

# **Montgomery County Early Childhood Coordinating Council**

## **Report 2015-2016**



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## MEMORANDUM

**November 30, 2016**

TO: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
The Honorable Nancy Floreen, President, Montgomery County Council

FROM: Barbara Andrews, Ph.D., Co-Chair, Administrator, Early Childhood Services  
Deann Collins, Co-Chair, Director, Title I and Early Childhood Programs, MCPS

SUBJECT: The Early Childhood Advisory Council 2015-2016 Report and 2016-2017  
Priorities

The Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC) is pleased to submit its 2015-2016 report and 2016-2017 priorities. The role of the ECCC is to monitor, advocate, and make policy recommendations for developing a comprehensive, coordinated early care and education system that supports school readiness and provides support to state and local initiatives.

The ECCC is comprised of a variety of stakeholders and professionals with expertise in the early childhood field including: County parents, business and foundation representatives, child care providers, Montgomery County Public School staff, Maryland State Department of Education staff, Montgomery County Libraries and County Government representatives. Our collective knowledge and expertise about the early care and education system, the importance of school readiness, and children and families in Montgomery County allows the ECCC to examine, discuss, problem solve, and provide a complete perspective to County officials.

The ECCC was formed in 2015-2016 from the work of the prior Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) which was initially established at a request from the State Department of Education. County Council Bill 13-15 established the current coordinating council. The work of the ECCC this year has been focused on identifying priorities that will help to create a system of early care and education in the County and forward the goals of eliminating readiness gaps and reaching full readiness for kindergarten for all children. This report contains a summary of our work this past year.

We wish to recognize and thank those who participate in our meetings for their commitment and perseverance in doing this work. We look forward to continuing the important work of this council and continuing our relationship with public officials at the County and State.

## **Early Childhood Coordinating Council**

The Montgomery County Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC) was formed through County Council Bill 13-15 in May 2015 with membership transferred from the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) in the spring of 2016. In 2015-2016 the ECCC held five meetings including a half day retreat in April. ECCC Committees meet as part of the full ECCC meetings and as needed between meetings to do much of the work of the ECCC. The mission of the ECCC is to make policy recommendations for developing a comprehensive, coordinated system of early childhood education that supports school readiness, and provides support for state and local initiatives.

In the last year the ECCC worked on completing the work of three committees: Media and Outreach, Literacy and Pediatric Outreach, and Family Engagement. The recommendations in this report reflect the committee work. The ECCC began work with Otero Strategy Group on the Strategic Plan for early Care and Education.

### **Mission**

To monitor, advocate, and make policy recommendations for developing a comprehensive, coordinated system of early childhood education that supports school readiness, and provides support for state and local initiatives.

### **Meetings**

The full Council met on the second Thursday of each month, initially at Johns Hopkins University, Rockville Campus and beginning in April 2016 at 1401 Rockville Pike in the Early Childhood Training Center from 9:00am-12:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.

A significant portion of the ECCC's work is accomplished through Committees. Committee meetings take place at various times throughout the year and at full ECCC meetings. All meetings are open to the public.

Please call 240-777-1867 or visit

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ECCC](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ECCC)

**or**

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/earlychildhood/ecac.aspx>

## **Membership 2015-2016**

Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services \*Co-Chair  
Jennifer Arnaíz, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
JoAnn Barnes, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta, Maryland CentroNía Preschool  
Deann Collins, Montgomery County Public Schools \*Co-Chair  
April Kaplan, Montgomery County Collaboration Council  
Amy Cropp, Montgomery County Public Schools  
Carl Eggleston, Maryland State Department of Education  
Patsy Evans, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
Natasha Ramberg, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
Joan Glick, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
Kim Grant, Montgomery County Family Child Care Association  
Stephanie Brant, Montgomery County Public Schools  
Michelle Green, Montgomery Child Care Association  
Carol Legaretta, Montgomery County Public Libraries  
Barbara Marshall, Montgomery College  
Meredith Myers, Family Services, Inc.  
Bernadine Occhiuzzo, Montgomery County Commission on Child Care  
Linda Owen, Organization of Child Care Directors  
Tobi Printz-Platnick, Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation  
Claudia Simmons, Montgomery County Public Schools  
Rebecca Smith, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council

### Advisors to the ECCC 2015-2016

Jody Burghardt, Montgomery County Public Schools, Gaithersburg Judy Center  
Hilda Richards, Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Nurse Consultant  
Portia Willis, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Early Childhood  
Mental Health

### Staff to the ECCC

Sarah Wilch-Spamer, Montgomery County DHHS

## **Council Activities 2015-2016**

- Examined County Council Bill 13-15 for changes to ECCC and transferred from the Early Childhood Advisory Council to the ECCC.
- Presentation from Deann Collins, ECCC Co-Chair and Director of Title I and Early Childhood Programs, MCPS on MCPS reorganization (September 9, 2015).
- Full discussion and examination of the HUB Consortium concept outlined in County Council Bill 13-15.
- Presentations from JoAnn Barnes, Chief of Children, Youth and Families, DHHS on the County budget process and Early Childhood Services and from Deann Collins on MCPS released budget (February 10, 2016).
- Presentation from Dr. Rolf Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent, Early Childhood Development, Maryland State Department of Education on state Early Childhood initiatives, the end of Race-to-the-Top funding and priorities for early childhood (February 10, 2016).
- Initiated strategic planning work with Otero Strategy group at annual ECCC Retreat (April 13, 2016)
- Completed committee work and made recommendations to full ECCC (Literacy and Pediatric Outreach, Parent/Family Engagement, and Public Outreach/Media Campaign).
- Completed analysis of bus campaign aimed at increasing awareness of ChildLink as a resource and a referral site for parents with children birth to age five.
- Used research from a variety of sources, including the ECAC Focus Group Report and the Demographics Report to create priorities and recommendations.
- Discussed and provided feedback on an early childhood workforce development plan from the Washington Region Early Care & Education Workforce Network (April 13, 2016).
- Introduction of Monica Ortiz, Early Care and Education Policy Officer, DHHS (June 8, 2016).
- Presentation from JoAnn Barnes on final county budget and early childhood priorities (June 8, 2016).
- Presentation from Deann Collins, MCPS on coordination discussion with Title I principals in relation to child care programs and providers and transitions for children and families (June 8, 2016).

## ECCC Recommendations

The ECCC commends the County for recognizing the need for a new strategic plan and a process for working toward a system of early care and education. Recommendations for this report are based on the ECCC work in 2015-2016. Additional recommendations will be developed after the publication of the strategic plan in December 2016 and the ECCC understands that the strategic plan will address at least two of the recommendations from the 2014-2015 ECCC report. It is essential that programs that work with young children and their families that address children's development and their readiness for school take precedence in County priorities and strategic planning.

ECCC recommendations stem from committee work and fall into two categories:

- Providing coordinated access to resources and services for parents of young children
  - Assuring that Providers, Parents and Pediatricians have research informed knowledge about what young children need to thrive and be ready for school
- **The ECCC recommends** that the County develop and fully fund a comprehensive mobile application to meet the information and service referral needs of parents with young children aged birth to eight. Young parents use their phones for all other types of services. Funding the development of an app will provide families with a simple, accessible tool for the information they need on how children grow and learn will help improve outcomes for their children.
  - **The ECCC recommends** the development of an outreach campaign aimed at school readiness targeted at parents, providers and pediatricians. Developing consistent messaging to the community about what children need to grow, learn and thrive that is used county wide between government, public schools, and partners can provide crucial information on school readiness.
  - **The ECCC recommends** that the County Council fully fund the development and creation of a regional system of **Family Involvement Centers** based on best practice and research to meet the needs of young children and families from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. These programs should provide **play-based, inclusive** early childhood experiences in **classroom settings** for children and families with a curriculum focused on a **Family Coaching Model** and on the *Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL)* model for social and emotional development.

Through the **Focus Group Research** implemented by the previous Early Childhood Advisory Council (2014-2015), it is clear that two primary concerns for school readiness are a lack of appropriate social/emotional experiences and development before a child reaches kindergarten and children entering school with little language (either home language or English). The 2014 *Demographics Report: Families and Children Birth to Six Montgomery County, Maryland* reports large increases in cultural diversity and in low-income families in the County. Providing families with a coordinated approach to supports and services and providing programs that give their children teacher facilitated social experiences in groups and utilize a parent coaching approach is essential to their readiness for kindergarten. Additionally, parents, child care providers and pediatricians need up-to-date information about how young children learn and how to best promote school readiness.



## **ECCC Priorities 2016-2017**

ECCC Priorities for 2016-2017 will also be informed by the Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education being released later this year.

Building a seamless system of care from birth to age eight in Montgomery County requires improved communication and connections within the entire early childhood system and requires aligned resources for families and young children.

- 1.) Create a Birth-3<sup>rd</sup> grade system of early childhood education via a dialogue between Birth-5 and K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade professionals that also includes improved communication with parents
- 2.) Align resources to maximize support to families provided by programs and services
- 3.) Support the development of family engagement and other opportunities with an emphasis on social/emotional development and kindergarten readiness

**Isiah Leggett, County Executive**  
**Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director**  
**JoAnn Barnes, Chief Children, Youth and Families**  
**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Early Childhood Coordinating Council**  
**1401 Rockville Pike, Suite 200**  
**Rockville, Maryland 20852**  
**240-777-1867 Voice, Maryland Relay 711, 240-777-1153 FAX**

Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call or write at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

*Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.*

