

# Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan

Developed through a CBEC<sup>1</sup> and ECCS<sup>2</sup> Team Partnership

January 2011

## Vision

All young children in Missouri are safe, healthy and capable of reaching their full potential.

## Mission

To ensure that Missouri's early childhood programs and services are comprehensive, coordinated, accessible, adequately funded and of the highest quality to meet the needs and to promote the well-being of all young children and their families. This can be accomplished by (a) developing key partnerships, (b) building collaborative strategies and (c) ensuring equal access to necessary resources, resulting in the implementation of an effective and sustainable early childhood system.

## Values

The priorities and strategies employed by the CBEC in achieving its mission reflect a core set of values:

- Early childhood is the life period of most intensive development where both positive and negative factors have the greatest impact.
- Effective programs for young children respond to the totality of a child's development, not just one aspect.
- Children with disabilities or other special needs are best served in natural environments and inclusive programs, rather than separate, clinical, or disability-focused settings.
- Family involvement and engagement is essential to meeting the needs of young children; effective early childhood programs invite and support parents<sup>3</sup> as fully engaged partners in the design and delivery of services.
- High quality programs that are informed by research are the most effective.
- Practices, programs and professionals must be culturally responsive.
- Investments in prevention and early intervention are the most cost effective use of public funds.
- The coordination of programs and services across the state, communities and agencies results in administrative efficiencies, greater impact of services and more convenience for families.

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<sup>1</sup> Coordinating Board for Early Childhood

<sup>2</sup> Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

<sup>3</sup> The term "parents" is inclusive of all primary caregivers of young children, including grandparents, non-custodial parents and foster parents.

## Strategic Focus

Missouri's system of early childhood programs and services is a group of interacting, interrelated and interdependent components that form a complex and unified whole. The system's purpose is achieved through the actions and interactions of its components. Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan incorporates five goals for young children:

1. Missouri's young children will have their basic needs met.
2. Missouri's children are raised in a stable, supportive and nurturing family environment.
3. Missouri's children have access to high quality early childhood programs.
4. Missouri's children have a source of coordinated, comprehensive and family-centered primary health care and services.
5. Missouri's children are socially and emotionally healthy.

## Format of Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan

A key purpose of this plan is to ensure that Missouri's policies and budget support achievement of the stated outcomes and goals. This strategic plan is organized around the following components of a comprehensive early childhood system:

- Governance and Leadership
- Financial Resources
- Quality Assurance
- Professional Development
- Accountability and Evaluation
- Public Engagement
- Health and Mental Health
- Family Engagement and Support

The plan for each component includes the following:

- Outcomes – the desired end state for this component of the early childhood system in Missouri.
- Goals – attainments related to outcomes that are achievable within a three-year time frame.
- Long-term activities – actions or initiatives aimed at supporting goals anticipated to take one to three years to accomplish.
- Short-term activities – actions aimed at achieving goals or supporting long-term activities that can be accomplished in a time frame of approximately one year or less.

## Governance and Leadership

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
<p>Governance of the state's early childhood system ensures that Missouri's young children are safe, healthy and supported in their home/caregiving environment.</p>	<p>Missouri's families have access to information to foster their young children's development.</p>	<p>Missouri's communities provide information and education to assist families in ensuring safe, healthy and supportive environments to further their child's development and learning.</p> <p>Community programs and services focus on a common goal of preparing children to succeed in school.</p>	<p>Public policies create and strengthen a comprehensive system.</p> <p>The governance structure achieves collaboration and accountability within and among components of the system.</p> <p>Missouri state policies support nurturing family environments that further child development and learning.</p>

**Goals:**

1. CBEC has financial and human resources to enable it to fulfill its statutory purpose.
2. CBEC is included by the Governor's office, legislators and advocacy organizations as a key partner in furthering any initiative that impacts young children and their families.
3. Local/regional collaborative entities support Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan and implement strategies to achieve similar goals and outcomes.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Develop and implement a campaign to educate members of the general assembly, the governor and staff, and directors of all relevant departments, including those not represented on the CBEC.
2. Analyze responsibilities and membership of CBEC and make necessary modifications to meet expectations of a State Advisory Council as defined in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Head Start Act, 42 USC 9801 et seq.).
3. Develop Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan format with outcome measures for the CBEC that can be used by local/regional ECCS entities to guide their planning efforts.
4. Give leadership and support to legislative and administrative actions that will ensure the implementation of programs that have been researched and endorsed by the board.
5. Continue to research options for governance of the early childhood system that will promote greater collaboration and coordination and recommend strategies to the Governor and department directors when appropriate.
6. Use needs assessment, ECCS outcome measures and other sources of information to determine issues that need more in-depth analysis by the CBEC and possible recommendations for action.

**Short-Term Activities:**

1. Work with the Governor and staff on budget and legislative strategies.
2. Participate in the state level P-20 Council to represent early childhood interests and the importance of continuity within the educational system.
3. Continue to build communication system with local ECCS entities and encourage alignment with P-20 or other regional entities.
4. Communicate with emerging Missouri Coalition for School Readiness to encourage alignment with CBEC priorities.
5. Develop a research process that supports the development of the board’s legislative and administrative agenda each year.
6. Continue to research administrative structures in other states and work with the Governor’s office and department directors for implementation of relevant strategies (e.g., alignment of professional development funding for early care and education).
7. Participate in work of Children’s Services Commission.
8. Activate CBEC Fund.
9. Initiative a process to aid in the identification of barriers to and opportunities for greater collaboration and cooperation.
10. Determine means by which Department of Higher Education can be a full partner in work of board.
11. Determine means by which First Steps can be a full partner in the work of this board.
12. Initiate contact with and develop plan for on-going involvement with work of Senate 2020 committees.

**Financial Resources**

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
Financial resources of the state’s early childhood system ensure that Missouri’s young children are safe, healthy and supported in their home/caregiving environment.	Financial resources support families’ access to programs and services that foster family stability and their young children’s development.	Financial resources are coordinated in local communities to ensure the most effective and efficient use of funds.  Missouri’s communities provide information about early childhood programs and services to help families access benefits and connect with other families.	Adequate and sustainable state funding is available for early childhood programs and services.  Funding guidelines are conducive to cross department collaborations.

**Goals:**

1. A larger percentage of the state’s general revenue is spent on young children.
2. All potential sources of federal funds are maximized.
3. There is a mechanism for early childhood-related programs whereby funding sources are integrated and streamlined to reduce duplication and eliminate gaps.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Develop a multi-year strategy for policy changes that address the state’s lack of revenue to sustain current services, ensure the availability of referral services when needed and fund new initiatives.
2. Develop sustainable financial plans for all new or expanded programs recommended by the CBEC.
3. Investigate new funding strategies/sources for the early childhood system.
4. Facilitate linkages between early childhood programs and alternative funding sources (i.e., businesses, public schools, foundations).

**Short-Term Activities:**

1. Be informed on decisions on use of federal stimulus funds for early childhood.
2. Participate with appropriate departments to apply for a federal Early Learning Challenge Grant (when signed into law.)
3. Continue to refine the department matrixes of services that identify source and amounts of funding.

**Quality Assurance**

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
Missouri’s children have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate early childhood programs.	Missouri’s families have access to high quality early childhood programs to facilitate their child’s growth and development and support the family’s self-sufficiency (i.e., employment, education and training).	Missouri’s communities offer various options of high quality, early childhood programs.	State policies, regulations, rules and standards are consistent within and between components of the early childhood system.  State policies, regulations, rules and standards reflect nationally identified best practices.  Legislators are educated on the relationship between quality and achievement of outcomes when serving young children.

**Goals:**

1. All components of the early childhood system, including abuse prevention and intervention, parenting education and support, early care and education, early intervention child health and child and family mental health, are designed in a manner that meets standards set by relevant national organizations.
2. All components of the early childhood system have the capacity to provide incentives and resources to encourage achievement of high quality standards.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Support legislation to increase accountability for the investment of subsidy funds.
2. Increase subsidy reimbursements for licensed care to support family access to quality settings.

3. Support the development and implementation of new rules for licensed family child care and license-exempt child care centers.
4. Support an in-depth analysis of existing parenting education/home visiting programs to ensure that they employ best practices and are serving families most in need.
5. Support the full implementation of a Missouri Quality Rating System for evaluating and improving early childhood programs in Missouri, which considers the inclusion of social-emotional, health and nutrition standards.
6. Research best practices for higher levels of quality beyond minimum regulation for abuse prevention and intervention, parenting education and support, child health and child and family mental health.
7. Establish a seamless system of early education birth to kindergarten entry.
8. Require all publicly funded early childhood programs to adhere to evidence-based standards, inclusive of health/safety and social-emotional measures.
9. Assure appropriate health and safety provisions are embedded into the revised child care licensing regulations for all provider types.
10. Develop a plan to assure that all children have a developmental screen by age 3.

#### Short-Term Activities:

1. Advocate for aligning the investment of subsidy funds to quality.
2. Make tiered subsidy payments proportional to quality.
3. Mobilize support for implementation of the proposed new rules for licensed child care centers.
4. Give leadership to the development and dissemination of infant-toddler early learning guidelines.
5. Give leadership to the development of a consolidated set of standards for prekindergarten education programs as recommended by the Pre-K Panel.
6. Support the implementation of a statewide quality assessment system for early care and education programs.
7. Advocate for necessary legislative components of a quality assessment system.
8. Support expansion of the Strengthening Families initiative to more sites and into more related programs that reach at-risk families.
9. Give leadership to the imperative of early intervention from birth to 5 – review First Steps eligibility criteria and advocate for expanded eligibility.
10. Review and analyze data from the Department of Social Services regarding state and federal funds that support unregulated care.
11. Review and analyze statewide data of those served in home visiting/parenting education programs.

**Comment [o1]:** Do we need to revise this language somehow to reflect birth to 5 early learning guidelines (SAC work?)

**Comment [o2]:** Point of discussion: do we want to do this in partnership with SICC—what if SICC doesn't want this?

### Professional Development

The workforce in school age/youth development is included in this professional development system recommendation by the CBEC because many children in kindergarten through middle school receive before and after school services from child care programs that also serve the birth-to-five population. Staff members in these programs benefit from being with staff from early childhood programs in many professional development experiences.

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
Missouri's children develop to their full potential through interaction with competent and qualified personnel.	Through engagement with competent and qualified personnel, Missouri's families have the skills and resources they need to facilitate their child's growth and development.	Professionals in all components of the system are knowledgeable and skilled and compensated relative to the value of their position and preparation.  Professionals in all components of the system receive assistance that optimizes performance in their jobs.	Missouri state policies support an integrated system of professional development, education and training that ensures that professionals in all components of the systems are knowledgeable, skilled and compensated relative to the value of their position and preparation.  Missouri state policies ensure that professionals in all components of the system receive assistance that optimizes performance in their jobs.

**Goals:**

1. There is a comprehensive, coordinated system of professional development that serves both early childhood and school-age professionals across settings with a unified administrative structure.
2. Professional development services are culturally responsive, inclusive and accessible to all.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Ensure continued implementation and evaluation of coordinated administrative structure for early childhood professional development services.
2. Support implementation of recommendations regarding degrees, articulation and certification.
3. Research strategies and make recommendations for integrating appropriate health and mental health training into pre-service and in-service programs.
4. Investigate and support the implementation of professional development activities that support effective inclusion of children with disabilities in Early Childhood and School Age environments.
5. Research strategies and make recommendations for the recruitment, retention and promotion of a culturally diverse workforce.

**Short-Term Activities:**

1. Initiate work with appropriate departments to create a coordinated administrative structure that includes current sources of funding and a shared regional delivery system.
2. Work with DESE and DHE and other Early Childhood stakeholders to develop recommendations regarding degrees and credentials. Work with DESE and DHE to develop specific strategies to achieve articulation between and within two- and four-year institutions.
3. Develop a Child Care Orientation Training series on social and emotional development and inclusion of children with social, emotional and behavioral concerns.

## Accountability and Evaluation

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
Missouri's children develop to their full potential as a result of data-driven decision-making and integrated planning at the community level.	As a result of data-driven decision-making and integrated community planning, Missouri's families have the programs and services they need to facilitate their child's growth and development.	Service planning and delivery at the local level is driven by analysis of reliable data.	Cross-sector data are used for planning, analysis and evaluation.  Policy decisions are based on reliable data.

### Goals:

1. A comprehensive child, family and professional needs assessment is completed and readily accessible.
2. Unit level data for children and practitioners who have direct contact with children are available from all components of the early childhood system.
3. Outcome measures for Missouri's Early Childhood State Plan are established and used at the state and local levels in making program decisions.

### Long-Term Activities:

1. Implement an on-going process of assessing needs that informs CBEC and state department plans.
2. Make needs assessment information readily available in an on-line database for state and local use.
3. Participate in the testing and validation process for the P-20 database by examining ways in which data collected by individual components of the comprehensive system may be duplicative, identify information gaps and streamline data collection and analysis across the components.
4. Advocate for increasing accountability for the investment of subsidy funds for unregulated child care.
5. Develop and maintain a system of periodic population-based statewide needs assessment measuring the extent to which families access a medical home.

### Short-Term Activities:

1. Design and begin the process of conducting a comprehensive assessment to analyze needs of young children, their families and early childhood professionals. This assessment should include the availability and quality of early childhood programs, as well as identification of opportunities for and barriers to coordination of early childhood efforts. Additionally, this needs assessment should include all requirements addressed in the State Advisory Council application per ARRA, 2009 (P.L. 111-5).
2. Support the work of and provide input to the P-20 Data Council in the development of the dataset related to early childhood program data, workforce data, child data and parent education/support data.
3. Work with appropriate departments to make PARS (Professional Achievement and Recognition System) participation compulsory for staff in all licensed and license-exempt programs.



4. Ensure design of a developmentally appropriate, valid and reliable kindergarten readiness assessment.
5. Support and provide input into the revision of the Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

### Health and Mental Health

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
<p>Missouri’s children have continuous access to coordinated, comprehensive and family-centered primary health care and services.</p> <p>Missouri’s children are socially and emotionally supported in their home, school and community.</p>	<p>Missouri’s families partner with their primary health care provider to access needed services and resources.</p> <p>Missouri’s families provide a socially and emotionally healthy home environment.</p>	<p>Missouri’s community health care providers are accessible and knowledgeable and readily share information with families about available services and resources.</p> <p>Collaborative efforts in communities identify social, emotional and behavioral risks and intervene to prevent more serious mental health problems (e.g., Bright Futures).</p> <p>Missouri’s communities support the emotional wellbeing of families and children.</p>	<p>Missouri’s state policies support the medical home model.</p> <p>Missouri’s state policies support the emotional well-being of families and children.</p>

**Goal:**

1. Principles promoting health and social/emotional wellness for young children and families are integrated into all aspects of Missouri’s early childhood system.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Support a statewide system of child care health consultation to provide health and safety consultation and education to child care providers.
2. Assure all Missouri children and their parents (especially children birth-5 years) have access to affordable public or private health insurance.
3. Assure all Missouri children have access to healthcare offered at hours and locations that are convenient for their families.
4. Support and enhance care provided by rural health providers.
5. Facilitate the development of a system of childhood mental health consultation.
6. Assure health care provider reimbursement rates are sufficient to ensure availability of an adequate number of providers.
7. Develop best practice standards and protocols for screening young children for emotional, social and behavioral risk factors, including the use of culturally appropriate tools and processes.
8. Establish criteria for infant/early childhood mental health consultation.
9. Develop a long-term coordinated plan for all pregnant women to have access to a home visiting program.

**Comment [V3]:** Does this belong in PD??

**Comment [o4]:** NEW: Any consideration to work of CSMT and/or partnering with CSMT to support mental health delivery system

**Short-Term Activities:**

1. Across all initiatives, resources will educate families about their children’s health through various screenings and diagnostic check-ups.
2. Maintain a resource website, including a listing of qualified mental health professionals and programs for young children.

**Public Engagement**

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
The needs of Missouri’s children are represented through the involvement of family members in advocacy, policy-making and program development.	Missouri’s families engage in advocacy, policy-making and program development.	The public is informed of the needs of children and advocates for greater local investment in children.  Community leaders support local investment in early childhood.  Communities include families in planning and decision-making in their communities.	The state’s political environment is supportive of greater investments in programs for young children.  Voters support greater public investment in early childhood.

**Goals:**

2. State level elected and appointed officials are educated on the importance of investing in young children.
3. Business leaders have a means by which they can mobilize their support for early childhood.
4. The public has access to information on what the state is doing to improve and expand the early childhood system.
5. Families serve on key policy-making bodies at the state and local levels.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Facilitate development of a blue-ribbon business action group that focuses on early childhood investment.
2. Encourage voter education efforts related to issues that impact young children, such as the Missouri Coalition for School Readiness.
3. Implement a statewide campaign to increase awareness of the importance of the child’s environments to his/her social emotional well-being.

**Short-Term Activities:**

1. Follow-up on short-term action steps and commitments that emerge from the Business Summit.

2. Explore social networking technology to promote greater public information and involvement.

### Family Engagement and Support

OUTCOMES			
CHILD	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	STATE
Missouri’s children reach their full potential through the active engagement of their family members in their development.	Missouri’s families engage with their children in ways that support the children’s development.	<p>Communities promote shared planning and decision-making with families.</p> <p>Community agencies and programs engage families in ways that support children’s development.</p> <p>Communities recognize, support, and are responsive to the diversity of Missouri’s families.</p>	<p>Missouri’s integrated early childhood system incorporates family leadership at all levels.</p> <p>Missouri’s infrastructure for advancing parent leadership supports training, informs policy, advocates for children and families, and provides mentoring opportunities.</p> <p>Families are actively engaged in the development of state policies and programs for young children.</p>

**Goals:**

1. Parents serve on key policy-making bodies at the state and local levels.
2. Develop a system of family support that enhances protective factors (see Strengthening Families) in families.

**Long-Term Activities:**

1. Partner to support the implementation of statewide parent leadership opportunities.
2. Develop and coordinate effective parenting initiatives that advance parenting and parents’ knowledge of child development.
3. Develop and implement a system that is responsive to emergency needs and promotes continued family stability.

**Short-Term Activities:**

1. Explore with the Head Start Association, Head Start grantees and other entities the development and coordination of parent leadership opportunities.
2. Design and conduct an environmental scan of state parenting initiatives.
3. Maintain a transitional benefit for families that exceed the eligibility level to alleviate the “cliff effect.”