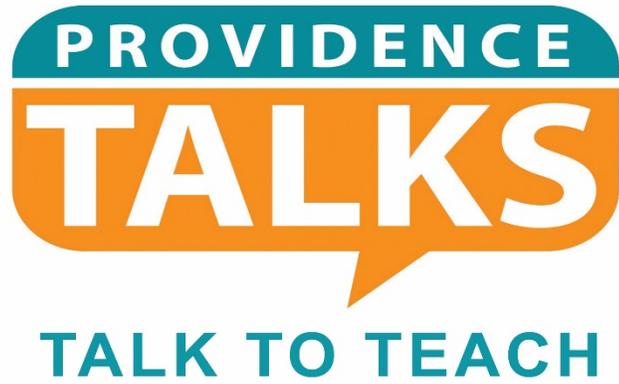


# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016  
Save the Bay Conference Center  
100 Save the Bay Drive  
Providence, RI

## **Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>
10:00-10:15	<b>Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Milestone Celebration: Universal Program Application</li></ul>	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Ken Wagner  Melissa Emidy
10:15 - 10:30	<b>Council Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council Comprehensive B-8 Plan</li><li>• Work Groups</li></ul>	Leanne Barrett
10:30 - 11:15	<b>State Policy Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pending Legislation re: Early Learning B-8</li><li>• Governor's Proposed FY17 Budget</li><li>• Options for Tiered Reimbursement for CCAP</li><li>• DCYF Child Care Licensing Regulations</li></ul>	Leanne Barrett Dacia Read Karen Beese Laura Kiesler
11:15-11:30	<b>Overview of Providence Talks</b>	Courtney Hawkins
11:30 - 11:40	<b>Overview of Campaign for Grade Level Reading</b>	Elizabeth Burke Bryant
11:40-11:50	<b>Updates/Announcements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Head Start School Readiness Conference</li><li>• Governor's Summit on Early Learning &amp; Development (May 16)</li></ul>	Robyn Giragosian Leanne Barrett
11:50-11:55	<b>Public Comment</b>	Public Participants
11:55-12:00	<b>Next Steps</b>  <b>Next Early Learning Council Meeting</b> June 22, 2016, 10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Save the Bay	Ken Wagner



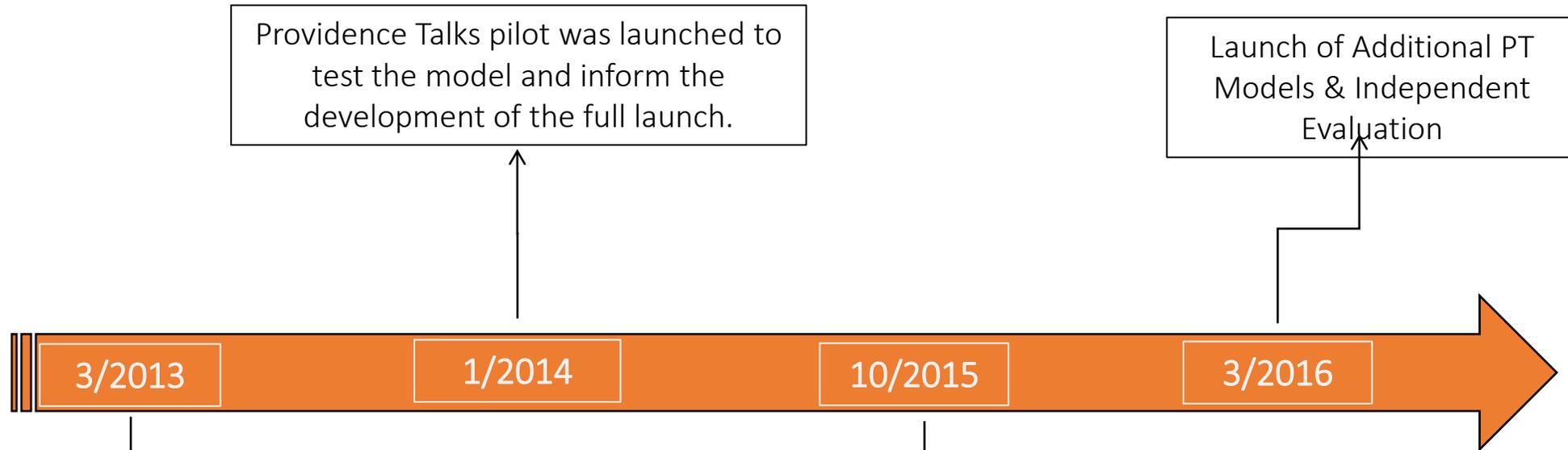
Rhode Island Early Learning Council  
March 23, 2016



# About Providence Talks: Video



# Timeline



Providence Talks pilot was launched to test the model and inform the development of the full launch.

Launch of Additional PT Models & Independent Evaluation

3/2013

1/2014

10/2015

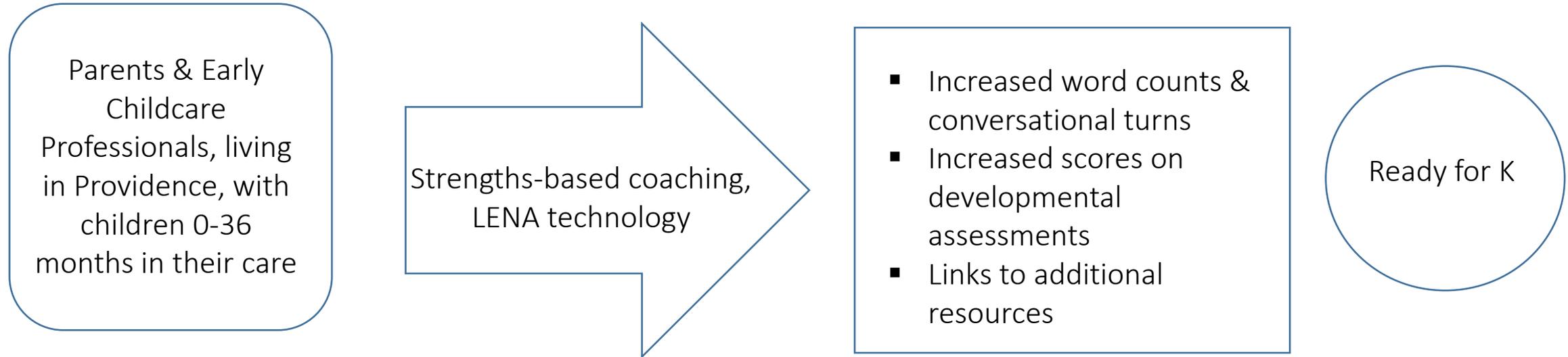
3/2016

The City of Providence was the grand pride winner of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' inaugural Mayors Challenge and received \$5 million to implement Providence Talks.

Expansion of the PT Home Visiting Model



# Theory of Change



## Additional Information:

- Program is open to Providence Families with Child 0-30 months who meet one risk factor on the RI DOH Universal Newborn Health Screening
- Curriculum is designed as a stand alone or supplement to the current portfolio of MEICHV Home Visiting & Early Head Start
- First Connections refers to PVD Talks, PVD Talks refer to First Connections along with other programs



# Models

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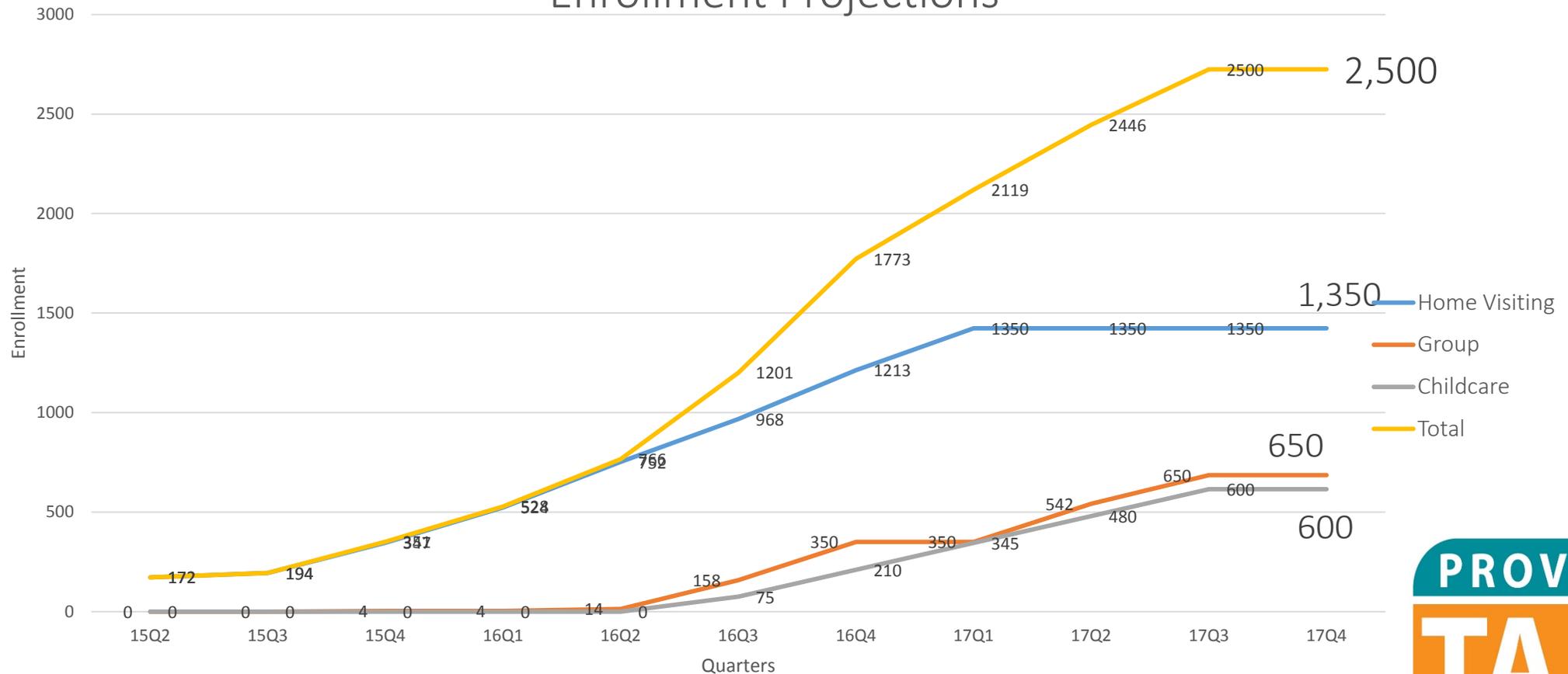
	HOME VISITING	GROUP	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
INTENSITY	13 SESSIONS 15 RECORDINGS	10 SESSIONS 12 RECORDINGS	8 SESSIONS 11 RECORDINGS
DURATION	8 MONTHS 10 BI-WEEKLY, 3 MONTHLY	10 WEEKS ALL WEEKLY	8 MONTHS 5 WEEKLY, 3 BIMONTHLY
SCALE	1350	650	300 EARLY LEARNING PROFESSIONALS; 600 CHILDREN

---



# Getting to Scale

## Enrollment Projections



# Curriculum & Assessment

## Core Components of the Coaching Model:

- Data Co-Discovery
- Skill Building
- Resource Sharing
- Goal Setting

- Coaching Curriculum designed in partnership with Meeting Street
- Providence Talks is designed to be a parent targeted intervention in which the child benefits as a consequence
- Aligned to RI Early Learning Development Standards across all domains of development
- Developmental Assessments: MacArthur-Bates CDI short form, ASQ-SE, LENA Language Development Snapshot



# LENA Technology

Digital Language Processors measure:

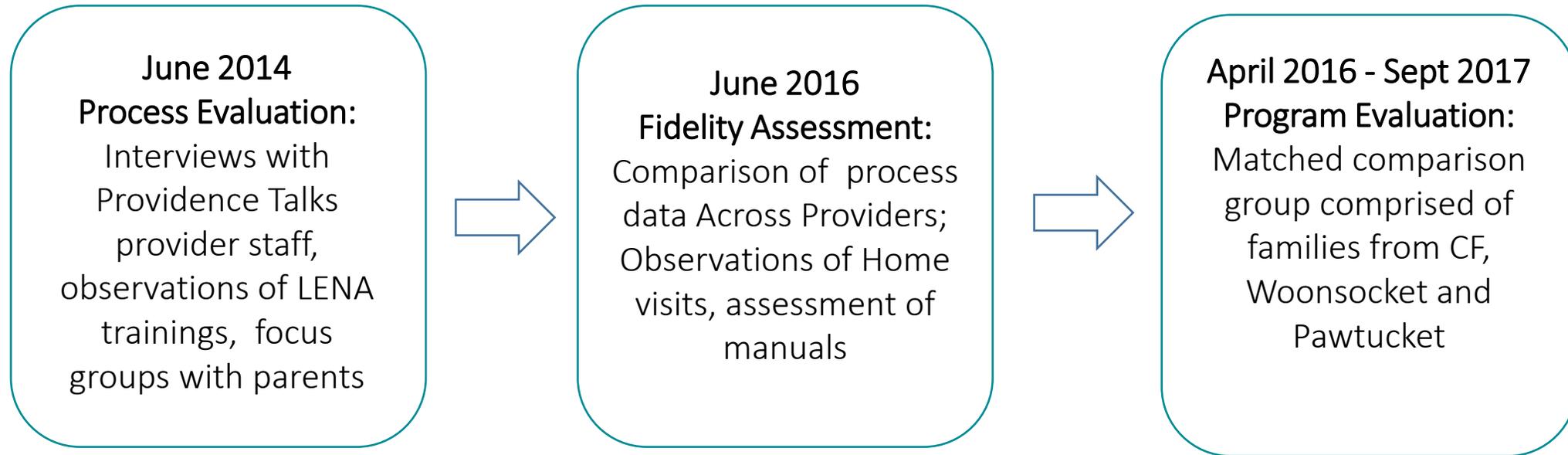
- Adult Word Counts
- Conversational Turn Counts
- TV Noise

Providence Talks Custom Reports:

- Track parent progress overtime
- Provide positive feedback for goal achievement



# Evaluation



Courtney Hawkins  
Executive Director, Providence Talks  
chawkins@providenceri.com  
(c) 347-702-1790



# RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

March 23, 2016

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

*Save the Bay*

**EARLY LEARNING RI**

# Meeting Agenda

2

## Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview

- Milestone Celebration – Universal Program Application

## Council Business

- Council Comprehensive Plan Birth – 8
- Work Groups

## State Policy Update

- Pending Legislation re: Early Learning B-8
- Governor's Proposed FY17 Budget
- Options for Tiered Reimbursement
- DCYF Child Care Licensing Regulations

## Providence Talks

## Campaign for Grade Level Reading

## Updates/Announcements

## Public Comment

## Next Steps

3

# Universal Program Application

4

# Council Business

# RI Early Learning Council 101

5

- Ensure that more children from birth through age 8, particularly from low-income and vulnerable families, participate in high-quality early learning programs to improve school readiness and school success
  - ▣ High-quality child care (centers and family child care)
  - ▣ Evidence-based family home visiting
  - ▣ Early Head Start and Head Start
  - ▣ Rhode Island State Pre-K
  - ▣ Early Intervention & Preschool Special Education
  - ▣ Public education K-3
- Facilitate development and sustainability of systems
- Improve coordination and collaboration

# RI Early Learning Council 101

6

- Attention to improving outcomes for young children (birth through 8) with High Needs
  - ▣ Low-income children (under 200% FPL)
  - ▣ Children with developmental delays and disabilities
  - ▣ Children with behavioral or mental health challenges
  - ▣ Children who have been victims of child abuse or neglect (including children in foster care)
  - ▣ Children in non-English speaking families
  - ▣ Children who have experienced homelessness

# RI Early Learning Council 101

7

- State Advisory Council for Early Care and Education as required in 2007 Head Start Act
- In Rhode Island, acts as an advisory body to the RI Children's Cabinet
- Uses data and research to develop system recommendations re: expanding access and participation, improving program quality, promoting the development of early childhood educators, and other key topics (e.g. data systems, KEA, etc.)

# Council Comprehensive Plan & Recommendations B-8

8

- 2015 – 2016 National Governors Association (NGA) support for development of state comprehensive B-8 Early Care and Education plan as an update to Council's 2012 Strategic Plan
- Draft recommended goals, 2020 targets, and strategies developed with Council subcommittees
- Draft plan shared at December 2015 Council meeting and through Council e-news
- Current work to connect draft strategies with work of Children's Cabinet and sort recommendations to make them more actionable
- Final recommendations presented for approval at June 2016 Council meeting

# Work Group Planning

9

- Charge and request for recommendations from Children's Cabinet to Council and to Work Groups
- Use data to track progress toward goals and adjust recommended strategies and targets as needed
  - Access
  - Quality
  - Workforce
  - Child Outcomes

10

# State Policy Update

# Pending Legislation: Early Learning B-8

11

Current proposed legislation under review by General Assembly:

- ❑ Rhode Island Family Home Visiting Act
- ❑ Child Care Assistance Eligibility Expansion to 200% FPL
- ❑ Child Care Assistance Transition Pilot Made Permanent
- ❑ Enhanced Quality Payments for CCAP
- ❑ Background Checks for Child Care Providers available through DCYF
- ❑ Recommendations re: access to early learning programs for children under age four
- ❑ Education funding formula adjustments for English Language Learners
- ❑ Screening and interventions for dyslexia
- ❑ 20 minutes of recess in elementary grades

# Governor's FY17 Budget: Early Learning B-8

12

## Expanded and Equitable Access

- **\$5.2M** in state funds to expand RI's mixed delivery Pre-K program to include 950 State Pre-K slots.
- **\$1.1M** to ensure statewide access to full-day Kindergarten by launching full-day Kindergarten programs in remaining districts.
- **Additional \$11.3M** in Child Care Assistance to cover case estimates for FY17 (\$7.9M in state funds).
- Legislation to require insurance coverage **parity for Early Intervention Services**.

## Quality and Evidence-Based Outcomes

- **\$7M** in categorical funding for English Language Learners and High-Cost Special Education students to address achievement disparities.
- **\$560K** to maintain 3.5 FTEs at RIDE focused on early learning quality, standards and systems.
- **\$1.1M** to support child care professional development and quality improvements.
- **\$1.1M** to expand Family Home-Visiting Programs.
- Sustained capacity at DCYF to ensure safety by **licensing** child care centers.

## System Improvements

- Exploration of **Tiered Reimbursement** upon adequate revenues.
- Children's Cabinet commitment to **data-driven system leadership**.

# Tiered Reimbursement

13

- High-quality child care costs more than low-quality child care. CCAP rates impact access to high-quality programs. CCAP rates impact wages for early educators.
- Federal recommendation that state rates meet 75<sup>th</sup> percentile to provide access to high-quality programs.
- Current CCAP rates are at (for family child care) or significantly below (for centers) the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 2015 Market Rate Survey.
- National experts recommend that rates for top tiers be set at or above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.

# Tiered Reimbursement

14

- The majority of states have enhanced child care reimbursement rates for higher quality programs
- Tiered Reimbursement is recommendation in 2012 Strategic Plan
- Senate resolution requesting DHS investigate options
- Governor supportive if funding can be identified
- Enhanced quality rates bill to implement possible first step introduced in General Assembly

# Tiered Reimbursement Options

15

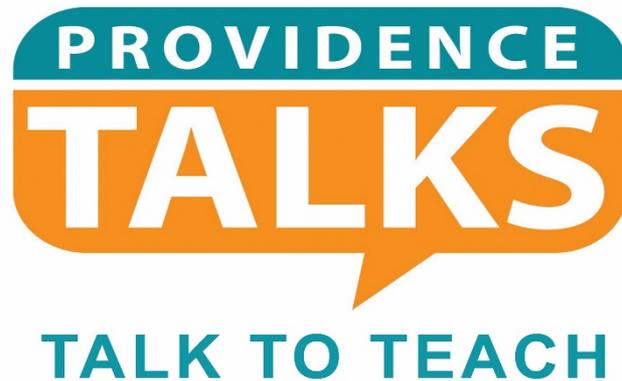
- Start with tiered rates for infants and toddlers and phase-in other age groups (preschoolers and school-age children)
- Start with highest quality programs (four and five stars) and phase in other programs (three, two, and one star)
- Start with base rates (one star) and phase-in enhanced rates

16

# Child Care Licensing

17

# Providence Talks



# Campaign for Grade Level Reading

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  
GRADE-LEVEL READING



**3** RD GRADE  
READING

≡ SUCCESS

MATTERS

# Updates/Announcements

19

- Head Start School Readiness Conference
- Governor's Summit on Early Learning and Development – morning of May 16

20

# Public Comment

# 2016 Council Calendar

21

- June 22, 2016 (NEW DATE)
- September 28, 2016
- December 14, 2016
  
- All Council meetings will be from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Save the Bay

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

### **AGENDA SUMMARY**

The Early Learning Council agenda addressed the following topics:

- Welcome
- Council Business
- State Policy Update
- Overview of Providence Talks
- Overview of Campaign for Grade Level Reading
- Updates/Announcements
- Public comment

### **KEY POINTS**

Key discussion points from the meeting are summarized below:

#### **WELCOME AND MILESTONES**

Elizabeth Burke Bryant welcomed all members of the Early Learning Council, including the members newly appointed by the governor. Membership now represents a broad array of organizations such as community partners, school districts, charter schools and a parent representative.

Commissioner Ken Wagner explained that the role of the Early Learning Council is to act in an advisory capacity to the reconvened Children's Cabinet. The Early Learning Council will provide the Children's Cabinet with an articulated perspective on integrated services for children from birth to age 8. The Children's Cabinet and the governor can then use the Early Learning Council's data and recommendations to inform policy decisions. Commissioner Wagner hopes groups for other ages served by the Children's Cabinet will follow the Early Learning Council's model and will develop similar processes to further inform the Children's Cabinet's work.

Melissa Emidy announced the Milestone Celebration. The Early Care and Education Data System, which is designed to centralize data across all programs, children and members of the workforce, released the DCYF license renewal application for centers earlier this month. The Program Search and Workforce Registry were released in 2015. Forty-seven programs have started a DCYF license renewal application and 12 programs have completed applications. Four hundred and sixty-five early childhood education workforce members have entered information into the Workforce Registry. The BrightStars application, DCYF renewal application for family child care providers and the RIDE CECE approval application will be released by the end of May. Providers can access resources and supports through the help desk link on the exceed.ri.gov website. Providers can open a help desk ticket for questions not answered through the help desk link and they will receive an email response.

#### **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

Leanne Barrett reviewed council business. (See slides.) The following comments and questions were made:

- The Early Learning Council is an advisory body that discusses many topics related to families, such as paid family leave and housing, but the Council's work is mostly focused on improving access to

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

high-quality early learning programs and improving coordination and collaboration among early learning and development programs.

- In most states, the early childhood systems are spread across multiple departments with diffuse leadership. Consistent with definition set forth in the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act, the role of the Early Learning Council is to improve communication across systems, particularly through the alignment and increased efficiency and effectiveness of early childhood systems, with a strong focus on improving outcomes for high needs children.
- Q: What data systems are in place to improve communication across systems?  
A: Under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, Rhode Island began creating an integrated and coordinated data system across key early learning program data systems so that the various data systems managed by different agencies can talk to each other. That system is in the process of being created now.
- The draft of the Early Learning Council's Comprehensive Plan was presented at the December 2015 Early Learning Council meeting. Feedback from that meeting was integrated into the plan and alignment between the Early Learning Council Comprehensive Plan and the Children's Cabinet's Strategic Plan is underway. Other revisions are also still in progress, with a goal of clarifying which strategies are active and which are exploratory. No major changes are expected. The final version of the Comprehensive Plan will be presented to the Early Learning Council at the June 22, 2016 meeting.
- The revised structure of the Early Learning Council's workgroups is still under development. One possibility is that the Children's Cabinet will give direction to the smaller workgroups by identifying issues the Children's Cabinet would like recommendations on and then requesting that the smaller workgroups investigate those issues more deeply. This is a work in progress.
- Comment: Having smaller workgroups is a great way to gain better knowledge and understanding of how the pieces of the early childhood education system are working together and how providers can align their work with that system. Having school districts at the table opens the possibility of aligning systems together that do not usually come together and of talking about issues like chronic absenteeism. Groups can share goals and work toward the same results.
- Comment: Child care is an important sector for both those that work in it and those that utilize it so that they can work in other sectors. Therefore, it is important for the state's Economic Development team and the Department of Labor and Training to invest in this sector.
- Smaller workgroups can include the expertise of people that are not appointed by the governor to the Early Learning Council.
- Comment: The Early Learning Council can inform teacher preparation programs so those programs can be responsive to the workforce's needs.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Commissioner Wagner will bring the workforce preparation issue to Commerce and the Department of Labor and Training since it makes sense for economic development.

## **STATE POLICY UPDATES**

### Pending Legislation re: Early Learning B-8

Elizabeth Burke Bryant reviewed pending legislation related to early learning birth to age 8. (See slide.)

Comments and questions included:

- Comment: The proposal for 20 minutes of recess should differentiate between unstructured play in an understaffed and unsafe environment and unstructured play with proper accommodations and scheduling. Play in an understaffed/unsafe environment is detrimental to children, but proper accommodations come with a cost.
- The recess bill does not say children have to go outside. It just specifies that there be 20 consecutive minutes of free play recess per day for children in grades K-5.
- Although Commissioner Wagner strongly believes that children should have access to unstructured play, a law regulating recess might restrict the ability of people to make necessary modifications.
- Q: Does the Early Learning Council lobby for specific pieces of legislation?  
A: Members of the Early Learning Council have different roles and responsibilities, some of which include advocacy and some of which do not. Because of this, the Co-Chairs of the Early Learning Council try to keep Council members abreast of current legislation so people can advocate if they wish, but the Early Learning Council itself does not officially advocate for or against any legislation. We do not want people to have to refuse membership on the Early Learning Council because of a political position taken by the Early Learning Council. Occasionally, the Early Learning Council will use its clout to support grant opportunities and similar issues.
- Comment: The Economic Progress Institute is involved in the legislation to make the Child Care Assistance Transition Pilot permanent. That bill allows CCAP families whose income increases to 225% FPL to continue to receive CCAP subsidies. The Child Care Assistance Eligibility Expansion would increase the eligibility for CCAP to 200% FPL.

### Governor's Proposed FY17 Budget

Dacia Read presented Gov. Raimondo's FY17 budget for early learning. (See slide). There were no additional comments or questions.

### Options for Tiered Reimbursement for CCAP

Leanne Barrett and Karen Beese discussed options for tiered reimbursement for CCAP programs. (See slides). Comments and questions included:

- If CCAP rates are low, it affects not only quality, but access as well because providers will not be able to afford to enroll CCAP children. Low rates also affect the ability of providers to offer living wages to qualified staff.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Child care rates are not set by costs, but by the market, i.e., what families in the community are able and willing to pay.
- Although CCAP rates were originally set to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market rate, they became detached from the market rate and have been frozen at an amount that is increasingly out of date. CCAP rates are currently at about the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market rate for family child care homes and at about the 12<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> percentile of the market rate for centers.
- There are currently 37 states with tiered reimbursement.
- KIDS COUNT introduced an enhanced quality rates bill to start a formal conversation about tiered reimbursement. The bill will create an opportunity for hearings where parents and providers can talk about the importance of adequately funding the child care system and setting rates that allow programs to deliver high quality care. The KIDS COUNT bill focuses on infant toddler providers.
- DHS's tiered reimbursement proposal has two components: increasing the CCAP base rates to at least the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market rate for all programs and adding enhanced rates above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile at a set percentage increase. Because these changes are financially significant for the state, DHS recommends starting with infant toddler rates and then expanding to rates for preschoolers and then school age children. The rationale for starting with infant toddler rates is that families struggle to find infant toddler care, the quality of available infant toddler care is low, and infant toddler care is more costly for programs.
- Comment: Within the BrightStars construct, we should challenge ourselves to think more about outcomes. When ratings have a higher impact on outcomes and it is not just about inputs, the legislature will be more supportive. The BrightStars validation study that is underway will help determine child outcome metrics.
- Q: Do other states with tiered reimbursement systems require any of that additional money to go to staffing? The workforce's knowledge and skills is a large component of high quality programs and outcomes for children and is also one of the largest costs for programs.  
A: There are some states with a QRIS that include metrics about staff compensation, but we are not aware of it being part of the tiered reimbursement system of any state. The Workforce Registry can collect data on program compensation. The Wage\$ model is a way to improve salaries for 1 and 2 star programs, where highly qualified staff members can help increase a program's quality level.

### **DCYF Child Care Licensing Regulations**

Laura Kiesler, Veronica Davis and Stephanie Renzi explained the process for providing feedback on the DCYF Child Care Licensing Regulations. Key comments and questions included:

- Following the federal recommendation to review human service regulations every 3-5 years, DCYF will first revise the child care licensing regulations for centers and will then revise the regulations for family child care providers.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Before DCYF makes any revisions, there will be multiple opportunities across the state to provide multi-level feedback, starting with listening tours, which give child care providers the opportunity to provide their feedback and ideas for the regulations.
- The listening tours are starting today. An online survey will be available in 2 weeks.
- Q: How were the listening tours publicized?  
A: They were publicized through many mediums including through DCYF communications to every licensed child care provider in the state, through the Child Care Providers Association and BrightStars, and through inclusion in the Early Learning Council's eNews.
- Q: Are there any proposed changes DCYF is already considering?  
A: No, DCYF will not make any decisions about changes until all the feedback is collected.
- After DCYF compiles and organizes the feedback from child care providers, it will collect feedback from other stakeholders.
- Q: What is the timeline for collecting feedback?  
A: The timeline is aggressive. After the listening tours are completed next week, DCYF will have a better idea of the timeline.
- Q: Have you considered other means of collecting feedback?  
A: Yes, there will be an online survey after the listening tours. The listening tours will be conducted in a round table format with set questions that will ensure comprehensive responses.

## **OVERVIEW OF PROVIDENCE TALKS**

Courtney Hawkins presented an overview of Providence Talks. (See slides.) Key comments and questions included:

- Commissioner Wagner explained that family based work focusing on supporting high quality interactions with children is important to fill the gap in access to high-quality early learning programs (like State Pre-K)
- The foundation of Providence Talks is on improving the language development environment of children at an age in brain development when it is most important and building up the ability of parents to achieve that.
- Providence Talks is among the first in a sequence of programs and services that children need in order to be on track in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Providence was the only US grand prize winner of the Bloomberg Philanthropies/ Mayors Challenge, a grant to fund cities across the world to solve big social problems.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Through July, the pilot of Providence Talks served 170 families. After the conclusion of the pilot, the program is being expanded to operate at scale. This week, the 500<sup>th</sup> family was enrolled. Children must be 0-30 months at enrollment and the program lasts up to 8 months.
- The LENA technology used in the Providence Talks program includes a digital language processor that is worn by the child and records all the noise a child hears, including the number of adult words, the number of conversation turns and the amount of TV noise. Participating families receive reports on their progress over the course of the 8 months. The devices have no playback capacity; once a report is generated the recordings are erased. The reports provide positive feedback for goal achievement.
- Since 1 model does not fit everybody's needs, there are 3 models of Providence Talks:
  - Home Visiting (original)
    - There are 13 sessions of home visiting- 10 weekly and 3 monthly follow up meetings. There are 15 recordings which result in an intense amount of data for families. The program lasts 8 months.
    - The goal for this model is to reach 1350 families by 2017.
    - The curriculum was written in partnership with Meeting Street School and is aligned with the RI Early Learning and Development Standards across all domains of development.
  - Group (e.g. churches, libraries)
    - This is a peer supported, shorter model where families are coached as a group. There are 12 recordings and 10 weekly sessions.
    - The goal for this model is to reach 650 families by 2017.
    - This uses the same curriculum as the home visiting model.
  - Professional Development for Child Care Workers
    - The professional development model works with early childhood providers that are caring for children in the 0-36 month age range to help them implement the same skills that Providence Talks is teaching families. The providers are also taught the assessment tools that Providence Talks staff members are using with families in the field. These assessment tools will help programs move up in quality.
    - In this model, the child care providers will wear the device, not the children, so they can receive an immediate assessment of the number of words and exchanges that they are delivering in their setting.
    - This program will give child care providers training and support to start talking to parents about what they are observing in a child's language development.
    - The curriculum for the professional development model was written in partnership with Ready to Learn Providence and Ready to Learn Providence is facilitating the sessions, which are starting Monday night working with 10 home based child care providers.
    - There will be 8 sessions over 8 months and 11 recordings. There will be 5 weekly sessions and 3 bimonthly sessions.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

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Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- The goal for this model is to reach 300 early learning professionals and 600 children by 2017.
- By December 2017, Providence Talks estimates enrolling 2500 families, which is 20% of eligible families in Providence.
- The Providence Talks coaching model includes:
  - Data Co-Discovery
    - Families and staff review reports and discuss accomplishments and progress.
  - Skill Building
    - Providence Talks staff will introduce techniques to increase language and interaction at home, e.g. using descriptive words to narrate the day. Skills taught are tangible and are easy for families to grasp.
  - Resource Sharing
    - Families receive a new book at each session.
  - Goal Setting
    - Families are encouraged to look at the data and to implement new skills.
- Providence Talks is committed to gathering data to assess how the program is doing and to share that data to inform the field. A process evaluation was conducted in June 2014 and a fidelity assessment will be conducted in June 2016.
- From April 2016-September 2017, a program evaluation will be conducted in partnership with Brown. This will be a matched comparison evaluation where families living in Woonsocket, Central Falls and Pawtucket who have children in the target range will do recordings over an 8 month period with no intervention. Families will be paid for their participation, but they will have no knowledge of Providence Talks. This evaluation will result in good baseline data about what is happening in families in urban communities. At the end of the program, families will receive a data report, which will be reviewed with them. The goal of this evaluation is to make comparisons between Providence Talks families and other families without intervention so a strong case can be made to expand Providence Talks to other cities.
- The curriculum for Providence Talks is on their website, [www.providencetalks.org](http://www.providencetalks.org), under the resources tab.
- Commissioner Wagner suggested that the Providence Talks curriculum could assist professional development initiatives in creating a heightened awareness of the impact of all interactions and word counts.
- Q: What is the cost of the LENA technology?  
A: The recorder is \$300 and the technology for creating the reports is an additional cost.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

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Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Q: What skill building is being taught?  
A: Providence Talks teaches specifically how to go from one exchange to multiple exchanges. Families will examine how a child's vocabulary is advancing in quality and sophistication and will not just focus on the number of words.
- Q: How does Providence Talks measure its success for kindergarten readiness when there is a significant time gap between 36 months and kindergarten entry?  
A: Providence Talks is part of a sequence of events leading to kindergarten. Children will be tracked into kindergarten to see if Providence Talks made a difference and Providence Talks offers transition planning at the end of the program to make sure children get into other programs, e.g., Head Start. Providence Talks will track participation in those other programs too.
- There are currently 400 children enrolled in Providence Talks and fewer than 10% are at risk of dropping out of the program. Approximately 45% of families come into the program with adequate language levels and approximately 55% of families are at the level of 7000 words a day. We need to connect those 55% of families to other programs to better help those children.

## **OVERVIEW OF CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE LEVEL READING**

Elizabeth Burke Bryant presented an overview of the Campaign for Grade Level Reading. (See slides.)

The following key comments and questions were made:

- The United Way of RI is taking the lead in partnering with KIDS COUNT for the RI Campaign for Grade Level Reading, which builds on the work being done in Providence, Newport and Central Falls.
- Our goal is to have the whole state focus on reading proficiency by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as a key predictor of high school graduation. This work begins prenatally and continues throughout early childhood and the early elementary grades.
- Key strategies to increase reading proficiency include:
  - Reducing early chronic absences
    - If they are not in seats, then children cannot learn.
    - There are huge discrepancies in absenteeism between low and high income children.
  - Preventing summer slide
    - Children fall behind in summer months when they do not have access to enriching experiences.
  - Increasing school readiness across the domains of early childhood
    - This readiness includes addressing mental health issues, accessing high quality programs and participating in regular comprehensive screenings to catch delays in learning and development well before kindergarten entry.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Focusing on the role of parents
- Each of us can link our own work to the broader message of this campaign and find a way to benefit from a coordinated approach.
- Nationally, 80% of low income children are not reading proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and in RI, according to the PARCC, 37% of children are meeting expectations in reading at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Comment: Newport is working with child care providers and families to emphasize the importance of vocabulary. The district is empowering teachers to implement strategies and ways of teaching literacy that will quicken the pace of getting children on target. Newport's summer reading program is increasing in time and frequency of dosage and the whole community is involved with increasing family awareness around chronic absenteeism. Newport's goal is to have more children reading at grade level so more funds can be used to enhance and enrich schools instead of being diverted for remedial purposes.

## **UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### Head Start School Readiness Conference

Robyn Giragosian, the Early Learning Council's parent representative, discussed the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Head Start School Readiness Conference to be held on May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Providence Marriott. There will be welcoming remarks from Commissioner Ken Wagner, a RIELDS workshop from RIDE on the 60 month benchmark, a presenter on the social emotional piece of transition, a district round table with parents and staff, and a session on Fun Family Activities. A light breakfast and a buffet lunch will be served and vendors will be available. The event is free to families, but Head Start agencies absorb the cost so Robyn is seeking grants to expand the conference to non-Head Start parents. Fifteen non-Head Start parents have been invited this year.

### Governor's Summit on Early Learning and Development (May 16)

At the Summit, Gov. Raimondo will present her overarching goal of ensuring all children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade and discuss emerging strategies to improve resources and coordination of the birth through age 8 system of programs that support early learning and development. Dr. Bette Hyde, the former director of Washington State's combined Department on Early Care and Learning will be the keynote speaker. We also plan to have interactive opportunities to identify strengths and priorities. Everyone on the Council will receive an invitation for the Summit.

### RI Association of Infant Mental Health Workshop

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the RI Association of Infant Mental Health will conduct a technical assistance workshop as a follow-up to last year's conference promoting collaboration on infant mental health competencies and endorsement. There will be a full open conference in May 2017.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Comments and questions from the public included:

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

## **Meeting Summary**

- Background checks should be expanded to include the national database.
- Q: Are there incentives in the tiered reimbursement proposals for increasing access for children with special health care needs that prevent them from accessing traditional child care options?  
A: Those children are always on the radar, but we need to coordinate eligibility to better understand where those children are and what services are currently available to them.