

## ECU 2020 Subcommittee Update Highlights

### 1. Parent Engagement, Support and Education Subcommittee

*The focus of this committee shall be ensuring access to family-centered, culturally appropriate parenting education and family support services for all parents of young children in the state, to promote the ability of parents and families to nurture and support the healthy development of their children.*

#### Update

The family engagement subcommittee has been working for the last two years on creating a system that would engage all the service providers that work with families and children. This system would allow the different providers to evaluate how they are currently engaging families and also will provide resources and standards that would reflect best practices to work with families. We also want to ensure that the family voice is represented.

The focus of the Parent Engagement, Support and Education Subcommittee is to ensure access to family-centered, culturally appropriate parenting education and family support services for all parents of young children in the state to promote parents and families' ability to nurture and support the healthy development of their children.

The Parent Engagement, Support, and Education subcommittee defines family engagement as; a collaboration between families, communities, and service providers equally invested in positive outcomes for children and families.

The Parent Engagement, Support, and Education subcommittee has adopted the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems. The subcommittee believes that utilizing this framework is the best way to incorporate family voices into an early childhood setting.

**The following are some of the areas we are still working on and discussing as we move forward.**

- Adopting a Family Engagement Framework
  - We are ready to adopt a working framework that has research behind it and speak to the state of Utah. Below are some of the points for further discussion
  - Clarify the purpose of adopting the framework
- Determine as a committee what the ultimate long-term goals are for family engagement throughout Utah (e.g., all providers (pre and post-service) trained in family engagement practices? Outreach efforts? Resources to empower and support caregiver knowledge of early learning? Etc.?)
- Identify ALL potential consumers/users of the framework.
  - Before we move forward, we want to identify who would be part of this effort.
- Identify readiness and feasibility for the use of a family engagement framework within the identified consumers.
- Identify other systems and policy needs.
- Seek Commission Support/Recommendations to the Commission Seek official support from the commission for the recommended family engagement framework
  - Seek support for funding for statewide training and supports on family engagement
- Ensure experts in family engagement are involved in key state-level early childhood committees, so that premises in family engagement are embedded throughout.

- Discuss the steps and needs for the implementation phase.

## **2. Data and Research Subcommittee**

*The focus of this committee shall be developing an annual needs assessment that evaluates the needs of children birth through five and their families; assists in obtaining relevant data and research to support members of ECU; evaluates research in the early childhood development field to support the Policy Subcommittee in the development of evidence-based strategies that address the needs of Utah's early childhood population; and identifies data gaps regionally, racially and economically in Utah's early childhood system.*

### **Update**

2019: The ECU Data and Research Subcommittee guided the development of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS), the Early Childhood Utah Community Assessment Tool (CAT) and integrated Ages and Stages Questionnaire data and reports. Guidance included advising on the content of these integrated data tools, followed by piloting the actual data tools/reports and providing quality improvement feedback.

2020: The ECU Data and Research Subcommittee supported initial, high-level statewide ASQ data analysis performed by Weber State University, Dr.'s Wei Qui and Sheila Anderson. Additionally, the subcommittee supports Weber State's current ASQ data analysis regarding one program's screening efforts with young children that have received more than one screen.

The ECU Data and Research Subcommittee closely examined four ECIDS Standard Reports and three ASQ Standard Reports descriptive language and functionality and made quality improvement recommendations.

This subcommittee assessed and addressed data reporting dynamics related to ECIDS and ASQ having historical child level zip code data.

This subcommittee developed and piloted the [ECIDS DataAccess and Use](#) process and forms and made quality improvement recommendations.

Finally, the ECU Data and Research Subcommittee endorsed a funding request to the Early Childhood Governor's Commission for the sustainability and enhancement of the three data products found on the [UDOH Early Childhood Integrated Data Portal](#).

## **3. Promoting Health and Access to Medical Homes Subcommittee**

*The focus of this committee shall be ensuring access to health and dental health care services and support for medical homes for all young children in the state.*

### **Update**

2019: Our committee was determined to provide a more extensive and systemic approach to developmental screenings, recognizing that many entities are screening but unsure of when, where, how and what specific follow-up to the families was being executed. We initially developed a survey that was sent out through several state and county committees to collect this information. We determined from the first round that we needed further information and decided to execute a follow-up survey. From this information, our committee began the

discussions as to what would be a comprehensive screening system that all entities connected to young children could use and provide a more universal approach throughout the state of screening, developmental promotion, detection and linkage to resources. These discussions led to a three-prong approach:

- 1) adaption of a standard screener across multi-sector entities and universal approach
- 2) central repository of screenings that all providers could access with parental permission for the purpose of reducing duplication and increasing multi-sector alignment and support to parents
- 3) standardized training and a central location to retain information on those trained and certification of all early childhood providers.

2020: Due to the limitations of COVID we have met with several experts within the state to review what is currently in place, what could be built upon to strengthen these systems and prepare a recommendation for the executive committee, and then prepare our recommendation to the Governor's Early Childhood Commission. We have learned much about the multiple data systems within the state and the capability of using existing systems to build a central repository of screenings that would be available to early childhood providers. We have explored a central option for all early childhood providers to access training and maintain a record of their training and certifications. In September 2020, we sought the Governor's Early Childhood Commission's approval for the recommendation of the usage of the ASQ-3 and ASQ: SE-2 and received approval. We are in the process of cementing a strong proposal to the commission for the other two goals of our committee.

#### **4. Social Emotional and Mental Health Subcommittee**

*The focus of this committee shall be ensuring access to services to promote healthy social-emotional development in all young children in the state, and services to address the needs of children who have or are at risk for developing mental health concerns or challenging behaviors.*

#### **Update**

The year 2020 was a memorable for many of us bringing many challenges, increased anxiety and uncertainty, but also opportunities. Towards the beginning of 2020 the social emotional (SE) subcommittee took time to review and revise the goals and objectives in the SE yearly work plan. With all of the trauma and stress from the COVID-19 pandemic many early childhood providers across all sectors were asking for increased support around trauma and social emotional issues. The SE subcommittee discussed the need of including trauma informed approaches into the work plan to ensure the adults caring for Utah's children had the resources they need. In partnership with many of the agencies serving on ECU, supports were identified and disseminated to early childhood providers. It is important to note, discussions around trauma screeners are continuing with the focus on balancing requirements for providers with the needs and benefit of additional screeners.

Another notable success from the year is the collaboration across mental health, early childhood, and child care organizations to bring in infant and early childhood mental health specific training. The training will include 3 cohorts: the first designed specifically for Master's level mental health clinicians, the second designed for child care specific providers, and the third designed for any other early childhood provider. The goal of the training and making it available for anyone in the state is to build a strong foundation for providers around infant and early childhood mental health. At this time, two state offices have committed funds for 5 years to continue with the training and expanding availability for early childhood providers in Utah.

The last update from the collaboration happening with the SE subcommittee is the adoption and expansion of an infant and early childhood mental health competencies and endorsement system for the state of Utah. The adoption and development of this system has been accomplished in partnership with Utah's Association for Infant Mental Health (UAIMH) and made Utah the 30<sup>th</sup> state in the Nation to adopt the system. In spite of all the challenges and barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic, UAIMH has been able to hold their first of three competency and endorsement system meetings with the National Alliance. Through public and private partnerships UAIMH has also been able to fund the full 0-5 system and now has full access and is working towards implementation. As part of that process a leadership cohort is being identified and will begin the process of endorsement next month.

The work of the SE subcommittee continues with many exciting projects to continue to expand the work around social emotional development and building partnerships with both public and private agencies to create a cohesive system. Social emotional development is vital for children to learn and grow and navigate their world. The SE subcommittee is committed to building awareness around early childhood mental health and building the capacity of all adults who care for children. This work is only possible through the collaboration, and the SE subcommittee is looking forward to continued partnerships to help continue to move the work forward.

## **5. Early Care and Education Subcommittee**

*The focus of this committee shall be ensuring access to quality programs and services that support the early learning and development of all young children in the state. This includes both in-home and out-of-home services.*

### **Update**

The subcommittee distributed an early childhood educator survey to early learning stakeholders on February 18, 2020. A Spanish version was sent on March 3, 2020. The survey closed on March 6, 2020 with 1,699 participants completing the survey. The subcommittee analyzed the survey responses at the March 16, 2020 subcommittee meeting. Common themes that emerged as areas of need are the following: early childhood degrees and skills; better compensation; support for demanding jobs; and less regulation. Recommendations included creating a task force or a professional development board to align certification, licensure, compensation, competencies, and assessments of early childhood educators with national standards. The survey results and recommendations were shared at the Governor's Commission meeting on July 9, 2020 as a proposal for a statewide professional development standardized training. Natalie presented on the findings of the subcommittee and proposed that the Governor's Commission Create a task force or professional development board comprised of

decision-makers in higher education, child care regulation, public education, and early educator professionals to address ongoing alignment of certification, licensure, compensation, competencies, and assessment of early educators that aligns with national standards.

Governor's Early Childhood Commission. Natalie left ECU in July 2020 and ECU spent time finding and nominating ECU Advisory council voting members who were willing to co-chair the Early Care and Education subcommittee. In November of 2020 Katherine Bark( Utah Department of Health ) and Teresa Judd ( Utah State Board of Education ) were voted in as the co-chairs for Early Care and Education. They have spent time with Natalie Brush reviewing her work and time with the subcommittee members and are looking forward to picking up where Natalie left off.