Building and Sustaining an Early Childhood System in Minnesota
Our Purpose

To engage in a candid discussion about how Minnesota’s leaders can deliver on their ambitious promises, and lead the nation in early childhood systems development
Take-Away Messages

• MN needs to build capacity and leadership at all levels of the system
• MN leaders need to find the right balance among the inherent tensions within EC policy-making
Core Functions of a Comprehensive Early Childhood System

- Define and Coordinate Leadership
- Recruit and Engage Stakeholders
- Ensure Accountability
- Create and Support Improvement Strategies
- Finance Strategically
- Enhance and Align Standards

Early Learning and Development

Outcome: Thriving Children and Families

Family Leadership and Support

Health
What Type of Policy Work Are You Really Doing?

- **CONTEXT:** Improving the political context that surrounds a system to produce policy changes needed to create and sustain it.

- **COMPONENTS:** Establishing high-performance programs and services within the system to produce results for children.

- **CONNECTIONS:** Creating strong linkages across the system components that further improve results for children.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Developing the supports systems need to function effectively and with quality (data systems, cross-system governance, etc.)

- **SCALE:** Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to as many children as possible to produce broad results.
A 20-Year Overnight Success

- Illinois: effective collaboration among foundations, advocates and state government
- Before: advocates often at cross-purposes
- Leaders have brought along Dem and GOP govs, trained state senators...
The Colorado Story

- Great framework, QRIS, local Councils, little prioritization
- Leadership troubles stalled progress
- Now RTT-ELC and new leaders have them poised for success
- Like MN: how to balance early learning with “whole child?”
Colorado’s EC Framework
North Carolina’s Long Game

• 1990’s – Gov. Jim Hunt, Smart Start
• 2011: under fire, organized effort to de-fund EC services
• The power of local partnerships as advocates: the firewall
• “War Room,” 501-c-4 lobbying, tapping GOP lobbyists
• State-level choreography requires well-trained dancers locally
North Carolina’s Quality Focus

• All early learning and development programs participate in QRIS, including public school and Head Start programs
• 68% of ALL subsidized children and 94% of children with special needs, are in 4 and 5 star programs
• 85% of all teachers are working toward an AA or BA
• NC has highest rates of early screenings of all states (ABCD project)
Diversity and Equity

• How inclusive are your planning and decision-making processes? Are all voices really being heard?
• How explicitly are you addressing issues of race, language and culture?
• Examine standards, QRIS, PD, measures, definitions
• No one has this down yet!
Diffusing Innovation

Chance Interactions | Meetings/Networking | Technical Assistance | Advocacy | Formal Training/Mentoring

Let it Happen | Help it Happen | Make it Happen

Social Networks | Peers | Experts | Champions | Change Agents
Final Thoughts

• Believe the cliché about shared vision and goals
• Be bold – don’t aim too low
• Lean in to the sharp points
• Be the duck
• Lead!!
The BUILD Initiative

For more information, visit www.buildinitiative.org

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