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) program, and the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI). When spending is viewed in the aggregate across these three programs, New Jersey ranks first in the nation (again) on resources and program standards for preschool

Ten quality standards are also tracked:

1. Whether the state has early learning standards
2. Whether teachers in preschool classrooms have a BA degree
3. Whether preschool teachers have completed specialized training
4. Whether assistant teachers have at least a Child Development Certificate (a lesser degree of education than an Associate's Degree)
5. Whether professional development in-service programs equal at least 100 hours over five years
6. Whether maximum class size is no greater than 15 children
7. Whether the staff: child ratio is no greater than 2:15

8. Whether screening, referral and support services are available
9. Whether the program serves at least one meal
10. Whether the program is monitored using site visits and other protocols.

Abbott preschools achieve 9 out of 10 of these quality standards, while the ECPA and ELLI programs have achieved 8 out of ten. In all three programs, the requirement of at least a CDA for teacher assistants is not met.

A real challenge for New Jersey is the relatively low level of early education program enrollment for preschoolers in communities not targeted for the high quality program. Across all preschool programs funded by the State of New Jersey or the federal government, including Head Start, NIEER reports that 49,091 preschoolers were served in 2009. This represents approximately 37% of all four-year olds and 26% of all three year olds. On this measure of “access,” New Jersey ranks 16th in the nation for four-year olds and 3rd in the nation on three-year olds. Utilizing a different data source and a different year, the 2010 New Jersey KidsCount report indicates that – across both public and private settings – 68% of the state’s four-year olds attended preschool prior to beginning kindergarten in 2007. According to the December 2009 CCDF Caseload Profile, 66.6% of the 37,732 children served were under the age of 6 and 78.7% of the expenditures were for children under 6 years of age. Clearly, the issues of access and enrollment are conflated, suggesting a recurrent finding across all of the Committee reports – the need to dramatically improve the State’s early childhood information systems across service sectors and agencies.

New Jersey Preschool Expansion Assessment Research Study (PEARS)²⁹

In 2008, as required by the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, a study of preschool expansion capabilities and quality was conducted by NIEER, with state agency oversight provided by the New Jersey Department of Education’s Division of Early Childhood Education. The study sought to answer three key questions related to the ages of children served, the general quality of licensed child care and Head Start settings, and the barriers and contributions these sites could make to advance an expansion of publicly-funded preschool statewide. Data for the study were collected from 407 program directors over February and March of 2008. Importantly, child care programs outside of the state-funded preschool programs were included in this study, whereas they are not included in the annual NIEER preschool yearbook results (see Table 3b).

For the purposes of this section of the Strategic Report, three findings from this study are important. First, the study found that across these programs there is sufficient “enrollment space” to serve all of the state’s remaining “at risk” preschool-aged children. Second, on a broad variety of quality measures (similar to those surveyed by NIEER annually), there are strong differences between school district operated prekindergarten programs, Head Start programs and child care center-based programs. Thus one cannot make the assumption that

²⁹ Assessing the Capacity of Child Care and Head Start Centers to Participate in New Jersey’s Preschool Expansion Initiative. NIEER, October 2008

because there is space, there is also high quality. Third, the educational level of program leaders is high, with 90% of better having attained a Bachelor’s Degree or more. While not tracked by the NIEER annual preschool yearbook, the issue of administrative capacity is a significant one for the field of early education in general.

Table 3(b): New Jersey Preschool Expansion Assessment Research Study³⁰

Capacity to Expand High Quality Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential spaces for 180,000 preschoolers with class sizes of 15. This would serve all “at risk” NJ preschoolers.• Generally, while they may meet licensing requirements, the quality of these facilities does not meet the higher quality program standards set forth by the state for the DOE-funded programs.
Administrative Early Education Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almost all Head Start administrators and well over half of child care administrators have earned a college degree related to early childhood education.• While administrators in child care centers are not required to hold a bachelors degree, nearly 90% have completed at least an undergraduate degree.• Less than 25% of district principals who supervise preschool classrooms and fewer than 10% of LEA administrators in charge of preschool planning have an early education specialization.
Early Care and Education Workforce Educational Background, Credentials and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 59% of the Head Start lead teachers had at least a bachelor’s degree; an additional 16% are enrolled in a BA program. Almost 30% of Head Start lead preschool teachers have preschool certification or the equivalent.• 47% of child care teachers hold at least a bachelor’s degree; another 8% are currently enrolled in a BA program. Slightly less than 20% of all child care center lead preschool teachers have preschool certification or the equivalent.• All LEA lead preschool teachers possessed at least a BA; 86% have the appropriate preschool certification or the equivalent.
Environmental Quality of Early Education Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classrooms are generally adequately supervised and teacher-child and peer interactions are warm and respectful. Although most classrooms are equipped for routine care, child care classrooms are somewhat less likely to be designed to foster early learning.• All classrooms provided some consistency in their daily routine; however, Head Start and child care classrooms were more likely to give children time to play outside daily.

³⁰ New Jersey Preschool Expansion Assessment Research Study, Executive Summary. Undated

Implementation of Department of Education Preschool Regulations

- Class Size: Across all settings, the average preschool class size was 15.1; DOE regulations for the high quality, fully funded programs require no more than 15. In child care centers, 70% of classrooms served no more than 15 children. In Head Start centers, 42% of classrooms served no more than 15 children.
- Curriculum Use. DOE requires that fully state-funded programs choose from 5 specific curriculum models. Outside of the DOE-funded programs, the needs assessment demonstrated that virtually all Head Start programs implement a comprehensive curriculum, and other preschool programs vary in terms of their type and level of curriculum implementation. No measure, however, was used to determine the fidelity of curriculum implementation.
- Classroom Support for Teachers. 64% of school districts report providing “ongoing regular assistance. Another 6% provide support 1-5 times a year.
- Children with Disabilities. 58% of districts provide services for “at least some” of the children with disabilities who are enrolled in their programs. Almost all Head Start centers serve these children in regular classrooms, as do 2/3s of child care center.
- English Language Learners. 2/3s of districts do not have a program designed to support English language learners; 3/4s have to programs to support maintenance of the child’s home language. 99% of Head Start centers serve ELLs; 85% have programs to support the preschool child’s home language. 3/4s of child care centers have ELL programs and 37% support the home language of the ELL child.
- Family Engagement. 95% of all programs (LEA, Head Start and child care) involve families; the intensity of this involvement, however, varies widely.

Family Child Care Study³¹

A 2005-2006 study of New Jersey’s registered family child care sector examined the characteristics and needs of over 1000 registered family child care providers from a survey pool of 3,800.³² Several findings provide an important contrast to center-based preschool programs

³¹ Family Child Care in New Jersey: A State Report on Registered Provider Care for Children in their Homes, 2005-2006

³² Note: The 27% response rate overall varied widely by county where surveys were returned at rates ranging from 18% to 85%.

described above. First, many fewer providers have achieved a college degree or higher (14%). Second, they rely much more heavily on their experiences than formal training or professional development to guide their interactions with children in their care. Third, almost all provide “full-day” services that extend for up to 10 hours (or more) per day. In addition, the study identified that while 74% of the family care providers who responded to the survey plan to continue for at least another 5 years, they experience two significant economic barriers: low wages (64% earn under \$24,000) and the lack of health insurance. However, it should be noted that since October, 2007, all home based providers have received a 21% increase in reimbursement rates for child care services.

A summary of findings from this study is presented in Table 3(c).

Table 3(c): New Jersey Family Child Care Survey

Gender, Age, Race/Ethnicity Language	<p><u>Gender</u>: Nearly all (97%) of providers are female.</p> <p><u>Age</u>: Six in ten are between 31 and 50 years of age. About one in five (19%) are between 18 and 30 years, 27% are between 50 and 64, and 6% are over age 65.</p> <p><u>Race/Ethnicity</u>: Four in ten are African-American; 29% are white; 24% Latino/Hispanic; 1-2% Asian-American/Pacific Islander, Native American</p> <p><u>Language</u>: More than nine in ten (93%) speak English with some or all children. About one quarter also speak Spanish.</p>
Operations and Enrollment	<p><u>Hours</u>: Nine out of ten (91%) provide full-day care, on average operating from 7a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Many begin as early as 5 a.m. and some serve children as late as midnight. Two thirds also provide part-time care, including wrap-around time (60%), evening care (27%) over-night care (21%) and weekend care (20%)</p> <p><u>Payment</u>. Three quarters (74%) accept families who pay some portion of their care with state child care vouchers</p>
Experience and Education	<p><u>Experience</u>: Over ten years: 29%. Six to nine years: 19%. Three to five years: 26%. Less than two years: 24%.</p> <p><u>Training</u>: 84% rely on their own experience parents; 62% reported that they also learned from classes and workshops. 7 percent have other professional degrees, e.g. CDA, Nursing license</p> <p><u>Education</u>: GED or high school degree: 48%. AA degree: 14%. BA: 11%, Master’s degree: 2%</p> <p><u>Desire to Continue</u>: Three-quarters (74%) would continue for at least another 5 years if systemic issues of wages and benefits could be addressed</p>
Services and Supports Provided to Children and Parents	<p><u>Meals</u>: Most offer and prepare meals for children, but most do not receive support for these services. 36% participate in the Child Care Food Program offering subsidization for meals and snacks</p> <p><u>Special Needs Children</u>: 19% report supporting children with special needs, ranging from asthma to down syndrome and speech</p>

impediments

Advice to Parents. Nearly 70% report that families ask them for parenting and child development advice. Nine in ten are comfortable to provide this advice.

Interest in Quality Improvement

Certification: One third (34%) expressed interest in working toward credentialing their child care home or achieving a professional accreditation

Professional Development: 81% said they would take advantage of available trainings if more scholarships were offered. 52% reported that they would participate in trainings offered online

Barriers to Professional Development: The time and location of opportunities

Services to Homeless Students

The Department of Education is required by law to conduct an annual count of identified homeless students enrolled in public schools. In 2007-08, the state's school districts identified 4,698 homeless students. New Jersey statutes require local school districts to immediately enroll homeless children who present themselves for enrollment.³³ In addition to identifying actual children for service and accountability purpose, the counting process reveals a recurrent set of barriers to serving the needs of these sometimes "invisible" children. First, local and state requirements for enrollment in public schools based on residency requirements are sometimes inappropriately applied to homeless children, with the result that children are undercounted. In addition, health record requirements present enrollment obstacles, such as immunization documentation.

Findings and Action

Federal legislation requires that the Council conduct a periodic needs assessment of quality and access for early childhood services and program. The State of New Jersey has not yet conducted a comprehensive needs assessment that will address the broadest intent of the federal legislation. However, in its first 60 days of operation, the Council did examine a number of needs assessment efforts developed by both the public and private sector, and identified four issues related to needs assessment going forward.

First, very little is known about the quality of and access to services for preschool children outside of the former Abbott school districts. Second, data on the quality and availability of early care options for infants and toddlers is significantly lacking. Third, there is a strong need to link the process of needs assessment to the process of data collection. Fourth, there is a need to map the various "needs assessments" now in use and to gather knowledge about both the processes and findings.

³³ See NJSA 18: 7B-13 and NJAC 6A: 17

Three recommendations were made regarding action in 2010-2013, as follows:

1. The Council should work with partners, including the Department of Human Services, NJ Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative and the Head Start Association, to develop a model for 2012 and 2013 to improve collaboration and information exchange across agencies around assessing the needs of children, families and the programs that serve them.
2. The Council should work on data systems development to facilitate data sharing about children, families and the programs.
3. Information gathering should be undertaken to map the quality of early care options for infants and toddlers.

B. COLLABORATION and COORDINATION

Each State Advisory Council is required to identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally-funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering these programs.

For this section of the report, Council members identified a broad sample of cross-agency efforts currently underway in New Jersey, and then identified barriers to increased collaboration and coordination as a core function of early childhood systems building.

Current Cross-Agency Collaborative Efforts

High-Quality Preschool

The Abbott preschool program is the best example of successful collaboration and coordination in early care and education. Use of a mixed delivery system to provide high-quality preschool in schools, Head Start and community child care programs is a strong example of successful collaboration and has made New Jersey's preschool program a national model.

Program Quality Initiatives

While the committee agreed that the Abbott preschool program is the most compelling and comprehensive example of early childhood system collaboration and coordination, there are other examples of successful collaboration on a smaller scale that have the potential for broader collaboration.

- The quality initiative entitled the Accreditation Facilitation Program promotes National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation

- A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)³⁴ has been piloted in two communities through the Build Initiative with technical assistance provided by child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies and funded with private foundation grants.
- The NJ Inclusive Child Care Program, which is funded by DHS, promotes and supports the inclusion of special needs children in various settings.

Infant-Toddler Care

Efforts include:

- Expanded number of Early Head Start Programs serving infants and toddlers
- First Steps quality initiative to provide training, onsite assessment, technical assistance, mentoring and coaching to infant/toddler caregivers. This initiative is administered by three CCR&Rs and has worked collaboratively with other CCR&Rs, Early Head Start and infant-toddler programs throughout the state
- Development of the infant-toddler caregiver credential and funding of scholarship program to support caregivers interested in obtaining the credential
- Enhancement grants to support programs in improving quality

Cross-System Initiatives

Efforts include:

- New Department of Health standards for health, nutrition and physical activity to be coordinated with child care
- Joint application for early intervention, Part B preschool and services in the Division of Developmental Disabilities is helpful for parents
- Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education Program in the Department of Children and Families and contracted to CCR&Rs in collaboration with the Department of Human Services
- Provision of Child Care Health Consultants in county child care resource and referral agencies was a good model of collaboration between health and child care (but positions were eliminated in FY 2010 budget cuts) However, DHS continues to fund the toll free Child Care Health Warmline where parents and providers may access prerecorded health related topics of interest or request and telephone consultation from a RN
- Mini Child Care Grants funded by DHS to assisted licensed centers with abating health and safety violations cited by the DCF Office of Licensing

Findings and Actions

The Committee identified a substantial list of barriers in aligning and coordinating programs: standards, eligibility, enrollment, funding, reimbursement rates and cross-agency policy. The absence of a single early childhood governance structure is also noted. Barriers are summarized below in greater detail. Across all of the areas that impact negatively on program collaboration

³⁴ Creating a Roadmap for Success: The Need for a Quality Rating and Improvement System in New Jersey, BUILD Subcommittee on QRIS, April 2010

and coordination, perhaps most significant is the absence of one or more entities – until the New Jersey Council for Young Children was established – with the responsibility of coordinating aspects of service development and delivery within and between early childhood services.

Table 3(d): System Needs and Challenges Related to Collaboration and Coordination

Program Standards	Different program standards for child care center licensing, Head Start program standards and Abbott preschool made initial collaboration difficult. Resolution is needed in the following areas: Governance; Length of Service Day; Class size; Teacher credentials; Curriculum; Regulatory requirements. Community providers that provide preschool must meet DHS child care licensing standards; school districts are not required to do so.
Alignment with Preschool	Program standards for preschool are not aligned with those for birth to eight or upon Entry to kindergarten. Other challenges include: Full-day kindergarten not available in all districts; Early education not viewed as PreK-3 continuum; Quality standards for infant & toddler care not completed; Alignment for children with special needs is problematic from birth to three and from early intervention to preschool, Special Education for eligible children, or from Early Intervention to preschool or child care for non-special education children
Program Eligibility and Access	<p>Access to high quality preschool depends on where a family lives. Expansion of preschool to additional “universal” districts (required to provide preschool to all three and four-year-old children) has not been funded.</p> <p>Lack of a statewide standard cut-off birth date for eligibility</p> <p>Differing state eligibility standards for child care vouchers providing wrap-around care for families in Abbott districts at 250% of Federal Poverty Index (FPI) and more restrictive income eligibility outside Abbott districts</p> <p>Varying federal eligibility standards make coordination and alignment more difficult.</p> <p>While home-based services are readily available, the availability of inclusive child care and early intervention services depend in great part on where one lives and what services are available in the community. Expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start model of inclusiveness has been limited.</p> <p>It is difficult to get preschool children with special needs evaluated by the Child Study Team. Once evaluated, districts tend to provide needed services within the district, rather than in community programs.</p>
Outreach and Enrollment	Parental receipt of information about early care and education is not systematic or well-coordinated. All districts handle preschool outreach differently, with varied levels of skills and concern over funding constraints. There is a role for family workers, community providers and county-based resource and referral agencies in preschool outreach.

There is no common or uniform application procedure by which a parent can gain access to services.

Low Reimbursement Rates

Aligning and coordinating reimbursement rates would improve program access and quality

Funding Streams and Funding Policy

Aligning Head Start and Abbott funding streams continues to be problematic. Different budgeting and funding approaches at the LEA level can be problematic for Head Start and community programs that cross towns.

Uniform program standards may be a good way to resolve governance issues, but reality is that the “payer” – the government entity providing the funds – is mandated by federal regulations and/or establishes the standard for how the money is spent.

Cross-System Coordination

Many early childhood advisory groups and councils. No single entity to coordinate across the system

Seven committee recommendations were proposed:

- Expand New Jersey’s High-Quality Preschool Program as it is the best example of high-quality, good system coordination and positive outcomes for kids.
- Plan for the Implementation of the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)
- Utilize the County Resource and Referral Agencies to Improve Coordination. Clearer recommendations and guidelines for their operation could address the issue of uneven implementation and develop the resource and referral agency’s strong potential to enhance collaboration on the local level.
- Coordinate Professional Development More Effectively. A strong system of cross sector coordination is non-existent yet vitally necessary.
- Ensure Effective Communications to Foster Better Collaboration/Coordination. One mechanism to improve coordination and communication could be the use of clear memoranda of understanding for interdepartmental activities.
- Maintain or Re-Establish Programs/Services that Enhance Coordination, including family workers and child care health consultants at the community level.
- Conduct a Crosswalk of Early Childhood Program Standards to identify strengths, gaps, inconsistencies and other issues for the Council to address.

At the April 21st meeting, these seven recommendations were prioritized into three action strategies.

1. Improve interdepartmental communication, within and across both governmental and private agencies including the mapping of formal Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) across agencies and recommendations for additional MOAs where system building, data development, and service quality and access would be improved.
2. Create a public cross-walk of early learning and development program standards (including home visitation) that is utilized across agencies.
3. Coordinate professional development (PD) offerings across public and private agencies, beginning with a full alignment and articulation of early childhood offerings across all systems including higher education.

C. Early Care and Education Enrollment and Outreach

Each State Advisory Council is expected to develop recommendations for increasing overall participation of children in existing federal, state and local child care and early childhood education, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.

Two committees worked on the issues of enrollment and outreach. Their findings are consolidated in Section C. In addition, the Council determined that, while issues of early education and care enrollment and outreach were important, it also wished to include within its purview the issue of outreach to parents and families more broadly than related to one service sector.

A Note of Background on Early Care and Education in New Jersey

Publicly funded early education in New Jersey involves six specific programs: the fully funded former Abbott (and four additional districts that expanded their programs); the partially state funded former non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid and Early Launch to Learning Initiative, Early Intervention, Preschool Disabled, child care programs funded through the federal Child Care Development Fund, and Early Head Start/Head Start.

The 2010 KidsCount report cited earlier provides data indicating that “New Jersey far surpasses the U.S. average in the percentage of children enrolled in public or private preschool”³⁵ with 61% of all four-year olds attending public or private preschool settings. Working across data sets suggests that New Jersey has about 139,200 children in each age cohort, birth to four. Sixty one percent would be equal to about 85,000 four years who attend some kind of formal preschool. Of these, about 62,700 are served in publicly funded settings shown in Table 3(e) below. Enrollment data reported in Table 3(e) were taken from the May 2010 NIEER Preschool Yearbook for 2009.

Where available, data are presented on the location of these programs and the characteristics of students who attend them.

³⁵ Cite. p. 15.

Table 3(e) Characteristics of New Jersey's Publicly Funded Programs³⁶						
	Fully State Funded (Abbott and 4 additional)	Partially State Funded (ECPA, ELLI)	Early Intervention (Part C)	Preschool Disabled (Self Contained)	CCDF	Head Start
# of Districts/Providers/Agencies	35 districts	110 districts	89 providers	500 districts	7761 providers	35 agencies
Enrollment (year)	42,389 (2009)	8,103 (2009)	10,505 (2009)	9,258 (2009)	47,700 (2009)	14,115 (2009)

Table 3(e2) Licensed Child Care Centers in New Jersey		
	For Profit Centers	Non Profit Centers
Providers	1778 centers	2388 centers

Kindergarten Enrollment

The 2010 New Jersey KidsCount report indicates that overall enrollment has increased slightly (by just 250 students) from 2005 through 2009, ending the 2008-2009 school year with an enrollment total of just over 93,500 students. The important trend in the education of New Jersey's entering kindergartners is a 16% decrease in the number of children enrolled in half-day programs and an increase of 10% in those enrolled in full-day kindergarten programs.³⁷

A Sample of Outreach Programs in New Jersey for Families of Young Children

The information provided below was compiled by the Council Committee on Participation and reported at the April 21st Council meeting:

- NJ Helps: A mechanism for parents to more easily access information online about programs they may be eligible to receive
- Parent Link Web site: Under development by the Department of Health through the federal Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant. This site will provide access to information and resources for early care and education.
- Child Find: A mechanism to obtain information about services for children with special needs.

³⁶ These data were compiled from several sources: 2009 NIEER Preschool Yearbook; 2010 NJ Kids Count;

³⁷ Cite to p. 17

- Family workers in Abbott preschools: These practitioners provide information, outreach and assistance to parents and a good model of a cross-system initiative between DOE and DHS.
- CCR&Rs: These agencies provide parent consumer education services and referrals to child care program and social service agencies.

Early Intervention as a Case Example of Underrepresentation

Point in time data from New Jersey's early intervention (EI) program reveal a potential underrepresentation of children of minority groups as compared with their overall representation in the population of children under age three.

Although this data may differ throughout the year, at the time that the data were collected, underrepresentation of minority groups was suggested. While 16.4% of the state's children under age three are African American, only 10.3% of EI enrolled children were African American. Similarly, while the Hispanic population comprises 25% of all New Jersey children under the age of three, EI enrollment of Hispanic young children represented just 19% of total EI enrollment. Finally, while young children of Asian/Pacific Islander descent constitute 8.5% of all children under age three, these children represented just 5% of current EI enrollment. Identification for early intervention should more closely approximate the demographics of the state's young children, suggesting a need for additional recruitment and outreach strategies.

Characteristics of Effective Outreach

Examples of effective outreach strategies include:

- Using welfare enrollment and other data to target efforts.
- Recruiting from where the children and their parents are most likely to be -- their places of employment, schools, hospitals, houses of worship, pediatricians' offices, and community events. Family Success Centers, Single Stop enrollment efforts, and other initiatives that enroll families in all programs and services for which they are eligible should be enhanced.
- Involving trusted community representatives, including families themselves, who speak the language of the families
- Simplicity in enrollment. Programs should ask only for the information they absolutely need for enrollment. This is particularly important in enrolling children from immigrant families.
- Measurement of efficacy, particularly for underrepresented families.

- Languages of families, translated into those languages by individuals from the community who understand the vernacular. Materials – including print, and radio and TV public service announcements -- should be tested by community members whenever possible.
- A coordinated effort among organizations so that families receive a coherent and comprehensive message about their options. The Council on Young Children might play this coordinating role.

Committee recommendations to improve outreach were presented at the April 21st meeting. They are clustered by type of action required and presented in Table 3(f) below.

Table 3(f). Recommendations Related to Information, Outreach and Engagement for New Jersey Families of Young Children

Type of Action	Specific Recommendation
Procedural Changes	<p>Develop a universal application form for early childhood services, modeled on the NJ Universal Health Record.</p> <p>Expand NJ Helps to include an online application and eligibility determination tool</p>
Better Coordination	<p>Outreach to homeless families requires a special commitment to greater coordination among LEA homeless liaisons, collaboration among local and county agencies</p> <p>Align family support/ child abuse prevention programs provided by the Department of Children and Families with early care and education, especially related to parent engagement</p>
Structural Changes	<p>Establish an entity in the Governor’s Office responsible for cross-agency coordination and initiatives, or formally assign this responsibility to the NJ Council</p> <p>Establish a regional leadership structure to define, implement and coordinate multi-agency services, especially to homeless families</p> <p>Provide incentives for agency partnerships to unite funding streams with projects that coordinate health, mental health, parent involvement and educational services in a statewide venture</p>
Training and Professional Development	<p>Train community workers, volunteers and Abbott family workers to help families utilize NJ Helps</p>

Findings and Actions

The Committee identified several existing mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of outreach to families and recommended a series of action steps that could be taken. These actions would involve better use of existing resources as well as some new investment in low-cost, high impact procedural change, such as creating a universal online application for early childhood services.

At the April 21st meeting, the Council consolidated these recommendations into three priorities for action over the period 2010-2013. First, better coordinate services and outreach for vulnerable young children (for example, homeless and migrant children, children with parents in the armed forces, English language learners and children with special needs). Second, expand NJ Helps to include an on-line application and eligibility determination in multiple languages. Third, coordinate outreach efforts across state agencies and work to implement outreach partnerships with community organizations.

D. Unified Data Systems

Each State Advisory Council is required to develop recommendations for the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the state.

The National Context

The past year has seen substantial attention to the development of early childhood data systems at the national level. This work is led by the Early Childhood Data Collaborative³⁸, a national consortium that will, over the coming months, publish a framework outlining core functions of an early childhood data (or information) system. These core functions include:

- The capability to track children across ages and over time, encompassing data on home, school and community environments
- Children's demographic data (such as birth date, gender, race, ethnicity, language, disability status for children within and not yet served by public programs)
- Data on child outcomes across developmental domains that can be linked across sectors, agencies and programs (e.g., child care, school settings, preschool, Early Intervention, family child care, etc)
- A technologic solution to linking child, workforce, program and fiscal data (e.g., teacher/workforce characteristics, program quality, and service costs), and

³⁸ Members of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative are the National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Center for Children in Poverty, Council of Chief State School Officers, Data Quality Campaign, Pew Center on the States, and the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California, Berkeley. Several states are members of a National Advisory Committee to the Collaborative including CT, VA, NC, MD and PA.

- Analysis and output tools that support analysis by geography useful at the state and community level for birth through age 8 strategic planning, resource management, program improvement, and accountability.

New Jersey’s P-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Development

At the same time, the P-12 sector is focused on expanding the structure and use of Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) funded since 2005 by the federal Institute for Education Sciences within the National Center for Education Statistics. New federal policy now requires that these data systems evolve from a K-12 exclusive focus down to link with or include preschool data and up to include post-secondary and workforce data.

New Jersey’s progress in this area is summarized on several national and federal websites, including the Data Quality Campaign (DQC).³⁹ In its 2010 profile of state progress in implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System, the DQC reports that New Jersey Department of Education reported has met eight of the 10 required elements.⁴⁰

Table 3(g). 2010 Status of New Jersey’s P-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System

Objectives That Have Been Met	Objectives That Remain to be Met
Assignment of a unique statewide student identifier, P-12	Statewide teacher identifier with a teacher-student match
Collection of student-level enrollment data	Student-level course completion (transcripts)
Collection of student-level test data	
Information on untested student	
Student-level SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement exam data	
Student-level graduation and drop out data	
Ability to match P-12 and higher education data	
Statewide data audit system	

The Council discussed that one way to begin to solve part of the lack of data interoperability across early childhood data systems would be to secure legislative or regulatory approval to assign a unique identifier earlier in the lives of New Jersey’s children. Through the NJ Smart system, New Jersey now assigns unique child identifiers to all children in any child care or preschool center that receives public funds from the Department of Education. A number of states, including Connecticut and Massachusetts are now assigning these identifiers to children that participate in any state-funded program, regardless of the source. In these states, assignment of the identifier is managed by the State Department of Education. Alternatively, Rhode Island is assigning a unique child identifier at birth as part of the state’s Vital Records process. In Rhode Island, assignment is managed by the Department of Public Health.

³⁹ Online at – www.dataqualitycampaign.org. See also the National Center on Education Statistics, online at – nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/

⁴⁰ Online at – [//dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/states/NJ](http://dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/states/NJ). See also the New Jersey profile at – nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/summary.asp

The Council also learned that many formal data-sharing memoranda of understanding already exist across New Jersey state agencies. Mapping these and sharing information about what kinds of data analyses are conducted based on data matches across systems was identified as a core action for the coming year. In addition, the Council discussed seeking technical assistance from the national Early Childhood Data Collaborative that includes the National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of Chief State School Officers and the Data Quality Campaign.

Moving Forward: Defining and Tracking Participation

As noted in the introduction to this report, the New Jersey Council for Young Children has defined “early childhood” as the period from birth through age eight years and includes within the definition of “early childhood education and development programs and services” those programs that provide health care (including oral health, mental health and nutrition services), family support (including parenting education), early learning (including family child care and center-based child care and early education programs), and services to children with special needs (including early intervention and preschool special education.”

Additional data will be required across this age of children, including the characteristics and needs of their families. Current data, although fragmented in nature, clearly indicate that the following categories of children are less likely to be receiving health care, mental health services, adequate and nutritious food, early intervention and/or early learning services:

- Those living in the state’s poorest families, both urban and rural
- Those in military families
- Homeless children
- Recent immigrants
- Those served in half-day kindergarten, and
- Those living in families speaking languages other than English

The Data Committee formulated a beginning set of questions to guide the Council’s work and investment in improving the interoperability of existing early childhood data systems in New Jersey over the period 2010-2013.

**Table 3(h). Guiding Questions for the Council’s Work
on Interoperable Early Childhood Data Systems**

Questions Related to Data Needs

1. What are the major demographic characteristics of New Jersey’s children through age five? How many live in low income families? How many have key risk factors for poor development?
2. How well-prepared for success are New Jersey’s young children when they enter kindergarten? What are their cognitive and social abilities?
3. How are New Jersey’s young children being served now, on a program-by-program basis? How many

are served in publicly-funded programs? What is the quality of these programs, and how does quality vary with income and other risk factors?

4. How much do the programs serving New Jersey's young children cost?
5. What is the workforce for these programs and how is it prepared?

Questions Related to Data Systems Development

1. What data can be provided by each public or private agency involved with young children to answer these key data questions?
2. What data can be directly shared on individual children and families to improve the services that they receive or should receive? What must be done to improve the ability to share data across agencies?

Findings and Actions

Gaps in data about children, the workforce and programs were reported for virtually every one of the functional reviews conducted by the Council over the past several months. In addition, challenges including barriers to data sharing and data availability (including timeliness) were reported. There was strong cross-committee agreement that a focus on data challenges is one of the top priorities for the coming years and that it must be addressed as a cross-cutting infrastructure issues.

Several priorities for action were agreed upon at the April 21st meeting:

1. The Council needs to engage in the work of mapping who has what data and how it can now be accessed and used for systemic analyses, strategic planning, service improvement and public accountability. Real and perceived barriers to data sharing and release posed by HIPPA and FERPA need to be addressed, with national technical assistance if it is available.
2. The Council will explore how to secure the assignment of a unique child identifier at birth.
3. The Council will explore, as an interim measure, how to design a proper, timely and regular process of matching data sets on vulnerable children and families (and the services that support them) across state agencies and extant data systems.

E. Program Quality Standards and Improvement

The issue of program quality standards and improvement is embedded across most of the seven Council categories of work (that is, the seven functions specified in the Head Start Act of 2007). The New Jersey Council for Young Children has added an eighth area of work by extracting work on program quality and improvement and consolidating it as a new area.

This section of the New Jersey Strategic Report represents the beginning of that consolidation. Existing program standards for early education and care are summarized below. In addition, a

very new report (April 2010) on a pilot New Jersey Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is summarized as well.

The Preschool Program Improvement Process

New Jersey’s nationally acclaimed and highly effective Abbott preschool program is anchored in a set of high quality program elements, summarized below in Table 3(g).

Table 3(i). Characteristics of the New Jersey Abbott District Preschool Program

Teacher Education	All teachers have a BA and are certified to teach preschool children
Staffing	Coaches and intervention referral staff are available to support each program component, particularly the provision of supports for children with potential learning difficulties and challenging behaviors
Professional Development	<p>On-site, individualized in-district support ensuring implementation of and fidelity to the district’s chosen preschool curriculum</p> <p>Annual training in: (a) best practices for inclusion of preschool children with disabilities and challenging behaviors in preschool classrooms; (b) methods for teaching dual language learners in preschool classroom; (c) parent and community involvement and nursing staff</p> <p>Ten-month, 60-hour annual seminar for school district’s newly appointed preschool master teachers</p> <p>Training in program quality and child assessment tools recommended by the State and common to all districts</p> <p>Regularly scheduled supervisor meetings for school district’s dedicated preschool administrators focused on scaffolding program implementation</p> <p>Fiscal training for school district’s preschool finance personnel.</p>
Curriculum	All districts fully implement an evidence-based, comprehensive preschool curriculum
Program Quality: Classroom Level	Average score on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised is 5.23 out of 7
Facilities	Specific facility requirements have improved the size of actual classrooms and assure that the space is configured to meet the needs of preschool-aged children
Fiscal Management	Fiscal reviews and audits to ensure that programs are using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and using DOE funds on only allowable expenses.

Child Outcomes	The Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Evaluation Study (National Institute of Early Education Research) has tracked the progress of children that attended the Abbott Preschool Program.
Coordination with Head Start Programs	Each Head Start program has an MOU with its receiving school district, as required by law. In addition, Head Start and LEAs have worked together to coordinate family services, improve disability partnerships, share nurses, and build aligned curriculum.
Wrap Around Services	<p>Provision of DHS funded wrap around services to support families that need or want child care for 4 hours per day from September to June and 10 hours per day during July and August.</p> <p>Family Outreach Program (FOP) Services to support the work and advise Family Workers about appropriate support services and practices to support families.</p>

The New Jersey State Department of Education, which oversees the Abbott programs has adopted and implements the following policies and practices to support high quality in the Abbott preschool program:

- Standards: Preschool Teaching & Learning Standards
- Regulations: Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs, N.J.A.C. 6A:13A
- Guidelines: Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines
- Teacher qualifications: Focus on certification of teachers
- Curriculum: Implementation of evidence-based comprehensive preschool curricula
- Fiscal: Monitoring and review process
- Professional development: for key district staff with broad reach
- Evaluation and improvement cycle: at both district and state levels

An evaluation and improvement cycle measures and improves each aspect of the program. The level of implementation of each initiative was evaluated and used to inform changes in individual classrooms, as well as at district and state levels.

Table 3(j). Abbott District Evaluation and Assessment Tools and Methodology in Use at the Classroom, District and Statewide Levels

Tools used to evaluate classroom practices, interactions, activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised • Supports for Early Literacy Assessment • Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory • Supports for English Language Learners Classroom Assessment • Curriculum-specific implementation tools
District assessment of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Assessment Validation System (SAVS), based on each

implementation of each program component	component of the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District-administered evaluations of classroom environments, activities, interactions, supports for dual language learners, math, literacy practices, etc. using tools described above to inform professional development
Statewide evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze district-reported SAVS data• Track rates of inclusion, retention, and certification• Third party evaluation of classroom quality• Track child outcomes over time• Conduct reviews and audits to monitor fiscal practices

National Program Standards Currently Implemented in New Jersey

New Jersey has been impacted by the work of professional organizations that specialize in early childhood education and care. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was one of the first organizations to set standards through an “accreditation system.” Two hundred fifty two programs are accredited in New Jersey.

In New Jersey, the Administration for Children and Families, Region II Office of Head Start, and the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education, have begun to collaborate in an effort to enhance the quality of preschool programs for low-income children. Many of the 400 Head Start sites providing educational and support services to approximately 17,000 young children and their families collaborate with multiple school districts.

Head Start Program Performance Standards

Head Start Program Performance Standards provide a sound foundation for achieving positive child outcomes, as a comprehensive child development program that encompasses all aspects of a child’s development and learning. Each program is required to implement a curriculum that promotes children’s cognitive development and language skills, social and emotional development, and physical development. All programs must adhere to specific Program Performance Standards in the areas of groups, size, adult-child ratios, and staff qualifications, including ensuring that each classroom has a teacher assistant with a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or its equivalent. Furthermore, families are expected to be involved in increasing their own literacy and child observation skills, and in the governance process of the Head Start program.

Program Standards for State Funded School Districts

All state-funded preschool programs in school districts (in provider, Head Start or district settings) must follow the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines which include all of the major elements identified as essential for implementation of a high-quality preschool program

and regulated by New Jersey Administrative Code. These guidelines and regulations offer a framework for individual school districts to use when implementing each component of the preschool program and when evaluating how well children and their communities are being served. The document describes the essential ingredients of effective preschool education, including, for example:

- Preschool to third grade certified teachers
- A maximum of 15 students in any preschool classroom
- Classroom space requirements (950 square feet per classroom for new construction and for newly contracted classrooms) and organized for developmentally appropriate preschool activities
- Use of an evidence-based, comprehensive curriculum
- Health, nutrition and other services
- Family engagement
- Supports for inclusion
- Supports for dual language learners

Developing a Quality Rating and Improvement System

The main components of most state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) programs are:

- A set of concrete, observable quality standards that apply in all service delivery settings
- A process for objectively assessing child care quality and maintaining accountability
- A system of training and technical assistance to help child care providers improve quality
- Incentives to encourage providers to reach higher levels of quality, and
- Public information to tell parents about the QRIS system and how it can be used when making child care decisions.”⁴¹

Over the past five years, a Quality Rating and Improvement System was developed and piloted by the New Jersey BUILD Initiative, which included the following entities during its development: Association for the Children of New Jersey, Department of Children and Families, Department of Human Services, Child Care Connection and the New Jersey Association of CRRRA, Professional Impact NJ and the New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children. National technical assistance was provided by the BUILD Initiative.⁴²

The Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ), lead organization for BUILD NJ, Child Care Connection and Camden County Department of Children’s Services assisted six child care centers in Trenton and Camden in the use of this scale to achieve changes that would raise the

⁴¹ Creating a Roadmap for Success: The Need for a Quality Rating and Improvement System in New Jersey (April, 2010). p.3

⁴² There is a national Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) National Learning Network. New Jersey does not appear to be a member. Online at - [//qrisnetwork.org/](http://qrisnetwork.org/)

centers' quality. With funding provided by Children's Futures and the William Penn Foundation, this innovative project was designed to model the implementation of a quality rating and improvement system throughout New Jersey."⁴³

Development of the QRIS scale incorporated several attributes:

- Use of NAEYC accreditation standards under the system revised in 2005 as the highest level of the scale.
- Selection of quality indicators that are accessible and achievable; Challenging but not impossible.
- Equal weighting of all categories of program quality: program and learning environment, family involvement, health and safety, professional development, personnel and business practices.
- Selection of the most important indicators of overall quality in each category as agreed upon by the stakeholders.

During the development of the scale, other sources of quality criteria were analyzed and integrated. These strategies included: the five protective factors from Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education, the Preschool Implementation Guidelines from NJDOE and federal Head Start Performance Standards. Consideration was also given to alignment with the professional development career lattice maintained by Professional Impact New Jersey.⁴⁴

A pilot to test the proposed BUILD QRIS was undertaken beginning in 2007, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Children's Futures program and the William Penn Foundation. Two centers from Camden and four centers from Trenton constituted the pilot cohort. In addition, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and Parents Anonymous of New Jersey were funded to conduct research on the understanding and comfort of parents with the QRIS and its constituent quality indicators.

Results of the pilot were reported in the April 2010 report -- Creating a Roadmap for Success: The Need for a Quality Rating and Improvement System in New Jersey. Findings include:

- The New Jersey QRIS can function as a set of stepping stones by which to measure the progress of programs toward accreditation, the highest benchmark in the NJ QRIS.
- Overall gains were made in the participating centers as the result of participation in the pilot QRIS, including as measured by the national Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS-R) for preschool programs. Gains were also made in programs serving infants and toddlers, as measured by the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), although not to the same degree as gains in the preschool programs.
- Quality indicators functioned as a key catalyst for change.
- "The baseline quality of private provider preschool classrooms contracting with the former Abbott districts varies from city to city."

⁴³ Creating a Roadmap for Success: The Need for a Quality Rating and Improvement System in New Jersey (April, 2010)

⁴⁴ op cit, p. 6

- “Relationships with mentors are critical to the success of the providers.”
- Although quality incentives were made available to advance their quality improvement plans, centers more often utilized the expertise and technical assistance of their mentors to advance their proposed quality improvements.

Findings and Actions

Issues related to the status of New Jersey’s evolving QRIS and findings from the pilot were raised at the April 21st Council meeting. It was determined that some disjuncture continues to exist among parties who were and were not involved in development of the proposed system. Council members agreed that new and remaining issues should be resolved over the next six months as part of the Council’s work agenda for 2010-2011. In addition, the Council will need to devise a plan for implementation of this or another QRIS by the end of its first full-year of operation, including resolution of such challenges as the voluntary versus mandatory nature of the QRIS, funding for program supports, incentives and technical assistance required to assist programs to advance on the quality rating levels, and any governance and coordination issues which may exist or evolve.

F. Professional Development

Each State Advisory Council is required to develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the state.

Background on Professional Development in Early Childhood

Professional development is an essential part of creating an effective early childhood workforce that serves young children birth to five and their families. Specialized knowledge of how young children develop and learn is critical for members of the early childhood workforce. Effective professional development must include on-going mentoring/coaching and the promotion of reflective practices for all infant/toddler and early childhood practitioners. Teachers and others who work in the field of “early education and development services”⁴⁵ need specialized training and guidance in working with children from diverse backgrounds, special needs, family dynamics, and children involved in the child welfare system, as well as those who are homeless. Despite the fact that many states have elements of an early childhood professional preparation and development system in place, no truly comprehensive system has been fully implemented yet.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ This terminology is used by the Head Start Act to describe a broad array of B-5 services and supports.

⁴⁶ Building an Early Childhood Professional Development System. National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices Issue Brief, February 2010. p.2 Online at -- Similar conclusions have been reached by the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Building a Comprehensive System of Professional Development

A policy brief⁴⁷ released in February 2010 by the *National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices* recommended a series of steps that states should take to build a statewide system of early childhood professional development:

- “Coordinate early childhood professional development policies
- Implement research-based standards for early childhood professional development
- Ensure access to professional development opportunities
- Gather and use data on characteristics of the early childhood workforce to improve professional and program quality.”

In New Jersey as in other states, professional development opportunities are offered by a medley of different professional development providers and vary widely with respect to the philosophy, content, and format of the learning experiences. These opportunities are offered to professionals including teachers, teaching assistants, family child care providers, paraprofessionals, disability specialists, consultants, technical assistance providers, family support providers, administrators, nurses, and master teachers.

In addition, Head Start programs and other larger programs/centers include all personnel who engage families, including transportation staff, cooks, custodians, office personnel, volunteers, etc. Professional development opportunities can range from a single workshop to a semester-long academic course provided by consultants, staff from resource and referral agencies, and/or two- and four-year college faculty.

Professional Development Pathways in New Jersey

New Jersey offers multiple pathways for early childhood practitioners to advance and continue their professional development. Various agencies across the state facilitate non-credit and credit-bearing learning opportunities that lead to the following credentials:

- The Child Development Associate credential (CDA),
- The New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential
- The Administrator Credential and
- The Preschool to Third grade (P-3) certification.
- The Family Development Credential

Professional development organizations within New Jersey, include:

Rutgers University, School of Social Work

⁴⁷ Building an Early Childhood Professional Development System, op cit

The Rutgers Family Developmental Credential (FDC) Program is a professional development course and credentialing program offered through the School of Social Work's Institute for Families. The program is funded by DHS to support the professional development of Family Workers employed by centers with contracts with the former Abbott Districts. The Family Development Credential program offers sequential training designed to provide family workers with baseline competencies and skills needed to empower families to attain a health self-reliance and interdependence with their communities.

Professional Impact New Jersey (PINJ)

PINJ is a statewide initiative funded by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development and private foundation grants. PINJ plays an integral role in the field of early care and education by supporting and advocating for the growth of early childhood educators. Products and services of PINJ include:

- **New Jersey Registry/Clearinghouse for the Early Childhood Practitioners**--The NJ Registry is part of a national consortium of registries tracking the professional development of the members of the early childhood workforce. There are 1,980 early childhood practitioners, including 197 instructors registered. Within this clearinghouse system, PINJ also manages an Instructor Approval System (see also Sections E on quality improvement and Section F on early education-higher education workforce preparation).
- **Enhancement Initiatives**--PINJ administers Accreditation and Quality Rating Scale Initiatives, and the Accreditation Facilitation Project. These efforts led to the accreditation of 257 centers, 30 family child care providers, and scholarships for 697 Directors' Academy training participants.
- **Administration of Credentials**--PINJ provides technical assistance for the Administrator's Credential and validation of the New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential.
- **Scholarship/ Reimbursement Program**--A total of 20,440 professional development scholarships have been awarded to the early childhood community statewide since the formation of PINJ in 1997. A total of 8,915 Abbott scholarships have been awarded to individuals since 1999.

Family Strength Associates (FSA)⁴⁸

FSA, a private non-profit organization established in 1996, provides professional development opportunities to child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start programs, public schools and community-based organizations. FSA provides customized on-site in-service workshops to program staff and parents. FSA's programs include:

⁴⁸ Online at -- www.familynow.org

- **New Jersey Child Care Training Program (NJCTP)**, funded by the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (DFD), It has provided 380 workshops to more than 8,900 participants since 2006.
- **New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Summer Institute and Mentoring Program** with funding from DFD through the NJCTP. It is operated by The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy at Thomas Edison State College.
- **The Child Development Associate (CDA)** More than 240 teachers have received the national CDA credential through Family Strength Associates since 2002.

Professional Development through Department of Education

In moving toward preschool through grade three educational programs with developmentally appropriate and aligned standards, curricula and assessment, the department has begun to broaden the focus of its work from preschool alone to preschool to 3rd grade. During 2008 and 2009 the Department aligned the standards and created a kindergarten practices and policy advisory group. The development of kindergarten program guidelines is underway. In addition, a kindergarten informational brochure was developed.

A major piece of the alignment was in the form of professional development. The department has expanded its reach by delivering support on a regional basis to all districts receiving state aid (Abbotts, Early Childhood Program Aid and Early Launch to Learning Initiative districts), and has opened much of the training to other school districts. In addition, professional development opportunities were implemented to address a range of district needs including the level of preschool program implementation and K-3 program issues:

- On-site support by the Division to address issues with program implementation in each former Abbott, non-Abbott ECPA and former ELLI district.
- Training in program quality and child assessment tools recommended by the State
- Regularly scheduled meetings for preschool administrators focused on program implementation
- The Role of the Master Teacher/Coach 10 month, 60 hour annual seminar for 65 newly appointed preschool master teachers throughout the state
- Annual training in best practices for the inclusion of preschool children with disabilities and challenging behaviors in preschool classrooms
- Annual training in methods for teaching English language learners in preschool classrooms
- Annual training in best practices for parent and community involvement specialists and nursing staff
- A four-part Leadership Seminar Series, delivered by the Association for Children in New Jersey and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association in collaboration with the department.

- Training in kindergarten program assessment tools and best practices, in conjunction with William Paterson University.

The New Jersey Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NJACCRRA)⁴⁹

NJACCRRA is a non-profit organization composed of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies, funded by DHS-serving the 21 counties of New Jersey. New Jersey's CCR&Rs provide vital support to the more than 4,000 licensed child care programs and 3,000 registered family child care homes in New Jersey through site visits that provide mentoring and support, disseminate regulatory requirements, and publish details on upcoming workshops and conferences.

Annually, the New Jersey CCR&Rs provide more than 44,000 professionals with more than 3,000 professional development training sessions and 6,000 technical assistance site visits to child care centers across the state. CCR&Rs offer non-credit Infant/Toddler and Preschool CDA coursework as well as the Director's Academy training and is piloting the Administrator's Credential. In addition, the CCR&Rs implement the *Strengthening Families Initiative through Early Care and Education* by providing training and technical assistance in child care centers to work on building protective factors for families in an effort to prevent child abuse and neglect.

YCS Institute for Infant and Preschool Mental Health Post Graduate Certificate Program in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

This is a two-year program for candidates from a wide range of allied disciplines who wish to integrate an infant and early childhood mental health perspective into their work. Requirements include a didactic series, supervised practicum, and a final project. A two-year, vigorous program for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech/Language Pathologists is slated to begin in January 2011. YCS also provides a conference that attracts 200-250 participants.

New Jersey Chapter of NAEYC (NJAEYC)

NJAEYC is a membership organization with regional chapters. The organization is involved in accreditation assistance to programs, public policy, advocacy events, and leadership development. NJAEYC provides a two-day conference to practitioners working with children ages 0-8 and professional development opportunities in the three regions of the state. Also, NJAEYC is the lead agency sponsoring a unique conference called *Health in Child Care* that focuses on health and safety issues in early childhood settings. It is the only conference of its kind in New Jersey.

New Jersey First Steps

First Steps is a statewide initiative funded by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, under the leadership of three regional CCR&R's. The Initiative provided on-site and off-site training and technical assistance, and program assessment using the ITERS-R to child care providers caring for infants and toddlers. New Jersey's Infant/ Toddler

⁴⁹ Online at -- www.njacccrra.org

Specialists provide 30 hours of WestEd, PITC training on best practice standards for this population. They also administer an Infant/Toddler Scholarship Program and Quality Enhancement Grant that will improve the quality of Infant/Toddler care throughout New Jersey.

Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators (CITE)⁵⁰

CITE is a professional membership organization that builds collaboration, provides professional development opportunities, support and resources, and influences public policy. CITE has been instrumental in the creation of many of the infant/toddler initiatives that the state has implemented in recent years, including the newly introduced New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential. Each year CITE offers opportunities for professional development through regional chapter workshops and an annual conference.

New Jersey Head Start Association (NJHSA)-is a membership organization which provides training, advocacy, coordination, and professional development for over 30 Head Start and Early Head Start programs. NJHSA strives to enhance the quality and efficiency of child development services through training and professional development opportunities for staff and parents of Head Start and Early Head Start programs and their child care partners. It offers a variety of training opportunities at its annual New Jersey Head Start Professional Development Conference in Atlantic City which will occur this year on May 23-26, 2010.

System Needs and Challenges

Lack of “Professional Development” Definitions and Policies

Despite New Jersey’s best efforts to provide meaningful professional development opportunities, there is no agreed upon definition of the term “*professional development*” and/or statewide policies in early education or related fields that guide providers of professional development in how to integrate research from multiple disciplines. Moreover, the professional development initiatives that do exist operate in their own silos and are fragmented, focusing on individual disciplines rather than the whole child. Further coordination is needed to ensure that training and development activities are consistent across the full spectrum of early care and education, including health, mental health, early intervention, and children with special needs. Furthermore, there are very few linkages between community professional development opportunities and higher education opportunities.

Lack of Training in Chosen Curricula

Early childhood providers from settings have difficulty accessing comprehensive curriculum training and materials, largely due to lack of financing. The State Department of Education currently recommends four commercially available curricula for early education program in New Jersey, *Creative Curriculum*, *Curiosity Corner*, *High Scope*, and *Tools of the Mind*. As noted earlier in this report, virtually all Head start programs use one of these programs. However, settings that do not receive Head Start or Department of Education funds may not fully

⁵⁰ Online at -- www.njcite.org

implement a curriculum, or may not have received comprehensive training and support. Opportunities for no cost or low-cost regional training in all the recommended curricula will help New Jersey make great strides in raising program quality of public and private early childhood providers statewide.

Lack of Access to Professional Development Opportunities

Early childhood educators do not always know when professional development opportunities are being offered. Affordability and release time from employers are also factors that affect access. Adding to this situation is the lack of a mechanism for educators to assess their skill sets and create an individualized professional development plan that incorporates mentoring and coaching.

Lack of Opportunities for Training that is coupled with Mentoring and Coaching

Research studies now show that mentoring and coaching, combined with online course work and timely feedback, are highly effective professional development strategies. While mentoring and coaching practices are in place as part of the Abbott preschool program, the mentoring model is scarce outside of these school districts.

Inadequate Scholarship/Reimbursement Programs

The ongoing inadequacy of financial resources for workforce scholarships and course reimbursement negatively impacts the ability of a generally under-funded workforce to take college courses and participate in on-going advanced training. Moreover, it interferes with teachers completing advanced degrees that lead to credentialing. Thus far, in New Jersey DHS scholarship/reimbursement funds have been prioritized for to Abbott teachers, teachers in DHS CCDF contracted centers or r CDA candidates. Funding is also provided to support Director's Academy Training. There is a need to provide scholarship and reimbursement to a broader audience of the early childhood community as well as directors who are leading these programs.

Inadequate Access to Technology for Professional Development

Funding is needed to provide statewide technical assistance, training and system development to ensure that all centers and family child care homes have access to technology for their programs. In addition, technology can be used for recording child's developmental growth, for reflective practices, and for degree attainment.

Lack of Marketing for Professional Development

The early childhood professional development system must come to be viewed and valued with the same regard as continuing education credits for social workers, lawyers, and physicians. In order to accomplish this, a strategic marketing plan must be developed to ensure that the public and policymakers understand the need for a comprehensive system of professional development, and its benefits for children and families.

Findings and Actions

New Jersey has an extensive set of organizations that provide professional development to practitioners and programs serving young children. A review of these programs reveals several challenges in getting the most effective and timely professional development to those who require it:

- The absence of common core definitions and cross-agency policies on professional development
- Lack of training in the preschool curriculum models
- Insufficient access to professional development opportunities, especially those coupled with mentoring and coaching
- Inadequate scholarship and reimbursement programs
- Inadequate access to technology for professional development
- Lack of marketing for professional development.

The Committee on Professional Development reported out four recommendations:

1. Establish through Professional Impact New Jersey (PINJ) a centralized web-based database of all early childhood professional development opportunities and providers with a comprehensive and coordinated approach to preparing early childhood professionals for working with ages birth through eight.
2. Consider the High School diploma as a minimum standard.⁵¹ As a priority teachers should be working on reaching a P-3 standard by working on the next step in the credentialing sequence (i.e., CDA to Infant/toddler credential; Infant/toddler credentials to Associate Degree; Associate Degree to BA, and BA to P-3)
3. Public school administrators and community-based child care directors administering a preschool program should have annual specialized training in early childhood birth through age 8.
4. Administrators that operated a NJ licensed preschool center should obtain the Administrator's Credentials validated by Professional Impact NJ.

At the April 21st Council meeting, three top priorities for action to improve and expand professional development:

1. Establish a centralized, web-based database of all early childhood professional development opportunities (through PINJ if possible).
2. Evaluate and make recommendations for minimum standards for early childhood staff that are not already regulated.

⁵¹ Note: This recommendation elicited substantial comment in written testimony presented at the public hearing. Concern was expressed that high school students who work in centers would be excluded.

3. Develop an administrator’s certificate with particular training in child development, including infant and toddler development.

F: Birth through Age Eight Workforce Development

Each State Advisory Council is required to “assess the capacity and effectiveness of two- and four-year public and private institutions of higher education in the state toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs.”

A very preliminary review of two- and four-year higher education certificate and degree programs that reference early childhood education reveals a range of offerings across the state, mostly focused on preparing group teachers for child care or certified teachers for publicly funded preschool settings. Tables 3(i-j) identify these programs by institution and course.

Table 3(k) Two-Year Early Childhood Programs Offered by New Jersey Higher Education Institutions			
Type of credential	Community College	Specialization	Total #
Certificates/ short term trainings	Bergen Cumberland Gloucester Hudson Passaic Warren	Career ladder/child development Teachers Aide/ECE; ECE Certificate; Management ECE Human development/ECE ECE/Child Care Infant & toddler Early childhood certificate	6
CDA	Atlantic Cape, Bergen, Brookdale, Camden, Cumberland, Hudson, Mercer, Passaic, Raritan Valley, Salem, Sussex, Union		12
AA	Atlantic Cape Brookdale Camden Cumberland Hudson Passaic Raritan Valley Salem Sussex Union Warren	Liberal arts: Child care Early childhood ECE Elementary/ECE ECE ECE ECE/P-3 Elementary Elementary ECE Elementary Education	11
AS	Camden Gloucester	Elementary Education Human development/ECE	3

	Morris	ECE	
AAS	Bergen Brookdale Cumberland Hudson Passaic Raritan Valley Warren	Career ladder/child development ECE ECE/Preschool ECE ECE ECE ECE	7

**Table 3(l). Four-Year Early Childhood Programs
Offered by New Jersey Higher Education Institutions**

Credential offered	Institution	Specialization	Total #
Certificates	Montclair	Child advocacy undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs	1
CDA	Bloomfield		1
BA	Bloomfield	P-3	9
	Caldwell	P-3	
	The College of NJ	P-3 (with urban education option); Elementary/ECE	
	College of St Elizabeth	P-3 and K-5 dual cert	
	Kean	P-3	
	Montclair	Post-bachelor in P-3 initial certification	
	NJCU	P-3 modified	
	Rowan	ECE	
B.S.E	William Paterson	P-3; P-3/ECE; ECE/Elementary dual certificate	1
	Seton Hall	Integrated ECE/elementary & Special ed	
Specialized P-3 alternate route	NJCU		
	Caldwell		
	Montclair		
Endorsement Program P-3	Felician College		
	Rutgers University		
	Richard Stockton		
M.A.	Felician	Elementary and P-3	2
	Montclair	Child Advocacy	
M.A.T	Montclair	P-3; P-3 & teacher of students with disabilities; ECE	4
	NJCU	ECE/Special education	
	Rider	Specialized P-3	
	Rowan	P-5	
M.Ed.	College of NJ	Elementary/urban education option; P-3/elementary dual certification five-year	5
	Rutgers	P-3	
	Kean	ECE/elementary education	
	Montclair	Inclusive ECE	
	William Patterson	ECE	
Doctoral	Rutgers	Ed.D Teacher Leadership; Ph.D ECE/Elementary	2
	Montclair	Teacher education	

System Needs and Challenges

Lack of a Higher Education Career Pathway for Program Leaders

While New Jersey's emphasis on improving the qualifications of the early childhood teaching workforce in publicly funded programs has led to (a) an expansion of four-year offerings across the state and (b) pathways for individuals to move from CDA or early childhood certificate programs to higher degrees and certification, there is no clear career pathway for those who seek to lead in early childhood programs. Yet, effective leadership is central to maintaining and improving the quality of education.^{52 53}

Limited Access to Higher-Education Infant-Toddler Preparation Programs

Three four-year institutions and eight community colleges offer coursework related to infant and toddler development. There is increasing demand for high quality care for very young children but it is not clear what kinds of preparation is provided in institutions for this specialized work.

Need for a Review of Existing Early Childhood Education Programs

Another key issue is the quality and responsiveness of programs to the everyday realities of teaching in early childhood education. The last systematic study of the professional preparation of preschool teachers in New Jersey was conducted in 2004.⁵⁴ Since that time there has been an expansion in program offerings but little consideration of whether these programs do indeed meet the needs of the field. A study of program directors working in Abbott preschool programs would suggest that four-year certified teachers aren't always prepared to work with students who differ linguistically, academically, and culturally to themselves.⁵⁵ National studies of 2 and 4- year preparation programs support this assertion.⁵⁶ Linked to the issue of quality is accessibility. With increasing efforts to improve the qualifications of the workforce, it is also important to determine whether program offerings are responsive in their delivery style for both non-traditional and traditional students.

Need for Higher Education Program Clarity and Articulation Agreements

A fourth issue appears to be the fragmented nature of higher education. Institutions of higher education are independent entities in competition with one another for students. Names used to identify a specialization in early childhood vary by institution, reading the websites makes it difficult to determine sometimes which program an individual should apply to, and it is not known how well articulation agreements work.

⁵² Whitebook, M., Austin, L., Darrah, D., & Bellm, D. (2009). *The leadership program in early childhood: A curriculum for new and emerging agents of change*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

⁵³ Goffin, S. G., & Washington, V. (2007). *Ready or not: Leadership choices in early care and education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

⁵⁴ Lobman, C., Ryan, S., McLaughlin, J., & Ackerman, D. J. (2004). *Educating Preschool Teachers: Mapping the Teacher Preparation and Professional development System in New Jersey*. New York: Foundation for Child Development

⁵⁵ Whitebook, M., Ryan, S., Kipnis, F., & Sakai, L. (2008). *Partnering for preschool: A study of center directors in New Jersey's mixed-delivery Abbott Program*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

⁵⁶ Maxwell, K. L., Lim, C-I., & Early, D. M. (2006). *Early childhood teacher preparation programs in the United States: National report*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

Findings and Actions

New Jersey's early childhood workforce is comprised of family child care providers, assistant teachers, teachers, and directors/principals or program managers as well as an array of support staff including intervention and referral staff, special educators, family workers, and advocates. A preliminary review of two- and four-year higher education certificate and degree programs reveals a range of offerings across the state, mostly focused on preparing teachers for child care or on preparing certified teachers for publicly funded preschool settings.

Almost every community college offers a CDA program and some kind of AA or AS program that provides students an opportunity to move into a Bachelors program of education leading to certification. Only seven institutions continue to offer a stand-alone Associate's degree or other degree in early childhood education that leads to teacher certification. Interestingly, the new infant-toddler teacher credential has resulted in most two-year institutions offering specialized training in working as an infant and toddler teacher. One institution offers specialized coursework in early childhood leadership for child care directors.

At the four-year institutional level, only one college offers a CDA and three offer coursework toward the new infant-toddler credential. Nearly all four-year institutions offer a Bachelors Degree in PreK-3 education. The single exception is Rutgers University, the only program in the state that offers a five-year PreK-3/elementary certification program leading to a master's degree. Eight institutions offer a master's program in early childhood education and two offer doctoral programs related to early childhood. There appear to be no specialized programs at the master's degree level focusing on early childhood leadership. Rutgers is offering a new doctoral degree program in leadership for early childhood directors who already possess a master's degree. Montclair State College, also offers an Ed.D. in teacher education and teacher development.

The Committee identified two major system challenges that will need to be addressed to improve course offerings (particularly in administration of early education programs and in the area of infant toddler development and services), access and articulation agreements.

1. Lack of a higher education career pathway for program leaders as well as limited access to infant toddler preparation programs within higher education
2. Need for a review of existing early childhood education programs along to establish program clarity and articulation agreements across New Jersey institutions of higher education.

G. Early Learning Standards

Each State Advisory Council is required to develop birth to five early learning standards and/or make recommendations for improvements in these standards.

New Jersey Preschool Standards

New Jersey has a comprehensive set of learning standards for preschool children, *the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards* (revised in 2009), that are grounded in a strong theoretical framework for delivering high quality educational experiences to young children between the ages 3-5. The *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*⁵⁷ define supportive learning environments for preschool children, provide guidance on the assessment of young children (3-5), articulate optimal relationships between and among families, the community, and preschools, and provide expected learning outcomes for preschool children by domain, as well as developmentally appropriate teaching practices that are known to support those outcomes.

The preschool standards serve as a resource for ensuring appropriate implementation of the curriculum, a guide for instructional planning, a framework for ongoing professional development and for the development of a comprehensive early childhood education assessment system. The preschool standards are not a curriculum, but are the learning targets for a curriculum. All preschool programs must implement a comprehensive, evidence-based preschool curriculum in order to meet the preschool standards. Although the preschool domains are presented as discrete areas in this document, the program must be delivered in an integrated manner through the curriculum's daily routines, activities, and interactions.

The preschool standards also provide the focus for the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for preschool children with disabilities. Providing appropriate intervention services to such students is in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2004, which guarantee students with disabilities the right to general education program adaptations, as specified in their IEPs and with parental consent. Supports are delivered in the context of a developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum, with adaptations as necessary.

Birth to Three Early Learning Standards

While New Jersey has developed a comprehensive set of preschool learning standards, the state has not developed standards for birth to age three. A key factor in promoting positive outcomes for young children is the aligned and dynamic interaction between standards and developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes school readiness and long-term success. It is the recommendation of the Early Learning Committee that birth to three standards be drafted, reviewed and adopted by the Council over the next year, 2010-2011. As part of this work, the B-3 standards will be aligned and integrated with the state's Preschool Standards that were updated within the last year. Together these will form the framework of the consolidated New Jersey birth to five Comprehensive Early Learning Standards.

Once adopted, overview materials will be prepared for families in order to help them understand and support the development of age-appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviors

⁵⁷ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, Department of Education, Re-adoption, 2009

of their young children. The Birth to Five Early Learning Standards will then be used to develop needed practitioner professional development for those currently work in the field and will be shared with higher education leadership as a guide to the continued development of post-secondary education and training in early childhood. (See Section F of this report.)

Alignment with K-3 Learning Standards

Further, as all states move to adopt the Common Core Standards and Assessments for K-12 as part of the federal Race to the Top initiative (and expected to be part of congressional reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), it will be highly important to participate in the vertical alignment of New Jersey's Birth to Five Early Learning Standards with the K-12 Common Core Standards.⁵⁸

Findings and Actions

The Committee on Learning Standards brought forth a set of six recommendations that included standards for children's learning and standards for program quality improvement. The recommendations related to program quality are captured in Section E. The remaining recommendations are listed below.

1. Develop infant and toddler standards and integrate with preschool standards to create a unified birth through eight set of New Jersey learning standards that describe what children should know and be able to do. These standards would be applied across agencies funding and working with young children.
2. Designate an agency to oversee the development and articulation of the standards.

⁵⁸ "Potential for Both Value and Harm Seen in K-3 Common Standards," Ed Week. April 7, 2010.

Appendix A. Council Membership List

Name/Title	Agency
Ellen Wolock, Director (and Chairperson)	NJ Department of Education-Office of Preschool Education
James Moore, Deputy Commissioner	NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Celeste Andriot Wood, Assistant Commissioner	NJ Department of Health and Senior Services-Division of Family Health Services
Beverly Wellons, Assistant Director, Child Care Operations	NJ Department of Human Services-Division of Family Development
Joseph Ferraina, Superintendent	Long Branch School District
Laura Morana, Superintendent	Red Bank Borough School District
Tina Foley	Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen
Alice Rose, Director, Child Development Center	McGuire Air Force Base, NJ
Peter Contini, President	Salem County Community College
Sharon Ryan, Associate Professor	Rutgers, The State University of NJ Graduate School of Education
Ana Berdecia, Senior Fellow/Director	Thomas Edison State College
Ted Gooding, President/CEO	O.C.E.A.N. Inc.
Betty Acosta, CFDS Manager	Pathstone Corporation
Suzanne Burnette, Head Start Collaboration Director	NJ Department of Education-Division of Early Childhood Education
Cindy Herdman Ivins, Director, Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships	Department of Children and Families
Barbara Kiley, President CITE	Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators, CITE
Barbara Reisman, Executive Director	Schumann Fund
Cecilia Zalkind, Executive Director	Association for the Children of New Jersey
W. Steven Barnett, Co-Director	National Institute for Early Education Research
Lisa Lockwood, President	NJ Association for the Education of Young Children, NJAEYC
Veronica Ray, President	New Jersey Head Start Association
Lorraine Johnson, President	New Jersey Head Start Director's Association
Michelle Melgarejo, President	New Jersey Family Child Care Provider Association
Gerard Costa, Director	YCS Institute for Infant and Preschool Mental Health