

NORTH DAKOTA
PRESCHOOL
DEVELOPMENT GRANT
BIRTH-5
STRATEGIC PLAN

FEBRUARY 2020



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I. Introduction

In December 2018, North Dakota was awarded \$2.651 million in the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG Birth-5). As a part of this grant, the state contracted with Greenway Strategy Group (GSG) in July 2019 to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment to inform a strategic plan to enhance early care and education. GSG completed the needs assessment in the fall of 2019, and North Dakota submitted the document in December 2019. The findings from the needs assessment steered the development of the statewide strategic plan.

To oversee PDG activities, state agencies partnered to form the Inter-Departmental Preschool Development Grant (IDPDG) Planning Group. IDPDG team members have met regularly to review and provide input on PDG activities, including gathering information, sharing data, reviewing findings, providing input on the needs assessment, and drafting the strategic plan. IDPDG team members—listed in Appendix A—include administrators from the Department of Public Instruction, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Information Technology Department, and Department of Commerce—all of whom have worked together to develop North Dakota’s statewide strategic plan.

Stakeholder input was a critical factor in both the formation of the needs assessment and the strategic plan. Stakeholders provided feedback from across North Dakota, and two important stakeholder groups reviewed the findings of the needs assessment and provided advice and feedback with regard to the development of the strategic plan: the Part C Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and the Governor’s Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC). The members of these groups are listed in Appendix B.

This report presents North Dakota’s statewide strategic plan to enhance early care and education. The report summarizes the findings from the needs assessment; describes the process for developing North Dakota’s PDG Birth-5 strategic plan; details the components of the strategic plan, including the goals, objectives, action steps, and measurable indicators of progress; and outlines the alignment of the findings of the needs assessment and the strategic plan. In addition, the table *State/Territory Strategic Plan Crosswalk with PDG Strategic Plan Requirements* presents the requirements for the strategic plan and the location of that information in this report.

Figure 1. State/ Territory Crosswalk with PDG B-5 Strategic Plan Requirements

Strategic Plan Domains	Page
Stakeholder Contribution: Identify the full range of stakeholders that were engaged in the strategic plan development/updates and how they will be impacted by the work	2, 6-10, 11-14
Goals and Action Steps: Clearly lay out a plan with goals and action steps that establish a comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system	11, 23
Partnerships, Collaborations, Coordination, and Quality Improvement Activities: Identify these areas that will be used to leverage policy alignments, program quality and service delivery across ECCE	2, 6-10, 11-14
Transitions Between ECCE Programs and Elementary School: Identify activities that address improving transitions of children from ECCE programs into elementary schools	11-14
Coordination and Collaboration Among Programs: Delineate how the plan will build on and support improved coordination and collaboration among ECCE programs	11-14
Framework for Quality: Provide a strong framework for laying out how the state/territory will increase the overall participation of children in high-quality ECCE programs, services, and settings within and across a mixed delivery system.	11-14
Statutory Requirements: Assess current federal, state, and local statutory requirements and identify any potential barriers or roadblocks that these requirements put on future coordination.	11-14
Measurable Indicators: Identify how the state/territory will use indicator data to assess progress, key desired outcomes, inform cost and resource efficiency, and support continuous quality improvement	15
State Advisory Council: Describe how the state/territory will continue to involve the State Advisory Council in the implementation of the strategic plan	6-7, 11, 17

Figure 2.

Alignment with Needs Assessment Domains	Page
Focal Populations for the Grant	11-17
Quality and Availability	11-17
Children Being Served and Awaiting Service	11-17
Gaps in data on Quality and Availability of programming and supports for children and families	11-17
Gaps in data/research to support collaboration in programs/ services and maximize parental choice	11-17
Measurable Indicators of Progress	15
Issues Involving Early Childhood Care and Education Facilities	11-17
Barriers to the Funding and Provision of High-Quality ECCE Services and Supports and Opportunities for More Efficient Use of Resources	11-17
Transition Supports and Gaps	11-17
System Integration and Interagency Collaboration	11-17

II. Findings from the 2019 Preschool Development Grant Birth-5 Needs Assessment

North Dakota's statewide strategic plan stems directly from the findings of the comprehensive needs assessment conducted in 2019. That connection is shown in more detail in the section of this report describing the components of the strategic plan. Through extensive research and synthesis of previously prepared reports and available data, as well as the analysis of results of focus groups, interviews, and surveys, the North Dakota PDG needs assessment identifies six areas where the state should prioritize its efforts to enhance early care and education.

1. Capacity

- a) Child care enrollment and capacity cannot be calculated accurately with currently available data. North Dakota's early care and education settings include licensed and unlicensed child care providers operating in centers and in homes, Head Start programs, and private and public pre-K. Special education units and early intervention services might be imbedded in these settings or provided by a different organization. The number of programs does not equal the number of providers, as one provider may offer multiple programs.
- b) Even with the previously noted data limitations regarding enrollment and capacity, current child care capacity is not meeting the demand for early care and education in North Dakota. Child Care Aware data and analyses show a substantial gap between the number of children needing care and the current capacity of child care. Survey data support this finding that capacity cannot meet the current need for child care.
- c) Available data show significant fluctuations within each type of licensed provider over the course of a year, indicating an unstable market, especially among group in-home and family providers. Rural communities with even fewer available providers might be impacted even more by such considerable fluctuations in the number of providers.
- d) Demand for child care is especially high for infants, children with special needs, and those requiring more flexible hours. Survey and interview data supported these conclusions.
- e) Issues with capacity and availability impact North Dakota's ability to attract and retain a high-quality work force. Providing parents with quality child care and education options will be essential to attract and retain people in the workforce.

2. Barriers to Access

- a) The high cost of child care and the lack of financial assistance can make early care and education programs inaccessible for lower-income families and for middle-income families who do not qualify for assistance programs.
- b) Children with special needs and children for whom English is not their first language also face obstacles in accessing early care and education. Key informants, providers, and parents indicated the need for more support for special needs children and dual language learners.
- c) A lack of information on available programs and information regarding how to navigate and access appropriate services also create barriers for accessing early care and

education. Parents are not sure how to access the care they need and are uncertain how to navigate the system of care available.

3. Quality

- a) Quality early care and education is difficult for North Dakota parents to define and identify.
- b) The state's only quality rating system for child care is almost unknown to parents, is voluntary for child care providers, and has extremely limited participation.

4. Challenges for Providers

- a) Providers of early care and education in North Dakota face numerous challenges as business owners and employers. They have difficulty hiring and maintaining quality staff in the midst of high employment rates across the state. They have to compete for employees against other businesses that can offer higher wages for staff with the same qualifications.
- b) Regulations and business costs exacerbate some of the other challenges faced by providers.

5. Challenges in the Mixed Delivery System

- a) This complex system hinders the efficient delivery of services to children, parents, and providers. There is not a one-stop-shop to help parents understand and locate child care services or assistance.
- b) The complexity of the mixed delivery system inhibits the collection and sharing of data on early care and education programs. Furthermore, the system itself is a barrier to providers entering the market and continuing or expanding services.

6. Issues with Available Data

- a) Data concerning early care and education are not easily accessible on any state reporting platform. Each department maintains its program data independently from the other, if the data are collected.
- b) There are currently no unduplicated data for ECE programs, capacity, or enrollment. This is largely due to DPI and DHS data being siloed between licensed child care providers and other programs in North Dakota, and because any data collected on children do not include a unique identifier for each child across all systems.
- c) In addition to the lack of data available regarding the number of children enrolled and the number and types of providers, funding amounts allocated for specific ECE programs are not readily available to the public or to many individuals within state agencies. Financial information is available for federal programs such as Early Head Start, Head Start, Part B, and Part C; however, it is unclear if state dollars are further supporting these programs and to what extent.

III. Strategic Planning Process

North Dakota’s vision is to *have a coordinated birth-5 ECE system with shared data capabilities that prioritizes early relationships and quality services*. To achieve that vision, state leaders utilized the data and analysis in the comprehensive needs assessment when crafting the strategic planning framework. North Dakota’s PDG strategic planning process consisted of three phases: Phase 1: using the findings of the needs assessment to draft the strategic plan and then refine it based on stakeholder feedback; Phase 2: gathering feedback about the draft strategic plan from stakeholders through multiple methods of data collection; and Phase 3: using this feedback to develop action steps and finalize the strategic plan.



Phase 1

To draft the initial framework of the statewide strategic plan, Greenway Strategy Group (GSG) facilitated a Design Session with members of the Inter-Departmental Preschool Development Grant (IDPDG) Planning Group on September 28, 2019. IDPDG team members reviewed the findings from the needs assessment and brainstormed answers to the following questions:

1. What benefits for the children, families, and communities in ND are we hoping to see by enhancing the early childhood landscape?
2. What are the most promising areas where we can focus improvement within the early care and education system in order to enhance the outcomes we seek?

By categorizing their responses to these questions into themes, the IDPDG team members drafted initial outcomes, goals and objectives comprising the main pieces of the draft strategic plan for the state to enhance early care and education.

A few days later on September 30, 2019, state leaders and a GSG facilitator presented detailed findings from the comprehensive needs assessment as well as this draft strategic planning framework to members of the Governor’s Early Childhood Education Council. This group of stakeholders held a robust discussion and provided direction to further refine the strategic plan.

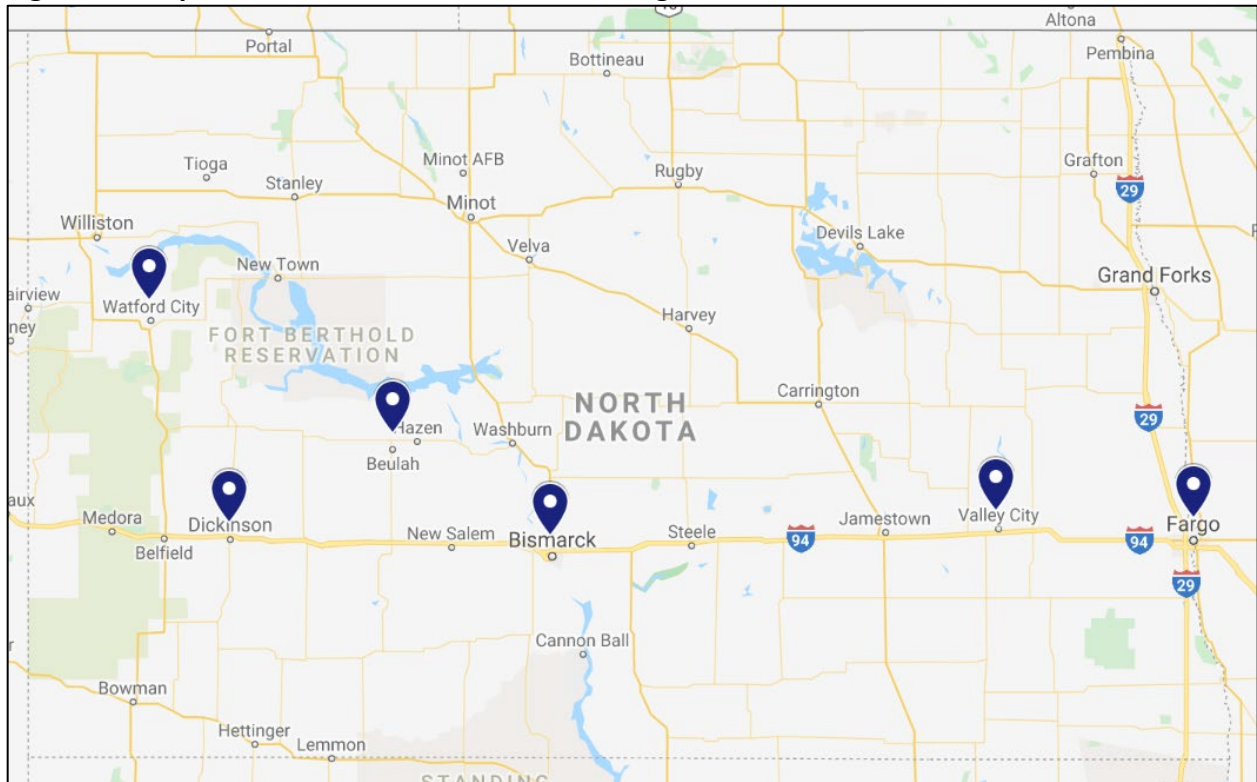
Phase 2

For the second phase of the strategic planning process, North Dakota continued to engage a variety of stakeholders through multiple methods of data collection. From October through December 2019, GSG staff traveled across the state to share the draft strategic planning framework with stakeholders through a series of engagement sessions, which included presentations, focus groups, and a survey, as shown in the table *Stakeholder Feedback on ND Statewide Strategic Plan*. The map in Figure 4 shows the locations of these meetings across North Dakota, including two statewide conferences and meetings in several smaller communities.

Figure 3. Stakeholder Feedback on ND Statewide Strategic Plan

Event	Location	Number of Participants	Date
ND K-12 Educators Conference	Bismarck (included participants from across the state)	14	Oct10
Main Street Initiative Summit Conference (Survey of Attendees)	Bismarck (included participants from across the state)	141	Oct 30
Vision West Consortium meeting	Beulah	52	Nov 13-14
Main Street Initiative convened meeting	Dickinson	4	Dec 9
Main Street Initiative convened meeting	Watford City	9	Dec 10
Main Street Initiative convened meeting	Valley City	5	Dec 11
United Way of Cass and Clay convened meeting	Fargo	17	Dec 12
United Way of Cass and Clay convened meeting	Fargo	5	Dec 12
Week of December 9th – Survey shared with meeting attendees to share with others	Dickinson, Watford City, Valley City, Fargo	21	Dec 9 - 13
Participants in the December meetings included representatives from local government, school systems, hospitals, community development, child care providers, child care licensing, and Child Care Aware.			

Figure 4. Map of Stakeholder Feedback Gathering



The engagement sessions entailed a presentation of the findings from the needs assessment as well as the draft strategic planning framework, followed by a facilitated discussion framed by these questions:

1. Regarding this strategic planning framework, what works well? What would you change? Is anything missing?
2. Within these objectives, are there specific initiatives or ideas you would like to see in your community to enhance early care and education?

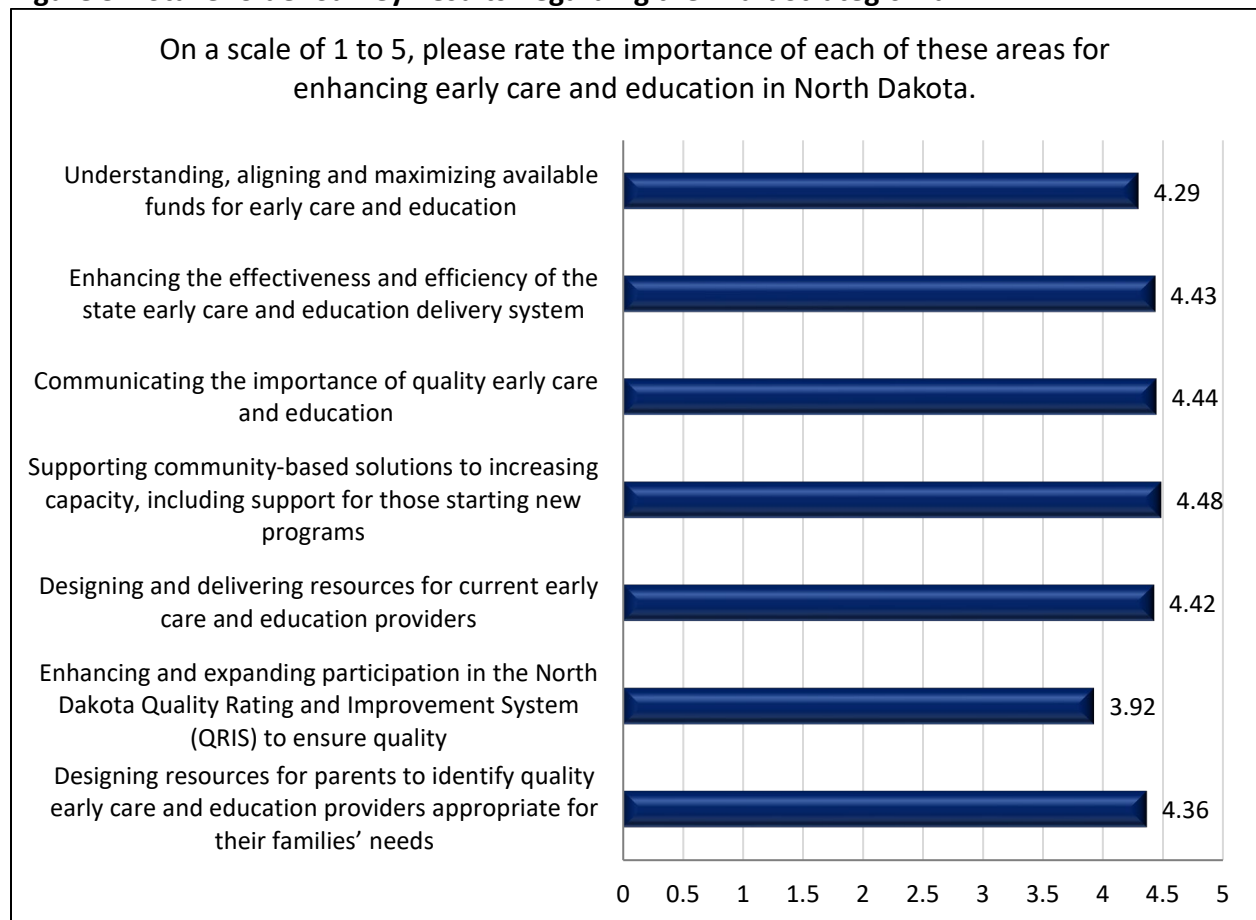
Session attendance was tracked and comments from each session were tabulated, but all feedback was summarized and not attributed to any one individual. Attendees at the engagement sessions expressed that the draft strategic plan objectives would focus on improvement in the areas of highest need. Stakeholders from across the state noted that the needs assessment findings reflected their own experiences, especially with regard to a lack of capacity, challenges for providers, and challenges from the mixed delivery system.

Stakeholder feedback was also collected through a survey about the draft strategic planning framework. The survey questionnaire is included in Appendix D. At the Main Street Initiative Summit in October, GSG staff set up a PDG informational booth and engaged conference attendees during the Marketplace, a room full of informational booths available during the conference. At the PDG booth, attendees could view the highlights from the needs assessment and take the survey online in real time. One hundred forty-one attendees responded to the

survey that day. The survey results shown in Figure 5, echoed the engagement session feedback and validated that the draft strategic plan focused efforts in the appropriate areas for enhancing early care and education in North Dakota.

State and community leaders from across North Dakota worked with GSG staff to coordinate the logistical arrangements for the engagement sessions, including securing facilities and sending invitations. The Director of the Office of Early Learning in the Department of Public Instruction arranged for the presentation and discussion at the ND Educators Conference, and conference attendees selected the session from the conference list. The engagement sessions in Dickinson, Watford City, and Valley City, in addition to the booth at the Main Street Summit, were organized by staff from the state Department of Commerce, Office of the Main Street Initiative. Invitations were sent to community members affiliated with the Main Street initiative in these areas. Attendance at the Vision West Consortium meeting was coordinated with the help of Main Street Initiative staff and Vision West directors, with all Vision West members invited. The two engagement sessions in Fargo were organized by the directors of the United Way of Cass and Clay in Fargo.

Figure 5. Stakeholder Survey Results Regarding the Draft Strategic Plan



Phase 3

The final step in the development of the strategic plan entailed another Design Session to review stakeholder feedback about the draft strategic plan, develop action steps, and finalize the overall strategic plan framework. GSG staff summarized the comments from the engagement sessions, as well as the survey data, analyzing all feedback for common themes and alignment with the draft objectives in the strategic planning framework. In late December 2019, GSG staff presented the summary and analysis of the stakeholder feedback, including validating comments and suggested ideas for action within each of the objectives. Common themes from the stakeholder feedback included 1) challenges for child care providers in operating a viable business in the face of rising costs; 2) challenges with the state and local delivery system of licensing and regulations; and 3) challenges parents face in accessing information about the availability of early care and education.

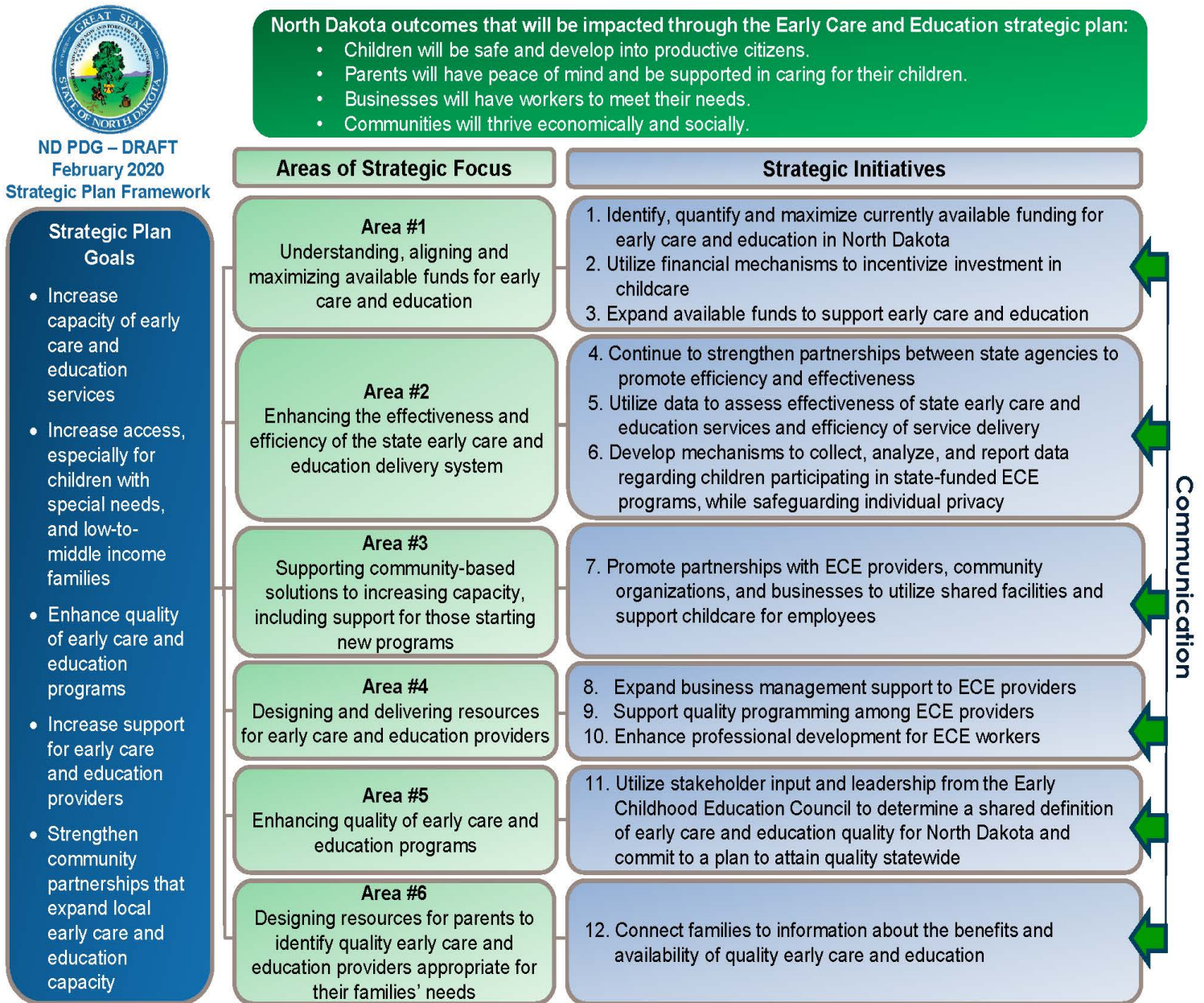
GSG staff then facilitated a discussion and brainstorming exercise with IDPDG members to draft the initiatives (deems “action steps” in the final strategic plan) for each objective area. The group first discussed what constitutes an initiative—an action step that results in sustained changes in practices and approaches. Then the team members shared their individual ideas for initiatives and discussed how to categorize the initiatives, including combining some ideas and delaying the implementation of other ideas. Team members acknowledged their brainstorming and strategic planning occurs within the context of limited funding and without the ability to alter the current state of rules and regulations.

Throughout the exercise, team members reflected on the feedback from stakeholders, and adjusted their ideas accordingly. One of the common themes heard from stakeholders entailed increased communication with parents and community members regarding early care and education. As a result, IDPDG team members determined that “communication” should be improved with regard to all aspects of the strategic plan, which is reflected in the final strategic planning framework. As the final step in this exercise, GSG facilitators helped IDPDG staff further refine their strategic plan objectives and action steps to the framework included in this report. The team revisited the framework in January 2020 to review and finalize each part of the strategic plan. The final strategic planning framework is presented in the next section of this report, along with a detailed description of its components.

IV. North Dakota's Statewide Strategic Plan

The PDG Strategic Plan will guide the work of IDPDG team members and their state departments in their efforts to enhance early care and education across the state. The Governor's Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC) will continue to be engaged and involved in this work as the strategic plan is implemented and as progress is measured. The PDG Strategic Plan framework is presented in the following graphic. (For a larger image, please refer to Appendix E.)

Figure 6. Strategic Plan Framework



The strategic plan begins with overarching outcomes that aim to improve life for all North Dakotans. However; in order to make these improvements, North Dakota should address the Strategic Plan Goals, which are focused solely on early care and education. The Strategic Plan Goals address the need for greater capacity, access, and quality. In addition to these three areas, support for child care providers and strengthening of community partnerships are included as Strategic Plan Goals. The objectives represent the areas in which North Dakota will focus its efforts to address both the goals and outcomes. Action steps fall under each objective. These action steps are the strategic initiatives North Dakota will carry out to make strides towards the goals and outcomes of the strategic plan.

During the data collection phase of the comprehensive needs assessment, the lack of available data and the need for improved communications between agencies, providers, and families were overarching themes. To properly address each outcome, goal, and objective, North Dakota will need to collect, aggregate, and analyze data more effectively and utilizing new and different practices. This level of change will require a shift of culture across agencies. Additionally, stakeholder feedback gathered from interviews and focus groups with parents, providers, and community members showed that any expansion in programming and services will need to be properly communicated. Targeted and consistent communication must accompany every action and initiative in the strategic plan.

Objective #1: Understanding, aligning and maximizing available funds for early care and education

In North Dakota child care providers struggle to maintain staff, comply with licensing requirements, charge competitive prices, and manage their businesses without losing money. Parents struggle to pay for the early care and education services their children need, when they can locate available services. The needs assessment showed that in order to assist families needed services and to increase the number of early care and education providers, North Dakota will need to invest in providing more services for children and families.

- **Action Steps:**

1. Identify, quantify and maximize currently available funding for early care and education in North Dakota
 - a. Current funds include approximately \$175,000 in the Continuing Education Grant, about \$2.3 million in Part C funds, about \$800,000 in Part B (619) funds, \$150,000 in Inclusion Grants, \$125,000 for Head Start, and about \$8 million in Child Care Development Fund monies
2. Utilize financial mechanisms to incentivize investment in childcare
3. Expand available funds to support early care and education
 - a. Pre-planning meetings prior to 2021 legislation will take place over the next year.

Objective #2: Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the state early care and education delivery system

The mixed delivery system in North Dakota has created duplication of services, inefficiency, and confusion for state agencies, providers, and families. Most importantly, the mixed delivery system has led to incomplete or duplication in data collection. Creating a more effective and efficient delivery system will address these concerns raised in the needs assessment and allow North Dakota to measure the strategic plan's impact more accurately.

- **Action Steps:**

4. Continue to strengthen partnerships between state agencies to promote efficiency and effectiveness
 - a. DOH leads the Work-as-One Needs Assessment Integration Initiative, and early childhood is an important population domain of this initiative
5. Utilize data to assess effectiveness of state early care and education services and efficiency of service delivery
 - a. IDPDG team members are working closely with ITD and the executive state steering committee to move forward with efforts to develop the state's Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)
6. Develop mechanisms to collect, analyze, and report data regarding children participating in state-funded ECE programs, while safeguarding individual privacy

Objective #3: Supporting community-based solutions to increasing capacity, including support for those starting new programs

Communities across North Dakota are sharing success stories of partnerships created to provide more early care and education services to families. While the needs of communities vary across North Dakota, innovative partnerships have proven to be successful ways for meeting their needs. Incentivizing and promoting these options to communities will have a positive impact on the capacity of services, especially in the most rural communities.

- **Action Steps:**

7. Promote partnerships with ECE providers, community organizations, and businesses to utilize shared facilities and support childcare for employees

Objective #4: Designing and delivering resources for early care and education providers

Providers across North Dakota expressed the need for additional support and resources from state agencies. These action steps address the need for business management support, programming, and professional development.

- **Action Steps:**

8. Expand business management support to ECE providers
 - a. Child Care Aware currently offers Start Up services
9. Support quality programming among ECE providers
 - a. Professional development opportunities are currently offered as part of PDG, and planning and coordination of future activities will continue
10. Enhance professional development for ECE workers

Objective #5: Enhancing quality of early care and education programs

North Dakota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) currently has low participation from child care providers, and there is not a commonly used definition of quality early care and education. Determining a shared definition across agencies will be the first step to creating a commonly used definition of quality, increasing participation in QRIS, and improving quality in programs across the state.

- **Action Steps:**

11. Utilize stakeholder input and leadership from the Early Childhood Education Council to determine a shared definition of early care and education quality for North Dakota and commit to a plan to attain quality statewide

Objective #6: Designing resources for parents to identify quality early care and education providers appropriate for their families’ needs

Parents have found the mixed delivery system difficult to navigate in addition to the struggles of finding early care and education to meet the needs of their children. This objective addresses the issues and concerns documented in the needs assessment. Increased communication and more information are vital for all parts of the strategic plan.

- **Action Steps:**

12. Connect families to information about the benefits and availability of quality early care and education
 - a. Currently the state has contracted with NDIT to connect families to much-needed information

V. Measures

Below are the indicators that will be used to evaluate progress of the strategic plan. The IDPDG will regularly review these measures to determine progress of the goals and objectives within the strategic plan. Currently, some of the data needed to measure indicators are not being collected, so North Dakota will need to prioritize the objective aiming at increasing efficiency to have successful evaluation. New data will need to be collected and aggregated across state agencies.

Figure 7. Strategic Goals and Measures

GOALS	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
Increase capacity of early care and education services	Growth in the capacity of licensed child care services for children birth to 5	Growth in the capacity of early education services (Head Start and pre-K programs)	Growth in the number of licensed child care providers offering care outside of traditional business hours	Growth in the number of early child care and education providers
Increase access, especially for children with special needs and low-to-middle income families	Continued monitoring of the number of children participating in Part B and Part C	Growth in the number of children from low-income families receiving early care and education services	Growth in the number of licensed child care providers offering services to special needs children	Growth in the number of service providers offering Part B and Part C services
Enhance quality of early care and education programs	Growth in the number of programs participating in QRIS	Growth in the number of programs in Steps 3 and 4	Growth in the number of children enrolled in participating QRIS programs	Growth in the number of children enrolled in QRIS programs rated at Steps 3 or 4
Increase support for early care and education providers	Increased number of partnerships between ECE providers, community organizations and businesses to utilize facilities and support ECE for employees	Increased number of trainings and professional development resources for early care and education providers	Increased access to instructional materials for early care and education providers	
Strengthen community partnerships that expand local early care and education capacity	Growth in the number of early care and education programs with reported partnerships with local education agencies	Growth in the number of reported community partnerships with early care and education providers	Growth in the number of businesses offering early child care and education support to employees	

VI. Connection between PDG Needs Assessment Findings, Domains and PDG Strategic Plan

The findings of the needs assessment directly influenced development of the objectives and goals of the strategic plan. Figure 8 below shows the connection between each objective in the strategic plan and the corresponding findings from the needs assessment. Each objective is intended to address more than one finding.

Figure 8. Connection between Objectives and Findings from Needs Assessment

Objective	Findings
Understanding, aligning, and maximizing available funds for early care and education	Capacity
	Barriers to access
	Quality
	Challenges for providers
	Challenges in the mixed delivery system
	Issues with available data
Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the state early care and education delivery system	Challenges for providers
	Challenges in the mixed delivery system
	Issues with available data
Supporting community-based solutions to increasing capacity, including support for those starting new programs	Capacity
	Barriers to access
	Challenges for providers
Designing and delivering resources for early care and education providers	Capacity
	Barriers to access
	Quality
	Challenges for providers
Enhancing quality of early care and education programs	Quality
Designing resources for parents to identify quality early care and education providers appropriate for their families' needs	Barriers to access
	Quality
	Challenges for providers
	Challenges in the mixed delivery system

Connection to Domains Required in Needs Assessment

The PDG comprehensive needs assessment addressed the areas of need among North Dakota's birth-5 population in alignment with the domains required by federal PDG guidelines. The PDG strategic plan was developed based on the findings from the needs assessment, which covered the domains required by federal guidelines, which are listed in Figure 2 of this document.

The focal population for the PDG needs assessment and strategic plan includes children ages birth-5 who are at-risk due to developmental delay; live in poverty or on a reservation; have experienced trauma, foster care, or homelessness; or are a dual language learner. Children living in rural communities are also a part of this focus, since 39.5% of the North Dakota population lives in rural communities. One of the findings from the needs assessment highlighted the limited availability of unduplicated data on the target population. The second

objective of the strategic plan aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the early care and education system—including improving the collection and use of data on this target population—and includes activities that will increase and align available data across state agencies. The increase in available data will allow North Dakota to gain a better understanding of the focal populations within the needs assessment and to go even further in quantifying and examining gaps in access and service to those communities. Improving data collection, availability and utilization will also enable North Dakota to focus efforts on enhancing early care and education for all children in the state, including those in the focal population for PDG.

The findings from the needs assessment included the lack of capacity or availability of early care and education and the barriers to accessing available care, including barriers to funding. The first three goals of the PDG strategic plan drive improvement toward enhancing quality and availability of early care and education, with *Objective #1 Understanding, aligning and maximizing available funds for early care and education* focusing improvement on the barriers to funding.

The PDG needs assessment highlighted challenges North Dakota faces when measuring the quality and availability of early care and education across the state. The lack of unduplicated data and the inefficiencies of the mixed delivery system impede the ability of the state to improve quality and availability of early care and education, in addition to inhibiting how North Dakota quantifies the number of children being served or awaiting service, the gaps in data on programming and supports for children, the gaps in data/ research supporting collaboration in programs and services, issues involving ECCE facilities, and transition supports and gaps currently in the state.

Data issues and the complex mixed delivery system in North Dakota have created challenges for providers and families across the state and led to inefficiencies in the delivery of services to children and families, data collection, and use of available funds. State administrators are aware of these challenges across agencies and implications for the provision of services. As a result, all of the objectives in the PDG strategic plan aim to address these domain areas by increasing interagency collaboration for improved efficiency. *Objective #2 Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the state early care and education delivery system* specifically endeavors to target state improvement efforts in this domain area. In addition, *Objective #5 Enhancing quality of early care and education programs* aims North Dakota improvement efforts toward the issue of *quality* directly.

VII. Next Steps

Although the state of North Dakota did not receive the PDG renewal grant—decisions were announced in late December 2019—IDPDG team members and the Governor’s ECEC will use the PDG Strategic Plan to guide the focus and priorities for North Dakota early childhood and education services. The IDPDG team will continue to meet regularly to phase their work and implementation. As new work is started, the team will also continue to measure progress based on the indicators listed above.

Appendix A
Inter-Departmental Preschool Development Grant Planning Group

State Agency	Title	Administrator
Department of Public instruction	Director, Office of Early Learning	Tara Fuhrer
Department of Public instruction	Part B 619 Coordinator	Angela Shull McSweyn
Department of Public instruction	Head Start/ Early Head Start Collaboration Administrator	Carolyn Kueber <i>As of October 2019</i>
Department of Public instruction	21st Century After School Administrator	Rebecca Eberhardt
Department of Human Services	Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Administrator	Amanda Carlson
Department of Human Services	Part C Coordinator	Jacqueline Adusumilli
Department of Health	Section Chief for Healthy and Safe Communities	Kim Mertz
Information Technology Department	Enterprise Architect	Tracy Korsmo
Department of Commerce	Program Specialist	Kerry Kraft

Appendix B
North Dakota Part C Interagency Coordinating Council

Representing	Name	City
Childcare, DHS	Amanda Carlson	Bismarck
DD Division, DHS	Tina Bay	Bismarck
Head Start, DPI	Becky Eberhardt	Bismarck
Foster Care, DHS	Tonya Canerot	Dickinson
SHS, Health Dept.	Kim Hruby	Bismarck
Higher Education	Shannon Grave	West Fargo
Homeless Program, DPI	Beth Larson-Steckler	
Insurance Department	Vacant	
Legislator	Sen. Nicole Poolman	Bismarck
Medicaid, DHS	Jodi Hulm	Bismarck
Behavioral Health, DHS	Kelli Ulberg	Bismarck
Special Ed, DPI	Valerie Bakken	Bismarck
Parent – Region I	Matthew Nelson	Williston
Parent – Region II	Holly Major	Minot
Parent – Region III	Vacant	
Parent – Region IV	Meredith Quinn	Grand Forks
Parent – Region V	Eric Gault	Fargo
Parent – Region VI	Mary Haugen	Jamestown
Parent – Region VII	Christopher Pieske	Bismarck
Parent – Region VIII	Sarah Carlson	Dickinson
Provider – Family Voices	Moe Schroeder	Hunter
Provider –	Vacant	
Provider – HIT, Inc.	Jill Staudinger	Dickinson
Provider – Lutheran Social Services of ND	Missi Baranko	Dickinson
Provider DD Unit, NEHSC	Carol Brakel	Grand Forks

Appendix C
North Dakota Governor's Early Childhood Education Council

Member Name	Position	County
Albrecht, Darren	Governor's Appointee - Supt. of Small School District	Walsh
Baesler, Superintendent Kirsten	Statutory - Dept. of Public Instruction designee	Burleigh
Bakken, Valerie	Governor's Appointee - Individuals Representing Children with Disabilities	
Bear Ribs, Carmelita	Governor's Appointee - Reservation-based Headstart Program	
Driessen, Allison	Statutory - Head Start State Collaboration Administrator	
Hornbacher, Jason	Governor's Appointee - Supt. of Large School District	Burleigh
Jones, Christopher	Statutory - Human Services designee	Burleigh
Jutila, Angela	Governor's Appointee - Parent Rep. of a Child Not Yet Enrolled in Elementary School	
Keegan, Rachel	Governor's Appointee - Parent Rep. of a Child w/ Disabilities Not Yet Enrolled in Elementary School	Burleigh
Kommer, Michelle	Statutory - Commissioner of Commerce Designee	Cass
Mertz, Kim	Statutory - State Health Office Designee	Burleigh
Moberg, Tessa	Governor's Appointee - Center-based licensed child care provider	McKenzie
Ogaard, Katie	Governor's Appointee - Elected Member of a School Board	
Owens, Representative Mark	Statutory - Chair of House Education Committee	Grand Forks
Piechowski, Stacey	Governor's Appointee - Home-based Licensed Child Care	Cass
Sanford, Lt. Governor Brent	Chairman - Office of the Governor	Burleigh
Schaible, Senator Donald	Statutory - Chair of Senate Education Committee	Hettinger
Sjol, David	Governor's Appointee - Supt. of Reservation-Based School District	Rolette
Steckler, Tanya	Governor's Appointee - Religious-based Preschool Provider	Ward
Thorpe, Leslee	Statutory - Commissioner of Higher Ed designee	Ward
Wolff, Elizabeth	Governor's Appointee - Non religious-based provider of early childhood education	Dickey

Appendix D Strategic Plan Input Survey



Input on ND's Strategic Plan for Early Care & Education

As a part of the Preschool Development Grant, North Dakota conducted a Needs Assessment for the birth to five population in the state. Using those findings, we are now developing a Strategic Plan focused on enhancing early care and education for children, ages 0-5.

Your input will be aggregated with other feedback to help develop the state's Strategic Plan. Thank you.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the importance of each of these areas for enhancing early care and education in North Dakota.

	1 - Not Very Important	2 - Somewhat Important	3 - Moderately Important	4 - Important	5 - Very Important
Communicating the importance of quality early care and education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Designing and delivering resources for current early care and education providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting community-based solutions to increasing capacity, including support for those starting new programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing and expanding participation in the North Dakota Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to ensure quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding, aligning and maximizing available funds for early care and education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the state early care and education delivery system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Designing resources for parents to identify quality early care and education providers appropriate for their families' needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Are there any specific initiatives or ideas that you would like to see in your community to improve early care and education?

3. If you have additional suggestions or comments, please share them here.



ND PDG – DRAFT
February 2020
Strategic Plan Framework

North Dakota outcomes that will be impacted through the Early Care and Education strategic plan:

- Children will be safe and develop into productive citizens.
- Parents will have peace of mind and be supported in caring for their children.
- Businesses will have workers to meet their needs.
- Communities will thrive economically and socially.

Strategic Plan Goals

- Increase capacity of early care and education services
- Increase access, especially for children with special needs, and low-to-middle income families
- Enhance quality of early care and education programs
- Increase support for early care and education providers
- Strengthen community partnerships that expand local early care and education capacity

Areas of Strategic Focus

Area #1
Understanding, aligning and maximizing available funds for early care and education

Area #2
Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the state early care and education delivery system

Area #3
Supporting community-based solutions to increasing capacity, including support for those starting new programs

Area #4
Designing and delivering resources for early care and education providers

Area #5
Enhancing quality of early care and education programs

Area #6
Designing resources for parents to identify quality early care and education providers appropriate for their families' needs

Strategic Initiatives

1. Identify, quantify and maximize currently available funding for early care and education in North Dakota
2. Utilize financial mechanisms to incentivize investment in childcare
3. Expand available funds to support early care and education
4. Continue to strengthen partnerships between state agencies to promote efficiency and effectiveness
5. Utilize data to assess effectiveness of state early care and education services and efficiency of service delivery
6. Develop mechanisms to collect, analyze, and report data regarding children participating in state-funded ECE programs, while safeguarding individual privacy
7. Promote partnerships with ECE providers, community organizations, and businesses to utilize shared facilities and support childcare for employees
8. Expand business management support to ECE providers
9. Support quality programming among ECE providers
10. Enhance professional development for ECE workers
11. Utilize stakeholder input and leadership from the Early Childhood Education Council to determine a shared definition of early care and education quality for North Dakota and commit to a plan to attain quality statewide
12. Connect families to information about the benefits and availability of quality early care and education

Communication