

Redding Consortium Social Determinants of Health Working Group
BRIEF of Interim Recommendations to Advance Equity in Early Childhood Programs, Services, and Education
November 30, 2020

Many of the barriers caused by poverty and systemic racism impact children well before they enter kindergarten.¹ The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has clearly demonstrated how racism can be detrimental to life-long mental and physical health, starting in early childhood². Indeed, these barriers are ingrained in DE's Early Childhood (EC) programs and systems.³ DE lacks a statewide developmental screening & referral system, which impacts children's ability to receive early intervention services for which they are eligible; furthermore, EC programs are not required to participate in DE Stars, public programs are not required to be licensed by the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL), and ECAP is underfunded.⁴ Local Education Agencies (LEA), or School Districts, are required to find and serve preschool children with disabilities, as per IDEA,⁵ but DE preschoolers with disabilities are not included in the lower ratio "Basic Special Education Unit Count."⁶

Current racial and economic disparities are evident when reviewing policies and outcomes for young children in DE.⁷ The Early Learner Survey (ELS), which DE began to administer in 2015 to all public kindergarteners entering school, highlights these disparities. The ELS divides assessment scores into two categories: "accomplished" (above a numerical threshold) and "emerging" (below that threshold). Statewide, the percentage of white incoming kindergarteners assessed as "accomplished" for language ranged from 59% to 62% between 2016 and 2019; the equivalent statistics for Black children ranged from 50% to 51% and for Hispanic/Latino children from 39% to 43%. The percentage of white children assessed as "accomplished" for mathematics ranged from 50% to 52%; the equivalent statistics for Black children ranged from 37% to 40% and for Hispanic/ Latino children from 29% to 31%. Similar disparities were detected for low-income children. Low-income children scoring "accomplished" in language ranged from 44% to 47%; other children ranged from 57% to 60%. Low-income children scoring "accomplished" in mathematics ranged from 32% to 34%; other children ranged from 48% to 50%.⁸ Empirical evidence demonstrates that inequities based on race and poverty are present well before children enter kindergarten.

Living in poverty from B-5 negatively impacts a child's ability to succeed in school, and Early Intervention can increase long term positive outcomes for children facing barriers of race and poverty.⁹ Formal, high-quality, center-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) has proven to be highly effective in improving children's experiences in kindergarten and beyond.¹⁰ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's Hi-5 Initiative recommends six impactful interventions to address Social Determinants of Health, with one being access to ECE.¹¹

The Redding Consortium calls upon DE leaders to to increase funding, pass legislation, change regulations, and implement policies to ensure that DE's Birth to Age Five (B-5) children who face barriers of race and/or poverty are guaranteed opportunities to succeed.

¹ Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center (<https://pn3policy.org/>)

² Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University: How Racism Can Affect Child Development

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/racism-and-ecd/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=november_2020

³ PDG B-5 Consolidated Needs Assessment Summary (https://education.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/oel_PDG_consolidated_needs_assessment.pdf)

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ IDEA Statute and Regulations: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/>

⁶ DOE's Verification Procedures for Special Education Funding Units and Local Assurances; August 2020

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/78/FINAL%2011.13.%202020%20-%202021%20Verification%20Procedures%20for%20SpEd%20Funding%20Units%20and%20Local%20Assurances.pdf>

⁷ Delaware's 2020 Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap for 2020 (https://pn3policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Prenatal-to-3-State-Policy-Roadmap-2020_Delaware.pdf)

⁸ "Early Learner Key Findings," Delaware Department of Education Office of Early Learning, March 2019

https://education.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/oel_16_18_deels_final2.pdf

⁹ Fantuzzo, Rouse, McDermott, & Sekino, "Early Childhood Experiences and Kindergarten Success: A Population Based Study of a Large Urban Setting," 34 School Psychology Review 571 (2005).

¹⁰ Brookings Institution: The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects (<http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Brookings-Pre-Kindergarten-Effects.pdf>)

¹¹ CDC: Health Impact in 5 years (<https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hst/hi5/index.html>)

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FY2022 & FY2023 Early Childhood Recommendations	Funding Information
<p>DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING: National research demonstrates long-term positive outcomes associated with Early Intervention (EI) and high-quality infant and Early Childhood (EC) programs.¹² The Redding Consortium recommends increasing access to EI and special education services for children facing barriers of race and poverty. To meet this need, we recommend 1) that licensed child cares require families to complete developmental screening at least 1 x per year (K Williams-Prime; L Sturgeon-Prime in Senate) and 2) requiring doctors who accept Medicaid and CHIP to implement screenings in alignment with the AAP's Bright Futures Schedule of Periodicity¹³ (K Williams-Prime). <i>As of 11/30/20, 389 of DE's 1,030 licensed child cares (41%) implement screening, and this is only monitored once every three years, at the DE Stars.</i></p> <p>IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619: IDEA requires Lead Agencies to actively seek children who may be eligible for services (IDEA calls this "Child Find"), 2) ensure the provision of services for which children are eligible, and 3) reduce the burden on children, families, and public school systems by identifying & serving eligible children as early in life as possible.</p> <p>EPSDT Program: Medicaid's EPSDT Program¹⁴ is designed to ensure that children ages birth-21 who are Medicaid and CHIP eligible receive screenings and preventive measures as recommended by the AAP's Bright Futures Schedule of Periodicity. <i>In DE in 2019, just 27.5% of children ages Birth-3 who are Medicaid or CHIP eligible received developmental screening with an approved screener.</i>¹⁵</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost to child cares or families. OCCL screening legislation will coincide with legislation to move IDEA Part C to DOE-July 2020 (L Sturgeon-Prime; Griffith & Williams-CoPrime in House). Part C screening funds will move to DOE. No cost to PCPs. They are reimbursed via Medicaid. Increased Funding-Child Find funds for school staff to process screeners & two OEL/OCCL contractors to support training & screening at EC programs, coordinate with home visitors, pediatricians & community agencies, oversee & support referrals & maintain state data. Approximately \$180,000
<p>Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP): DOE ECAP contracts run on a 3 year cycle. The current cycle is FY2020-FY2023. The Redding Consortium recommends increasing current per child funding from \$7,227 to \$15,319,¹⁶ and by FY2023, increasing the number of ECAP slots by 1,000 to meet the needs of unserved low-income 3 and 4 year olds in the four target districts. With increased funding, grantees will be required to increase quality, including 1) full day (at least 6 hours) programming, 2) onsite optional BC/AC (with POC option), 3) high-quality PD and programming (literacy, SEL, Conscious Discipline, online developmental Screening, equity, trauma informed practices), 4) inclusion in classrooms, 5) OCCL licensing, 6) DE Stars participation & SL 4 or 5, and 7) POC option for non-ECAP children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Funding: FY2022-Focus on increased quality. Fund current 845 ECAP slots at K-12 DE per student level = \$12,944,555; programs must meet high quality measures. FY2023-Focus on increased slots. Fund 1,000 additional ECAP slots at the K-12 level=\$15,319,000.
<p>Home Visiting: The Redding Consortium recommends Increasing access to Home Visiting Programs in the COW and surrounding areas of need to reduce the barriers associated with race and poverty, and in alignment with the Delaware Early Childhood Council's (DECC) 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.¹⁷ Home visiting is a prevention strategy used to support pregnant moms and families with young children to promote infant and child health, foster educational development and school readiness, and help prevent child abuse and neglect. Across DE, high-quality home visiting programs, including the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), Healthy Families Delaware (HFD), Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Early Head Start (EHS) offer vital support to parents facing the challenges of raising babies and young children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team of four home visiting staff members to support the COW & surrounding areas. Implementation of HV referral system. Increased Funding: FY2022-\$600,000
<p>Current Legislation that that aligns with Redding Consortium's Educational Equity Goals:</p> <p>Prek Special Education: The Redding Consortium recommends Prek-3rd Grade Basic Spec Ed. unit funding that aligns with 4th-12th grade current unit funding to ensure that all children with special needs have access to high-quality services & programs. (Rep. Kim Williams-Prime)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rep Williams-working on refiling and funding.
<p>Current Legislation that that aligns with Redding Consortium's Educational Equity Goals:</p> <p>IDEA Part C: The Redding Consortium recommends that DOE become the Lead Agency for IDEA Part C to align EC & special education services and programs and to reduce barriers caused by race and poverty. This recommendation is in alignment with the DECC's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.¹⁸ (L Sturgeon-Filing; Griffith & Williams- CoPrimes in House)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY2022-Funding TBD Senator Sturgeon-working with EC stakeholders to DRAFT legislation.
<p>Current Legislation that that aligns with Redding Consortium's Educational Equity Goals:</p> <p>Common Initial School Registration: The Redding Consortium recommends a common statewide online registration system for all public school programs to reduce barriers associated with race and poverty. This recommendation is in alignment with the DECC's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.¹⁹ (Senator Elizabeth Lockman-Prime)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senator Lockman-working on refiling & funding.

¹² Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC): Effectiveness of Infant and Early Childhood Programs: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/effective/effective.asp>

¹³ Preventive Pediatric Health Care Bright Futures/American Academy of Pediatrics: https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf

¹⁴ EPSDT - A Guide for States: Coverage in the Medicaid Benefit for Children and Adolescents: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/effective/effective.asp>

¹⁵ US DHHS's Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services; Medicaid & CHIP in DE: <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-overviews/stateprofile.html?state=Delaware>

¹⁶ Rodel: DE at a Glance; Per Pupil Funding: <http://www.rodeldel.org/ata glance/>

¹⁷ Delaware Early Childhood Council's (DECC) 2020-2025 Strategic Plan:

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/366/ECC%20DECC%20FINAL%20PDF%20TINA.pdf>

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Id.