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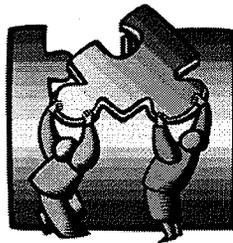
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Minnesota Child Care Professional Development
Creating a Coordinated, Accessible, Inclusive System

Minnesota Department of Human Services
August, 2007

Consultant's Report

Minnesota Child Care Professional Development
Creating a Coordinated, Accessible, Inclusive System



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Brief Overview of Project	1
Overview of Considerations.....	1
Professional Development System Strengths: Alignment with CDS Goals for PD Development and System Outcomes.....	2
Identifying Gaps and Missing Activities that Could Enhance Inclusion or Accessibility	2
Overlaps: Identifying Activities Occurring Through More than One Entity or Grantee	3
Interdependence: Taking a Look at How Activities Create Mutual Dependencies	3
System Coordination.....	4
An Accessible, Culturally Competent, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive System....	4
Managing Communication and Continuous Feedback	5
Introduction.....	8
Overview of Scan Process.....	9
Overview of Assessing Access Process	10
Overview of System Change: Change Process Leadership and Focus Group Process.	10
Analysis Implications.....	11
Considerations.....	14
Vision, Core Values and Guiding Principles	15
Child Development Services (CDS), DHS	16
Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System	17
Core Values and Guiding Principles	17
Core Values.....	17
Guiding Principles.....	17
Common Language, Shared Understanding	17
Clarifying Definitions and Terms	18
Definitions and Terminology As Drafted by the CPLT	18
Building on What Exists: The NCCIC Framework	20
Matrix of DHS Professional Development System Funded Grantees, Entities and Major Activities.....	23

DHS Professional Development System Strengths: Alignment with CDS Goals for Professional Development and System Outcomes.....	28
Identifying Gaps and Missing Activities that Could Enhance Inclusion or Accessibility	29
Overlaps: Identifying Activities Occurring Through More than One Entity or Grantee	30
One System, Many Parts	31
Decision-Making and System Interfaces.....	34
Task Structure	35
Attributes of an Accessible, Culturally Competent, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive System	39
Prioritizing Competing Needs.....	40
Defining the Attributes of a Culturally Competent, Responsive and Inclusive System	41
Strengthening and Rebuilding Stakeholder Connections.....	42
Embedding the Attributes of Accessibility, Cultural Competence, Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion	44
Guidelines for Embedding the Attributes of Accessibility, Cultural Competence, Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion into the System.....	44
The Attributes at Work: At-a-glance.....	48
Managing Communication and Continuous Feedback	49
Continuous Feedback	50
PD System Scan Summary: Implications for the Stakeholder/ Advisory Group	52
Trainer Credential	54
Promising Practices, Promising Strategies	56
W. K. Kellogg Foundation	56
Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care	57
Additional Strategies and Considerations	58
Appendix.....	60
Decision-Making Model, TeamWorks International, Inc.	60

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brief Overview of Project

This document includes information compiled and analyzed by DeYoung Consulting Services, LLC, and the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota; and work done by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Development Services (CDS) and Change Process Leadership Team.

The Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System (MNCCPD) was created for and belongs to child caregivers and providers. Caregiver is a term used to identify individuals providing Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) care; and provider is a term used to identify individuals providing licensed or center-based care. The MNCCPD system primarily serves providers within licensed centers and home settings, legal unlicensed school-age care programs and, secondarily, FFN caregivers. To improve coordination and reduce unnecessary duplication of services, the system must be enhanced.

As part of the CDS efforts to plan, develop, and implement an accessible and coordinated child care professional development system, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued and vendors were selected to complete three different analysis processes:

- A scan of the professional development (PD) system trainers and training content
- An assessment of access to the PD system
- An effort to introduce system change into the PD system.

Much of this report is dedicated to the third component: affecting system change within the MNCCPD system. This narrative reflects work completed between January of 2006 and January of 2007 and serves as a “snapshot in time” of the consultants’ perspective on the MNCCPD system and the work done during that period. Since that time, DHS and its stakeholders have moved forward with the system change work and that movement is not reflected here. Many of the recommendations offered in this report can be used to further enhance the system change process.

To create a foundation for this year-long process, the consultants worked with DHS and an advisory group called the Change Process Leadership Team (CPLT) to create the system’s core values and guiding principles, as well as a shared vocabulary to aid in discussions and understanding of the work.

Based on analyses, a number of perspectives on the system are offered, as well as some suggestions for its improvement/enhancement.

Overview of Considerations

Scan, Access and Focus Group Reports

To better understand the MNCCPD system alignment and the system’s overall effectiveness, the consultants conducted an overview of each analysis process and the respective findings, particularly as they relate to coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence.

This review demonstrated that many of the functions and processes within the system have not been properly aligned, which created misfits and misalignment. The consultants believe this stems from the system’s unfinished organizational structure, which influences clarity of roles and responsibilities, leadership, decision-making, task structure and execution, and communication.

Collectively, the findings also confirmed that the system provides training through a variety of methods and formats. The proper intersection of functional components is a critical factor that influences the effectiveness of delivery, the trainer infrastructure, and curriculum development.

With regard to coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence, a review of documents indicated a number of needs involving access, such as addressing the needs of rural and diverse communities, including geographic considerations and cost (travel and other expenses). Addressing the needs of trainers outside of the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) system was also a concern. Suggestions for addressing that need can be found in the scan report (referred to on page 4) and access information (p. 10).

The scan and access reports also indicate a need for stronger coordination and support from DHS at a higher systemic level and from the CCR&Rs at a baseline level.

Professional Development System Strengths: Alignment with CDS Goals for PD Development and System Outcomes

One way to measure the strength of a system is to understand how its activities (e.g., funded programs and initiatives) are aligned with its goals and outcomes. It is also important that system goals and outcomes be clear and measurable so that they can provide the direction necessary to focus activities toward the accomplishment of a vision. The current goals and outcomes for the professional development system were developed by the CDS team. A matrix, created for purposes of this report (see page 23), details CDS professional development system goals and broad system outcomes, and depicts how the funded activities align with these goals and outcomes. It is important to understand that these goals and intended system outcomes should be embodied and expressed through the Minnesota child care professional development system.

This matrix reveals the following:

DHS Professional Development System Strengths

- There appears to be alignment of the DHS professional development system funded activities with the CDS goals and system outcomes
- The DHS professional development funded activities support several of the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) elements of a professional development system (e.g., funding, core professional knowledge, and access and outreach)
- All of the funded activities appear to be aligned with the core professional knowledge element of a professional development framework
- The types of activities being funded appear to be a good base from which to form a unified system of professional development.

Identifying Gaps and Missing Activities that Could Enhance Inclusion or Accessibility

Where are the gaps or needs? What gaps or needs appear to be most pressing? The matrix shows:

- There is only one entity funded to provide activities that align with the quality assurance element of a professional development framework. In addition, the system lacks adequate checks and balances, leaving many decisions open to individual interpretation; decisions may also be made based upon a model of “who you know, who you feel comfortable with, or who you have relationships with.”

- While the CCR&R baseline sites list working with FFN caregivers in their work plans, these plans lack specifics. The Early Childhood Resource and Training Center (ECRTC) is the only funded entity with well-defined activities focused on developing FFN caregivers.
- While the CCR&R district and baseline sites list working with cultural and underserved communities in their work plans, there are no specific plans listed. Currently, Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MnTRECC) and ECRTC are funded entities that specialize in working with cultural communities, and the Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC) is the only entity funded to work with special needs caregivers and providers.

Overlaps: Identifying Activities Occurring Through More than One Entity or Grantee

The matrix is able to identify where there are instances of overlap in funded activities, and reveals:

- There are commonalities in the Minnesota CCR&R Network, district and baseline sites' major funded activities because each of them focuses primarily on implementing resource and referral types of strategies. This was not a surprise.
- There are commonalities in activities that support the funding element of a professional development framework; these involve the grant and scholarship work being carried out by the Minnesota CCR&R Network, districts, and baseline sites.
- Each of the funded activities overlaps in its alignment with the core professional knowledge element of a professional development framework because the activities include training or skill-building strategies.
- Many of the entities or grantees' activities overlap in their alignment with the access and outreach elements of a professional development framework because access and outreach are either in their respective work plans (e.g., CCR&R district and baseline sites) or because they are an entity whose primary focus is serving a cultural community (e.g., MnTRECC or ECRTC).

The overlaps (or commonalities) in activities provide a thread with which to knit the DHS professional system together into a whole. The overlaps do not appear to be redundant, but instead are to be expected and often seem helpful.

Interdependence: Taking a Look at How Activities Create Mutual Dependencies

A system is made up of interdependent parts, each contributing to and receiving something from the whole. These parts should be specifically arranged to accomplish the vision. Looking through the lens of the matrix begins to show some of the ways in which funded activities are interdependent with each other.

- Examples of strategies that connect to multiple funded activities are training delivery, trainer recruitment and retention, advisory committees and funding (e.g., scholarships and grants).
- There are connecting, or interdependent, points that indicate a high need for communication and collaboration to avoid potential problems (e.g., scholarships and grants, training delivery, or trainer recruitment and retention).

A good foundation exists from which DHS can build a unified system. Funded activities are aligned with many of the system goals and outcomes; they also support several of the elements of a PD framework. However, the items for consideration offered in subsequent sections will identify areas in need of attention and implementation strategies that will help to address gaps and provide coordination, clarity and consistency throughout the system.

System Coordination

The MNCCPD system consists of interrelated parts focused on providing development opportunities to providers that enhance their early childhood and school-age caregiving skills. And while the system consists of parts that are interrelated, recommendations from both the scan of the professional development system¹ and focus group findings² indicated a need for enhanced coordination within the system. System coordination is defined as a combination of clearly defined leadership, lines of authority, a process for decision-making, and an identified task structure that supports the achievement of a shared vision.

In order to affect long-lasting and positive systems change, enhancements to the overall coordination within the Minnesota child care professional development system must begin with building a sustainable infrastructure. Building a sustainable infrastructure involves ensuring that the changes to a system become a part of the fabric of the structure and functions of the system. To do that, the following guidelines should be implemented:

- **Clarify the system's organizational structure.** Understand how the overall work of the system should be divided and coordinated. Decide what type of organizational structure will work best, and whether to fully implement the proposed process structure.
- **Delineate lines of authority, leadership, roles and responsibilities.** Once the decision about which type of organizational structure will work best (e.g., functional, matrix, process, etc.) is made, the next step is to delineate the leadership roles and lines of authority, as this will help everyone to understand their specific tasks and responsibilities.
- **Align decision-making with system leadership, roles and responsibilities.** Align the decision-making process with leadership, roles and responsibilities.
- **Identify the task structure and external/broad system interfaces.** The proposed process-driven structure is organized around core processes (e.g., assurance, development and delivery). Use this to help define the primary functional component through which all others will intersect. Training should be the primary functional component because an important part of the MNCCPD is to develop and deliver **training** for providers.

These proposed modifications provide suggestions for strengthening coordination and moving the revised Minnesota child care professional development system model toward the reality of a sustainable infrastructure. This system must not only have a sustainable infrastructure; it must also be accessible to the diverse stakeholders it serves.

An Accessible, Culturally Competent, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive System

Based upon research³ that explored the Minnesota child care system, accessibility, inclusion, cultural competence and cultural responsiveness are all considered to be attributes of an effective child care professional development system.

As stakeholders consider how to create a system that contains these attributes, they must begin by understanding how the attributes are defined. **Accessibility** is defined as “approachable, reachable, understandable and available,”¹ and **inclusion** as “presence in a group.”⁴ **Cultural responsiveness** relates

¹ *Professional Development Scan: Report to Minnesota Department of Human Services*, Amy Susman-Stillman and Vicki Hawley, 2006.

² *Child Care Information and Rating System — Parent Focus Groups Results*, Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services, 2007.

³ *Building Cultural Responsiveness in Minnesota's Child Care System: Strategies, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations for Future Direction*, November 2001, Claire Buchwald, FOCUS Interactive Research, and *Study on Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in Minnesota's Center-Based Child Care Programs*, November 2001, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, dictionary references are cited from *MSN Encarta*, <http://encarta.msn.com>.

to behavioral or attitudinal changes within individuals, which impacts organizational attitudes; and **cultural competence** relates to institutional knowledge and infrastructure innovation; both are characteristics or qualities that can be reflected in service delivery.

One of the reasons for creating a culturally competent, responsive and inclusive system is to positively influence the professional development experiences of individuals who are providing early childhood and school-age care to Minnesota's children. In doing so, DHS can strengthen the connections of those who are actively participating and comfortable in the system, and can create a bridge to reconnect stakeholders who, because of their experiences, have been disengaged from the MNCCPD system.

To enhance or improve the group and organizational processes of the system, the following suggestions should be implemented:

- Identify the desired stakeholder experience and develop measures, based on attributes, that can be used to demonstrate that stakeholders have experienced the desired outcome in the group and organization processes, services and funded programs/initiatives of the system.
- Hold funded programs and initiatives accountable to standards that support the achievement of the desired stakeholder experience. Use these same attribute-based standards to measure funded program/initiative quality in these areas.
- Utilize existing partnerships with cultural programs and organizations to help create a base of information about the gap between the group and organizational processes of the system, and the desired stakeholder experience. This information can be used to target technical assistance to improve experiences in all areas within the system.
- Create an MNCCPD system that reflects these attributes in the values and norms shared by system members, the ways in which tasks are accomplished within, and the system's functional components. A suggested goal is to ensure that attributes are ultimately embedded within all components of the MNCCPD system, including the evaluation component.

Other ways to embed these attributes (accessibility, inclusion, cultural responsiveness and cultural competence) into the culture of the system at many levels (system, team and work group and individual) are also suggested. The attributes can also be embedded into the functional components of the system: the Career Lattice framework, the Learning Continuum Framework, the Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure, the Curriculum Development and Approval Function and Delivery Function.

Managing Communication and Continuous Feedback

An individual's uncertainty about what a newly developed or newly revamped system will look like, and how he or she will fit within that system, can lead to resistance. Managing communication is one strategy that builds support for change and deals with the rumors, gossip, and potential resistance that may come with that change. As a result of conducting focus groups, the consultants learned that the MNCCPD system is in need of a system-wide plan to manage communication. A communications plan or strategy enhances accessibility within a system.

Eliciting feedback from stakeholders in ways that foster and build relationships is also essential to the long-term success and sustainability of any organizational effort. This strategy can take many forms: a participatory process, relational dialogues, or a continuous feedback process. A strategy for continuously receiving information and feedback that utilizes methods that are meaningful and respectful, whatever the name, is an attribute of an inclusive system.

A number of considerations are offered to ensure that DHS' communication strategies appeal to a broad group of system stakeholders. The simple steps in developing effective communications below are

strategies based on a framework created by Philip Kotler¹ and it is suggested that they be integrated into an overall system-wide communications plan:

- Identify the target audiences (e.g., trainers, caregivers, providers, staff, communities of color, higher education, other state agencies)
- Determine the objective of the communication (e.g., is it to raise awareness, impart information, build or rebuild trust?)
- Design the messages (e.g., decide the message content, structure, format and sources)
- Select the appropriate communication channels (e.g., personal, such as face-to-face, telephone, email; or non-personal, such as newsletter, Web page, direct mail)
- Establish a budget (e.g., allocate funds based upon affordability, objective, channel)
- Decide on the communications mix (e.g., advertising, such as public presentations, or public relations and publicity, such as press releases, press kits)
- Evaluate the results (e.g., develop a process for identifying and reviewing the results of the communication).

The traditional methods for gathering stakeholder feedback involve strategies like conducting focus groups, individual interviews, and community meetings. A continuous feedback process is a strategy for gathering feedback in an ongoing or continuous way; this allows for the building of relationships and development of trust. It is often a key strategy in a management communications plan. Continuous feedback is a forum that allows for predicting, anticipating and minimizing reactions; it also allows people to feel that they are being heard and are part of a change process.

For the MNCCPD system to be successful in this endeavor, DHS should consider the following:

- Develop a process that makes use of a stakeholder/advisory group (similar to the CPLT), a group that can be utilized at the district level
- Design a communications model that embraces the core processes of the TeamWorks decision-making model
- Clearly define a vision and structure for the Statewide Access Leadership Team that can be utilized at the baseline level
- Design a process that embraces the attributes of coordination, inclusion, accessibility and cultural competence.

In addition to the considerations mentioned above, a few continuous feedback strategies that would complement the use of the DHS TeamWorks decision-making model include:

- Invite system stakeholders across the state to participate in a process of continuous learning, improvement, and feedback by becoming a part of a continuous feedback group. This group would be focused on a specific component of the system such as:
 - system structure, culture and sustainability
 - trainer infrastructure
 - curriculum development
 - Minnesota child care learning continuum
 - Minnesota Career Lattice.
- Continuous feedback groups would interface with the *Shared Reality*, *Creating Options*, and *Choice Making* processes of the TeamWorks decision-making model.

¹ Communication Management Strategy, April 2007, http://www.inovasi.lipi.go.id/website/public_comm/strategy.htm, (retrieved on 12 Apr. 2007).

- Allow the participants of these groups to play a role in documenting and reporting the themes that emerge from their group discussions; connect this information to the work of the *Creating Options* and *Choice Making* processes of the TeamWorks model.

DHS should adopt a continuous feedback structure that is tiered, allowing DHS to reach individuals at a variety of levels across a variety of locations.

All of the strategies and considerations listed above will help Child Development Services create a more coordinated, inclusive, and culturally relevant Minnesota child care professional development system.

INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System (MNCCPD) was created for and belongs to child caregivers and providers. The MNCCPD system primarily serves providers of licensed center-based, family child care and school aged care, and secondarily serves Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers. To improve coordination and reduce unnecessary duplication of services, the system must be enhanced.

As a part of the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Community Partnerships Division, Child Development Services' (CDS) efforts to plan, develop, and implement an accessible and coordinated child care professional development system, a Request For Proposals (RFP) was issued and vendors were selected to complete three different analysis processes:

- A scan of the professional development (PD) system trainers and training content
- An assessment of access to the PD system
- An effort to introduce system change into the PD system.

Much of this report is dedicated to the third component: affecting system change within the MNCCPD system. This narrative reflects work that was done between January of 2006 and January of 2007 and serves as a "snapshot in time" of the consultants' perspective on the MNCCPD system and the work done during that period. Since that time, DHS and its stakeholders have moved forward with the system change work and that movement is not reflected here. However, many of the recommendations offered in this report can be used to further enhance the system change process.

To enhance the overall coordination within the Minnesota child care professional development system, DHS must begin by building a sustainable infrastructure. Building such an infrastructure involves ensuring that the system changes become a part of the fabric of the structure and functions. This will aid in making long-lasting and positive systems change. To do that, we suggest the following:

- **Clarify the system's organizational structure.** Understand how the overall work of the system should be divided and coordinated. Decide what type of organizational structure will work best and whether to fully implement the proposed process structure.
- **Delineate lines of authority, leadership, roles and responsibilities.** Once the decision about which type of organizational structure will work best (e.g., functional, matrix, process, etc.) is made, the next step is to delineate the leadership roles and lines of authority, as this will help everyone to understand their specific tasks and responsibilities.
- **Align decision-making with system leadership, roles and responsibilities.** Align the decision-making process with leadership, roles and responsibilities.
- **Identify the task structure and external/broad system interfaces.** The proposed process-driven structure is organized around core processes (e.g., assurance, development and delivery). Use this to help define the primary functional component through which all others will intersect. Training should be the primary functional component because an important part of the MNCCPD is to develop and deliver **training** for providers.

These proposed modifications provide suggestions for strengthening coordination and moving the revised Minnesota child care professional development system model toward the reality of a sustainable infrastructure. This system must not only have a sustainable infrastructure; it must also be accessible to the diverse stakeholders it serves. Suggestions for realizing both are addressed in the remaining pages of this report.

This report begins with an overview of three reports: the PD system scan, the assessment of access to the PD system and the focus group report. Based on the findings, this report then offers analysis implications

that provide insight into factors that may come to play when introducing change into the PD system. This section also identifies common themes, points of difference, etc., between the respective findings.

Next is a look at the MNCCPD system tools that help to clarify the system's strategic intent: the vision, core values, guiding principles and common PD system terminology. To determine the overall effectiveness of a system and then to enhance coordination within it, DHS must first understand the extent to which different parts of the system are aligned and work together in an interconnected way to effectively achieve the system vision. The extent to which the features and functions of one part of the system support the effectiveness of the other parts is examined. Suggestions are provided for organizing the system's many parts into an effective organizational and task structure, as well as how to clarify (or delineate) roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.

The report provides an overview of the desired attributes of the PD system (accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence) and offers suggestions for embedding these attributes into the framework of the MNCCPD system. These suggestions will help increase access to the system for those who may have felt excluded previously (Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers, for example) and will help create a system that is inclusive in ways that will engage and re-engage the diverse constituencies (stakeholders) in the system. For purposes of this report, **accessibility** is defined as "approachable, reachable, understandable and available" and **inclusion** as "presence in a group."¹ **Cultural responsiveness** relates to behavioral or attitudinal changes within individuals; which impacts organizational attitudes; and **cultural competence** relates to institutional knowledge and infrastructure innovation; both can be found in characteristics or qualities reflected in service delivery. These attributes are dealt with in greater detail throughout this document.

The report concludes by providing suggestions for managing system communication and providing continuous feedback, and by exploring promising practices and strategies that can aid in the development of a well-coordinated system.

This analysis of the system, along with considerations that are offered throughout this report, can help DHS further refine its efforts to create an effective, coordinated and inclusive PD system. By looking at specific parts of the system as a whole, stakeholders are viewing it from what is referred to as a systematic perspective.

A brief overview of each analysis process and a summary of the respective findings follow.

Overview of Scan Process

The intent of the scan portion of the analysis was to develop and implement tools and/or methods that could be used on an ongoing basis to gather, compile and summarize information from child care professional development initiatives. This information, within the context of the DHS child care PD system planning process, informed the development of:

- Trainer infrastructure
- Curriculum related functions.

The University of Minnesota Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) was charged with conducting this scan. CEED examined two critical elements of the professional development system: trainers and training content. In addition to scanning these two PD system components, CEED identified the context, benefits and challenges, and made recommendations related to a Minnesota trainer credential.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, dictionary references are cited from *MSN Encarta*, <http://encarta.msn.com>.

Using a combination of surveys and interviews (phone and face-to-face), CEED gathered information about numbers and demographics of trainers who are current educators in the early care and education field.

Overview of Assessing Access Process

The Request for Proposals indicated that the access component of the work was to involve developing and implementing tools and/or methods that could be used on an ongoing basis to gather, compile, and summarize information from child care professional development initiatives and the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system to assess the effectiveness of efforts to increase access to the PD system. The work was also to include summarizing strategies and initiatives currently in place to increase access for all existing and potential consumers of the PD system.

In fall 2006 the DeYoung Consulting team surveyed CCR&R staff and advisory committee members, and professional development coordinators. The following information was gathered:

- PD coordinators
 - FTE staff positions
 - Partnership activities and types of partnerships
 - Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MnTRECC) membership
 - Partnership initiation
 - Determination of training needs
 - Community partner engagement
 - Recruitment for advisory committee.
- CCR&R Staff Demographics
 - Demographic characteristics
 - Staff positions
 - Educational attainment
 - Staff of color.
- CCR&R committee member demographics
 - Demographic characteristics
 - Educational attainment
 - Service capacity
 - Committee members of color.

Overview of System Change: Change Process Leadership and Focus Group Process

The RFP called for the systems change component of the project to gather information directly as well as analyze and integrate the information gathered from the PD access components to recommend next steps toward the development and delivery of an accessible PD system.

This analysis and recommendation process included selecting a group of approximately 26 leaders (cross-functional and key stakeholder representatives) from the existing professional development system, to inform, guide, and shape the desired system change outcomes and the change process. This group was called the **Change Process Leadership Team (CPLT)**. The primary responsibility of the CPLT was, to serve in an advisory capacity, focusing on the vision, strategy and planning of professional development system changes activities. The CPLT has been engaged in most of the activities of the systems change component of this project.

The process also included a series of focus groups and individual interviews conducted during spring 2006 to gather information from key system stakeholders related to the accessibility and coordination of the professional development system. The specific objectives for obtaining this information were to:

- Explore the barriers and challenges to accessing the child care professional development system
- Identify strategies to enhance coordination within the child care professional development system
- Explore the barriers or challenges impacting the delivery of inclusive and culturally relevant child care professional development and training.

Analysis Implications

Each analysis process had a different focus: the scan emphasized multiple aspects of training content and the trainer credentialing process; the access phase focused specifically on CCR&R staff, committee members and PD coordinators; while the system change process took a broader, system-wide perspective. Collectively, the three processes revealed the following about the features, operations and characteristics of specific parts of the system:

- Who is staffing and advising the system
- How partnerships are being utilized
- Who is providing training
- What were the trainer challenges
- What type of support would be helpful for trainers
- How accessible, inclusive and coordinated the system is.

This information provides insight into how individual parts of the system are supporting and/or affecting other parts.

Assessing access analysis process implications. Researchers learned the characteristics of those who are staffing and advising the system, as well as how partnerships are being utilized. They know that the CCR&R staff and committee members within the system are largely homogenous. For example, they are

- Female
- Caucasian
- Non-refugees
- Non-immigrants who speak English as their primary language
- Not fluent in another language
- Have no impairments
- Have a degree from a college/university or graduate school
- Have post-secondary coursework.

The CCR&R staff and committee members of color who responded are also homogenous in that they are largely

- Not refugees
- Not immigrants
- Speak English as their primary language
- Have a post-secondary education from a vocational, technical or academic college or graduate program.

The report analysis indicated that partnerships within the system are used mostly to identify trainers and trainer needs, advise the system, develop curriculum, and assist with training delivery.

It is important to consider the make-up of those who staff and advise the system because this affects how tasks are structured and accomplished, group functioning, and the development of group norms. This, in turn, influences decision-making, leadership, and the culture of the system, ultimately affecting the quality of experiences within the system.

Scan analysis process implications. While the **scan** analysis process revealed much about the professional development system, such as trainer challenges, trainer support, and how training content is developed, delivered and approved, like the assessing access process, it also revealed the demographic make-up of those who are providing training. For example, researchers learned that trainers were mainly independent contractors, and the demographic data from those who responded to the survey was very similar to that of those who staff and advise the system; they are mostly

- Caucasian
- Speak English as their primary language
- Have a degree from a college/university or graduate school.
- This is significant because “who” provides training influences “what is included in training content, and “how” training is delivered. This ultimately affects caregiver and provider experiences, which, in turn influences how children are fully prepared to succeed as they enter educational settings.

Systems change analysis process implications. The **systems change** process took a closer look at coordination, accessibility and inclusion. This process revealed that the professional development system is lacking in areas of organizational structure, positive culture, and vision, among other things. This, in turn, affects the overall effectiveness of the system, which influences group/team effectiveness and individual system experiences.

The individuals who conducted all three analyses (scan, assessing, and systems change) encountered some form of apprehension from communities of color when they were asked to participate in each process. And while the reasons for this are largely unknown, during the systems change process, communities of color shared their experiences of having their numerically limited voices overshadowed by the majority. Stakeholders only have to look at who is staffing and advising the system, and who is providing most of the training within the system, to understand the potential implications for the experiences of communities of color.

Coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence

Coordination, access, inclusion and cultural competence have been addressed. Now the specific ways in which the three analysis processes addressed these four attributes will be considered. As part of the recommendations, each report described needs and/or suggested strategies regarding coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence, although that terminology may or may not have been used. The table that follows attempts to summarize the collective needs from each process as they relate to those four descriptors.

	Coordination	Accessibility	Inclusion	Cultural Competence
Scan	<p>(From a baseline perspective)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frustration with a lack of coordination, poor scheduling, training cancellations, etc. ▪ Poor site logistics coordination: arriving to find doors locked, poor lighting and technology, etc. <p>(From a systems perspective)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too few connections between the child care PD system and higher education ▪ Lack of a comprehensive trainer database: difficult to ensure that common messages, opportunities and changes are heard by all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of access to training system for rural and diverse audiences ▪ More incorporation of corporate child care, Head Start and other system trainers needed ▪ Practitioners and trainers worried that credential process will open the door for some and close it for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perception of cliques: some are not asked to train. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for a language match between trainers and audiences.
Assessing access		<p>Suggestions to Increase PD Access (PD coordinator survey):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep costs down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mileage costs are prohibitive ▪ Funding for PD opportunities when attendance is low ▪ Affordable methods of communication needed ▪ PD needed in every county on regular basis ▪ MNSTREAMS should be made more user-friendly. 		
System Change: Focus Group Findings	<p>(From a systemic perspective)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancement of system coordination needed ▪ PD system caregiver, provider, and stakeholder experiences should be improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for leadership, vision, direction, and clear expectations from DHS ▪ Clearly defined PD system pathways, entrance and access points to growth, development, and learning opportunities needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequate support for delivery activities and outreach strategies needed ▪ Equitable methods of involvement and engagement needed ▪ Capacity of PD stakeholders should be increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expectations for and measurement of cultural relevance should be put in place.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance PD infrastructure support ▪ Identify broad system elements and partnerships to enhance coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional support for professional development delivery needed ▪ System should be more standardized and centralized ▪ Need additional motivation and incentives to encourage participation and system utilization ▪ PD opportunities in rural or greater Minnesota should be expanded. 		

Considerations

Together, the three processes offer a multidimensional perspective of PD system needs regarding coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence.

After reviewing the suggestions from all three processes, the extent to which various parts of the system are aligned and/or influence the effectiveness of other parts becomes evident. The data from each process is rich with individual details about the system; but as we step back to take a systems view of the data, we are able to better understand the complexities and nuances of the MNCCPD system.

The suggestions demonstrate that many of the functions and processes within the system have not been properly aligned which has created misfits and misalignment. Researchers believe this stems from the system's unfinished organizational structure, which influences clarity of roles and responsibilities, leadership, decision-making, task structure and execution, and communication. Building a system without a clearly defined organizational structure is like attempting to build a house without a foundation. The organizational structure influences the organization's effectiveness, in much the same way that a foundation affects the stability of a home.

Collectively, the suggestions also confirmed that the system's primary focus is providing training through a variety of methods and formats. The proper intersection of functional components is a critical factor that influences the effectiveness of delivery, the trainer infrastructure, and curriculum development.

With regard to coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence, a review of the documents indicated that they all reported concerns about access, such as addressing the needs of rural and diverse communities, including geographic considerations and cost (travel and other expenses). Addressing the needs of trainers outside of the CCR&R system was also a concern. Suggestions for addressing that need can be found in the scan and access reports.

The reports also indicate a need for stronger coordination and support from DHS at a higher systemic level and from the CCR&R at a baseline level.

Given what the scan, assessing access, and systems change processes reveal, the balance of this report will focus on providing suggestions regarding structure, alignment and the design of components to enhance coordination, accessibility, inclusion and cultural competence within the MNCCPD system, beginning at the system's foundation: its core values and guiding principles.

VISION, CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Like any well run organization, an effective professional development system needs a framework that includes a vision, core values and principles on which to build its work. What is the vision for the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development system? Why has this system been created? The consultants worked with DHS and the Change Process Leadership Team to develop a draft vision, core values and guiding principles that will serve as the framework for the Minnesota child care development system.

The draft MNCCPD system vision that was created during this process is as follows:

The unified Minnesota child care professional development system will help Minnesota children enter school fully prepared to succeed. The system will ensure that:

1. Caregivers have the confidence, competencies and tools needed to effectively serve children and families
2. Educational opportunities for caregivers are grounded in a foundation of high ethical and quality standards
3. A diverse population is well served by the system, from various cultural and ethnic communities, to families, to licensed and non-licensed providers, to trainers and instructors, to community partners.

Core values are those that form the foundation for an organization. Regardless of technological changes, population shifts, turnover in employment, etc., these values remain the same. Core values are deeply rooted in the organization. The basis of a vision for change is an organization's core ideology, described as core values. Core values typically are three to five basic principles/beliefs that have stood the test of time, represent what the organization stands for, and inform members what is important to the organization.¹

Guiding principles serve as the beliefs and principles that govern the work of the organization, and the treatment of coworkers, system partners, stakeholders, etc. They are expressed in behaviors.

As a part of the October 2006 Change Process Leadership team meeting, participants were asked to give their input on which values and principles should guide the Minnesota child care professional development system. The consultants reviewed the responses and created a compilation of core values and guiding principles that reflect that input.

These values and principles of a system, ideally, should be consistent with those of the overall organization and administrator, DHS.

While, at that time, DHS' Child Development Services had no formal core values and guiding principles per se, it did have a "Vision: Planning for Professional Development" that provided a foundation for their work. This document contained an overall outcome for the vision, and more specific outcome statements. The consultants worked to ensure that the proposed MNCCPD system vision was in alignment with that vision. This DHS vision follows:

¹ *Organization Development and Change, 8th Edition*, Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley, 2005, Thomson South-Western.

Overall Outcome: Children and youth reach widely held developmental expectations in the following domains: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, cognition and general knowledge, and creativity and the arts.

A. Quality, relevant PD system that is measurable and accountable	B. A flexible, balanced, intentional, and inclusive approach to planning and implementation	C. A PD system that is continuous, responsive, accessible, strength-based, and provides a continuum of opportunities	D. CDS supports system implementation with skilled staff, clearly defined roles, and strong communication with communities	E. A PD system assures core competencies across the provider/caregiver workforce	F. Creating and/or coordinating a variety of paths for the provider/caregiver workforce
<p>1. Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children: Early learning standards or guidelines. Standards are already four years old. ■ Caregivers and providers: Core competencies almost done ■ Programs: Need to be developed <p>2. Evaluation component tied to outcomes: Includes child-level assessment, program-level assessment, and assessment of infrastructure components</p> <p>3. Child care rating system: Builds on standards which translate into rating levels</p> <p>4. A PD system that is measurable and accountable</p>	<p>1. Our system is planned balancing and budgeting financial and human resources of all infrastructures existing and new</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inclusive planning - money and people balanced in the system ■ Traditional, existing, and new territory are given equal consideration in the building process <p>2. Standardized based upon research and effective practice but flexible to adapt to shifts and changes as needed</p> <p>3. Reflective of process that was intentionally inclusive and took the time to cultivate relationships and seek input and feedback in its development and implementation</p> <p>4. Inclusive and accessible with diverse leadership</p>	<p>1. One system with common goals and objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connected with national initiatives and other state PD models ■ Built on effective practices and research ■ A good communication system <p>2. Responsive to emerging needs</p> <p>3. Built on strengths; recognize successful initiatives</p> <p>4. Clearly defined and communicated roles and responsibilities</p> <p>5. Clearly articulated PD system, plus our role with it</p>	<p>1. System built on the individual strengths of our team members</p> <p>2. As a team, we understand our roles and how they interface regarding professional development; same for partners; local and regional levels too.</p> <p>3. Not the secret service! - All communities know about our supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Translations ■ Outreach <p>Strong public awareness element to system</p>	<p>1. System includes local partners and recruits needed expertise: supports ongoing expertise for special needs (special education) teachers, and cc providers knowledgeable about caring for kids with special needs</p> <p>2. Work force built with diversity; work with diverse populations in all our work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cultural ■ Income ■ Geographic ■ Formal and informal caregivers <p>3. Stakeholders are contributing and providing services, not duplicating efforts</p> <p>4. System integrates community resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Libraries ■ Museums ■ Arts ■ Sports <p>5. The PD system results in care and educational providers empowering and assisting families to access resources to address needs and provide sensitive, knowledgeable care</p> <p>6. Kids to be successful thru parents advocating for kids, child development and family focus</p>	<p>1. Expand educational approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provider driven ■ Community ed ■ Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) ■ Mentoring <p>Sessions held in community gathering places: community centers, churches, and child care provided</p> <p>Providers choose subjects to study</p> <p>Forum discussion network</p> <p>2. Higher education role is defined and involved</p> <p>3. Coordinated multiple entry points</p> <p>4. Integrated technology system</p> <p>5. Resource teams IE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Infant and toddler ■ Culturally responsive ■ Special needs ■ SAC, OST <p>6. A cohesive system using a continuum of supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Something for everyone caring for children; accessible to all families and providers ■ Parents are an integral (included) element <p>7. Continuum of a variety of accessible PD opportunities for practitioners so that they have the skills to nurture and prepare children for school</p> <p>8. A PD system that reflects a continuum and is accessible and ongoing</p>

MINNESOTA CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The MNCCPD system core values and guiding principles were developed with input from the Change Process Leadership Team and were aligned with the CDS vision:

Core Values

Core Values are what we (as a department, program, or initiative) value. These words describe how we expect to travel to where we want to go:

- **Accountability/System Assurance:** We will help to ensure that our PD system is stable, clearly articulated, and accountable. This will help to inspire practitioner confidence.
- **Clarity:** Clarity of Roles - We will work to identify roles within the PD system and to ensure that those roles are clearly defined, yet complementary. Clarity of Terms - We will also establish a clear understanding and use of terminology that is generally used in the child care professional development field.
- **Easy Access:** We will work to ensure that all stakeholders can both see themselves in the system and have easy access to it.
- **Cooperation and Connection:** We will work to establish systems and relationships that encourage communication, cooperation, and mutual promotion among stakeholders.
- **Long-term Sustainability:** We will develop an inclusive, system-wide sustainability plan that engages current and potential stakeholders, and is focused on creating long-term viability and adaptability to future needs.
- **Alignment of Perception and Reality:** All of the above will move us closer to the value of aligning stakeholder perceptions of the PD system with what the system aspires to be.

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are how we do our work together or behave with one another (as a department, program, or initiative). They are expressed in terms of **behavior**:

- We believe the professional development system is here to serve stakeholders by focusing on **ensuring** that children enter educational settings fully prepared to succeed; children enter kindergarten eager and excited about learning and numerous quality child care options are available to families.
- We are relationship-based and therefore **model** unity, respect, authenticity and inclusiveness.
- We **partner strategically** to enhance the value and expand the reach of services provided.
- We are **goal-oriented**, focused, and always keep the “end in mind.”
- We believe in the continuous cultivation of leaders from within the diversity of individuals in the PD system. Therefore, we are **intentional about creating opportunities for leadership** at all levels, and our leaders reflect the various cultural and ethnic communities within the system.

COMMON LANGUAGE, SHARED UNDERSTANDING

A system with a shared vision, core values, and guiding principles must also include common definitions and terminology to bring about clarity. Having common definitions and terminology creates a common language that is shared throughout the system, promoting mutual understanding. There are many terms and phrases used within the MNCCPD system that, unless clearly defined, can be interpreted in different ways.

Clarifying Definitions and Terms

For clarification purposes, the definitions below describe how a few key words or phrases are being used in the context of this document. These terms were in place before the systems change process began.

- **Entity or Grantee:** An organization or agency funded through a DHS contract or grant to develop or implement a funded activity
- **Activity:** Elements of a professional development framework whenever it makes sense or is appropriate; or the Minnesota CCR&R service delivery model functions/duties for district (scale) and baselines (local/regional) sites
- **Strategy:** Methods for implementing activities
- **Interdependent Strategies:** Strategies that are connected because they have mutually dependent elements that rely on each other for mutual assistance, support, cooperation, or interaction
- **Accessible and Inclusive:** Defined in the RFP that funded this system change project as “a lack of barriers to PD services; respectful, relevant, inclusive and culturally appropriate PD service delivery; the integration of a broad range of perspectives in planning and/or system components that support and monitor access throughout the PD system on an on-going basis.”

Definitions and Terminology As Drafted by the CPLT

Through the work of CDS and the CPLT, a draft set of definitions for frequently used words and phrases was developed. This is considered to be a starting point. It is expected that the dialogue will continue, until a clearly defined set of definitions and phrases for the MNCCPD system can be established.

The Change Process Leadership Team met, discussed the draft definitions and terminology, and provided their thoughts and initial comments. Comments that surfaced from their discussion included:

- Define the target audiences for the definitions and terminology.
- Ensure that the language level of the definitions and terminology is understandable across a wide audience.
- Acknowledge and recognize that where people are geographically, and who they are culturally, provide a lens through which they perceive the meaning of words.
- Refrain from stereotyping groups or individuals.
- Develop clear, brief and succinct definitions.
- Ensure that the language values everyone and is welcoming to all, and stresses the system is providing welcoming opportunities.
- Remember that the definitions are about and for those being served by the system. Therefore, there needs to be a mechanism for involvement in defining and receiving feedback from people within the system about the definitions.
- It must be clear that these evolving definitions are referring to the MNCCPD system.

Below are the draft MNCCPD system definitions and terminology reviewed by the Change Process Leadership Team. Some of the definitions include considerations that surfaced during the discussion.

Professional Development: Professional Development is the personally initiated commitment and right to build expertise, enhance personal growth, improve training and caregiving abilities, and contribute to the field of early childhood and school-age care and education.

Considerations:

- Should the language be personally initiated or self-initiated, since there are aspects that employers initiate and aspects an individual might initiate?
- Consider using the word invested rather than initiated.

- Simplify the definition and make it more succinct.
- Be clear about who the audience is when thinking about the language and definition.

Inclusive: The professional development system is inclusive when it is all-encompassing. It is made complete by ensuring that the contributions, voices and experience of all are incorporated into the system. It fosters practices in which all children, encompassing a broad range of abilities, participate and are regarded as equal members of the learning community.

Access: The professional development system is accessible when the system values and respects the individual skills and potential contributions of all active and potential participants. Individuals within the professional development system must be able to experience opportunities for personal and professional growth; potential participants must find opportunities for developing their skills and knowledge in a welcoming format.

Considerations:

- It should mean that the system values what each and every person brings to it and has welcoming opportunities for everyone interested
- We should look at the definitions/terminology used by different states that serve diverse populations (e.g., California, Louisiana), some of which also have a more developed system.
- These states are serving different cultures; our (Minnesota's) definitions are very North American in value.

Cultural Competence: Cultural competence in the professional development system is defined as the staff's ability to make connections with, or relate to, the specific cultures (racial, ethnic, social, national) represented within the system. The initial focus will be on racial and ethnic competence and understanding the effects of poverty.

Considerations:

- Cultural competence could be changed to be cultural proficiency which is a term developed at Hamline University (Barbara Washington, Urban Education Center).
- Outside of the United States the term proficiency is more commonly used.
- Add/include the word economic to the list (or poverty).
- The initial focus will be on racial and ethnic competence, and understanding the effects of poverty is not part of a definition.

Underserved Populations (should be known as under-represented populations): Under-represented populations are the disproportionately small number of representatives from racial, ethnic and low-income groups whose needs have not been met. The definition also includes those who support practitioners who work with the disability population, English language learners, and other disadvantaged populations. The goal is to create a professional development system that continuously embraces and seeks to build up the representation of those groups that have not received appropriate attention, though they are an integral part of the system.

Considerations:

- Delete the goal part of the definition
- Disproportionately small is in relation to the representative number of a specific group served by the PD system.

Curriculum Development: This is the function of identifying, approving, developing curriculum, tools and processes needed to support the professional development system.

Considerations:

- Consider not using the word curriculum in a definition of curriculum.
- Curriculum development could be defined as a plan over time, and language that talks about goals or adds explanations could be deleted.
- Consider how the word curriculum is defined in other cultures (e.g., curriculum is defined as a resume in some cultural communities).

The following terms have no accompanying considerations:

Trainer Infrastructure: A comprehensive system of hiring, approving, training and supporting trainers.

Career Lattice: A framework for offering multiple pathways for professional growth designed to support (and inspire) care and education practitioners to continually improve the quality of care for children and youth.

Delivery: The ways in which training or professional development activities are provided, including: training formats, locations, time schedules, topics, content, or the connection of the trainer or leader to specific populations.

Training: Planned events and activities that provide opportunities for professional growth and learning.

Training Format: The way training is organized or conducted, such as individual study, workshops, cohorts, play groups, consultations, mentoring, online classes and classes for credit.

The dialogue to more clearly define the MNCPPD definitions and terminology should continue.

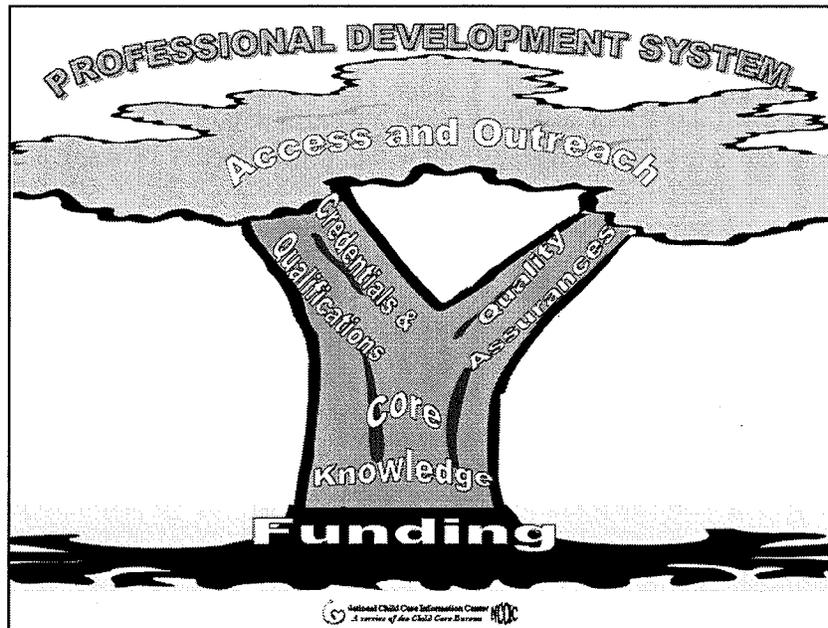
Building on What Exists: The NCCIC Framework

The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) has developed a conceptual framework for early childhood professional development that identifies the elements of a quality child care professional development system. Minnesota has utilized the NCCIC conceptual framework as it has begun to build and develop its child care professional development system.

The elements “outline a framework for effective professional development of early childhood educators that identifies key principles and premises that apply across the diverse roles and settings of early childhood professionals.”¹ The framework contains elements of what leaders in the early childhood field define as a “professional development system.” The components of the framework consist of five broad elements: Funding and Core Knowledge are at the base and seen as the foundation for creating a sustainable system. Qualifications, Credentials and Quality Assurance provide pathways for professional development opportunities, entering the child care field, and for career advancement. Access and Outreach provide strategies and methods that make system activities widely available. This framework also identifies both core elements and sub-elements. For example, *funding* is considered to be a core element, and *scholarships* would be a sub-element.

¹ NCCIC Principles and Quick Resources for Professional Development, April 2007, <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/goodstart/principles-profdev.html> (retrieved on 16 Apr. 2007).

The framework, pictured in the following diagram, is being used to help states identify the core features of their early childhood professional development systems.



Next, a look at how Minnesota is currently applying the NCCIC conceptual framework to further clarify the MNCCPD system.

Building on What Exists: Application of the Framework

To understand where we are going (a new system), we must understand and acknowledge where we are and how we are building upon what exists. Staff are not developing an entirely new system; they are taking the pieces that are there already and looking at both how they fit and function together and how they are interdependent. Looking at how Minnesota is applying the NCCIC Framework, the image paints a picture that enables the “pieces of the system” to begin to see how they each add value, are necessary, and how they need one another to achieve the shared vision; no single entity or grantee can do this work alone.

CDS funds activities and services intended to improve the quality and availability of child care in Minnesota. Many of these activities and services fall into the category of professional development, which attempts to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of child care providers. While CDS is not the only source of funding for child care related professional development in Minnesota, it does fund much of the training associated with it, and desires to move toward the development of a unified child care professional development system — the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System.

As staff begin planning for and suggesting strategies for unifying the diverse parts of professional development into a system, with all parts working toward a shared vision, and as strategies are created that lead toward accountability, and enhance access to and inclusion within the system, it is important to understand and build on what already exists.

A review of CDS literature (e.g., DHS Vision chart), funded programs and entities (e.g., brochures, fact sheets), and various documents about the CCR&R network and CCR&R system (e.g., state statute, work plans, delivery model, sample letter of agreement) was used to reveal the state of alignment between funded activities and system goals and outcomes; this review also helped to identify system strengths, gaps, overlaps, and interdependencies of funded activities.

The training component of the professional development system (as funded through CDS) is primarily delivered through the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral System (also known as the CCR&Rs). In addition, contracts have been awarded to fund programs and initiatives focused on the Elements of a Professional Development Framework: funding, core professional knowledge, qualifications and credentials, quality assurance, and access and outreach. Child care professional development in Minnesota consists of many parts (e.g., entities, grantees), each with a specific function (e.g., programs, initiatives). All are interdependent and needed to ensure that all children enter educational settings prepared, ready and enabled to succeed; therefore all would benefit greatly by being unified in their efforts.

Interpretation of professional development in Minnesota as it exists today (including the CCR&R network, CCR&R system district and baseline sites and the entities and grantees funded by DHS to provide professional development resources and services) is represented in a matrix (page 23).

Why a Matrix of Funded Entities and Grantees?

This matrix was created to serve as a visual representation of child care related professional development as it currently exists, as seen through the lens of major activities funded by CDS; these activities include entity or grantee programs or initiatives. This matrix helps to bring the picture of the current reality of child care professional development into focus. It allows us to see the types of activities that are currently being funded and how those activities align with the Elements of a Professional Development Framework and CDS Professional Development System goals and outcomes.

There are five parts to the matrix:

- Who is being funded and the program being provided
- The major activities of the funded entity or grantee
- Points of alignment with the professional development system goals (A-F) and outcomes (1-3)
- Points of alignment with the NCCIC elements of a professional development system for early child care
- Potential connecting points for major professional development system activities.

The matrix provides the ability to begin to visualize the strengths (these strengths will be defined later in this document) within the professional development system, overlaps (if any), and potential points of connection among funded activities. The matrix also reveals potential gaps, or types of activities missing from the system that would assist in the attainment of CDS goals for the professional development system and system outcomes. It should be noted that information was not available to determine the effectiveness of an actual activity, just that the activity was being funded. While available information allows us a perspective about whether there is alignment of activities, to some degree, with the NCCIC elements and CDS goals and outcomes for the professional development system, it should be noted that a more in-depth evaluation of funded activities would provide detailed information about alignment with, and attainment of, goals and outcomes.

The matrix was developed by reviewing various information sources. Examples include information provided by programs and entities (e.g., brochures, fact sheets, informational handouts, report summaries, etc.); the DHS Professional Development System Five-year Plan, DHS Vision chart; CCR&R work plans; CCR&R statute; CCR&R service proposed delivery model; CCR&R letter of agreement; and informal conversations with funded entities/grantees staff. The following is a description of the DHS professional development system, as seen through the matrix.

MATRIX OF DHS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FUNDED GRANTEES, ENTITIES AND MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The matrix below is a visual representation of major professional development activities funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Development Services (CDS) through entity or grantee programs or initiatives. **Column one** is the name of the entity or grantee and the primary program or initiative funded through CDS. **Column two** identifies the major activity or activities the entity or grantee is funded to provide. **Column three** identifies how the major funded activity is aligned with the CDS goals for the professional development system (A-F) and their identified System outcomes (1-3). The checkmarks (✓) in the columns under the heading **Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Child Care Framework** (Funding; Core Professional Knowledge; Qualifications and Credentials; Quality Assurance; and Access and Outreach) indicate that the major funded activity addresses that element in some way. The **Potential Connecting Points for Activities** column is a partial list of the interdependent strategies of major PD system activities.

Entities and Grantees; (funded initiative or program)	Major PD System Activities	Alignment w/CDS Goals for PD System (A-F) and CDS PD System Outcomes (1-3)	Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Child Care Framework					Potential Connecting Points for Activities (This is not an exhaustive list of strategies)
			Funding	Core Professional Knowledge	Qualifications and Credentials	Quality Assurance	Access and Outreach	
Minnesota CCR&R network Funded initiatives or programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ T.E.A.C.H.¹ ▪ R.E.E.T.A.I.N.² ▪ Eager to Learn ▪ Program for Infant/Toddler care (formerly ITTI³) ▪ Learning Continuum Planning⁴ ▪ MNSTREAMS.org 	Activity: Coordinate and manage the statewide resource and referral network, training delivery, and statewide CCR&R communication system Activity: Develop and maintain child care professional programs, supports and resources	CDS goals for the PD system (B, C) System outcomes (1, 3)	✓	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Coordination ▪ Scholarships and Grants ▪ Development and maintenance of programs ▪ Coordination ▪ Translation ▪ Advisory committees

¹ Teacher Education And Compensation Helps

² Retaining Early Education Through Attaining Incentives Now

³ Infant Toddler Training Intensive

⁴ Formerly provided by St. Louis County; moved to the CCR&R Network.

Entities and Grantees; (funded initiative or program)	Major PD System Activities	Alignment w/CDS Goals for PD System (A-F) and CDS PD System Outcomes (1-3)	Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Child Care Framework					Potential Connecting Points for Activities (This is not an exhaustive list of strategies)
			Funding	Core Professional Knowledge	Qualifications and Credentials	Quality Assurance	Access and Outreach	
Minnesota CCR&R System: District sites (scale)	Activity: Develop and implement child care resource and referral services at a scale level; and support the delivery of child care professional development training at a district level (scale)	CDS goals for the PD system (B, C) System outcomes (1, 3)	✓	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Telephone-based referral services ▪ Baseline reporting: local child care data, status reporting, and capacity building ▪ Scholarships and grants ▪ Advisory committees and planning groups ▪ Training delivery ▪ Trainer recruitment and retention ▪ Translation
MN CCR&R System: Baseline Sites (local and regional)	Activity: Develop and implement child care resource and referral services at a local level; assess child care professional development training needs; and coordinate training advisory committee within local communities.	CDS goals for the PD system (B, C) System outcomes (1, 3)	✓	✓		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Telephone-based referral services ▪ Baseline reporting: local child care data, status reporting, and capacity building ▪ Scholarships and grants ▪ Advisory committees and planning groups ▪ Training delivery ▪ Trainer recruitment and retention ▪ Translation

Entities and Grantees; (funded initiative or program)	Major PD System Activities	Alignment w/CDS Goals for PD System (A-F) and CDS PD System Outcomes (1-3)	Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Child Care Framework					Potential Connecting Points for Activities (This is not an exhaustive list of strategies)
			Funding	Core Professional Knowledge	Qualifications and Credentials	Quality Assurance	Access and Outreach	
Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MnTRECC)	<p>Activity: Provide culturally responsive child care professional development implemented by tribal communities; and develop and implement culturally responsive core professional knowledge.</p> <p>Activity: Collaborate with Minnesota CCR&R to strengthen tribal child care programs and provide access to tribal child care professionals to build cultural responsiveness in MN CCR&R districts and baselines.</p>	<p>CDS goals for the PD system (B, C)</p> <p>System outcomes (1, 3)</p>		✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Advisory Committees
<p>Early Childhood Resource and Training Center (ECRTC)</p> <p>Funded program: Building Cultural Connections</p>	<p>Activity: Provide culturally responsive child care professional development to cultural communities and FFN providers and caregivers; develop and implement culturally responsive core professional knowledge.</p>	<p>CDS goals for the PD system (B, C)</p> <p>System outcomes (1, 3)</p>		✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Development of programs ▪ Translations of materials ▪ Advisory committees

Entities and Grantees; (funded initiative or program)	Major PD System Activities	Alignment w/CDS Goals for PD System (A-F) and CDS PD System Outcomes (1-3)	Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Child Care Framework					Potential Connecting Points for Activities (This is not an exhaustive list of strategies)
			Funding	Core Professional Knowledge	Qualifications and Credentials	Quality Assurance	Access and Outreach	
Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance (MNSACA)	Activity: Core professional knowledge development for school-age care providers; accreditation for licensed programs.	CDS goals for the PD system (C, E) System outcomes (1)		✓		✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Training delivery ▪ Training advisory ▪ MN Career Lattice (e.g., career path) ▪ MN Trainer Infrastructure ▪ MN Learning Continuum
Concordia University: Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC) Funded initiative: Project EXCEPTIONAL	Activity: Supporting practitioners and parents in inclusion of children and youth with special needs through targeted professional development.	CDS goals for the PD system (C) System outcomes (1)		✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data gathering, sharing, compiling and analyzing ▪ Training delivery ▪ Training advisory ▪ MN Career Lattice (e.g., career path) ▪ MN Trainer Infrastructure ▪ MN Learning Continuum
Concordia University: MNSMART Funded initiative: Relationship-based Professional Development (RBPD)	Activity: Relationship-based professional development delivery methods; develop the core professional knowledge of caregivers and providers.	CDS goals for the PD system (C, E, F) System outcomes (1)		✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MN Career Lattice (e.g., career path) ▪ MN Trainer Infrastructure ▪ MN Learning Continuum ▪ Training delivery ▪ Training advisory
First Children's Finance (formerly known as the Development Corporation for Children) ¹ Funded program: Building Excellence and Success in Training (B.E.S.T.)	Activity: Developing business management skills and organization capacity building for licensed child care centers and settings.	CDS goals for the PD system (C, F) System outcomes (1)		✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training delivery ▪ Training advisory ▪ MN Career Lattice (e.g., career path) ▪ MN Trainer Infrastructure ▪ MN Learning Continuum

¹ Formerly provided by Development Corporation for Children (now known as First Children's Finance).

Entities and Grantees; (funded initiative or program)	Major PD System Activities	Alignment w/CDS Goals for PD System (A-F) and CDS PD System Outcomes (1-3)	Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Child Care Framework					Potential Connecting Points for Activities (This is not an exhaustive list of strategies)
			Funding	Core Professional Knowledge	Qualifications and Credentials	Quality Assurance	Access and Outreach	
Metropolitan State University (MSU) Funded program: Early Childhood Experiential Learning	Activity: Pathways leading to qualifications and degrees through Credit for Prior Experiential Learning	CDS goals for the PD system (C, E, F) System outcomes (1)		✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MN Career Lattice (e.g., career path) ▪ MN Trainer Infrastructure ▪ MN Learning Continuum
Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MNAEYC) Funded initiative: Professional Development Council	Activity: Facilitate convene, and staff the Professional Development Council (PDC). The PDC works with others to facilitate further development of a comprehensive PD system in Minnesota.	CDS goals for the PD system (A, E) System outcomes (1)		✓	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MN Career Lattice (e.g., career path) ▪ MN Trainer Infrastructure ▪ MN Learning Continuum

DHS Professional Development System Strengths: Alignment with CDS Goals for Professional Development and System Outcomes

One way to measure the strength of a system is to understand how the activities (e.g., funded programs and initiatives) are aligned with the goals and outcomes of the system. It is also important that system goals and outcomes be clear and measurable so that they can provide the direction necessary to focus activities toward the accomplishment of a vision. The goals and outcomes that exist for the professional development system were developed by CDS. Below are the CDS goals and broad system outcomes, and the depiction of how the funded activities align with these goals and outcomes, as indicated in the matrix. It is important to understand that these goals and intended system outcomes are anticipated to be embodied and expressed through the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System.

CDS Goals for the PD System:

- A. A quality, relevant PD system that is measurable and accountable exists.
- B. A flexible, balanced, intentional, and inclusive approach to planning and implementation is utilized.
- C. The PD system is responsive, accessible, strength-based, and provides a continuum of opportunities.
- D. CDS supports system implementation with skilled staff, clearly defined roles, and strong communication with communities.
- E. The PD system assures core competencies across the provider/caregiver workforce.
- F. The PD system creates and/or coordinates a variety of paths for the provider/caregiver workforce.

System Outcomes:

1. **Increased knowledge and skills of practitioners, especially from underserved populations.** This will be measured using a combination of practitioner advancement in the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA; a method for documenting increased learning aligned with the practitioner core competencies) and the Personal Learning Assessment Tool (PLAT, a mini-survey practitioners fill out post-training to demonstrate learning).
2. Increased use of the ITNA by practitioners, especially from underserved populations. Using the ITNA, the provider will complete a professional development plan documenting improvement in each core competency area.
3. Increased percentage of practitioners accessing CCR&R training, especially from underserved populations.

DHS Professional Development System Strengths:

- There appears to be alignment of the DHS professional development system funded activities with the CDS goals and system outcomes.
- The DHS professional development funded activities support several of the NCCIC elements of a professional development system (e.g., funding, core professional knowledge, and access and outreach).
- All of the funded activities appear to be aligned with the core knowledge element of a professional development framework.
- The types of activities being funded appear to be a good base from which to form a unified professional development system.

The matrix shows that with the exceptions of CDS Goal D (an internal goal specifically for Child Development Services) and system outcome 2, the DHS professional development system funded activities are aligned with CDS goals and system outcomes. CDS Goal C and System outcome number 1 are aligned with the highest number of funded activities.

The matrix shows that the funded activities align with all of the Elements of a Professional Development Framework. Of the framework elements, core professional knowledge is aligned with all of the funded activities. This is important because having a core body of professional knowledge is essential to a comprehensive professional development system. It is a plus that all of the funded activities of DHS professional development are aligned with this framework element.

What can be seen through the matrix:

- The difference between the types of activities being funded through the CCR&R network and system and those funded through other entities or grantees
- The categories of activities being funded fall into the areas of: resource and referral, training delivery, culturally responsive child care professional development, school-age child care professional development, accreditation, special needs professional development, relationship-based professional development, business management and capacity building, credit for prior learning, building a professional development system and core professional knowledge.
- The only funding for quality assurances activities is through the Minnesota School Age Care Alliance (MNSACA) (e.g., accreditation)
- There are two institutions of higher learning that receive funding for activities: Concordia University and Metropolitan State University
- There are two entities receiving funding (MnTRECC and ECRTC) that emphasize serving child caregivers and providers from cultural communities.

What cannot be seen through the matrix:

- It is difficult to ascertain if entities or grantees are aware of the CDS goals and outcomes, or to determine the emphasis or priority that will be placed on them
- Based on the Assessing Access component review of several CCR&R work plans, it is known that the plans often lacked specific details in areas like addressing access for underserved populations and persons with disabilities
- It is unclear who actually owns the intellectual property (e.g., funded program or service) being provided. Is the Department's Child Development Services contracting with entities and grantees to develop and provide a service that is wholly owned by DHS, or are grants being provided to entities to support programs and services that are their intellectual property?

Identifying Gaps and Missing Activities that Could Enhance Inclusion or Accessibility

Where are the gaps or needs? What gaps or needs appear to be most pressing? When thinking about gaps in the system, think of them the way one would a missing piece from a puzzle. Every piece is essential. So, when thinking about what is missing from the PD system, think about the pieces that are essential to the attainment of this vision of all children entering educational settings fully prepared to succeed.

Through the matrix:

- There is only one entity funded to provide activities that align with the quality assurances element of a professional development framework. In addition, the system lacks adequate checks and balances, leaving many decisions open to individual interpretation; decisions may

also be made based on a model of “who you know, who you feel comfortable with, or who you have relationships with.”

- While the CCR&R baseline sites list working with FFN caregivers in their work plans, these plans lack specifics. ECRTC is the only funded entity with well-defined activities focused on supporting Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers.
- While the CCR&R district and baseline sites list working with cultural and underserved communities in their work plans, there are no specific plans listed. Currently, MnTRECC and ECRTC are funded entities who specialize in working with cultural communities, and the Center for Inclusive Child Care is the only entity funded to work with the special needs caregivers and providers.

Overlaps: Identifying Activities Occurring Through More than One Entity or Grantee

The matrix identifies where there are instances of overlap in funded activities. Identifying these overlaps can reveal what activities might have in common, or if there are points of intersection. This information could be helpful in making future decisions about the professional development system. Looking at the matrix:

- There are commonalities in the CCR&R network, district and baseline sites in major funded activities because each of them primarily focuses on implementing resource and referral type strategies. This was not a surprise.
- There are commonalities in activities that support the funding element of a professional development framework; these involve the grant and scholarship work being carried out by the Minnesota CCR&R network, districts, and baseline sites.
- Each of the funded activities overlaps in their alignment with the core knowledge element of a professional development framework because the activities include training or skill building strategies.
- Many of the entities or grantees’ activities overlap in their alignment with the access and outreach elements of a professional development framework because access and outreach are either in their respective work plans (e.g., Minnesota CCR&R district and baseline sites) or because they are an entity whose primary focus is serving a cultural community (e.g., MnTRECC or ECRTC).

While overlaps (or commonalities) in activities exist, they provide a thread with which to knit the DHS professional system into a whole. And while some redundancy is to be expected, this system change process will address these areas in which overlap is not desirable.

Interdependence: A Look at How Activities Create Mutual Dependencies

A system is comprised of interdependent parts, each contributing and receiving something from the whole. These parts should be specifically arranged to accomplish the vision. For the professional development system to attain a vision of all children entering educational settings fully prepared to succeed, staff must begin to understand and recognize the ways in which the major activities within the professional development system are dependent on one another. Looking through the lens of the matrix, some of the ways in which funded activities are interdependent can be seen.

- Examples of strategies that connect to multiple funded activities are training delivery, trainer recruitment and retention, advisory committees and funding (e.g., scholarships and grants).
- There are connecting, or interdependent points that indicate a high need for communication and collaboration to avoid potential problems (e.g., scholarships and grants, training delivery, or trainer recruitment and retention).

This picture of child care PD in Minnesota today shows that there is a “system within a system,” comprised of the CCR&R system, as well as funded programs, initiatives, and activities that are interdependent. In subsequent sections of this report, implementation strategies and items for consideration that will aid in identifying missing pieces of the system will be provided, a part of the thread that will be used to weave the interdependent parts of the system into a unified whole.

A good foundation exists from which DHS can build a unified system: funded activities are aligned with many of the system goals and outcomes; and also support several of the Elements of a PD Framework. The items for consideration offered in subsequent sections will identify areas in need of attention, and implementation strategies that will help to address gaps and provide coordination, clarity, and consistency throughout the system.

ONE SYSTEM, MANY PARTS

The MNCCPD system consists of interrelated parts focused on providing development opportunities to providers and caregivers that enhance their early childhood and school-age caregiving skills. While the system consists of parts that are interrelated, recommendations from both the Scan of the Professional Development System report and focus group findings indicated a need for enhanced coordination within the system. Many of the comments in both reports addressed coordination. One focus group participant said that “DHS can support us in our role with continued funding for the Early Childhood Assessment Program and the coordination of services among the early childhood community.” When asked about potential roles for DHS within the MNCCPD system, another focus group participant suggested that “connecting with other policy entities (the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Governor’s office, other state departments, other divisions) because they appear to be on different trails without coordination, yet they have similar missions that have (or could have) an impact on child care professional development.”

System coordination is a combination of clearly defined leadership, lines of authority, a process for decision-making, and an identified task structure that supports the achievement of a shared vision. Therefore, the “Proposed Model for the DHS Funded System” that was developed for the department in 2005 by external consultants (the model was created for discussion purposes) will be presented first. This will be followed by suggesting an expanded description of this model, including its functional components, and strategies for developing and implementing the model. High priority is placed on strategies that support a coordinated, accessible, inclusive professional development system. Information and data gathered by scanning DHS PD contracts, trainers and training content, as well as focus group data, were used to inform the expanded model and development and implementation strategies.

The expanded description of the MNCCPD system model includes a proposed organizational structure that is inclusive of the system’s functional components.

Organizational Structure

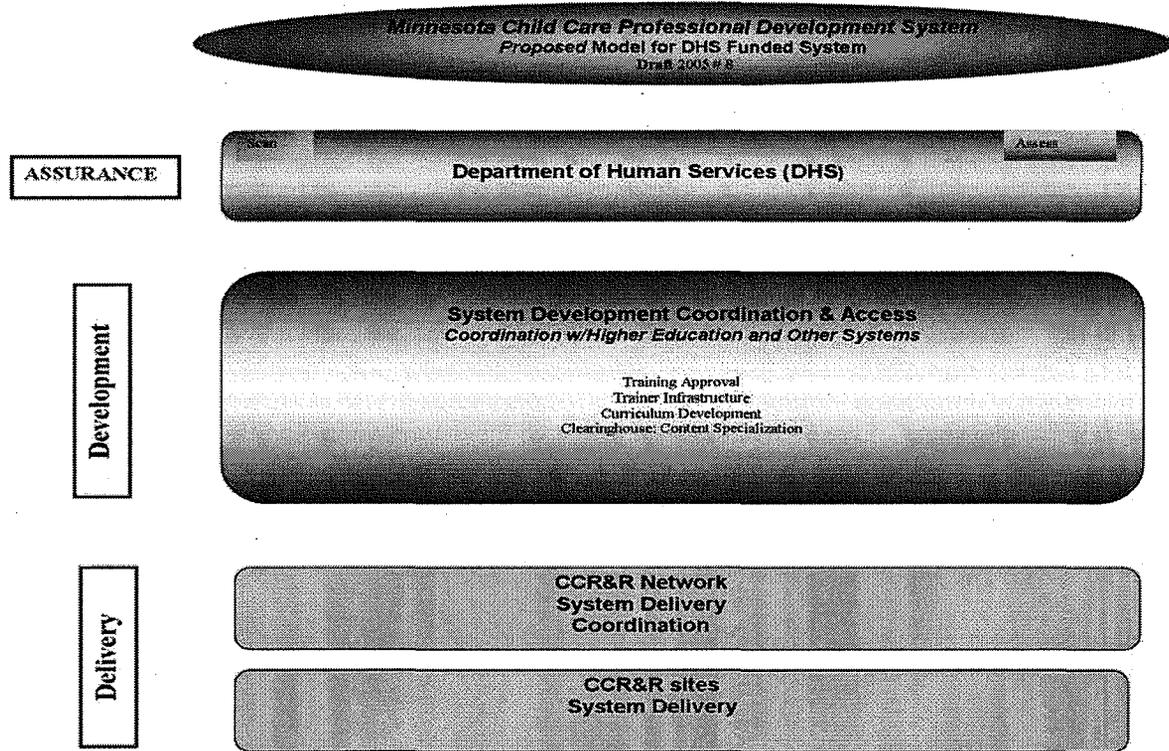
An organization’s overall effectiveness is determined by several factors including, but not limited to, its structure and the extent to which its subsystems are aligned. And an organization’s structure indicates how the overall work of the organization is divided and coordinated for task completion.¹ The effectiveness of the MNCCPD system is determined by its overall structure, which influences the effectiveness of its functional components and its relationship with external (or broader) systems. Enhancing coordination begins with improving the organizational structure.

¹ *Study on Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in Minnesota’s Center-Based Child Care Programs*, November 2001, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Organizational (or system) structure can take several forms: functional, divisional, matrix, process and others. The most effective structure for an organization (or system) can be determined by taking into account external elements and forces (inputs), such as political and social forces, that affect the attainment of organizational objectives, and the processes/design components (e.g., strategy, culture, roles, responsibilities, etc.) that influence how functional components (e.g., training delivery methods, curriculum development) are converted into services for stakeholders or customers.

The MNCCPD system has many of the components found within an organization (e.g., a vision, strategies, goals and objectives) and, like any organization, to function effectively it must also have a defined organizational structure. **Figure A** is the Proposed Model for the DHS Funded System. It provides an example of an organizational structure for the MNCCPD system. However, it is incomplete. The model seems to represent a process driven structure, where the system is organized around core processes: assurance, development and delivery. What the model does not clearly delineate are the specific roles/responsibilities, decision-making processes, and task structures that are needed to accomplish the vision. This document will address each of these in greater detail.

FIGURE A: Proposed Model for the DHS Funded System

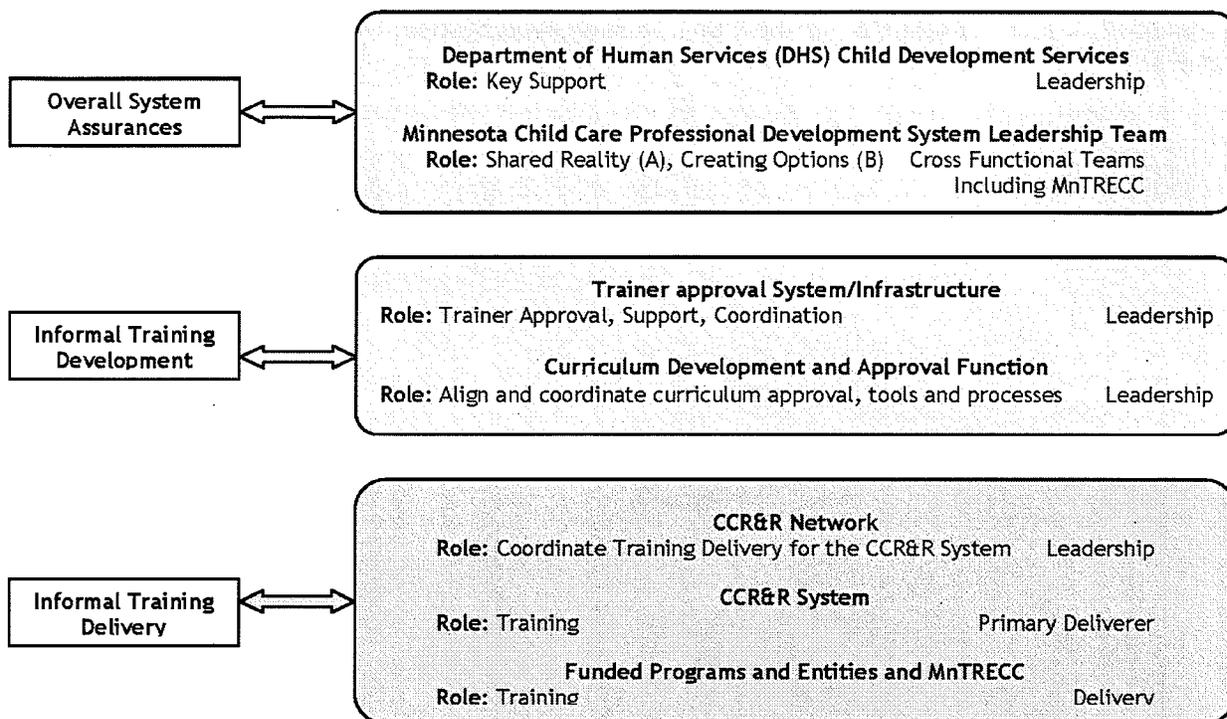


Roles and Responsibilities

Delineating roles allows an understanding of those specific tasks and responsibilities that are needed to accomplish the shared vision for the system. **Figure B** is a DRAFT, revised version of the model and includes additional details to more clearly describe the organizational roles and responsibilities, such as leadership in the areas of system oversight, training content and delivery. These leadership roles are needed to accomplish a shared vision. For example, the revised model shows that CDS serves the role of key support and leadership for the assurance process of the system. The addition of the MNCCPD system Leadership Teams, which are cross functional, define the system’s shared reality and create options for

moving this reality forward. It is the output of these teams that provides CDS with implementation options.

FIGURE B: Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System (Organizational Structure): Proposed Model/Revised



The revised model further clarifies the roles within both the development and delivery processes of the MNCCPD system organizational structure. The Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure has the role of providing trainer approval, support and coordination, and is responsible for trainer leadership. The Curriculum Development and Approval Function has the role of aligning and coordinating curriculum approval, tools and process, and is responsible for training content leadership.

The CCR&R network serves the role of coordinating training delivery for the CCR&R system. The CCR&R system is the primary deliverer of training for the MNCCPD system. Funded programs, entities and MnTRECC are secondary deliverers of training for the MNCCPD System. The revisions to the model answer the questions:

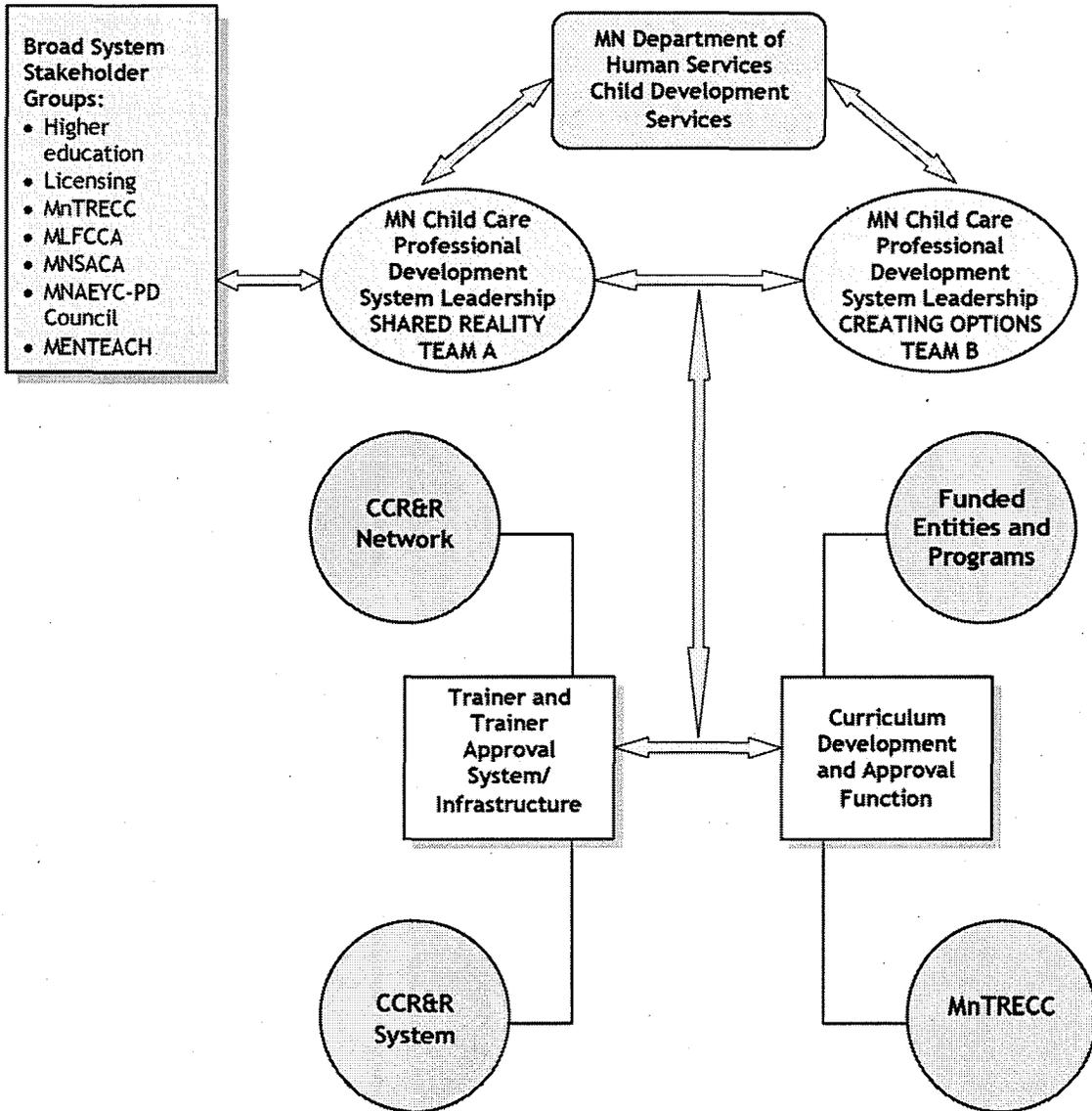
- Who is providing leadership for the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System and how?
- How can a separate Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure and Curriculum Development and Approval Function within the development process interact with the training delivery process?
- What is the role of funded programs, entities and MnTRECC in the MNCCPD system?

This model also shows that the scope of CCR&R network coordination efforts includes training, an important part of the MNCCPD system. The revised model clarifies the organizational structure for the MNCCPD system.

Decision-Making and System Interfaces

The next step is to understand how decisions are made and how the system interfaces internally and externally (or with broader systems). **Figure C** provides a proposed view of a decision-making process and suggestions of interfaces for the MNCCPD system. Understanding the scope of decision-making authority and the process by which decisions are made enhances system effectiveness and coordination.

Figure C: Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System: Decision-making and System Interface



The primary decision-making model for the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System was developed by TeamWorks International, Inc. (see Appendix). **Figure C** is a proposed visual representation of how this model can be used and the internal and external interfaces for the MNCCPD system. While some of the roles identified in the proposed visual are a part of an ad hoc structure for continuing the professional development system change work (teams A and B), it is recommended that consideration be given to continuing these roles beyond the scope of the system change project.

This is a decision-making, mutually influencing, and consensus model approved by Child Development Services and is used within the system as a shared process for shaping recommendations. The essential elements of this model include:

- Shared reality and creating options (while developing a shared understanding)
- Choice-making
- Implementation (or planning and setting expectations)
- Refinement (continuous improvement).

The following are proposed decision-making roles for the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System that incorporate the TeamWorks decision-making model.

A. MNCCPD System Shared Reality Team A

This team of external stakeholders will look at issues, problems, and information, and use this data to raise specific questions and inform the development of potential choices/options. This team would also interface with internal and external systems and stakeholders to more clearly align the visions and goals of each system to accomplish shared goals.

B. MNCCPD System Creating Options Team B

This team of external stakeholders will gather the information from team A, use it to define options and put these options into a more clearly defined format for presentation to CDS. They will take those refined options and information back to team A for review to ensure that the more defined format still represents what they would like to see presented to CDS.

C. Choice Making (DHS Child Development Services)

CDS will take the options/choices and information from team B and use this to make decisions that will impact the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System.

D. Implementation

The decision of who is responsible for implementing a given recommendation will be made based on the type of recommendation. For example, recommendations affecting system leadership and overall coordination will be implemented by CDS, while recommendations affecting training content will or could be implemented by the Curriculum Development and Approval Function. The Training and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure, Curriculum Development and Approval Function, CCR&R network, CCR&R system, funded programs and entities, and MnTRECC will have a shared role in implementing choices/options.

E. Refinement

Refinement is the process of studying how choices and options have been implemented to determine the effectiveness, and then suggesting modifications, when appropriate. The ultimate responsibility for this would rest with CDS, with teams A and B informing this process.

Task Structure

A system **Task Structure** is the way in which functional components are aligned and intersect to accomplish a vision. At its core, the MNCCPD system develops and delivers **training** (e.g., from entry level to the Child Development Associates Credential [CDA] or equivalent) for providers, and to partner strategically to ensure caregivers and providers have access to core professional knowledge through a continuum of training and learning experiences.

Within the MNCCPD system, **training** is the **primary functional component** through which the other system components intersect. The **Functional Components** (e.g., training delivery methods, Career

Lattice Framework, etc.) are the gears of the system through which the vision is accomplished, which is why it is essential that stakeholders understand how they intersect with one another. **Intersections** are the places where the functional components of the system interconnect with other components. **Connections** are places where functional components link to a single part of the system, but are not interconnected. **External Systems and Networks** are organizations outside of the MNCCPD System or subsystems within the system that interconnect with system components.

For example, the Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum Framework stems from training, and intersects with trainer credentialing, relationship-based professional development (a subsystem); and Minnesota Early Childhood & School-Age Trainers Association (MECSATA, an external network). Training delivery methods (a functional component) that also stems from training (the primary functional component), connects to the CCR&R system (which is a primary delivery method and a subsystem).

Training has been the primary means by which other functional components of the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System intersect. The Change Process Leadership Team helped identify the purposes, functions, implementation strategies and intersections for the following functional components that are part of the MNCCPD system:

- Training delivery methods
- Trainer and Training Infrastructure System/Approval
- Curriculum development and approval
- Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum framework
- Career Lattice framework.

These functional components are the tasks by which the vision of the MNCCPD system is brought about. To ensure that functional components effectively interconnect with external or broad systems, a proposed working relationship of the MNCCPD System Shared Reality Team A has been suggested (see Figure C above). This will strengthen the connections between systems.

Table A describes the *functional components, purpose, intersections and connections* of the MNCCPD system, based on the work of the Change Process Leadership Team (e.g., discussions and meeting summary documents).

Table A: Functional Components, Purpose, Intersections and Connections

(* denotes DHS-funded sub-systems of the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System)

Functional Components	Purpose	Intersections and Connections*
Training	The primary purpose of the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development system is to provide learning opportunities for caregivers and providers of early childhood and school-age care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure ▪ Curriculum Development and Approval Function ▪ Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum Framework ▪ Training Delivery Methods ▪ Career Lattice Framework
Trainer and Trainer Approval System/ Infrastructure	In partnership, coordinate, develop and implement processes, methods and tools to approve, support, train and enhance professional development of a full spectrum of trainers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training Delivery Methods ▪ Training of Trainers* ▪ Trainer Registry*
Curriculum Development and Approval Function	Align and coordinate curriculum approval, tools and processes necessary to support the MN Child Care Professional Development system in coordination/ partnership with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training Delivery Methods ▪ Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure ▪ Career Lattice Framework ▪ Minnesota Learning Continuum Framework ▪ Higher education: credit based systems
Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum Framework	Serve as a comprehensive framework for organizing and supporting the learning and professional development of trainers and all who provide child care to Minnesota's children and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer Credentialing* ▪ Curriculum development and approval ▪ MECSATA ▪ Relationship-based PD ▪ Higher education
Training Delivery Methods	Ensure the accessibility of informal learning opportunities for caregivers and providers of early childhood and school-age care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer and Training Approval System/Infrastructure
Career Lattice Framework	A framework for offering multiple pathways for professional growth; designed to support (and inspire) care and educate practitioners to continually improve the quality of care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer and Training Approval System/Infrastructure ▪ Training Delivery Methods

Figure D outlines the *functional components, intersections, connections, external systems and networks* of the MNCCPD system, as based upon the work of the Change Process Leadership Team. It represents a proposed visual of the task structure for the MNCCPD system. A key dimension of task structure is coordination: how functional components are structured to promote effective interaction, particularly for interdependent functions. The ways in which tasks are structured impact coordination and effectiveness while attempting to achieve the vision. A clearer definition of how tasks are structured within the system allows for more effective management of external or broad system relationships, and along with networks, allows for the extension of the reach of vision.

Figure D: Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System: Functional Components and Intersections

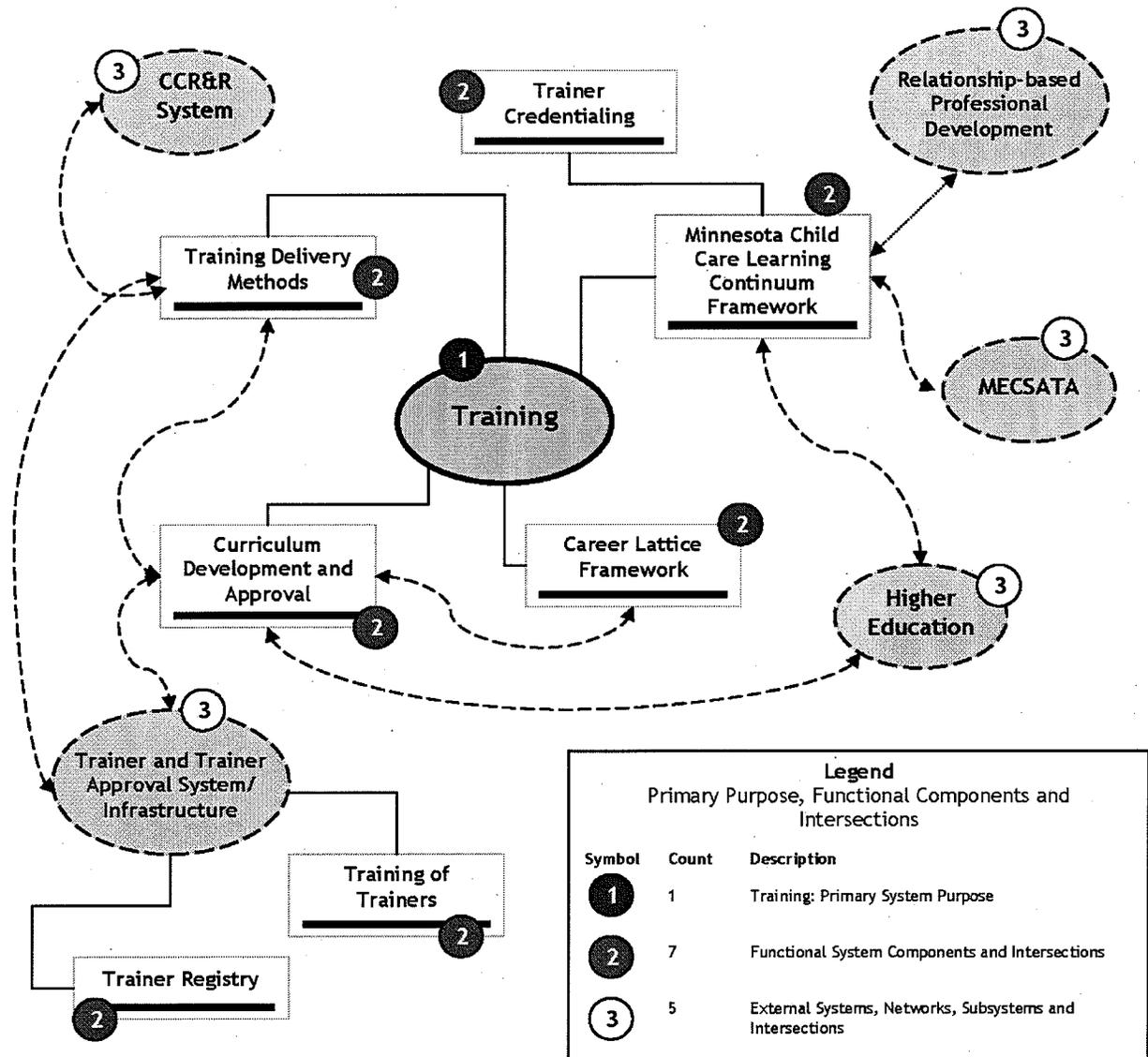


Table B below describes the consultants' perspective of a few of the external systems, networks, subsystems, intersections and connections of the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System, based upon the work of the Change Process Leadership Team. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list, and that the (*) denotes a DHS-funded subsystem. Effective coordination of functional components with external systems and networks can provide caregivers and providers with a seamless experience, regardless of how they enter the system or the way in which they gain access to the system. And it places the MNCCPD system on a pathway together with its external partners to advance the goal of positively influencing child care professional development in Minnesota.

Table B: External Systems, Networks and Subsystems

(* denotes DHS-funded sub-systems of the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System)

External Systems, Networks and Subsystems	Purpose	Intersections and Connections*
CCR&R System*	Primary deliverer of training for the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training Delivery Methods
Higher Education	Deliverer of credit-based learning; Determines experience to count for credit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minnesota Learning Continuum Framework ▪ Curriculum Development And Approval.
Minnesota Early Childhood & School-Age Trainers Association (MECSATA)	Trainer support and promotion, networking, and voluntary trainer credentialing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minnesota Learning Continuum Framework.
Relationship-based Professional Development*	Deliverer of informal and formal training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance, consulting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minnesota Learning Continuum Framework

ATTRIBUTES OF AN ACCESSIBLE, CULTURALLY COMPETENT, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SYSTEM

Based upon research¹ that has explored the Minnesota child care system, accessibility, inclusion, cultural competence and cultural responsiveness are all considered to be attributes of an effective child care professional development system.

The need for enhanced accessibility, inclusion, cultural competence and cultural responsiveness within the MNCCPD system was cited by individuals who participated in the 11 MNCCPD system focus groups conducted in spring 2006. Some comments from participants regarding descriptors included the following:

- “There is no definition of what is culturally relevant and at the same time developmentally appropriate or consistent with the core competencies for each of the various cultural groups”
- “At the process level — create a process that ensures that the core competencies and best practices are culturally inclusive beyond the numbers of individuals at the table”
- “The system isn’t accessible because it isn’t aligned with other state departments”
- A concern for the “Distance to the classes and their availability” to outlying areas.

¹ *Building Cultural Responsiveness in Minnesota's Child Care System: Strategies, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations for Future Direction*, November 2001, Claire Buchwald, FOCUS Interactive Research; and *Study on Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in Minnesota's Center-Based Child Care Programs*, November 2001, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

An overview of the attributes of an accessible, inclusive, culturally competent and culturally responsive system follows, along with suggestions for creating a process that uses these attributes to engage and re-engage the diverse constituencies (stakeholders) in the system. Suggestions to assist in enhancing cultural competence at the organizational level of the system are also offered.

These attributes and suggestions will be carried forward as ways are offered in which they can be embedded within the functional components of the MNCCPD system, and by doing so can improve the ability to engage systems, such as Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care.

Prioritizing Competing Needs

A climate of diminishing resources often creates an atmosphere of competing priorities. To understand why the development of a culturally competent, responsive and inclusive framework for the MNCCPD system is a priority, it is helpful to consider research about the child care needs and demographic trends in Minnesota:

- “By the year 2025, communities of color will represent approximately 17 percent of Minnesota’s population.”.... “These changes not only add children to the child care system, but also require ongoing assessment and action to ensure that child care programs and services meet the diverse needs of all families.”¹
- A 2000 survey of the racial/ethnic diversity of children in center-based child care programs indicated that a total of 16 percent were children of color (an increase from the 1993 study, which indicated 9.2 percent).²
- “Altogether, 70 percent of households that use child care use some form of Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) care on a regular basis” and “46 percent of families use FFN care as their primary”³ source of care.
- “Exclusive use of FFN care is higher for families with low incomes (32 percent), families of color (36 percent), families whose children have special needs (38 percent), and families from immigrant and refugee groups (37 percent).”³
- “About 16 percent of FFN caregivers say that the randomly selected child they care for has special needs (medical, physical, emotional, developmental or behavioral), that affect the way they take care of the child. These children may or may not require an Individual Education Plan (IEP).”⁴

Though this is only a sample of child care research, it supports the need to ensure that the MNCCPD system is culturally competent, responsive, and inclusive because:

- Expectations are that the number of families of color accessing and utilizing some form of child care in Minnesota will continue to increase
- A high percentage of families accessing family, friend and neighbor care are of color and/or from immigrant and refugee groups
- Family, friend and neighbor care represents the most significant type of child care being provided in Minnesota for low-income families, and among providers of this type of care, a significant percentage are providing care for children with special needs.

¹ *Building Cultural Responsiveness in Minnesota’s Child Care System: Strategies, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations for Future Direction*, November 2001, Claire Buchwald, Ph.D., Director, FOCUS Interactive Research; and *Study on Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in Minnesota’s Center-Based Child Care Programs*, November 2001, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

² *Study on Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in Minnesota’s Center-Based Child Care Programs*, November 2001, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

³ *Child Care Use in Minnesota: 2004 Statewide Household Child Care Survey*, Nov. 2005, Wilder Research. Also *Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers: Results of the 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*, Feb. 2006, Wilder Research.

⁴ *Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers: Results of the 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*, Feb. 2006, Wilder Research.

The research also supports the need to focus first on enhancing access to the MNCCPD system for racial and ethnically diverse caregivers and providers. Secondly, it supports the need to ensure that the system is accessible to family, friend and neighbor caregivers and to those providing care to children with special needs. This supports the assertion that a culturally competent, responsive and inclusive framework is needed.

Defining the Attributes of a Culturally Competent, Responsive and Inclusive System

One of the primary reasons for creating a culturally competent, responsive and inclusive system is to ultimately enhance the experience of Minnesota children and their families by positively influencing the professional development experiences of those who provide child care. By creating a system that contains these attributes, stakeholders can help to positively impact how individual caregivers and providers experience system services (e.g., training content, training delivery, etc.).

It can be said that accessibility and inclusion are byproducts of, or will be enhanced, when service design and delivery are culturally responsive. And service design and delivery will be culturally responsive when system stakeholders are culturally competent.

Following are descriptors of attributes, which are meant to be a place from which to build; a place to bring people and their varied opinions, experiences, and thoughts together to create a positive, common set of system experiences.

Cultural Competence

The characteristics or qualities of **cultural competence**¹ within a system are:

- Having a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrated behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable the people within the system to work effectively across cultures
- Having the capacity to
 - value diversity
 - conduct self-assessment
 - manage the dynamics of difference
 - acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge
 - adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities being served.
- Incorporating the above in all aspects of policymaking, administration, practice, and service delivery; systematically involving consumers, key stakeholders and communities in their development.

Cultural Responsiveness

The characteristics or qualities of **cultural responsiveness**² within a system are:

- An awareness of the ways culture and professional practices intersect
- An ability to respond to the linguistic needs of constituents
- An awareness of how an individual's way of thinking, behaving, and being are influenced by race, social class, ethnicity, and language
- A commitment to being an agent of change by confronting barriers and obstacles to inclusion.

¹ Adapted from "Cultural Competence: Definition and Conceptual Framework." National Center for Cultural Competence, <http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/foundations/frameworks.html>.

² Adapted from *Becoming Culturally Responsive Educators: Rethinking Teacher Education Pedagogy*, Dr. Cathy Kea, Dr. Gloria D. Campbell-Whatley, Dr. Heraldo V. Richards, 2004, National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems; and *Building Cultural Responsiveness in Minnesota's Child Care System: Strategies, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations for Future Directions*, November 2001, Claire Buchwald, FOCUS Interactive Research.

Inclusion

Inclusion moves beyond the traditional place at the table or being asked to give an opinion or input; those who were once disengaged are now:

- Providing organizational leadership and direction, as evidenced by their increased positional influence within the system
- Respected for their expertise, as evidenced by the value placed on their knowledge and experience through the implementation of their ideas
- Influencing major decisions, as evidenced by their ability to affect the design and development of system services, delivery and resources
- Seen as integral to the success of the system, a complement to others within the system, and essential for system effectiveness; therefore, they see a meaningful place for themselves within the system.

Accessibility

An accessible system is one that is:

- **Approachable:** meetings, trainings, development experiences, and system activities are welcoming; system leadership and participants are receptive and open to new ideas or suggestions; there are ongoing ways to gather input, provide feedback, and have people involved
- **Reachable:** participants experience equal ability to influence and exert personal power within the system
- **Understandable:** communication is clear and comprehensible, and the system is user-friendly
- **Available:** system services, opportunities and resources are easy to find and use; there are a variety of delivery methods and types of development opportunities that are conveniently located or geographically close to system participants.

These attributes are meant to provide a starting point to guide the movement from the desire to change the system to tangible system modifications; from current experiences to desired future system experiences by stakeholders. These attributes are not a framework, per se, or an end, but are the beginnings of one; they can be used to guide discussions and decision-making, helping to balance the individual need to be heard (or involved) with the need to continue forward movement (or progress).

Strengthening and Rebuilding Stakeholder Connections

One of the reasons for creating a culturally competent, responsive and inclusive system is to positively influence the professional development experiences of individuals who are providing early childhood and school-age care. In doing so, DHS can strengthen the connections of those who are actively participating and comfortable in the system, and can create a bridge to reconnect stakeholders who, because of their experiences, have been disengaged from the MNCCPD system.

One strategy that can strengthen existing connections and build a bridge to reconnect the disengaged is to enhance or improve how each individual experiences the group and organizational processes within the system because they affect individual professional development experiences.

A group process is the way in which persons relate to one another as they perform activities¹; for example, how people communicate, engage new people, solve problems, handle conflict, make decisions, use leadership and authority, and develop group norms. Organizational processes are the way in which different elements of the organization interact or how different organizational functions are handled;¹

¹ *Organization Development and Change, 8th Edition*, Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley, 2005, Thomson South-Western.

examples include working across functional areas, handling coordination, setting priorities, action planning, problem-solving, communication, leadership, visioning, task accomplishment and addressing conflict. Changing the group and organizational process of the MNCCPD system to better reflect the attributes above can improve the relational experiences of stakeholders participating in system activities.

To enhance or improve the group and organizational processes of the system, the following suggestions should be implemented:

- Identify the desired stakeholder experience and develop measures, based upon the attributes, which can be used to demonstrate that stakeholders have experienced the desired outcome in the group and organization processes, services, and funded programs/initiatives of the system.
- Hold funded programs and initiatives accountable to standards that support the achievement of the desired stakeholder experience. Use these same attribute-based standards to measure funded program/initiative quality in these areas.
- Use existing partnerships with cultural programs and organizations to help create a base of information about the gap between the group and organizational processes of the system and the desired stakeholder experience. This information can be used to target technical assistance to improve experiences in all areas within the system.
- Create an MNCCPD system that reflects these attributes in the values and norms shared by system members, the ways in which tasks are accomplished within, and the system's functional components. A suggested goal is to ensure that attributes are ultimately embedded within all components of the MNCCPD system, including the evaluation component.

Think of ways to reflect these attributes as a process is developed to rebuild relationships with those who have been disengaged from, or who have been dissatisfied with, their relational experiences within the MNCCPD system.

To do this:

- Listen to and develop broad connections with the community. Listen to, broadly engage, and connect with cultural communities, using the attributes to help develop strategies. Listening strategies include:
 - community dialogues
 - leadership training to learn about power and strategy and how to work respectfully and effectively together.

This is different from a data gathering process; this is about hearing from and listening to communities, and creating spaces for them to hear from and listen to each other in order to build (and rebuild) relationships. This model, based on the Community Listening process developed by Hope Community¹, will allow DHS to engage in ongoing learning about the community, develop real respect for the people in the community, and build authentic relationships. It also allows for examination of issues and development of an understanding of each others' realities and limitations.

- Break the traditional input/feedback cycle. The data gathering phases of this project saw low participation by cultural communities. Many individuals expressed an unwillingness to participate in providing feedback because they had done so for past projects and had not seen the information used. It was suggested that organizational processes include ways to tangibly utilize gathered information and to communicate use of that information to system stakeholders, even if data was gathered from projects dating back several years. In addition, find ways to publicly acknowledge and recognize cultural communities for their contributions of

¹ Community Listening and Organizing, Hope Community, www.hope-community.org/Community/listeningandorganizing (retrieved on 13 Apr. 2007).

input/feedback that have resulted in positive changes to the system. This will help them feel that their contributions are valued; it also builds respect for their intellectual capital among other system stakeholders.

- Rebuild trust by communicating and managing communications. Using the attributes, develop an organizational communication plan that creates a forum for stakeholders to share their experiences in a proactive manner so that DHS is anticipating rather than reacting to them. Acknowledge their experiences; give them a place to discuss them; provide a positive place to ask questions. For example, create blogs, message boards, conference calls, paper and electronic newsletters, etc. This allows anticipation and affirmation of experiences while allowing people to feel they are being heard.
- Move beyond an implicit to an explicit organizational culture. Move beyond an unspoken organizational culture to an obvious, visible, shared organizational culture that includes accountability. To do this, begin with the attributes and the finalized version of the core values and guiding principles. Use them as mechanisms to ensure accountability and represent basic system assumptions and norms.

These suggestions will aid in enhancing the cohesiveness of stakeholder relationships and provide them with better experiences as they participate in the system. The next section suggests ways to use this information to create a framework, as well as how to embed the attributes into the functional components of the MNCCPD system.

EMBEDDING THE ATTRIBUTES OF ACCESSIBILITY, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS AND INCLUSION

As noted previously, accessibility, inclusion, cultural competence, and responsiveness are all attributes of an effective child care professional development system. The key to creating such a system is to understand how best to blend these attributes into the framework that becomes the foundation of the MNCCPD system. They must be interwoven into the core values, guiding principles, and policies — and the system's processes, infrastructure and functional components.

The MNCCPD system has a culture, just like any organization. The culture (or cultural norms) of the system “represents the basic assumptions, values, and norms shared by members. They are often taken for granted and serve to guide members’ perceptions, thoughts, and actions.”¹ And when changes to the structure, functional components, and procedures of a system are significant, and require new ways of working and relating to operate, a change to the cultural norms is required if the change is going to be successful.

This section provides suggestions for embedding the Attributes of an Accessible, Culturally Competent, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive System into the culture, functional components, and existing framework (e.g., Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum and Career Lattice Frameworks, proposed Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure, and Curriculum Development and Approval Function) of the MNCCPD system.

Guidelines for Embedding the Attributes of Accessibility, Cultural Competence, Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion into the System

Culture

To consider how to embed the attributes into the MNCCPD system, start by taking a look at the connections between the **culture** of the system and the ways in which participants experience the system.

¹ *Organization Development and Change, 8th Edition*, Thomas G. Cummings and Christopher G. Worley, 2005, Thomson South-Western.

How culture within a system is formed will also be discussed. Beginning here helps to ensure that individuals have positive professional development experiences. These experiences play a part in strengthening and building unity among the interrelated parts of the MNCCPD system.

“Culture is the way of being of the organization, exerting influence over people’s morale and spirit. It determines what types of individual behaviors are acceptable or not and shapes the behaviors and style exhibited by the organization in the marketplace. Culture is the organization’s character. Culture is initially formed as the organization takes on the mindset, behavior, and style of its founders. It is embedded over time into the very fabric of the organization through its formal and informal policies and procedure, methods, practices, and ways of operating.”¹

What has been the culture, or character, of the Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System? What are its formal and informal ways of operating?

- What happens when someone voices a concern? How is that individual treated?
- Are the system components, programs and initiatives adaptable to change?
- Do the members of the system trust each other, the leadership, and how decisions are made?
- Is everyone on board when decisions are made, or are some feeling that certain processes are moving forward and leaving specific communities behind?
- Do all stakeholders see the value in having an inclusive, culturally responsive, culturally relevant system and how it applies to them or benefits their work?
- Are the business and/or services of the system clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders?
- Is action paralyzed or forward momentum halted when concerns are raised or someone disagrees with a decision?

These questions have been posed as a way of highlighting how individuals who participated in focus groups for the systems change component of this project described their experiences with the MNCCPD system culture. This helps in understanding the impact that the culture or character of the MNCCPD system can have on the experiences of its participants, and why embedding the attributes of accessibility, cultural competence, responsiveness, and inclusion within the system’s culture is important. Paying attention to the culture of the system is an essential first step to the success of the systems change effort. Culture is changed at the system, team/work group, and individual levels.

Having outlined what culture is, its importance to the functioning of an organization, and how the MNCCPD culture is perceived, the following guidelines for embedding the attributes into the culture of the system are suggested:

At the system level:

- Align the draft core values and guiding principles with the attributes. Leadership at all levels should practice modeling these values and principles in their own behaviors to set an example that reflects the character of the system.
- The core values and guiding principles should be visible throughout the system and made known to all system stakeholders.
- Develop a philosophical framework based on the attributes that serves as a cornerstone for program and service development, delivery, and by which system experiences can be objectively measured.
- Define customer satisfaction through the lens of the attributes and make a commitment that meeting customer expectations is a primary goal of the system.

¹ *Beyond Change Management*, Dean Anderson and Linda Ackerman Anderson, 2001, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

- Practice incorporating the attributes into the way in which messages are developed and communicated, and the way in which information is shared.
- When coordinating how system functions will interconnect, use the attributes as an objective measurement to determine when to slow down or move ahead. This will help ensure that all stakeholders feel that their voice is being heard and their expertise included.

Within teams and work groups:

- Use the attributes to establish team or group operating norms that help lead to positive, productive experiences and group goal achievement.
- Use the attributes to help clarify team and group interpersonal behavior expectations, and to define methods for managing differences of opinion and resolving conflict.
- Incorporate the attributes into the process of defining team or group tasks; also use them to develop expectations for how the team or group will include all voices and work together toward task accomplishment.

The individual level:

- Use the attributes to develop and communicate interpersonal behavior expectations for system stakeholders. Ensure that all stakeholders know that the attributes were used in development of these expectations.
- Intentionally create opportunities within the system for individual learning and for practicing the incorporation of the attributes into both their personal and professional life.

Functional Components and Existing Frameworks

The MNCCPD system consists of several functional components and existing frameworks. To enhance the experience of stakeholders, the following guidelines are suggested for embedding the attributes in these functional components and existing frameworks:

Within the Career Lattice Framework

The draft purpose for the *Career Lattice Framework* is to provide “a framework for offering multiple pathways for professional growth designed to support (and inspire) care and education practitioners to continually improve the quality of care. It is a representation of where people can get into and move within the system and allows freedom of movement. The *Career Lattice Framework* helps to build and ensure competence at all levels of the professional development system.”

To embed the attributes into the Career Lattice Framework, it is suggested that DHS and its partners:

- Align the pathways for professional growth with the attributes to ensure that the framework builds cultural competence at all levels of the system.
- Using the attributes, further define the implementation strategies for the framework to ensure that they will offer multiple pathways for professional growth that are accessible to providers in formal child care settings, as well as FFN caregivers.
- Align the framework to the system core values and guiding principles to create positive stakeholder experiences as they navigate the framework.
- Before the framework is finalized, and based on the attributes, develop authentic opportunities for system stakeholders, including those who have been disengaged, to influence major decisions about the framework. This demonstrates respect for their expertise.

Within the Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum Framework

The draft purpose statement for the *Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum Framework* states that it will “serve as a comprehensive framework for organizing and supporting the learning and professional development of trainers and all who provide child care.”

To embed the attributes into the Learning Continuum, it is suggested that DHS and its partners:

- Align the blocks/levels of learning with the attributes to ensure that the framework builds cultural competence at all levels of the system.
- Within the blocks/levels of learning, include the best practices of FFN caregivers; base these practices on the attributes. This process provides recognition of the important role of families and cultural communities in “transferring cultural values, language, and traditions to their children.”¹
- Align the framework to the system core values and guiding principles to create positive stakeholder experiences and demonstrate respect for their expertise.
- Develop a process for finalizing the framework that is grounded in the attributes. This will help to ensure that DHS has included the voices and expertise of families, FFN caregivers, and disengaged cultural communities.

Within the Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure

The draft purpose statement of the *Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure* function is “in partnership and collaboration coordinate, develop and implement processes, methods and tools to approve, support, train and enhance professional development of a full spectrum of trainers (including relationship-based trainers) delivering training through multiple strategy methods. The *Trainer Infrastructure* will enhance the professional development of trainers by coordinating, developing, and implementing a trainer support process that will touch the whole state and be accessible geographically, linguistically and culturally.”

To embed the attributes into the Trainer and Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure, it is suggested that DHS and its partners:

- Align the features and functions of the approval system/infrastructure with the attributes to ensure that trainers throughout the system are able to work cross-culturally in an effective manner.
- Use the attributes to help identify the characteristics and qualities DHS wants within the organization selected to lead this effort; use the attributes to frame the selection process.
- The characteristics and qualities of the organization chosen to lead this effort should align with the core values and guiding principles of the MNCPPD.
- The attributes can be used to develop a process and tools for measuring the effectiveness of the approval system/infrastructure in delivering positive, productive experiences for all stakeholder groups, and providing supports that are accessible, both geographically and linguistically.
- The trainer registry should be developed by including input from, and possess attributes that demonstrate a respect for, the expertise of a variety of stakeholder voices, including those who have been previously disengaged from the system.
- The tools and methods developed to approve, support, train and enhance professional development of trainers should be grounded in the attributes to ensure that the system/infrastructure includes the intersection between professional practices and culture.

Within the Curriculum Development and Approval Function

The draft purpose statement of the *Curriculum Development and Approval Function* is “to ensure, align, and coordinate curriculum approval, tools and processes necessary to support the Minnesota child care professional development system in coordination/partnership with others.”

¹ *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care Best Practices: A Report to Ready 4K, Condensed Report*, Betty Emarita, November 2006).

To embed the attributes into the Curriculum Development and Approval Function, it is suggested that DHS and its partners:

- Align the features and functions of curriculum approval with the attributes to ensure that curriculum content throughout the system develops the capacity of providers and caregivers to effectively care for, nurture, and enhance the development of children from cultural communities that are different from their own.
- Use the attributes to help identify the characteristics and qualities DHS wants within the organization that will lead this effort, and to frame the selection process.
- The characteristics and qualities of the organization chosen should align with the core values and guiding principles of the MNCCPD.
- Both the endorsement/approval/monitoring process and the credentialing process should be developed using input from, and possess attributes that demonstrate a respect for, the expertise of a variety of stakeholder voices, including those who have been previously disengaged from the system.

Within the *Delivery Function*

The draft purpose statement of the *Delivery* function is to “provide accessible learning opportunities” within the system.

To embed the attributes into the Delivery function, it is suggested that DHS and its partners:

- Align the delivery of learning opportunities with the attributes to ensure they embody accessibility by being approachable, reachable, understandable and available.
- Use the attributes to develop a process for gathering information that will inform how learning opportunities are delivered, and to effectively market and publicize opportunities.
- The delivery function should be aligned with the core values and guiding principles of the MNCCPD system to ensure that the function appropriately connects with the *Trainer Approval System/Infrastructure* and *Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum Framework*.

The Attributes at Work: At-a-glance

Cultural Organizations

Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MnTRECC), *the Early Childhood Resource and Training Center (ECRTC)*, and *the Network for Children of African Descent (NdCAD)* are examples of organizations where the attributes of accessibility, cultural competence, responsiveness, and inclusion are at work and meeting the needs of specific cultural communities. These organizations demonstrated how to create positive, productive experiences for their stakeholders, and how to incorporate practices that reach a variety of stakeholders, including providers in formal child care settings, FFN caregivers, and families (e.g., parents and extended family).

Family Friend and Neighbor

Family, Friend and Neighbor caregiving is care that incorporates the best practices of a child’s first teacher: his or her family. Betty Emarita’s report, *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care Best Practices: A Report to Ready for 4K*, provides examples and guidelines for using the attributes to develop strategies for including FFN caregivers in the functions of the MNCCPD system. It is suggested that this work be incorporated into the front-end process to eliminate the possibility of unintended consequences on the back end. Ms Emarita’s work provides answers to questions and concerns regarding FFN care.

Incorporating the attributes of accessibility, cultural competence, cultural responsiveness, and inclusion helps to ensure that all who participate within the system feel welcomed and included. The methods used to communicate with those stakeholders can also positively or negatively influence this experience.

Managing Communication and Continuous Feedback

An individual's uncertainty about what a newly developed or newly revamped system will look like, and how he or she will fit within that system, can lead to resistance. Managing communication is one strategy that builds support for change and deals with the rumors, gossip, and potential resistance that may come with change. As a result of conducting focus groups, it was learned that the MNCCPD system is in need of a system-wide plan to manage communication. A system-wide communications plan or strategy enhances accessibility within a system.

Eliciting feedback from stakeholders in ways that foster and build relationships is also essential to the long-term success and sustainability of any organizational effort. This strategy can take many forms: a participatory process, relational dialogues, or a continuous feedback process. A strategy for continuously receiving information and feedback, that utilizes methods that are meaningful and respectful, whatever the name, is an attribute of an inclusive system.

The following are suggested methods that can be used to develop a plan to manage system-wide communications and elicit continuous feedback. These methods also take into consideration options for adapting and utilizing best practice research to fit the MNCCPD system, potential roles for stakeholder/advisory groups and optional feedback strategies that would complement the use of DHS' decision-making model of choice, as created by TeamWorks International.

Managing Communication

Having a plan to manage communication is integral to developing the attributes of inclusion and accessibility within a system. A communications plan is important because through it a forum can be created for people to provide suggestions and voice objections, while proactively — versus reactively — managing responses. The plan should identify primary and secondary audiences and offer multiple strategies for reaching them.

The Afterschool Investments project report titled, *A Guide for Effective Governance: Considerations and Lessons Learned for Afterschool Networks*, is a good resource. It offers suggestions for communications plan development. For example, the following must be considered:

- The groups within the system that require frequent or regular communication
- The type of communications and the most effective strategy for each audience (e.g., regular emails, monthly meetings, or quarterly newsletters)
- The frequency of communications for each group
- The different messages that need to be crafted for each group (e.g., messages that resonate with providers and caregivers may be less convincing to the business community)
- How often and by what means the system will reach out to those organizations that are not yet formal members (e.g., what type of information will be shared, and how often updates will be distributed).

These considerations apply to any MNCCPD system communications management plan, as well as:

- Methods of outreach and communication need to enhance stakeholder experiences by helping individuals within the system feel included
- Methods of outreach and communication result in increased accessibility to system activities.

A review of Assessing Access Survey results indicated that word of mouth and phone calls were two of the top three strategies that PD coordinators were using to initiate partnerships. While these strategies are effective for some audiences, as mentioned above, the most effective communications strategies are those tailored to the audience. The PD system serves a diverse audience and some members who are not in the loop may lose out when these methods are used alone. Most of the system's communications strategies are general, broad and, as mentioned earlier in the alignment section of this report, developed by a mostly homogenous group within the system. When strategies are developed by such a group, they will be structured in ways that are mostly satisfying to that group, to the exclusion of others.

A number of considerations are offered to ensure that DHS' communication strategies appeal to a broad group of system stakeholders. These simple *Steps in Developing Effective Communications* are strategies based on a framework created by Philip Kotler¹ and should be integrated into an overall system-wide communications plan:

- Identify the target audiences (e.g., trainers, caregivers, providers, staff, communities of color, higher education, other state agencies)
- Determine the objective of the communications (e.g., to raise awareness, impart information, build or rebuild trust)
- Design the messages (e.g., decide the message content, structure, format and sources)
- Select the appropriate communication channels (e.g., personal, such as face-to-face, telephone, email; or non-personal, such as newsletter, Web page, direct mail)
- Establish a budget (e.g., allocate funds based on affordability, objective, channel)
- Decide on the communications mix (e.g., advertising, such as public presentations, or public relations and publicity, such as press releases, press kits)
- Evaluate the results (e.g., develop a process for identifying and reviewing the results of the communication).

An example of a previously developed communications channel is a one- or two-page document that outlines the organization's mission, vision, core values, guiding principles, and planned activities. This was used to raise community awareness and was often helpful in developing grant proposals or PowerPoint presentations. It was also used to provide information for potential employees during hiring processes.

It is also important that a communication plan include two-way channels for gathering continuous feedback. This allows for identification of and attention to the experiences of system stakeholders, thereby developing strategies that appropriately manage and respond to those stakeholders. The continuous feedback process should be designed in a way that provides opportunities for authentic conversation, while gathering timely and needed information that will help guide course correction of system-wide activities. The following section provides more detail for creating continuous feedback channels.

Continuous Feedback

The traditional methods for gathering stakeholder feedback involve strategies like conducting focus groups, individual interviews, and community meetings. A continuous feedback process is a strategy for gathering feedback in an ongoing way; this allows for building relationships and developing trust. It is often a key strategy in a management communications plan. Continuous feedback is a forum that allows an organization to predict, anticipate and minimize reactions; it also allows stakeholders to feel they are being heard and that they are part of any change process.

¹ Communication Management Strategy, April 2007, http://www.inovasi.lipi.go.id/website/public_comm/strategy.htm (retrieved on 12 Apr. 2007).

Most people have heard the saying, “first impressions are lasting impressions.” It is also known that those impressions, good or bad, are often communicated to others. If someone’s first experience with an entity is negative, or worse, he or she has a string of bad experiences, that is difficult to overcome. The same is true for one’s impressions of an organization or system. The continuous feedback process portion of a communications plan allows an organization to proactively address concerns while providing people a positive and safe place to ask questions and communicate or vent their objections. The process allows for capturing and summarizing what people are saying and determining how, if, or when suggestions or concerns will be addressed.

The Assessing Access Survey results revealed that PD coordinators were using the following strategies to initiate partnerships: surveys and advisory committees were the top two strategies used, and advisory committees and conversations with others were two additional strategies used to engage community partners. While these strategies in and of themselves are not bad, they are designed by a homogenous group within the MNCCPD system.

Linda Garrett-Johnson initiated an independent research project titled, “In Their Own Words: Organization Effectiveness Research Project,” in 2004. As part of this project, she conducted interviews with funders, nonprofit executive directors, and nonprofit executive directors or lead staff from communities of color. During this process, she discovered the work of a local organization — Hope Community. Almost all of the funders she interviewed highlighted the community engagement strategies developed by Hope; this collection of strategies is called *Community Listening*. As part of Garrett-Johnson’s interview with Mary Keefe, executive director of Hope Community, Ms Keefe stated:

“The Community Listening process is about hearing from and listening to the community. People come together in groups (such as seniors, tenants, aides, clients) so that they can hear from each other as well as talk to Hope Community, so they are starting to build relationships with other people in the community.”— *Mary Keefe, executive director, Hope Community.*

During this interview, it was learned that Hope Community developed a relational engagement model that involves connecting with and listening to people of various ages and across many cultures; this allows them to receive and provide continuous feedback. Hope’s Community Listening model involves between 18–30 group dialogues based on specific topics. During these dialogues, those involved help to shape the process. This dialogue goes beyond just talking about a specific issue; it involves thorough discussions about challenging questions that are important to them and their community. Participants understand that there is no guarantee that Hope will act on all of the issues that surface, but they realize that they have been invited to be a part of a process that is working toward making a difference in the community. They are also invited to play a role in writing the report that presents the themes that emerged from the group discussions. Hope also creates what they call public power spaces, which involves opportunities for people to understand power and strategy¹ through activities that include:

- Power analysis
- Effective public life
- Everyday leadership
- Effective negotiation with schools, employers, community leaders, etc.
- Active research – getting needed information.

While the MNCCPD system is statewide and not located in a specific community, the lessons learned by Hope Community could be beneficial to the system development process. Therefore, it is suggested that

¹ Community Listening and Organizing, Hope Community, www.hope-community.org/Community/listeningandorganizing (retrieved on 13 Apr. 2007).

DHS consider developing a relational process for receiving and providing continuous feedback, similar to that of Hope Community. The benefits of a continuous feedback process are:

- The ability to proactively generate useful information and feedback
- The ability to share and promote learning through information exchange
- The ability to build and rebuild a learning community around key issues
- The ability to learn from mistakes and make course corrections.

Considerations

For the MNCCPD system to be successful in this endeavor, DHS should consider the following:

- Develop a process that makes use of a stakeholder/advisory group (similar to the Change Process Leadership Team) that can be utilized at the district level
- Design a communications model that embraces the core processes of the TeamWorks decision-making model
- Clearly define a vision and structure for the statewide Access Leadership Team that can be utilized at the baseline level
- Design a process that embraces the attributes of coordination, inclusion, accessibility and cultural competence.

In addition to the considerations above, a few continuous feedback strategies that would complement the use of the TeamWorks decision-making model include:

- Invite system stakeholders across the state to participate in a process of continuous learning, improvement, and feedback by becoming part of a continuous feedback group. This group would be focused on a specific component of the system such as:
 - System structure, culture and sustainability
 - Trainer infrastructure
 - Curriculum development
 - Minnesota Child Care Learning Continuum
 - Minnesota Career Lattice.
- These continuous feedback groups would interface with the *Shared Reality*, *Creating Options*, and *Choice Making* processes of the TeamWorks decision-making model.
- Allow participants of these groups to play a role in documenting and reporting the themes that emerge from their group discussions; connect this information to the work of the *Creating Options* and *Choice Making* processes of the TeamWorks model.

Finally, a continuous feedback structure that is tiered would allow DHS to reach individuals at a variety of levels across a variety of locations.

While the development of a communications system may involve a stakeholder/advisory group in one capacity, the results of the scan report offered a number of other findings that have implications for the work of this group, in conjunction with DHS.

PD SYSTEM SCAN SUMMARY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STAKEHOLDER/ADVISORY GROUP

This portion of the report provides a brief overview of the scan process, findings, recommendations, as well as suggested implications for DHS and the designated stakeholder advisory group.

As previously mentioned, CEED was charged with examining trainers (numbers and demographics, recruitment practices, employment, support needs, delivery modes and challenges faced), and training content (training by core competency area, assessment of content needs, content development overlaps and gaps in content). It also identified context, benefits, challenges, and recommendations related to a Minnesota trainer credential. The credential scan included an analysis of other states that currently have some kind of trainer approval systems.

During the analysis of trainer and PD coordinator perspectives, CEED made and recorded observations about how each component within the system's infrastructure functions, how components work together, and what pieces are missing from policies, data tracking and other parts of the system.

Trainers

The survey indicated a varied age range of trainers, with a mean of 45, and relatively high levels of education and experience. Pay levels also varied and were based on experience.

The analysis also showed that there are diverse approaches to recruitment and support of trainers. PD coordinators would like to be more consistent about recruitment criteria but have received no mandate to do so.

In terms of trainer support, or competence building, most trainers reported taking at least one adult learning course as part of their professional preparation. Most also took advantage of professional development opportunities. The desire for additional development, however, can be hindered by both an inability to take time off and the cost of such development. But most were very concerned with staying up to date with emerging topics and initiatives.

Trainers expressed a number of frustrations with the current system, including:

- Local training delivery, including coordination and compensation, lack of work, site logistics, relationships with the CCR&R or the Professional Development Council (PDC).
- Overall PD system challenges, including lack of support, marketing, communication, and planning, licensing, trainer positions and credentialing, and higher education connections
- Trainer support needed, including more connections with other trainers and a need for mentors
- Access to the training system, compensation, trainer PD, and resources
- Stand alone trainings that do not support practitioner change
- Lack of data and a lack of materials or adapted materials.

Based on the analysis findings, there are a number of potential implications for DHS and new PD system advisory groups.

Implications for Trainer Infrastructure

As DHS and its advisors continue their discussion of development of a trainer infrastructure, a number of training related implications should be considered. These implications are grouped based on proposed key functions to be carried out by the newly created trainer infrastructure or in conjunction with the CCR&R district and baseline sites:

Trainer approval/hiring:

- Identify key intersections that result in quality. This could include figuring out consistent, intentional ways to recruit, train, and pay trainers.
- Create greater standardization and consistency of processes to eliminate inequities. This goes beyond initial approval and hiring.

- What, if anything, should be offered to trainers from outside of the system (corporate child care, Head Start, etc.)?
- Trainer quality assurance and accountability: provision of meaningful professional development that helps trainers grow in their skills, provides coaching and feedback, etc.

Recruitment:

- Recruit trainers with the intent of increasing the language match between trainers and audiences.

Trainer support:

- Create models of trainer support: research, build or incorporate. There are few examples of true trainer support from the state.
- Provide a way to leverage highly skilled trainers to teach others in areas such as training design.
- Provide trainer support in the area of technology.
- Emphasize longer Training of Trainers sessions to allow for introduction of more intensive content knowledge.
- Content updates: Where does the intellectual material and energy for trainer support come from?

Maintain database of current trainers:

- Create a customized database of trainers.

The remaining potential implications are regarding a more centralized system of accountability for trainers and may also warrant further discussion:

- Review competition, incentives, and expectations for pool of independent trainers.
- Trainer responsibilities/expectations: Expect periodic training reports from trainers?

Trainer Credential

The second part of the report focused on trainer credential. Many states have instituted a trainer approval process, or trainer credential. The purpose of a credential is to clearly identify competencies and criteria for the pool of professionals who work within a particular system.

As part of its scan, CEED looked at the topic of trainer credential from the perspectives of other states, as well as from a Minnesota-specific vantage point. The CEED report details a number of questions and issues that many states (including Minnesota) have grappled with. It would serve DHS and new PD system advisory groups well to review these topics. Examples include the following needs: a clearly communicated rationale, a well developed public relations/marketing plan about potential benefits of credentialing, implementation of interim steps leading to a credential, and many others.

The trainer survey and PD coordinator interviews indicated that over half of the trainers reported being a member of a trainer association, but only 10 percent of those trainers hold a MECSATA credential. Various reasons were cited for lack of a credential. The report lists a number of advantages and barriers to a Minnesota trainer credential and offers recommendations, a number of which are related to the trainer infrastructure and learning continuum, two functions that the CPLT were charged with reviewing. These recommendations may warrant further attention from DHS and new PD system advisory groups.

The CEED report first recommends a determination of “Who’s in Charge?” of the trainer credential, noting that “DHS can fill its role of governance and assurance by serving as or designating a group with a clear mandate. It will be important to link this credential to either incentives or mandates in the system, in order to validate its meaning.”

Trainer credential related recommendations that may be pertinent to the work of DHS and its advisory team include the following:

- Establish a trainer database or registry to identify and communicate with as many current trainers as possible.
- While the above database is collected, identify a clear credential process that includes at least three levels: novice/apprentice; trainer (community, content, state initiatives), and advanced trainer who offers training that articulates into a credit-based system or trains trainers.
- Facilitate a development and marketing group that includes stakeholders from PD agencies, trainers, MECSATA, licensors and underserved communities. Charge the group with developing clear levels, criteria, verification processes, and communication/messaging strategies.
- Identify a group that will be responsible for trainer approval — either a volunteer board with stakeholders from the above groups, or designated representatives from grantees.
- Design a system that links trainer approval to training levels.
- Based on lessons learned from other states, identify at least three levels of trainers with clear guidance and support for those who want to enter the system and move from level to level.

PD System Content

The final section of the CEED report addresses state initiatives and emerging training curricula, identifies other training offerings by core competency domain, and offers observations about strengths and gaps in content.

A number of content gaps were identified, including:

- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Math
- Physical health/movement
- Working with special situations
- Working with second language learners
- Focus on intentional interactions.

The report went on to describe areas of overlap (which many of the trainers thought was helpful to enhance learning) and delivery modes, such as online training, articulation, and relationship-based training.

The report poses a number of content-related implications that DHS and its advisory group may want to review:

- Data tracking: How can training content be tracked in a way that provides “progress monitoring” of the types of training offered?
- Content development: What is a systematic process for developing or adopting new training curricula?
- Content levels – content approval: Trainers expressed strong interest in developing their own sessions, but levels, distribution, and intellectual property rights must be considered.
- Content levels – who teaches what: Who is approved to teach at what level, or at what depth of content?
- How is the content taught: How are trainers equipped to deliver content?
- Identify strengths from each initiative: How can strengths from particular initiatives be leveraged and tracked?
- Role of and support for coaching, consultation, and mentoring
- Documenting effectiveness/evaluation

The CEED report presented a myriad of system strengths and needs. A number of those needs can be served well if addressed by a diverse group of invested stakeholders.

PROMISING PRACTICES, PROMISING STRATEGIES

Highlighted below are promising practices that will aid in the development of a well-coordinated, functioning child care professional development system in Minnesota.

W. K. Kellogg Foundation¹

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is known for its innovative and responsive grants and programming. The Foundation has developed **Integrating Principles**, comprised of six elements:

- Partnership
- Leadership
- Innovation (which is further defined as the foundation's **levers for change**)
- Systems change
- Community (defined as the foundation's **strategic context**)
- Learning (which has been defined as the **program purpose**).

The six elements of the **Integrating Principles** are integrated into and guide all of the foundation's work in youth and education. All grant proposals submitted to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for youth and education funding are required to include one or both principles from the foundation's **strategic context** and one or more principles under the foundation's **levers for change**.

While Minnesota has a very structured RFP process, the strategy of requiring that proposals include a set of principles that reflect the values of the MNCCPD system could be adapted and used by DHS. The draft MNCCPD core values and guiding principles could be a starting point for developing these principles.

Evidence-based Practices

Evidence-based practice is defined as "a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence with family and professional wisdom and values. In other words, it is a balance of scientific proof and professional and family experience and values" (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). The model that is being used by the Center for Evidence-Based Practices (CEBP: www.evidencebasedpractices.org) can serve as a how-to guide. CEBP seeks to "promote the development and adoption of evidence-based early intervention, early childhood education, parent and family support, and family-centered practices." They do this by conducting research that identifies best practices in early childhood care and then finds ways to support and promote initiatives and activities that will implement and evaluate the use of these best practices.

The MNCCPD system has focused on gathering professional wisdom and values. As the system determines its desired outcomes, these outcomes should be reflective of the wisdom, or best practices, of those who will benefit the most from a coordinated, inclusive child care professional development system: children and their families. DHS is currently funding research, initiatives and activities; however, there is no clear connection or model that facilitates coordination between them. DHS should implement a strategy, based on an evidence-based practice model, to develop a clearly defined structure that links research projects to funding decisions. This will create a more effective connection between best practice research and DHS funded initiatives and activities. It will also allow the department to better evaluate the direct evidence of the impact these funded initiatives and activities have had on the lives of child care providers, caregivers, children and their families.

¹ *Integrating Principles*, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, <http://www.wkkf.org/Default.aspx?tabid=90&CID=3&ItemID=5000001&NID=5010001&LanguageID=0> (retrieved on 27 Apr. 2007).

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care Best Practices: A Report to Ready 4K

Betty Emarita describes Family, Friend and Neighbor care as “the most widely used and oldest form of child care.” However, because research has been driven by individuals who are professionals in the field of early childhood and school-age care, Ms Emarita states that FFN care “has not always been taken into account and has been often seen as an inferior form of care.”

In November 2006, Ms Emarita, commissioned by Ready 4K, wrote a report that outlined how culturally diverse families who access FNN care teach their children how to attain educational success, and what early education systems can learn from these families. A few key applicable highlights include:

- Cultural communities prefer FFN care because it enables them to transfer cultural values, language and traditions to their children.
- Using a family investment model instead of a professional development model is more supportive of FFN families and caregivers because the model is driven by families; views children holistically; takes into consideration a child’s connection to their family, community, and culture; and is voluntary and flexible.
- The best practice frameworks currently being conceptualized, researched, disseminated and used to define early learning standards must continue to be expanded and flexible to be inclusive of the approaches to learning and best practices being used and defined within cultural communities.

Ms Emarita states that “people are looking for solutions that are asset-based” (e.g., that look at what families are doing right and connects the informal systems to the formal systems). Therefore, DHS needs a strategy within the MNCCPD system to initiate a dialogue about, and intentionally explore, the best practices and approaches to learning within cultural communities, capturing this information and utilizing it to further influence the development of a framework and model for including skill-building and developmental activities for FFN caregivers and providers within the system.

Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care

Understanding how to effectively utilize strategic partnerships and alliances can strengthen any system. The MNCCPD system has a strategic partner in MnTRECC. MnTRECC links American Indian caregivers and providers to resources and information designed to “enhance and strengthen the child care delivery system for American Indian children and families in Minnesota.”

In a conversation with the staff of MnTRECC, it was learned that to many American Indian caregivers and providers, the Minnesota CCR&R system seems intimidating and structurally rigid. MnTRECC staff see their organization as a “happy medium, bridging the goals of the CCR&R system and the early childhood care goals of 11 American Indian bands in Minnesota.” MnTRECC knows and understands the early childhood care goals and needs of the American Indian bands. A strength, or promising practice, of MnTRECC can be found in their ability to bring together various American Indian bands in Minnesota under a shared vision of early childhood care for their children and families. They are considered to be the respected experts within their cultural community who have the ability to articulate and speak on behalf of the goals and early childhood care needs of American Indian children in Minnesota.

MnTRECC has a workplan they implement as a CCR&R district site that can serve as a model for the MNCCPD system because no single entity possesses the knowledge of *all* cultural communities. MnTRECC, and early childhood care organizations like them such as the Early Childhood Resource and Training Center and the Network for the Development of Children of African Descent, are respected experts within their cultural communities, each having the ability to articulate and speak on behalf of the goals and early childhood and school-age care needs of the children within these communities.

An essential promising practice for the MNCCPD system is to be intentional and strategic in partnerships with respected cultural organizations who share a vision for early childhood and school-age care.

Strategies for being intentional include:

- Develop and provide opportunities to showcase the expert knowledge contained within cultural communities and organizations by inviting the recognized experts to be keynote presenters at conferences hosted by respected mainstream organizations such as Youth Community Connections or University of Minnesota, or encourage them to publish white papers articles that can be shared both locally and nationally.
- Make funds available to support the continued work of these organizations.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the strategies and considerations listed within this report, the following are included for consideration in moving toward the development of a coordinated, inclusive, culturally responsive Minnesota Child Care Professional Development System.

- Ensure that system goals and outcomes are clear and measurable so that they provide the direction necessary to focus activities toward the accomplishment of a shared vision. One example of how to do this would be to develop/revise the outcomes by taking them through an evaluation methodology like a logic model.
- Develop methods and processes for evaluating funded initiatives and activities to determine if they are actually increasing knowledge, developing skills, etc.
- When contracting to provide a program or service, clearly delineate in the RFP process and contract negotiation if this product or service is the intellectual property of DHS.
- Give consideration to funding an entity that would provide leadership, direction, and coordination of the entire professional development system.
- Consider funding an entity that would provide oversight and accountability for the process of hiring and supporting trainers by developing a trainer approval and support infrastructure. The work of this entity could also be coordinated by the entity selected to provide broad oversight and coordination for the professional development system.
- Make funding choices based on measurable goals, outcomes, and methods of accountability for the following:
 - Support for providing essential skills to non-traditional caregivers (e.g., Family, Friend and Neighbor)
 - Culturally-responsive child care professional development
 - A focus on underserved (e.g., special needs) populations
- Explore the possibility of making use of the wide range of services each entity or grantee has to offer (including activities that may not be funded by DHS), the use of which has to-date been informal in nature. It is suggested that more intentional arrangements be in place that are mutually beneficial and agreeable to all parties involved. This could assist in closing access gaps within the system (e.g., use of the ECRTC Culturally Specific Leadership Models, which develop the leadership skills of child care providers from cultural and immigrant communities, to help identify leaders for participation in the MNCCPD system).
- When considering activities to fund, potential grantees could be asked to provide examples of how their activity (or proposed activity) adds value to or fills an essential missing piece of the puzzle (i.e., system).
- To avoid redundancy or duplication, future funded activities should be evaluated against criteria that will help determine the unique contribution provided by the activity to the professional development system.
- As part of any funding request, potential grantees could be asked to provide measurable examples of ways in which they will work together with the other components of the system to

ensure consistency, and the ability to demonstrate understanding of the interdependencies within the system.

- When an organization requests funding, conduct an organizational assessment to determine the strengths and technical assistance needs of the organization. Develop a consistent process for determining when technical assistance might be considered a requirement for an organization to receive funding. The system should become a model that reflects the attributes of cultural competence and cultural responsiveness by ensuring that there is a diverse pool of consultants with a variety of backgrounds and skills to draw upon, as well as specific knowledge about individual cultural communities, who can provide the identified technical assistance to a diverse group of organizations.

Implementation Considerations

The primary purpose of this report has been to provide suggestions that can be used in the design of a coordinated, accessible, inclusive child care professional development system. Equally important to the design of a system is the plan to implement the many suggestions because the implementation plan typically links strategic thought with strategic action.

As the creation of an implementation plan moves forward, it is important to know that the plan should:

- *Maintain a forward moving momentum.* This can be accomplished by balancing theory with practice, such as continuing to focus on the primary goals for the design of the system and by answering the questions: where do you want to begin, with whom, and when. The department can begin by moving forward with the development of core system components (e.g., trainer approval function or curriculum development) and finalizing the organizational structure for the overall MNCCPD system. Focusing on a forward moving momentum helps to avoid the temptation to revert back to what has been, or to the status quo, especially during times when reaching consensus or agreement is difficult.
- *Develop and heighten optimism about the future state of the system.* One way to do this is to weave the implementation plans into the very fabric of the MNCCPD system and organizational structure. This will easier follow-through on the details of the plan, which will, in turn, develop and heighten optimism about the future state of the system as stakeholders begin to see details of the plan taking shape.
- *Clearly identify implementation roles, responsibilities and timelines.* Successful implementation depends in part on everyone understanding their individual roles and responsibilities, and how they influence each other and the shared goals. Timelines will help keep the plan on track and allow the department to monitor progress and determine when an adjustment might be in order.
- *Productively address any implementation barriers.* The suggestions contained in this report are meant to aid in the identification of potential implementation barriers and provide productive solutions to those barriers. It is important to face any barriers head on and determine a method for dealing with them, because not doing so can stop any implementation plans in their tracks.

APPENDIX

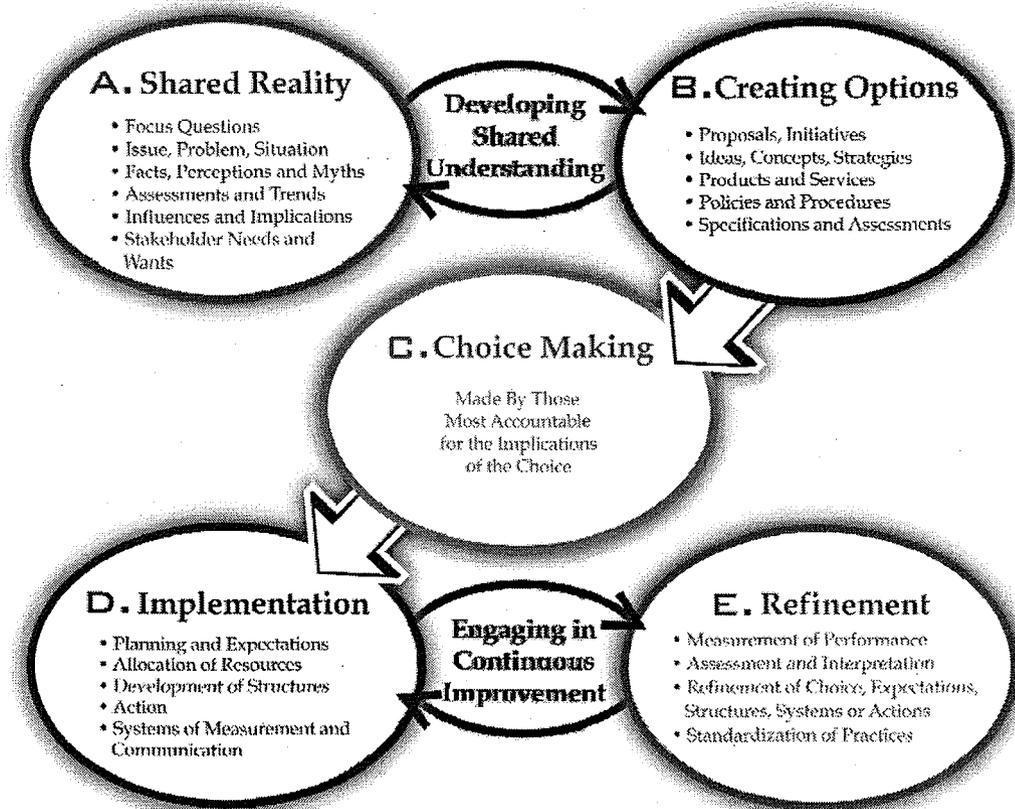
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