Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

Meeting #5

March 29, 2022

- **Please be on video** as much as possible to help with overall engagement

- **Mute self** when not speaking

- Use **Chat feature or "raise hand" button** for questions or comments

- Technical issues can happen to anyone – **chat privately to Hannah Quinn for any needs**

- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**

- Members of the **public can submit written feedback to** greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us

Welcome & Agenda

Welcome from our Co-Chairs

Shakira Bradshaw

Parent of Children under 5

Jenny Moses

Children's Cabinet

Sandy Simar

Early Educator

The Task Force is supported by:

- **Children's Cabinet Staff**: Erin Bailey, Hannah Quinn
- **Facilitation Team**: Afton Partners and Children's Funding Project

Develop a plan and implementation timeline that **ensures all families have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that enriches, nurtures, and supports children and their families.**

Revised Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles reflect the Task Force's values and beliefs, guide how it operates, and lay a foundation for decision-making

Promote Equity	Prioritize Family Perspectives, Needs, and Choices	Support the Power of Local Communities	Build Upon our Solid Foundation	Uplift and Diversify the ECE Workforce	Recognize Implementation Realities	Expect High Quality & Effectiveness	Design for Stability, Sustainability, and Positive Impact
We will prioritize a system that promotes equitable outcomes, with a specific focus on children of color and building cultural competency in ECE classrooms.	We will prioritize families' perspectives, needs, and choices as we make data driven and evidence informed recommendations, recognizing that all provider types and settings provide value to the system.	We will ensure local communities are able to define their own priorities and are supported to build the system that meets their children and families' needs.	We will build upon the successes of Minnesota's past and current system, lessons from other states, and the expertise and research in the field.	We will invest in our dedicated and capable early childhood professionals so that they have the opportunity to thrive and grow, and we will build and support a racially diverse workforce.	We will recognize inherent system constraints while remaining responsive to local, state, and federal landscape changes.	We will endeavor to create a high quality and effective ECE system that meets the needs of all of Minnesota's children and families, regardless of circumstance, knowing that the state's future workforce, economy, and resident welfare is dependent upon it	We will work to support funding stability for providers, educators, and staff across mixed delivery settings to ensure better service for families.

Reach conclusion on definition of 'historically disenfranchised groups'

Remind ourselves of stakeholders in the system

Move our vision for effectiveness forward

Identify access improvement options

Meeting #5 Discussion – 2 hours

6:00 – 6:15 p.m.   Welcome, agenda, Meeting 4 minutes approval, revisiting norms

6:15 – 6:20 p.m.   Formal vote: revised definition of historically disenfranchised groups

6:20 – 6:30 p.m.   Recap of legislators' recommendations and stakeholders the plan must consider

6:30 – 6:45 p.m.   Effectiveness definition

6:45 – 7:45 p.m.   Deep dive discussion: Access

7:45 – 7:55 p.m.   Working Group and listening session share-outs

7:55 – 8:00 p.m.   Timeline, next steps, meeting close out

Reminder: Norms & Expectations

- **Members attend meetings prepared and on time**
- **Engage in respectful dialogue**
  - Everyone's input is important
  - Assume best intent
  - Listen with an open mind, and for commonalities
  - Don't say or type anything you wouldn't want to have shared in public
- **Be actively engaged**
  - Don't just disagree, offer a doable alternative idea
  - Speak to the point on the floor
  - Apply your expertise and networks
- **Confirm decisions as we go**
  - Strike a balance between gathering input and moving forward

Protocols to ensure effective discussion

It is critical we use our very limited time together on topic.

- If conversation is **irrelevant to the topic at hand or becoming too narrow** for the scope of our work, *we will redirect with a gentle reminder of the topic at hand.*
- If conversation moves to **points already agreed to by the Task Force**, *we will redirect with a gentle reminder that the topic has been addressed.*

It is critical that all perspectives are heard.

- Please help us in ensuring all Task Force members have time in meetings to share their voice and input. *If you find you are speaking up often, pause to allow space for others.*
- Please let us know if you find it challenging, for any reason, to share your perspectives in our Task Force meetings.
- Reminder there are other opportunities to provide input outside of two-hour meetings, including 1:1 discussions with Task Force leadership, and by providing written input. Requests for individual time and any written input can be provided to greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us.

Open meeting law requires public bodies to **record and maintain votes** of its members. Virtual meetings require a vote by roll call.

Formal votes will include only voting members and formal votes will be held for items such as a statement on vision, or value or a recommendation to be included in the Task Force Plan.

Informal voting (ex. thumbs up) may be used to engage all Task Force members on items such as a matter of process, or an item necessary to get to a vision statement or recommendation.

Quorum is defined as a majority of voting members.

Reminder: Voting Procedures

Open meeting law requires public bodies to **record and maintain votes** of its members. Virtual meetings require a vote by roll call.

Formal votes will include only voting members and formal votes will be held regarding anything that would be included in the report and approval of the report.

Voting Members:

- Rep. Peggy Bennett
- Rep. Liz Boldon
- Shakira Bradshaw
- Meghan Caine
- Luciana Carballo

- Kathleen Church
- Sen. Karin Housley
- Pat Ives
- Brook LaFloe
- Adriana Lopez

- Jenny Moses
- Krystal Shatek
- Sandy Simar
- Jayne Whiteford
- Sen. Melissa Wiklund

Protocols to improve formal voting

As we move forward in our work, we will have many items requiring formal vote. Therefore, we must adhere to voting protocols that allow for effective use of our collective time:

- **As much as possible, items to be voted upon will be clearly noted at least one meeting prior to the vote**

  - Ex: items to be voted on in our <u>April</u> meeting will be clearly flagged <u>today.</u>

- **Ample opportunity will be provided to allow feedback on items for vote prior to the time of the vote**, including:

  - Task Force meetings prior to vote where the topic is addressed
  - Reminders of upcoming votes in Task Force emails with content to be voted upon
  - 1:1 discussion opportunities
  - Email feedback and discussion

- **If you suspect you will be unable to support a recommendation or are unsure, <u>please provide feedback prior to the meeting when it will be voted upon</u> to determine what changes would be necessary for you to support the recommendation.**

Please indicate your approval of the minutes from meeting #2 by using the '***Raise Hand***' icon/button in WebEx.

To do this, click on the 'smiley face' icon at the bottom of WebEx. After the dialog box opens, please click on the '***Raise Hand***' icon/button if you want to approve the minutes from meeting #3.
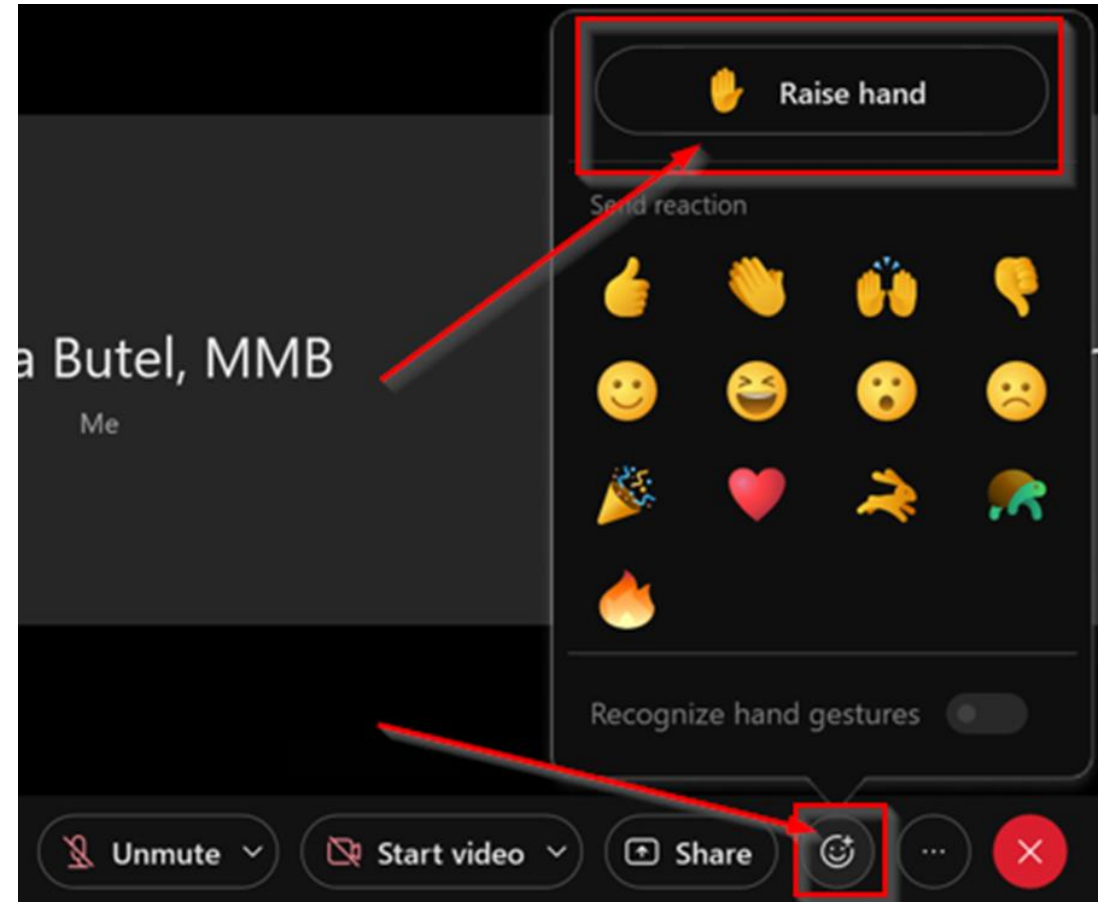
[UPDATED for vote] Which Groups have not experienced Equity in the ECE System?

Historically disenfranchised groups include:

- Racial and ethnic minorities, including People of Color and Indigenous people (POCI)

- **Members of the LGBTQIA community**

- Those experiencing multi-generational or ongoing trauma

- Those at risk of or with developmental delays or disabilities

- Those from **homes where English is not the primary language**

- Those experiencing homelessness or living in low-income households

Recap of legislators' recommendations and stakeholders the plan must consider

Legislators on this task force shared their insights on building toward an actionable plan
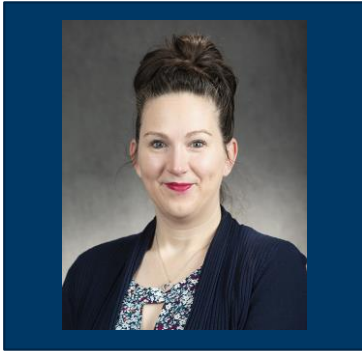
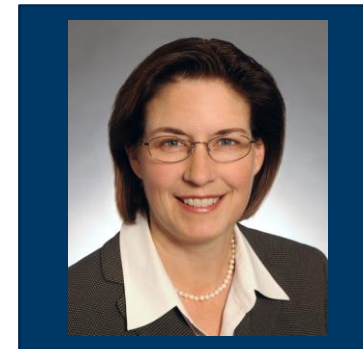Representative Liz Boldon, House District 25B
- Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee

Representative Peggy Bennett, House District 27A
- Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee

Senator Karin Housley, Senate District 39
- Vice Chair, Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Senate District 50
- Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee

Recommendations from legislators

- The plan and implementation timeline should be **as specific as possible** – recommendations should be **clear about intent and purpose** and should **include details and data**.

- The Task Force should **engage with legislators and stakeholders** through the plan development process. Continued buy-in from these groups will lead to a higher likelihood of success.

- There have been **other task forces and councils that weren't able to achieve implementation of their recommendations because of a lack of consensus**. That is something this Task Force should work to avoid.

- **Working groups** will be vital to meeting our timeline and goals. They will need to have specific tasks and work towards reaching goals.

- There is a **large amount of expertise and experience, thoughtfulness, diversity, and knowledge** on the Task Force. The group can harness that to produce a report that is actionable and leads to real change but needs to **work toward finding consensus and agreement.**

- **Providers –** The entities where services are being provided (businesses, family child care homes, school districts, etc.).*

- **Settings –** In a mixed delivery system, settings include licensed child care centers, licensed family child care providers, family friend and neighbor care, school-based pre-kindergarten, and Head Start programs

- **Programs** – The services provided to children (child care, PreK, etc.)

- **Workforce –** The staff (e.g.-educators, paraprofessionals, assistants) that provide early care and education.*

*Licensed Family Child Care are both providers and workforce

Child development, safety, and wellbeing during hours of employment or education

Prepared students ready to learn, preparing a workforce ready to teach

Business continuity and income

Economic well-being, including workforce availability, tax revenue from providers, and accountability for public dollars

Career options, pathways, and compensation

Workforce availability (near-term) and pipeline (long-term)

Parents / Families

K12 & Higher Ed

Providers

Children
Early childhood development and kindergarten readiness

State of MN

ECE Workforce

Businesses / Employers

Effectiveness Definition

Themes from 'Effectiveness' definition break out groups from Meeting #4

What did people **like**?

- Focus on building trusting relationships.
- Emphasis on social emotional well being and consistent/ nurturing environments.
- Relying on what families say they need.
- The definition is easy to understand.

What would you **change** or **what is missing**?

- Affirmation of the variety of cultures in society and focus on inclusivity and diversity.
- Diverse teachers that reflect the diversity of the children.
- Add 'culturally responsive environments'.
- Add 'cultural needs".
- Add "preparing kids to transition to Kindergarten or other settings".
- Add "trauma-informed, or trauma responsive".
- Families must be welcomed and treated with respect.

What would it take for providers to be able to offer this experience?

- Resources (Money, consistent funding, funding structure that works for providers and families)
- Adequate facilities and transportation
- Safe and healthy environment.
- Staffing (Additional staff and a stabilized workforce)
- Accountability to ensure effectiveness and supportive and non-punitive quality standards.
- Trauma-informed services
- Community/Legislative support
- Support systems (Take care of the PD, mental, and emotional well-being of ECE staff.)
- Training (Resources and supports)

Updated 'Effectiveness' definition

In addition to being <u>affordable</u> and <u>accessible</u>, an <u>effective</u> ECE system centers child and family well-being. It does this by:

- Ensuring offerings address and advance the social, emotional, psychological, **cultural**, physical, and intellectual needs of each child **to prepare them to transition to kindergarten.**

- Providing safe, stable, secure, consistent, nurturing, and enriching environments for each child

- Building trusting relationships **built on mutual respect** between each family and their caregivers

- **Promote culturally responsive environments with diverse staff that reflect the families they serve and the whole state.**

- Connecting families to resources and supports *they* have identified will increase their family well-being

Access deep dive discussion

What makes an *accessible* system for children and families?
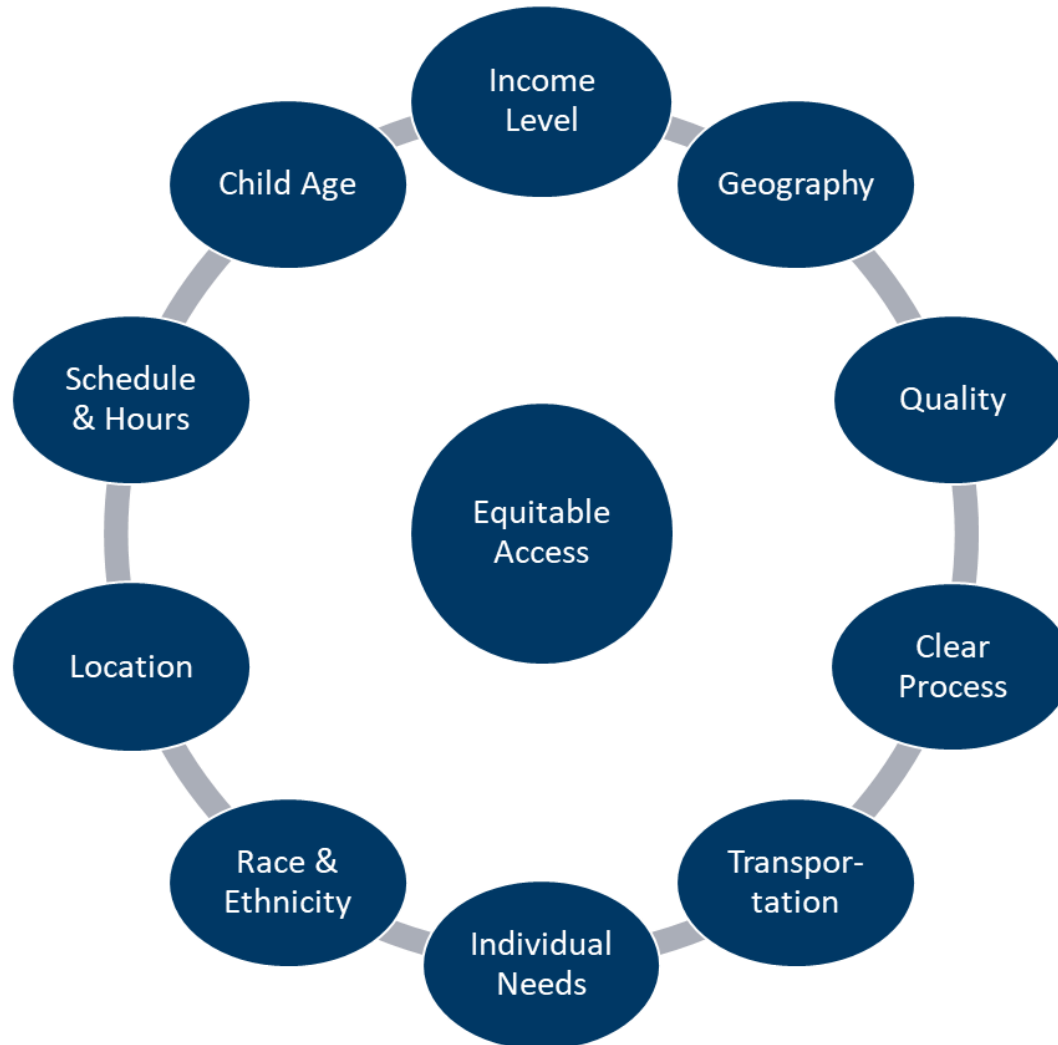
An equitably accessible system provides a **clear process** through which families can access **affordable programs at all income levels** and ensures **availability in programs of family choice** that **meet individual child and family needs and expectations**, given **each family's unique context and circumstances**

3/31/2022

Factors this Task Force identified that must be considered in our plan for equitable access

- Accessibility and **ease of the process** through which parents determine eligibility, identify options, and secure early care and education

- **Income & other eligibility requirements** that lead to public subsidy access for early care and education

- **Availability (schedule & hours) and accessibility (geography, location)** of early care and education that meets the diversity of families' needs

- The **role local communities should have** in both *determining access priorities* for their communities and *how to meet access needs*

- Resources and ability of providers to offer **culturally responsive programming and environments**

- **Transportation and other barriers, such as language barriers**, affecting access to families' programs of choice

Factors this Task Force identified that must be considered in our plan for equitable access

Affordability Working Group to bring considerations to full Task Force	• Accessibility and ease of the process through which parents determine eligibility, identify options, and secure early care and education • Income & other eligibility requirements that lead to public subsidy access for early care and education
Full Task Force to discuss considerations this meeting and next meeting	• Availability (schedule & hours) and accessibility (geography, location) of early care and education that meets the diversity of families' needs • The role local communities should have in both *determining access priorities* for their communities and *how to meet access needs* • Resources and ability of providers to offer culturally responsive programming and environments • Transportation and other barriers, such as language barriers, affecting access to families' programs of choice

Equity Framing for Discussions

In considering the conversation and progress we will make today, we must:

- **Center children and families**

- Pay **particular focus to the needs and priorities** of historically disenfranchised children and families, providers, workforce, and communities

- Specifically contemplate **how our decisions may benefit or harm** historically disenfranchised children and families, providers, workforce, and communities

- Seek the **expertise and input from stakeholders** already doing the work in children and families, provider, workforce, and communities

- Where possible, consider **data that provides insight** into the relative impact on historically disenfranchised children and families, provider, workforce, and communities

Equitable Access Survey

Availability (schedule & hours) and accessibility (geography, location) of early care and education that meets the diversity of families' needs	The role local communities should have in both determining access priorities for their communities and how to meet access needs	Resources and ability of providers to offer culturally responsive (CR) programming and environments	Transportation and other barriers, such as language barriers, affecting access to families' programs of choice
• Provide helpful tools for parents navigating the system • Increase the available hours for families • Provide business incentives and develop public/private partnerships • Incubate and incentivize growth of more ECE centers	• Rely on community control for planning and prioritization • Build on existing models (Mixed Delivery, FCF, Econ Dev grants, HS Com Engagement Framework, Rural grants, Initiative Foundations) • Adopt other innovative partnership ideas from other state models	• Provide ample CR resources (e.g.- free/discounted training, training on parent communication, toys and books) and other supports • Recruit diverse staff and provide coaching • Establish cultural competency professional standards • Provide relevant and engaging cultural competency training	• Provide interpreter services • Increase transportation options • Provide wraparound transportation support for families in need

Problems to Address

Access Factor	Problem to Address	Long-term Goal/Vision
Availability (schedule & hours) and accessibility (geography, location) of early care and education that meets the diversity of families' needs	Families do not have readily and consistently available access to child care that accommodates their schedule needs and/or is provided in a location that is convenient to their home or work location.	All families, regardless of schedule and geographic location, have readily and consistently available access to child care that accommodates their schedule needs and is provided in a location that is convenient to their home or work location.
The role local communities should have in both determining access priorities for their communities and how to meet access needs	Decisions made at the state-level impacting availability of and access to child care do not systematically consider the needs and preferences of unique local communities across the state, potentially resulting in a mismatch of services available to services required or desired.	Local communities have a meaningful voice in decisions about what services are provided, where and when, in order to ensure child care options meet local needs and preferences. Power is shared between the state and local communities to ensure this happens.
Resources and ability of providers to offer culturally responsive (CR) programming and environments	Children and families want and need culturally responsive programming and environments, but the child care system at large does not have a clear and consistent approach to prioritizing and providing this.	The State of Minnesota's child care system has a unified vision and approach to prioritize and provide culturally responsive programming and environments. This is developed and implemented in an inclusive manner.
Transportation and other barriers, such as language barriers, affecting access to families' programs of choice	Even when child care options exist, families still face systemic challenges accessing those options, such as transportation and language barriers, which limits family participation.	Minnesota's child care system, in partnership with local communities, identifies, understands, and addresses family participation barriers at both the system and individual level.

Equitable Access – Small Group Discussion

- Small group activity: One group for each access factor

  - Have we correctly identified the **problem to solve**? How would you change this?

  - Have we correctly identified the **long-term goal/vision**? How would you change this?

  - What are some **meaningful parts of the solution set** that the group believes merit further investigation?

- Share discussion with full Task Force in report out

- Before next meeting: Send any additional feedback to greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us

- <u>April meeting</u>: Share back draft recommendations to make meaningful improvements to access with this Task Force

- <u>May meeting</u>: Move to vote on recommendations to improve access

Working Group and Listening Session Share-outs

Task Force & Working Group Structure

Task Force

Endorses charge, guiding principles, deliverables, and timeline

Establishes, advises, and sets priorities for Working Groups

Reviews, adjusts, and formally approves recommendations for incorporation into a Task Force Report

Working Groups

Take direction from Task Force

Research, analyze, and bring proposals to Task Force

- Regarding key topics/questions posed by the Task Force
- Stemming from the Charge, and
- In alignment with guiding principles

Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group

GOAL: What do we mean by a "qualified, diverse, supported and equitably compensated" workforce, and how do we get there?

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members
Meghan Caine, Early Childhood Educator - Public school-based	Nicole Blissenbach, MN Dept of Labor and Industry
Pat Ives, Director of Licensed Child Care	Lydia Boerboom, Kids Count on Us Representative
Adriana Lopez, Early Childhood Educator - Licensed Center	Oriane Casale, Department of Employment and Economic Development
Jenny Moses, Children's Cabinet	Cyndi Cunningham, MN Child Care Provider Information Network
Krystal Shatek, Director of Licensed Child Care	Nancy Hafner, Faculty Representative
Senator Melissa Wiklund	Debbie Hewitt, Minnesota Department of Education
	Ann McCully, Child Care Aware of Minnesota
	Michelle Trelsted, MN Community Education Association

Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group Update

- The Working Group meeting on March 9 focused on:
  - Understanding the compensation landscape for early childhood educators and staff.
  - A review of some recommendations from the Transforming Minnesota's EC Workforce Project.
  - Review of proposed wage scale.

ECE Level	Educational Requirements	Role	Hourly Wage	Annual Wage
Base	High School Diploma	• Paraprofessional	$15.00	$31,200
ECE I	CDA Certificate	• Support Educator in 0 – 5 settings Support Educator in Gr K – 3 settings	$18.20	$37,856
ECE II	Early Childhood-related Associate Degree	• Lead Educator in 0 – 5 settings Support Educator in Gr K – 3 settings Guide Practice of ECE I Roles	$22.75	$47,320
ECE III	Early Childhood Ed BA	• Lead Educator in 0 – 5 settings Lead Educator in Gr K – 3 settings Guide Practice of ECE I and II Roles	$28.44	$59,072

Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group Update

- Discussion themes included:
  - Factoring in current economic situation (inflation, tight labor market) will be important as we consider recommendations. We may need to revisit previous calculations of a livable wage.

  - The wage scale proposal is meant to close the gap between current wages for ECE workers and a livable wage. It compensates workers more for furthering education, which is meant to help with retention – it provides a growth opportunity in the profession.

  - Most wage data only reflects those who are in the Unemployment Insurance Program (UI), this excludes many FCCs. How can we best capture data from FCCs, and how can we address their specific needs? They may not see themselves within the wage scale, because they are business owners and a part of the workforce.

  - Potential solutions for business supports may include an ongoing stipend or monetary support delivered directly to providers.

Family and Provider Affordability Working Group

GOAL: What does it mean to have an affordable system that works for families and that providers want to be a part of? How do we get there?

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members
Representative Liz Boldon	Janell Bentz, Minnesota Department of Revenue
Shakira Bradshaw, Parent Children Under 5	Summer Bursch, Minnesota Association of Child Care Professionals (MACCP)
Kath Church, Family Child Care Program	Deb Fitzpatrick, Statewide Advocacy Organization
Brook LaFloe, Tribal Representative	Missy Okeson, Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs)
Jayne Whiteford, Parent Children Under 5	Clare Sanford, Minnesota Child Care Association
	Tonia Villegas, Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators
	Cindi Yang, Department of Human Services

Family and Provider Affordability Working Group Update

- The Working Group meeting on March 10 focused on understanding current benefit programs for families, including the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and Early Learning Scholarships.

- Broad discussion themes included:
  - Pros and cons of aspects of current programs
  - How to make subsidies available for more families
  - How to support middle-income families
  - Avoiding benefit cliffs

Month	Anticipated Meeting Topics
February	Introductions & Overview
March - May	Family Affordability: Eligibility Co-payments Accessing Benefits
June - July	Provider Sustainability: Determining provider pay levels Provider pay process challenges
August	Administration Streamlining funding and reducing complexity Roles in plan administration
September – October (TBD)	Finalize Recommendations

Family and Provider Affordability Working Group Update

Ideas discussed: CCAP

- Explore broadening access to this program through adjusting entrance level income requirements.

- Explore broadening eligible activities to include: substance abuse treatment, commute time, more job search hours, considering domestic violence and mental health issues eligibility factors

- Family contribution levels seem too high, given current inflation. Lowering costs for all should be a priority.

Ideas discussed : Early Learning Scholarships

- Families can use the entire amount right away, or can use it to pay a smaller amount throughout the year. There are pros and cons with both approaches, and an approach that allows for the most stability is important.

- Scholarships are currently focused on 3- and 4-year-olds. Given what we know about brain development, scholarships should be eligible for children aged birth to five, because the earliest years are so developmentally important.

Virtual Listening Session Report Out

- Task Force co-chairs held the first virtual listening session on Wednesday, March 23.

- Themes included:
  - Broad support for goals of our work.
  - Support for a proposal to create a mentoring program for providers and educators as a way to support professional development, networking, and growth within the profession.
  - Ideas about supporting transitions from ECE settings to Kindergarten – how can we partner to have bidirectional communication about children?
  - Struggles with attracting and training the workforce, especially in rural areas. Higher education program closings have contributed to the issue, and folks are looking for creative solutions (online trainings, non-traditional classes, etc.)
  - Exploring creative ways to provide benefits and supports to the workforce is important. Some ideas included a network of substitutes to allow for days off for PTO, sick days, holidays, and paid professional development days.

Timeline & Next Steps

- ❑ Understanding the current state *In process*

- ❑ Who does the system need to work for? How? *In process*

- ❑ What is working in the system today? *In process*

- ❑ Defining the future experience we want to see

  - ❑ What is equitable access? *In process*

  - ❑ What are the dimensions of a quality, effective experience? *In process*

  - ❑ What is affordable? *Working Group*

  - ❑ What is sustainable for providers? *Working Group*

  - ❑ How should the workforce be compensated and supported? *Working Group*

- ❑ How do we ensure local voice and ownership?

- ❑ What capacity building is needed?

- ❑ How do we get to our goal, led by equity?

As Task Force staff maintains and updates our records of potential recommendations to include in our deliverables, we invite you to provide written input, outside of our regular Task Force meetings. Input should follow our normal meeting norms and procedures:

- Provide actionable ideas and potential solutions

- Apply your specific expertise

- Speak to the topics at hand for the work of the Task Force

Email ideas to GreatStart.TaskForce.MMB@state.mn.us

Task Force Timeline (draft)

Task Force launch

Research & Analysis in Working Groups with Task Force guidance

FINAL Report submitted

Today's Meeting

January-February 2022

December 15, 2022

November 30, 2021

March-September 2022

February 1, 2023

Working Groups begin

DRAFT recommendations and report completed

Meetings will be held from **6 - 8pm** on the last Tuesday of each month, except when conflicting with anticipated holidays

- **April 26, 2022**
- May 31, 2022
- June 28, 2022
- July 26, 2022
- August 30, 2022
- September 27, 2022
- October 25, 2022
- November 29, 2022
- December 20, 2022
- January 31, 2023

Formal (Statement on vision or value, recommendation to be included in the Task Force Plan)

- Primary Stakeholders in the ECE System
- Effectiveness Definition
- Equitable Access Definition

Informal (Matter of process, necessary to get to a vision statement or recommendation)

- N/A

Send any feedback to:
greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us

Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- **Tuesday, May 24th (6 – 7pm)**

Working Group meetings
- **Workforce**: Wednesday, April 13, 6-8pm
- **Affordability**: Thursday, April 14, 1-3pm

Next Task Force meeting is
Tuesday, April 26th, 6-8pm