

# ***What About Quality Matters for Children's School Readiness***

*Institute on the Intersection of  
Research, Policy, and Practice*

July 31, 2007

Washington, DC



NCCIC

# Introductions

## Moderator:

- Lori Connors-Tadros, early learning coordinator for the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)

## Presenters:

- Joanne Roberts, Wellesley College
- Wendy Wagner Robeson, Wellesley College
- Rosemarie Allen, CO Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrator
- Gladys Wilson, FL CCDF Administrator

# Goals for the Session

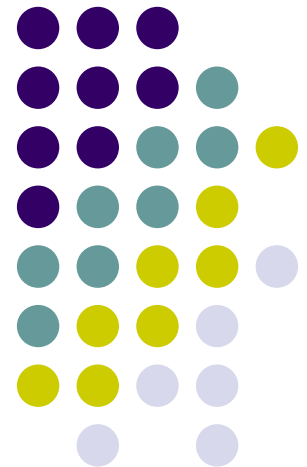
- Share new research findings impacting policy related to *Good Start, Grow Smart* priorities and school readiness
- Learn about CO and FL efforts to improve quality in all settings in order to support school readiness
- Discuss critical policy and research questions

# Massachusetts Early Care and Education and School Readiness Study

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Wendy Wagner Robeson, Ed.D.

Joanne Roberts, Ph.D.





# Research Questions

- What is the relation between preschool program quality and children's academic school readiness?
- What characteristics of preschool classrooms make a difference in school readiness outcomes for children?

# Samples



- Sample 1 (low-income sample): N=165
  - 41 different centers throughout Massachusetts
  - All enrolled in centers serving low-income children
- Sample 2 (longitudinal sample): N=213
  - 150 different child care centers throughout Massachusetts
  - Children and their families have been followed since they were 12-months
  - Study retention rate of over 85% over 4 years!

# Methods



- Observed pre-K classrooms in the fall
- Assessed children's school readiness in spring
- Surveyed parents during pre-K year
- Surveyed pre-K teachers



# Measuring Classroom Quality

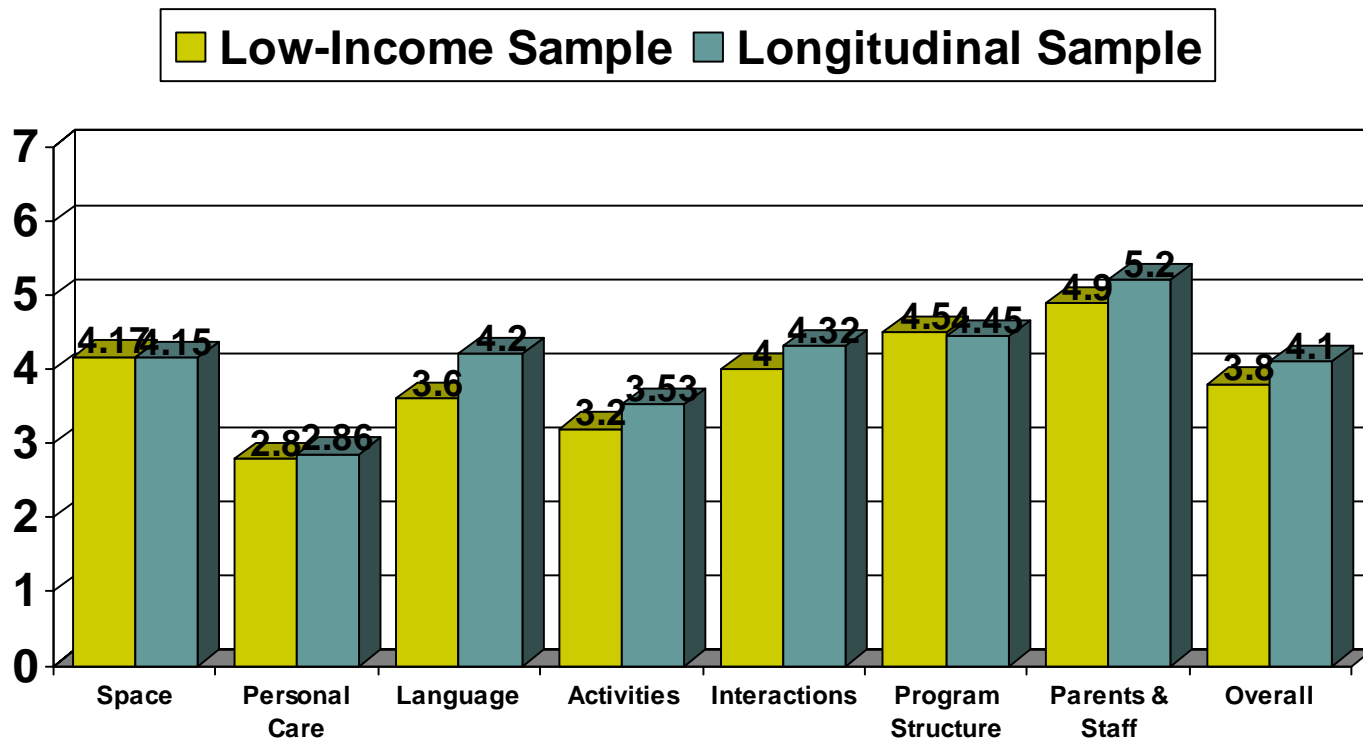
- Teacher education and experience
- Child-Caregiver Relationship Scale
- Classroom observations
  - ECERS-R
  - ECERS-E
  - SELA
  - Arnett Caregiver Rating Scale



# Quality: ECERS-R



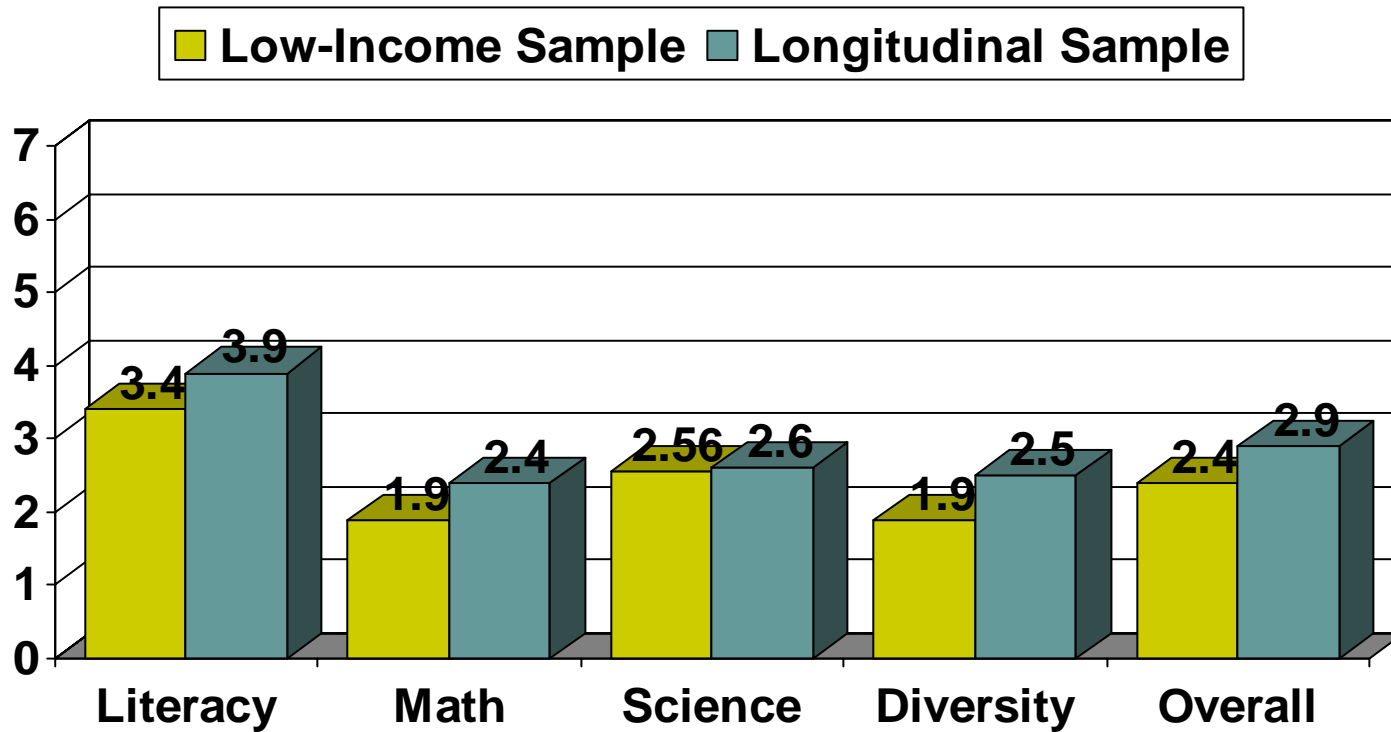
## Average Score on ECERS-R



# Quality: ECERS-E



## Average Score on ECERS-E



# Quality: Latent variable measurement models



- Four indicators of quality that were modeled as latent variables
  - Literacy and Math
  - Curriculum
  - Safety and Health
  - Caregiver/Child Relationships

# Factor Loadings for Classroom Quality



<b>Literacy &amp; Math</b>	SELA	.87***
	ECERS-E Literacy	.87***
	ECERS-E Math	.63***
	ECERS-E Science	.53***
	ECERS-R Language and Reasoning	.89***
<b>Curriculum</b>	ECERS-R Activities	.83***
	ECERS-R Program Structure	.65***
<b>Safety and Health</b>	ECERS-R Space & Furnishings	.71***
	ECERS-R Routine Care	.70***
<b>Caregiver-Child Relationship</b>	Arnett-Positive Relationships	.95***
	Arnett-Detachment (reversed)	.84***
<b>Overall Quality of Classroom</b>	<b>Literacy and Math</b>	<b>.96***</b>
	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>.90***</b>
	<b>Safety and Health</b>	<b>.82***</b>
	<b>Caregiver-Child Relationships</b>	<b>.76***</b>

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

# Definition of School Readiness



- 5 Domains
  - Health and physical development
  - Social and emotional development
  - Approaches to learning
  - Language development and communication
  - Cognition and general knowledge

# Measuring School Readiness



- Child Assessments

- BMI
- PPVT-III
- EVT
- Bracken
- PALS
- Woodcock-Johnson III:  
applied problems

- Teacher Survey

- ASQ-SE
- SSRS
- Children's Approaches to Learning

- Family Survey

- ASQ-SR
- SSRS

# Academic Readiness: Latent variable measurement models



- Latent variable comprised of standard scores from
  - PPVT-III
  - Bracken
  - EVT
  - Woodcock-Johnson III: applied problems
  - PALS

# Academic Readiness Factor Loadings



PPVT-III	.78***
Bracken	.84***
EVT	.74***
Woodcock Johnson- Applied Problems	.84***
PALS	.73***

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001





# Additional Variables

- Child age
- Child gender
- Child race and ethnicity
- Poverty status
- Maternal depression
- Home literacy environment

# Home literacy environment: Latent variable measurement models



	Factor loadings
Number of books in the home	.75 **
Frequency of reading	.70 **
Play/teaching interactions	.61 **

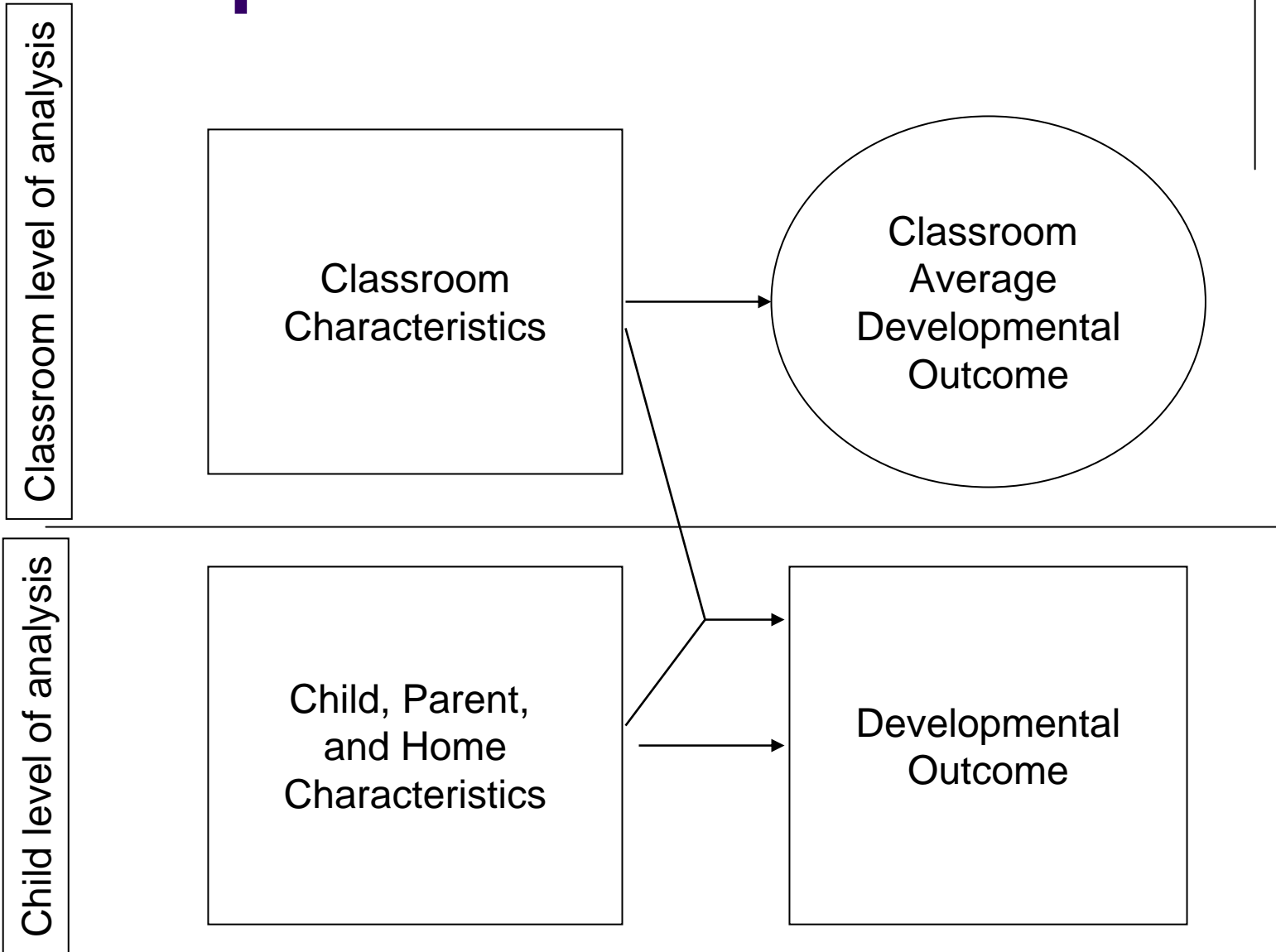


# Classroom Level of Analysis



Child Level of Analysis

# Conceptual Model



# Multilevel model of academic readiness



Child level		Beta
	Age	-.09
	Gender (1=Male)	.06
	Race (1=White)	-.03
	Ethnicity (1=Latino)	.02
	Maternal Depression	-.02
	Poverty	-.09
	<b>Home literacy environment</b>	<b>.72***</b>
R squared		.65
Classroom-Level		
	<b>Quality of Classroom</b>	<b>.43*</b>
R squared		.18

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

# Multilevel model of academic readiness



Quality Indicator	Beta	R squared
<b>Literacy and Math</b>	<b>0.46 **</b>	<b>.22</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	0.22	.10
<b>Safety and Health</b>	.24	.05
<b>Caregiver-child Relationship</b>	<b>.40 *</b>	<b>.16</b>

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

# Predicting academic readiness



- Variability in academic readiness is partially a function of the home literacy environment.
- Overall quality of the classroom significantly predicted academic readiness.
- The literacy and math environment of the classrooms and the caregiver-child relationships were the strongest quality predictors of academic readiness.



# Policy implications

- Quality of PreK experiences predicts children's academic readiness.
- Literacy and math environments, as well as caregiver-child relationships, are important components of PreKs.
- Quality of PreK is largely minimal. Science, math and literacy are areas that need particular attention.





# Policy implications

- The home literacy environment is critical. Parents need to be encouraged to read to their children.
- Child assessments were highly related, forming a latent variable. Assessments of school readiness may be able to be streamlined to reduce burden on teachers and students.

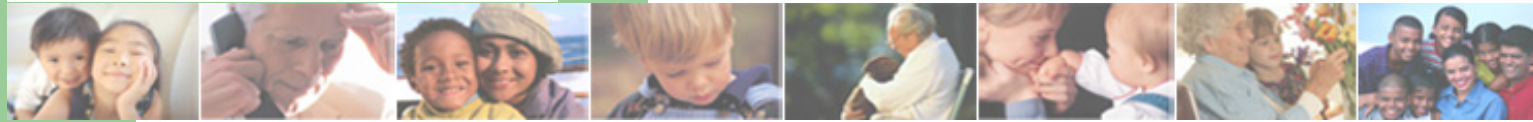
# The Colorado School Readiness Quality Improvement Program

Office of Children,  
Youth and Family  
Services

**It's  
ALWAYS  
about the kids**

Mission:

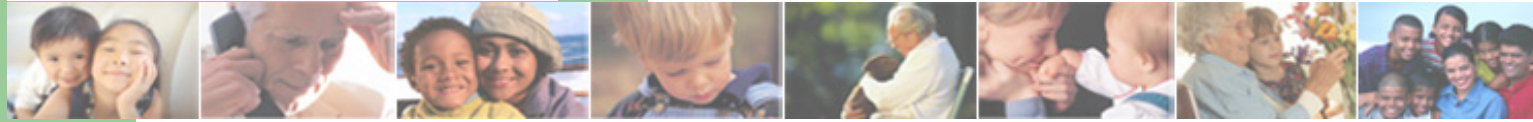
We Improve people's lives by  
supporting quality Child Care



## Division of Child Care's Vision

- We meet the need for quality child care by partnering with families, providers, and local communities.

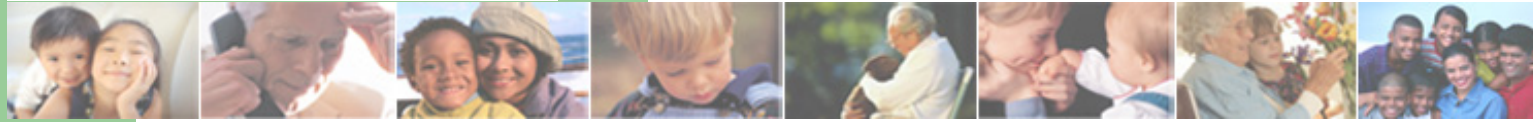




## Division of Child Care's Goal

- The overall goal of the Division of Child Care is to promote quality, accessible and affordable child care services for Colorado families.

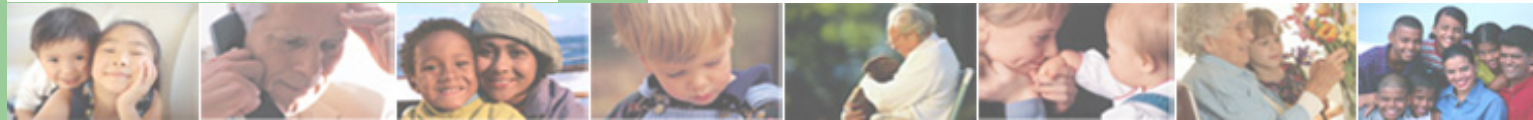




# Division of Child Care

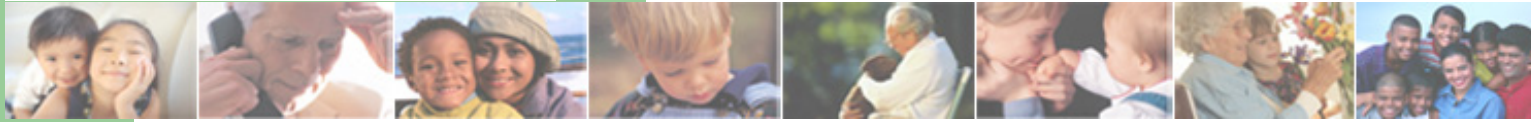
- Child Care Licensing
- Colorado Child Care Assistance Program
- Quality Initiatives





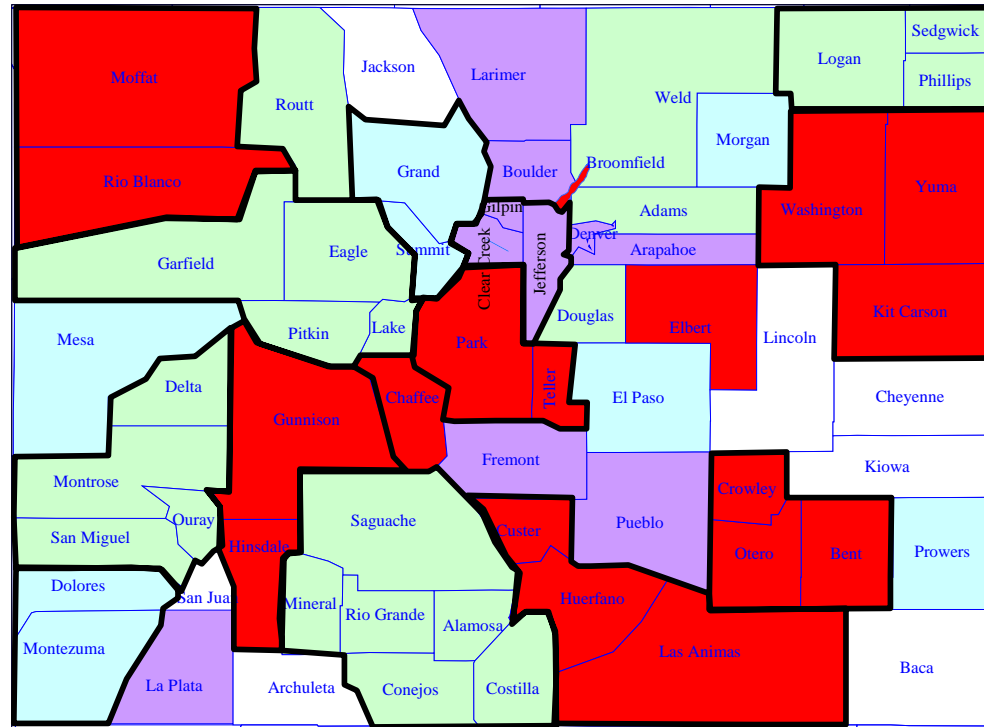
# Early Childhood Councils

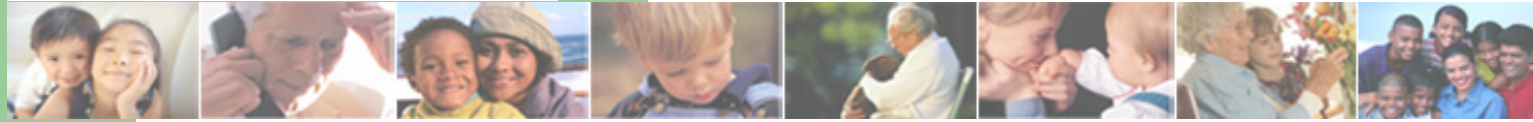
- **Develop and implement early childhood systems in local communities that address the following goal areas:**
  - Program Availability
  - Program Quality
  - Accountability
  - Organizational Structure and Governance
  - Parent and Family Engagement
  - Public Engagement
  - Professional Development
  - Funding and Finance



# Early Childhood Councils Statewide

**Number of EC Community Grantees: 31 (representing 57 counties)**



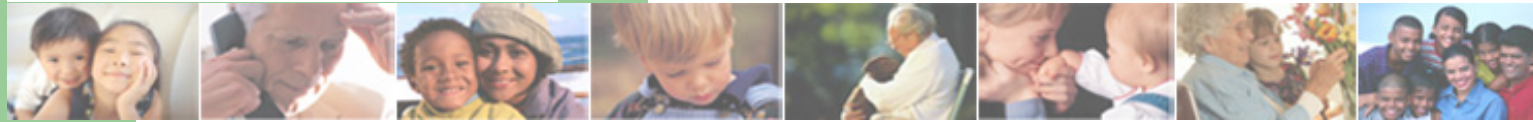


# Local EC Council Partners

(include, but not limited to the following)

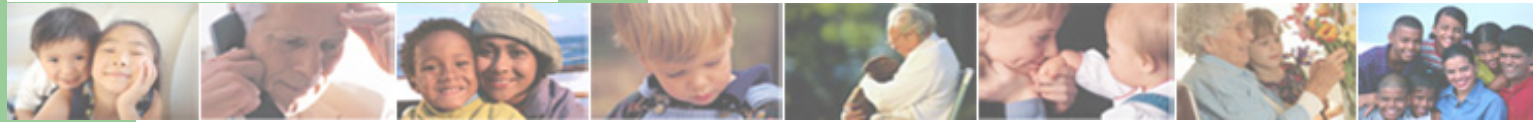
- **County Social Services**
- **Public Schools**
- **Head Start**
- **Resource and Referral**
- **Family Child Care**
- **Business**
- **Home Visitation**
- **Community Mental Health**
- **Higher Education**
- **Family Resource Centers**
- **Family Literacy**
- **Early Childhood Connections**
- **County Health Dept.**





## EC Council Successes: Collaboration

- Increased partnership, reduced turf issues
- CCCAP, CPKP & Head Start dollars used jointly to fund full-day, full-year programs
- Economic impact analysis of child care profession in multiple communities
- Professional development plans leading to credentials and college credit
- Participation in School Readiness program

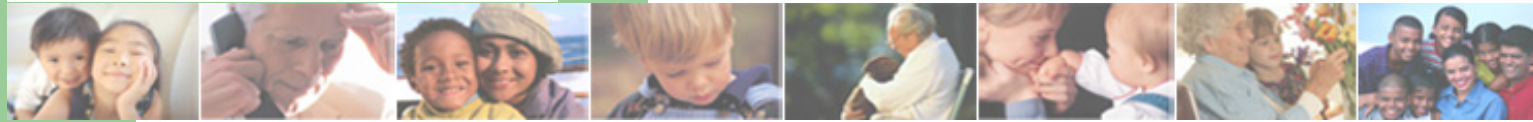


## SCHOOL READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Purpose:

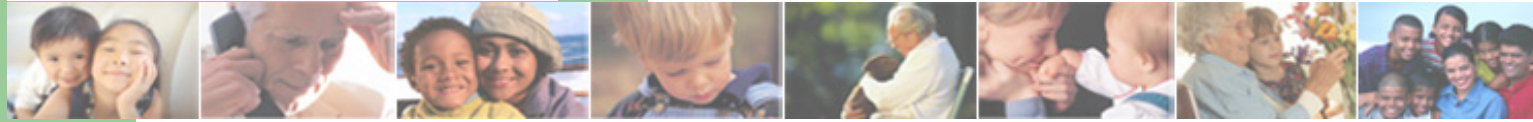
To improve the school readiness of

- Children 5 years of age and younger
- Receiving care from a provider whose facility serves children who will attend under-performing elementary schools that receive Title I federal funds.



# School Readiness Projects

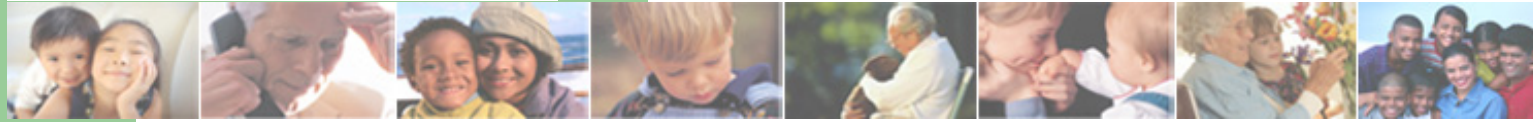
- Must be coordinated by an Early Childhood Council
- Participating communities selected based on approval by CDHS of a plan to improve school readiness in their community.
- Receive funding over 3 years to use according to their plan.



# Participating Child Care Providers

- Must be licensed.
- Must be located near elementary schools that had an overall academic performance rating of “Low” or “Unsatisfactory” on their School Accountability Report in 2005.

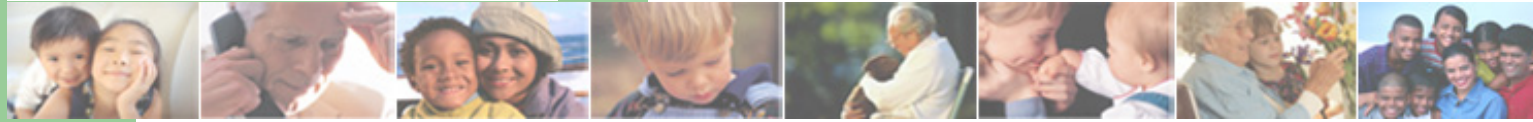




# Participating Child Care Providers

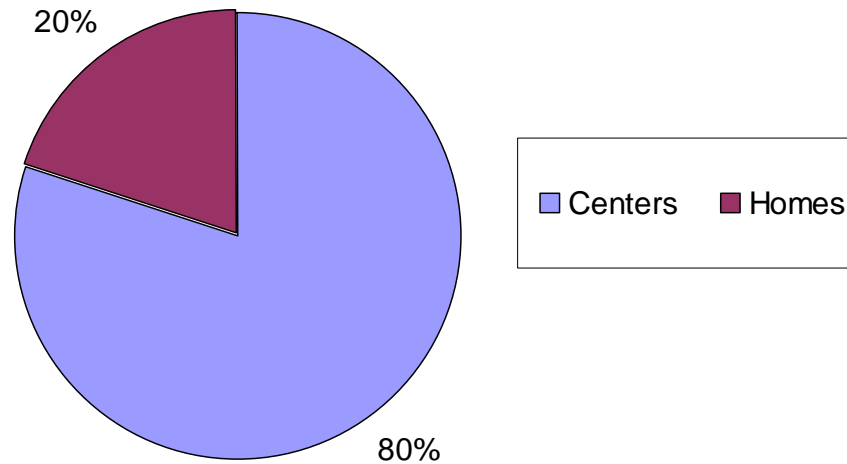
- All participating sites received assistance in improving the quality of care through:
  - The use of enhanced educational materials,
  - Specialized teacher training,
  - Mentoring/coaching,
  - and increased parent involvement.

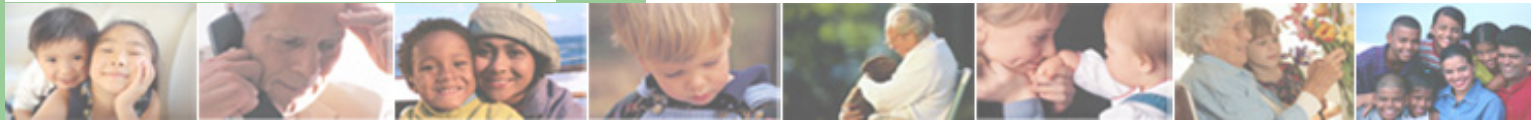




# Participating Child Care Providers

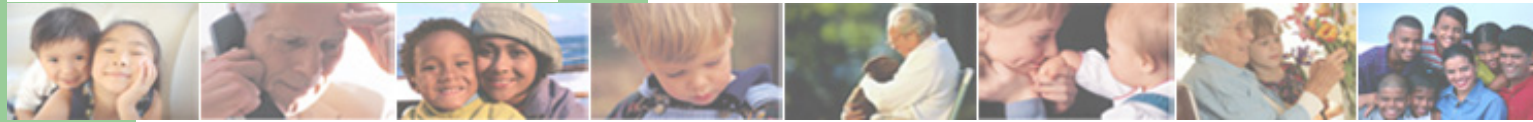
**Centers and Homes in Program**





## School Readiness Projects – Quality Ratings

- All participating providers receive an annual Quality Performance Rating by Qualistar Early Learning.
- Ratings range from 0 to 4 stars, with 4 representing the highest level of quality.
- To remain in the program, sites must either sustain ratings of 3 or 4 stars or improve their score on the quality of the learning environment.

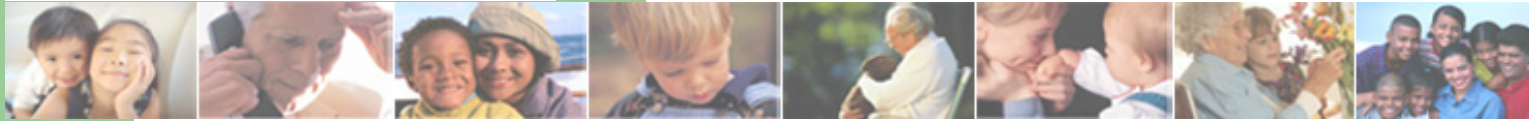


# Summary of The First Three Year Funding Cycle

- The program has just completed its first three-year grant period
  - 10 participating projects,
  - involving about 175 sites,
  - 440 early care and education classrooms.
  - 6,100 children (at any given time).

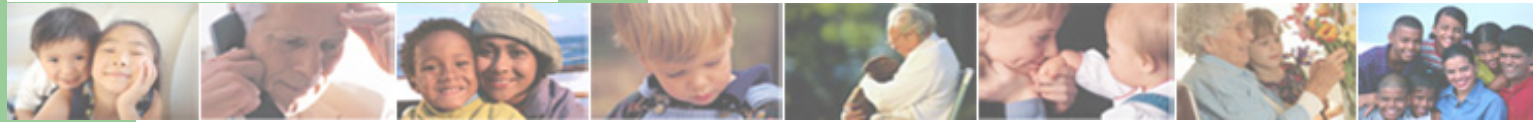






## Summary of The First Three Year Funding Cycle (continued)

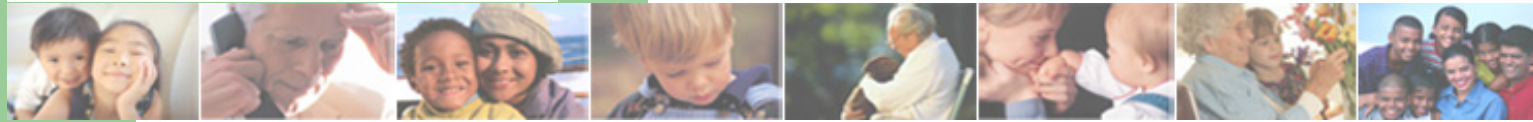
- The children who were in the program attended over 100 schools in 18 school districts located in diverse locations around the state.
- Participating projects worked with local school districts to track the children in the program as they enrolled in school.
- In those districts that were willing to give student-assigned state identification numbers, their achievement on state assessments can be monitored.



# Evaluation of First 3 Year Cycle

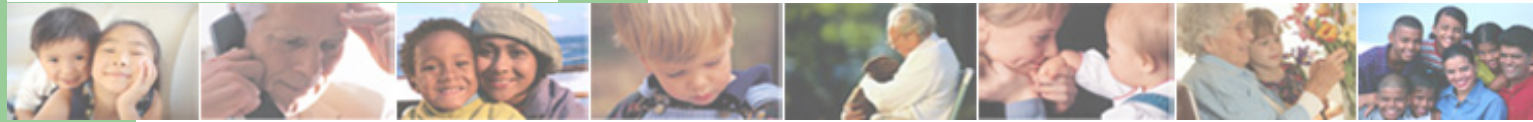
- There has been considerable success in improving the quality of early care and education sites across the state.
  - Generally, sites rated at the 2 stars or below level are considered “low quality,” while those rated 3 stars or above are considered “high quality.”





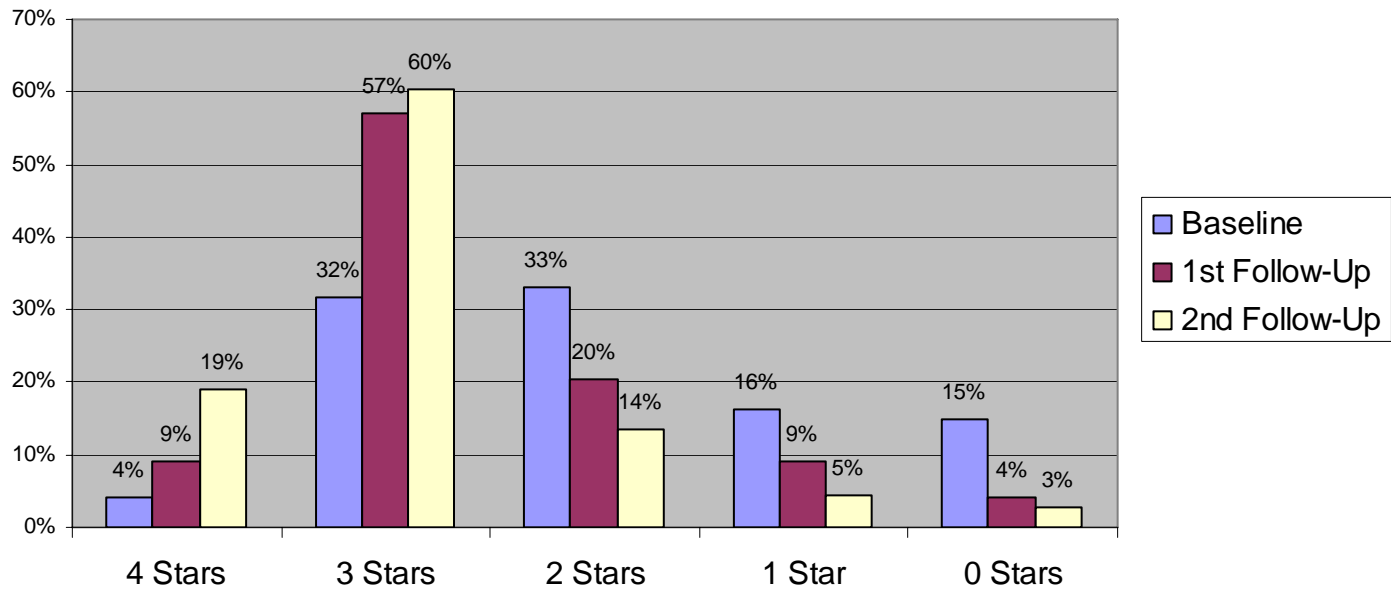
# Evaluation of First 3 Year Cycle (Continued)

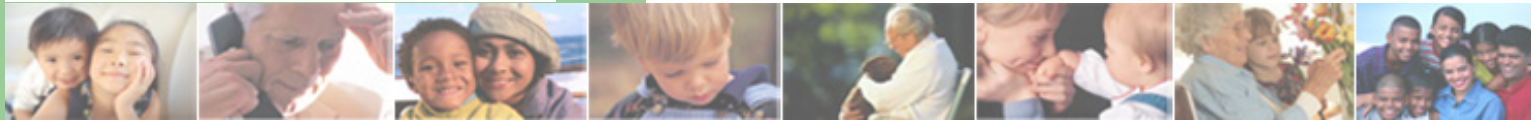
- When the program began,
  - Only thirty-seven percent (37%) of all participating sites were considered high quality,
  - While a full sixty-three percent (63%) were considered low quality.
- By the 3<sup>rd</sup> follow up rating,
  - Seventy-six percent (76%) of the participating sites were rated high quality,
  - The number of low quality sites had been reduced to twenty-four percent (24%).



# Star Ratings

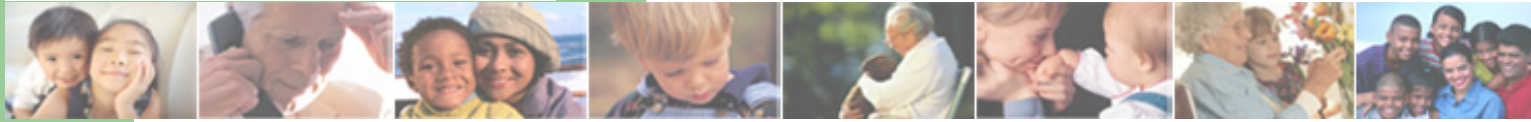
## Comparison of Ratings





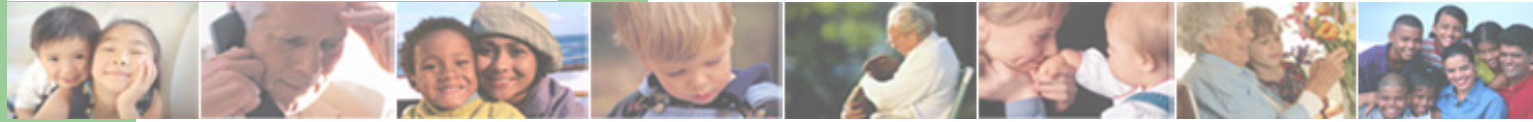
## Future Funding

- Due to its success, in 2005 the legislature reauthorized the continuation of the School Readiness Program, HB05-1238, modifying the name to the “School Readiness Quality Improvement Program” to more accurately reflect the focus of the program’s work.



# Future Funding

- June 2006 \$2.2 million per fiscal year was awarded to 14 diverse communities across the state incorporating urban, suburban, mountain, and rural plains areas.
- There are now 14 projects participating in the program, with approximately 148 early care and education sites representing 464 classrooms that are attended by 6250 Colorado children.



**It's  
ALWAYS  
about the kids**

# The Future is in Our Hands



*We Improve People's Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care*

# What About Quality Matters for Children's School Readiness

Gladys Wilson, Director  
Agency for Workforce Innovation  
Office of Early Learning  
Florida





**The Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning (OEL) works to support families and ensure children have quality care and early learning opportunities.**



*Support services and programs available to children and families:*

- ◆ **Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)**
- ◆ **School Readiness**
- ◆ **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)**



# **Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)**

**CCR&R is dedicated to helping families find answers to their questions regarding how to identify quality early learning programs and how to locate a provider that meets each family's needs. Trained staff are available to provide families with referrals to programs that are customized to each family's needs, as well as referrals to other services in the community.**



# CCR&R State Model

- ◆ Florida is unique in that the Florida State Network CCR&R Office is housed at the AWI-Office of Early Learning.
- ◆ This positions CCR&R staff within close proximity to the policy and rule developers, program staff, and staff of the research and evaluation units.



# School Readiness

*“School Readiness Act”*

**Florida Statutes**

**Chapter 411.01 School Readiness**

**Programs; Early Learning**



# School Readiness...

is a financial assistance program for working families who are income eligible. Parents earning moderate or low incomes may qualify for financial assistance to help in paying a portion of the costs for early learning services.



# **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)...**

**is a publicly-funded education program for all four-year-old children born on or before September 1st, who reside in Florida. VPK began in the fall of 2005 and is a free, voluntary, high quality education program.**



# Another Florida Early Learning Program





# Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP)

Another unique Florida program that partners Florida businesses with early learning.

<http://www.ccep.bz/>



**The CCEP program is an innovative, public/private partnership program that was created by the Florida Legislature in 1996 to help employers meet the needs of a growing segment of their workforce- *working parents*.**

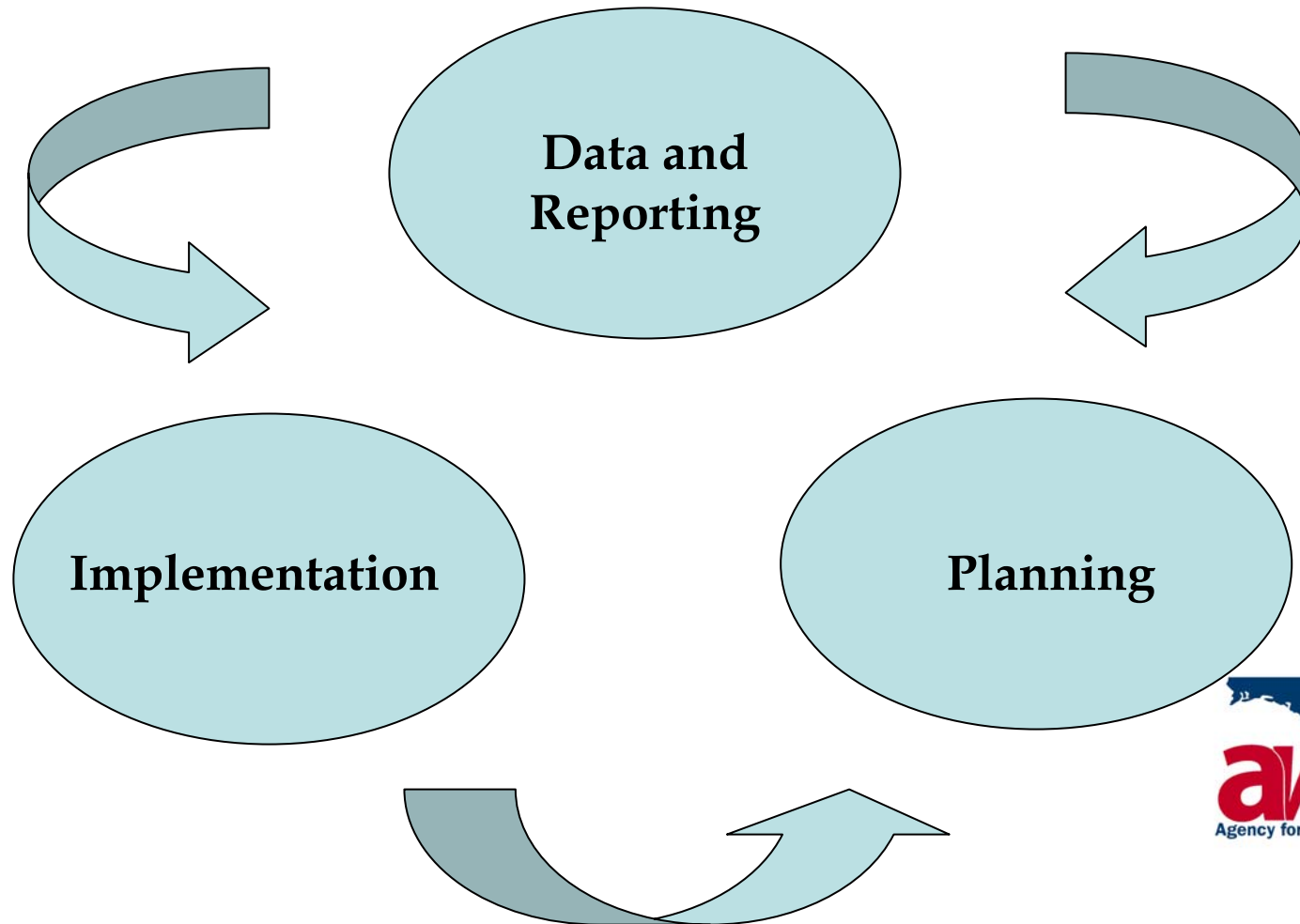
**This exciting program leverages a relationship between businesses and families that want to work and succeed. When families, businesses and the CCEP come to the table as partners, the entire community benefits.**



**How are the various early learning services delivered to Florida families?**



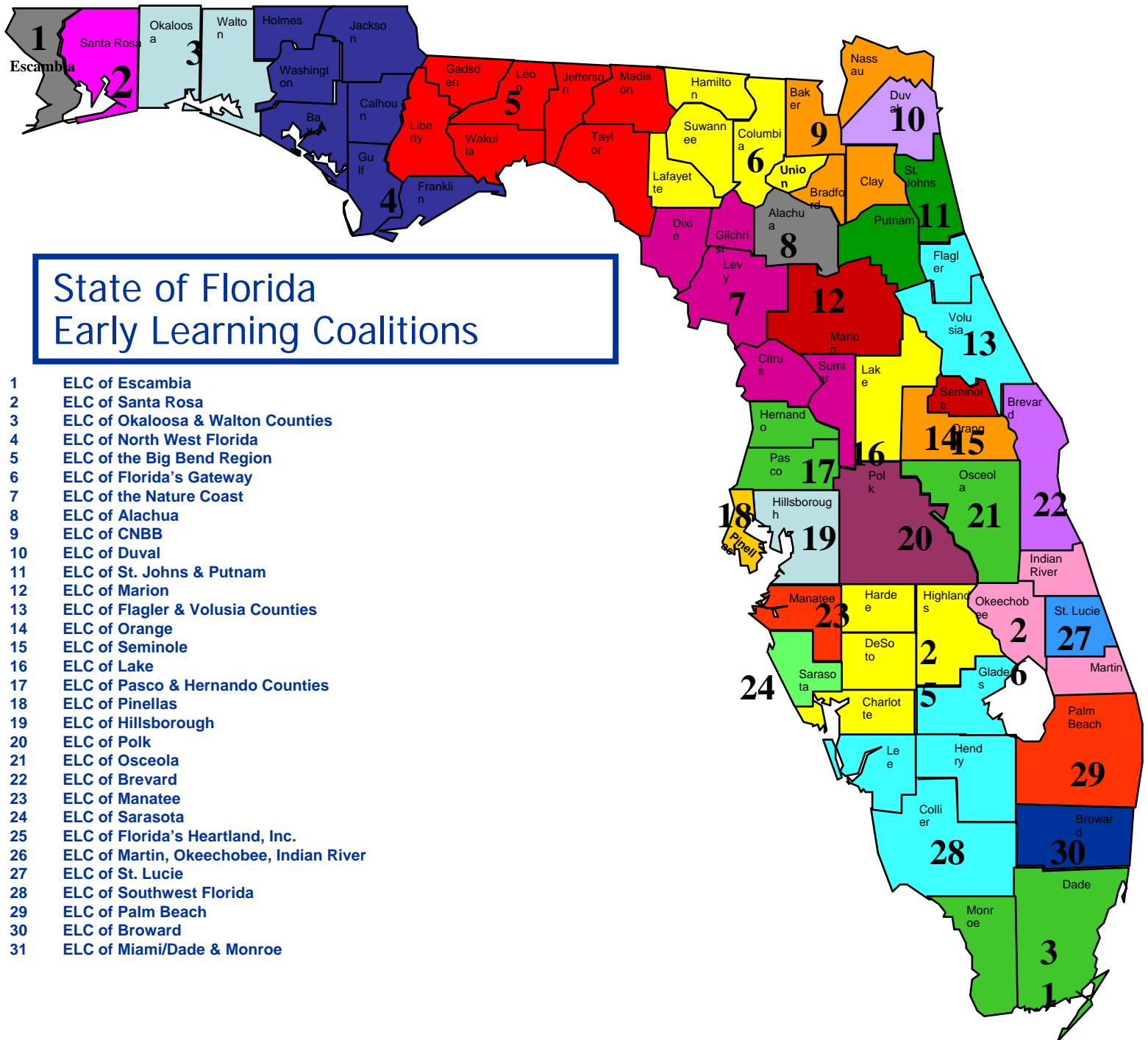
# Intersect of Policy and Program



# Early Learning Coalitions

- ◆ **31 Early Learning Coalitions**
- ◆ **Each coalition is a unique, local governing board comprised of 18 members including Governor appointees**
- ◆ **Each of Florida's 67 counties is represented by a early learning coalition**





# State of Florida Early Learning Coalitions

- 1 ELC of Escambia
- 2 ELC of Santa Rosa
- 3 ELC of Okaloosa & Walton Counties
- 4 ELC of North West Florida
- 5 ELC of the Big Bend Region
- 6 ELC of Florida's Gateway
- 7 ELC of the Nature Coast
- 8 ELC of Alachua
- 9 ELC of CNBB
- 10 ELC of Duval
- 11 ELC of St. Johns & Putnam
- 12 ELC of Marion
- 13 ELC of Flagler & Volusia Counties
- 14 ELC of Orange
- 15 ELC of Seminole
- 16 ELC of Lake
- 17 ELC of Pasco & Hernando Counties
- 18 ELC of Pinellas
- 19 ELC of Hillsborough
- 20 ELC of Polk
- 21 ELC of Osceola
- 22 ELC of Brevard
- 23 ELC of Manatee
- 24 ELC of Sarasota
- 25 ELC of Florida's Heartland, Inc.
- 26 ELC of Martin, Okeechobee, Indian River
- 27 ELC of St. Lucie
- 28 ELC of Southwest Florida
- 29 ELC of Palm Beach
- 30 ELC of Broward
- 31 ELC of Miami/Dade & Monroe

# Coalition Plans

**Each year, every coalition submit plans for service delivery in their areas.**

**Coalition plans are outcome driven and must demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency.**



# Coalition Plans

**The early learning coalition must implement a comprehensive program of school readiness services that enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation.**





# Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida

An example of an outcome driven activity can be found in the plan of the coalition representing seven counties in the Florida Panhandle addressing *Coordinated Staff Development and Training*.




Required Element	Current Situation	Action	Activities	Outcome
<p><b>Coordinated Staff Development and Training</b></p>	<p>A Coalition Training Plan was developed and disseminated to School Readiness and VPK providers and posted on the website.</p>	<p>Increase the skill and documented level of Readiness and VPK teachers through a systematic plan of education as measured by newly developed teacher tracking system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Implement a process for recording and tracking teacher's Professional Development goals and progress.</li> <li>◆ Implement Professional Paths, creating process manual.</li> <li>◆ Implement Seminar Specialization, creating process manual.</li> </ul>	<p>50% of teachers participating will have increased their level of education and skill based on education level at point of entrance into the tracking system and measured by written evaluations including pre- and post-tests, classroom evaluations, program evaluations, and completion of Teacher Work Projects.</p> <div> </div>

# Early Learning Coalition of Duval (Jacksonville Area)

Another example of an outcome driven activity can be found in the plan of the coalition representing northwest Florida addressing *Developmentally Appropriate Curricula*.



Required Element	Current Situation	Action	Activities	Outcome
<p><b>Developmentally Appropriate Curricula</b></p>	<p>◆ Four developmentally appropriate curricula have been approved by the Coalition for use by providers in school readiness centers.</p>	<p>To implement the system within the presented timeline and monitor use by all centers.</p>	<p>◆ Curriculum Monitors will visit centers in rotation and monitor the use of curriculum.</p> <p>◆ Curriculum Monitors will provide T/A to those not in compliance.</p>	<p>Activities will result in 85% of all school readiness providers having a developmentally appropriate curricula before the end of 2008-2009 year.</p> <p>All centers participating in QRS will move to the next star in the Curriculum Domain.</p> 

# Coalition Monitoring

The AWI-OEL has a review team that visits each coalition to monitor compliance with plans. Technical assistance is provided in those areas in need of attention (e.g., community outreach, governance, and CCR&R service delivery).



*Current Efforts of Connecting  
Research and Data, Policy,  
and Programming Issues*



# Efforts to Increase Funding

**In an effort to increase coalition funding to ensure the continuance of high quality service delivery, AWI-OEL is initiating the creation of Performance-Based Funding.**



# Performance-Based Funding

By attaching additional funds to the increase performance of service delivery by coalitions, AWI-OEL plans to award coalitions that go above and beyond by creatively and efficiently delivering early learning services to families in their communities.





# Data Quality Initiative (DQI)

The mission is to promote program effectiveness, planning, and decision-making at all levels by providing valid and reliable data to internal and external constituents, by transforming data into useful information for decision-making through data analysis and research, and by implementing processes to assess program performance.



# Data Quality Initiative (DQI)

Effort to centralize the early learning system, scrutinized collected data, and respond to the field's requests for routine and ad hoc data needs.



*Future Efforts of Connecting  
Research and Data, Policy,  
and Programming Issues*



# Current & Future Research Interests

## Churn Rate:

**A study of children enrolled in the school readiness program to focus on frequency of entry and exit of the program and contributing factors. Initial steps involve an examination of OEL data and later steps involve interviews, field work, and other qualitative components.**



# Current & Future Research Interests

## Service Delivery Project:

- ◆ **Purpose will be to analyze the service delivery models across coalitions. Some coalitions directly operate CCR&R, VPK, and SR Eligibility services while others utilize contracts. It is important to understand the effectiveness of each model. This will include examination of local staffing patterns, service delivery standards such as how parents gain access to all or any of these services. Information gathered could be used to begin determining what the most effective model is for coalitions and to move each coalition toward this model.**
- ◆ **A second piece to this examination will be to begin setting service delivery benchmarks for coalitions. Based on demographics such as number of children younger than five and number of working families - estimates on the number of children and families that should be served in a particular area could be determined.**
- ◆ **The ultimate goal of this investigation will be to move toward performance-based contracts for all services.**



# Current & Future Research Interests

## Impact of Chapter 411.01:

- ◆ Now that “School Readiness Act” has been in place for nearly a decade – how has its implementation changed service delivery in the early learning community and impacted children’s lives?



# Thank you!

**Gladys Wilson**

**Director**

**Agency for Workforce Innovation –  
Office of Early Learning**

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**[www.flready.com](http://www.flready.com)**



# Roundtable Discussion: Intersection of Research, Policy, and Practice

- How do the research findings or State approaches that you heard today impact your thinking about ...
  - Access to high-quality settings for low-income families
  - The role of policy-makers and researchers in involving families
  - Reasonable approaches to measuring children's school readiness

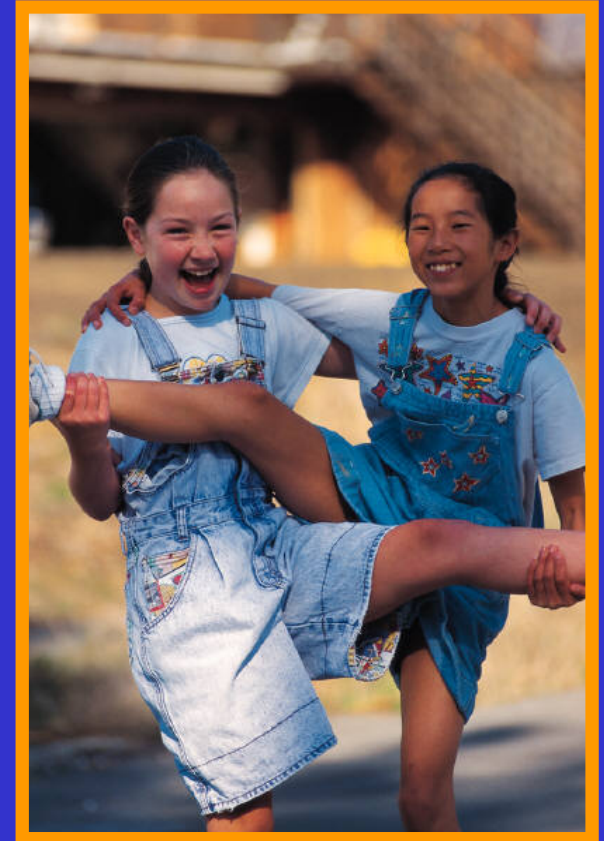


# Wrap-Up

## ■ Reflections

- I learned ...
- I am surprised by ...
- I would like to know more about ...

## ■ Resources



Thank You

NCCIC

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