

# Rhode Island Early Learning Council

SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

9:00 - 11:00 A.M.

*CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES, PROVIDENCE*



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**EARLY LEARNING RI**

# Meeting Agenda

## **Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview**

### **Presentation & Discussion: PDG Birth to 5**

- Needs assessment findings
- Strategic planning process

### **Presentation & Discussion: Infant/Toddler Workforce Compensation**

- Overview of process and recommendations
- Request Council endorsement of recommendations

### **Presentation & Discussion: Pre-K Expansion, Transition to Kindergarten**

## **Announcements**

## **Public Comment & Next Steps**

# Rhode Island's PDG Birth to 5 Grant

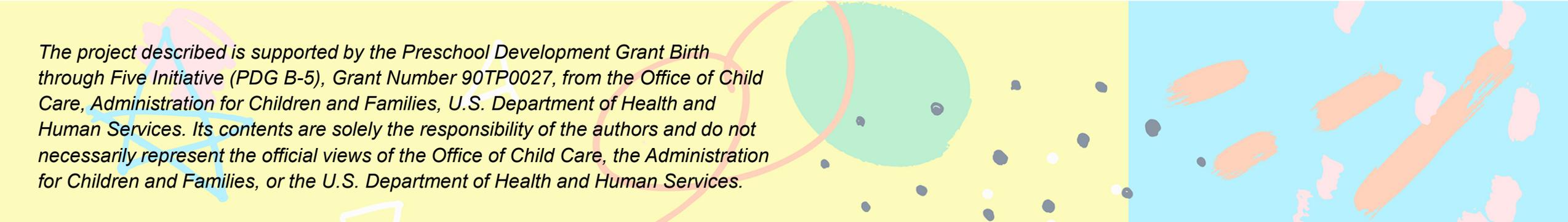
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# Preschool Development Grant Birth-5

## Needs Assessments Preliminary Results

### September 25, 2019

*The project described is supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0027, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*



# Agenda:

- Introduction – Overview of Rhode Island's PDG Birth-5 Grant
- Key Questions for the Council
- Presentation of Preliminary Findings
  - LISC: Facilities Needs Assessment
  - Abt:
    - Family Needs Assessment
    - Workforce Needs Assessment
- Discussion
- Next Steps



# Preschool Development Grant (PDG Birth-5) Update

- RI was awarded a **\$4.2M federal grant to align, strengthen and support our state's early childhood system (birth-five)**
- DHS is the lead entity for the state in partnership with sister Children's Cabinet agencies RIDE, RIDOH, DCYF and EOHHS
- PDG is supporting the planning for an expansion of Pre-K, in addition to strengthening the existing Birth-5 system



# PDG Birth-5 Overview

**Grant Purpose:** “To develop, update, or implement a strategic plan to facilitate collaboration and coordination among ECE programs in a mixed delivery system to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to transition into the local educational agency or elementary school.”

## Four Key Activities:

- ✓ **Needs Assessment**
- ❑ Strategic Plan
- ❑ Maximize Parental Choice and Knowledge
- ❑ Increase Collaboration and Efficiency



# Key Questions for Consideration

We aim to discuss the following:

- **Are these findings consistent with your own experience? Are they reflective of the needs you experience within your own organization or community?**
- **How would you prioritize addressing these findings? Are there common themes that denote particular urgency?**
- **Are there initiatives that your agency has piloted that would effectively address these needs at scale?**

# Rhode Island Early Learning Facilities Study

Progress Report,  
Preliminary  
Observations &  
Recommendations  
*September 2019*

# Six methods of investigation were used to gather the information used in the study

Surveying	Focus Groups	Site Visits	Data Review	Interviews	Project Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of licensed center-based settings and LEAs surveyed</li> <li>36% return rate – 59% return rate from high quality centers</li> <li>Privately funded small grant opportunity for survey participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal focus groups held for state leaders, early learning providers and real estate developers</li> <li>Informal focus groups at existing association meetings including Head Start Association, Business Owners for Child Care, LEA Early Learning Coordinators and Child Care Directors' Association</li> <li>Focus groups as part of family child care training programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of 2019 pre-k applicants</li> <li>100% of community-based settings and LEAs indicating space available to expand and/or interest in expanding</li> <li>New spaces under consideration for expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2014 Early Learning Facilities Needs Assessment Data</li> <li>2017 State of Rhode Island Schoolhouses Report</li> <li>All applicable regulations and standards</li> <li>Construction cost data</li> <li>DCYF classroom size measurement sheets</li> <li>Detailed center level financial data</li> <li>Child Care Deserts Report</li> <li>Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook data</li> <li>Rhode Island Department of Education school enrollment trends</li> <li>Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Early Learning Fact Sheet: Focus on Pre-K for Four-Year-Olds 0-4 population data</li> <li>Family child care property ownership records</li> <li>Data from facility financing projects in other geographies</li> <li>Commerce RI commercial properties listings</li> <li>Rhode Island public libraries space analysis</li> <li>Rhode Island Efficiency Commission final report</li> <li>Analysis of BrightStars ratings in Exceed database</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local interviews with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Licensing Leadership</li> <li>State Fire Marshall</li> <li>RIDE Pre-K Leadership</li> <li>RIDE Building Authority</li> <li>DHS Leadership</li> <li>Children's Cabinet Leadership</li> <li>Key Advocates</li> <li>Key Provider Leaders</li> <li>Commerce RI</li> <li>Chamber of Commerce Leadership</li> <li>State Properties (Efficiency Committee) Leaders</li> <li>Real Estate Developers</li> </ul> <p><b>National interviews with leaders from facility projects in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Massachusetts</li> <li>Washington DC</li> <li>California</li> <li>Philadelphia</li> <li>Connecticut</li> <li>Detroit</li> <li>New Jersey</li> </ul> <p>Interviews with leadership from the Bi-Partisan Policy Institute and the National Children's Facilities Network</p>	<p><b>Project Examples conducted to model pros, cons, costs and time frames of varying building and project types:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project cost and feasibility modeling conducted for a variety of building types by professional architectural firms</li> <li>Project data reviewed and summarized for a variety of actual project types constructed over the past decade</li> </ul> <p><b>Project types considered include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New construction</li> <li>Major rehabilitation of existing structure for early learning use</li> <li>Use of space in existing community-based setting</li> <li>Use of space in existing municipal building</li> <li>Public school space</li> <li>Single classroom renovation</li> <li>Out of the box strategies</li> </ul>

## The assessment had several goals



# The study included six program types, all of which are essential to the mixed delivery system

Total Children served: ▼				Regulated/Monitored by: ▼			FACILITY Projects Funded with: ▼				
Program Type	Ages Served	Number	High Quality Providers (Rated 4 or 5 by BrightStars)	DCYF	RIDE	U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF)	State & Municipal Funding	Loans	Fundraising / Grants	Equity	Federal ACF Funding
Community-based Early Learning (child care, private preschool/ nursery schools)	0-5	16,072	21%	X			X (VERY RARE)	X	X	X	
Family Child Care Homes	0-5	3,061	1%	X				X		X	
Head Start/ Early Head Start Providers	0-5	4,935	33%	X		X	X (CDBG)	X	X	X	X
Title I Preschool in Local Education Authorities (LEAs)	3-5	1,312	22%		X		X				
RIDE Funded State Pre-k Classrooms in Community-Based Settings	4-5	1,026	65%	X	X	X (IF HEAD START)		X	X	X	X (IF HEAD START)
RIDE Funded State Pre-k Classrooms in LEAs	4-5	378	44%		X		X				

# Rhode Island already has enough built space for its four year old population, though not always in community of residence

## AVAILABILITY OF LICENSED SLOTS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS IN RHODE ISLAND



*Disparities in the location of current four year old slots in Rhode Island minimize the ability for a “one size fits all” solution to work well across the entire state. Rhode Island’s requirements that state pre-k programs can only be offered in a child’s town of residence is a challenge, particularly in municipalities that are child care deserts.*

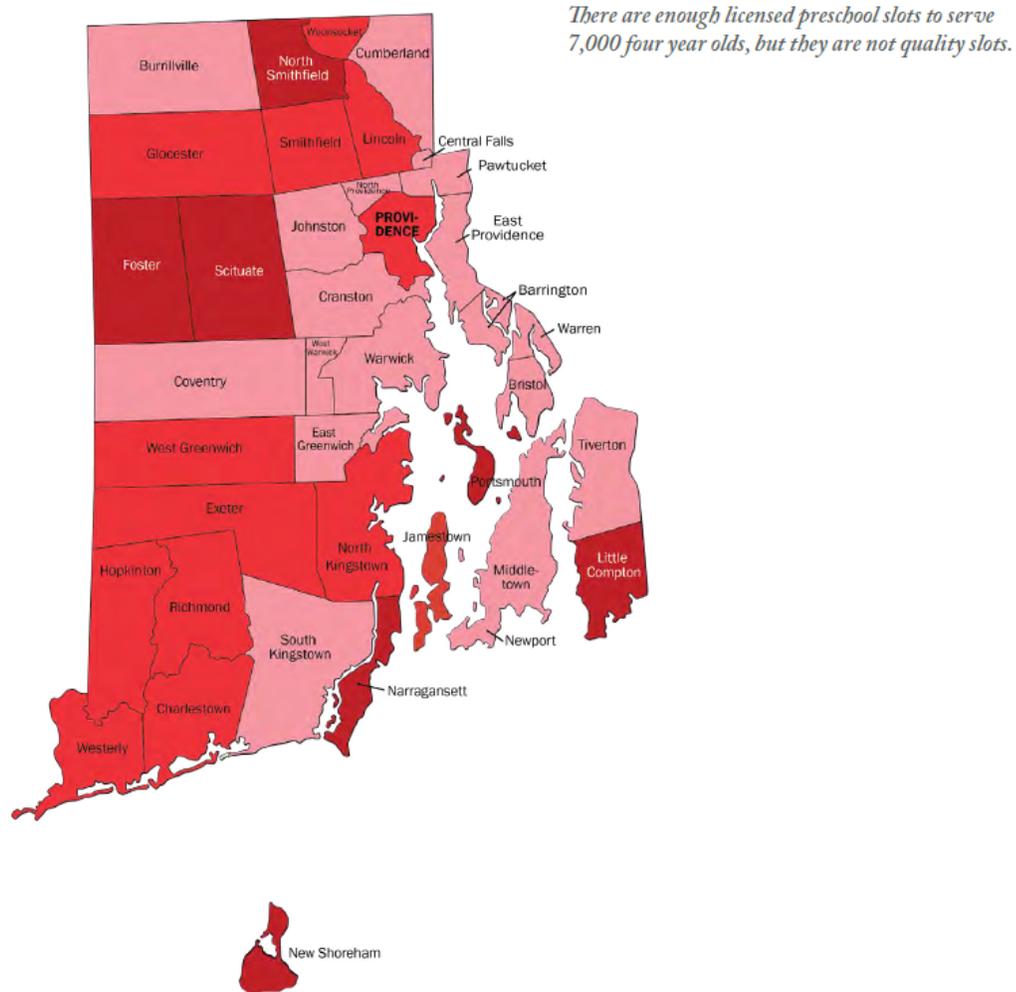
Communities where there are more licensed slots (all quality levels) than the number of children estimated to need care

Communities that have enough licensed slots (all quality levels) for the number of four year old children estimated to need care

Communities where there are not enough four year old slots to meet the demand for the estimated number of children in that district

# Rhode Island has enough built space for its four year old population, however, not enough quality spaces

## AVAILABILITY OF LICENSED QUALITY SLOTS FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS IN RHODE ISLAND



Communities where there are no highly rated four year old child care and early learning providers

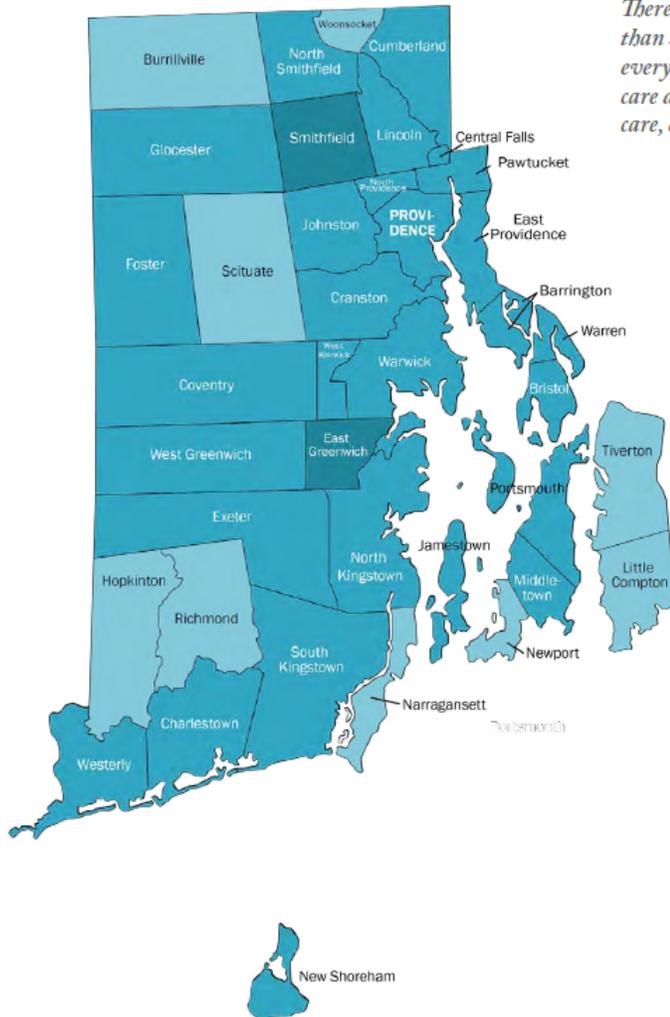
Communities where 25% or less of licensed four year old child care and early learning providers are high quality

Communities where only 26-56% of licensed four year old child care and early learning providers are high quality\*

\*No communities exceeded 56% in how many existing four year old child care and early learning providers were highly rated at the time of the study

# Rhode Island does not have enough licensed spaces for its infant and toddler population in need of care

## AVAILABILITY OF LICENSED INFANT & TODDLER CARE IN RHODE ISLAND



*There are 24 cities and towns that have more than 3 infants and toddlers needing care for every 1 licensed slot available (a sign of a child care desert). There is a crisis in infant/toddler care, especially quality care.*

Communities that have enough licensed slots (all quality levels) or the number of children ages 0-3 estimated to need care

Communities where there are between 2-10 children ages 0-3 estimated to need care for every licensed slot available

Communities where there are more than 10 children ages 0-3 estimated to need care for every licensed slot available

# Rhode Island has 18 communities with no high quality infant/toddler care slots at all

AVAILABILITY OF LICENSED QUALITY INFANT & TODDLER CARE IN RHODE ISLAND



*There are 18 cities and towns that have NO high quality infant and toddler care available. In the remaining communities, high quality infant and toddler slots are limited.*

Communities where there are no highly rated infant/toddler child care slots

Communities where highly rated infant/toddler child care slots meet the need for less than 10% of the infant/toddler population estimated to need care

Communities where highly rated infant/toddler child care slots meet the need for 11-32% of the infant/toddler population estimated to need care

# Converting preschool space to infant space is feasible from a facility standpoint

As pre-k continues to expand across the state, preschool spaces may open up in some community-based facilities. Converting these classrooms to infant/toddler use could be readily achieved in many cases from a facility standpoint, but is not desirable for operators from a financial standpoint.

### FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Most spaces, if converted, would meet the basic requirements for children ages 0-3:

- **Ground level**  
Currently 9 in 10 preschool classrooms are located at ground level
- **In-classroom changing and food prep areas with sinks**  
Currently 3 out of 4 preschool classrooms have the plumbing required to support conversion
- **Minimum of 540 square feet for a group of toddlers and 360 square feet for a group of infants**  
Current preschool classrooms average 650 square feet
- **Different furnishings and equipment (cribs, changing tables) than preschool classrooms**
- **Direct access to the outdoors so children with no or limited mobility can be easily transported in case of emergency**

# However, converting is not practical from a financial standpoint

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Operators of community-based facilities would need access to capital to retrofit space and purchase new equipment AS WELL AS additional operating support dollars to make up ongoing revenue losses.

Illustrative Conversion	Illustrative Quality Rating	Annual Net Revenue Loss
18 preschool children to 8 infants	4 star (high quality)	\$56,000/year
18 preschool children to 12 toddlers	4 star (high quality)	\$24,000/year

**Assumptions:** The above modeling assumes the same number of staff at the same salary levels and that all other overhead, materials and other costs remain essentially stable. Revenue was calculated as follows: the number of children that could be enrolled x the published reimbursement rate x 90% to factor typical vacancies and non-payments. There may be additional costs or considerations, so the above examples should be used for broad overview illustrative purposes only.

*There is **no** dedicated public source of capital for early learning facilities, therefore in addition to the above operating losses, in the absence of new funding sources, most providers would also need to bear the cost of all renovations to convert the space.*

# Rhode Island has limited potential for expansion within its existing community based early learning settings

- 77% of programs report having a wait list
- 64% report being fully enrolled
- The majority of openings for centers not fully enrolled are for the 3-5 year old age group



# Robust regulatory review does not indicate that regulations present barriers to growth

A robust review of facility related program regulations, various building and fire code requirements and best practice guidance was conducted with standards assessed for any potential inconsistencies, lack of alignment, or especially onerous requirements. An online survey, focus group discussions, interviews with regulators and assessors and site visit interviews conducted with operators provided additional insights.

Early learning facility operators are supportive of regulations that protect children and promote quality, but indicate the regulations are difficult to navigate due to their own lack of expertise in real estate development, a lack of clarity and specifics in many regulations, the number of entities that regulate the industry, inconsistencies in regulatory interpretation within and between agencies and a lack of one centralized place to find all requirements and contact information in an easily navigated format.

## GUIDING REGULATIONS/BEST PRACTICE QUALITY STANDARDS

### Community-based Child Care

General Building Regulations	Civil Law	Mandatory Regulations	Higher Quality Standards, Certifications & Accreditations	Best Practice/ Quality Guidance
RI State Building Code (SBC-1, SBC-3 Plumbing, SBC-4 Mechanical, SBC-5 Electrical, SBC-8 Energy Conservation, etc.)	Department of Justice ADA Standards for Accessible Design	RI DCYF Child Care Program Regulations for Licensure	BrightStars/ Environmental Rating Scales	Caring for Our Children
NFPA 1 and 101 (State Fire Marshal's Office)	US Consumer Product Safety Commission Public Playground Safety Handbook (ASTM Standards)	Child Care Center and Family Child Care	RI Department of Education Comprehensive ECE Program Standards	US EPA Healthy Child Care Guidelines
City/Town Ordinances (Local Authority having Jurisdiction)		Head Start Facility Standards	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	Best Practice Research on Impact of Space
		Head Start Grantees and EHS Partnership Sites Only		

## GUIDING REGULATIONS/BEST PRACTICE QUALITY STANDARDS

### RIDE Regulated Preschool Facilities

General Building Regulations	Civil Law	K-12 Regulations	Higher Quality Standards, Certifications & Accreditations	Best Practice/ Quality Guidance
RI State Building Code (SBC-1, SBC-3 Plumbing, SBC-4 Mechanical, SBC-5 Electrical, SBC-8 Energy Conservation, etc.)	Department of Justice ADA Standards for Accessible Design	Remediation of Hazardous Materials Releases	BrightStars/ Environmental Rating Scales	Caring for Our Children
NFPA 1 and 101 (State Fire Marshal's Office)	US Consumer Product Safety Commission Public Playground Safety Handbook (ASTM Standards)	BEP 2009 Regulations	RI Department of Education Comprehensive ECE Program Standards	US EPA Healthy Child Care Guidelines
City/Town Ordinances (Local Authority having Jurisdiction)		RIDE 2007 School Construction Regulations	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	Best Practice Research on Impact of Space
		Rules and Regs for School Health Program		

Note: Not all buildings/programs will have to meet every listed regulation or standard. Compliance will vary based on a number of items, such as if the building is new or existing, type of construction, location, CCAP accepting, Head Start, RIDE or DCYF licensed, etc.

## REGULATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Those developing new classrooms in community-based facilities and public schools would benefit from an easier way to access all of the regulatory requirements for this type of space, while operators would benefit from a better understanding of the specific regulations that will be evaluated during ongoing inspections.

- All buildings, including early learning facilities, are subject to regulations and codes designed to protect their occupants**  
 These include building and fire inspections
- In Rhode Island, each municipality has its own set of regulations connected to facilities and approval of the construction process, including things such as zoning, parking and permitting**
- Early learning facilities have additional, unique regulations and are also required to meet "best practice" standards to achieve high quality ratings**  
 Regulations and best practice guidance provided by licensing agencies, BrightStars quality assessors and the Department of Education are generally very well-aligned and consistent in written form, but, due to the intentionally open ended nature of most standards, are frequently interpreted differently within and across agencies
- Other highly regulated industries serving non-ambulatory populations (such as hospital systems) typically have someone on staff with expertise in facilities, building codes and regulations to assist with new construction**  
 This is unlikely to be the case with early learning providers, whose primary expertise is child development
- Because Rhode Island utilizes a mixed delivery system, regulations and standards and regulatory bodies vary between program types**  
 This creates a unique challenge in providing one clear and distinct regulatory pathway for all providers in the system
- Research shows most operators are not concerned with the regulatory process per se**  
 Only 29% of operators view building regulations as a barrier to opening new classrooms and even fewer (18%) indicate they would need help navigating the regulatory process if they were upgrading their existing facilities
- Rather, the concern appears to be regulations and standards that are ambiguous, for example "must be in good condition"**  
 This lack of specificity allows for too much and too varied interpretation of regulations and standards

# Financial realities inhibit improvement and growth



*Early learning providers in Rhode Island are only able to dedicate, on average, 12% of their total revenues to all expenses related to occupancy and infrastructure.*

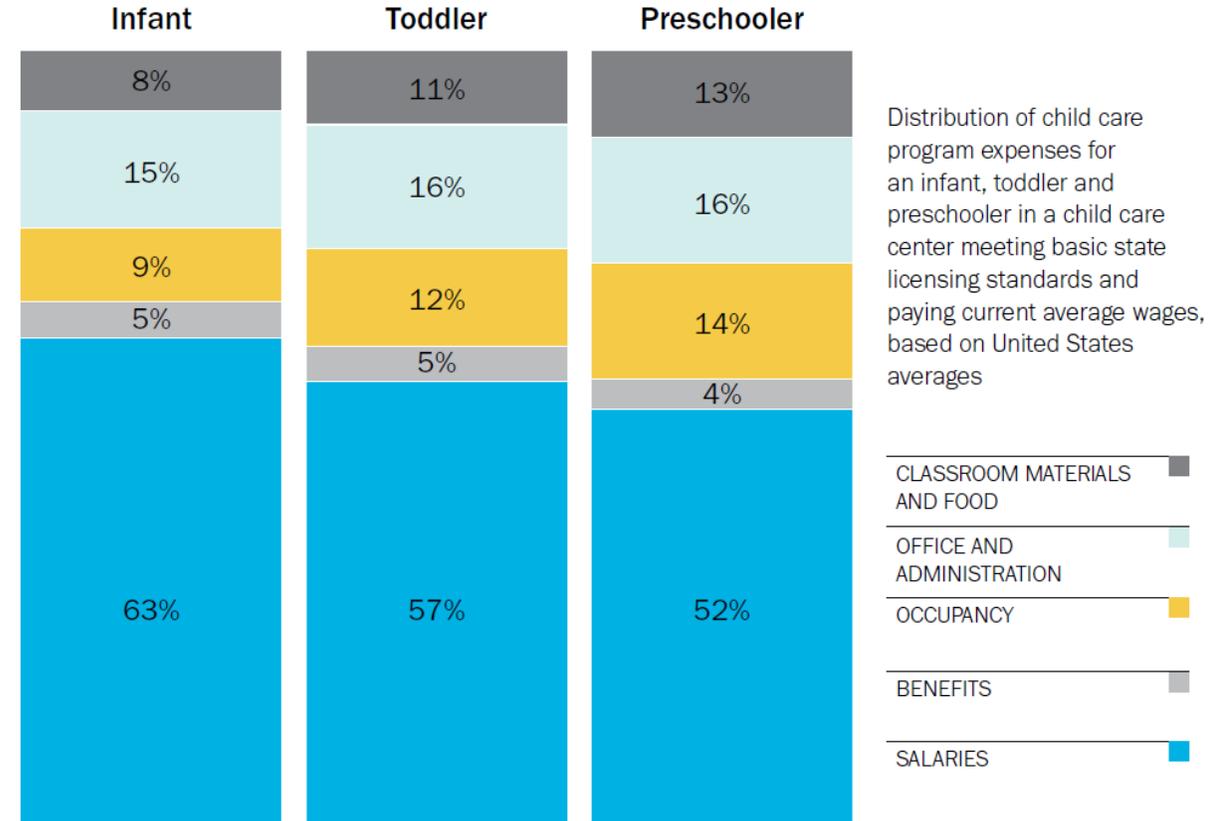
Financial constraints facing the early learning industry and the Rhode Island state budget negatively impact the ability of most community-based providers to expand or make quality improvements.

Many early learning providers in Rhode Island express interest in opening new facility spaces and/or expanding and operating additional programs, but there are significant barriers, most notably financial and lack of affordable and appropriate sites, inhibiting their ability to do so.

Early learning facility projects frequently cannot qualify for traditional building and construction loans due to the unpredictable and short term nature of many funding streams, such as state pre-k, the delayed reimbursement process for state subsidies, lack of sufficient collateral and tight operating margins.

## *Revenues are Allocated to Salaries, Benefits and Classroom Supplies, Little is Left for Occupancy*

Community-based early learning facility operators typically use equity, personal savings, loans and fundraising to fund improvements to their facilities and/or expand to serve additional children.



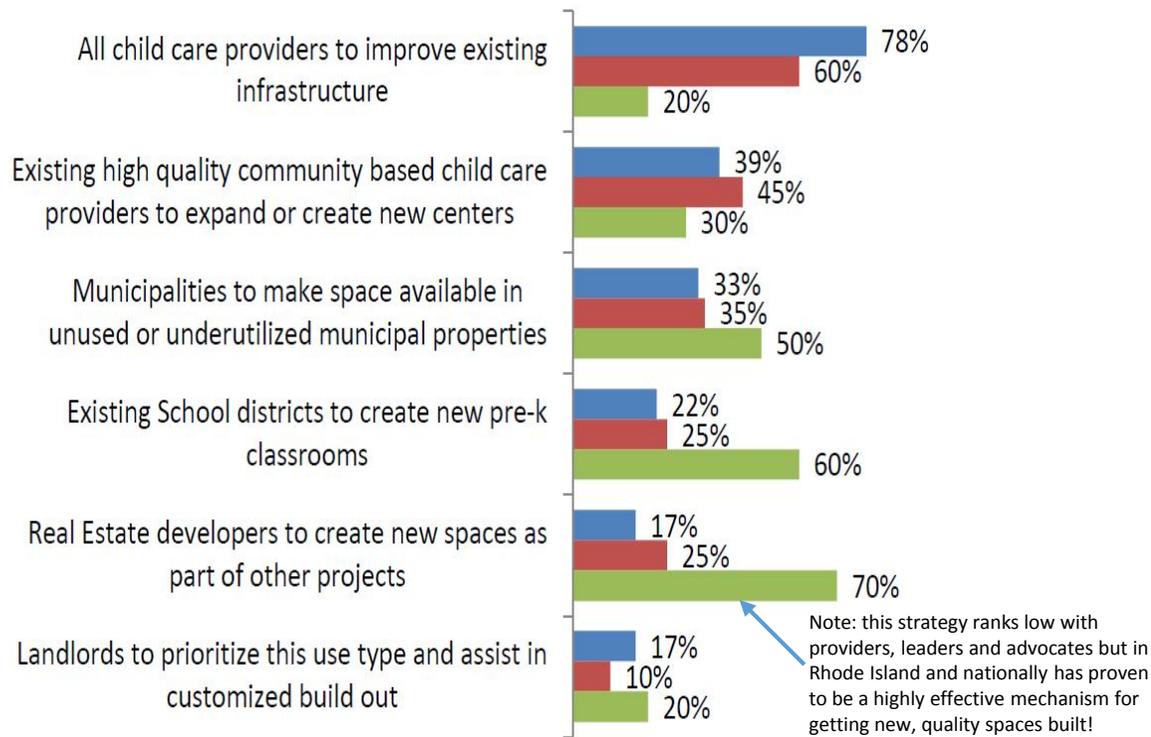
Source: Center for American Progress

*A review of financial data from 60 Rhode Island community-based childcare facilities validates the findings of the Center for American Progress: Only 10-15% of a facility's total revenues are available for occupancy costs, improvements and expansion.*

# Preferred Expansion Pathways

As highlighted during focus group process

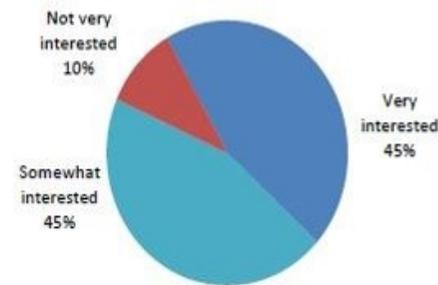
12. Achieving universal pre-k in Rhode Island means creating spaces for 7,000 four year olds that meet all regulations and support quality. This equates to about 300,000 square feet of space. The best way to accomplish this is to incentivize:



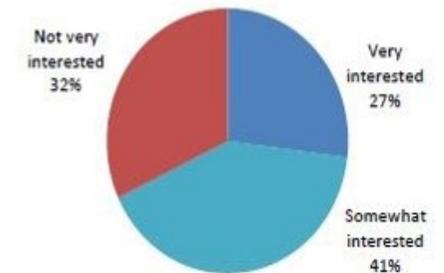
■ Early Learning Providers ■ State Leaders & ECE Advocates ■ Real Estate Developers

26-29. If funding were available, how interested would you be in...

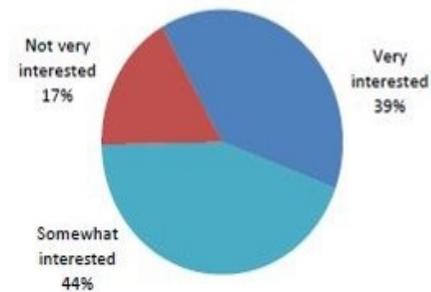
Building classrooms in empty commercial or retail buildings?



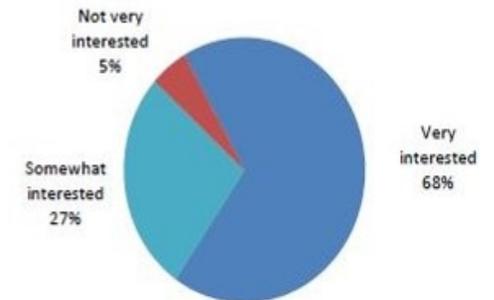
Building single classrooms in existing community-based facilities?



Developing classroom space in partnership with public schools?



Building new child care centers from the ground up?



# Preliminary observations

- Developing new classrooms and facilities takes significant time and funding. A lack of suitable sites and buildings in Rhode Island's already densely built urban areas creates additional growth complications. Therefore, capitalizing on existing built infrastructure is essential.
- Early learning space has unique requirements designed to ensure health and safety of vulnerable populations and support delivery of quality programming.
- Rhode Island's existing early learning infrastructure is in need of significant attention. Most providers lack sufficient resources to address deferred maintenance issues, make quality improvements or capitalize on unused spaces for expansion.
- Focus on pre-k expansion should not detract from critical lack of access to regulated infant and toddler care.



- Successful facility projects have all of the following components; a location and building that meet requirements and needs, a strong operator and sufficient funding.
- A comprehensive review of successful initiatives from around the country points to the importance of bringing new partners to the table.
- There is no dedicated source of public funding for community-based early learning center facility projects. Most providers lack sufficient resources to take on new facility projects without access to additional funding.
- A robust review of regulations does not point to lack of alignment or undue burdens. However, varying interpretations within and between departments as well as a lack of clarity and specificity in many regulations does create challenges and frustrations.

# Early Action Recommendations

## FUNDING

Take necessary steps to include early learning facility bond referendum on November, 2020 ballot. Utilize highly successful Massachusetts program as a model. This is the most clear-cut way to access the large amount of capital needed to grow the system to scale and enable prioritized providers to make necessary improvements to infrastructure. Funding can be tied to state priorities and critical needs.

Include line item in the state budget for a small grants program to be used for facility planning and pre-development activities as well as urgent space-related health, safety and quality issues. Utilize funding to emphasize state priorities. Seek matching opportunities from private funders.

## POLICIES

Contemplate policy change that allows delaying start-up of newly awarded pre-k classrooms to allow time for adequate planning and infrastructure development. Few providers or developers will build new space on speculation and current time frame does not allow for development of new spaces.

Reconsider policy that requires child to attend state pre-k in his or her community of residence which allows for better use of existing infrastructure.

Work with legislature and municipalities to:

- Create a blanket property tax exemption or stabilization program for providers meeting key benchmarks (quality, high needs populations, etc.) This will afford greater financial stability to existing providers and better encourage new development.
- Lessen zoning restrictions so that more buildings and sites can be considered for early learning use.

## PARTNERS

New partners from different backgrounds than traditional early learning advocates are needed. Form an early learning facilities task force similar to the one in San Mateo County, CA that includes business, real estate experts, philanthropy, government and educators. To be effective this group must include new partners with specialized expertise.

Connect with leadership of other states currently grappling with similar issues. Form Governor's Association Working Group to advocate federally and share lessons learned and strategy successes.

Support and incentivize partnerships between LEAs and high quality community based early learning providers to maximize use of appropriate infrastructure available within many school systems.

Engage Rhode Island's philanthropic community in a shared vision to support growth of a quality early learning system. Evidence from around the country points to the vital role that private funding plays in successful early learning policy.

## REGULATIONS

SMILEE Regulations are needed for facilities - Specific, Measurable, Incremental, Logical, Enforceable, Enforced. Ensuring facilities can be readily measured and consistently understood should be a top priority for the next revision to standards.

Create and operationalize tools that support regulators with consistency and transparency and guide providers in clearly understanding requirements. These are needed to support shared understandings and consistent application.

Create a central clearinghouse for all regulations connected to facilities. This could be as simple as a website page that contains links to resources and includes links to resources, all applicable regulations and key contacts.

## PROGRAM SUPPORTS

Develop and launch an online platform such as the ones available in Philadelphia, DC, Detroit and New Jersey to readily identify and easily connect providers, available sites, developers, funders and areas of need.

Create a more robust set of resources to guide providers through the real estate process and educate other essential partners on key components of quality early learning space.

Increase access to training and supports to guide current and potential providers through the facility improvement and development processes.

Ensure access to robust on-site facility related support for all components of the mixed delivery system.



**BOLD  
THINKERS  
DRIVING  
REAL-WORLD  
IMPACT**

# *Rhode Island Preschool Development Grant Birth through Age 5 (PDG B-5)*

## **Selected Findings from Family and Workforce Needs Assessments**

**September 2019**

*The project described is supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0027, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

# PDG B-5 Needs Assessment

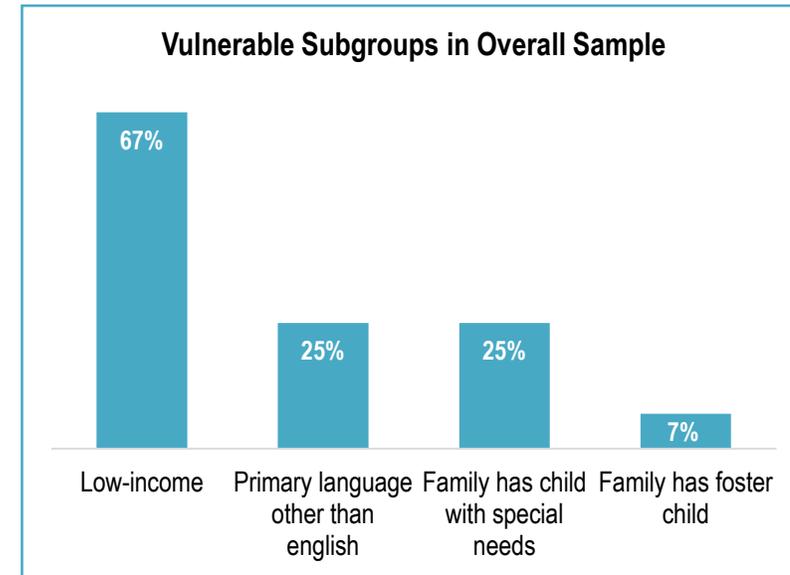
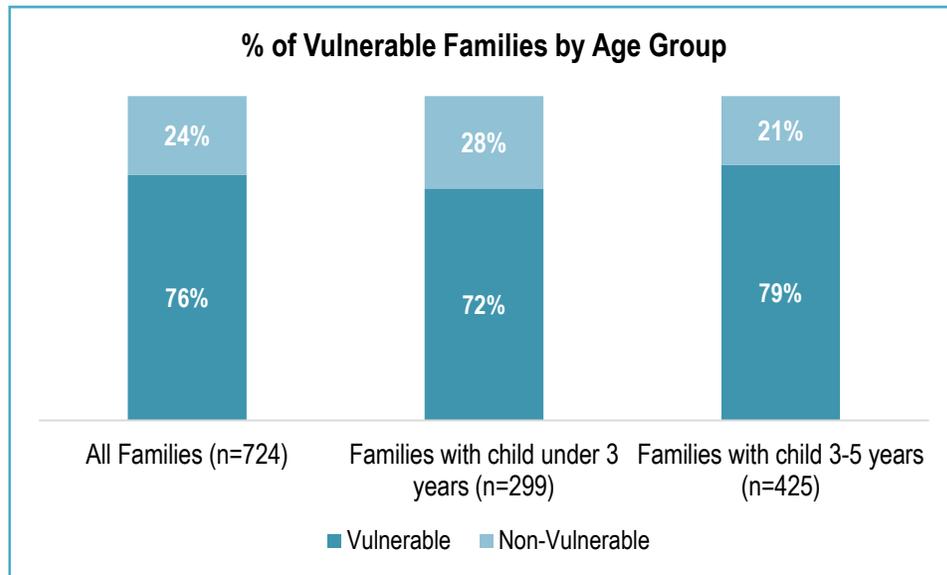
## Overall Objectives and Approach



- PDG B-5 Family and Workforce Needs Assessments were designed in consultation with cross-agency state leadership and additional stakeholders.
- This work builds on prior needs assessments and research across sectors in Rhode Island.
- Needs assessments aim to provide updated and comprehensive information to help inform data-driven strategies to support families and the workforce.
- Intensive outreach efforts took place to families and the workforce to make them aware of opportunities to participate in the needs assessments and share their voices.
- Data collection took place from late July through August 2019.

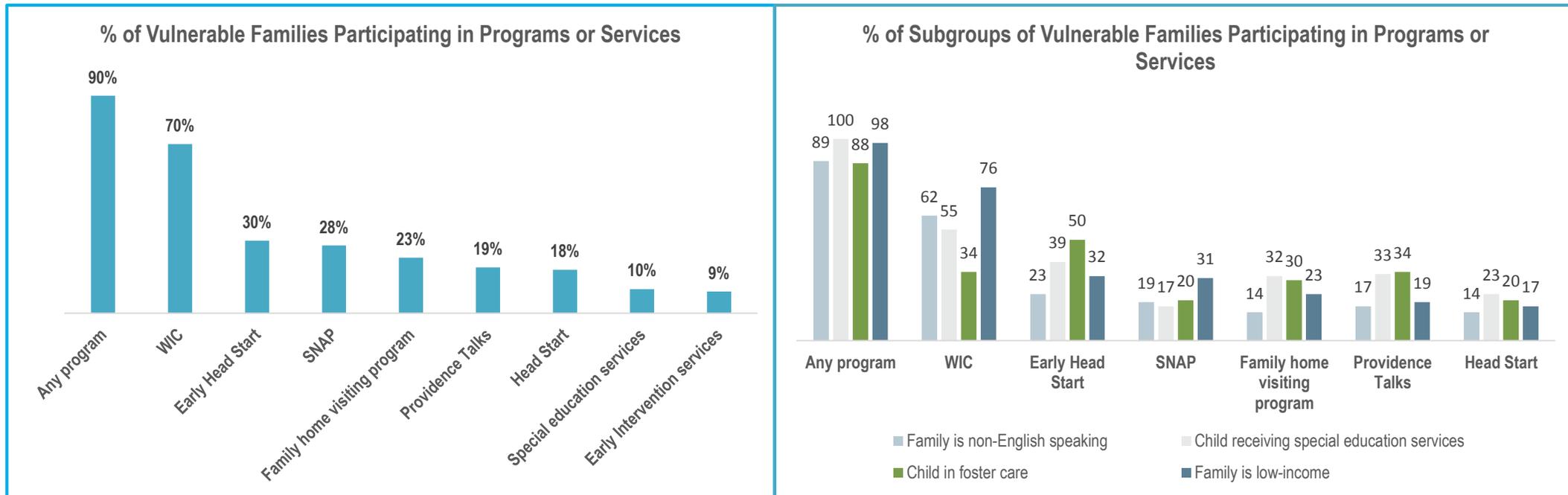
# Family Needs Assessment Sample

- 700+ families with children prenatal through age 5 completed the statewide survey. Survey respondents came from across the state – responses represent 85% of the 93 RI zip codes.
- 10 family focus groups that included 52 families in three focal communities, including 4 conducted in Spanish.
- About three-quarters of the families in the survey sample belong to vulnerable populations: low-income, primary language other than English, family with foster care child(ren), and/or child(ren) with special needs.



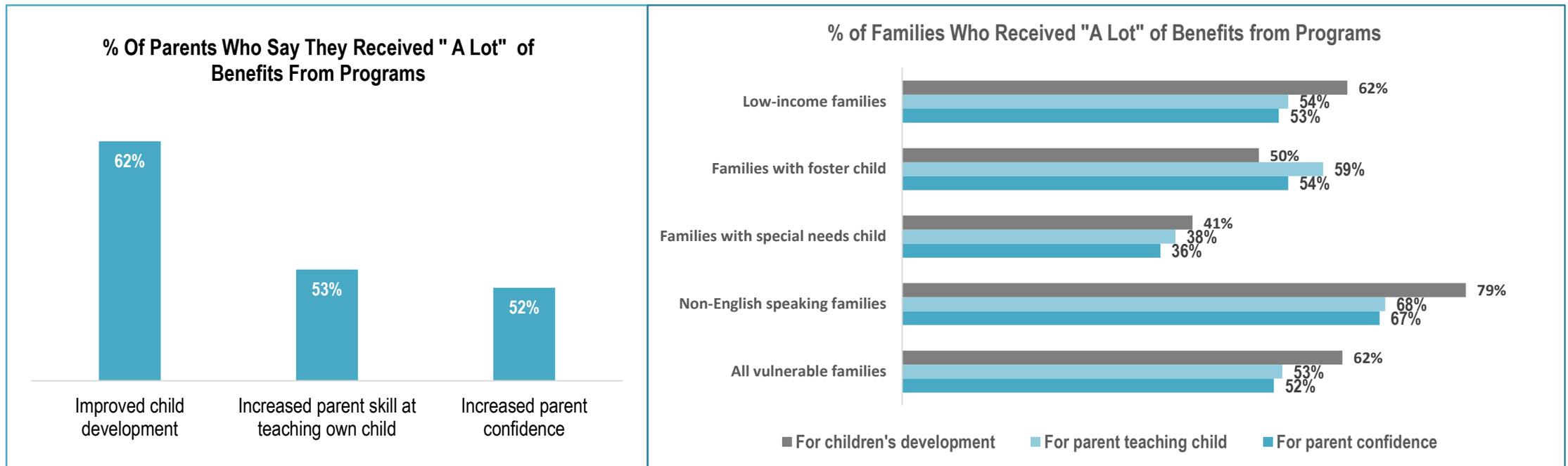
# Family Needs Assessment: Select Finding #1

- **Program Participation.** Over 2/3 of vulnerable families report participating in WIC while fewer than 1/3 are participating in any other program or service.
  - Compared to other vulnerable families, fewer families who speak a primary language other than English participate in programs or services.



# Family Needs Assessment: Select Finding #2

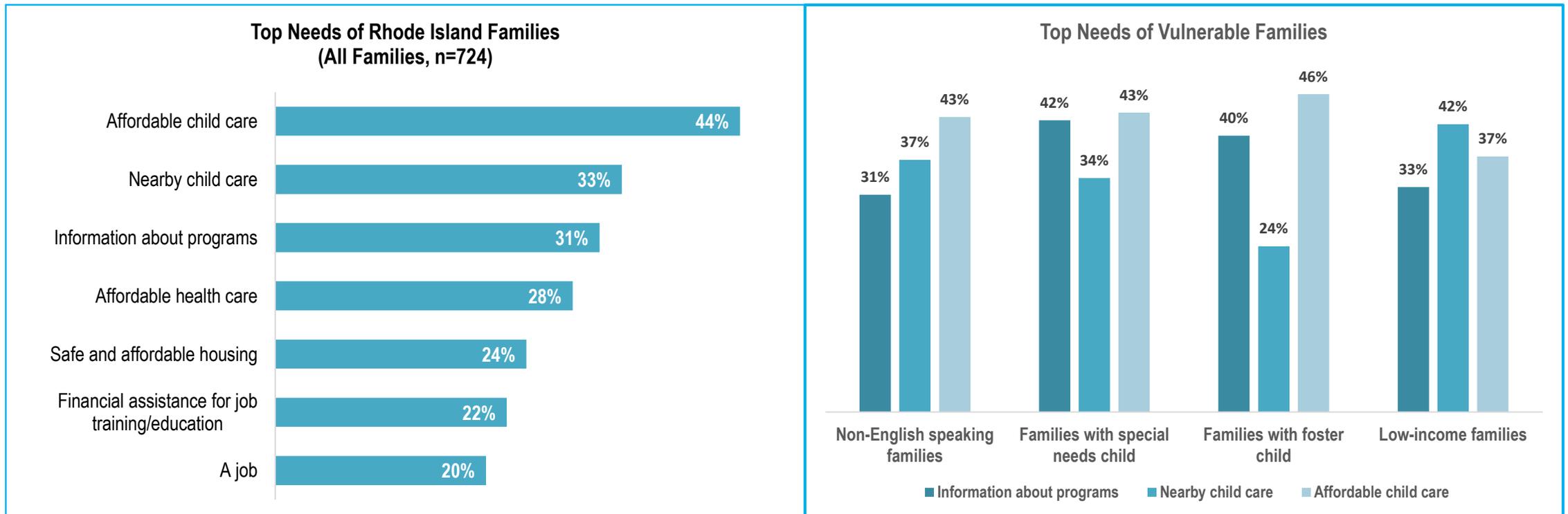
- **Program Benefits.** Most families (50 – 60%) report that programs they participate in provide “ a lot” of benefits in areas related child development, parent support for child learning, parent self-confidence
  - Fewer families with children with special needs report “a lot” of benefits.



SOURCE: Family Survey, Q3 "Raising young children is challenging. Which of the following would help your family the most?" (Check up to three or "None of the above")

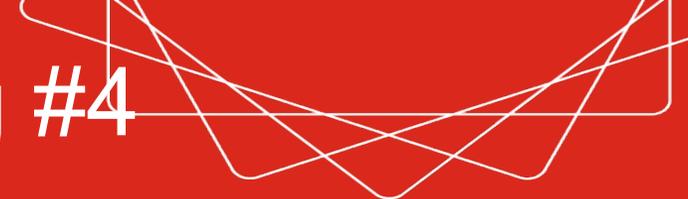
# Family Needs Assessment: Select Finding #3

- **Family Needs.** Needs identified most often by families with young children (all families and vulnerable subgroups) include: (1) **affordable child care** and **child care close to home** and (2) **information about programs**.
- More families who speak a primary language other than English identified need for jobs and affordable health care.



SOURCE: Family Survey, Q3 "Raising young children is challenging. Which of the following would help your family the most?" (Check up to three or "None of the above")

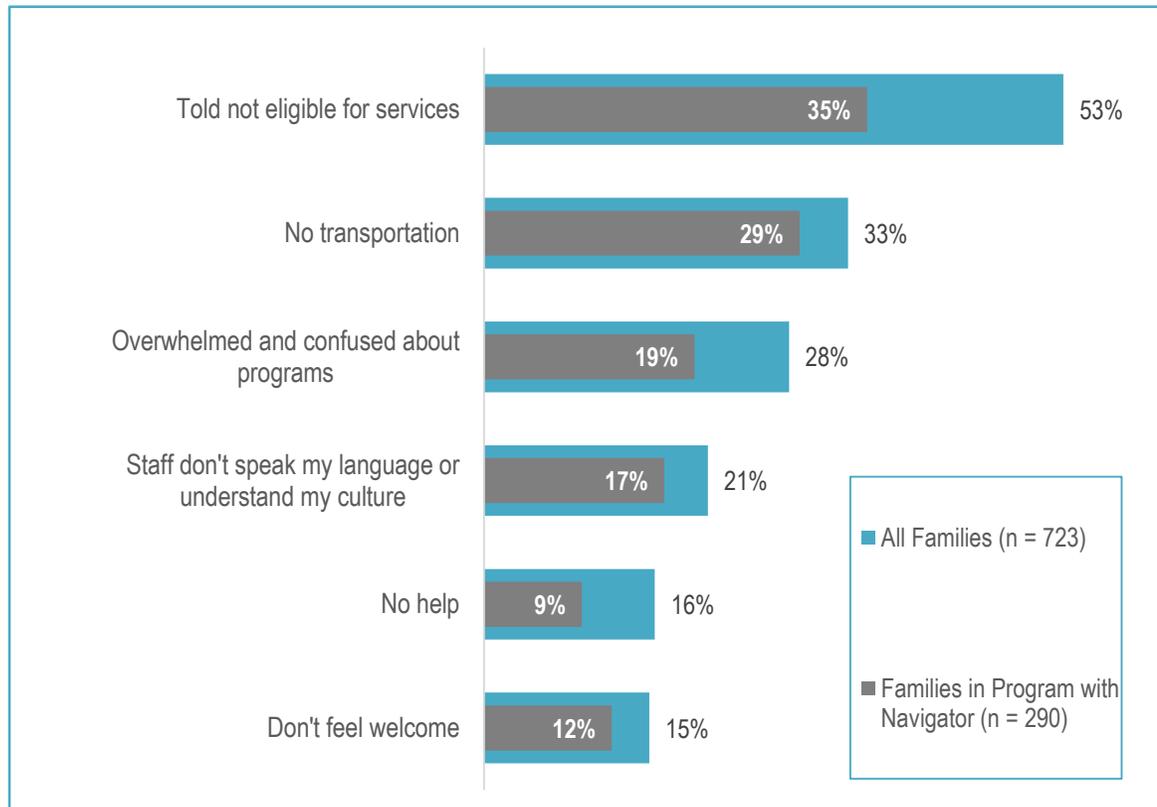
# Family Needs Assessment: Select Finding #4



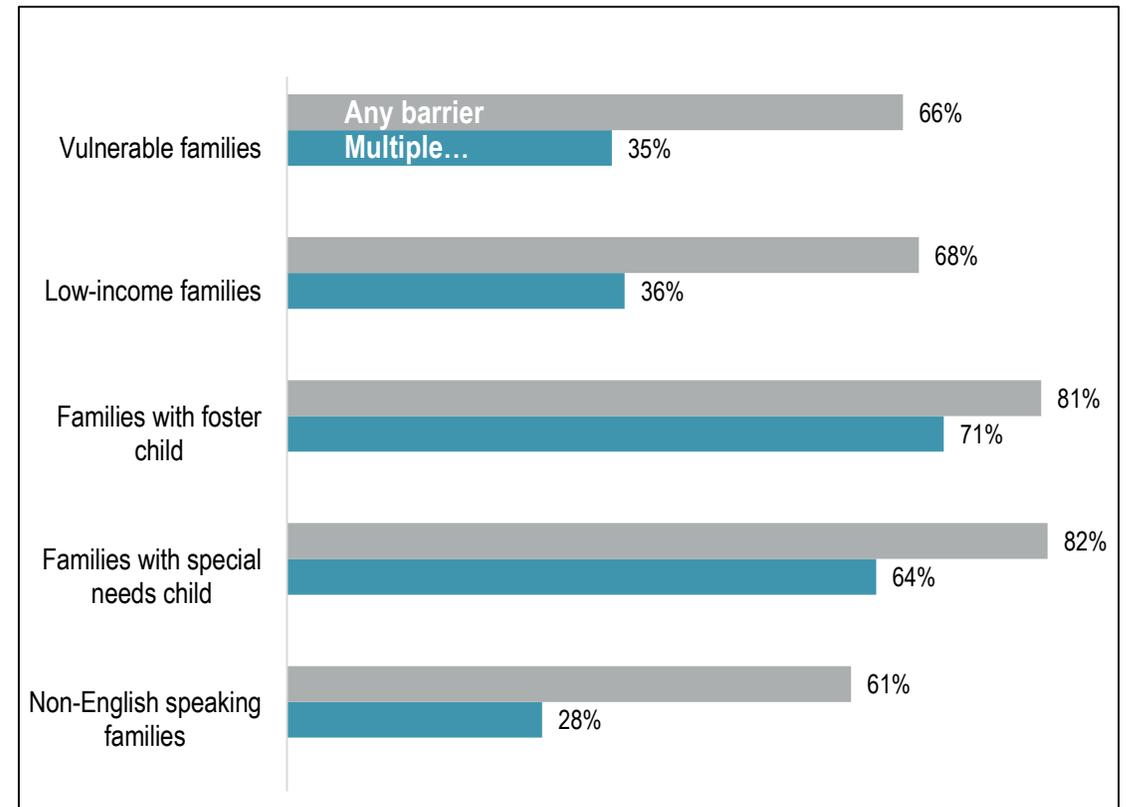
- **Barriers to Access.** In general, families report the following barriers to accessing programs/services (1) they were told they were ineligible for services and (2) that they are **overwhelmed or confused** about the options for different services.
  - More families in vulnerable subgroups report multiple barriers. Families who speak a primary language other than English report additional barriers due to language and cultural differences.
  - Families in programs with staff who helped them navigate services are less likely to report these barriers, particularly concerns about eligibility

# Barriers to Accessing Needed Services

% of Families Identifying Specific Barrier



# of Barriers Experienced by Vulnerable Subgroups



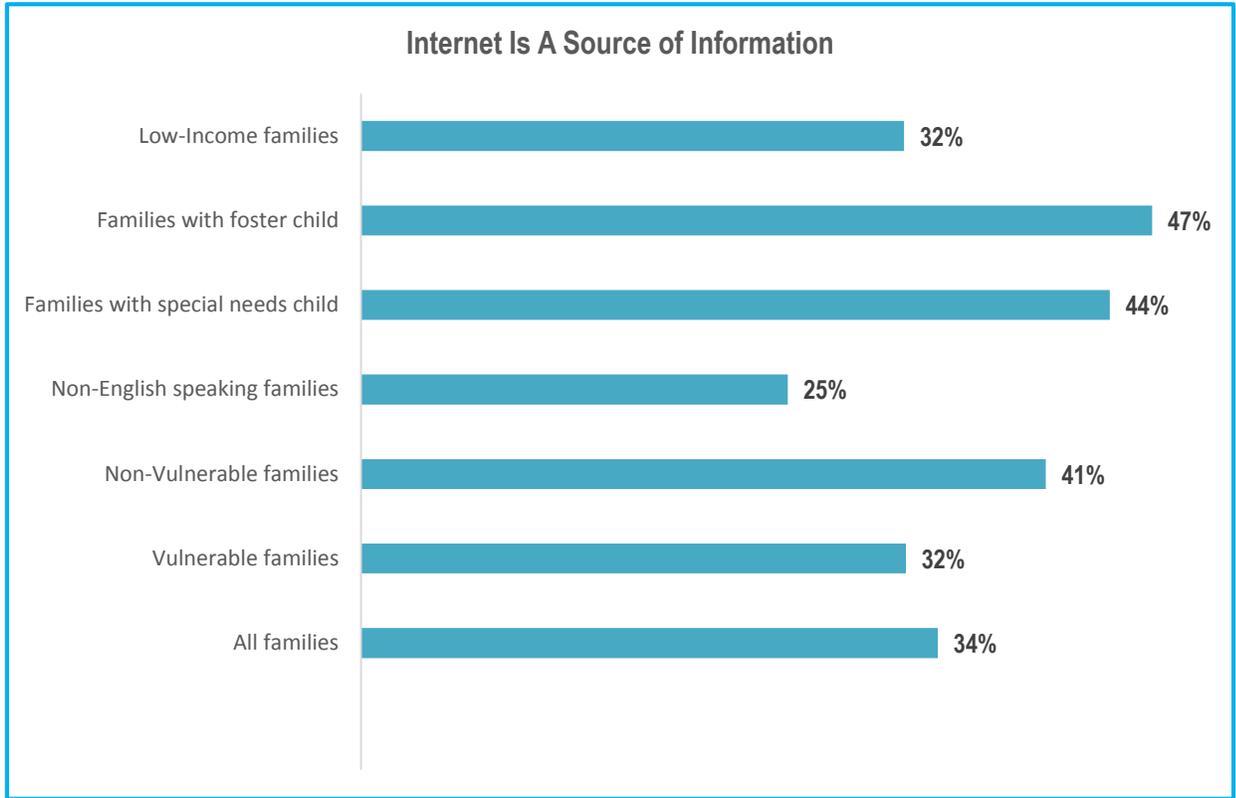
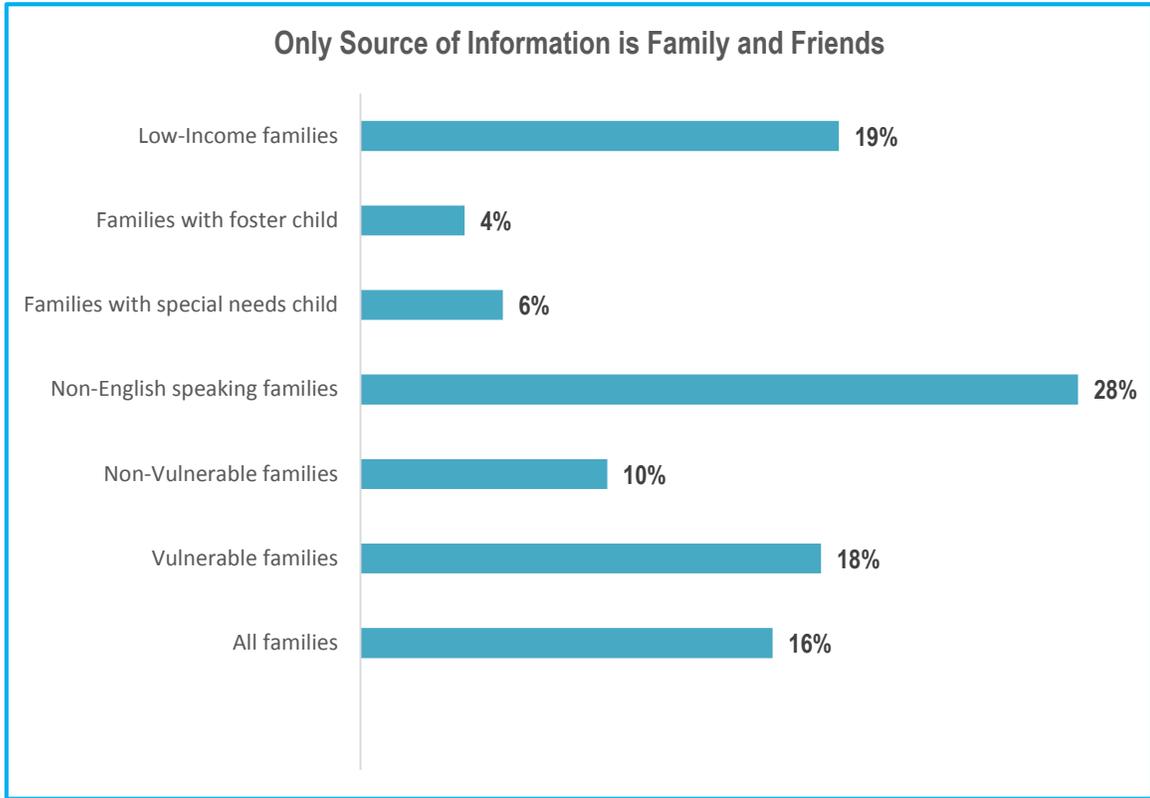
SOURCE: Family Survey Q9 "What difficulties or barriers have you faced in getting services you need for your family?" (Check all that apply or "None of the above")

# Family Needs Assessment: Select Finding #5



- **Sources of Information.** More vulnerable families rely on family and friends for information about services, especially low-income and families who speak a primary language other than English.
  - Fewer vulnerable families use the Internet for information, especially families whose primary language is not English and low-income families.
  - Only 10% of the focus group families were aware of the state website Exceed RI and even fewer had visited it, although many participants were interested in learning more about it as a future resource.

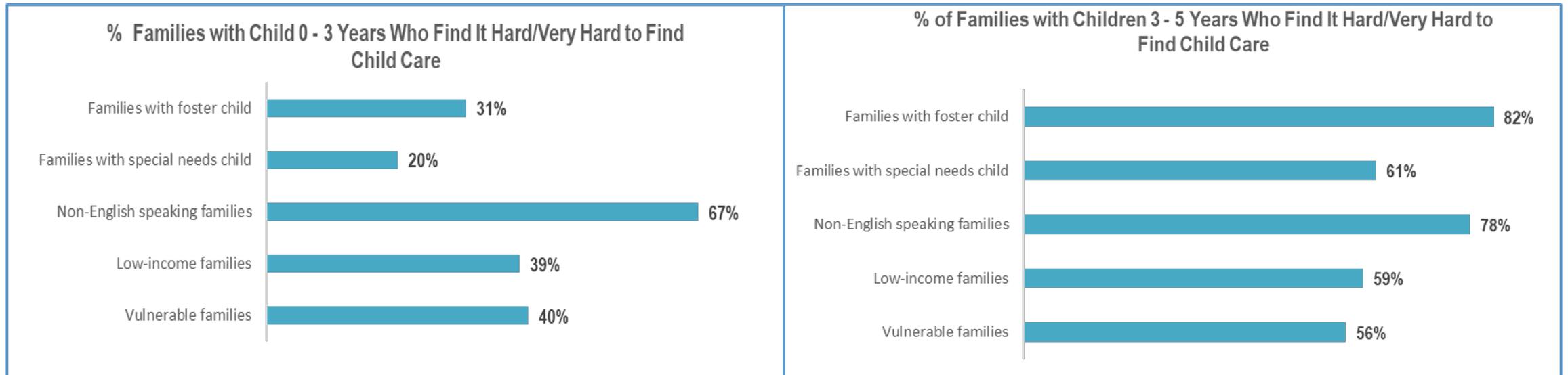
# Sources of Information on Programs and Services



SOURCE: Family Survey Q9 "What difficulties or barriers have you faced in getting services you need for your family?" (Check all that apply or "None of the above")

# Family Needs Assessment: Select Finding #6

- **Child Care.** A majority of families used some type of child care. A bit less than half (40%) of families report having a “hard” or “very hard” time finding child care.
  - A higher proportion of families whose primary language is not English (67%) report that it was hard to find child care.



# Potential state action steps: communications and navigation



- Need for a ***robust family communications and outreach/public awareness campaign*** to help provide information about available early learning resources and comprehensive services to families with young children, including information about State Pre-K and its benefits.
- ***Intentional messaging and communications to particular subgroups of families*** with multiple barriers to access for families whose primary language is not English, families with children with special needs, and families with foster care children.
- Consider strategies for ***increasing ease of navigation*** for all vulnerable families starting when children are very young (0 – 3 years) , especially those who are not part of existing programs.

# Workforce Needs Assessment Sample



Sector	# Survey Respondents	Response Rate
Child Care (including Head Start and State Pre-K) program directors	166*	35%
Child Care and Public School (including Head Start and State Pre-K) educators	892*	Received responses from 61% of programs
Family Child Care Providers	5 focus groups including 54 providers	
Family Visiting Directors	15	44%
Family Visiting Staff	58	67%
Early Intervention Directors	8	89%
Early Intervention Staff	189	64%

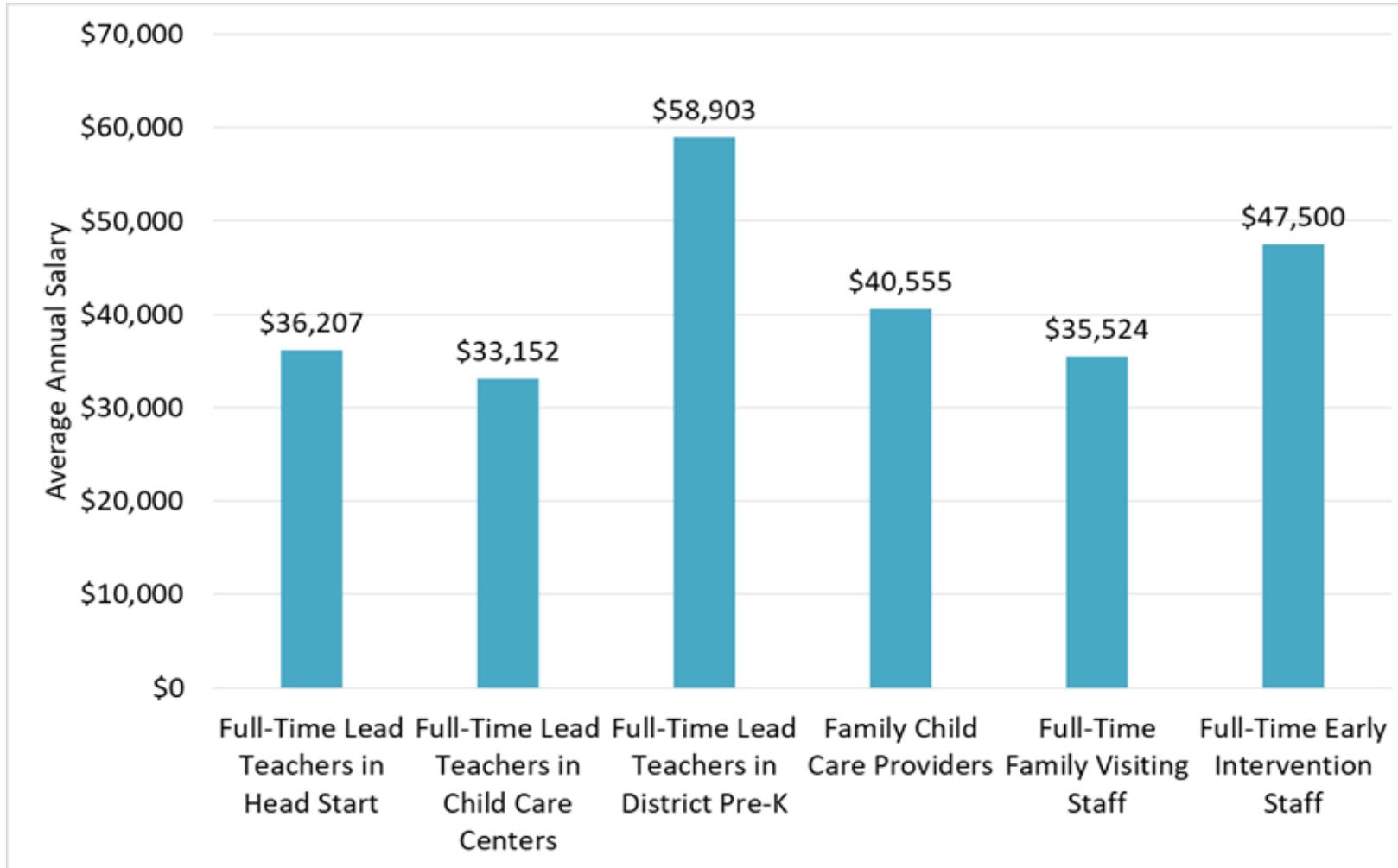
\*Child care and public school responses were weighted so that findings represent the estimated statewide population of programs/educators.

# Workforce Needs Assessment: Select Findings

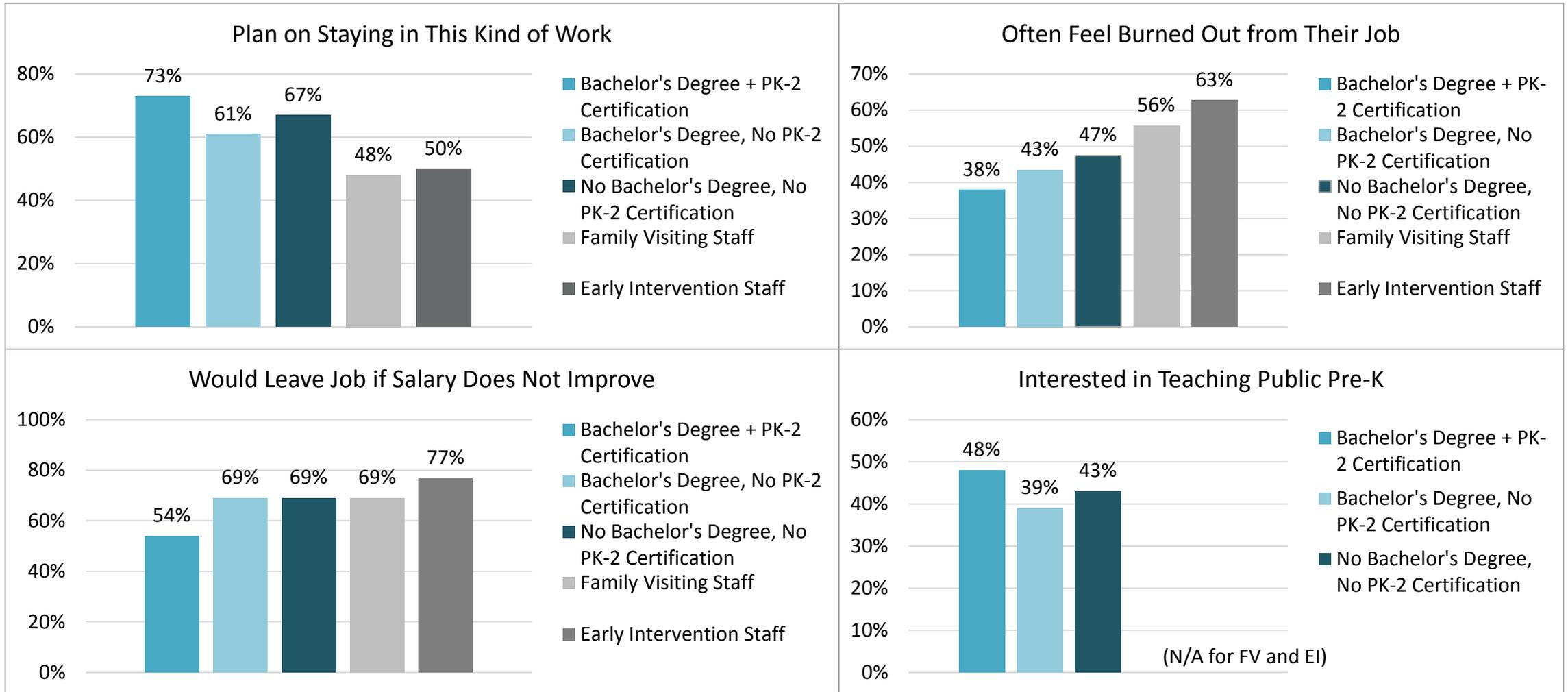


1. The workforce needs assessment data suggest **multiple sources of instability** facing all sectors of the B-5 workforce including:
  - Compensation gaps (including benefits)
  - Staff turnover
  - Job stress/burnout
  - Limited supports and opportunities for upward movement
2. The supply of qualified teachers to support State Pre-K expansion appears to be adequate, although implementation challenges remain.

# B-5 Workforce Compensation Gaps



# Potential Factors Affecting B-5 Workforce Movement



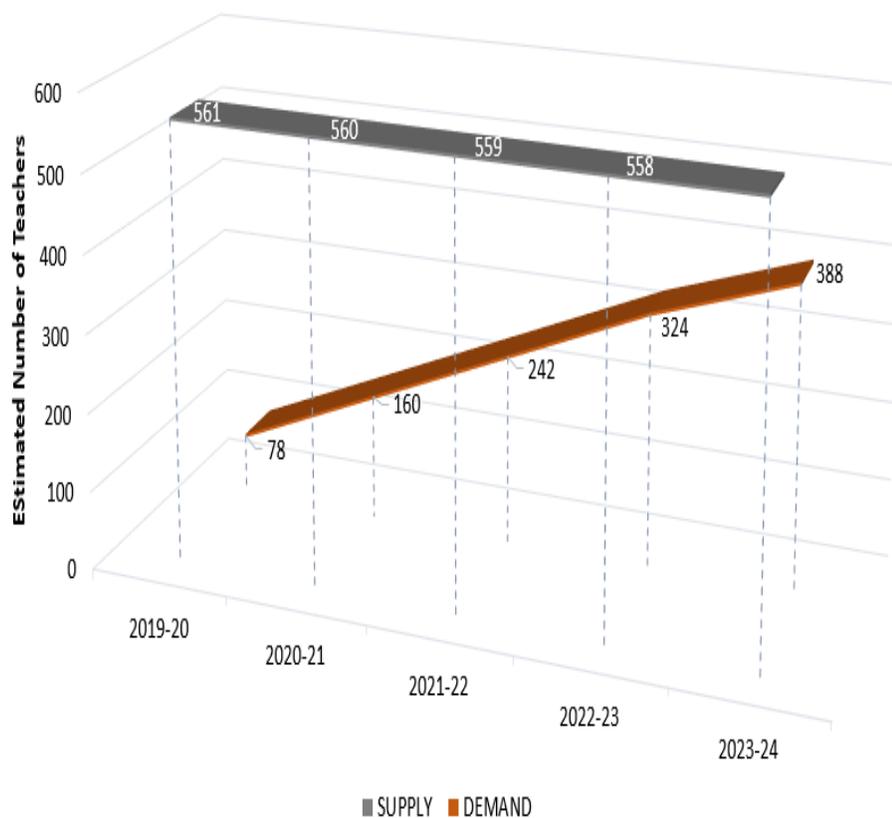
# B-5 Workforce Job Satisfaction



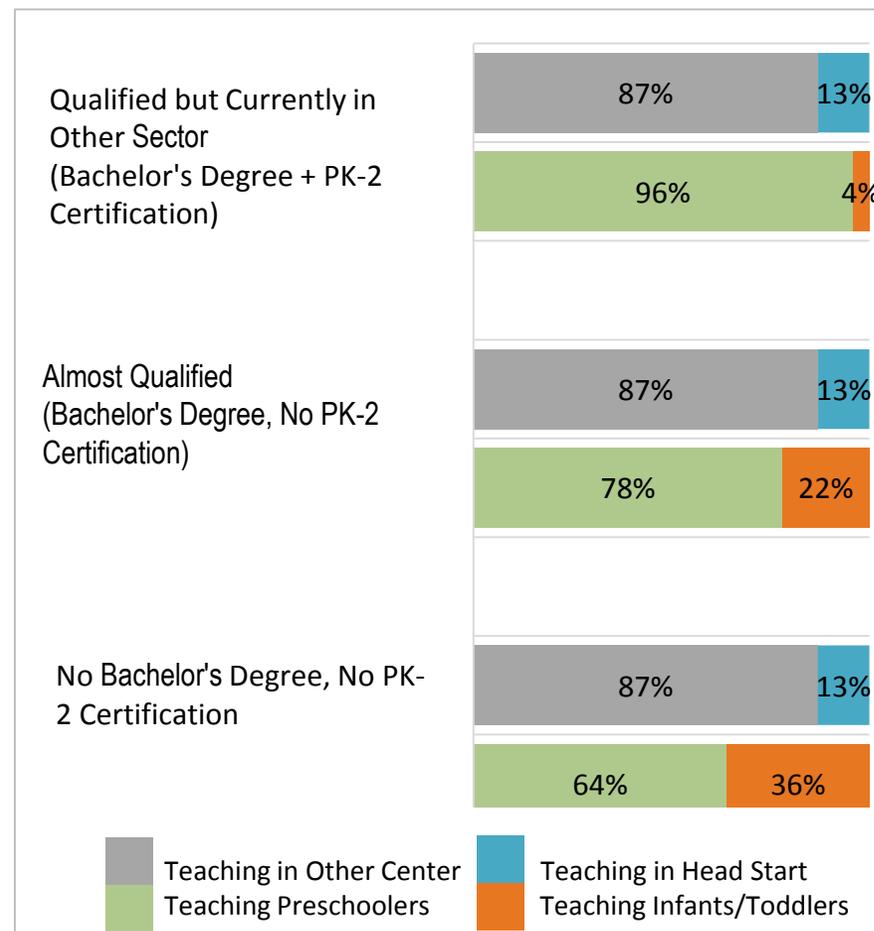
- 80% of center and public school preschool teachers and Family Visitors and 92% of Early Intervention staff feel like they're positively influencing other people's lives through their work at least a few times per week
- However, job stress/burnout is the top reason that child care program and Early Intervention directors cite for teacher/staff turnover. It is not among the main reasons that Family Visiting directors cite for turnover.
- The most common concerns of family child care providers who participated in focus groups are the number of agencies that they are required to report to and lack of coordination among them, as well as lack of recognition for their work.

# Focus on State Pre-K Expansion: Are There Enough Qualified Teachers?

On paper, the state has a sufficient supply of educators to roll out the expansion of State Pre-K and to serve 7,000 young children by 2024, assuming that attrition is minimized.



## Current distribution of preschool teachers in Rhode Island



# Focus on State Pre-K Expansion: Workforce Implementation Challenges



- There is not a well-supported pathway (financial assistance from the state or programs) for the current workforce to obtain a Bachelor's degree and PK-2 certification, although these are expectations for higher BrightStars levels and State Pre-K lead teachers.
- Over two-thirds of the existing 3,000 PK-2 certificates are not currently in use in Rhode Island.
- It will be difficult to move qualified teachers already in the workforce into State Pre-K classrooms without negatively impacting the quality of existing child care classrooms.
  - As is, directors (across sectors) report that it takes a lot of time (more than 30 days) to fill most staff vacancies and that they aren't highly satisfied with the candidate pool.

# Potential State Action Steps to Stabilize and Boost Quality of the B-5 Workforce



- Explore additional strategies to increase and provide more equitable compensation to the B-5 workforce such as higher subsidy rates, compensation incentives and/or scholarships for higher education, direct wage supplementation, and refundable tax credits
- Explore apprenticeship model to offer students paid on-the-job learning that results in a credential (and in some cases higher degrees) to help break down some of the barriers to accessing higher education.
- Consider creating pool of substitute/relief teachers to support release time for child care teachers working to complete credentials
- Continue to invest in improving the quality of current programs and classrooms to avoid existing teachers leaving classrooms as State Pre-K expands

# Key Questions for Consideration

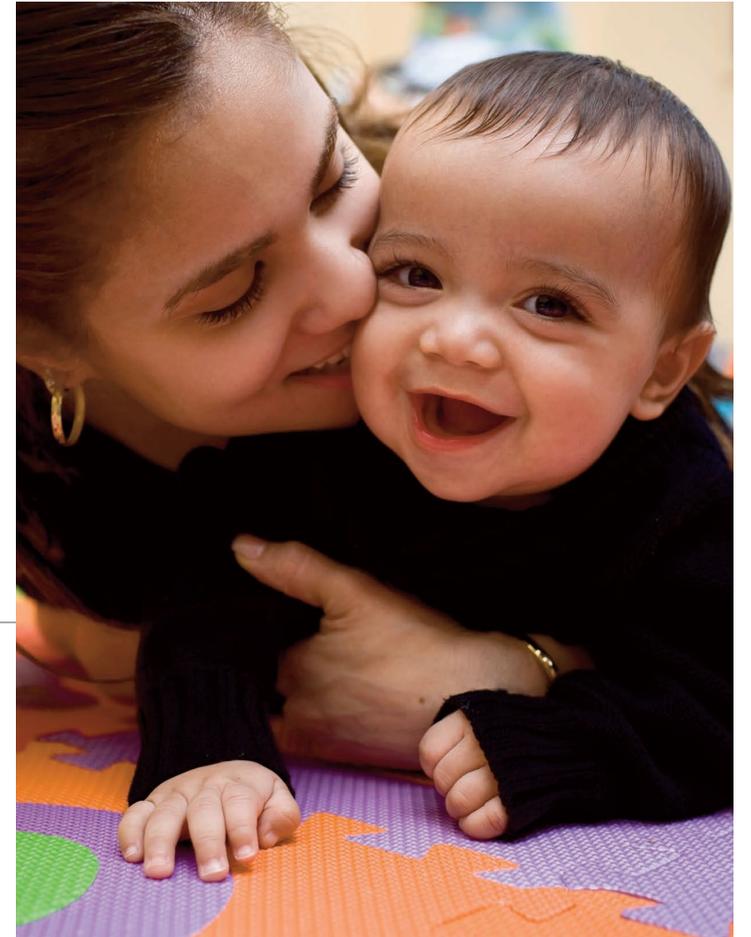
- **Are these findings consistent with your own experience? Are they reflective of the needs you experience within your own organization or community?**
- **How would you prioritize addressing these findings? Are there common themes that denote particular urgency?**
- **Are there initiatives that your agency has piloted that would effectively address these needs at scale?**

# Please Stay Engaged!

- Send additional feedback on today's presentation to PDG Birth-5 grant manager, Sam Saltz: [Sam.Saltz@dhs.ri.gov](mailto:Sam.Saltz@dhs.ri.gov)
- We will be scheduling a special working meeting in November to review the state's PDG Birth-5 Strategic Plan and hope you will join us!

# Infant/Toddler Educator Compensation Task Force

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In 2015, the RI Early Learning Council endorsed a recommendation of the Infant/Toddler Policy Steering committee to **develop and implement strategies to improve the compensation** of professionals who work with infants and toddlers.



In 2016, the RI Early Learning Council's strategic plan **prioritized the development of wage enhancement strategies** to improve recruitment and retention of effective early educators.



In 2019, the RI Family Home Visiting strategic plan identified the **need to improve home visiting staff recruitment, retention, and quality** as one of 3 top priorities.

# Workforce Compensation Is a Priority

# Rhode Island Infant/Toddler Educator Compensation Task Force

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- Convened in 2018 by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and RI Association for the Education of Young Children to develop recommendations to improve the compensation of infant/toddler professionals.
- Support from ZERO TO THREE's *Think Babies Campaign* and from the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center's *Moving the Needle on Compensation Initiative*.
- 28 participants including state administrators, child care, family home visiting, and Early Intervention providers, and other experts.
- Eight 4-hour meetings over 9 months with expert facilitation by Harriet Dichter, a national leader in developing early childhood systems.
- Five participants attended the National Summit on Early Childhood Compensation in April 2019
- Occasional meetings planned for 2019-2020 with return to Summit in April 2020.

The National  
Research Council

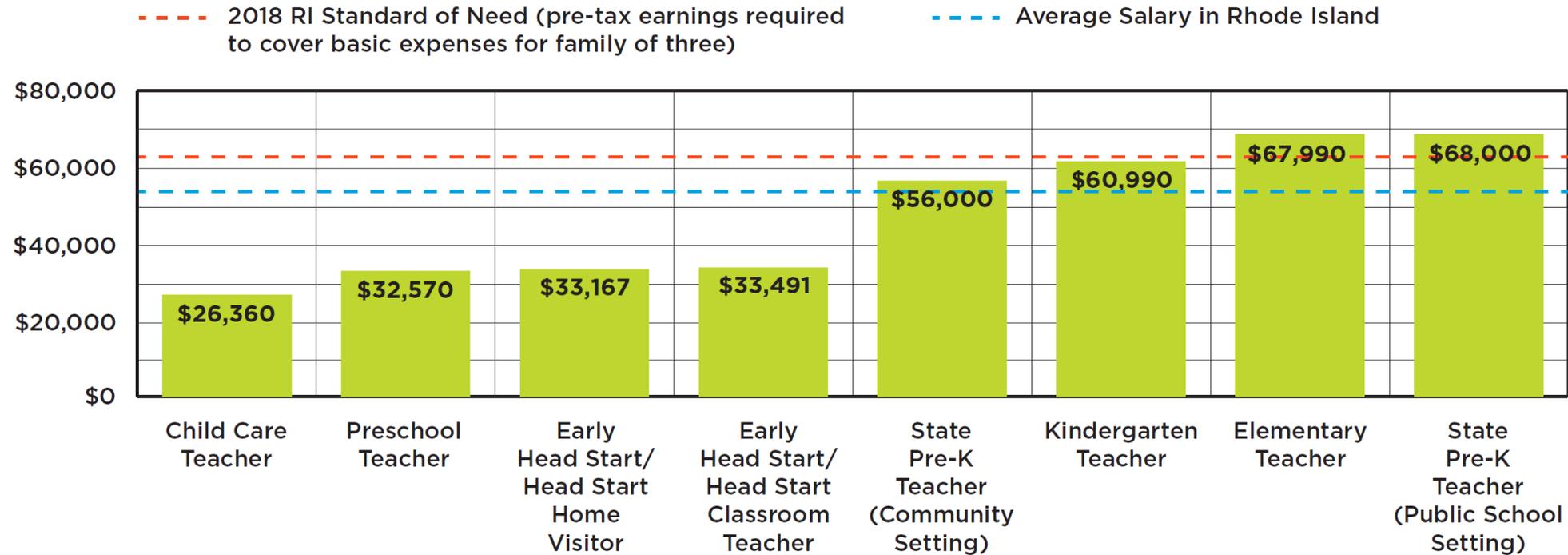
The Institute of  
Medicine &

The National  
Academy of Sciences

Find that:

- teaching young children, including babies, requires expert knowledge and skills equivalent to teaching older children in grades K-12.
- all educators of children birth through age eight should have a bachelor's degree with specialization in child development and early learning.
- a significant increase in public funding is needed to achieve this goal.

## EDUCATORS' AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARIES, RHODE ISLAND, 2017



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). May 2017 state occupational employment and wage estimates. Retrieved August 30, 2019, from [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov). Head Start Program Information Report - 2017 summary report - Rhode Island. Retrieved August 30, 2019, from <https://training01.hsesinfo.org>. Friedman-Krauss, A., et al. (2019). *The state of preschool 2018*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. *The 2018 Rhode Island standard of need*. (2018). Providence, RI: Economic Progress Institute.

In Rhode Island, salaries for Early Interventionists range from \$28,080 to \$46,000 per year, and most family home visiting professionals earn salaries between \$30,430 and \$46,000 per year.

# Infant/Toddler Professional Target Wage Scale Rhode Island, 2019

Level	Education	Target Hourly Wage Floor	Target Annual Salary Floor
1*	CDA credential or 3 ECE credits	\$16/hr	\$33,280
2	12 ECE credits	\$17/hr	\$35,360
3	Associate's degree	\$19/hr	\$39,520
4	Associate's degree and 24 ECE credits	\$20/hr	\$41,600
5	Bachelor's degree	\$21/hr	\$43,680
6**	Bachelor's degree and 24 ECE credits	\$23.50	\$48,880

\* \$1 more than Fight for \$15 minimum wage goal

\*\* Average starting salary for kindergarten teacher in RI in 2017 Note: The starting kindergarten teacher salary is for 40 weeks per year so this could be adjusted to cover a 52 week year (\$63,544). The median wage for a kindergarten teacher in Rhode Island in 2017 was \$66,640.

# Common Strategies States Use to Improve Wages for Early Childhood Professionals

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Contract with programs, provide adequate public funding, and specify minimum wages to be paid to educators.

Current strategy for Rhode Island State Pre-K.

In the U.S., we are one of four states that require State Pre-K programs to pay State Pre-K teachers a salary equal to the starting salary for a public school kindergarten teacher.



Fund an intermediary organization to pay wage supplements directly to educators who meet certain criteria.

20+ states implement the T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood model and provide small wage supplements

15 states implement a wage supplement strategy paying individuals who have specific education credentials an ongoing wage enhancement.



State offers a refundable tax credit to teachers who meet certain criteria.

2 states use this approach.



# Cross-Sector Recommendations

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- 1) Adopt and use a statewide target wage scale linked to educational levels for infant/toddler educators, Early Interventionists, and family home visitors.
- 2) Conduct a public education campaign designed to show the value of infant/toddler educators and the need for improved compensation.
- 3) Establish an Infant/Toddler Employer Group with the RI Department of Labor and Training.
- 4) Establish a working group to develop and introduce an Early Childhood Workforce Investment Act in 2020.

# Infant/Toddler Child Care Recommendations

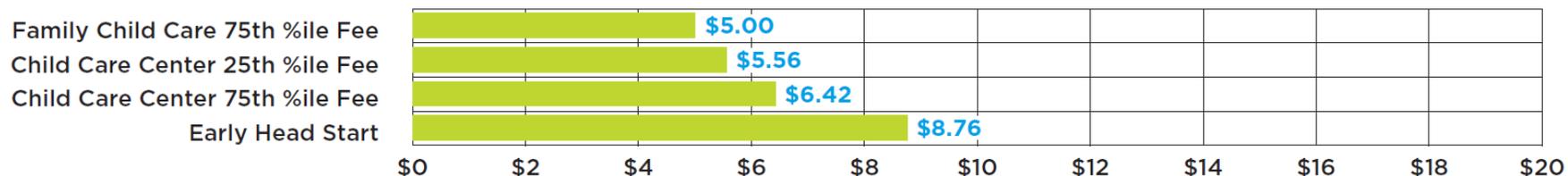
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- 1) Commit to meeting the federal rate guidelines for the Child Care Assistance Program through tiered quality rates -- at least \$7 million in new state/federal funding required.
  - 2) Fund an infant/toddler teacher wage supplement demonstration project (at least \$250K/year with 2 years recommended for demonstration project). Work with partners to conduct an evaluation and consider how to scale it up.
- ✓ Both proposals should be pursued simultaneously.
  - ✓ Even when CCAP rates meet the federal standards (paying 25<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile of market rate), revenue will not be adequate for programs to pay adequate wages to attract, retain, and develop effective educators.
  - ✓ Wage supplements will still be needed because programs cannot increase tuition for private pay families to reach levels needed to pay adequate salaries.

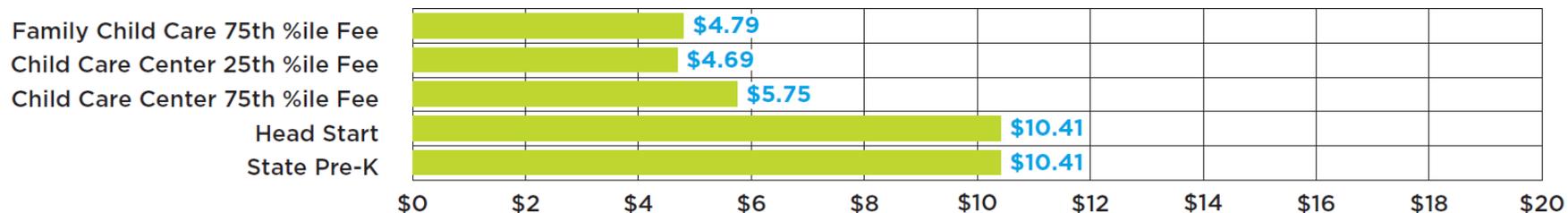


## HOURLY FUNDING PER CHILD ENROLLED, RHODE ISLAND

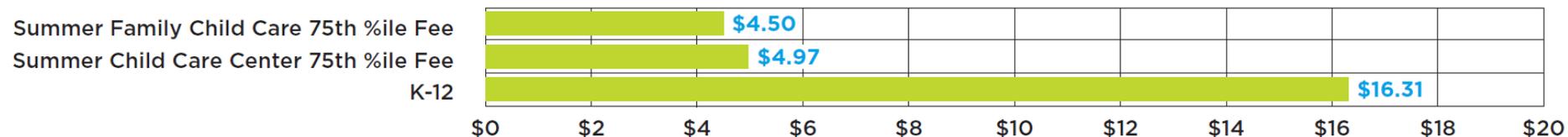
### INFANTS & TODDLERS (UNDER AGE 3)



### PRESCHOOLERS (AGES 3-5)



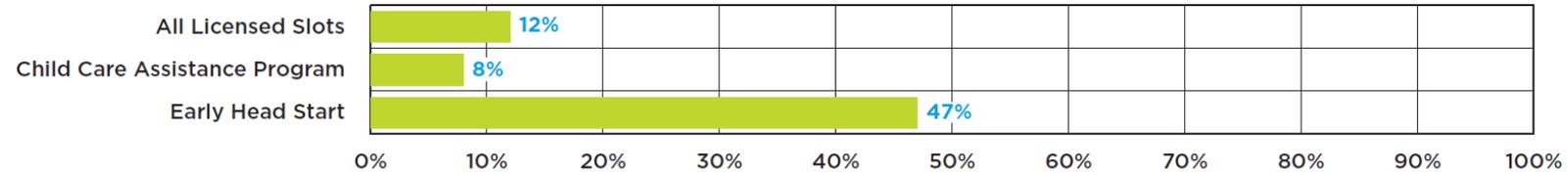
### SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN (AGES 6+)



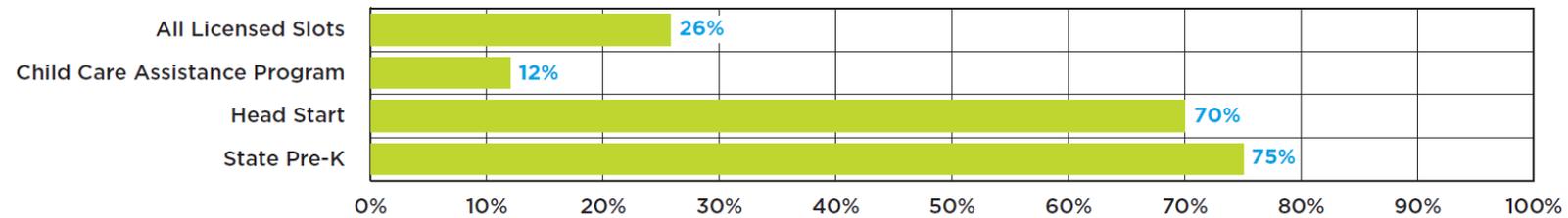
Sources: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations using 30-hour week for school-day programs (K-12, Early Head Start, Head Start, and State Pre-K) and 40-hour week for child care and summer programs with data on funding levels from Silver, B. E. (2018). *Statewide survey of child care rates in Rhode Island*. Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island. Friedman-Krauss, A. H., et al. (2019). *The state of preschool 2018: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research and Barnett, W. S. & Friedman-Kruass, A. H., et al. (2016). *State(s) of Head Start*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

## PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS (4 OR 5 STARS), RHODE ISLAND, 2018-2019

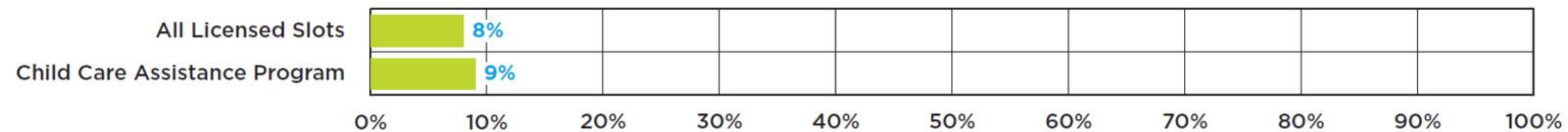
### INFANTS & TODDLERS (UNDER AGE 3)



### PRESCHOOLERS (AGES 3-5)



### SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN (AGES 6-12)



Sources: Licensed Slots: Early Care and Education Data System, January 2019, CCAP: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2018, Early Head Start and Head Start: Rhode Island Head Start programs, October 2018, and State Pre-K: Rhode Island Department of Education, October 2018. Note: licensed family child care slots were evenly divided across age groups, estimated at 33% infants and toddlers, 33% preschoolers, and 33% school-age children.

# Starting Right Infant/Toddler Teacher Education & Retention Awards



- Intermediary pays wage supplements (every 6 months) directly to educators of infants who meet specific educational criteria and demonstrate evidence of good classroom/program practices.
- Open statewide to infant educators who apply in partnership with their employer. Programs must serve CCAP children, including CCAP infants.
- Recipients to be chosen through a state-supervised lottery. Lottery can be stratified to ensure state goals are met.
- Recipients agree to remain in the same program, working with infants.
- Recipients receive individualized, on-site coaching to improve classroom/program practices (similar to Pre-K) and must achieve certain scores on a valid and reliable quality measurement tool.
- Evaluation will examine impact of wage supplements on teachers, programs, families, and children.
- Project can be scaled up gradually to serve more teachers and programs. It can also be expanded to teachers of toddlers and preschoolers.

# Early Intervention Recommendations

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- 1) Leverage existing billing opportunities to support Early Interventionists.
- 2) Establish a compensation-based incentive pool.
- 3) Review and update Early Intervention reimbursement rates.

# Family Home Visiting Recommendation

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- 1) Incorporate the Infant/Toddler Professional Target Wage Scale into family home visiting contracts.



# State Pre-K & Transition to K

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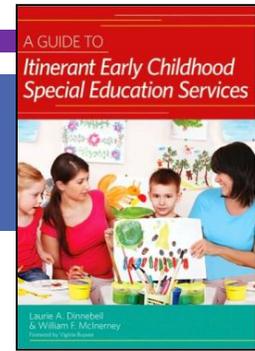
# WELCOME TO STATE PRE-K!

## Who's New:

- Genesis Center
  - Providence
- The Children's Workshop
  - Warren
- CHILD, Inc
  - Coventry



# IECSE SERVICE DELIVERY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD



- Research based *service delivery model* for providing special education services *within* the general EC environment
- *Alternative to pulling children out* of the classroom to separate spaces, classes, programs or schools
- Allows the IECSE teacher to provide *direct service embedded* into the typical classroom routines and activities
- Through planned and routine collaboration, allows *EC teachers to embed instruction* throughout the week
- Allows *services/supports to be provided seamlessly* within the child's natural environment (no unnecessary transitions for children)
- Benefits children with *all types and severity* of disability

**Central Falls:**

Central Falls School District, Capt. Hunt Early Learning Center (12 Kendall Street) – 5 classrooms

**Coventry**

CHILD, Inc. (23 Cady Street) – 2 classrooms

**Cranston:**

Comprehensive Community Action Program (848 Atwood Ave.) – 6 classrooms

Cadence Academy (546 Budlong Road) – 2 classrooms

Cranston Public Schools Arlington Elementary School (155 Princess Ave.) - 1 classroom

**East Providence:**

Martin Middle School (111 Brown Street) – 5 classrooms

Oldham School (60 Bart Drive) – 3 classrooms

(Note: Applications for the Martin and Oldham sites are available at the East Providence Administration Offices, 145 Taunton Ave.)

East Bay Community Action Program (70 Turner Ave.) – 1 classroom

**Johnston:**

Graniteville School (6 Collins Avenue) – 1 classroom

(Note: Applications for the Graniteville site are available at Graniteville School until June 17 and at the Johnston Central Office, 10 Memorial Dr., throughout the application period.)

**Newport:**

East Bay Community Action Program Head Start (8 John Chafee Blvd.) – 2 classrooms

**Pawtucket:**

Pawtucket School Department

(Note: Applications for the Fallon and Greene sites are available at the Pawtucket Central Office, 286 Main St.)

Fallon Memorial School (62 Lincoln Avenue) – 2 classrooms

Nathaniel Greene School (235 Smithfield Avenue) – 2 classrooms

Ready to Learn Providence @ Heritage Park YMCA Early Learning Center (333 Roosevelt Ave.) – 2 classrooms

Children's Friend and Service (13 Legion Drive) – 1 classroom

**Providence:**

Genesis Center – RI (620 Potters Ave) – 1 classroom

Ready to Learn Providence @ CCRI Liston Campus (1 Hilton St.) – 1 classroom

Beautiful Beginnings (700 Elmwood Ave.) – 2 classrooms

Children's Friend and Service (350 Point St.) – 3 classrooms

Children's Friend and Service (99 Berkshire St.) – 2 classrooms

Children's Friend and Service (550 Hartford Avenue) – 1 classroom

Imagine Preschool (520 Hope Street) – 3 classrooms

Meeting Street (1000 Eddy St.) – 3 classrooms

Smith Hill Early Childhood Learning Center (25 Danforth St.) – 5 classrooms

**Warren**

The Children's Workshop (410 Child Street) – 1 classroom

**Warwick:**

CHILD, Inc. (849 Centerville Rd) – 2 classrooms

CHILD, Inc. (160 Draper Ave.) – 3 classrooms

**West Warwick:**

Academy for Little Children (10 James P Murphy Industrial Highway) – 1 classroom

CHILD, Inc. (28 Payan St.) – 3 classrooms

**Woonsocket:**

Connecting for Children and Families (46 Hope St.) – 2 classrooms

Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Association

Karen Bouchard (204 Warwick St.) – 4 classrooms

Cass Park (350 Newland Avenue) – 1 classrooms

Bourdon Blvd - (2 Bourdon Blvd) - 1 classroom

Pothier Elementary School (420 Robinson Street) – 2 classrooms

YWCA Rhode Island (514 Blackstone Street), 1 Classroom

**North Providence:**

Tri-Town Community Action Agency (79 Waterman Avenue) – 1 classroom



# PRE-K TO K TRANSITION SERIES

- Cohort 1 – Newport, West Warwick and Woonsocket (2018-2019)
- Cohort 2 – Coventry, East Providence and North Providence (2019 -2020)
- We know that the successful coordination between Pre-K and Kindergarten helps lay the groundwork for a child’s positive school experience.
- By aligning standards, curricula, instruction and assessments between Pre-K and Kindergarten programs, children can experience a seamless pathway that is key to a child’s social adjustment and future educational success.
- Linking systems through new and intentional policies supports all elements of the education continuum. This is a continuous process that requires systematic collaboration and communication to develop a sustainable transition system.
- Cohort 1 outcomes –
  - Alignment of standards and expectations
  - Community engagement events
  - Pre-K and K teacher site visits
  - Child centered videos and books
  - Summer Ramp Up events for entering K students
  - Common transition forms with shared access to data
  - Community hosted registration events

# Announcements

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# Public Comment

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## **2019 Scheduled Meetings**

SPECIAL COUNCIL WORK GROUP MEETING ON PDG,

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., SAVE THE BAY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., SAVE THE BAY

[www.earlylearningri.org](http://www.earlylearningri.org)