Trends in Early Learning: Opportunities for State Policy Action

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Overview

• Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge: Why and What
• Macro trends in ECE state policy
• Potential policy levers and opportunities
• Resources
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

The Basics

• $500 million grant competition
• 35 states, DC, and PR applied
• General goals
  ➢ Promote school readiness among high-needs children by increasing access to high-quality ECE
  ➢ Develop a more integrated ECE system
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

- High-quality accountable programs (i.e., QRIS)
- Promoting early childhood outcomes
  - Standards, Assessment System, Family Engagement, Comprehensive Services (e.g., health, mental health)
- Improving ECE workforce
  - Professional Development, Quality Supports (e.g., training opportunities, scholarships)
- Measuring outcomes and progress
  - Kindergarten Entry Assessment, Data System
- Invitational Priority
  - Linkage to early grades
QRIS – A Visual Representation

Points awarded for these areas:
- Child Outcomes
- Facility Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions
- Professional Development & Training
- Family Engagement & Partnership

Levels:
- Level One: Licensing
- Level Two: Professional Growth and Facility Management
- Level Three: 30-69 points
- Level Four: 70-90 points
- Level Five: 91-100 points
2 Major Trends in Early Learning Policy

- States as systems leader
- Connecting early childhood with early elementary and beyond.

*Strive for coordination and coherence*
5 Potential Policy Levers & Opportunities

1. Reform governance to increase coordination and coherence
   • Consolidation within one agency
   • Creating new departments
   • Creating P-20 structures
   • QRIS
5 Potential Policy Levers & Opportunities

2. Align learning standards
   • Aligning infant/toddler standards with preschool standards
   • Addressing DLLs and special needs children
   • Aligning 0-5 standards with K-12
     ➢ Common Core as an opportunity
     ➢ Alignment goes both ways
5 Potential Policy Levers & Opportunities

3. Implement kindergarten entry assessment
   • Potential to develop common understanding about goals for children…
     ➢ Within ECE
     ➢ And between ECE and K-12
   • Challenges/Opportunities
     ➢ Resources (money, time, training, people)
     ➢ Developing appropriate and comprehensive assessments
     ➢ Assessing DLLs and special needs children
     ➢ Using data effectively and appropriately
5 Potential Policy Levers & Opportunities

4. Develop and improve data systems
   • Potential for ECE data systems to improve practice and policy – in ECE and in K-12
   • Challenges/Opportunities
     ➢ Multiple ECE systems
     ➢ Uncoordinated data
     ➢ Lack of child development data
5 Potential Policy Levers & Opportunities

5. Create more coherent training and PD systems
   • Articulating core competencies
   • Potential tools - career pathways/lattices, QRIS, coaching
   • Revamping teacher education standards
   • Revamping principal training programs
   • Challenge – capacity of higher ed and PD providers
Resources


• QRIS
  • DHHS-ACF website - http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/qrisresourceguide/index.cfm
  • QRIS National Learning Network - http://qrisnetwork.org/

• Governance
  • NGA’s *Building Ready States* report - http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1010GOVSGUIDEEARLYCHILD.PDF

• Standards
  • Early Learning Guidelines website - http://www.earlylearningguidelines-standards.org/
Resources

- Kindergarten readiness assessment

- Data systems
  - Early Childhood Data Collaborative – [www.ecedata.org](http://www.ecedata.org)

- Training and professional development
  - NAEYC - [http://www.naeyc.org/policy/ecws](http://www.naeyc.org/policy/ecws)

- Alignment with K-12
  - FirstSchool - [http://firstschool.us/](http://firstschool.us/)
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