

Project Abstracts

Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils Implementation Grant

High Risk Populations

- Low Income (FARMS)
- English Language Learners (ELL)
- Children with Disabilities (Special Education)

Key

- Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment through Stories (VIOLETS)
- Reach Out and Read (ROAR)

1/2/2014

MSDE

Wendy Baysmore, Grants Specialist



Allegany County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Early Childhood Advisory Council of Allegany County (ECAC) was established to address the achievement gap for Allegany County students entering Kindergarten fully ready to learn. The ECAC of Allegany County is focusing on narrowing the achievement gap for lower socioeconomic and special needs children by simultaneously focusing on providing professional development for early learning providers (Pre-K and Head Start teachers, teacher and instructional assistants, and child care providers) and providing activities that provide parents with tools and free resources to help them effectively prepare their children to enter school ready to learn. By enhancing the knowledge and skills of Allegany County's early learning providers and families, the ECAC believes that children from lower socioeconomic households and children with special needs will have the resources needed to be prepared to enter school fully ready to learn.

The following professional development activities have been identified to enhance early learning provider's ability to work with the targeted subgroups and improve Language and Literacy and Social and Emotional Development:

- VIOLETS
- CLASS
- Ruby Payne
- SEFEL

The following activities have been identified to provide families with needed resources to help their children improve Language and Literacy and Social and Emotional Development skills:

- Learning Parties
- Reach Out and Read
- Library of Allegany County (Imagination)
- Summer camp for special needs children
- Annual School Readiness Fair

In addition to the specific activities outline above, the ECAC of Allegany County will also work to create awareness of the importance of early learning and school readiness through a community outreach campaign.



Anne Arundel County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Anne Arundel County ECAC grant will focus on the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) domains of personal and social and language and literacy in the catchment area of Georgetown East Elementary. The goal of the project is to increase language and literacy readiness scores for the 2014/2015 Georgetown East kindergarten class by 5% by June 2015.

During a full day planning session in August 2013, the Anne Arundel County Early Childhood Coalition examined FARMS, race, special education and ELL at targeted elementary schools. The members concluded that the catchment area of Georgetown East Elementary showed the most disparities and should be the focus of the Anne Arundel County Early Learning Challenge (ECAC) grant. The student body is drawn from some of the most impoverished areas of the City of Annapolis.

Five strategies outlined in the proposal are all targeted at the catchment area of Georgetown East Elementary. They include a detailed local needs assessment to ensure targeted strategies are properly focused. Those five strategies are:

- Reach Out and Read
- Early childhood programming at the local library
- Child care provider training
- Parent engagement efforts
- Early childhood summit



Baltimore City-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Baltimore City ECAC “*Cherry Hill Races to the Top*” (CHRTT) will improve critical educational outcomes in the community by implementing a systemic community engagement approach to address these problems. CHRTT will target:

- Early childcare providers (home and center-based)
- Parents
- Service agencies
- Community members
- Area elementary schools

The two major goals are: 1- To increase regular school attendance among kindergartners; and 2-To increase the number of third graders reading at grade level. These goals will be achieved by implementing the following objectives: conducting an assessment of the landscape; forming a Cherry Hill Early Childhood Coalition; developing school readiness and attendance messaging; providing professional development activities around Maryland EXCELS program; implementing family strengthening activities. CHRTT will engage in three strategies to address the problems in Cherry Hill:

- Strategy 1- Engage the early childhood education community to create a shared vision and communication campaign for improving school readiness and school attendance.
- Strategy 2 -Strengthen the early education delivery system through improved collaboration and strong professional development.
- Strategy 3 - Strengthen Cherry Hill families by building their capacity to support their children’s education.

This initiative will allow Baltimore City ECAC to positively impact educational outcomes for children in Cherry Hill.



Baltimore County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Baltimore County Early Childhood Advisory Council will focus on promoting an increase in the number of children entering school ready to learn through multiple strategies and collaborative partnerships. Some efforts will attempt to reach parents of young children across Baltimore County while others will be focused on a target geographic area.

Due to the geographic and population size of the County, additional efforts will be focused on a target area on the east side of the County identified through a needs assessment. Within this target area, child care providers will be encouraged to understand the Maryland EXCELS program and have opportunities to receive training and technical assistance to promote their participation in that program. The target area will also be the focus of a pilot project to establish community-level links between direct service providers with the hope of increasing the efficiency of resource utilization. There will also be outreach to parents and caregivers to attend multiple family nights at their respective elementary school with the focus being:

- Promoting early childhood well-being
- Establishing relationships of trust and comfort with the school
- Early childhood story times at community locations
- Expansion of services at the Family Support Center

The Baltimore County Early Childhood Advisory Council will utilize the grant period as an opportunity to establish a solid foundation for an early childhood system with the expectation that the collaborative partnerships and collective efforts will prosper indefinitely.



Calvert County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Calvert County's Local Early Childhood Advisory Council will focus on:

- Promoting the importance of school readiness with families and caregivers
- Encouraging more families with young children to participate in high quality early care and education

Grant activities target informal caregivers, particularly those in foster care and kinship care, families with boys, and stay at home parents. With the goal that all children fully enter school ready to learn in Calvert County, grant activities will focus around closing the achievement gaps in language/literacy and social emotional domains and ensuring accessibility and affordability to the target population.

As we looked closer at the population of young children being served in these setting, both informal and Pre-K, the ECAC determined the following were priority factors for influencing the trend line: the isolation and lack of support and access to resources parents and informal caregivers experience in a rural bedroom community, the comparably lower education of our adult population, a dramatic increase in the percentage of young children in kinship/foster care as a result of prescription substance abuse, and the greater percentage of boys with disabilities.

These efforts culminated in the development of an action plan. In these sessions, we came to an important decision: with limited funding we would focus our efforts on two key goals that address the school readiness needs of children where they are - at home with parents/informal caregivers or in some kind of childcare setting outside of home. We also decided that the activities under each strategy must address language/literacy and social emotional domains, be low cost/no cost, accessible to the target population, and provide or discuss accommodations for gender inclusiveness and gross motor skills. The measure of success for each strategy in the action plan includes quantity (how much did we do?), quality (how well did we do it?) and impact data (are we better off?).



Caroline County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Utilizing a data driven strategic planning approach, the Caroline Early Learning Advisory Council (CELAC) identified that, although a vast majority (94%) of Caroline County Kindergartners enter school fully ready to learn as measured by Work Sampling System (WSS), there are subgroups and domain areas that are not performing as well as others.

The goal of CELAC is to better address the unique needs of identified Kindergarten sub-groups and to provide supports via Parent Engagement and higher quality Early Care and Education programs which will address the needs of “fragile children” who remain “at risk” for intervention. CELAC will strive to improve authentic readiness, thereby promoting academic growth via its Implementation Grant by utilizing three key strategies:

- Parent Outreach, Education and Support utilizing the Early Childhood Engagement Family Framework;
- Marketing and Community Outreach to informal providers, new parents and children not engaged in public Preschool;
- Professional Development for Early Care and Education Providers.

The Council will develop subcommittees to support the implementation of these strategies through related activities including:

- Parent CAFÉ’s
- Reach out and Read
- Learning Parties
- Public Library
- Pre-Natal and Post-Natal Parent Outreach
- Faith-Based Outreach activities
- ECE Professional Development opportunities and resources in the areas of Language and Literacy
- SEFEL, universal screenings, curricula, and quality improvement strategies



Carroll County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Carroll County Early Childhood Consortium (ECC) will offer professional development opportunities for early childhood educators who serve children birth through five (5) years of age and their families who are identified as living in poverty (including homeless families) and/or young children who have identified disabilities and delays. The goal of the professional development and training opportunities is to increase school readiness for the identified subgroups of children entering kindergarten.

Because high quality care and education are critical to positive outcomes for young children, professional development will be offered to professionals to increase their understanding regarding families that experience economic hardship. Topics that include the realities of economic hardship and relational building strategies will minimize roadblocks for students by increasing strategies for teachers to engage with the children in the classroom. Training will support:

- Teachers to promote social-emotional competence for delayed children
- Integrating Sensory Motor and SEFEL strategies
- Increasing proficiency for language and literacy

In addition, the members of the ECC will increase their capacity to provide marketing and community awareness of the importance of development and early learning for young children prenatally through kindergarten entrance. The project activities will commence in January 2014 and continue through June 2015.



Cecil County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Cecil County's Local Council will use grant funds to support the implementation of the "Strengthening Families (SFP)" 3-5 program in five high-risk communities: Rudy Park (GMES); Windsor Village (TEES); North Bay (NEES); Hollingsworth Manor (HHES); and Perryvilla (PEES). SFP is both a nationally and internationally recognized program designed to strengthen families by enhancing parenting skills and develop stronger family communication. By strengthening bonds with their children and learning more effective parenting skills, the incident of child maltreatment has also been found to decrease.

Each community will participate in 14 two-hour sessions including the following components:

- Communication skills training
- Parenting skills training
- Social/Emotional skills training for families

Outcomes for the program include increased family strengths and resilience, reduced risks of children developing challenging behavior, and increased school readiness.



Charles County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Charles County Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) has been able to identify an existing problem in Charles County after analyzing the 2011-2013 Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) data. As a result of our analysis we identified the following populations are in need of further assistance to achieve school readiness:

- Low Income
- Children with Disabilities
- English Language Learners

The goal of the Charles County ECAC is to meet the Governor's goal of having 95% school readiness by 2015, for all Charles County Children. During the 18-month time frame of this initiative, the Charles County ECAC will provide resources to children and families along with training opportunities for childcare providers of all backgrounds (home-based, childcare centers, informal care, etc.) with the tools needed to achieve school readiness.

As we work toward achieving the goal of 95% school readiness, the Charles County ECAC will offer:

- Professional Development opportunities for early care providers
- Create a resource directory specific to Early Childhood Services/agencies for families to use
- Provide Family Engagement opportunities through Learning Parties, VIOLETS program, Community Outreach and Family Night programming throughout the county.

Providing materials to families through various outreach and community events will further promote school readiness through the "Parents as First Teachers" concept.



Dorchester County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Dorchester Early Childhood Advisory Council determined that the domain of language and literacy should be the focus of DECAC's efforts. Data provided through the administration of the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) demonstrated a significant delay in this area for all population subgroups. When compared to the rest of the state and comparable counties, Dorchester's children lag behind their peers in school readiness. Particularly concerning their performance in the domain of language and literacy. Several key strategies and activities were identified to promote family engagement and the importance of early learning and reading. The (DECAC) identified three areas of focus to affect positive change of children entering school interested, eager, and "ready to learn." Those areas are:

- Language and literacy through exposure of print
- Family Engagement activities that are highly motivating
- Public awareness campaigns conveying the message that learning begins at birth

The Council also identified the strategy of using "Learning Parties" to target this need. Learning Parties involve established curriculum and materials provided by the Ready at Five organization. The goal of this proven program is to engage the families in activities that promote language and literacy thereby increasing the overall success of children in school.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council is excited about the prospect of making a positive impact on the families in Dorchester County.



Frederick County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Although Frederick County has made great progress in preparing children to enter school ready to learn, not all subgroups of children have enjoyed the same degree of success. Children with disabilities have fallen well behind their peers without disabilities. The target population for the project is children who have been, or are likely to be, identified with a disability under one of the following:

- Speech and Language
- Autism
- Other Health Impaired
- Multiple Disabilities

We have identified several avenues to address this disparity. First, we need to delve deeper into the research. Second, we will target those who are working directly with young children with disabilities in all early care and education environments. Therefore, we will focus on our teacher preparation courses offered through our higher education partners to ensure that inclusive best practices are included in all courses. We will also provide high quality research based training for our early care educators. Finally, we must reach out to the parents and caregivers of young children providing information, strategies, and resources.

Frederick County is not alone in experiencing a widening achievement gap between children with and without disabilities. With these funds our goal is to decrease that gap, improving early childhood education for all children.



Garrett County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Garrett County has prioritized children entering school fully ready to learn for the past 16 years. Even with progress, there have been some groups of children who continue to exhibit school readiness below the percentage of all Garrett County students. The groups include:

- Children with disabilities
- Low-income children

Additionally, those two groups have lower readiness percentages in a majority of the School Readiness Domains, particularly Social and Personal as well as Language and Literacy.

The primary goal of the project is: By June 2017, 95% of Garrett County students entering Kindergarten will achieve a rating of full readiness as measured by the State's kindergarten assessment. This primary goal will be achieved through the accomplishment of annual expected increases in the comparative groups mentioned earlier in the abstract.

Achieving the goals of the project will be achieved by utilizing evidenced base/promising practices, which focus on early childhood and include the family. We currently have programs such as Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) and Parents as Teachers that will be utilized to continue to achieve an increased number of Garrett County youth entering school fully ready. We hope to incorporate, train the trainer opportunities for staff of agencies, which will allow staff to implement additional services in the home that focus on family literacy and behavior management. Finally, we will also incorporate local physician practices into Family Literacy through the Reach Out and Read program.



Harford County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

At first glance, most young children in Harford County seem to be ready for Kindergarten. The council used the Results-Based Accountability framework to determine the “story behind” the trends, and why some sub-groups of young children were not entering school ready to learn. From the data, the council agreed sub-groups or populations to focus on regarding needs:

- Children living in poverty
- Children in home/informal care
- Children with special needs
- English Language Learners and living in the Deerfield/Edgewood school communities

To address the need of these children, the council will join together to achieve the following goal through implementing the strategies listed below:

GOAL: By September 2015, 77% of kindergartners entering Deerfield Elementary and 89% of the kindergartners entering Edgewood Elementary will achieve full readiness on the State’s kindergarten assessment, an increase of 8% for both schools.

STRATEGIES:

- **Early Childhood Campaign:** Focusing on all low-income parents/caregivers of young children newborn through four years old in the Edgewood and Deerfield Communities.
- **Learning Parties:** Ready at Five Training of Trainers model will be used to increase the number of neighborhood-based learning parties in the Edgewood Community.
- **Reach Out and Read:** The Reach Out and Read program partners with local doctors to provide books for families of young children during regular and well-child visits.
- **Social Emotional Awareness Campaign (SEA):** Provide information to parents and caregivers in the Edgewood Community on helping young children with feelings, following rules, and problem solving.



Howard County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) has worked hard to eliminate achievement gaps among student groups; however such gaps still exist. These gaps can be seen early on in a child's academic career, with students who are English language learners, who require special education services, or whose families qualify for Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARMs) underperforming on the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) compared with their peers. The Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council, made up of such partners as the HCPSS, the Howard County Office of Children's Services, and the Howard County Library, is working to eliminate these early achievement gaps, and will be using Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funds to target children from under-performing student groups who will be attending Deep Run Elementary School. Using a three-part approach, the Advisory Council will work to ensure that students receiving special education services, English language learners, and students receiving FARMs are fully ready for kindergarten and show similar levels of performance on the MMSR as their peers who do not receive special services. To reach these goals, the Advisory Council will utilize strategies built around the following three outcomes:

- **Finding and Supporting Every Child:** Locate all children ages birth to five to begin building strong partnerships with families before their children enter kindergarten
- **Strengthening Community Partnerships:** Contact all childcare providers within the Deep Run ES community; partner with providers to communicate to interested families and provide services that can assist them in preparing their children to enter kindergarten fully ready to succeed
- **Better Equipping Parents to Prepare their Children for School:** Implement Ready at Five's family events, known as Learning Parties, based on the MMSR domains of Language and Literacy and Science lessons. These family events will provide families with the materials, skills, and comfort level necessary to support development of crucial language and literacy skills at home. Funds will also be used to hold School Readiness Fairs to encourage family participation in early learning activities at home.



Kent County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Kent County Early Childhood Advisory Council strives to provide children, 0-5 years old and their families who live in poverty with opportunities to enter school ready to learn. Through this project, we will work to enhance and expand our current early childhood system so that families receive the care and support they need for their children in the most effective way possible. For individuals and family groups, Kent County residents live in poverty at much higher rates than other Maryland residents. These factors, combined with a lower rate of school readiness rates for youth involved in home/informal care and Head Start students, and the barrier that transportation presents in getting families the support they need, led us to prioritize the following goals and strategies:

➤ **Goal #1: Improve the quality of early childhood care and education programs.**

Strategies and activities related to this goal will connect the skill development and resources for our home and informal child care providers, Head Start, and elementary schools. Because of our rural nature and the effects of poverty often mean that transportation poses a significant barrier in accessing resources, our efforts will center on providing transportation to existing programs at the library and Parks & Recreation, as well as the activities/events that we plan to hold with these funds.

➤ **Goal #2: Provide parents with access to information, education and support that will help them identify and meet the developmental, social, educational, and emotional needs of their children.**

Strategies and activities will focus on providing parent/child activities, a media campaign to inform families about child and family activities, and educational opportunities and resources for parents/caregivers.



Montgomery County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Montgomery County proposes to address the school readiness achievement gap experienced by low-income communities and communities in which there is a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELL). This proposal is in support of the development of four projects: the continued development and sustainability of the Montgomery County Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC); a public outreach and media campaign aimed at school readiness; a specific professional development and parent engagement project in a Title I school community; and a project to improve access to data, including a mini-study on changing demographics in Montgomery County. These four projects are intended to complement each other and to have a positive effect on the achievement gap in the school community chosen for the professional development and family engagement project.

The proposed project in the Gaithersburg Elementary School (a Title I school) community will include the implementation of training and technical assistance for both family child care and center-based child care programs. Additionally, a Breakthrough Center will be developed to support family child care providers and center-based child care administration and staff in the implementation of Maryland EXCELS and the Maryland Child Care Credential Program. This project will also reach parents and families in the school community through engagement activities such as:

- Learning Parties
- Parent Cafes
- Local Judy Center
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Reach Out and Read
- Early Childhood Mental Health Pediatric Project



Prince Georges County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

Upon review of the 2013 school readiness data and existing county initiatives, the Council identified the Glassmanor and Marlow Heights/Hillcrest Heights communities to target in this proposal. The proposed project will target school boundaries for three schools located in southern Prince George's County, Maryland: Samuel Chase, Allenwood, and Hillcrest Heights. In addition to the elementary schools, the project will target center and family based child care centers located in these communities.

While PGCPSC has been on track towards meeting many of its school readiness goals, the downward shift in school readiness scores for SY 2013 places a number of the children behind the target readiness level. In order to improve school readiness, there is a need to build an infrastructure that establishes a comprehensive, aligned, and highly effective early care and education system within the County; improve access to pre-school and other high-quality early learning programs; and provide the opportunities for families to support the social and emotional development of their children. In order to address some of the school readiness gaps in Prince George's County, The Prince George's County Early Childhood/LAUNCH Council has developed a proposal designed to: a) Increase access to quality and equitable funded early care and education programs, and b) Assist families with access to resources to succeed as their child's first teacher. The overall goal of the project is to demonstrate a five percentage point increase in the number of children who achieve a rating of full readiness in identified schools by 2015, as compared to the 2014 administration of the State's Kindergarten Assessment. In order to achieve this goal, the following strategies will be implemented:

- Provide SEFEL training and coaching to early care and education programs in 2 targeted communities
- Provide access to parent education opportunities and resources

Members of the EC/LAC Leadership Team, comprised of representatives from Prince George's County Public Schools and Prince George's County Government, will serve as key personnel for the project and provide oversight and support the implementation of the proposed activities.



Queen Anne's County-Project Abstract

Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Queen Anne's County Early Childhood Advisory Council will focus on the development of a marketing plan that will communicate the council's mission that all county children should "enter school fully ready to learn." This message will be distributed through methods that consider the audience on the basis of income, culture, language, geography, and experiences. A school readiness plan will also be developed utilizing a "Strengthening Families Approach" that will focus on children and families with the most need as determined by the Council's Results Accountability Planning Report completed in September 2013.

Professional development and educational resources will be provided to areas determined as having the most need. The indicators that the LECAC will focus on based upon the Queen Anne's County Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) data and the county demographics are:

Indicators (2012/2013)	%Fully Ready	%Not Ready
Low scores on the MMSR Language & Literacy Domain	73%	27%
Scores across all domains of the MMSR for Free & Reduced Meals	80%	20%
<i>Children living in the more rural areas of QAC particularly in northern part (Sudlersville) High FARM (17%), migrant (ELL population)</i>	77%	23%
English Language Learners	64%	36%
Head Start MMSR scores (average/all domains)	78%	22%
Children with disabilities scores (average/all domains)	73%	27%
MMSR scores of children from home and/or informal care	84%	16%



Somerset County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Somerset Early Local Advisory Council (SELAC) will work to achieve the ultimate goal of the SELAC Committee, "to ensure that all students enter kindergarten ready to learn." Historically, it has been noted in school-wide school improvement plans throughout Somerset County that a general lack of background knowledge and literacy has contributed to students' poor performance in school. Teachers have struggled to bridge the gap and make up lost time in these areas, but have met with limited success. With the training and implementation of the Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language Enrichment through Stories (VIOLETS) early childhood curriculum, each Pre-K teacher in Somerset County, as well as one family childcare provider, will receive the resources needed to help focus on oral language and pre-literacy skills. Additional professional development will be provided to Head Start and local child care providers in order to ensure successful school transition and the creation of Judy Hoyer and Breakthrough Centers will help ensure this process.

This project will work to increase the level of school readiness for all children in Somerset County ages 0-5. Multiple strategies will be implemented to include:

- Professional Development
- Family and Childcare Outreach
- School Readiness Materials/Resources
- Creation of a Judy Center and Breakthrough Center



St. Mary's County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The St. Mary's County Early Childhood Advisory Council will address the school readiness gap of children from low income households by creating a targeted communication plan directed to the community and families of preschool children who meet the income criteria to participate in the Free and Reduced Meals program. The goal of the Council is to provide opportunities for children, whose families may not be able to provide the necessary skills for school readiness, thus narrowing the readiness gap between children living in poverty and their peers who are not living in poverty. Several strategies to guide us toward reaching our goals are:

- Professional Development
- Outreach and promotion of early learning activities
- Creation social media campaign (community website)
- Community Mentors Program
- Parent Notes Program (which partners with local pediatricians)

The following partners within St. Mary's County will serve on subcommittees as well as play additional key roles for the activities designed around our target population:

- St. Mary's County Public Schools
- Department of Social Services
- County Library
- Department of Aging and Human Services
- The Promise Resource Center



Talbot County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Talbot Early Childhood Advisory Council Implementation Grant seeks to improve readiness outcomes for all children, in particular those who are living in poverty. Currently, just fewer than 22% of our children entering kindergarten are rated as less than fully ready for school. In almost every subgroup, a large percentage of these children were also living in poverty, as measured by the Free and Reduced Meals enrollment criteria. These children come predominantly from the Easton and White Marsh attendance areas, both of which are Title I schools in the district.

We are targeting four major domains:

- Mathematical thinking
- Scientific thinking
- Language and literacy
- Personal and social development

As part of the literacy component to our work, we will expand the use of the VIOLETS program, a language and vocabulary enrichment program, in three additional classrooms serving our targeted population; enhance classroom libraries in centers, schools, and family settings; support literacy programs such as Reach Out and Read and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library; and promote the services offered through our local library, particularly through the use of Parent Cafés, their mobile van, and their children's library activities.

By implementing these ideas it is our short-term objective that by Fall 2014, the percentage of children with economic disadvantage who are rated fully ready on the Maryland Kindergarten Entry Assessment will increase.



Washington County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

As one Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) member said, “we need to do nothing less than change the culture of Washington County.” Low-Income families were selected as part of a broad, over-arching strategy of Community Engagement by ECAC members as its focus for the first two years. This project will create awareness, engagement and action among various stakeholders in the community, including the families, teachers and caregivers, businesses, and government officials that impact children in low income households.

Strategies:

NEED		STRATEGY
1	Identify children living in low-income households to determine what services they need to increase their readiness for school.	Conduct needs assessment
2	Identify and publicize resources available to low-income households.	Develop web site and/or other technological application
3	Engage and educate parents, early care and education professionals, businesses, governments, and other stakeholders.	Create public engagement campaign
4	Create a plan to sustain the early childhood delivery system.	Develop sustainability plan
5	Continue efforts of the Literacy Task Force when it disbands.	Organize an Early Childhood Literacy sub-committee of the ECAC

Project partners will use data from a comprehensive needs assessment to create a county-wide early childhood service delivery system. Services available to families of young children will be communicated using technology options preferred by the families surveyed. Messages about school readiness will be developed and disseminated through a public engagement campaign. Early childhood “champions” will be identified to ensure that the work of the ECAC will continue after the project’s funding ends. Data from the needs assessment will also inform specific community activities that increase children’s readiness for school.



Wicomico County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Wicomico Early Childhood Council (WECC) seeks to ensure all children enter school in Wicomico County ready to learn. After much discussion and input from all stakeholders, the WECC unanimously agreed that both subgroups, English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities, should be targeted for intervention and outreach services. The following goals and objectives will be addressed by the WECC:

- There will be an increase in the readiness levels of ELL as measured by the State Kindergarten Assessment.
 - All ELL children ages birth to five will be identified.
 - ELL families will participate in school readiness activities.
- There will be an increase in the school readiness performance of students with disabilities as measured by the State Kindergarten Assessment.
 - All students with disabilities, ages birth to five, will be identified.
 - Families of children with disabilities will participate in school readiness activities.

Various strategies will be implemented which include outreach to families, a community awareness campaign, professional development and school readiness activities. Partners include, but are not limited to, Wicomico County Board of Education, Wicomico County Executive Office, Wicomico County local agencies, local businesses in Wicomico County, institutes of higher learning, childcare providers, and families. Each partner will provide expertise to assist the WECC in meeting the specified goals.



Worcester County-Project Abstract



Local Early Childhood Advisory Council (LECAC)
Implementation Grant
January 1, 2013-June 30, 2015

The Worcester County Early Childhood Advisory Council selected strategies to ensure that all children enter school ready to learn. Outreach efforts will identify targeted low-income families and children who are three or four years of age in all areas of the child care community. Other connections and activities to help reach our goal are:

- Reach Out and Read
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Early Childhood Concert event that will be organized and implemented.

Another component to this project is implementing materials and training for the Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Language through Stories (VIOLETS) program in three Head Start sites and one child care center. VIOLETS is an early childhood curriculum designed to develop oral language, pre-literacy skills, and background knowledge in young (ages 3-5) English Language Learners and children with low expressive language skills.

Additional professional opportunities will be provided to Head Start and child care providers for social/emotional health of young children (SEFEL) to ensure successful transitions between programs. Readiness Kits will be distributed to family care providers to provide active engaging activities for children and families. A public relations campaign will promote awareness in the community of the importance of readiness for school. Transitioning strategies for language and literacy, mental health, and family involvement will support an increase in readiness for all children, especially for students for low-income families.