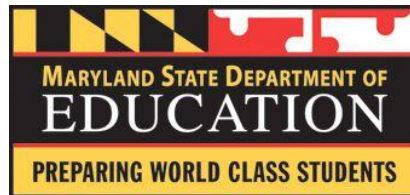# *Best Practices to Engage Parents and Guardians in Early Education Programs and Services*

Report Authorized by the Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PREPARING WORLD CLASS STUDENTS

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The Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014

Senate Bill 332 (Ch. 2, No. 78, Section 4)

AND SO BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that the Maryland State Department of Education shall conduct a study on the best practices to engage parents and guardians in early education programs and services. The Department shall develop an outreach plan based on best practices identified by the study, in collaboration with existing programs for working families that promotes the benefits of early education programs and services, particularly in communities with low participation rates in early education. The Department shall report on the study and outreach plan to the governor and, in accordance with 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee on or before December 1, 2014.

Overview

This report is in response to the legislative request to conduct a study on the best practices to engage parents and guardians in early education programs and services, and provide an outreach plan. Under the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) established *project section 8* which is devoted entirely to family engagement in all early learning settings, including family child care, libraries, Head Start and Early Head Start, Judy Centers, Maryland Infant and Toddler Program, and Preschool Special Education. Under this section, there are six publicly funded initiatives under way to provide outreach and expand family support across Maryland (this is addressed in this report under the *Supporting the Framework* and *Outreach Activities*). The six initiatives are:

- Community Cafes
- Learning Parties
- Raising a Reader
- Reach Out and Read
- Maryland Library Partnerships
- Making Access Happen

The recommended outreach ranges from activities that are solely parent focused to activities that promote ways parents and children are learning together. Furthering its support, MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) provides grants to the Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers (Judy Centers) and administers the contract for the Maryland Family Support Center Network. Both of these programs have family engagement as

the cornerstone of their key goals and evaluate their success based on family involvement. This report will review the status of these programs, and provide an outreach plan for 2015, to broaden the dissemination of the framework of effective practices with families in a number of early childhood education settings.

Best Practices in Family Engagement

Family engagement starts before a child is born. As parents bond with their children, they are developing skills to encourage and engage their child. Research shows that it is these skills that give children the confidence, the motivation and the support they need to be successful in school. Family engagement is a necessary component in all early learning environments, in order to foster family support for the child or the student at home.[i] DECD administers grants to the following programs which include family engagement components: Early Head Start and Head Start, Family Child Care, child care centers, Judy Centers, Family Support Centers, as well as public prekindergarten.

The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge $50 million federal grant was received in 2011 and boosted MSDE's work on strengthening family engagement. The Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education, whose primary charge is to monitor a steady and strong improvement in early care and education, has established the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition whose mission it was to review a federal Head Start sponsored Family Engagement Framework and customize it for Maryland.

According to Head Start and Early Head Start Parent and Family Engagement research, families play the most critical role in helping to prepare children for school and that meaningful and continued engagement of families in their children's early learning supports school readiness and later academic success; thus offsetting the risks of a low-income household.[ii] These results reinforced a survey by the Family Engagement Coalition, which analyzed family engagement and family interactions with service providers. Based on this survey, best strategies were determined for reaching and engaging all families to provide continued support for children in their early care and education, ensuring all families and their young children are fully prepared for school.[iii] As a result, best practices and specific goals were identified and included in the framework.

The Coalition was established in late 2012 by MSDE to bring together representatives of child and family serving organizations and agencies [see Appendix A]. Over the course of a year, in addition to the survey, the Coalition developed a framework outlining Maryland's guiding principles and strengths for parent engagement in early learning environments and based on best practices. As a result of the Coalition's best thinking, "The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children" was released in October 2013. The framework (see figure A) established that family engagement initiatives should:

> **Goal 1**: Promote family well-being.
>
> **Goal 2**: Promote positive parent-child relationships.
>
> **Goal 3**: Promote families as lifelong educators of their children.
>
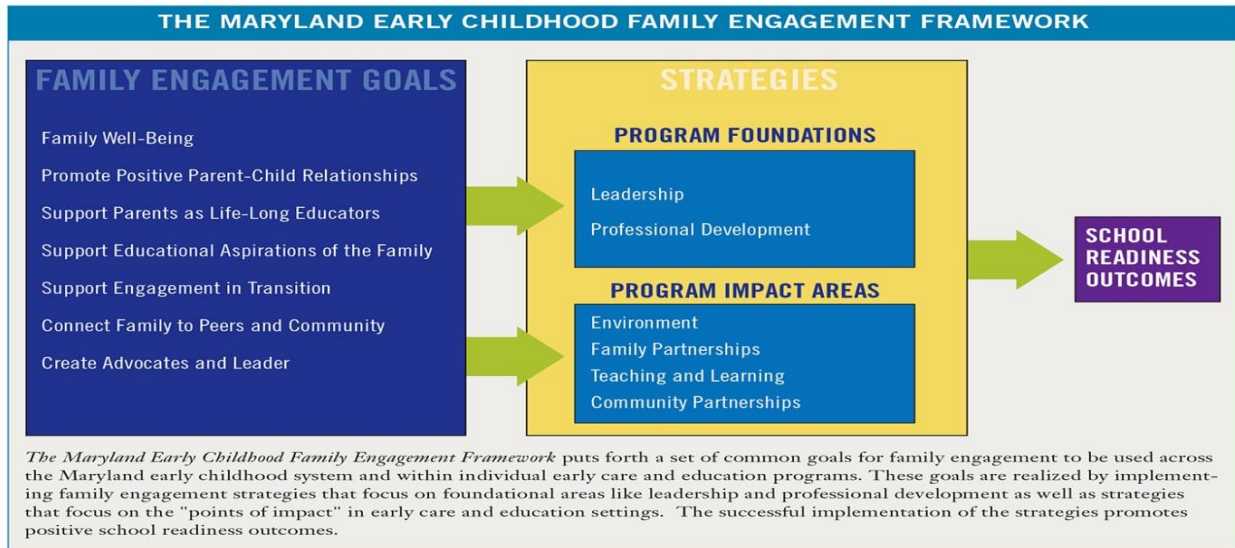> **Goal 4**: Promote the educational aspirations of parents and families.

Goal 5: Promote families through the care and educational transitions of early childhood.

Goal 6: Connect families to their peers and to the community.

Goal 7: Support the development of families as leaders and child advocates.

The goals are realized through strategies that focus on the foundational areas of program leadership and professional development for the "points of impact" in early child care and education settings, such as the program environment, teaching and learning, family and community partnerships. These strategies, as outlined in the framework, reflect an evidence-based approach to promote positive school readiness outcomes.

FIGURE A

The Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework puts forth a set of common goals for family engagement to be used across the Maryland early childhood system and within individual early care and education programs. These goals are realized by implementing family engagement strategies that focus on foundational areas like leadership and professional development as well as strategies that focus on the "points of impact" in early care and education settings. The successful implementation of the strategies promotes positive school readiness outcomes.

Supporting the Framework

Family engagement is a requirement of the implementation of the prekindergarten expansion grant. In addition to remaining in compliance with licensing regulations, maintaining state or national accreditations, or Level 5 of Maryland EXCELS, grantees will be monitored to ensure they are in accordance with the ten benchmarks of high-quality preschool education and that they are implementing the family engagement strategies in accordance with the Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework.

Judy Centers, Maryland Family Network, Head Start and Early Head Start, Maryland's Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education have all been longstanding and vital parts of the early childhood infrastructure. To better serve Maryland families, the Prekindergarten Expansion Fund is helping programs provide more outreach and services to the families they serve [see Appendix B].

A. MD Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Education Programs

Achieving first-rate programs is manifested by consistent implementation of quality standards and best practices for Maryland's Early Care and Education professionals and programs. The Maryland Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs were developed to assist early care programs and professionals implement and sustain quality standards and practices. The Maryland Standards outlines a self-appraisal and accreditation/validation process that is connected to the Maryland Excellence Counts in Early Learning and School Aged Child Care (EXCELS) program, a voluntary tiered quality rating and improvement system. With these two programs working together, more early care programs and providers will be able to participate in the EXCELS program.

1. Accreditation
Program accreditation is a quality improvement process by which early care and education programs can significantly and continuously enhance the caliber of services they provide. In this process, a program voluntarily pursues self-study, program improvement, and external program review in order to achieve and publicly confirm that it meets national or state quality standards. It is a clear, consistent strategy to improve the level of care and education services. All participating programs implement a set process for program enhancement, and operate with the same set of national or state standards.

Accreditation not only focuses on the caliber of education that children are receiving, but also focuses on the involvement of the family. Throughout the accreditation process, programs are asked to assess their family involvement responsibilities. High-quality

programs provide activities which allow parents to participate in ways they feel comfortable, including opportunities to serve as a team member and helping to make decisions for the program (**Goals 6** & **7**). Programs also assist families with developing home environments that are supportive of children's learning and development. Providing guidance and information helps to support the family well-being and their internal relationship, while also educating parents about child development and early education; thus giving parents the tools they need to advocate for their child's education (**Goals 1, 2, 3,** & **7**).

2. Maryland EXCELS

Maryland EXCELS is a voluntary tiered quality rating and improvement system that recognizes the accomplishments of early childhood and school age programs and providers through a set of standards that must be achieved at five levels leading to first-rate programs. Programs are assessed according to a number of different content areas, all of which include family engagement. Specifically, to allow parents to take an active role in their child's early care and education:

- Levels 2-3 – Families are provided with opportunities to be involved in the program in at least two ways (**Goal 6**).
- Level 4 – Families are provided with at least four ways to be involved in the program, including conferences, activities, fundraising, decision making, parent newsletters, or parent surveys. Program requests a copy of a child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Process (IEP), if applicable, and works with early intervention or special education service providers to support child and family outcomes (**Goals 3, 5, 6,** & **7**).
- Level 5- Using the Level Four criteria above and providing families with at least five ways to be involved in the program (**Goals 3, 5, 6,** & **7**).

Maryland EXCELS is designed to not only educate parents about high-quality early care providers in the state of Maryland, but to empower them as leaders and advocates for their children's care and education (**Goal 7**).

B. Judy Centers

One way that Maryland's early care and education system focuses on impact areas is through the Judy Centers, which are located within designated Title I school zones, and provide access to premium early childhood education programs as well as comprehensive family support services. In addition to maintaining the benchmarks of high-quality preschool education, Judy Centers must also comply with twelve Component Standards:

• Full-Day/Full-Year Programming

• Provision of Breakfast/Lunch

• Service Coordination and Family Support

• Integration of Early Education Services

• Family Involvement

• Early Identification/Intervention

• Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities

• Health Services

• Professional Development

• Adult Education/Family Literacy

• Accreditation/Validation of Programs

• Judy Center Partnership/Leadership

As of September 2014, there are 33 Judy Centers and three satellites located throughout Maryland. Four Judy Centers and satellites in high-risk areas of Baltimore City and Prince George's County are included in the RTT-ELC. Judy Centers promote school readiness through collaboration with community based agencies, organizations, parents, and businesses. Through this integrated approach, the Judy Centers are able to promote program and service delivery that is in one location at or near the schools, ensuring that young children who matriculate into school are given opportunities to start their formal education on a level playing field with their peers.

The centers focus on family well-being **(Goal 1)** and families as learners **(Goal 4)** are key aspects of the Judy Center model. The Judy Center's role in family engagement is centered on the family's ability to participate in and support their child's early learning. Supporting positive parent-child relationships **(Goal 2)**, families as lifelong educators **(Goal 3)** and family engagement in transitions **(Goal 5)** is accomplished through a host of activities that may include Parent Cafés, programs for dads and other significant men in the lives of children, playgroups, puppets and children's theatres, story time, and family field trips. These activities and events are focused on parenting education, covering the seven domains of learning that are used to assess school readiness when children enter kindergarten **(Goal 5)**. Family activities also provide social networking opportunities that connect parents and caregivers to their peers and community **(Goal 6)**.

C. Maryland Family Network and Family Support Centers

Family Support Centers are community-based programs that provide services to parents with young children from birth through age three, to help them raise healthy children and build productive futures. Located in Maryland neighborhoods marked by high numbers of pregnant and parenting adolescents, families with low incomes, low birth-weight babies, high school dropouts, and high rates of unemployment, the centers provide comprehensive, preventative services, which include:

- Quality developmental child care while parents are on site;
- Adult education and employability services **(Goal 4)**;
- Health education and referral **(Goal 6)**;
- Developmental infant and toddler assessment and referral **(Goal 6)**;
- Home visiting **(Goals 1, 2 & 3)**;
- Peer support **(Goal 6)**;
- Service coordination; and
- Outreach, collaboration, and resource development.

Family Support Centers are operated by local public or private organizations under a grant from MSDE with the Maryland Family Network (MFN) and other financial supports. The two-generational and voluntary program treats parents as equal partners, not as "clients" or "cases." Participants share in policy decisions and in program development. All staff members at Family Support Centers (FSCs) receive training on and are expected to practice in empowerment. The focus is on accepting families where they are, building on individual and family strengths, and in helping families identify their own goals and work towards achieving those goals **(Goals 1, 4 & 6)**. Families receiving services at FSC represent a wide range of complex challenges, including substance abuse, lack of formal education, domestic and community violence, and lack of social supports.

For the twelve months that ended June 30, 2014, the network of Family Support Centers in Maryland served more than 3,000 individuals comprehensively. Many of these were referred to FSC by local departments of social services, health clinics and departments, faith-based organizations, and other community-based service providers.

D. Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded programs serving low-income children ages birth through five residing in all jurisdictions of Maryland. With the Reauthorization Act of 2007, Head Start and Early Head Start were no longer just anti-poverty programs, but a school

readiness program, preparing all Head Start children and families for school. Since its induction, Head Start and Early Head Start have placed a strong emphasis on family involvement, understanding that children are successful when families are fully engaged. Head Start and Early Head Start use a two-generational approach to family engagement. Children receive a high-quality education while parents are encouraged and supported to be fully involved in their child's education **(Goals 3 & 5).** Parents are able to learn more about child development, including social and emotional health as well as have opportunities to be a part of the Policy Council, a governing body of Head Start, which allows parents to be responsible for decision making in the Head Start program **(Goals 1, 2, 6, & 7).** Head Start offers support and guidance to parent's efforts to accomplish their own personal, educational and professional goals as well **(Goal 4).** This approach ensures children and families long term success and growth in academic achievement, improved employability, and income.[iv]

E. Maryland's Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education (Birth through 5)

The supports and services provided through early intervention and preschool special education can help infants, toddlers and children with disabilities and their families make powerful connections to gain critical school readiness skills needed to succeed in school and throughout their lives. These services, based on the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), support their unique development and learning needs. Evidence shows that one of the most effective ways to achieve this mandate is to reach children with developmental delays and disabilities when they are very young and in their natural environment.

The early childhood intervention and education philosophy is supported through national research that suggests that meaningful engagement of families in their children's early learning supports school readiness and later academic success.[v] By design, early childhood intervention (birth through age five) establishes families as partners and families as their child's first teacher who are fully engaged in the process **(Goals 3, 5, 6, & 7).**

Family engagement is essential for positive outcomes for children. In each local jurisdiction in Maryland, parent coordinators (parents of children with disabilities) and professionals work together to provide family support services through the public school system. These services consist of three different program components:

- Family Support Network (FSN) – Parent Coordinators provide support and training to families of children receiving Early Intervention services **(Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, & 7)**.
- Preschool Partners (PP) – Parent Coordinators provide support and training to families of children ages three through five receiving services through an Extended IFSP or an IEP **(Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, & 7)**.
- Partners for Success (PFS) - Parent Coordinators provide support and training to families of children receiving services through an IEP. Families of children with disabilities can

access support throughout their child's academic career and as they transition into adult life **(Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6,** & **7).**

By supporting, educating and informing parents, they become the advocate their child needs to be successful.

Outreach Activities

To further support the strategies of the framework, specific outreach activities were designed to increase family involvement and provide hands on opportunities for service providers and parents to work together to improve children's school readiness scores.

A. Community Cafés

Community Cafés, hosted by the Maryland Family Network, work within the goals of the Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework. Community Cafés are guided conversations designed to share the collective knowledge of parents, caregivers and service providers to build a network of community support for families. These community-building events, based on the national "Strengthening Families" model, promote family well-being (**Goal 1**) and connect families to their peers and to the community **(Goal 6)** by providing concrete support in times of need and fostering social connections and parental resilience. Furthermore, Community Cafés can support the development of families as leaders and child advocates **(Goal 7)** by engaging parents, early care professionals, and community members in conversations about their needs, priorities and concerns regarding their communities.

Currently, Maryland Family Network staff and other trained facilitators, such as parents and home visitors, have worked to support the RTT-ELC project and to establish connections in the communities linking these projects without duplicating efforts. For example, through a grant agreement with Abilities Network, MFN provided table hosts to facilitate a Parent Café for parents and community representatives. Cherry Hill Community Hub staff served as the community resource experts to parents participating at the Café.

B. Learning Parties

Built on the idea that learning can be fun, Learning Parties, created by Ready at Five, and are interactive, hands-on, parent/child "parties" that promote the development of school readiness skills of young children **(Goals 3** & **5)**. They are designed to improve the abilities of parents/families, and early care and education professionals to support young children's development and foster family engagement **(Goal 2)**. Learning Parties promote positive parenting and enhance the ability of parents to be their young child's first teacher and to help parents recognize learning opportunities and teachable moments in everyday activities **(Goal 3)**. Also, Learning Parties offer parents opportunities to cultivate a social network by connecting them with their peers and community, enabling them to talk and learn from one another **(Goal 6)**. Learning Parties often assist families with young children in transition as they are often held in the local schools and pre-school children get school experiences prior to enrolling in kindergarten **(Goal 5)**.

Many early childhood programs view Learning Parties as an excellent family engagement strategy and are using the Learning Parties to reach out to families and build their capacity to support the development of their child's school readiness skills. Attendance and enthusiasm are high among program staff, families and children with the most popular Learning Party domain being language and literacy, followed by science and math.

C. Raising a Reader

The Raising a Reader (RAR) program is a family engagement and early literacy initiative with a track record of improving early literacy school readiness scores of children, helping to ease their transition into kindergarten by preparing them for school **(Goal 5)**. RAR helps families to develop, practice and sustain the habit of reading to their children, supporting families in developing skills as their child's first teacher **(Goal 3)**. The components of this program include regular workshops, a connection with the community library, and weekly book rotations **(Goal 6)**.

This spring, kick-off events were held in public libraries and participating Title I schools. Parent pre- and post-surveys were used to analyze family involvement and interest in literacy. "Blue Bag" events, where families are given blue bags to carry books to and from the public library, were held to recognize children's participation and to provide incentives to borrow books from the public library.

The RAR family engagement and early literacy initiative is now beginning year two of implementation. Additional Title I schools in Talbot County and Prince George's County will join schools that participated last year in RAR. Prekindergarten teachers from the new schools will receive training in the implementation of RAR before scheduling parent events and beginning the weekly rotation of book bags to students. Forty Title I schools in seven school districts across Maryland are participating in RAR in the Early Learning Challenge grant**.**

D. Reach Out and Read

The program Reach Out and Read (ROAR) partners with medical practices to give out books to families with young children to encourage families to read together, helping to prepare children for school. By connecting families to the community **(Goal 6)** and building on the unique relationship between the family and medical providers, young children's early literacy skills are being supported. During regular wellness pediatric checkups, ROAR physicians and family physicians give new, developmentally appropriate books to children age six months to five years and advise parents on the importance of reading out loud to their children. This type of activity, shared book reading, provides a unique opportunity for families to spend time together building positive relationships **(Goal 2)** and also helps support parents as lifelong educators for their children **(Goal 3)** by helping to foster their child's early literacy skills.

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MD AAP) assumed leadership in establishing a statewide ROAR project and has created informational material and started distribution of books to new pediatricians. Implementation and relationships were established with literacy subcommittees in an effort to continue to train local coalitions in the ROAR model. Reach Out and Read enrolled **97,598** as of October 27, 2014 and reached capacity, far exceeding the goal of 50,000 children by 2015. The program is now working on sustainability and continuing their relationships with all eighty-three practices throughout Maryland.

E. Maryland Library Partnership

The Maryland Library Partnership embodies the three pillars of the Coalition's work - a focus on bringing stakeholders together to integrate family engagement efforts across the state; expanding the definition of learning environments in order to promote learning, anytime, anywhere; and building the capacity of providers to deliver more customer friendly, high-quality services to families. This partnership seeks to improve the quality of parent's interactions with library staff, increase the frequency of family's engagement with libraries, and encourage families to take greater advantage of other social services in their community **(Goal 6)**. In order to meet these goals, libraries engaged in the library partnership to promote a customer friendly atmosphere conducive to learning and target their services to the learning needs of individual families. These libraries encourage families to spread the word not only about the library, but other resources in the community including GED programs, Head Start, addiction recovery programs, and child care agencies. The library partnership represents a fundamental rethinking of the role of the library – from providing occasional opportunities for children to engage with reading to serving as a central point of connection linking families to all the resources they need to promote their child's literacy **(Goal 3)**.[vi]

Library Partnerships include library cafés, which are held twice a year for families. The library café model involves carefully facilitated training for families along with relationship and community building exercises **(Goals 2 & 6)**. Under the leadership of the Maryland Public Library Association, resources are being identified for new parent information centers, and recruitment of parents for the library cafés is underway. Thirteen public library systems in Title I school areas have parent information centers and library cafés and an additional five centers are currently being established.

By following the framework's seven goals and the effective practices established in the aforementioned projects, Maryland is moving towards parents and early care providers partnering together and transforming parent involvement into authentic parent engagement to be able to truly respond to a family's needs. By building relationships with families and sharing the responsibility of quality education and care across all early care and early education environments, a culturally competent and universal design is created and both families and

providers will have ensured meaningful and effective strategies that have the power to impact student learning and achievement.[vii]

F. Making Access Happen

Making Access Happen, a collaboration between the Maryland State Department of Education and the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, is designed to increase the participation of three- to five-year-old children with disabilities in public and private community-based early care and education programs. Making Access Happen works by providing teachers and service providers with job embedded professional learning opportunities, including reflective coaching.[viii]

In the early intervention process, parents are part of Individualized Education Process or Individualized Family Service Plan team and work together with teachers and special educators to form the goals and objectives for their child **(Goals 3, 5, 6, & 7)**. Teachers and providers have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and develop skills for implementation of inclusive practices, and gain a broader understanding of early intervention and special education. A deeper awareness of the necessity of the family's involvement develops, leading to programs increasing their outreach activities and parent communication, ensuring positive school readiness outcomes for children.

Future Directions

Educating parents in the role of being their child's first teacher and advocate has been an ongoing challenge for early care and education programs. Through the specific goals of the Family Engagement Framework, service providers are given strategies to work with the parents to support healthy child development and school readiness. The framework reflects the best thinking of the various organizations that are represented in the coalition.

The State Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), through the establishment of the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition developed the Family Engagement Framework, which provided the necessary vehicle for use as the outreach plan to support educators and service providers. The Framework was developed in 2012-2013 and has been widely disseminated through meetings, workshops and the Maryland State Department of Education's website.[ix]

In FY 2015, through the work of the Family Engagement Coalition, MSDE will work to develop the Effective Practices Toolkit (online and hard copy) for providers to present the most successful, effective and promising practices in working with families. Once available, this compendium of best practices will support the Family Engagement Framework and give service providers ideas for effectively working with families. Early childhood educators, service providers and parents will have the opportunity to share family engagement activities and outreach practices that have been successful, and submit them for use in the toolkit. The development of an interactive website will allow for dialogue, networking, and sharing of knowledge.

The MSDE Division of Student, Family and School Support is developing a family engagement framework – pre-K-12 – to build the capacity of educators to work with parents as equal partners. The framework builds on previous major state initiatives including recommendations made to the State Board in 2003 by the Maryland Parent Advisory Council on how families will be involved in education, national standards and initiatives from other states and the Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework that was approved by the State Board in 2013 [see Appendix C].

A Core Team made up of local and state representatives from MSDE, local education agencies, parents, the PTA, and others are now developing the framework and working with stakeholder groups for input and feedback.

Future planning for all programs listed in the report, such as Accreditation, EXCELS, Head Start and Early Head Start, Birth through Five System of Services as well as the Maryland Family Network's Family Support Centers and Judy Centers, includes vital components that support family growth and involvement. Additionally, outreach activities, such as Community Cafés, Learning Parties, Raising a Reader, Reach Out and Read, Library Partnerships and Making Access Happen will continue through the state and local fundraising and grant seeking efforts. The Maryland Family Engagement will inform the on-going work of the members of the coalition, the ECAC, local early childhood councils, and many others. It is envisioned that family

engagement will grow and flourish under the leadership of parents and service providers who see and promote the positive outcomes that occur when families are fully involved in their children's early care and education.

APPENDIX A

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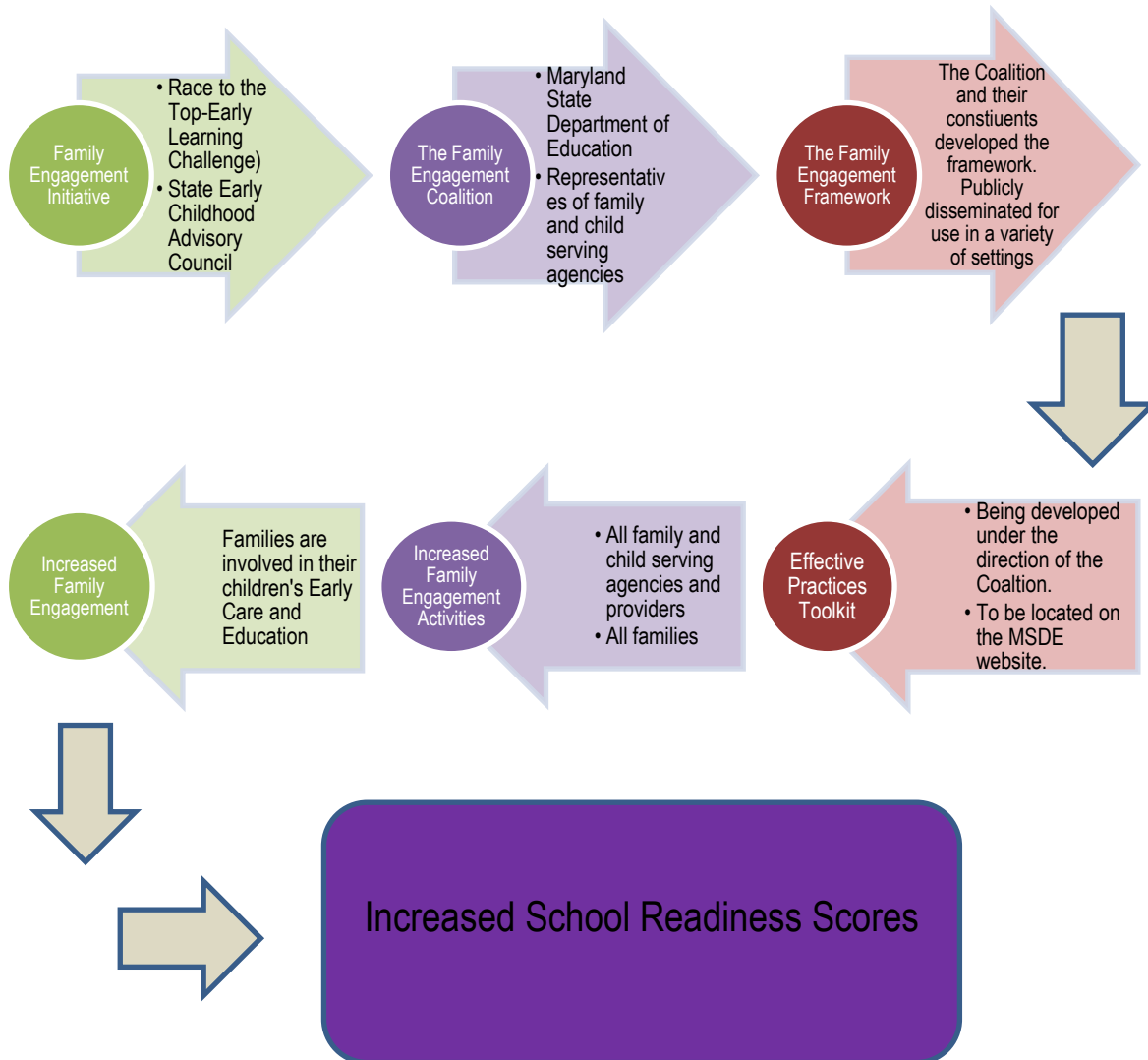| Susan Shaffer | Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC) | sshaffer@maec.org |
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APPENDIX B
Supporting the Framework

Initiative	Goals	Program Foundations	Impact Areas
Accreditation	1,2,3,6,7	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
EXCELS	3,5,6,7	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Judy Centers	1,2,3,4,5,6	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Maryland Family Network	1,2,3,4,6	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Head Start/Early Head Start	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Birth – Five	1,2,3,5,6,7	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Community Cafes	1,6,7	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Learning Parties	2,3,5,6	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Raising a Reader	3,5,6	Leadership	Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Reach Out and Read	2,3,6	Leadership	Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
MD Family Library Partnership	2,3,6	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships
Making Access Happen	3,5,6,7	Leadership/ Professional Development	Environment Family Partnerships Teaching and Learning Community Partnerships

APPENDIX C

Family Engagement Initiative Flowchart

Family Engagement Initiative
- Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge)
- State Early Childhood Advisory Council

The Family Engagement Coalition
- Maryland State Department of Education
- Representatives of family and child serving agencies

The Family Engagement Framework
The Coalition and their constiuents developed the framework. Publicly disseminated for use in a variety of settings

Effective Practices Toolkit
- Being developed under the direction of the Coaltion.
- To be located on the MSDE website.

Increased Family Engagement Activities
- All family and child serving agencies and providers
- All families

Increased Family Engagement
Families are involved in their children's Early Care and Education

Increased School Readiness Scores

APPENDIX D

National and State Family Engagement Resources

Title: The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Resource Catalogue 1.0

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/Resource_Catalogue_041112.pdf

Source: OHS National Center on Parent, Family, and

Community Engagement (NCPFCE)

Description: Annotated catalog of exemplary resources to promote effective parent, family, and community engagement in support of young children's learning, development, and school readiness. Organized according to The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE Framework).In this first edition of the catalog you will find books, articles, webinars, and other useful resources—most of which are available free of charge on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website.

Title: Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/rbc-coordinated-integrated-services.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: Technical assistance resource that outlines the knowledge, skills, and actions for staff working with families in Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs. This document is a tool to assist programs with implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. These competencies represent both research-based and best practices in the early childhood, human services, and social work

fields. This resource was developed with broad input from Head Start and Early Head Start programs, parents, and the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement.

Title: Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series Positive Parent–Child Relationships

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/parent-child-relationships.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: Aligned with related Head Start Performance Standards, this resource presents a selected summary of research, proven interventions, and program strategies intended to be useful for the Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) community.

Title: Using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community

Engagement Framework in Your Program: Markers of Progress

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/ncpfce-markers-of-progress.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: This resource was created to help you recognize your program's accomplishments in engaging parents, families, and the community. It also offers you the opportunity to identify aspects of your work in this area that can be strengthened and offers ideas for new and innovative ways to enhance your efforts. The information you gather from your observations, conversations, and reflections is important data that can be incorporated into your decision-making about your whole program. In fact, this guide and the subsequent information you

collect, could be utilized to inform the required annual program Self-Assessment.

Title: Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment: Responsibilities, Perspectives, and Strategies

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/family-engagement-and-ongoing-child-assessment-081111.pdf

Source: NCPFCE

Description: Addresses the perspectives of parents and program staff in the sharing of child assessment information through the formation of partnerships and suggests strategies for bringing those perspectives together. It outlines a framework for building partnerships between program staff and parents that establish ongoing communication, enhance teacher-child and parent child relationships, and help prepare children and families for transitions to later schooling.

Title: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

Link: Please see the National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement website for this resource.

Source: NCPFCE

Description: Presents responses to common questions about the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.-

Title: Engaging Families in Promoting Positive Health: Ideas for Events and Activities from NBCDI Affiliates

Link: http://www.nbcdi.org/sites/default/files/resource files/Family%20Engagement%20Event%20Han dbook.pdf

Source: NBCDI

Description: Describes innovative and culturally-relevant family engagement events and activities related to health and nutrition that our Affiliates have developed and implemented. We created this manual so that Affiliates and partners implementing the Healthy Practices Program – and other health education initiatives – will have tools to help them plan and evaluate meaningful workshops and events.

Title: An Activity Book For African American Families: Helping Children Cope with Crisis

Link: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/cop e_with_crisis_book/pages/index.aspx

Source: NBCDI/NICHD

Description: Developed in response to events of 9/11, but also designed to help families face everyday hardships such as crime and poverty. Includes information about how parents can help children cope with crises in a sensitive and responsive way, as well as a series of developmentally appropriate activities for parents and children to engage in together.

Title: Parent Teacher Education Connection Website

Link: http://tcet.unt.edu/home/pte.html

Source: Kansas Parent Information Resource Center

Description: Developed by KPIRC and University of Northern Texas, this website provides six online modules for preparing teachers to work with families, based on the National PTA Standards. Each module contains goals, interactive content and activities, and several relevant program studies. The module topics are: 1) Welcoming, 2) Communicating, 3) Supporting Student Success, 4) Speaking Up for Every Child, 5) Sharing Power, and 6) Collaborating with the Community.

Title: Helping Parents Become Interventionists Through the Use of Child Assessment Data

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browseour-publications/helping-parents-become-interventioniststhrough-the-use-of-child-assessment-data

Source: Harvard Family Resource Project

Description: Discusses sharing data with families and illustrates how program staff and parents can work as partners to review child assessment data and co-create goals for children.

Title: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Simulation

Link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/pfce_simulation

Source: National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement/Harvard Family Research Project

Description: This simulation activity helps early childhood educators explore and practice everyday strategies to develop a positive, goal-directed relationship with a family in a virtual Head Start center. While the simulation was designed for Head Start/Early Head Start professionals, early childhood educators outside of Head Start can access the simulation and will find the relationship-building strategies useful in their own work.

Title: Harvard Graduate School of Education Pre K-12 Parent Survey

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browseour-publications/a-new-tool-for-understanding-familyschool-relationships-the-harvard-graduate-school-of-education-prek-12-parent-survey

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: The Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) research team recently developed a set of survey "scales"—groups of related questions that are analyzed as a whole to improve measurement precision—to assess family–school relationships in schools serving Pre-K to 12th grade students. The scales, designed to elicit input from parents, can help

schools evaluate interventions that they are implementing to try to improve family–school relationships, see how family–school relationships develop as students advance from one grade to the next, or simply collect baseline information on their strengths and areas that need improvement in their family–school relationships. The tool is unique in that it is a rigorously developed, web-based set of survey scales that schools and districts can access online and administer to parents with school children of all ages.

Title: Family Engagement and Children with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Educators and Parents

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browseour-publications/family-engagement-and-children-withdisabilities-a-resource-guide-for-educators-and-parents

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: A resource guide designed to help parents and special educators establish a comfortable and effective partnership in service of promoting successful outcomes for children with disabilities. Includes research reports, journal articles, examples of best practices, and tools that suggest methods for developing productive collaborations so that educators and families can, together, ensure better services for children in their care.

Title: Family Engagement in Early Childhood: A Resource Guide for Early Learning Challenge Grant Recipients

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browseour-publications/family-engagement-in-early-childhood-aresource-guide-for-early-learning-challenge-grant-recipients

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: To support RTTT–ELC grant recipients' efforts, Harvard Family Research Project produced this selective list of resources about engaging and supporting families with young children. This list includes journal

articles, practical guides, webinars, and presentations that cover the topics of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement; training early childhood educators on family engagement; promoting family support and engagement statewide; sharing data with families; and creating programs that engage families.

Title: Teaching Cases on Family Engagement: Early Learning (Ages 0–8)

Link: http://www.hfrp.org/ECE-TeachingCases

Source: Harvard Family Research Project

Description: This set of teaching cases for early childhood education programs was developed by Harvard Family Research Project to highlight critical dilemmas in family–school–community relations, especially among low-income and culturally diverse families.

Title: Connecting with Parents in the Early Years

Link: http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/pubs/connecting.html

Source: Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP)

Description: This seven-chapter e-book outlines effective ways to communicate with parents, including those who are hard to reach.

Title: Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library

Link: http://everychildreadytoread.org

Source: American Library Association

Description: A parent education toolkit of resources to help public librarians and other early literacy centers present workshops that help prepare parent's/caregivers for their critical role as their child's first teacher.

Title: Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten: Linking Children, Families, & Schools

Link: http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Transition%20into%20Formal%20Schooling/Enhancing%20the%20Transition%20to%20Kindergarten%20rev.PDF

Source: National Center for Early Development & Learning

(NCEDL) Kindergarten Project

Description: As part of the National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL) Kindergarten Project, Marcia Kraft-Sayre and Robert Pianta produced this manual on transitioning students from early learning centers to kindergarten through the use of social connections.

Title: Partnering with Families in Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Link: http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/family-engagement/index.html

Source: Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Description: Early childhood mental health consultants can use information from this web-based tutorial to strengthen their understanding of how to facilitate strong partnerships with families within the consultation approach and overcome common barriers, building a framework within which the quality work begins and develops.

Title: Strengthening Families

Link: http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families

Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy

Description: Offers many resources to help prevent child abuse and neglect by helping early care and education programs to assist families develop "protective factors" which contribute to child safety and well-being. Resources such as self-assessments, case studies of state implementation, and guides for early care and education programs are available.

Title: Every Child Ready for School: Helping Adults Inspire Young Children to Learn

Link: http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=3529

Source: American Library Association

Description: Reflecting the combined expertise of a reading specialist, an outreach librarian, and an early literacy trainer, Every Child Ready for School keeps libraries at the forefront of early literacy and school readiness information delivery. Focusing on training the caregiver, this handbook explains how to help day-care providers, homeschoolers, and others who care for young children foster school-readiness skills among their charges; arms librarians with a step-by-step workshop model, with tips on implementing and evaluating the program; and provides guidance for coordinating workshops with other library early literacy initiatives. Includes resources and activities to share with participants. Presenting models which can be easily adapted to state-mandated school-readiness requirements, Every Child Ready for School helps libraries fashion their own innovative community early literacy outreach programs.

Title: Tender Topics: Picture Books About Childhood Challenges

Link: http://www.ipgbook.com/tender-topics-products-9781937589349.php?page_id=21

Source: Huron Street Press

Description: A reading specialist, an outreach librarian, and a children's librarian combine their considerable expertise in this essential guide for parents that brings reading, early literacy, child development issues, and picture books together. Advising parents who are wondering how to talk to their young child about difficult topics such as death, loneliness, or fear, this authoritative collection of appropriate picture books, Tender Topics: Picture Books About Childhood Challenges, makes broaching the subject easier. Authors Dorothy Stoltz, Elaine Czarnecki, and Buff Kahn have created an annotated listing that includes more than 300 high-quality, carefully selected picture books that are ideal for opening discussion about tender topics and establishing bonds between generations that can help parents and children better weather the challenges families face every day.

Citations:

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http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/pfcef

[iii] http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/engage.html

[iv] http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2014/05/07/the-new-war-on-poverty-tackling-two-generations-at-once/

[v] (Henrich & Gadaire, 2008; Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez, 2006)
See: http://marylandlearninglinks.org/3549

[vi] Source: Harvard Family Research Project http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/libraries-helping-to-close-the-opportunity-gap-maryland-library-partnership

[vii] Source: Harvard Family Research Project http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/racing-to-the-top-maryland-s-promising-practices-in-family-engagement

[viii] http://marylandlearninglinks.org/363438

[ix] http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/child_care/challenge/engagement.html