

THE
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Engaged Families, Effective Pre-K: State Policies that Bolster Student Success

Education Reform Series
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Meaningful family engagement is a vital component of pre-kindergarten quality. When pre-k programs involve family members and other caregivers in their children’s education, they help build a lifelong partnership that fosters children’s school and life success, leads to more effective parenting and supports higher performance in our nation’s schools.

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Education Reform Series

High-quality pre-kindergarten is the first step in education reform. A vast body of research demonstrates that early learning programs develop children’s cognitive, social-emotional and physical readiness for success in school. This solid foundation is proven to contribute to higher literacy and math attainment, lower grade retention, reduced remedial and special education needs and increased high school graduation rates.

When students have a high-quality pre-k experience, they are better prepared and motivated to achieve at higher levels, multiplying the impact of other reforms. The alternative – helping children catch up in later grades – is both more costly and less effective. The evidence is clear and compelling: Successful school improvement plans, like a child’s development, benefit most from investments made in the critical early years.

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Introduction

Family members are a child's first and most important teachers. A growing body of research demonstrates that when families are actively engaged in their child's learning, children are better prepared for school and achieve at higher levels.¹ Increased participation by families in pre-kindergarten programs has also been linked to greater academic motivation and stronger social and emotional skills among all young children, regardless of ethnic and socioeconomic background. Through engagement with pre-k, parents and other family members develop a sense of collaboration in the educational process that can endure throughout a child's life, increasing the chances that their children will succeed and providing crucial support for school reform.²

Engaging families in their children's learning is not a new concept. For over 100 years, the Parent Teacher Association has brought families and schools together to address education issues at the national, state and local levels.³ Further, since its inception in 1965, the federal Head Start program has had family involvement at its core,⁴ and when Early Head Start was established in 1994, it maintained that commitment. Several decades of research show that parent involvement in Head Start is associated with children's increased cognitive and social-emotional school readiness and with positive parenting.⁵

Family engagement is also a central feature of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, a well-researched pre-k program with proven benefits that opened in 1967 and continues to operate today. "Parent resource teachers" work with families to improve parenting skills, devise developmentally appropriate at-home activities and identify opportunities for classroom involvement.⁶

Studies have found that high rates of family engagement in the program were linked to increases in children's reading achievement, decreased rates of grade retention, fewer years in special education and improved high school completion rates.⁷

As policy makers across the nation work to raise the quality of publicly funded, voluntary pre-k programs to maximize the benefits to young children and taxpayers, strong evidence indicates that strategies to increase family engagement should be central to those efforts. Family engagement is a unique ingredient of pre-k quality. Most other indicators – child-teacher ratio, class size, teacher effectiveness – reflect the classroom environment, but parent involvement speaks to the link between the home environment and a child's learning. When families are involved both at home and in the pre-k setting, children do better in school.⁸ Supporting families to play an active role in their children's learning leads to improved outcomes through high school.⁹ Parents and other family members benefit, too, as they develop a sense of collaboration in the educational process that can last a lifetime.

Embedding family engagement practices in pre-k standards requires strong policy, dedicated resources and effective governance. States should also leverage existing investments by aligning involvement activities across early learning and the elementary grades, collaborating with Head Start and partnering with public schools and nonprofit organizations.

This report explores the ways family involvement enhances high-quality pre-k. It also recommends actions policy makers can take to ensure that state programs help families establish a firm foundation of engagement in their children's learning when it matters most – in the early years of life.

What is Family Engagement?

Family engagement is a partnership between parents, grandparents and other caregivers and pre-k programs that reflects a shared responsibility to foster young children's development and learning. Family engagement supports children's success by building lasting connections among family, community and the education system. By joining the work of pre-k staff and families to help children enter kindergarten with the necessary skills, early learning programs can build a lifetime connection between families and their children, the education system and their community. Engagement activities provide key opportunities to reinforce the value of pre-k and the role families can play at home and school to support their children's learning.

For some families, engagement in early learning both at home and at school comes naturally. They read to their children frequently, talk with teachers about their children, participate in events and workshops and serve on committees to shape the pre-k program. Other families, however, may not find engagement so easy due to barriers caused by work, transportation or difficulty navigating the education system.¹⁰ Early learning programs must work in partnership with families to provide multiple avenues for participation, and state education policies should support those efforts.

A Family Grows and Finds a New Community through Engagement^a

Maria – mother of Javier, Juanita and Ana – attributes much of her success as a parent to her local Head Start program. After moving to a new community far from family and friends, Maria and her husband, José, enrolled their son in the local elementary school, but they didn't have a reliable opportunity for their daughter to interact with other children. A neighbor recommended she turn to Head Start where she was immediately welcomed.

Maria enrolled three-year-old Juanita in Head Start's home-based program, which provided opportunities for children and parents to socialize at the center as well as regular teacher visits to the family's home. Maria particularly appreciated that these visits focused not only on Juanita, but also incorporated activities and suggestions related to her infant, Ana. To ensure effective communication and the building of strong relationships between Maria, José and the children, the program provided a family support staffer who was fluent in Spanish and lived in the community. The home visitor offered guidance and support so that Maria was able to better understand her children's characteristics and temperaments and to support their early learning. Maria, her husband and their children also developed relationships with other families and staff through the frequent social events and parent meetings.

José appreciated that the home-based program had a strong father-involvement component. He enjoyed having opportunities to be with other fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers and uncles at special meetings and field trips. Maria became very involved in the program, attending parent meetings, serving on the advisory committee and organizing fundraisers. She even signed up to take child development classes offered through the local community college and taught at the program site. "There were teachers, staff and parents all learning together to support the children," she said.

After a year, Juanita was eligible for the Head Start center-based program, and Ana entered Early Head Start. "The door was always open and teachers encouraged parents to volunteer," said Maria. "Because the teachers were from the community, it helped build trust, respect and awareness of each other's strengths and needs. They never looked down on me and always helped me make connections that would benefit our family and the development of our children. It was exciting to see our kids learn and grow and to know that we were working hand in hand with the teachers and the program to support this growth. It was a real partnership from that very first day that we entered the door."

^a Phone conversation, May 4, 2009. Names have been changed at the request of the family.



Elements of Effective Family Engagement

A review of the research reveals five essential elements for promoting effective family engagement in early childhood education:¹¹

- 1. Early learning programs expect, welcome and support family participation in decision making related to their child's education.** Programs that recognize and respect family members' role as their child's first and most important teachers can encourage families to serve as advocates for their children and participate in early learning activities at home and in the program.
- 2. Families and early learning programs engage in consistent, two-way, linguistically and culturally appropriate communication.** Programs that provide multiple avenues for timely and ongoing communication can both acquire and share crucial insights about a child's strengths and needs so that both teachers and parents can more effectively support his or her development and education.
- 3. Families' knowledge, skills and backgrounds are integrated into the learning experience.** Programs can benefit from family members' unique knowledge and skills by providing opportunities for volunteering and other participation. Teachers can seek out valuable information about children's lives, families and communities and use it to enrich and increase the relevance of their curricula and instructional practices.
- 4. Programs help families foster a home environment that enhances learning.** Engagement allows programs to assist families in providing a home environment that is both reflective of their culture and supports their child's educational experience.
- 5. Early learning programs create an ongoing and comprehensive system for promoting family engagement.** Programs that ensure teachers and administrators are trained and receive needed supports, e.g. professional development, can fully engage culturally, linguistically and economically diverse families and promote meaningful relationships.

Family Engagement in Federal Education Policy

Many federal education programs and statutes include some family engagement components. The most explicit and comprehensive of these is found in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The parent involvement component of these programs is so highly regarded that it is specified in the Head Start Program Performance Standards and Program Regulations.¹²

Conceptualized and implemented as two-generational programs, Head Start and Early Head Start have been associated with positive parenting behavior and practices at home and warmer and more responsive parenting styles.¹³ A national study found that parents who participated in Head Start beginning when their children were age three were less likely to rely on high-control discipline styles such as using “time outs” and that these effects lasted through the first-grade year.¹⁴

Mother, Rhode Island

My son loved having the
teacher come to our house.
He was so excited that she was
there. He showed her all of
his toys and wanted to play.

Other federal education legislation, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also contain specific requirements for family engagement. IDEA and IDEA Part B, which covers pre-k children, require parent involvement in charting the course for children with special needs. Under the 1997 amendments to IDEA, parents are equal partners with school personnel, entitling them to access children’s school records and to participate in the design and evaluation of special education services.¹⁵ At least one parent is required to attend their child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting as a key member of the IEP team. For infants and toddlers identified with special needs, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), developed in a partnership between the intervention team and the family, contains information about the services necessary to facilitate each child’s development and reflects the family’s concerns, priorities and resources.¹⁶ The IFSP process and early intervention services provide a system of supports available to families to help them care for their children.

ESEA also recognizes the value of engaging parents and other caregivers in education, as evidenced by requirements that schools, districts and state education agencies implement involvement strategies that support a partnership between families and the school.¹⁷ For example, all schools that receive federal funding under Title I to raise the performance of low-income and other at-risk students must develop parent involvement policies and strategies, and all but the smallest (a district that received under \$500,000 in Title I funding) must spend at least 1 percent of those resources on parent training and education programs.¹⁸

Policy Recommendations & State Examples

During the past decade, governors, state legislators and education leaders have led the charge to advance high-quality, voluntary pre-k for all three and four year olds, increasing funding by nearly \$3 billion.¹⁹ State policy makers across the country, faced with dramatic budget shortfalls, are protecting their investments in early education programs.²⁰ High-quality pre-k is proven by a wealth of research to improve educational outcomes and enhance economic competitiveness.²¹ The most effective pre-k programs – those that generate the largest dividends for children and taxpayers – meaningfully engage parents and other caregivers.²²

While states have steadily improved other quality aspects of their programs over the past decade, policy has lagged behind research with respect to family engagement.²³ Today, policy makers have an important opportunity to help parents and other caregivers actively connect with public pre-k programs. To that end, Pre-K Now strongly recommends the following policy

solutions for advancing family participation in early education. While these recommendations specifically address publicly funded pre-k, all programs serving young children regardless of program type, size or scale, should reflect these principles and policies. These strategies can enable state education systems to build and sustain meaningful partnerships with families, beginning in the early years, that last throughout children's school careers.

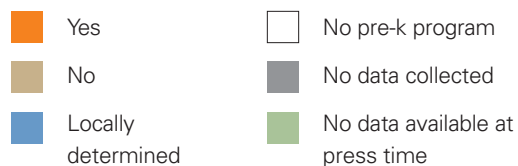
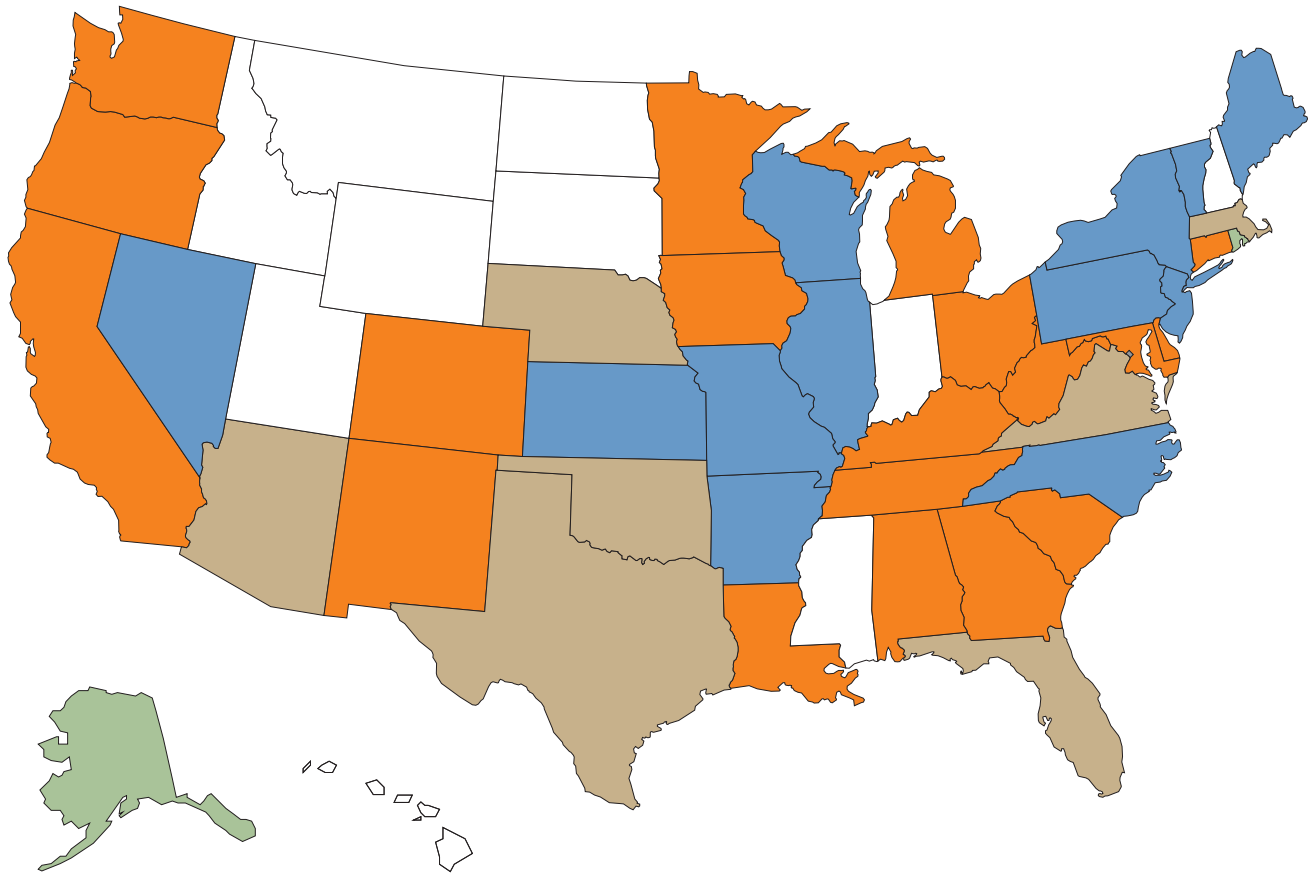
The examples offered are a sampling of efforts currently underway in many states; they are not intended to be a comprehensive account of the promising work nationwide. Rather, they illustrate how the policy recommendations can be implemented. Clearly, some states are beginning to take important steps to support family engagement. Much more can and should be done so that families are welcome, valued and essential partners in their children's early learning.



Policy Recommendations & State Examples

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Map 1: Do states require pre-k programs to implement family engagement activities?^a



Data collected by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) in conjunction with their annual state of pre-k survey. NIEER data are based upon states with programs as of the 2008-09 school year. Alaska and Rhode Island began their pre-k pilot programs in the 2009-10 school year, so no data are available for these states. For states with multiple programs, this analysis is based upon the pre-k program with the greatest enrollment.

Require State-Funded Pre-K Programs to Develop, Implement and Monitor Plans for Family Engagement

To qualify for state funding, all pre-k providers should be required to engage families in ways that reflect best practices.

- Require that all programs applying for state pre-k funding create and execute plans for engaging families.
- Provide funding to support family engagement activities.
- Provide technical assistance to programs implementing evidence-based family engagement practices.
- Assure that the state pre-k agency monitors each program's family engagement efforts.

Kentucky

Both the statute and administrative regulations governing the *Kentucky Preschool Program* require that programs receiving pre-k funds create, implement and monitor a plan for family engagement. Families should have opportunities to: participate in classrooms and other program activities as volunteers or observers, receive parent training and education, work with their child in cooperation with pre-k staff, meet with appropriate staff regarding their child's individual needs and progress and have a minimum of two home visits by pre-k staff per year. Kentucky's Department of Education monitors family engagement through program reports.²⁴

Wisconsin

Wisconsin employs a financial incentive. School districts with *Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K)* programs that provide at least 87.5 hours of parent outreach receive higher reimbursements from the state. Nearly 47 percent of school districts take advantage of this, and their *4K* programs (in all settings) offer a range of engagement activities and services such as: *4K* orientation, special classroom events, family celebration nights, home visits, parenting classes, lending libraries and kindergarten-transition plans. In their school funding reports, districts describe their models and are held accountable through the Department of Public Instruction's auditing process.²⁵

Father, South San Francisco

I'm involved in the pre-k program because it's good for my kids. They want to know that I am interested in their life, curious about what they are learning and not just dropping them off.

Policy Recommendations & State Examples

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Appoint a State-Level Leader to Oversee, Support and Expand Family Engagement Opportunities

Leadership at the state level is needed to ensure that family engagement is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated across early childhood and education agencies and programs.

- Include in statute language emphasizing the importance of family engagement in school readiness and family- and community-development efforts.
- Appoint a specialist in the state pre-k agency to be responsible for overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of family engagement for continuous program improvement.

Washington

Washington State's Department of Early Learning (DEL) was created in 2006 and includes a Family Partnerships Division that is responsible for embedding family engagement principles and practices in all state-supported early learning and care programs. DEL staff also ensures that capacity and quality initiatives, including professional development activities, licensing and public-private partnerships to support early reading, feature robust family engagement components.²⁶

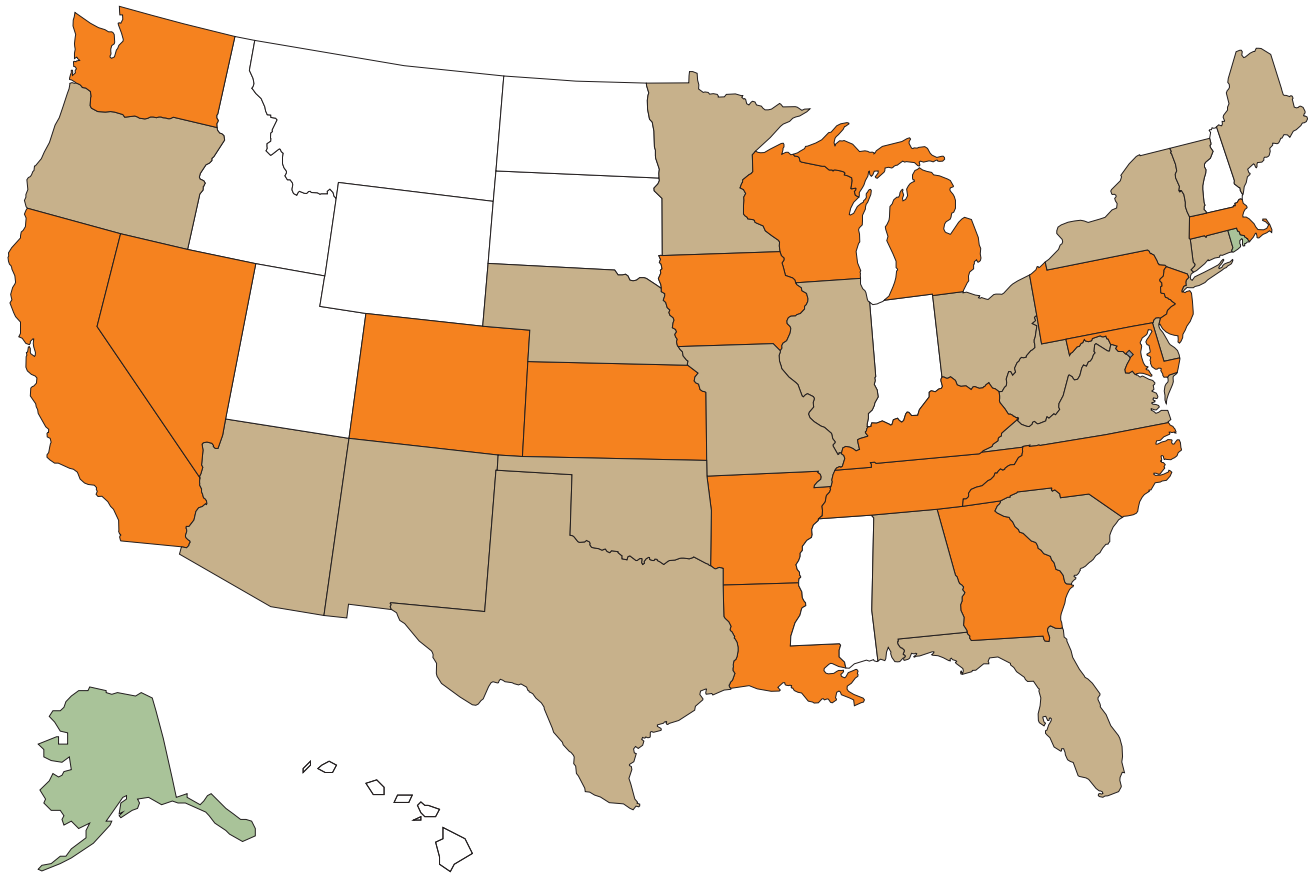
Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania created the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in 2004 to ensure children and families have access to high-quality early childhood services, and in 2008, OCDEL hired a special assistant whose sole focus is enhancing family engagement practices and family support services across programs. The special assistant assures a parent perspective in all the work of OCDEL and provides guidance on engaging families to the Departments of Public Welfare and Education, which jointly oversee OCDEL.²⁷

Mother, Missouri

Head Start gives you the life skills and confidence to speak up and be active. This helps you, not only your child. I'm going to go back to college. Had it not been for the encouragement that I've received through Head Start, I wouldn't be doing this. It's taken me to another level.

Map 2: Does someone oversee family engagement policies for state pre-k?^a



- Yes
- No
- No pre-k program
- No data collected
- No data available at press time

Data collected by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) in conjunction with their annual state of pre-k survey. NIEER data are based upon states with programs as of the 2008-09 school year. Alaska and Rhode Island began their pre-k pilot programs in the 2009-10 school year, so no data are available for these states. For states with multiple programs, this analysis is based upon the pre-k program with the greatest enrollment.

Policy Recommendations & State Examples

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Ensure Family Engagement is a Core Competency in Teacher and Administrator Preparation and Certification

Institutions of higher education and state certification systems must ensure that pre-k teachers and administrators know how to build strong, reciprocal relationships with families.

- Establish family engagement as a core competency in pre-k teacher- and administrator-preparation programs.
- Include competencies related to family engagement in state certification for pre-k teachers and administrators.
- Require and support the participation of teachers and administrators in ongoing training, coaching and mentoring on family engagement.

Kentucky

Kentucky's Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) teaching certificate requires that early educators demonstrate the ability to collaborate with “team members including colleagues, families, primary caregivers, agency personnel and other service personnel” in developing learning experiences for children in a variety of early educational environments. Additionally, certified teachers must show they can support families through “family-centered services that promote independence and self-determination.”²⁸

North Carolina

The North Carolina Standards for Birth-Kindergarten Teacher Candidates approved by the state board of education in 2009 require prospective early childhood teachers to develop the ability to “foster relationships with families that support children’s development and learning.” Activities described under this standard include: “exchanging information, making collaborative decisions, and cooperatively implementing and evaluating program plans for the child.”²⁹

Provide Families with Information and Resources to Participate Fully in Children’s Learning and Development

Pre-k programs must provide parents and other primary caregivers with information about basic child development and with guidance about what they can do to support their child’s early learning and healthy growth.

- Ensure that programs make information available to families on a range of topics, including child development, learning through play, strategies for supporting early learning at home, finding a quality pre-k program, resources in the community for families with young children and transition to kindergarten.
- Provide specific and ongoing information on children’s development and learning to fully inform families about what they can do at home and in conjunction with the pre-k program to advance their child’s school readiness.
- Provide programs, school districts and/or communities with funding to hire family outreach specialists to help families access needed information and services.
- Provide incentives and funding for the development of “community schools” – school-based centers where families can access academic resources, healthcare and social services in one central location.

Georgia

Funding is available for pre-k programs or school districts to hire resource coordinators to proactively support family engagement by providing parent education seminars and workshops, linking families to needed services (e.g., health, food, housing, clothing, financial and job assistance) and organizing literacy and kindergarten readiness and transition events.³⁰

Michigan

In 1998, the Michigan Department of Education developed the R.E.A.D.Y. program to provide parents and caregivers of young children with information and materials focused on early language and literacy skills. The R.E.A.D.Y. kit contains one children's book and a recommended reading list, learning activities, music recordings, a child development video and other products. Kits are available in both English and Spanish for children ages birth through pre-k. To date, over 1 million Michigan parents have received kits.³¹

Advocate, California

When parents are involved in the early years, they are more likely to continue that involvement into later years. The comfort that they have in quality pre-k will cause them to question, push, prod for education reform in the public schools.

Require at Least One Home Visit and One In-Person Conference with Each Pre-K Family

Strengthening teacher-family relationships is critical to effective engagement. Early education leaders should encourage and support personal connections between teachers and families.

- Require that pre-k teachers conduct at least one home visit³² and one in-person parent-teacher conference each year.
- Provide regular opportunities for families to observe or volunteer in their child's pre-k classroom.
- Ensure that programs provide additional home visits as needed to address potential learning delays (e.g., literacy and language development) or to build on successes.

Oregon

The *Oregon Head Start PreKindergarten Program* (OPK) adheres to the performance standards of the federal Head Start program; so all programs provide home visits to enhance the parental role in children's development and early learning. OPK programs are required to encourage parents to participate in at least two home visits each year.³³ Programs serving migrant families are required to conduct two parent-teacher conferences and to make every effort to conduct a home visit.³⁴

Nebraska

Nebraska's pre-k programs are required to have a family development and support component. In addition to connecting families to needed comprehensive services, programs must conduct at least two home visits per year and provide other opportunities for parents to communicate with program staff, such as attending teacher conferences, participating as classroom volunteers and serving on advisory committees.³⁵

Policy Recommendations & State Examples

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Ensure Representation of Family Perspectives on State Early Childhood Advisory Councils

Families must be guaranteed a voice in broader discussions on policy and practice from the beginning to ensure that family engagement is an integral component of early education. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 requires states to develop advisory councils to coordinate high-quality systems of early learning and care.³⁸ Family perspectives should be valued and incorporated into the work of the councils.

- Require that the membership of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (or other equivalent state, regional and local bodies) include parents or guardians of children younger than five years.
- Provide ongoing leadership training, coaching, mentoring and support to families serving on Advisory Councils and other committees.
- Specify family engagement oversight, monitoring and evaluation as a task of the council.
- Survey families to assess their needs and recommendations for increasing engagement.

Minnesota

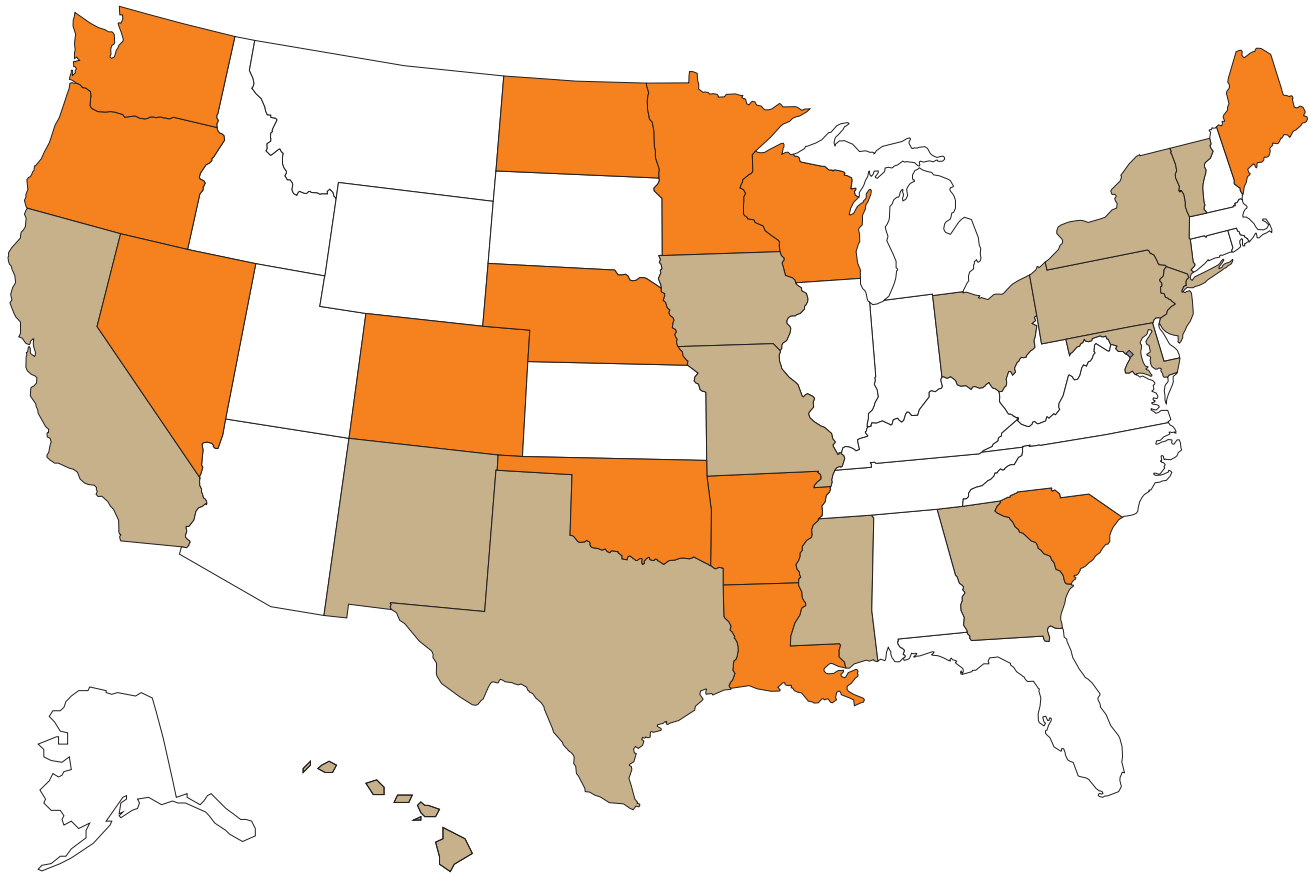
Minnesota statute requires that the governor appoint two parents of children younger than six to be full members of the state's Advisory Council. Funds appropriated for the council can be used to reimburse parent-members' expenses.³⁹

Delaware

The Delaware Early Care and Education Council oversees the development of a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative early learning system. Its membership includes parents, private citizens, business leaders and representatives from the early education and care community.⁴⁰



Map 3: Does the state early childhood advisory council include a parent?^a



Research on state early childhood advisory councils (ECAC) was conducted between December 2009 and January 2010. This analysis considers an ECAC to be one that has been formally designated through gubernatorial or legislative action. States without formally designated ECACs are based on the November 2009 report by the New America Foundation, "The Next Step in Systems-Building," with additional research by Pre-K Now to identify any states that may have established ECACs since the release of the report. Based on this research and subsequent monitoring of state activities through June 1, 2010, the following states have taken action to create ECACs since the publication of the New America Foundation report: Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, North Dakota and Oregon. However, additional states are expected to appoint advisory councils prior to the August 1, 2010 application deadline for federal ECAC grants. See the Appendix for a full citation.

Policy Recommendations & State Examples

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Require Pre-K Programs and Local Elementary Schools to Develop and Implement a Plan for Transition to Kindergarten

Transition from pre-k to kindergarten presents a rich opportunity for supporting families' ongoing participation in their children's education at home and at school. Education leaders at both the pre-k and elementary levels need to facilitate a smooth transition for the child and family so that all are ready for the next step in the educational process even if the pre-k program is at the same school.

- Provide accessible resources and materials to families that guide them through the transition process.
- Create programs linking families with a child about to enter kindergarten and those who have completed kindergarten.
- Schedule kindergarten classroom visits for families and children.
- Provide training on transition for elementary school principals and pre-k administrators.

Georgia

In Georgia, transition is viewed as a year-long process. Pre-k children are connected to kindergarten students through reading buddy programs or by visiting the kindergarten classroom. Parents are given information about kindergarten registration and volunteer opportunities in the elementary school. Schools and community programs work together to provide needed services (e.g., health screenings), to sponsor joint workshops and events and to align pre-k and kindergarten standards.³⁶

Head Start Parent Volunteer, Arizona

I went on a home visit and the parent wouldn't let us in the house and instead talked with us on her porch. She had lots of kids and her home was a mess. She was embarrassed for us to see that. Once the staff built a relationship with her, she not only allowed them in the home, but also worked with staff and other parents to get her home clean and organized so she was no longer embarrassed.

Ohio

Ohio's Ready Schools framework consists of seven transition components: 1) school leadership that emphasizes planning, 2) development of relationships to ease adjustment, 3) supportive environments that create a safe and healthy transition experience, 4) standards, instruction and assessment that align curricula between pre-k and kindergarten, 5) guidance for teachers on supporting diverse children, 6) home-school-community connections that improve relationships and increase collaboration among all adults in children's lives and 7) adult learning communities for administrators, teachers, family members and community partners.³⁷

Conclusion

Pennsylvania: A Comprehensive Approach to Engaging Families in Pre-K

Pennsylvania's commitment to building a comprehensive early childhood system is predicated on building quality into and alignment among all programs and services. Meaningfully engaging families in all publicly funded early learning and care programs is central to achieving those goals and to maximizing the benefits for children. Within the state's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) – which provides centralized administration for all early childhood programs including pre-k, state-funded Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, the Keystone STARS child care quality rating system and others – family engagement practices and support services are overseen by a dedicated special assistant. The goal is to employ the family perspective to enhance the quality of services and streamline delivery to better support children's early learning.^a

Since its inception, Pennsylvania's state pre-k program, *Pre-K Counts*, has featured robust standards for family engagement. Grantees are required to submit quarterly reports explaining their family engagement practices as well as frequent parent testimonials. Each quarter's report must address different elements of the involvement efforts, including describing strategies to communicate to parents about the program, examples of parent involvement opportunities such as volunteering, providing feedback and participating on advisory committees and examples of impacts on parents participating in children's learning and in the program.^b *Pre-K Counts* also collaborates with community engagement groups that work to increase awareness about early childhood issues, improve kindergarten-transition plans with school districts and increase parent advocacy in the policy making process at the local and state levels.

^a Sarah Holland, Pennsylvania Department of Education Office of Child Development and Early Learning, personal communication, April 22, 2009.

^b Ibid.

Family engagement initiatives enhance young children's educational experiences by supporting families' roles as their child's first and most important teachers and creating continuity between the learning that takes place at school and at home. Engaged families are more informed about their children's healthy development and early learning. They become active partners in the educational process, which increases their children's chances for school and life success.⁴¹

State and federal policy makers seeking to improve the performance of public education should consider the expansion of high-quality pre-k programs with meaningful family engagement initiatives as a fundamental piece of those efforts. Just as pre-k is the first step in education reform, engaging parents and other caregivers in the early years is the first step to supporting a child's successful learning through an effective partnership of families, teachers and schools.



Appendix

The following chart provides additional information about policies governing family engagement in state-funded pre-k programs and family representation on state early childhood advisory councils.

State	Does the state require pre-k programs to implement family engagement activities? ^a	Does someone oversee family engagement policies for state pre-k? ^a	Does the state early childhood advisory council include a parent? ^b
Alabama	Yes (one or more)	No	No formally designated ECAC
Alaska ^c	No data	No data	No formally designated ECAC
Arizona	No	No	No formally designated ECAC
Arkansas	Determined locally	Yes	Yes
California	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No
Colorado	Yes (one or more)	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	Yes (one or more)	No	No formally designated ECAC
Delaware	Yes (one or more)	No	No formally designated ECAC
Florida	No	No	No formally designated ECAC
Georgia	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No
Hawaii	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No
Idaho	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC
Illinois	Determined locally	No	No formally designated ECAC
Indiana	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC
Iowa Shared Visions	Determined locally	Yes	No
Iowa SVPP	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No
Kansas At-Risk	Determined locally	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Kansas Pre-K Pilot	Determined locally	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Kentucky	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Louisiana 8(g)	Determined locally	Yes	Yes
Louisiana LA4	Yes (one or more)	Yes	Yes
Louisiana NSECD	Yes (one or more)	No	Yes
Maine	Determined locally	No	Yes
Maryland	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No
Massachusetts	No	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Michigan	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Minnesota	Yes (one or more)	No	Yes
Mississippi	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No
Missouri	Determined locally	No	No
Montana	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC
Nebraska	No	No	Yes
Nevada	Determined locally	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC
New Jersey Abbott	Determined locally	Yes	No
New Jersey ECPA	Determined locally	Yes	No
New Jersey ELLI	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No
New Mexico	Yes (one or more)	No	No
New York	Determined locally	No	No
North Carolina	Determined locally	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
North Dakota	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	Yes
Ohio	Yes (one or more)	No	No
Oklahoma	No	No	Yes
Oregon	Yes (one or more)	No	Yes
Pennsylvania EABG	No	No	No
Pennsylvania HSSAP	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No
Pennsylvania K4 & SBPK	No	Yes	No
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts	Determined locally	Yes	No
Rhode Island ^c	No data	No data	No formally designated ECAC
South Carolina 4K	Yes (one or more)	No	Yes
South Carolina CDEPP	Yes (one or more)	No	No formally designated ECAC
South Dakota	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC
Tennessee	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Texas	No	No	No
Utah	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC
Vermont Act 62	Determined locally	No	No
Vermont EEI	Determined locally	No	No formally designated ECAC
Virginia	No	No	No formally designated ECAC
Washington	Yes (one or more)	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	Yes (one or more)	No	No formally designated ECAC
Wisconsin 4K	Determined locally	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin HdSt	Yes (one or more)	Yes	No formally designated ECAC
Wyoming	No state pre-k program	No state pre-k program	No formally designated ECAC

^a Data collected by the National Institute for Early Education Research in conjunction with their annual state of pre-k survey.

^b State ECAC membership —

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Pre-K Now at a Glance

Mission

Pre-K Now collaborates with advocates and policy makers to lead a movement for high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds.

Vision

Pre-K Now's vision is a nation in which every child enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Location

Washington, DC

Leadership

Marci Young
Project Director

Funders

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
The McCormick Foundation
The Nellie Mae Education Foundation
RGK Foundation
The Schumann Fund for New Jersey

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Pre-K Now Key Differentiators

- Focuses exclusively on pre-k
- Provides the most up-to-date gauge of the pre-k pulse in any state
- Offers nationwide access to pre-k advocates
- Monitors and distributes daily pre-k newsclips
- Provides a national perspective on local pre-k issues
- Provides outreach, policy and Spanish-language information targeted to the Latino community
- Leads a national movement which has gained significant momentum in the last five years

The Case for Pre-K

- Pre-k benefits all children academically, socially and emotionally.
- High-quality pre-k for all nets a high return on investment in children and the community.
- The most important brain development occurs by age six.
- Pre-k is the first step to education reform.

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