INCLUDING PREK IN COMPREHENSIVE ECCE SYSTEMS BUILDING

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WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

• Identify barriers and solutions to implementing preK within the context of the comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE) system.

• Increase knowledge of systems-building strategies for preK expansion to build an equitable system.

• Learn how states support preK in mixed settings through financing mechanisms, workforce supports, inclusive practices, and data systems.
STATE-FUNDED PREK PROGRAM

- Funded, controlled, and directed by the state.
- Serves children of preschool age (3 and 4).
- Primary focus on early childhood education.
- Group learning experience at least 2 days a week.
- Must be distinct from subsidized child care.
- Must not be primarily designed to serve children with disabilities.
- When blended with Head Start, state funds must substantially increase the number of slots.

(Friedman-Krauss et al., 2022)
MIXED DELIVERY

• A state-funded, -controlled, and -directed preK program that is delivered through the mixed delivery system.
  
  - A *mixed delivery system* is a combination of programs, providers, and settings—such as Head Start, licensed family and center-based child care programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations—supported by a combination of public and private funds. (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015)
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

• Core mixed delivery programs and funding streams
  o Child care
  o Early Head Start/Head Start
  o State funded preK programs
  o Title I of ESSA

• Broader programs and services
  o Home visiting
  o IDEA Part C and Section 619 of Part B
  o Family support
  o Health and mental health
  o Nutrition

• Infrastructure components that support these programs and services
POLL QUESTIONS

Which settings are **allowed to deliver** your state’s preK? Check all that apply.

a. Center-based child care
b. Family child care homes
c. Local education agencies (LEAs)
d. Head Start
e. No state-funded preK program
f. Other/unsure – please comment in chat

Which settings **actually deliver** your state’s preK? Check all that apply.

a. Center-based child care
b. Family child care homes
c. Local education agencies (LEAs)
d. Head Start
e. No state-funded preK program
f. Other/unsure – please comment in chat
How prek is part of comprehensive ECCE systems building
Please put your response to the following question in the chat:

As your state considers options to establish or expand state-funded preK, what barriers and challenges have you identified?
STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PREK IN THE ECCE SYSTEM

• Collect and integrate data to monitor capacity of the mixed delivery programs (coordinated enrollment).
• Set policies around family share of costs for full-day, full-year mixed delivery programs with preK options.
• Create financing structures to offset reduction of programs serving younger children.
• Create comprehensive transition plans.
• Create a comprehensive plan to prepare, support and retain a high-quality mixed delivery workforce.
• Develop and align standards across mixed delivery programs.
• Coordinate mixed delivery program monitoring to reduce burden.
• Embed related ECCE services (food, health, mental health) across all mixed delivery programs.
SCALING PREK IN MIXED DELIVERY SETTINGS WHILE BUILDING THE ECCE SYSTEM

Lori Connors-Tadros, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, National Institute for Early Education Research
CONTINUITY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN IS CRITICAL TO HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY PREK IS AN EQUITY IMPERATIVE

• Current reality:
  o Given the pandemic, most states served fewer children in state-funded preK in 2021.
  o Even before the pandemic, the 2019 American Community Survey reported only about 54% of children from low-income households attended any early childhood education program. (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2022)

• Hopeful signs for the future:
  o PreK can be a fulcrum to a comprehensive ECCE system birth through early elementary.
  o About 15 states proposed or have recently passed legislation to expand preK; many are using federal relief funds to expand access.
  o All but one state allows preK to be delivered in mixed delivery settings.
  o Including family child care in state-funded preK is a new opportunity.
HOW TO EXPAND QUALITY PREK AND ENSURE EQUITY

- See preK as a strategy to lift the birth to 5 system.
- Support a high-quality workforce.
- Provide start-up and planning costs.
- Assess facilities and address supply building.
- Intentionally include children with disabilities and dual language learners.
- Build out data systems to collect data on race, ethnicity, quality, and setting of ECCE access.
FAMILY CHILD CARE IN STATE PREK

- An opportunity to expand options to learn for children and to support families' needs.

- Much work remains to build capacity, to define and support quality.

Note. Adapted from Weisenfeld & Frede (2021, Tables 2–3).
A PATH FORWARD FOR EXPANDING PREK IN A COMPREHENSIVE ECCE SYSTEM

- Clear vision
- Shared governance
- Attention to time and capacity
STATE PANEL

Tonya Coston, Executive Director, Division of Early Childhood Services, New Jersey Department of Education

Kimberly Friddell, Director, Office of Preschool Education, New Jersey Department of Education

Sandy Trujillo-Medina, Director Early Care Education and Nutrition, New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department

Kristi Snuggs, Deputy Director, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Lorena Gonzalez, Senior Manager, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
NC Pre-K Overview

- Available in all 100 NC counties and administered via 91 contracting agencies (blend of public and private agencies)

- 3.3% for HEAD START
- 43.2% for PUBLIC SCHOOL
- 50.5% for SMART START/ PARTNERSHIPS
NC Pre-K Children Served by Facility

52% PUBLIC SCHOOL

12% HEAD START

36% PRIVATE CHILD CARE
NC Pre-K Challenges & Strengths

Challenges
- Number of Children
- Teacher Compensation
- Rate Structure
- Challenging Behaviors
- Communication

Strengths
- Teacher Licensure & PD
- Increased Rates for Private Sites
- Increased Admin Funding
- Pre-K to K Transition
SUMMARY

• ECCE systems building should include preK planning to ensure cohesion.

• PreK in mixed delivery settings offers more choices for families.

• Expanding access to preK is an equity imperative.

• When obstacles are encountered look for solutions through systems planning.
REFERENCES


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