

Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee

January 5, 2023

4 – 6:00 pm

AGENDA

Charge to the Committee:

Make recommendations to the City Council on the potential design and implementation of a locally governed program to ensure universal and equitable access to early care and education for all Saint Paul children

1. Greeting (5 minutes)
2. Guest Speaker
Hannah Quinn, Coordinator, Great Start for All Children Task Force (15 minutes)
Q & A (10 minutes)
3. Next Phase of Committee Collaborative Work (15 minutes)
 - (1) Overview
 - (2) Guiding Principles for Recommendations
 - *Recommendations should focus on work that the city can and should actually do now*
 - *Recommendations should be supported by relevant community data and information discussed at the committee*
 - *Recommendations should make the best use of all existing resources toward a program proposal that is centered on kids/families/workers*
 - *Recommendations shouldn't duplicate work already being done*
 - *Other suggestions?*
4. Small Group Discussion - Program Design and Workforce Development (60 minutes)
5. Whole Group Share-Out (15 minutes)
 - (1) Major Takeaways
 - (2) Topic Areas for More Discussion
6. Next Steps and Close

Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee
Group Norms

- Dedicate time to check in on norms at each meeting.
- Start on time/End on Time.
- “Step Up” & “Step Back”.
- We use “thumbs up” for group acknowledgment/to move on as a group.
- Have the conversation/ask questions inside this space.
- Be willing to ask questions.
- Respectfully disagree.
- Avoid acronyms or other uncommon terms - be willing to explain what those things are to the group.
- Gain acknowledgement before speaking - take turns when speaking or asking questions.
- Hold questions for guest speakers/panelists until they are finished speaking or presenting - write your questions down.

**Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee:
Meeting Notes
4-6 pm**

January 5, 2023

Attendees: Eric Haugee, Halla Henderson, Mitra Jalali, Megan Jekot, Hwa Jeong Kim, Kristenza Nelson, Rebecca Noecker, Kera Peterson, Tracy Roscoe, Maria Scot, Stephanie Thomas, Quentin Wathum-Ocama, Khalid Omar, Zang Vang-Lee, Nelsie Yang

1. Greeting

2. Great Start Task Force

Hannah Quinn Coordinator, Great Start for All Children Task Force (slides attached)

Goal is to ensure all children and educators have equal access and benefits regardless of race, income, setting, etc. Implementation taking no more than six years beginning in 2025.

Q&A

Compensation, cost of living based on regional standards or state standards?

- i. Simplification of inclusion calls for state cost of living standards, however they would like to use regional standards

What happens after report is submitted?

- ii. Task force dissolves after report is submitted, however they are working on ways to continue their work forward. Funding/fiscal implementations are not the work of the task force. They have discussed fiscal recommendations to show legislators.

Did the task force focus on a certain age group?

- iii. 0-5 is the general age range being focused on by this task force. 7% is the affordability threshold being set, based on 2014 standard set by state departments.

Follow up: How did the task force come to the 0-5 age range? What are the benefits?

- iv. Task force was always including 0-5 age range in order to help all families that need it. Importance of 0-3 age range established by brain science, research, etc.

How will they assess programs that are providing care and education? What metric for assessing quality?

- v. Need for a consistent and equitable standard. One recommendation is to explore the option of including all licensed providers in the Parent Care rating

system. Significant time not spent on looking at specific models for rating, this would be focused on more during the 2025-2031 implementation phase.

What happens when families are in programs that are more expensive than “average” in the community?

- vi. Middle line between family affordability and provider affordability. Idea is to be able to run various types of cost modeling based on various factors (age of children, quality level, etc.). Determining what the true cost of care would be to the providers, then up to providers to set costs based on the standard level of no more than 7%.

Is this an income-based program or open to all kids?

- vii. Inclusive to all kids but families that make over \$240,000 may not receive aid from the program because they can afford that 7% level. All families are eligible for the program but the level of benefits is dependent on income. Potential administrative piece that prevents providers from over-charging for their care.

3. Discussion of next Phase of Committee collaborative work

- Co-Chair outlined the Guiding Principles for Recommendations
 - Recommendations should focus on work that the city can and should actually do now
 - Recommendations should be supported by relevant community data and information discussed at the committee
 - Recommendations should make the best use of all existing resources toward a program proposal that is centered on kids/families/workers
 - Recommendations shouldn't duplicate work already being done

4. Small Group Discussions on Program Design and Workforce Development

a. The Committee discussed the following issues in small groups

- To be eligible to receive St. Paul early learning funding, families must be Saint Paul residents.
- Families should be eligible to receive St. Paul early learning funding without regard to immigration status.
- Families should be able to choose a location for care and education that best meets their needs, including St. Paul Public Schools, Head Start, licensed child care centers and licensed family child care.
- Saint Paul early learning funding should cover whatever scheduling options families need, including year-round, full-day care.
- Providers receiving Saint Paul early learning funding must be licensed or meet basic safety standards.

- Over time, providers should be expected to meet a quality standard in order to continue receiving St. Paul early learning funding. Providers should be given a choice of which CCAP-accepted standard to meet.
- Providers receiving funding must be located in St. Paul.
- St. Paul early learning funding should fully cover the cost of care for families at 185% poverty and below. Families who earn more should be subsidized on a sliding scale.
- If funding is not available for all children, the program should prioritize families with the most need. To determine need, a point system would be used.
 - Under 100% of Federal Poverty Level - 1 pt
 - Homeless – 1pt
 - Foster care – 1 pt
 - Mental health diagnosis – 1pt
 - Parent under 21 – 1pt
 - Multilingual family – 1pt
- The program should include a finder tool and staff to help families find the right program and apply for aid.
- What is considered competitive pay and benefits for child care workers, and what actions can we take to ensure this is met for all workers in our program?
- How do we ensure our program expands employment rather than takes away from the current childcare workforce?
- What type of support should Saint Paul fund for providers in a Saint Paul early learning system? (Check all that apply.)
 - Professional development
 - Career pathways through education, experience, demonstrated competencies, and compensation
 - Make progress toward compensation and benefit standards at parity with kindergarten teachers
 - Bolster scholarship programs for early educators
 - Reward degree completion with wage supplements

5. Large Group Share-Out

Major takeaways/questions/further discussion points

- Saint Paul residents/centers outside of Saint Paul, how would this impact funding, other benefits
- Standards, which CCAP standards to meet, what method of standardization would we use? How would this impact what providers are eligible? Should

group/program come up with their own standards or find one single method to use?

- Arguments made for Parent Aware
- Family choice, providing information on different standardization methods
- Providing pathways or programs for centers to reach whatever quality standard they feel most fits their center

- Ensuring support or help in deciding and achieving which accreditation body best fits them

- Family choice and center choice

- Considering legal non-licensed and if it is useful to fund them/help them to reach licensure, potentially requirements for these providers

- Sliding scale, federal poverty rate, federal living wage vs. Saint Paul living wage

- Argument made for sliding scale, off ramp for families, not taking away all benefits if families increase wages or income level

- Quality educators and efforts made to increase wages, livable wage for Early Childhood educators, payscale similar to K-12?

- Look at what K-12 teachers pay and benefits are, consider what Early Childhood providers education/qualifications are in comparison to pay, don't devalue the pay of K-12 but also compensate Early Childhood providers fairly

- So many factors to be conscious of, consider what we need to focus on now to get to the point of a recommendation, not reinventing the wheel, utilizing things that are already in effect but also making it user-friendly for providers to want to be a part of

- Consider efforts the state is making

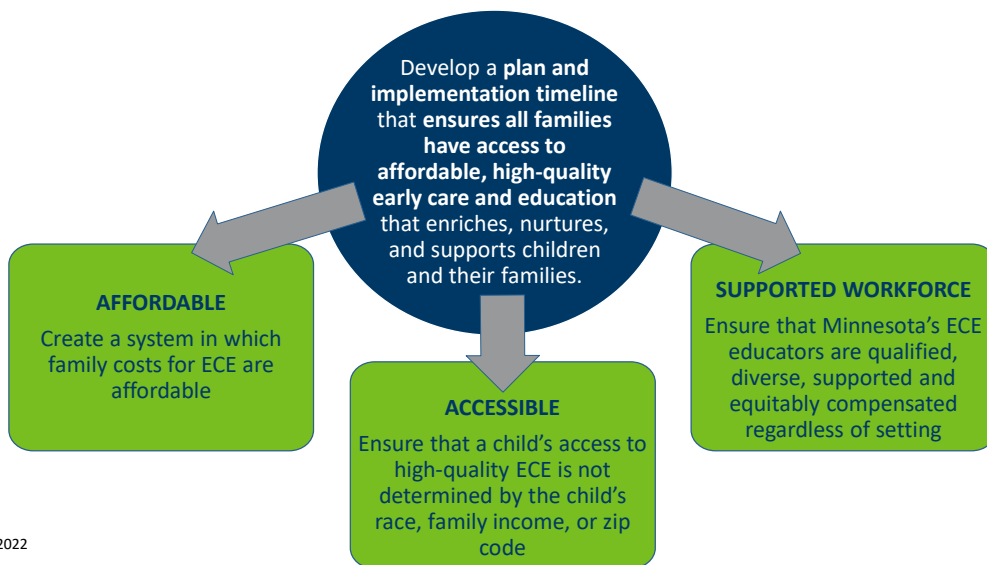
The meeting was adjourned.



Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

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Task Force Charge & Goals



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Our Deliverables

Develop a **plan** and **implementation timeline** that ensures all families have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that enriches, nurtures, and supports children and their families.

The implementation timeline must phase in the plan over a period of no more than six years, beginning in **July 2025** and finishing no later than **July 2031**.

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Voting Members

- **Pat Ives**, Director of Licensed Child Care Center (Greater MN)
- **Krystal Shatek**, Director of Licensed Child Care Center (7 County Metropolitan Area)
- **Sandy Simar**, Early Childhood Educator, Head Start or Community Education Program
- **Johanna Villa**, Early Childhood Educator, Licensed Child Care Center
- **Meghan Caine**, Early Childhood Educator, Public School-based Early Childhood Program
- **Kathleen Church**, Family Child Care Program License Holder (Greater MN)
- **Luciana Carballo**, Family Child Care Program License Holder (7 County Metropolitan Area)
- **Representative Liz Bolden**, MN House
- **Representative Peggy Bennett**, MN House
- **Senator Karin Housley**, MN Senate
- **Senator Melissa Wiklund**, MN Senate
- **Jayne Whiteford**, Parent Children Under 5 (Greater MN; public program)
- **Shakira Bradshaw**, Parent Children Under 5 (Metro; private program)
- **Brook LaFloe**, Representative of a Federally Recognized Tribe with Expertise in Early Care and Education
- **Jennifer Moses**, Children's Cabinet Representative

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Non-Voting Members

- **Nancy Hafner**, Faculty Representative, Early Childhood Education
- **Barb Fabre**, Indigenous Visioning Representative
- **Lydia Boerboom**, Kids Count on Us Representative
- **Suzanne Pearl**, Nationally Recognized Expert in Early Care and Education Financing
- **Summer Bursch**, Minnesota Association of Child Care Professionals (MACCP)
- **Amy Walstien**, Minnesota Business Partnership
- **Laurny Schothorst**, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
- **Clare Sanford**, Minnesota Child Care Association
- **Cyndi Cunningham**, MN Child Care Provider Information Network
- **Michelle Trelsted**, MN Community Education Association
- **Tonia Villegas**, Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators
- **Kraig Gratke**, Minnesota Head Start Association
- **Missy Okeson**, Minnesota Initiative Foundations
- **Deb Fitzpatrick**, Statewide Advocacy Organization
- **Ann McCully**, Child Care Aware of MN
- **Debbie Hewitt**, Department of Education
- **Oriane Casale**, Department of Employment and Economic Development
- **Karen Fogg**, Department of Health
- **Bharti Wahi**, Department of Human Services
- **Siv Dobrovolny**, Department of Labor and Industry
- **Laurena Schlottach-Ratcliff**, Department of Management and Budget
- **Janell Bentz**, Department of Revenue

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Task Force Co-Chairs



Shakira Bradshaw
Parent of Children under 5



Jenny Moses
Children's Cabinet



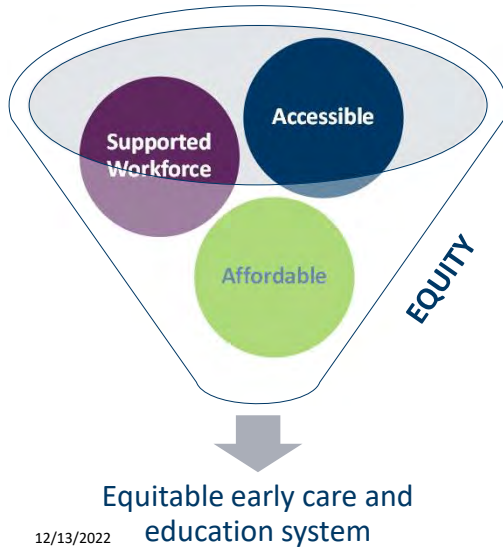
Sandy Simar
Early Educator

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Process and Outcomes must be Centered on Equity



The Task Force identified the following historically disenfranchised groups as those who have not experienced equity in the ECE system and so, are most in need of prioritization:

- Racial and ethnic minorities, including People of Color and Indigenous people (POCI)
- Members of the LGBTQIA community
- Those experiencing multi-generational or ongoing trauma
- Those at risk of or with developmental delays or disabilities
- Those from homes where English is not the primary language
- Those experiencing homelessness or living in low-income households

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Essential Commitments

- The Task Force formally acknowledged its **commitment to the Mixed Delivery System**, acknowledging that all types of providers and settings provide value to families and children, and family preference must be honored and respected by design.
- The Task Force also formally acknowledged that **care and education cannot be separated**: Every single experience a child has is a learning opportunity, making care and education inextricably intertwined. All settings within the mixed delivery system offer safety, supervision, and education to the children they serve. Learning in early childhood is based in play, interactions, and experience, and care and education cannot be separated.

Mixed Delivery System: System of programming and services for children from birth through age 5 delivered through a variety of providers, settings, and funding structures. These settings include licensed child care centers, licensed family child care providers, family friend and neighbor care, school-based pre-kindergarten, and Head Start programs. Minnesota and other states use a mixed-delivery system in order to offer choices to families that best meet the needs and preferences of families, children, and communities. All types of providers provide benefit and value to the families they serve.

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Task Force & Working Group Structure

Endorses charge, guiding principles, deliverables, and timeline

Establishes, advises, and sets priorities for Working Groups

Reviews, adjusts, and formally approves recommendations for incorporation into a Task Force Report

Task Force

Working Groups

Take direction from Task Force

Research, analyze, and bring proposals to Task Force

- Regarding key topics/questions posed by the Task Force
- Stemming from the Charge
- In alignment with guiding principles

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Task Force Progress: Major Recommendations

1. Create a family benefits system that provides affordable access to early care and education for all families, with no family paying more than 7% of their income for services.

- Dramatically expand affordability of early care and education programs through a new "Great Start Minnesota Program". This new program would blend existing federal and state funding streams, along with additional funding needed to fully support the program. Under the proposed program, all families are eligible, and no family will pay more than 7% of their income for early care and education.
- Structure the new benefits program to promote access to quality services by removing financial barriers and other disincentives that could discourage families from choosing quality care.
- Promote family choice among provider and program types that best meet family needs.
- Leading up to this new system, the Task Force presents recommendations to make meaningful, near-term improvements to existing programs to improve affordability and access for families now.

2. Provide early childhood programs with adequate funding to deliver effective services for children and families.

- Fairly fund providers for the services they offer. Minnesota should pay programs based on the true costs of services rather than "market rates," which are used today for benefits programs, and only reflect the price families are able to pay.
- Provide funding in a stable, transparent, consistent, and equitable manner, with simple administrative processes.
 - Programs should be paid in advance of services and not on a reimbursement basis and paid based on enrollment rather than attendance.
 - By improving funding levels and funding processes, programs will not only stabilize and survive, but thrive and be able to increase capacity to serve children and families well.

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Task Force Progress: Major Recommendations, continued

3. Pay the early care and education workforce a living wage.

- Poor compensation and lack of support and acknowledgement leads to persistent workforce shortages and the inability to recruit new employees. Overcoming this foundational challenge requires investing in wage growth to attract, retain, and support Minnesota’s early care and education workforce.
- Invest in early care and education programs to enable them to dramatically increase compensation for early educators and other members of the workforce by paying at least a living wage.
- Implement a framework that increases early care and education wages aligned with experience and education and provides benefits including paid time off and health insurance to appropriately reflect the value the early care and education workforce provides to children, families, communities, and the state.

4. Invest in increasing access to effective programs.

- To enable the early care and education workforce to make the Task Force’s vision of effectiveness a reality for all children and families, Minnesota needs:
 - consistent and equitable standards and growth-oriented accountability systems;
 - a healthy business environment and clear, consistently-applied regulations; and
 - a cohesive, high functioning infrastructure and ecosystem.

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Task Force Timeline



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Thank you!



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