

Minnesota's Great Workforce for Early Care and Education

2014 Annual Report



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Minnesota Department of
Education

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About the Minnesota Department of Education

The Minnesota Department of Education works to advance educational achievement by supporting education programs, educators and support staff, setting clear standards and measuring indicators of performance. In February 2011, Governor Mark Dayton released a seven-point plan for Excellence in Education, which highlighted supporting early childhood learning as a key goal.

About the Minnesota Department of Health

The Minnesota Department of Health works under the mission of protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans. It works with local health agencies, independent organizations and tribal governments to ensure healthy conditions within the state.

About the Minnesota Department of Human Services

The Minnesota Department of Human Services works to help people meet their basic needs, live with dignity and achieve their highest potential. Its focus is on the people served and on supporting partnerships with stakeholders working to achieve similar results.

Background and Purpose of this Report

The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant

In the early learning field, it is common for quality of services to vary across settings. Providers come from a range of education levels and experiences. Over the past few years, the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services have been working on efforts to raise the professionalism of early care and education providers and to set higher standards for training, professional development and education provided to them.

In August 2011, the Office of Early Learning formed as a joint effort among the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services to address the need for greater coordination of programs for early learning services and professional development. Its mission – to coordinate the governance and execution of programs and, ultimately, to

improve the care, education and outcomes of children and families.¹

Four months after the formation of the Office of Early Learning, the Minnesota Department of Education received \$45 million in funding from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant from the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.² Its purpose was to increase access to high-quality care and education programs for children who had high needs, and to build a great early childhood education workforce.

Context and Purpose of the 2014 Annual Report

As part of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, Minnesota agreed to produce an annual report highlighting efforts and outcomes for workforce development funded through the grant. When defining the scope of this annual report, stakeholders decided to include efforts that, though not funded directly by the grant, align closely with its workforce development goals. Beyond what is included in this report, conversations continue among stakeholders working to improve early childhood learning

¹ While the Office of Early Learning was a key coordinating body during the time frame covered in this report, at the time of this writing it was in the process of restructuring.

² <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/2013-early-learning-challenge-flyer.pdf>

outcomes and kindergarten readiness across the state.

This report outlines key goals, strategies and progress from the 2014 calendar year for a set of early childhood workforce development topic areas. In some cases, the report identifies specific responsible agencies, organizations, or funding sources. However, the majority of efforts are building on a foundation of work and relationships among multiple entities. In many cases, it would be cumbersome to identify all partners behind efforts and the role each played in 2014 progress. Therefore, this report focuses on efforts, goals and outcomes, rather than detailing those responsible for the work.

The Great Workforce for Early Learning

The early learning field has a range of career options, from providers of direct care in family child care homes and teachers in center- or school-based programs, to coaches, trainers, administrators, educators and mentors. The field is diverse and career opportunities continue to expand. These efforts are described in this report as building and supporting a “Great Workforce” for those providing early care and education supports to children, and the personnel that support these early educators.

To organize work to build and support the Great Workforce, this report categorizes work into six topic areas. Initiatives in each topic area aim to move members of the workforce up the Career Lattice, and to support and recognize the increasing professionalization of the workforce.

The six topic areas used to categorize the 44 individual initiatives in 2014 included:

- Knowledge and Competency Framework
- Training and trainer development
- Credentials, certificates, and diplomas
- Scholarships and financial supports
- Relationship Based Professional Development
- Technology and data systems.

Overview of the 2014 Annual Report

This report gives an overview of the purpose and goals for each of the six topic areas and the progress made during the 2014 calendar year. Appendix A includes a full list of all 44 initiatives under the six topic areas, with descriptions and reports on progress towards achieving goals. This report also documents examples of collaboration among partner agencies, grantees and other key stakeholders, and informs recommendations for where to focus future work.

Methodology

To begin the 2014 report, state agency staff worked to identify the initiatives funded by and related to the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant and key contacts for each. Two data collection methods informed the content of this report:

1. Key informants from each of the 44 identified initiatives shared individual updates on progress and key accomplishments about their work.

Contacts shared information either through phone interviews or via email.

2. Initiative contacts and other stakeholders participated in a focus group-style meeting to identify collaborative progress and achievements, recognize shared challenges and determine opportunities for future work.

An expanded description of the methodology for this report is in Appendix B.



Minnesota’s Early Learning Workforce

Information on the size and make-up of Minnesota’s early learning workforce is not easily compiled. However, an estimate is possible using a combination of data from multiple sources. The Minnesota Department of Human Services has commissioned periodic statewide surveys to gather context on the child care provider workforce and how its makeup has changed over time.³

The most recent survey of the Minnesota workforce, conducted in 2011, estimated that Minnesota’s child care workforce included more than 43,000 workers, a number which

included school-age care programs and license-exempt preschools. However, data from the Licensing division within the Minnesota Department of Human Services reveals that the make-up of licensed child care providers in the state has changed significantly since 2011. The Minnesota Department of Education tracks the number of active licensed teaching staff in its data system for teacher licensure and employment (STAR), but cannot provide reliable data on non-licensed members of the workforce. For the 2013-2014 school year, there were 5,954 licensed staff working in Early Childhood Special Education, School Readiness and/or Early Childhood Family Education.⁴

Table 1. Minnesota’s early learning workforce includes more than 40,000 staff members

Setting	Number of staff
Child care programs licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services	35,500
Licensed teachers in school-based programs	5,954
Head Start programs (may overlap with child care programs licensed by DHS)	3,325
Tribally-licensed child care programs	Unknown
License-exempt preschool programs	Unknown
Total	More than 40,000

³ Valorose, J. & Chase, R. (2012). “Child Care Workforce in Minnesota: 2011 Statewide Study of Demographics, Training and Professional Development.” Wilder Research & Minnesota Department of Human Services. <http://tinyurl.com/wilderchildcare>.

⁴ Minnesota Office of Early Learning, “Race to the Top –2014 Early Learning Challenge Grant Annual Performance Report.”

Additionally, Head Start employs 3,325 staff members,⁵ but many of these staff may be double-counted as child care staff since most Head Start sites are also licensed as child care centers. No reliable data is available on the number of individuals working in license-exempt community-based preschools, nor those working in tribally-licensed child care programs. Acknowledging the limitations of our data, Table 1 on the previous page provides an estimate of the size of the early learning workforce.

Child Care Programs

According to the Department of Human Services, there were approximately 9,850 licensed family child care providers and 1,640 licensed child care centers operating as of December 2014, with the majority (62 percent) of licensed family child care providers in greater Minnesota and the majority of child care centers (61 percent) in the seven-county Twin Cities metro region. Although recent data is not available on the number of workers represented by these programs, data from the 2011 study of the workforce tells us that family child care homes employ an average of 1.31 individuals

while child care centers employ an average of 13.87 individuals.⁶ Combining these two data sources, we estimate that licensed family child care settings employ approximately 12,800 providers and assistants, and licensed child care centers employ approximately 22,700 staff. The latter includes an estimated 2,100 center directors, 11,800 teachers, 3,400 assistant teachers and 5,400 aides.

School-based Programs

According to the Minnesota Department of Education's teacher license tracking system, in 2014 there were 5,954 licensed teachers working in school-based early learning programs. These programs include 424 Early Childhood Special Education programs funded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Parts B and C; 618 School Readiness-funded school-based pre-kindergarten sites (171 of which are also funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act); and an unknown number of additional school-based pre-kindergarten sites funded through alternative sources and often operated through Community Education.

⁵ Minnesota Department of Education, "2013-2014 Head Start Program Information Report" (PIR), PIR Summary Report.

⁶ Valorose, J. & Chase, R. (2012). "Child Care Workforce in Minnesota: 2011 Statewide Study of

Demographics, Training and Professional Development." Wilder Research & Minnesota Department of Human Services. <http://tinyurl.com/wilderchildcare>.

Head Start Programs

According to the “2013-2014 Head Start Program Information Report,” Minnesota has 53 Head Start grantees (including 34 Head Starts, 18 Early Head Starts and one Migrant and Seasonal Head Start) housed in 34 Community Action Agencies, seven private/public nonprofits, one school system and 11 tribal governments or consortiums.

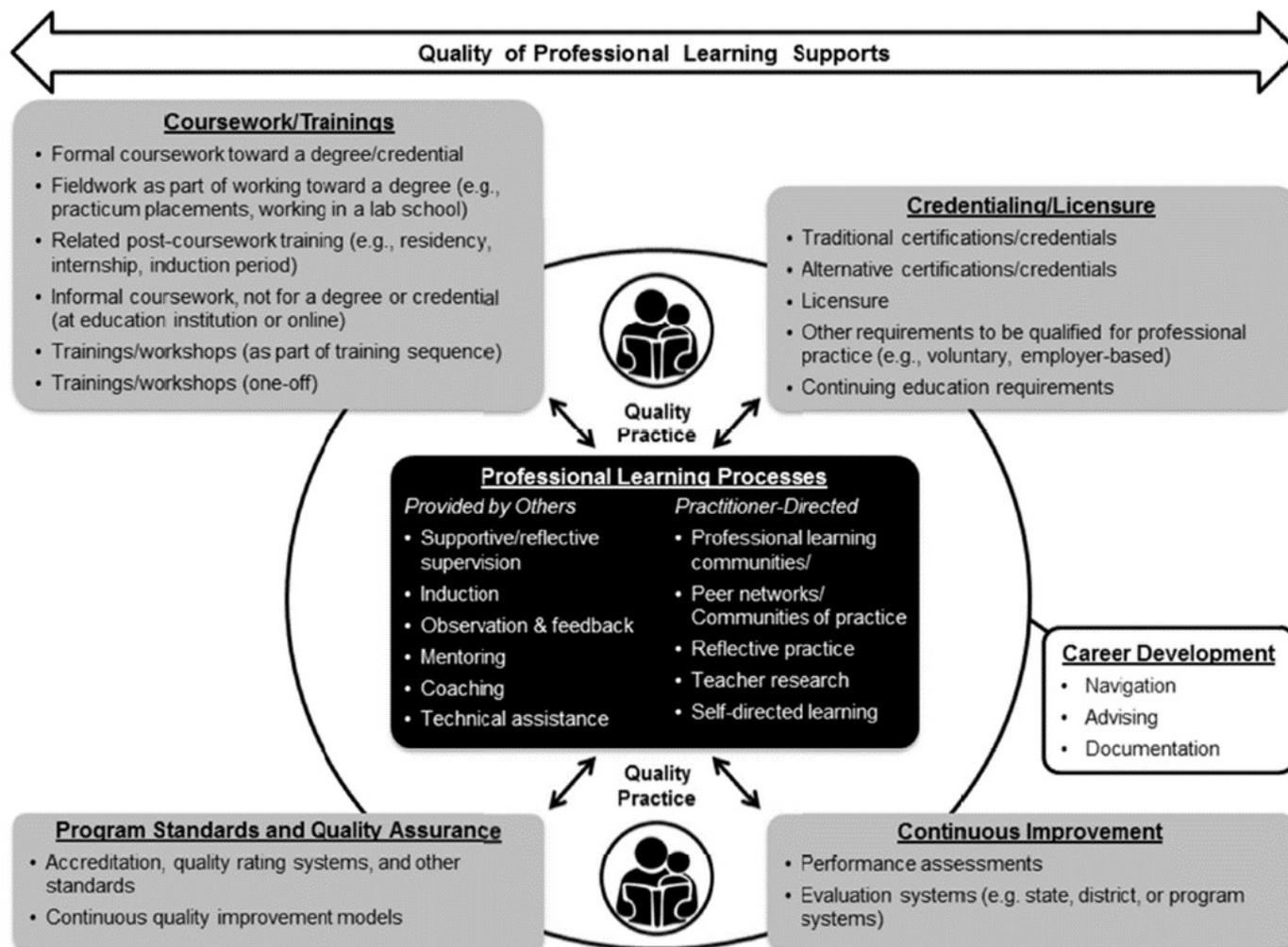
The “2011 Child Care Workforce Report” does not include estimates of how many non-providers (which include trainers, coaches, mentors and educators) are practicing in Minnesota’s early learning field, but it is important that these workers receive support to grow along with providers.

According to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, “young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning and responsive to their individual progress. Thus, the adults who provide for their care and education bear a great responsibility” (p. 1-1).⁷ Accordingly, given the demonstrated importance of early childhood education and growing research on early brain development, it is critical that early care and education practitioners have access to high-quality professional development. With such a large, diverse workforce, delivering high-quality professional development requires an equally broad and multi-faceted professional development system.

⁷ “Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation.”

Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2015.

Figure 1. The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council outline the learning events and contextual factors that influence the quality of professional learning.



Reprinted with permission from the National Academies Press, Copyright 2015, National Academy of Sciences Institutes of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC). 2015. *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. P. 8-4.

Overview of the Great Workforce Topic Areas

Minnesota, with federal and state funding, has historically supported efforts for improving the quality and development of the early learning workforce through individual and collaborative efforts of the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, institutes of higher education and partners. The additional \$45 million in Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funding bolsters the state's goals of "increasing early childhood program quality and accountability, building a skilled early childhood workforce, increasing access to quality early childhood programs for children with high needs, and aligning state infrastructure around those goals."⁸

From the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, "preparation programs, training, mentoring and coaching and in-service professional development are critical direct mechanisms for developing and sustaining the knowledge and competencies for professionals" (P. 8-1).⁹ Additionally, a set

of contextual factors are important to enhancing quality care and education and retaining quality providers in the field.¹⁰ In its recent report, "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation," the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council present a broad, cohesive model for professional learning that encompasses both learning events and contextual factors that impact the quality of professional learning supports and ultimately lead to quality practice (Figure 1). These factors include for-credit coursework and non-credit trainings, program standards and quality assurance, credentialing and licensure, continuous improvement, professional learning processes and career development (P. 8-4).

Using a similar approach to create cohesion among professional development initiatives, Great Workforce stakeholders use a structure that includes six topic areas for organizing efforts to build and support the workforce for early care and education. The first topic area includes initiatives related to establishing an updated **Knowledge and Competency Framework**. Since 2004, the state has used a set of core competencies for early childhood

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<http://www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EarlyLearn/index.html>.

⁹ "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation."

Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2015.

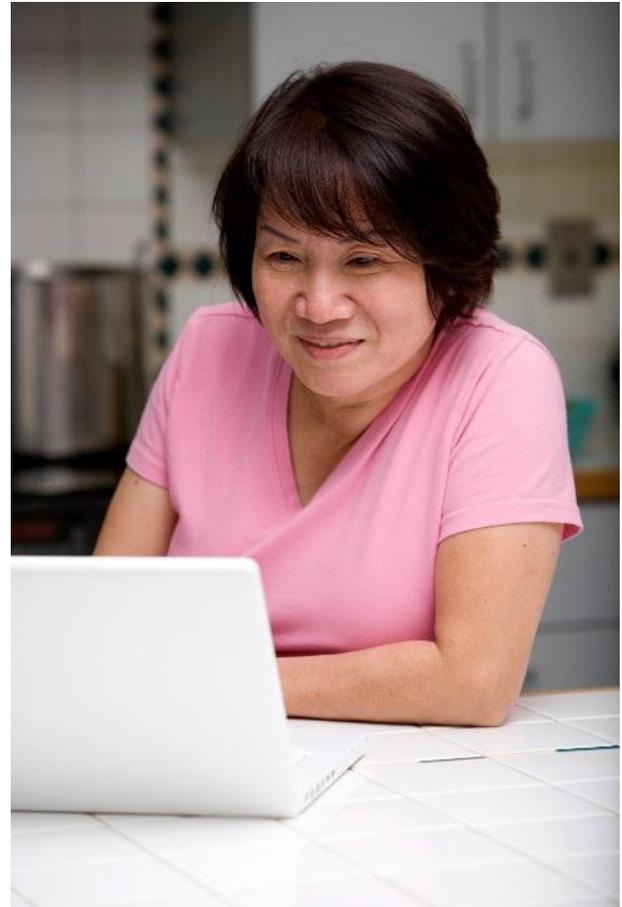
¹⁰ Ibid.

education and care practitioners that define knowledge and skills to support child outcomes and development, based on the research of that time.¹¹ These Core Competencies have served as the basis for training and professional development in the child care field. Minnesota also has Board of Teaching standards, which are separate guidelines for early childhood teachers seeking licensure. Those standards are revised on a schedule approved by the Minnesota Legislature. Notably, neither set of standards currently include professionals working in Early Childhood Special Education. Since 2012, work has been underway to align the 2004 Core

Competencies with the Board of Teaching standards to create a single Knowledge and Competency Framework. The initiatives in the Knowledge and Competency Framework topic area reflect the various aspects of that alignment work. These initiatives also include work to enable smooth transitions among sectors and institutes of higher education for degree-seeking professionals.

Efforts in the **Training and Trainer Development** topic area serve to improve

¹¹ “Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners who work with children birth through age eight and their families,” First Edition, September 2004. A project of the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children in collaboration with



the skills of trainers to enhance training outcomes based on Minnesota’s 2004 Core Competencies. These initiatives are working to expand the pool of quality trainings and trainers, and to make trainings more available and appropriate for those served. These efforts build, at least in part, on the training and trainer approval process operated by the Minnesota Center for

the Minnesota Professional Development Council, funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the McKnight Foundation, and the Midwest Association for the Education of Young Children.

Professional Development (MNCPD). Figure 2 lists a breakdown of 2014 training events approved by MNCPD, by Core Competency.

Just as partners work to improve and monitor the quality and diversity of trainers and training content, efforts in the **Credentials, Certificates, and Diplomas** topic area aim to recognize the quality of early educators and

practitioners who have completed educational programs. These initiatives assist practitioners in completing programs and expanding opportunities to structure learning and recognize professional advancement. As shown in Figure 3 on the next page, the number of credentials, certificates, and diplomas awarded increased between 2013 and 2014.¹²

Figure 2. The Minnesota Center for Professional Development approved more than 4,200 training events in 2014

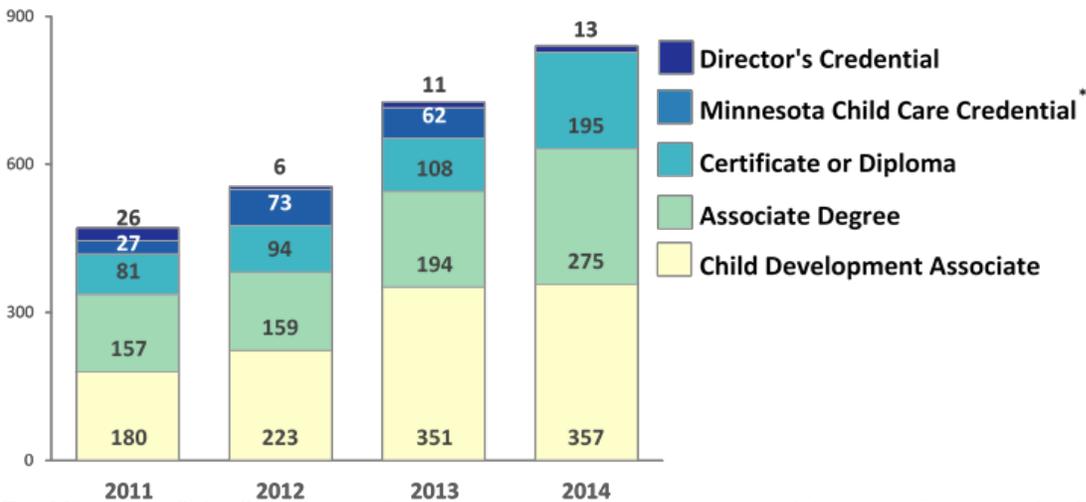
There were more than 4,200 approved training events held across Minnesota during the 2014 calendar year. The Minnesota Center for Professional Development approved course content and assured that trainers leading the training events were appropriately qualified. Child Care Aware, the largest training provider in the state, offered more than 60 percent of these approved trainings, displayed below by Core Competency. The transition to the new Knowledge and Competency Framework is scheduled to begin in 2015 and be completed in 2016.



¹² Minnesota Office of Early Learning (forthcoming in 2015). "Race to the Top –2014 Early Learning Challenge Grant Annual Performance Report."

Figure 3. The number of credentials, certificates, and diplomas awarded has been increasing since 2011

According to Minnesota’s 2014 Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant Annual Performance Report, the total number of credentials, certificates, and diplomas awarded has increased every year between 2011 and 2014. All credential categories, with the exception of the Minnesota Child Care Credential, increased between 2013 and 2014.



*The Minnesota Child Care Credential underwent changes based on participant feedback starting in 2012, which delayed participation and temporarily reduced the number of credentials awarded. The updated program launched in 2014, and participants representing 121 family and center-based programs enrolled and began working towards the credential.

In conjunction with work to provide professional development opportunities for early educators, efforts to offset the financial burden of training and education are essential to ensuring that the workforce can access opportunities and keep highly trained individuals in the field. Initiatives in the **Scholarships and Financial Supports** topic area aim to make professional development and education more affordable, and to incentivize longevity in the field for exceptional practitioners.

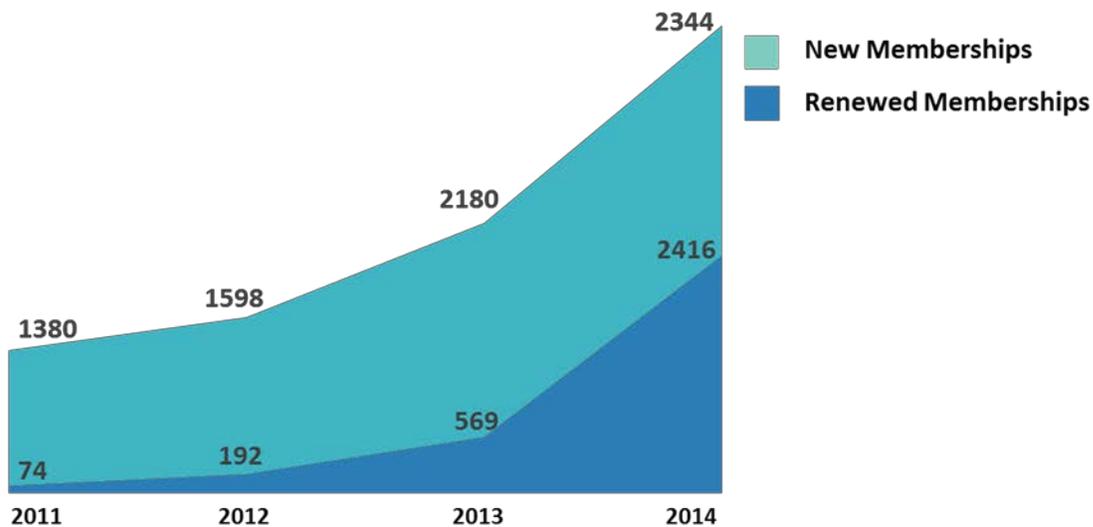
Great Workforce partners are also working to recognize the value of professional development experiences that happen outside of the typical adult training classroom. Efforts in the **Relationship Based Professional Development** topic area aim to provide tailored support and development opportunities to early educators in a variety of ways, including through coaching, consultation and mentoring. Some efforts focus on developing specific skill areas, while others help guide the broader development of early learning programs and educators.

Other initiatives work to assist practitioners in planning for, learning about, and formally tracking their professional development records using **Technology and Data Systems**. Initiatives in this topic area aim to make online systems and more user-friendly, and to engage more professionals in using these tools. The data systems also aim to improve the quality of data available about the workforce. One effort under this topic area in 2014 was to launch and enhance

Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, which is branded as Develop. Develop provides members access to their learning records and ability to search for local training opportunities by Core Competency. Develop began approving Relationship Based Professional Development Specialists in spring 2014. As shown in Figure 4, participation in Develop has increased every year since 2011.

Figure 4. Participation in Develop has increased every year since 2011

In 2014, the number of active individuals participating in Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, reached an all-time high, with 4,760 individual memberships. Individual members include center-based staff, family child care providers, and other professionals who work in or support early learning and/or school-age care programs.



Collaboration Among Partners in 2014

The partners involved in building and supporting Minnesota's Great Workforce use the six topic areas described above to categorize various efforts and communicate common goals. Within topic areas, each of the 44 initiatives work towards advancing unique, albeit interconnected goals. Due to the high number of initiatives and involved parties, it is especially important that there is collaboration across Great Workforce partners to address gaps and challenges, share resources where appropriate, and avoid duplication.

While increasing collaboration and communication continues to be an ongoing effort for partners involved in Minnesota's Great Workforce, work in 2014 resulted in several particularly notable collaborations. As an example, throughout the year, representatives from the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services met quarterly as the Office of Early Learning Professional Development Team. These meetings explored the work done within each agency,

including where there were overlaps. Participants worked on alignment efforts so that individual projects complemented each other to fit the needs of the populations served, where appropriate. The Office of Early Learning Professional Development Team is one example of several ongoing collaborative teams, varying in topic area, size and focus, which met in 2014.

In some instances, partners from different organizations worked together in an intentional way to achieve common goals. A highlight from 2014 of this collaborative work was completion of three knowledge and competency frameworks for professional development delivery providers. The frameworks align Minnesota's 2004 Core Competencies with the Board of Teaching standards and inform credit and non-credit professional development for family child care providers, teachers working with



preschool-aged children, and those working with infants and toddlers. This goal was achieved by three advisory groups with broad representation from stakeholders, including higher education, the Minnesota Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, child care providers, and the Minnesota Departments of Education, Human Services, and Health.

In other instances, communication among partners has allowed for acknowledgement of common goals, which partners then work towards individually. As an example, while working to develop the “2013 Great Workforce Annual Report,” partners acknowledged the need across efforts to infuse culturally competent material and context into bilingual trainers’ facilitation materials. While work remains, 2014 saw major steps forward in this area.

As part of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, the Minnesota Child Care Credential underwent revisions to include the principles of Minnesota’s Universal Multicultural Design Framework. Following these updates in 2014, more than 60 bilingual trainers began working toward the credential through one Somali-speaking cohort and two Spanish-speaking cohorts. By the end of 2014, there was a waiting list for three upcoming Somali-speaking cohorts to begin in 2015.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services also contracted with Think Small to recruit bilingual and bicultural individuals into learning communities and prepare them to be active and approved trainers. As a result of these efforts, the number of bilingual and bicultural trainers in the state increased by 85 percent from the 2013 baseline. Trainers recruited by this effort speak an array of languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Bhutanese, Hmong, Karen, Oromo, Somali and Spanish.

Initiatives and professionals working to advance those initiatives continue to have cross-initiative and topic area connections with varying levels of formality, which also help to reduce silos among efforts. In some cases, separate initiatives may be completely dependent on one another to achieve respective goals. This may happen among initiatives in the same or different topic areas. Similarly, separate initiatives may be highly related, but not dependent on each other to make progress or accomplish goals. Finally, there are instances of informal or circumstantial information sharing among initiatives of various topic areas, as the professionals involved in various initiatives attend the same meetings and trainings. These connections and communication channels continue to evolve as efforts advance through stages of work.

2014 Accomplishments

This section provides an overview of the progress made in each of the six Great Workforce topic areas during the 2014 calendar year. Information for this section came from interviews with key informants for each of the initiatives within the topic areas and during the cross-initiative collaborative meeting. More information on each of the initiatives is available in Appendix A.

Knowledge and Competency Framework Efforts

Minnesota has had two primary standards or sets of expectations for the skills and knowledge an early educator should demonstrate:

- Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners (2004)
- Minnesota Board of Teaching standards.

In 2014, two initiatives worked towards establishing a single set of competencies for educators, and creating a clear path for educational advancement: Aligning Board of Teaching standards with the 2004 Core Competencies, and establishing Articulation Agreements within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. Highlights of this work from 2014 include:

- Advisory groups working collaboratively to publish three competency frameworks, including one each for three types of professionals: Those working in family child care homes, teachers working with preschool-aged children, and those working with infants and toddlers
- Two- and four-year early childhood program staff at institutes of higher education met to discuss approaches for establishing Articulation Agreements, and to identify courses that might transfer.

Training and Trainer Development

In 2014, 15 initiatives contributed to training and trainer development by expanding the variety and quality of trainings and trainers available to early learning programs. At the time of the “2011 Child Care Workforce Report,” 57 percent of the child care workforce reported being interested in going through an in-depth training series for professional development. However, two-thirds of the family child care providers and 71 percent of those working in center-based programs reported challenges finding convenient professional development opportunities. Because of these findings, and other assessments of changing workforce needs, Minnesota state agency staff has

worked diligently to expand the number of high-quality series-based trainings available in the state. This has also required expanding the pool of qualified trainers. Developing both course content and trainers helps to make opportunities more accessible to and appropriate for practitioners across the state.

The 15 Training and Trainer Development initiatives for 2014 were:

- Development of training modules on authentic assessment
- Expanding training offered via Eager to Learn
- Training on the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs)



- Training library staff to offer early literacy workshops to parents and child care providers
- Training professionals on administering Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) tests
- Expanding the pool of bilingual and bicultural trainers
- Improving the Minnesota Center for Professional Development's process for ensuring quality of trainers and trainings
- Developing additional Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System training content, developing a cadre of trainers to train on assessment and curriculum tools
- Building consensus around best practices for coaching
- Training teachers on implementation of full-day kindergarten, training child care providers on the Child and Adult Care Food Program, training teachers on administration of kindergarten entry assessments
- Expanding training for professionals who serve young children with disabilities
- Expanding training on Early Childhood Screening.

Key accomplishments in 2014 for this work were:

- About 2,700 educators, trainers and other early learning program staff members participated in coursework in Eager to

Learn, Child Care Aware of Minnesota's community-based e-learning program. This is an increase of more than 10 percent from 2013.

- Child Care Aware of Minnesota introduced Anytime Learning, an online, self-study, module-based training program that provides flexibility in professional development. Between July 2014 and December 2014, nearly 8,000 professionals enrolled.
- The number of bilingual and bicultural trainers in the Think Small learning community increased by 85 percent from 2013. The 2014 learning community included trainers speaking an array of languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Bhutanese, Hmong, Karen, Oromo, Somali and Spanish. All these trainers were approved by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD) and completed the required trainings of trainers to be eligible to train on Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System foundational training content.
- State Library Services facilitated a training of trainers on the Every Child Ready to Read 2 curriculum. The 27 librarians and early literacy trainers that attended can now provide reading workshops for parents and child care providers.

Anytime Learning in Rural Minnesota: A Family Child Care Provider's Story

Roseau is located in north central Minnesota; about 10 miles from the Canadian border, with a population of just over 2,800. Being such a rural community, the number of local, in-person training opportunities available for child care providers can be, at times, limited. As one 15-year family child care provider explained, "the advent of Anytime Learning through Child Care Aware has significantly reduced barriers to trainings."

She explained that it had been challenging to meet the number of training hours required of her by the state, from a grant that she received, and to maintain her Parent Aware Star Rating. Anytime Learning provides her with an affordable and flexible learning experience to meet professional development needs. "You can do it at your own pace, click through the slides, listen to the instructor speak, watch the videos," she explained. "You can stop on a slide, take notes and read it again... and there are quizzes at the end so I know I'm retaining the information."

Since taking trainings through Anytime Learning, she has been able to improve her practices and share information with the families she works with, especially related to child brain development and breastfeeding. She has encouraged other family child care providers to take the trainings, as well. "Don't pass it up," she tells her peers. "It's good information, it's affordable and... convenient."

- The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) is working with professionals to develop in-person and online trainings on how to use authentic assessment in 11 topic areas. CEED surveyed professionals from all settings and collaborated with the Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services to identify topic areas.
- Two committees comprised of professionals from a variety of early childhood settings met to develop revised content for two Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. By the end of 2014, they completed content on the Social-Emotional Language and Literacy domain. CEED began developing corresponding trainings, which will be accessible to all early care and education professionals.
- The Minnesota Department of Education convened a meeting with stakeholders representing seven other professional development providers to begin working towards a formalized foundational coaching process.
- National experts facilitated six seminars to prepare approximately 450 teachers, principals and directors for full-day kindergarten.
- The Minnesota Early Childhood Comprehensive System Grant funded a cross-agency collaboration to develop

Early Childhood Screenings: A Screening Coordinator's Story

In August 2014, the Director of Early Childhood Education and Screening Coordinator for the Minneapolis Public School District participated in an Early Childhood Screening training hosted by the Minnesota Departments of Education and Health. She said that what she liked most about the training was that “the state was setting a tone for improved practice in serving children for whom English is not their first language, [and is] focusing on building equity and improving services for all ethnic groups across the state.” This is especially important, as her work specifically targets underserved ethnic groups and neighborhoods in Minneapolis, and includes early childhood screening services at homeless shelters.

Early Childhood Screening programs help to ensure families have access to and connect with programming that will help children to be ready for kindergarten. They work to identify potential developmental delays and provide resources for interventions, when needed. According to the Screening Coordinator, “[the trainings] promote improved work across sectors, especially between education and health care, around school readiness and addressing development concerns in the state’s young population.”

The Screening Coordinator said that, in general, she finds it very easy to stay up-to-date with the latest information about screenings, techniques and quality indicators. She is able to access information from the Minnesota Departments of Education and Health websites, and finds state staff accommodating when questions arise.

training strategies to support public programs that perform developmental and social-emotional screenings. These programs include local public health programs, health care providers, mental health providers, school districts, Head Start and Early Head Start and child welfare programs.

- Staff at the Centers of Excellence for Young Children with Disabilities worked with national experts to standardize training practices in its three innovation areas. These include the Technical Assistance Centers on Social and Emotional Intervention, Family-Guided Routines-Based Interventions, and the Classroom Engagement Model.
- Forty-one trainers went through a training process in at least one of the six assessment and curriculum tools, for 49 completions. These trainings came out of collaborative work among the Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services, and 11 training organizations to identify training needs.

Credentials, Certificates, and Diplomas

Five initiatives in 2014 related to credentials, certificates, and diplomas worked to increase the number of practitioners who complete educational programs by either reducing barriers or offering education directly. While

all licensed early childhood teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree, educational credentials vary widely for individuals working in non-school-based early childhood settings. According to the "2011 Child Care Workforce Report," an estimated 38 percent of child care workers held a bachelor's degree or higher (though not necessarily related to early childhood education or development). Another 18 percent held an associate's degree, Child Development Associate credential, or a certificate or diploma in a related field. The remaining 44 percent of child care workers had at most a high school diploma or GED. Given this wide range of education levels, a variety of credentials are needed to support professional growth of the workforce.

The 2014 initiatives related to credentials, certificates, and diplomas included:

- Delivering training for the Family Service Credential
- Offering the Director's Credential online
- Revising the Minnesota Child Care Credential
- Developing the Minnesota Infant/Toddler Credential
- Promoting programs that offer credit for prior learning.

Notably, other initiatives related to credentials are listed in the section related to

financial supports and scholarships. Key accomplishments include:

- A cohort of 17 professionals completed the Director’s Credential, which is up by more than half from the 11 that completed the program in 2013
- Nine cohorts of providers began working towards the Minnesota Child Care Credential, including two Spanish-speaking, one Somali, two online through Eager to Learn, and another four face-to-face. Participants represented 82 family child care and 39 center-based programs

The Minnesota Child Care Credential, Spanish-speaking Cohort: A Provider’s Story

A Spanish-speaking family child care provider in Minneapolis began working towards her Minnesota Child Care Credential in a bilingual cohort. She has been a child care provider for more than 15 years and decided that she, along with the two assistants she employs, should go through the credential program to improve services they provide to children. Being able to attend, in person, with other Spanish-speakers was a big factor in their decision to enroll.

“It has helped me a lot. It has helped me change my routine and my schedule, too,” she explained. “Now I am doing more science experiments that I have found for the children of these ages. We have really gotten their attention. It makes them more motivated to explore, use recycled materials and talk more about nature.”

- Thirty-four Minnesota Head Start staff members successfully completed the Family Service Credential training.

Scholarships and Financial Supports

Four initiatives provided financial supports for early learning program providers to make professional development more affordable in 2014. Financial supports and scholarships helped reduce barriers for accessing professional development and incentivized providers to pursue opportunities.

The scholarships and financial supports topic area also includes financial incentives to encourage highly trained individuals to remain in the field, creating consistency for children. According to the “2011 Child Care Workforce Report,” the turnover rate of child care workers (not including Head Start or school-based early childhood programs) was 11 percent, which is down from 12 percent in 2010 and 16 percent in 2005.

Initiatives with these overall goals included:

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA scholarships for individuals pursuing higher education
- Reimbursement of fees for individuals completing the Minnesota Child Care Credential

- A range of supports for individuals pursuing a Child Development Associate
- Retention bonuses through Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now (R.E.E.T.A.I.N.).

Highlights in 2014 include:

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA awarded 82 scholarships, with nearly half going to family child care providers and half to center program staff.
- Early educators received 130 assessment fee scholarships, 36 training scholarships and five renewal fees for the Child Development Associate credential.
- Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funding subsidized 75 percent of the cost for the Minnesota Child Care Credential program for practitioners.
- The R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program provided 144 bonuses, totaling nearly \$300,000. R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses incentivize well-trained child care professionals to continue offering consistent care to the same group of children over time.

Relationship Based Professional Development

Relationship Based Professional Development is the collective term for activities related to coaching, consultation, or mentoring to early learning professionals. According to the “2011 Child Care Workforce Report,” 15

percent of licensed early educators, 19 percent of child care center teachers, 47 percent of licensed or legally unlicensed preschool teachers (not including school-based or Head Start programs), and 23 percent of child care center directors reported participating in some form of Relationship Based Professional Development in 2011.

This topic area included 14 initiatives in 2014, including:

- Using the Practice-Based Coaching framework to improve school readiness practices of Head Start teachers
- Growing the capacity of Minnesota’s early childhood mental health network
- Utilizing child care health consultants to support health and safety in child care settings
- Facilitating a user group to support Head Start staff in analyzing and using assessment data
- Providing additional training to Head Start home visitors who coach parents on child sickness and injury
- Partnering across agencies to support literacy coaching for family child care providers
- Using a multi-tiered coaching model to support literacy tutoring

- Providing consultation or mentoring to child care programs pursuing national accreditation
- Supporting new CLASS coaches by pairing them with more experienced mentors

Working with a Child Care Health Consultants: A Provider’s Story

A child care center in Mahanomen, Minnesota has been working with a child care health consultant for nearly four years. A provider at the center explained that before working with the health consultant, it was challenging to receive the individualized information that a lot of their health and safety-related questions required. That changed when they began their relationship with their child care health consultant.

“We can call, text, email [the consultant]... she’s really good and hands-on. She comes into the area when we need face-to-face time, or will stop by to see if there are any questions,” the provider explained. When they first started working together, the child care health consultant and center staff worked together to revise and update their policy handbook to be more detailed about health and safety. The handbook has helped guide staff and inform parents about what to expect. In addition, the provider explained that the consultant is “always willing to sit down and talk with parents if they have questions, or don’t agree with recommendations that we give.” The provider explained that having an established relationship with a child care health consultant helps the center staff to feel empowered to reach out when they have questions, and to receive guiding information to keep children in their care safe and healthy.

- Improving the quality coaching model utilized in the Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Establishing standards for approving and recognizing Relationship Based Professional Development
- Supporting the work of professional development advisors
- Developing a coordinated referral process for connecting child care programs with inclusion coaches.

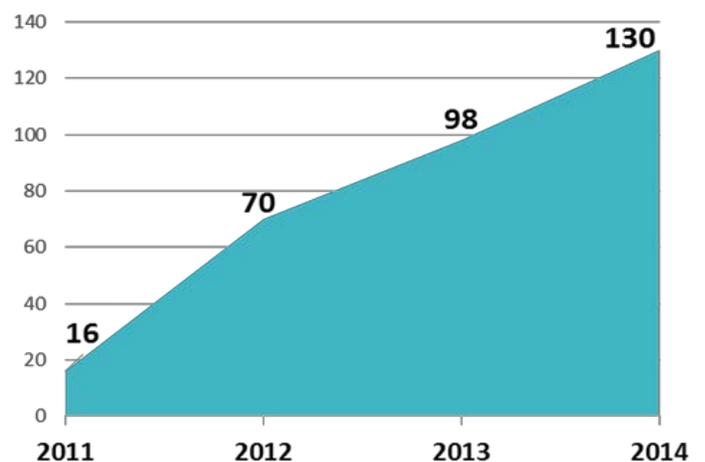
Highlights from 2014 include:

- Between July and December 2014, Parent Aware quality coaches documented more than 4,700 Relationship Based Professional Development events in Develop. Many of these event hours can be used by individuals to advance to a higher step on the Career Lattice.
- Child care health consultants documented more than 800 points of contact with providers in the Race to the Top Transformation Zones. This included 69 on-site visits to Parent Aware-rated providers.
- Families who participated in Minnesota Head Start Association’s health literacy intervention had 13 percent fewer non-urgent visits to the emergency room than a comparison group from the same county.

- Eighteen Child Care Aware of Minnesota CLASS Coaches and 13 Head Start CLASS Coaches participated in the CLASS Coaching mentorship program, which is a collaboration between the two organizations.
- Fourteen providers received full-support services and one-on-one mentoring from the Minnesota Licensed Family Child Care Association to meet the National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation Standards.
- The Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC) Accreditation Facilitation Project provided approximately 1,235 on-site consultation visits, for a total of 3,203 hours.
- The Minnesota Reading Corps program worked with 13 family child care providers from the Northside Achievement Zone and St. Paul Promise Neighborhood. The providers and Reading Corps members received regular support from a coach to facilitate relationship-based supports.
- Four Head Start programs completed the Practice-Based Coaching Academies. The purpose of the Academies is to support systemic decisions about professional development and coaching as a Head Start program team, inclusive of policies, preparation and processes.
- Just short of 500 early care and education providers received on-site consultation for 161 children with special needs from the Center for Inclusive Child Care. Ninety-five percent of these children remained enrolled in their programs.
- The number of child care centers reaching candidacy for accreditation with the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC) has increased every year since the awarding of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant in 2011, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. The number of child care centers reaching candidacy for accreditation has increased every year since 2011

One-hundred-thirty child care centers reached candidacy for accreditation with the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children in 2014. This is up by more than 30 percent, since 2013.



Technology and Data Systems

Four initiatives were undertaken in 2014 to improve the quality of technology and data systems used to support professional development. These initiatives have two goals; they aim to:

- Assist practitioners in using technology to enhance professional development
- Improve the quality and quantity of data collected about the workforce and supports offered.

The four initiatives under the topic of technology and data systems in 2014 were:

- Increasing access to Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool
- Including training events offered by school districts, charter schools, and Head Starts in Develop
- Developing an online version of the Individual Training Needs Assessment,
- Launching a Web-based tool for career guidance.

Progress from 2014 includes:

- Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, replaced the Minnesota Professional Development Registry. Develop uses updated software and a one-stop-shop approach to bridge

The Develop Lab

From conversations at the Pine Tech Child Care Aware office in Pine City, Minnesota, it became clear to staff that providers in the area were struggling with technology, both in terms of joining Develop and accessing online learning opportunities. Providers were facing barriers related to internet access and lacked familiarity and comfort using technology.

These initial conversations led to the idea to host training workshops as introductions to Develop. From this, Pine Tech Child Care Aware applied for a grant with the Northland Foundation to purchase 10 Google Chromebooks, cases, projector, mobile internet source, and a printer to comprise a mobile "Develop Lab" to provide access and learning opportunities in the community. With this setup, they have been able to get groups of providers together and teach them how to sign into Develop, access their learning records, and show them how to take training online through Anytime Learning and Eager to Learn. The Develop Lab team has already hosted multiple meetings, attended conferences, and will be hosting workshops throughout 2015.

Working with Child Care Aware staff and with other providers helps to build confidence in working with the online systems. "We worked with one [provider] who needed one class, and took it online, but was frustrated because she didn't have her certificate," explained one of the Develop Lab project leaders. "She was frustrated... and worried that she wouldn't get her rating, but we were able to take out a Chromebook, sign in, and discover that she hadn't clicked 'submit' [on her final quiz]... So by the end of the night she had her certificate.

professional development and quality improvement efforts so that professionals and programs can access tools and information with a single login.

- More than 4,500 early learning professionals and 1,500 early learning programs were using Develop by the end of 2014.
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Center for Professional Development conducted a pilot program to facilitate inclusion of Head Start-sponsored trainings and

school district-sponsored trainings in Develop.

- The Individual Training Needs Assessment, a survey tool for providers to inventory their experiences and comfort with the 2004 Core Competencies, was built within Develop.
- The Minnesota Center for Professional Development finished creating content for the Virtual Career Guidance Tool. It is online to browse career options and corresponding training and education requirements.



Challenges Facing the Great Workforce

While efforts to build and support a Great Workforce evolve over time, there are still persistent challenges limiting the growth and professionalization of the field. During discussions that informed this report, participants identified a number of continual, structural challenges for those offering support and training, and for direct care providers and educators who seek professional development.

Challenges for Professional Development Providers

Participants identified several challenges facing those working to build and support the workforce, especially related to the wide range of topic needs and education levels. An example of this is in the array of career paths that professionals can pursue, each with its own specific specialty areas and skillsets. In addition, there is a spectrum of educational attainment among individuals in the various positions. A workforce with a range of education backgrounds requires a range of trainings – both by topic and level – to meet their needs. This, compounded with the reality that Minnesota has a large number of training and professional development providers, creates challenges ensuring that

the state is meeting the needs of professionals at all levels.

In addition to the wide variety of training types and levels needed to support professionals at all levels is the reality that the workforce is vulnerable to changing professional development requirements. Depending on the role within the workforce, policies, regulations or funding sources may require professionals to attend particular trainings or spend a specific amount of time on training or professional development. Changes in these requirements may shift the demand for professional development opportunities, requiring those working to build and support the workforce to respond quickly.

The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council echo these challenges expressed by Great Workforce stakeholders. Its recent report “Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation” found that, nationally, the early child care and education workforce is highly fragmented. Expectations and learning requirements vary significantly by the roles of the professionals in the workforce, the settings that they practice in, practitioner traditions and cultures, requirements from sources of funding, and management or regulatory agencies that provide oversight. Because of these multiple

levels of fragmentation, it is challenging for learning expectations for the workforce to keep pace with the latest science on how to serve children most appropriately during developmental stages.¹³

Challenges for Potential Professional Development Participants

While opportunities for professional development and related activities are increasing and expanding across the state, there continue to be limitations in the uptake by practitioners and potential future practitioners. There are a series of persistent barriers, especially in the child care field, limiting practitioners' participation in professional development at a variety of levels. As an example, early learning professions often offer low compensation. Professional development does not always increase pay due to the market-driven nature of service fees. Providers may be unable to charge higher rates for their services after

going through professional development, or risk moving beyond what their clients can afford, ultimately, losing customers. This lack of a guaranteed payoff, combined with the upfront cost to participate in trainings and professional development opportunities, can greatly limit participation.

Another reality of the child care field is that it is not uncommon for practitioners to see the job as a temporary placement, rather than a career. For some providers, caring for children can be a way to make ends meet while caring for their own children. Early learning programs are also not a career pathway that high school guidance counselors or college advisors advertise strongly, in part because of the traditionally low compensation levels and the perception that it is not a permanent career option. Because of these workforce retention challenges, the drive to go through professional development can be lower in comparison with someone with long-term plans to remain in the field.

¹³ "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation." Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2015. p. 8-1:

https://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2015/BirthtoEight_brief.pdf.



Recommendations: Opportunities and Direction for Future Work

The following recommendations are from insights shared by interviewees and participants in the cross-initiative collaborative session. These recommendations address areas commonly cited as presenting opportunities for improvement with actionable strategies.

While the recommendations provide general guidance for the direction of future work, they rely heavily on stakeholders for detailed planning and execution.

Improve Recruitment and Retention of Professionals in the Workforce

It is widely understood that stable relationships with early child educators and low staff turnover rates have a positive

impact on child development.¹⁴ Therefore, an important focus for future work is to attract and keep qualified professionals in the field. To do this, state agencies can promote currently available supports to build stability in the great workforce, such as the T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses, which give workers a reason to remain in the field. State agencies, in partnership with other organizations working to strengthen the early care and education workforce, should also explore sustainable options for increasing wages for the full workforce.

State agency staff can make efforts to connect with a broader network of potential employees. Currently, high school guidance counselors and college advisors provide minimal emphasis on early care and education as a career path. Minnesota's partner state agencies can work with career counselors to promote the variety of career pathways available, and the training and education required for each. Similarly, state agencies might enlist marketing experts to support communication about careers in the early learning field, and better use the

Minnesota Center for Professional Development Virtual Career Guidance website, which explains career pathways and supports available for achieving goals.

Strengthen Coordination Among Stakeholders and Partners

When collecting data to inform this report, stakeholders recognized that silos among agencies working on parallel efforts still exist. Limited information sharing may lead to duplicated efforts or gaps in service needs when there are assumptions about what other organizations are or are not working on. It can also be confusing for practitioners in the field as they attempt to navigate a complicated patchwork quilt of training and professional development opportunities.

One particular area where coordination needs improvement is between Minnesota state agencies and the state's institutes of higher education. While all work to connect current and potential early learning program professionals with the training and education

¹⁴ Ahnert, L., Piquart, M. & Lamb, M.E. (2006). Security of children's relationships with nonparental care providers: A meta-analysis. *Child development*, 77, 664-679. See also Whitebook, M. & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care center staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18, 273.

needed to be successful, there are very few direct lines of funding or contracted work among them. Ultimately, the early learning field would benefit by reducing overlapping or duplicate efforts. Practitioners would benefit by having a smooth transition between non-credit trainings and for-credit programs at colleges, while the growth of practitioners with degrees will increase professionalization of the field.

Work to Improve Perceptions of Professionalization of Early Care and Education Providers

As discussed previously, there are several persistent factors which lead to the perception that work in early care and education is not a professional career path. Unfortunately, according to stakeholders, this perception can be prevalent in those working in the field, as well as the public. When practitioners do not see themselves as being fully professional, it can reduce incentives or the internal motivation to participate in professional development opportunities. While many of the initiatives that build and support the Great Workforce aim to expand and improve on the professional development opportunities available to practitioners, it is equally important that they, too, continue to promote the corresponding career paths as fully professional.

Continue to Expand the use of Develop and Improve Data Accuracy Within the System

The 2014 rebranding of Minnesota's Professional Development Registry as Develop, along with the enhanced features and integration with the Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System has been a big step forward in creating a one-stop-shop for professional development opportunities. Already in its first year, participation by professionals and early care programs has increased significantly from what it was in 2013. However, barriers remain to having a fully inclusive system. Uncertainty remains for practitioners and professional development providers about the difference among Develop, the Minnesota Center for Professional Development, and Minnesota STREAMS to Quality (MNStreams.org), which is Child Care Aware's online training catalogue. In addition, it is especially important that data that is available in Develop go through checks for accuracy and consistency. As practitioners are in the stage of becoming familiar with Develop, they may be especially sensitive to errors. Initial inaccuracies may give the impression that the entire system is faulty or untrustworthy, and may create skepticism about participation.

Appendix A: Initiative Descriptions and Progress from 2013

Initiatives Related to Knowledge and Competency Framework Efforts

Because Minnesota has multiple sets of expectations for the skills and knowledge early educators should demonstrate, it can be challenging for providers to understand the different expectations and which apply to them. In 2014, two initiatives worked towards establishing a single set of expectations for educators and creating a clear path for educational advancement, including:

- Aligning Board of Teaching standards with the Minnesota Core Competencies
- Establishing Articulation Agreements within the Minnesota State College and University System.

Aligning Board of Teaching standards with the 2004 Core Competencies

Key Goal

Develop a knowledge and competency framework for professional development delivery providers to use as a foundation for learning experiences.

The Minnesota Board of Teaching standards describe expectations about the knowledge needed by licensed teachers working in early childhood education settings. Minnesota's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners (2004) describe the skills and abilities needed to work effectively with young learners. This initiative works to align Minnesota's 2004 Core Competencies with the Board of Teaching standards in user-friendly knowledge and competency frameworks. Frameworks may inform credit and non-credit professional development, based on specialty area. Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funding made this initiative possible.

2014 Progress

In 2014, advisory groups, including child care providers and representatives from higher education and the Minnesota Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, worked



Three competency frameworks are now available on the Minnesota Department of Education's website.

collaboratively to produce competency frameworks combining the Board of Teaching standards and field-developed competencies. In December 2014, the revised frameworks became available on the Minnesota Department of Education's website. The advisory groups developed competency framework versions for three types of professionals, including: Providers working in family child care homes, those working with preschool-aged children, and those working with infants and toddlers.

These documents identify the skills needed to demonstrate competencies at three levels: Explores, implements, and designs and leads. Progress between levels depends on the professionals' skills, rather than solely their level of education. Teachers and providers will be able to use these documents to map their own professional development and education.

Also in 2014, advisory groups began work on two companion guides. The guides will provide key concepts in plain language, examples of strategies and stories of how professionals can demonstrate competencies in various settings.

Establishing Articulation Agreements Within the Minnesota State College and University System

Key Goal

Establish articulation with two- and four-year education programs to allow students to transfer into new schools and receive credit for previous coursework.

Articulation Agreements are policies between institutions of higher education that allow students to transfer between programs and obtain credit for previous coursework. In order to make earning a degree in early childhood programs more accessible, schools within the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system are communicating to work on Articulation Agreements between two- and four-year programs.

2014 Progress

MnSCU two- and four- year schools held three joint meetings in 2014, in January, April and September, to discuss possible plans for Articulation Agreements for teacher licensure programs. Previously, two-year programs had developed a written agreement about how to work together and coordinate efforts without being competitive with each other. The four-year colleges had conversations and continued to work towards articulation without having programs give up individual identities.

In 2013, the MnSCU state office supported development of an early childhood unity forum to bring together child care centers, Head Starts, representatives from two- and four-year early childhood programs, and the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services. The forum created a dialogue towards a seamless picture of early childhood education programs. While the forum ended in 2013 without specific Articulation Agreements, many of the relationships that formed during the process continued in various ways, which included increasing diversity in membership on advisory committees and broad involvement in consulting on projects in 2014.

Since beginning this work, MnSCU faculty have made important strides forward, which is especially noteworthy considering the work does not have a particular source of funding. Rather, it was an undertaking that MnSCU faculty began on their own, in addition to their existing workloads.

Initiatives Related to Training and Trainer Development

In 2014, 15 initiatives contributed to working towards training and trainer development. These initiatives worked toward the goals of expanding the variety and improving the quality of trainings and trainers available to early educators. These initiatives included:

- Development of training modules on authentic assessment
- Expanding training offered via Eager to Learn
- Training on the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress
- Training library staff to offer early literacy workshops to parents and child care providers
- Training on administering otoacoustic emissions tests
- Expanding the pool of bilingual and bicultural trainers
- Improving the Minnesota Center for Professional Development's process for ensuring the quality of trainers and training
- Developing additional Parent Aware training content
- Developing a cadre of trainers to train on assessment and curriculum tools
- Building consensus around best practices for coaching
- Training teachers on implementation of full-day Kindergarten
- Training child care providers on the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Training teachers on administering Kindergarten Entry Assessments
- Expanding training for professionals who serve young children with disabilities
- Expanding training on Early Childhood Screening.

Development of Training Modules on Authentic Assessment

Key Goal

Develop an effective professional development infrastructure to promote the use of authentic assessment by early educators.

The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) is developing authentic assessment training modules for 11 topic areas identified by early educators. CEED conducted a survey of family and center-based providers, early childhood school-based services, Head Start and professional development providers, and collaborated with the Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services to identify topic areas. When completed, all in-person training modules will be broken down to include one-third content, one-third skill development and one-third reflection. Each module will include multiple activities and video content to share concrete examples of how to implement quality authentic assessment practices.

2014 Progress

CEED worked to identify content developers for each of the 11 topic areas. CEED hired professionals, both within Minnesota and from across the country, to develop content. Content developers have expertise, know the related evidence-base, and have experience using authentic assessment in practice. Content developers will provide a training guide, PowerPoint slides, external resources, video clips and concrete examples of how to implement authentic assessment. Developers will create content for both in-person and online trainings. By the end of 2014, several of the 11 modules were nearing completion, with trainer guides finished and work underway to complete the online components.

In addition to the 11 authentic assessment modules, CEED developed a two-hour primer on authentic assessment that includes foundational information about authentic assessment for trainers to go through prior to the other trainings. Beyond the primer, trainers may take trainings in any order; there is some overlap in content area for areas that are especially important for trainers to understand.

The same stakeholder group that assisted in identification of topic areas for the modules also identified quality trainers. By the end of 2014, stakeholders identified 68 high-quality trainers from across the state, all included in Develop, to participate in the modules and provide authentic assessment trainings in the future. CEED has scheduled 11 training of trainer events for the beginning of 2015. All trainings and modules will be included in Develop, as they are completed.

Expanding Training Offered via Eager to Learn

Key Goals

Offer a more advanced level of community-based learning through online learning communities.

Facilitate completion of the Minnesota Child Care Credential, NAEYC Director's Credential, and the Child Development Associate credential.

Child Care Aware of Minnesota offers a community-based, e-learning program for early learning and school-age care providers called Eager to Learn. Research supporting the online learning model informs course structure, which brings people together through technology. Students take training individually, and the larger programs (which include the Child Development Associate, the Minnesota Child Care Credential, the Director's Credential and Spanish-language courses) put attendees into learning communities. The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funded an upgrade to the learning platform, which made the online interface more user-friendly.

2014 Progress

Legislation went into effect in 2014 that changed licensing requirements for family child care providers. These changes increased the annual training time from eight to 16 hours. It also now requires providers to complete specific training curricula on behavior guidance, supervising for safety, abusive head trauma and sudden unexpected infant death. In 2014, 2,721 students, including early learning professionals, trainers and other staff members, participated in Eager to Learn training. This was up by more than 10 percent from the 2,393 participants in 2013. Eager to Learn likely would have had even greater participation in 2014, however, the timing of the release of the new mandated curricula delayed the start-date.



More than 2,700 educators, trainers, and other early care and education staff members participated in Eager to Learn coursework.

Also in 2014, Eager to Learn launched a training program called Anytime Learning, which provides modules and interactive trainings for students to take on their own time. As of December 2014, 547 students had registered for 868 training events through Anytime Learning.

Training on the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs)

Key Goal

Ensure that there are equal opportunities for all early care and education professionals to access training on the newly revised Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.

The Early Childhood Indicators of Progress are the set of standards for developmentally appropriate expectations used in the state for children from birth to age 5. There are six domains for the Indicators of Progress, including social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and literacy development, creativity and the arts, cognitive development, and physical and motor development. As a part of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress has undergone a revision, which included input from a cross-section of professionals from across the state. As a complement to the revised Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, this initiative is working to develop a corresponding set of accessible trainings on the updated indicators for all early care and education professionals.

2014 Progress

Two committees for revising the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress met in 2014 to develop content in language and literacy development and social and emotional development domain areas. The committees included professionals who work in a variety of early childhood settings and capacities throughout the state. The state departments also received input from national experts for revising content. The inclusive nature of the committee development process has helped to increase ownership, investment and interest in the standards. By the end of 2014, the language and literacy development content was completed and transmitted.

For corresponding trainings, the Minnesota Department of Education contracted with the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), University of Minnesota. CEED began developing training content for the language and literacy development domain. It will work towards the remaining domains as committees complete updates. All corresponding trainings will be available through Develop, when completed. Additionally in 2014, CEED developed formal plans for dissemination, and the evaluation plan for the project.

Training Library Staff to Offer Early Literacy Workshops to Parents and Child Care Providers

Key Goal

Prepare Minnesota libraries to provide quality story times, literacy-rich playful learning spaces, and outreach to parents and care providers that incorporates the most up-to-date early literacy research and findings.

The Every Child Ready to Read® curriculum from the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Services to Children teaches parents about early literacy skill development. In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education’s Early Learning Division, State Library Services developed training sessions to align the second edition of Every Child Ready to Read® (ECRR2) with the Language and Literacy Development domain of Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs). Minnesota’s public libraries offer thousands of programs for young children and their families each year. These newly developed trainings help libraries to incorporate the ECIPs into early childhood programming through a training of trainers model. A Library Services and Technology Act Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services made the project possible.

2014 Progress

State Library Services facilitated six trainings on ECRR2 for library staff in 2014 to learn a range of ways to help parents and caregivers build reading readiness. These trainings included five six-hour sessions on “Storytimes for Everyone,” and one training of trainers for librarians and early literacy trainers.

The “Storytimes for Everyone” trainings included content on enhancing story time with early literacy best practices. Participants learned how to effectively introduce, model and put into practice activities that build early literacy skills, and how to create engaging prompts that encourage parents and children to sing, talk, play, write and read in the library and at home. A total of 190 librarians and early childhood professionals attended in Owatonna, Prior Lake, Redwood Falls, Detroit Lakes or Grand Rapids. In a post-training survey, participants reported significant increases in knowledge and confidence in using new practices.

Twenty-seven librarians and early literacy trainers completed the ECRR2 training of trainers session at the Minnesota Department of Education. Participants are now prepared to provide Every Child Ready to Read workshops to parents and child care providers.

Training on Administering Otoacoustic Emissions Tests

Key Goal

Create a robust system of trained professionals to provide timely access to otoacoustic emissions testing for children.

Measuring otoacoustic emissions is a method of testing for hearing loss, outer-ear canal blockage or middle ear fluid in children from birth until school age. In this initiative, a cross-sector team of professionals, including Head Start programs, audiologists, deaf and hard of hearing teachers, early childhood speech and language teachers and school nurses, is working to increase training on how to do the tests. This team is working in early Head Starts and Early Childhood Special Education programs so children can get more timely access to these screenings.

2014 Progress

In 2014, the cross-sector team working on this initiative received a grant from the Early Childhood Hearing Outreach Initiative (ECHO), an initiative within Utah State University's National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management. This grant provided the funding needed for ECHO to provide trainings to 11 teams of stakeholders across Minnesota on how to train others to use the equipment needed to facilitate otoacoustic emissions tests. In total, ECHO trained 40 trainers in 2014.

After going through the ECHO training, trainers gained access to an online forum where they can connect with other trainers and post questions, comments and recommendations about the trainings in which they participated. The online space allows trainers to stay connected and updated as they facilitate trainings in their regions.

Expanding the Pool of Bilingual and Bicultural Trainers

Key Goal

Increase the number of bicultural and bilingual trainers across the state.

The state partner agencies are committed to increasing the number of bilingual and bicultural trainers across the state to provide all early educators with high-quality professional development opportunities. Think Small is working to recruit and support bilingual and bicultural trainers to provide Parent Aware trainings in languages other than English. Child Care Aware of Minnesota is supporting this effort by offering training of trainers and online learning communities for newly recruited trainers.

2014 Progress

Think Small increased the number of new bilingual and bicultural trainers by 85 percent from 2013 to 2014. All trainers recruited have a bachelor's degree or higher, are proficient in



The number of bilingual and bicultural trainers is up 85 percent from the 2013 baseline.

speaking English, and have earned approved trainer status from the Minnesota Center for Professional Development. Trainers participating in this project speak an array of languages, including: Amharic, Arabic, Bhutanese, Hmong, Karen, Oromo, Somali and Spanish. Having these individuals trained to offer foundational Parent Aware trainings will mean that more non-English-speaking providers will be able to meet Parent Aware training requirements. Recruitment efforts continue to include:

- Collaborating with professional development advisors working in Child Care Aware district offices
- Connecting with key community leaders to help identify potential participants.

Improving the Minnesota Center for Professional Development's Process for Ensuring the Quality of Trainers and Trainings

Key Goal

Ensure that all trainers and trainings offered to early learning professionals in the state are of high quality.

The Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD) offers an approval process for trainers and training content to ensure quality. Individuals seeking approval as trainers submit coursework, training records (including proof of training on best practices in adult learning), employment history and letters of reference. Experts review these materials to award the applicant a trainer type and level in Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool. For approved courses, the sponsoring organization must submit a description of course content, learning objectives, and description of how the trainings apply to Minnesota's 2004 Core Competencies. Develop tracks training events for approved courses.

2014 Progress

Although the Minnesota Center for Professional Development had been operating an approval process for trainers and training content since 2008, the process underwent a number of changes when Minnesota upgraded the Professional Development Registry software in 2013 and rebranded the system as Develop in 2014. As software upgrades were implemented, the Minnesota Center for Professional Development worked to revise policies and procedures around approval of trainers and trainings, and to communicate changes to key stakeholders. MNCPD also completed an analysis of how other states approve their trainers. This data will be beneficial in the coming year as Minnesota reviews and revises current policies and processes.

Coordinated work between the Minnesota Center for Professional Development and the Department of Human Services began to:

- Clarify trainer and training approval policies and procedures, and clearly communicate to key stakeholders.
- Align the trainer support process more closely with supports from the Child Care Aware of Minnesota system. These alignments will be beneficial as the MNCPD reviews and revises minimum requirements for trainers in the future.

Developing Additional Parent Aware Training Content

Key Goals:

Develop Parent Aware trainings that are comprehensive and inclusive for all who participate.

Incorporate practice and reflection into the structure of Parent Aware trainings.

Facilitate positive child outcomes related to school readiness by training high-quality early educators.

With the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, the Minnesota Department of Human Services contracted with the University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education and Development, to adapt the 54 hours of Parent Aware foundational training requirements into Spanish, Somali and Hmong. It is also developing 108 new hours of advanced trainings. With the exception of a two-hour training on the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, all trainings are series-based with a model that divides course time into content learning, reflection, and new skill practice.

2014 Progress

The Center for Early Education and Development revised four of the foundational Parent Aware trainings based on feedback from



Fifty-four hours of foundational trainings are available to child care providers seeking a Parent Aware Star Rating.

trainers, quality coaches and training participants. With these revisions, all 54 hours of foundational trainings now align with Minnesota's Universal Multiple Cultural Instructional Design framework. This makes it easier to translate training content into other languages, and reflects a philosophy of facilitated training that incorporates participant discussion.

CEED continued to work to develop the 108 hours of advanced training that will meet all Parent Aware training requirements. CEED expects to have this work completed by July 2015. Availability of the training through the Child Care Aware system will likely begin in Fall 2015.

Developing a Cadre of Trainers to Train on Assessment and Curriculum Tools

Key Goal

With support from stakeholder groups, develop a regionalized cadre of trainers to provide low-cost trainings on assessment and curriculum tools.

The Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services are working collaboratively to increase the number of trainers for multiple assessment and curriculum tools based on demand and instrument quality. A broad group of stakeholders conducted a needs assessment related to trainings on assessment tools and identified that there was little capacity to train providers on specific tools. From that, the departments worked together under the Office of Early Learning to avoid duplication and coordinate training of trainers for the most popular assessment and curriculum tools. These tools include: Teaching Strategies Gold; Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos; Creative Curriculum – Preschool Foundations; Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care; Desired Results Development Profile and the Brigance Inventory of Early Development. The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant funded this effort.

2014 Progress

The Minnesota Departments of Education and Human Services worked to convene a group of 11 training organizations as stakeholders to coordinate and implement this effort. Together, they identified the most popular curriculum and assessment tools in the state, worked to develop a set of criteria for identifying high-quality trainers, and recruited trainers to go through the training with publishers of the tools. In 2014, 41 trainers went through the training process in at least one of the six assessment and curriculum tools, for 49 total completes.

The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant helps to subsidize the cost of training these trainers. Additionally, training organizations provided more than \$75,000 in matching funds to support these trainings. All trainers agreed to submit an application to Develop, which will list them as an approved trainer. There were more than 50 training events listed in Develop from these trainers by late 2014 and early 2015.

Building Consensus Around Best Practices for Coaching

Key Goal

Bring organizations together that are either employing coaches or using coaching in their practice and programs to gain consensus on key coaching components, and the supports needed for a sustainable coaching effort across sectors.

Many of the organizations that provide professional development to the early care and education workforce have unique and individualized models for implementing coaching in their programs. However, in many cases, provider sites may be participating in two or more programs simultaneously with the same coach. This has created challenges for coaches to incorporate and consolidate information in a way that maintains fidelity of implementation to the intended model, while communicating content for teachers in an integrated way. This initiative includes engaging major professional development organizations in a process aimed at gaining consensus on a foundational coaching process, regardless of the specialized content, to reduce challenges for coaches.

2014 Progress

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Education facilitated an initial meeting with many of the professional development providers to better understand the complementary coaching processes currently in action across sectors. This included first determining how many coaching models are in the state and the outcomes expected from each. Stakeholders participating in the conversations included: Minnesota Reading Corps, the regional Centers of Excellence for Young Children with Disabilities, Minnesota Head Start Association, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Center for Inclusive Child Care, Head Start Regional Training and Technical Assistance Network, and the University of Minnesota's Center for Early Education and Development. All of the stakeholder organizations employ similar models for implementing coaching in their programs.

The Minnesota Department of Education conducted a series of eight semi-structured interviews with coaches who the stakeholder group had identified as being highly effective. These interviews helped to inform the coach's expectations for a sustainable and effective support system. This feedback from coaches will also help to inform what best practices will be included in a formalized foundational coaching process which, moving forward, will be the focus of coaching conversation groups.

Training Teachers on Implementation of Full-day Kindergarten

Key Goal

Support the implementation of full-day kindergarten with high-quality instructional practices for teachers, principals and directors of curriculum and instruction so that students can demonstrate achievement and continue their growth in formal schooling.

In the 2014-2015 school year, for the first time, public schools in Minnesota offered full-day kindergarten to all students. In its first year, more than 99 percent of kindergarten students in public schools and publicly supported charter schools are participating. To help support educators, the Minnesota Department of Education offered seminars on instructional practices and effective kindergarten learning environments for kindergarten teachers, elementary school principals and directors of curriculum and instruction. The seminars, facilitated by national experts, presented research-based practices for setting a foundation of excellence, and supporting academic success for all kindergarten students.

2014 Progress

While this was the first year that Minnesota offered full-day kindergarten universally across the state, participation exceeded expectations, with 99.6 percent of publicly enrolled kindergarten students attending full-day. The seminars in this initiative, offered by the Minnesota Department of Education, help to ensure that teachers and students are making the most of the additional classroom hours. The Department of Education hosted six seminars in 2014, including three two-hour and three full-day sessions. Approximately 450 teachers, principals and directors of curriculum and instruction from public schools and public charter schools attended. While the seminars were available to all kindergarten teachers and local education leaders statewide, recruitment efforts emphasized professionals who work with underserved populations. All seminars included lessons based on “Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches,”¹⁵ a resource document which emphasizes kindergarten as a pivot point between early education and first through third grades, and the transition that children make during that time.



National experts facilitated six seminars to prepare teachers, principals and directors for full-day kindergarten.

Building off the success of these initial seminars, the Minnesota Department of Education conducted conferences and workshops about best practices for early entrance into kindergarten

¹⁵ Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). “Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches.” Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington.

and how schools and parents can make developmentally appropriate decisions. It also conducted a survey of kindergarten teachers to better understand kindergarten teaching and learning experiences across the state, and to inform future professional development opportunities.

Training Child Care Providers on the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Key Goal

Train family child care homes and child care centers on requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that provides funding to child care centers and family child care homes that provide nutritious, balanced meals to children. The Department of Agriculture provides funding to the Minnesota Department of Education, which reimburses qualifying providers. Service providers who serve a high number of lower-income families receive a higher rate of reimbursement for providing nutritious meals. Historically, a barrier for participation has been understanding requirements to participate, and ability to provide the records and paperwork needed to submit claims for reimbursement. This initiative provides training to participating child care centers and family child care homes on requirements of the program, how to qualify, and how to correctly submit claims for reimbursement.

2014 Progress

This initiative works to train any applicable workers – from directors, food program directors, staff members and those self-employed in family child care homes – on how to meet requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program and accurately submit claims for reimbursement. Ultimately, trainings are a mechanism to increase participation and, therefore, increase the quality of care provided.

In 2013, a Child and Adult Care Food Program advisory group began working to bring together partners and stakeholders in early learning to strategize on the best ways to deliver trainings, share successful strategies for facilitating trainings, and establish common messaging. This advocacy group met monthly and continued to meet in 2014.

A recommendation identified by the advisory group was that there was a need for trainings to be available on an online platform. This was especially important for many of the smaller child care centers and family child care homes, where it is unlikely that providers are able to leave the location to attend trainings. The advisory group produced a series of webinars in 2014, including 30 training topics in 12- to 30-minute segments for programs that participate or are interested in participating. This significantly increased accessibility to trainings opportunities.

Training Teachers on Administering Kindergarten Entry Assessments

Key Goal

Be intentional about providing professional development to kindergarten teachers on tools that relate to children's entry status.

Minnesota's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant included funding to revise Minnesota's school readiness measurement tools through the Minnesota School Readiness Pilot Study (School Readiness Study 2.0). Through School Readiness Study 2.0, the Minnesota Department of Education provides support to a sample of districts, schools and kindergarten teachers. Certified trainers provide training and support to kindergarten teachers on how to administer the assessment instruments in their school. In the study, participating districts or schools select a kindergarten assessment tool from a menu of options, which includes Teaching Strategies Gold, the Desired Results Developmental Profile and the Work Sampling System. Teachers receive in-person training on their selected tool, based on publisher recommendations, administer the tool within the first eight weeks of the school year, and enter scores into the tool's online data system.

2014 Progress

Late in summer 2014, 45 kindergarten teachers began working with certified trainers to complete the recommended training programs for their selected assessment tools. These teachers were from the School Readiness Study's sample of schools that had not yet gone through training. Trainings were on three tools, including Teaching Strategies Gold, Desired Results Developmental Profile and the Work Sampling System. In addition to these three tools, this year also included a pilot of the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) tool, which may be included on the menu of assessment tools in the future. The trainings for each tool varied in length, depending on recommendations from the publisher.

Additionally, 2014 also included the option for public preschool teachers to participate in trainings on the tools. This is the first year that public preschool teachers were included, in an effort to improve recruitment and to bridge school readiness efforts between preschools and kindergarten. Moving forward, the initiative will continue recruitment and continue to require professional development for teachers using the tools. These opportunities will remain free of charge to the participating schools, as long as funding is available.

Expanding Training for Professionals who Serve Young Children with Disabilities

Key Goals:

Build and support needed skills and knowledge in professionals who serve young children with disabilities to increase the probability that these children and their families achieve positive outcomes.

Collaborate with local programs to provide needed supports throughout the state.

Through the Minnesota Centers of Excellence for Young Children with Disabilities, Early Childhood Special Education professional development facilitators work in regions throughout the state. The regional facilitators establish relationships with local early childhood program leaders and coordinate professional development for providers working with children with disabilities from birth to age 5. Professional development facilitators and programs work in three innovation areas:

- Technical Assistance Centers on Social and Emotional Intervention (social/emotional focus)
- Family-Guided Routines-Based Interventions (home visiting focus)
- Classroom Engagement Model (inclusive classroom focus).

Specific professional development content within each innovation includes evidence-informed practices, practice-based coaching, child development, and meets the intended outcomes of legislative efforts to support young children with disabilities and their families. All innovations address the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and families in Minnesota. Targeted training is arranged regionally to inform and educate providers who work with young children with disabilities and their families about the specific innovation that was selected by their program.

2014 Progress

In 2014, a self-assessment tool called INSPIRE ACTION was released to all local Early Childhood Special Education programs. Its goal was to help

those programs identify their strengths and training needs. By September 2014, all local programs throughout the state had completed the self assessment. Professional development facilitators partner with local program staff to review results and help identify professional development areas of need.



Staff at the Centers of Excellence worked with national experts to standardize training practices in their three areas of work.

Also in 2014, staff members at the Centers of Excellence worked to develop and enhance training materials. It continued to build relationships with national experts to standardize training practices

for the Family-Guided Routines-Based Interventions and the Classroom Engagement Model. National experts from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center worked with members of the Centers of Excellence to incorporate practices of child and family engagement into innovation work. These best practices are from the Division for Early Childhood, an international membership organization for professionals working with young children with disabilities and their families.

Expanding Training on Early Childhood Screening

Key Goal

Ensure that those responsible for conducting Early Childhood Screenings in Minnesota understand the purpose, state requirements, and recommended practices of screenings.

The Minnesota Departments of Education and Health together provide training to Early Childhood Screening Coordinators and screening staff on required components of Early Childhood Screening. Staff from the Minnesota Department of Health's Child and Teen Checkup program provide in-person training on hearing and vision screening for screening staff and nurses. Its website provides hearing and vision screening procedural manuals and other resources to support evidence-based and effective screening practices.

The two departments also work together to develop training content on the importance of Early Childhood Screening for service providers who serve families with young children, and for providers who are in a position to help connect families to Early Childhood Screening programs. Under the Minnesota Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant, the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services are collaborating to develop additional training strategies to support public screening programs that perform developmental and social-emotional screenings. These screening providers include local public health, health care providers, mental health providers, school districts, Head Start and Early Head Start, and child welfare.

2014 Progress

Staff from the Minnesota Departments of Education and Health co-trained two one-day trainings for Early Childhood Screening staff in August and September 2014. Staff co-trained on specific developmental and social-emotional

screening instruments for school districts and other screening programs. Staff from these departments and the Minnesota Department of Human Services continue to plan for delivery of ongoing and enhanced training activities to support public programs that perform developmental and social-emotional screenings, referral and follow-through for young children.



The Minnesota Early Childhood Comprehensive System Grant is focused, in part, on developing and coordinating training strategies to support public programs that perform developmental and social-emotional screenings.

Initiatives related to Credentials, Certificates, and Diplomas

There were five initiatives related to credentials, certificates, and diplomas in operation in 2014. Each of these efforts work to increase the numbers of practitioners who complete educational programs by either reducing barriers to education or offering education directly. The 2014 credentials, certificates, and diplomas initiatives included:

- Delivering training for the Family Service Credential
- Offering the Director's Credential online
- Revising the Minnesota Child Care Credential
- Developing the Minnesota Infant/Toddler Credential
- Promoting programs that offer credit for prior learning.

Delivering Training for the Family Service Credential

Key Goal

Provide direct service staff with a credentialed, comprehensive and credit-based training experience for their work with children and families.

The Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Network provides Minnesota Head Start grantees with intensive training and technical assistance, including that needed for Family Service Credentialing. The Family Service Credential includes knowledge, skills and actions for staff working with diverse families. The network uses the Portage Project Family Service Credential to support direct service staff through a comprehensive, credit-based training, with research-based best practices from early childhood education, human services and social work. The Family Service Credential includes a training of trainers component intended for individuals who will implement the credential in their local agencies.

2014 Progress

The Family Service Credential training process begins with review and analysis of family service staff training requests coming into the Minnesota Head Start Training and Technical Assistance



Thirty-four Minnesota Head Start family service workers successfully completed the Family Service Credential training in 2014.

Network, the Minnesota Head Start Association, and the Minnesota Head Start Collaboration Office from Head Start agencies. Requests consist of relationship-based competencies for staff and supervisors who work with families, as well as their accompanying knowledge, skills and actions. Some Head Start agencies require new employees to complete the credential, and others self-select depending on professional development needs and plans.

Trainings begin when a large enough group requests the Family Service Credential. In 2014, 34 family service workers participated in the three-day training. Numerous individuals went on to complete the Family Service Credential training of trainers and are now able to build capacity and infrastructure within their agencies.

Offering the Director's Credential Online

Key Goal

Advance the careers of directors, family child care providers, assistant directors and teachers through professional education on providing high quality care to children and families using center-based programs.

Eager to Learn has collaborated with the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC) to deliver the Director's Credential learning community as an online, cohort-based program for child care center directors and assistant directors. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) co-sponsors the Director's Credential, which meets director training requirements for NAEYC accreditation. Eager to Learn offers the coursework, including 144 course hours over 11 months centered on supervision, management and administration, and a practicum project. MnAEYC awards the final credential. Child care centers with a director that has achieved the Director's Credential earn an extra point towards a Parent Aware rating.

2014 Progress

Previously, requirements for eligibility to go through the Director's Credential program changed to allow for anybody preparing for a leadership role, rather than just

directors. The program made this change because, often, leadership recognizes high-quality teachers as being highly capable for director positions, but they may not have backgrounds in supervision, management or administration. With the more open admission requirements, the 2014 cohort included a cross-disciplinary group of providers, school-age care directors, instructors and infant/toddler directors. In November 2014, a cohort of 17 students completed the credential, up by more than half from the 11 that completed the program in 2013.



In 2014, 17 directors and assistant directors received the credential.

Revising the Minnesota Child Care Credential

Key Goal

Increase the number of Minnesota early educators achieving the national Child Development Associate.

The Minnesota Child Care Credential began in 2011. Funded by the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, it started undergoing revisions in 2012, based on participant feedback, with revisions completed in early 2014. The Minnesota Department of Human Services provides partial reimbursement for the costs of completing the Minnesota Child Care Credential, which includes 120 hours of training. All training hours are eligible to be used toward completion of a Child Development Associate credential.

2014 Progress

Based on participant and trainer feedback on the initial credential training, revisions were finalized in 2014. These revisions included:

- Revision of courses to incorporate content that meets all Parent Aware training requirements
- Revision of all courses to incorporate Minnesota's Universal Multiple Cultural Design Framework principles
- Reordering courses and assignments to align with training and portfolio requirements of the national Child Development Associate
- Revision of the schedule of delivery to shorten the time to complete the credential from two years to 14 months.



Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funding went towards improving the Minnesota Child Care Credential process to reduce barriers, and increase the number of participants.

Nine cohorts began statewide in 2014, including two in Spanish, one in Somali, two online through Eager to Learn, and an additional four face-to-face cohorts. Overall, this includes 82 family child care programs and 39 center-based programs, totaling 121 programs served.

Development of the Minnesota Infant/Toddler Credential

Key Goal

Increase the number of providers achieving the Level One Infant/Toddler Mental Health Endorsement by creating a new cross-sector infant/toddler credential.

When completed, the Minnesota Infant/Toddler Credential will be a new credential that includes 30 hours of training. It will meet all requirements for level one of the Minnesota Infant/Toddler Mental Health Endorsement Program, and some training indicators in Parent Aware.

2014 Progress

In 2014, the Minnesota Infant/Toddler Credential entered the final stages of development, with face-to-face content being converted to online courses. Through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the Center for Early Education and Development, University of Minnesota, developed content of the credential, focusing on cross-sector relevance. This credential will likely benefit individuals providing services to young children and their families in the areas of child care, other early care and education settings, foster care, home visitors and child welfare. The credential should be finalized and available in Fall 2015.

Promoting Programs that Offer Credit for Prior Learning

Key Goal

Encourage and accelerate placement in higher education so that early childhood professionals can earn credentials needed for career advancement in less time.

Minnesota currently has multiple pathways for early child care providers and professionals to gain training, including formal education, non-credit courses and experiential learning. To encourage professionals to pursue higher education opportunities, ease the transition into these institutions, and accelerate the process, some offer credit for previous experience and training. The Minnesota Center for Professional Development, through its grant contract with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, works to promote programs that offer credit for prior learning, and offers information about these programs on its website. Institutes of higher education direct individual policies for awarding credit for prior learning. The center does not directly award credit, or offer direct advising for credit for prior learning.

2014 Progress

While the number of people gaining credit for prior or experiential learning is not formally tracked, an indirect indicator is in the number of professionals obtaining the Child Development Associate. In 2014, 357 professionals received the credential, which is up slightly from the 351 that received it in 2013, and by nearly one-third from 2012, according to the Council for Professional Recognition.

Initiatives Related to Scholarships and Financial Supports

Four initiatives provided financial supports in 2014 for early educators to make professional development more affordable. Offering financial supports and scholarships helps to reduce barriers to professional development, and incentivizes providers to pursue Career Lattice advancement opportunities. Initiatives with these overall goals included:

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA scholarships for higher education
- Supports for pursuing a Child Development Associate
- Reimbursement of fees for individuals completing the Minnesota Child Care Credential
- Retention bonuses through Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now (R.E.E.T.A.I.N.)

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] MINNESOTA scholarships for higher education

Key Goals

Increase the education, sense of professionalism and, ultimately, compensation of the early care and education field.

Increase the commitment of professionals in the field and reduce employee turnover.

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) is a nationally trademarked program based in North Carolina. The Minnesota Department of Human Services funds T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] MINNESOTA to provide scholarships for child care and education professionals seeking their associate's or bachelor's degree, or a Director's Credential, for early childhood education or child development. Funding from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant supported work to redesign funding to broaden prospects and ensure that funding more closely supports individuals working in Parent Aware-participating programs.

2014 Progress

Many of the changes developed in 2013 to make the program more accessible and locally tailored went into effect in 2014. With these changes, the number of applicants increased by



T.E.A.C.H. awarded 82 scholarships in 2014, with 47 percent awarded to family child care providers and 53 percent to center program staff.

one-third, and scholarships awarded increased by 29 percent over the previous year. The number of scholarships designed specifically for high school seniors increased by 55 percent. Overall, 2014 saw improved marketing efforts to reach more diverse populations and new audiences. This included adding scholarships for administrators and trainers, which was new in 2014. Federal Child Care Development Funds and Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funds supported provision of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.

Supports for pursuing a Child Development Associate Credential

Key Goal

Increase the number of early care and education providers in Minnesota who have achieved the Child Development Associate Credential by providing scholarships.

This initiative provides scholarships to help early childhood educators understand the process and receive the Child Development Associate, a credential awarded by the national Center for Professional Recognition. With federal Child Care Development Fund and Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Care Aware provides scholarships to cover the cost of trainings and assessment or renewal fees.

2014 Progress

In 2014, early educators received 130 assessment fee scholarships, 36 training scholarships, and five renewal fee scholarships through the program. As with previous program years, 2014 again saw high



In 2014, early educators received 130 assessment fee scholarships, 36 training scholarships and five renewal fee scholarships.

levels of participation from communities of color in the scholarship programs. Roughly 39 percent of scholarship applicants were from communities of color (while 61 percent were from Caucasian applicants). Recruitment efforts to increase the number of rural applicants were successful, also. Awardees from greater Minnesota increased from one-quarter in 2013 to more than one-third in 2014.

Minnesota Child Care Credential Supports

Key Goal

Encourage participation in the Minnesota Child Care Credential program, which ultimately leads to more professionals receiving the Child Development Associate credential.

Minnesota Department of Human Services funding through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant and the federal Child Care Development Fund subsidized the cost of the Minnesota Child Care Credential program. Local Child Care Aware agencies receive funding directly so that the credential training is available at one-quarter of the cost that it would be without the subsidy. This incentivizes professionals to register and enroll in the training.

2014 Progress

Nine cohorts began the Minnesota Child Care Credential in 2014. These included two in Spanish, one in Somali, two online through Eager to Learn, and four face-to-face. Overall, participants represented 82 family child care programs and 39 center-based programs, totaling 121 served.

Participation increased significantly since 2013, when the Minnesota Child Care Credential changed to meet all Parent Aware training indicators. However, enrollment numbers remained below projected targets. This was likely because of two factors:

- Participants that are employed in Parent Aware-participating programs prefer to finish all requirements as soon as possible; although the timeline for completion of the Minnesota Child Care Credential has been shortened, it still takes 14 months to complete
- Child Care Aware professional development advisors (who are responsible for assisting lead teaching staff in Parent Aware-participating programs to identify which training requirements they have already met, and what they still need to take to meet Star levels) have heavier workloads with less time to engage in Minnesota Child Care Credential recruitment efforts.

Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now (R.E.E.T.A.I.N.)

Key Goal

Retain well-trained, educated and experienced practitioners in the field to ensure that children receive the best possible care.

The Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now (R.E.E.T.A.I.N.) program provides a competitive bonus system designed to incentivize well-trained child care professionals to continue offering consistent care to the same group of children over time. To be eligible, applicants must:

- Have a degree, Child Development Associate credential, or have completed the Minnesota Child Care Credential
- Be working in the field for at least one year
- Be engaged in ongoing professional development
- Not receive a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus the previous year.

Minnesota Department of Human Services funding supports R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses through the federal Child Care Development Fund. The Child Care Aware of Minnesota Coordinating Office administers these incentives.

2014 Progress

R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses are more competitive than those offered by other initiatives in the scholarships and financial supports topic area. After receiving 234 applications, the program awarded 144 bonuses in 2014, totaling \$300,000. This was an increase from 2013, when the program awarded 89 bonuses for \$200,000. Because of how competitive the program had become, efforts in 2014 continued to specify eligibility criteria to support the goals of T.E.A.C.H. and the Child Development Associate Credential. New in 2014, bonus recipients must have membership in Develop to determine their position on the Career Lattice.



The R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program provided 144 bonuses, totaling \$300,000, in 2014.

Initiatives Related to Relationship Based Professional Development

Fourteen initiatives under the Relationship Based Professional Development topic area were in effect in 2014. Relationship Based Professional Development is the term given to activities related to coaching, consultation or mentoring to early educators or practitioners. In 2014, these initiatives included:

- Using the Practice-Based Coaching framework to improve the school readiness practices of Head Start teachers
- Growing the capacity of Minnesota's early childhood mental health network
- Utilizing child care health consultants to support health and safety in child care settings
- Facilitating a user group to support Head Start staff in analyzing and using assessment data
- Providing additional training to Head Start home visitors who coach parents on child sickness and injury
- Partnering across agencies to support literacy coaching for family child care providers
- Using a multi-tiered coaching model to support literacy tutoring
- Providing mentoring to family child care providers pursuing national accreditation
- Providing consultation to child care centers pursuing national accreditation
- Supporting new CLASS coaches with mentoring
- Improving the quality coaching model utilized in Parent Aware
- Establishing standards for approving and recognizing Relationship Based Professional Development
- Supporting the work of professional development advisors
- Developing a coordinated referral process for connecting child care providers with inclusion coaches.

Using the Practice-Based Coaching Framework to Improve the School Readiness Practices of Head Start Teachers

Key Goal

Improve early childhood education teachers' use of evidence-based interactional and teaching practices in ways that support progress toward school readiness.

In Minnesota, the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Network provides Head Start grantees with intensive training and technical assistance services through a collection of early childhood school readiness services. It is the Network's role to identify, document and support the professional development needs of Minnesota Head Start grantees, and to provide those services within guidelines of the Office of Head Start, in collaboration with other Minnesota early childhood education entities. Head Start adopted the Practice-Based Coaching framework as one form of evidence-based professional development designed to support teachers as they implement effective interactional teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. Practice-Based Coaching supports effective teaching practices and informed decision making, focusing on three areas:

- Shared goals and action planning
- Focused observation
- Reflection and feedback.

2014 Progress

To advance their goals for supporting Head Start grantees, the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Network developed the Practice-Based Coaching Leadership Academies. The design and purpose of the academies is to support systemic decisions about professional development and coaching, inclusive of policies, preparation and processes as a team. The academies are comprised of two parts:

- Two-and-a-half days of workshops where coaching experts guide teams in planning for implementation and evaluation of Practice-Based Coaching in their programs.
- A two-day workshop specifically designed to support coaches, with a Teachers Learning and Collaborating component designed to support facilitators of group coaching models.

In 2014, 21 Head Start programs began work in this framework. Four programs completed academies and nine will be completing academies in March and April 2015.



Four programs completed the Practice-Based Coaching Academies in 2014. Nine will be completing academies in March and April 2015.

Growing the Capacity of Minnesota's Early Childhood Mental Health Network

Key Goals

Develop an infrastructure of early childhood mental health professionals and improve provider capacity with state-sponsored trainings.

Increase the assessment and treatment of young children with mental health needs, and access to mental health services for uninsured children.

Improve clinical and functional outcomes of young children through mental health services.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Children's Mental Health Division, has contracted with 20 mental health agencies across the state, and national experts, to build a statewide system for evidence-based early childhood mental health. A network of mental health professionals provides treatment and assessment for children between birth and age 4 who are uninsured or underinsured. Professionals provide services in the child's home, mental health clinics, primary care offices, child care sites and schools.

2014 Progress

The Children's Mental Health Division issued grants for agencies to increase the capacity of Minnesota's early childhood mental health network. The division and the Minnesota Department of Health identified more than 350 clinicians who are competent to provide mental health diagnostic assessments for children under age 5. The division has also trained more than 200 clinicians in evidence-based early childhood mental health therapies. These services are available in 83 of Minnesota's 87 counties and two tribes. Since 2004, more than 1,500 mental health professionals have gone through state-sponsored trainings to use appropriate diagnostic processes for children. However, since consultation is not currently a billable service by medical professionals, there are limited funding streams to support offering it.

In 2013-2014, 20 child welfare professionals from five metro counties completed work in an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health curriculum pilot. The pilot was a collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Safety and Permanency Division, and the University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. Through this initiative, child welfare professionals developed expertise in infant and early childhood development and learned how to use this knowledge to improve child and family outcomes in child welfare.

The University of Minnesota also offers a post-baccalaureate Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Certificate program for a variety of professionals and students looking to develop the skills necessary to support the social and emotional development of young children ages birth to 5. Thus far, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Children's Mental Health Division, has financially supported more than 50 licensed clinicians in attending the certificate program.

Utilizing Child Care Health Consultants to Support Health and Safety in Child Care Settings

Key Goal

Promote high quality child care in the areas of health and safety through provision of health and safety consultation, technical assistance and training to early educators.

The Minnesota Department of Health sponsors a program, funded by Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, to provide grants to child care health consultants in the four Race to the Top Transformation Zones. The grantee consultants offer health and safety assessments and recommendations, trainings, assistance coordinating individual health and emergency plans for children with special needs, and referrals to additional resources. The consultants receive training using a curriculum from the National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants. In Minnesota, licensed child care centers are required to seek child care health consultation from a registered nurse, public health nurse or licensed physician. This initiative also works to provide health consultation services for family child care providers, for whom it is not required.

2014 Progress

The child care health consultants in the Transformation Zones reached out in 2014 to establish working relationships, communicate available services, and identify specific needs related to child health and safety with early learning networks, licensors, quality coaches, and individual providers in their zones. The consultants worked on education, which included training child care staff, parents and children on topics such as food safety, car seat safety, emergency preparedness, health care planning for children with specific health conditions, immunization requirements, and pool and lake safety, among others. This initiative engaged families with information and resources in child care settings, and included safety guides to family child care providers in licensing newsletters.

Child care health consultants also provided technical assistance to child care providers and quality coaches, and answered questions related to child health and safety. Consultants in the Transformation Zones documented 839 points of contact with child care providers, including 69 on-site visits with Parent Aware-participating providers, 295 telephone calls, and 475 emails. The consultant in White Earth conducted health and safety assessments with 88 percent of center-based and family child care providers in that Transformation Zone. Using the results, each provider worked collaboratively with their consultant to identify goals to build health and safety quality in their program. This work is funded through 2015.

Facilitating a User Group to Support Head Start Staff in Analyzing and Using Assessment Data

Key Goals

Support the authentic assessment process as a high-quality data collection activity in classrooms as an integral part of instructional planning and individualization.

Support using data in decision making and encourage data analysis and interpretation to inform classroom instruction and individualization.

Explore evidence-based approaches to inform and strengthen classroom practice.

The Minnesota Head Start Association has facilitated a Quality Assessment User Group since 2006. This group functions as a learning community for education coordinators at Head Start programs to collaborate on how best to analyze student data to understand student progress and inform the educational needs of students. Education coordinators use this information to work with teachers and develop strategies to serve student development. The group meets three times per year; after the Child Development Assessment monitoring check-points at the start, mid-point and end of the school year. This user group supports the use of other quality assessment tools, such as CLASS, and provides networking and education on related topics for education coordinators and Head Start coaches.

2014 Progress

The user group continued the strategy of meeting three times per year in 2014, following the Child Development Assessment monitoring checkpoints. Including the programs that participated in 2014, since its start in 2006, more than three-quarters of all Minnesota Head Start programs have participated in the Quality Assessment User Group. Participants learn how to analyze assessment data and make use of it to implement specific strategies, depending on child indicators for kindergarten readiness. A report released in 2014 from the 2012-2013 school year indicated that of the 3,062 4-year-olds from 19 participating Head Start programs, 88 percent met the developmental targets for kindergarten after exiting the program. The group has also been instrumental in improving the overall consistency and reliability of quality assessment data. Because of this, Head Start can confidently aggregate data across programs and use it to inform policy decisions.

While the Quality Assessment User Group is currently facilitated by the Minnesota Head Start Association and only available to Head Start programs, because of its success and proven outcomes for school readiness, the Minnesota Department of Education is working to replicate the process to be available to all early childhood programs.

Providing Additional Training to Head Start Home Visitors who Coach Parents on Child Sickiness and Injury

Key Goal

Reduce non-urgent emergency room visits for young children from birth to age 5 by educating parents and families about child sickness and injury.

In this initiative, the Minnesota Head Start Association trains Head Start home visiting staff to engage and educate families about child sickness and injury. Visiting staff use the book *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* as a resource for families to look up child sickness and what to do when faced with certain illnesses and injuries. When families have more information about the severity of illnesses and injuries, they are less likely to bring children to the emergency room for non-urgent reasons. Ultimately, this reduces health care costs. Families receive their own copy of the book to use as a resource. The book is available in multiple languages and uses language that is accessible for low-literacy populations.

2014 Progress

In 2014, the Minnesota Head Start Association completed a review of program data from April 1, 2013, to Mar. 31, 2014, (the latest date that information was available). The review looked at medical records for 684 children age birth to 5 from families who had gone through the health literacy intervention, and a comparison group of children in the same counties. The evaluation found that non-urgent visits to the emergency room were 13 percent lower in the intervention group than the comparison group. This was especially prominent in the Twin Cities metro area, where some counties saw as much as a 30 percent reduction.

During that same period, 726 families completed pre- and post-intervention surveys. The surveys found that after the intervention, 82 percent of participants reported referring to *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* at least once in the previous month, with 43 percent using it at least three times. Additionally, there was an 8 percent decrease (on the three-month follow-up survey) in families who reported always or sometimes going immediately to a doctor or emergency room when their child is sick.

The Minnesota Head Start Association will be continuing this project in the future. It will continue to train Head Start home visiting staff to engage families and purchase copies of the book for families to use at home.

Partnering Across Agencies to Support Literacy Coaching for Family Child Care Providers

Key Goals

Positively impact early literacy development of children in family child care settings in the Minneapolis Northside Achievement Zone and St. Paul Promise Neighborhood.

Encourage family child care providers to seek ongoing professional development and quality improvement.

The Minnesota Reading Corps and Think Small are piloting an effort to promote literacy in young children in family child care homes in the Minneapolis Northside Achievement Zone and the St. Paul Promise Neighborhood. Eligible providers must be licensed and in operation for a minimum of three years. In two-hour sessions, two or three days per week, Reading Corps literacy tutors implement early learning literacy curriculum with children. Reading Corps members actively engage and consult with the family child care providers while they are working with children so that providers can continue literacy activities outside of tutoring sessions. Each Reading Corps member and family child care provider pair is matched with a coach from Think Small to help facilitate the relationship between provider and tutor.

2014 Progress

The Minnesota Reading Corps worked with 13 family child care providers in and near the St. Paul Promise Neighborhood and the Minneapolis Northside Achievement Zone in 2014. This included seven providers in St. Paul and six in Minneapolis, which together serve 66 children. Five family child care providers returned from 2013 for a second year of the program. These five providers received visits from Reading Corps members two or three times per week, and bi-weekly coaching from an internal coach at Think Small. They attended three trainings on lesson plans, data review, and environment tours, totaling 6.5 hours. The remaining eight providers, all new in 2014, received member visits three times per week, and bi-weekly coaching at ServeMinnesota. They attended nine training sessions, totaling 23 hours, in the new SEEDS to Sprouts of Emerging Literacy program, which apply to the Career Lattice, and a 2.5-hour environmental tour.

To support providers in the 2014 cohort, the Minnesota Reading Corps increased its capacity from one member to four. It approved Parent Aware lesson plans to use during ongoing coaching with all members. The Minnesota Reading Corps also increased family engagement efforts, allowing members and coaches to share data, student portfolios and discuss the program with families.

Using a Multi-tiered Coaching Model to Support Literacy Tutoring

Key Goals

Build internal capability and capacity within organizations for using data to inform instruction.

Implement evidence-based interventions with fidelity to increase school readiness in children.

The Minnesota Reading Corps coaching model uses a multi-tiered coaching model to support organizations to use data to inform instruction, use evidence-based interventions, and implement programs with fidelity. Through this model, site-specific internal coaches monitor, train and provide guidance on implementing assessments and interventions to Reading Corps tutors in programs serving children from age 3 to third grade. The internal coaches, who are generally teachers, curriculum directors or literacy specialists, serve as mentors for the Minnesota Reading Corps tutors during their service year. A cohort of external, master coaches provide training and support to internal coaches by working side-by-side, performing classroom and coaching session observations, and using a fidelity checklist to facilitate conversations and learning. Three times throughout the school year, master coaches facilitate meetings with internal coaches to review classroom data used to inform instruction.

2014 Progress

The Minnesota Reading Corps includes two programs: Those from age 3 to pre-kindergarten (PreK) and kindergarten through third grade (K-3). During the 2013-2014 school year, nearly 600 internal coaches and more than 50 master coaches provided support to the 1,100 program tutors.

Child indicator data collected throughout the 2013-2014 school year informed an end-of-year report, which documented the progress of Reading Corps students. In the PreK program, 4-year-old students meeting or approaching the kindergarten entry targets improved by between 22 and 55 percent of all students across the five measurement areas. With K-3, more than 45 percent of all students across all four grade levels progressed to meet or exceed the expected grade-level skill improvements. This was especially prevalent in kindergarteners, where more than 60 percent of Reading Corps students met or exceeded desired skill development.

Providing Mentoring to Family Child Care Providers Pursuing National Accreditation

Key Goal

Support licensed family child care providers to improve quality of programming to meet the Parent Aware standards and become accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care.

The Minnesota Licensed Family Child Care Association (MLFCCA), supported by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, contracts with experienced family child care providers to deliver one-on-one mentor support to other family child care providers. Providers eligible to receive mentor support are licensed family child care providers who provide child care for at least one at-risk child. MLFCCA mentors guide the improvement of program quality, and support providers making steps towards achieving accreditation. Services are offered in three tiers:

- Tier 1. Free technical support to any family child care provider with questions about accreditation and/or Parent Aware
- Tier 2. Free initial assessments, in which a trained MLFCCA mentor works with licensed family child care providers to evaluate the steps needed to reach accreditation
- Tier 3. Full support services (available to only a small number of providers), including one-on-one work with providers over several months to plan and implement improvements to meet Parent Aware indicators and National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation standards.

Providers are required to purchase a self-study guide and pay an accreditation application fee. At milestones within the process and after they become accredited, their fees are reimbursed in full.

2014 Progress

Funding for this initiative comes in two-year grant cycles, which end in June. The cycle that ended in June 2014 included 22 initial assessments and 14 accreditations were in process with tier three mentor support. Seven trained MLFCCA mentors delivered all initial assessments and worked one-on-one with licensed family child care providers working toward accreditation. These mentors often bring new candidates to the project through their encouragement and recognized leadership in the family child care community. The diversity of the pool of candidates working toward national accreditation increased in 2014, with the addition of three Latina provider candidates.



Mentors conducted 22 initial assessments and providers achieved 14 NAFCC accreditations in 2014, with seven more providers in progress toward accreditation.

Providing Consultation to Child Care Centers Pursuing National Accreditation

Key Goal

Facilitate the national accreditation of 325 child care centers in the nine-county Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC) received funding from the Greater Twin Cities United Way to operate the Child Care Accreditation Facilitation Project consultants. MnAEYC works to provide services such as coaching, consultation and program improvement resources to child care centers seeking national accreditation in the greater nine-county Twin Cities region. Child care centers receive supports to set goals, work on quality indicators, and document quality practices to achieve national accreditation.

2014 Progress

MnAEYC continued recruiting and supporting centers in 2014. By the end of 2014, 324 recruited programs remained active in the project, serving an estimated 23,844 children, with the capacity to expand to 27,773. By the end of December, 227 of the 324 recruited programs (70 percent) received national accreditation, with 125 of those were also rated by Parent Aware. Additionally, 62 programs committed to going through the Parent Aware rating process.

Table 2. Distribution of child care centers receiving accreditation facilitation services by county

County	Programs
Anoka	31
Carver	20
Dakota	41
Hennepin	137
Isanti	3
Ramsey	64
Scott	13
Washington	15

In 2014, MnAEYC consultants provided roughly 1,235 on-site consultations, totaling 3,203 hours. In between on-site consultation sessions, emails and phone calls were exchanged between child care programs and project consultants. Program staff participated in training sessions on topics related to standards, and attended monthly cohort meetings to help share information and network with other programs. In 2014, participants received roughly 558 training hours.

Supporting new CLASS Coaches with Mentoring

Key Goal

Strengthen the skill level of all CLASS coaches working with Parent Aware participating programs through mentorship with Head Start CLASS coaches.

Child Care Aware of Minnesota and local Head Start organizations are collaborating to implement a mentorship program. Head Start CLASS coaches mentor Parent Aware CLASS coaches monthly for professional growth and capacity-building. Pairs of mentors and mentees work together to establish a set of core agreements for how their mentorship will progress. In most cases, the mentors and mentees are not working in the same organization so they discuss logistics around their meetings, and how the mentee will get experience with the CLASS tool. Commonly, mentors agree to have the mentee visit a Head Start setting and practice using the tool. This helps prepare the mentee for their annual re-reliability test in using the CLASS tool.

2014 Progress

The Child Care Aware Coordinating Office continued to contract with the Center for Early Education and Development, University of Minnesota, to implement the mentoring program. Child Care Aware of Minnesota also contracted with local Head Start organizations to identify one of their CLASS coaches to participate in the program. The Center for Early Education and Development offered support and technical assistance to the Head Start CLASS coaches about best practices in mentoring relationships. In 2014, 18 Child Care Aware of Minnesota CLASS coaches and 13 Head Start CLASS coaches participated in the program.

Improving the Quality Coaching Model Utilized in Parent Aware

Key Goals

Provide intentional coaching designed to refine a child care program's interactions with children and prepare them for kindergarten.

Provide technical support to child care programs documenting their practices in order to earn a Parent Aware Star Rating.

Determine steps to improve upon providers' current Parent Aware ratings prior to a re-rating.

Parent Aware quality coaches use the "Parent Aware Implementation Manual" to provide approximately:

- Twenty to 30 hours of coaching on Building Quality for programs that are getting ready to enter Parent Aware
- Two to 15 hours of technical assistance to programs preparing to submit documentation for a Parent Aware Rating
- Three to five hours of Technical Assistance for programs that receive a One, Two, or Three Star Rating.

Child care centers applying for a Three or Four Star Rating can receive up to 30 hours of CLASS coaching. Coaching is mainly face-to-face and one-on-one with program staff, with a few exceptions where group work is preferred.

2014 Progress

Between July and December 2014, Parent Aware quality coaches documented more than 4,700 Relationship Based Professional Development events in Develop. Many of these event hours can be used by individuals to advance to a higher step on the Career Lattice.

Parent Aware quality coaches expressed concerns to the Child Care Aware of Minnesota Coordinating Office and the Minnesota Department of Human Services about how to respond to health and safety issues that arise during their coaching session but may be outside the scope of their work with the provider. In response, the Minnesota Department of Human Services explored how similar programs address these issues, then wrote and vetted policy with key stakeholders. The new policy now provides coaches flexibility in addressing issues that present as teachable moments, consulting with Licensing when necessary, and acting as a mandated reporters when needed.

The Child Care Aware of Minnesota Coordinating Office and the Minnesota Department of Human Services began to address concerns expressed by Parent Aware quality coaches about caseloads being too high to serve early childhood providers effectively.

Establishing Standards for Approving and Recognizing Relationship Based Professional Development

Key Goals

Track Relationship Based Professional Development activities in Develop.

Allow practitioners to use approved Relationship Based Professional Development activities towards movement on the Career Lattice, Parent Aware and meeting certain licensing requirements.

Relationship Based Professional Development services include coaching, consulting, advising and mentoring. Work in this initiative includes creating approval standards in Develop for specialists who offer these services. Relationship Based Professional Development events entered into Develop count as clock hours for professionals similar to an in-person course.

2014 Progress

Work in 2014 included launching two endorsement areas in Develop that coaches can apply for: Parent Aware Quality Coach and CLASS Coach. By the end of 2014, there were 85 Relationship Based Professional Development Specialists approved in Develop with one of the two endorsements. Between July and December 2014, there were 4,741 Relationship Based Professional Development events entered into Develop. Many of these hours can be used to move a provider up the Career Lattice.

Supporting the Work of Professional Development Advisors

Key Goals

Assist individuals working in child care programs in cataloging past trainings, identifying key areas for growth, and setting individualized professional development goals, especially related to meeting Parent Aware training indicators.

Two sources fund the professional development advisors in local Child Care Aware organizations:

- The Minnesota Department of Human Services' Federal Child Care Development Fund
- Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant funding to support Parent Aware implementation.

Professional development advising helps child care professionals access professional development opportunities and document their progress. Professional development advisors work with lead teaching staff employed in Parent Aware-participating programs to identify past trainings that meet Parent Aware training indicators, and the trainings needed to reach specific Star levels.

2014 Progress

Because of the large number of Parent Aware program participants needing help finding trainings that meet Parent Aware indicator requirements, the majority of Child Care Aware professional development advisors assisted participants over the phone. The advisors also assisted Parent Aware program participants to provide proof of training completion to Parent Aware raters.

Professional development advisors were involved, to a lesser extent, in recruiting child care providers for the Minnesota Child Care Credential. They also supported credential participants in completing the credential coursework and applying for the national Child Development Associate credential.

Developing a Coordinated Referral Process for Connecting Child Care Providers with Inclusion Coaches

Key Goals

- Increase the use of inclusion practices for children with special needs.
 - Develop skilled and knowledgeable providers serving children with special needs.
 - Increase the number of programs serving children with special needs.
 - Reduce de-enrollment for child care centers of children with special needs.
-

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has contracted with the Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC) to offer two services to Parent Aware-participating programs serving children with special needs: Inclusion coaching, which involves relationship-based supports for up to 30 hours at the child care setting; and consultation services for including children with special needs into child care program communities. This initiative helps to ensure that children with special needs are receiving high quality, appropriate care from skilled and knowledgeable providers and is funded with Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant and federal Child Care Development Fund funding.



In 2014, 495 early care and education providers received on-site consultation for 161 children, totaling more than 670 hours; 95 percent of these children remained enrolled in their programs.

2014 Progress

In 2014, the CICC continued working to educate Parent Aware quality coaches with webinars explaining the services and CICC coaching model. CICC provided technical assistance to quality coaches on how to communicate effectively with providers about CICC services, and how to assist providers to make referrals for children suspected of having developmental delays, to meet federal mandates on early referrals.

Additionally in 2014, the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services worked together to develop an implementation plan for a coordinated referral process among the three departments. The primary goal is to keep children enrolled in care and education programs, rather than re-enrolling them into different programs.

CICC provided additional training and technical assistance to both child care providers and families of children with special needs. In 2014, Child Care Aware of Minnesota offered 47 CICC training events for child care providers, with 800 individuals attending.

Initiatives Related to Technology and Data Systems

Four initiatives in 2014 worked to help providers gain access to technological tools for planning and tracking professional development. Several of these initiatives are related to the launch of Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool. Develop provides individual members and their employers with a record of the education and training that practitioners have completed, and provides a searchable database of professional development opportunities. Members of Develop submit information about their degrees, credentials, trainings and experience. Staff of the Minnesota Center for Professional Development verify these accomplishments and assign practitioners a step on the Career Lattice. The initiatives related to building, enhancing and supporting technology and data systems in 2014 included:

- Rebranding the Professional Development Registry as Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool
- Including training events offered by school districts, charter schools, and Head Start programs in Develop
- Developing an online version of the Individual Training Needs Assessment
- Launching a Web-based tool for career guidance.

Increase Access to Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool

Key Goal

Build a free online toolbox for the early learning and school-age care community that offers an array of tools to support quality improvement and professional development:

Under this initiative, with funding from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant and other sources, a new, updated system that expanded the professional development features and added new features to support Parent Aware replaced the Minnesota Professional Development Registry. This new multi-purpose toolbox, re-branded as Develop, is available at www.developtoolmn.org. The one-stop-shop approach works to bridge the divide between professional development and quality improvement so that programs and professionals can access a variety of tools with a single login, and state-run initiatives can operate more efficiently by sharing data and aligning policies and procedures. For example, Parent Aware Ratings for child care programs depend, in part, on the Career Lattice levels and Learning Records of program staff. Rather than asking teaching staff to print and submit copies of their Learning Record, Parent Aware raters are able to pull up-to-date Learning Records for staff directly from Develop.

2014 Progress

In early 2014, Parent Aware features and ratings data merged with Develop. By March 2014, Parent Aware raters began using Develop to process new ratings. In May 2014, early learning programs began using Develop to apply for Parent Aware, submit documentation, and track progress toward earning a rating.



Develop is being used by more than 4,500 early learning professionals and 1,500 early learning programs to support engagement in a variety of cross-sector professional development and quality improvement initiatives.

In February 2014, professional development service coordinators working in the Child Care Aware system gained access to features and reports in Develop that will help them to more efficiently plan and implement training opportunities across the state.

In July 2014, all Parent Aware quality coaches gained access to Develop to monitor progress of the programs they serve in Parent Aware, and track the coaching and technical assistance they provide to programs. From July 1 to December 31, 2014 quality coaches documented 2,953 Relationship Based Professional Development events, totaling 4,741 hours of coaching or technical assistance.

The result of this effort is that staff in Parent Aware participating programs who attended these coaching sessions received professional credit for the time spent with their quality coach.

Also in July 2014, professional development advisors working in the Child Care Aware system were granted access to features in Develop that allow them to review Learning Records of staff in Parent Aware participating programs, thus allowing them to provide more efficient advising services.

In August 2014, all Head Start grantees and school districts received access to an expedited training approval process that allows them to:

- Bypass the standard course content review process conducted by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development
- Use trainers that are not approved by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development.

This policy acknowledges the requirements for training rigor imposed by other governing bodies on Head Start grantees and school districts. Now, it is easier for grantees and districts to enter training in Develop, which makes it easier for child care providers to take advantage of training occurring in their local community.

Including Training Offered by School Districts, Charter Schools and Head Start Programs in Develop

Key Goal

Create pathways for Develop to be inclusive of all early childhood care and education programs.

While Develop, and the Professional Development Registry that preceded it, has historically been seen as a tool for child care programs to track, record and share trainings and training materials, a larger goal is to have it be more inclusive of trainings and professionals in all early care and education sites. This initiative is working towards creating inter-agency coordination and reducing barriers to ultimately increase participation in Develop by all programs. Initially, the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Center for Professional Development created a pilot for interested Head Start programs to facilitate participation in Develop. Since then, efforts have expanded to include charter schools, school districts and additional Head Start programs. Having more programs entering training into Develop creates a platform for increased cross-sector participation in trainings, and opportunities for networking and relationship building.

2014 Progress

In early 2014, the original pilot to facilitate participation of Head Start programs was completed, and the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Center for Professional Development facilitated a debrief with the Minnesota Department of Education about what went well and the lessons learned through the pilot.

In July 2014, the Minnesota Department of Education began meeting regularly with partners at the Center for Early Education and Development about creating guidance and establishing expectations about engaging Head Starts, school districts and charter schools moving forward. While a series of job changes and transitions within collaborating organizations slowed momentum on recruitment and outreach to early care and education programs and delayed implementation, work in 2014 developed a shared, cross-agency understanding of the importance of having high-quality trainings available to all program types. With future recruitment efforts, participating programs will receive strong customer service and support, and clear guidance on how Develop and existing training infrastructure can align.

Developing an Online Version of the Individual Training Needs Assessment

Key Goal

Facilitate informed career planning and development to early educators.

The Individual Training Needs Assessment is a survey tool for providers to use to inventory the experiences they have and their comfort with each content area of the 2004 Core Competencies. After completing a series of questions, responses help to determine the types of trainings that the professional should take in order to move forward on the Career Lattice. Questions on the Individual Training Needs Assessment are generally situation-based with an agreement-scale for how frequently respondents perform tasks.

2014 Progress

In 2014, software developers completed work to build an online version of the Individual Training Needs Assessment into Develop. Once launched, professionals registered on Develop will be able to complete the assessment online. Previously, the Individual Training Needs Assessment had been a part of professional development advising services offered through Child Care Aware and through the Minnesota Center for Professional Development, but was only available as a hard copy, pen and paper version. The public launch of the online Individual Training Needs Assessment option has been postponed due to a desire to align it with the new Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Launching a Web-based Tool for Career Guidance

Key Goal

Assist with long-term planning and professional development pathways for early care and education professionals.

The Minnesota Center for Professional Development has been working to create an online career guidance tool. The tool includes information about early childhood care and education careers, and the types of for-credit and non-credit programs available for support. It embeds information from the Individual Training Needs Assessment and links to opportunities for Relationship Based Professional Development. Ultimately, this resource helps people to discover rewarding work and fulfilling careers.

2014 Progress

The Minnesota Center for Professional Development finished creating content for the Virtual Career Guidance tool in 2014. The tool launched and is available online for those



The Virtual Career Guidance tool was developed and launched and is now available at www.mnpcd.org/VirtualCareerGuidance.asp.

who are new to the field, or those looking for a change to browse career options and the types of training and education required at each level. The tool includes information about the Career Lattice and identifies options and requirements at each of the 12 steps, including the number of training hours required to achieve the step, appropriate next steps for training and education, and available career positions at each step. The tool is available at www.mnpcd.org/VirtualCareerGuidance.asp.

Appendix B: Expanded Methodology

Minnesota's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant application specifies that a Great Workforce report on Race to the Top-funded projects, goals and outcomes be published annually. Building from the 2013 Great Workforce annual report, data for this report was collected through two primary methods: A series of phone interviews and email correspondence with key initiative contacts, and a focus group-style meeting to identify collaborative progress and achievements, recognize shared challenges, and identify opportunities for future work.

Defining the Scope

Minnesota's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant application noted that all programs and efforts that received Race to the Top funding would be included in the annual reports. In addition, staff from partner state agencies made the decision to include a number of efforts that indirectly benefitted from Race to the Top funding, which were especially integral to supporting Race to the Top-funded projects, and/or assisted the state in being competitive for receiving the Early Learning Challenge Grant. This process resulted in the inclusion of 44 projects (or initiatives) that fall under six categories of work (topic areas).

Corresponding with Key Contacts

After identifying the initiatives to include in this report, a master list was developed with one or two key contacts for each. Key contacts were selected based on their overall familiarity and involvement in the work and leadership on achieving key goals.

Researchers from The Improve Group followed up with each key contact through email to schedule phone interviews or arrange a process for updating existing information from the 2013 report. Interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes, depending on the number of initiatives for which the interviewee was the primary contact.

Key informants provided information about goals of the initiative and a description of the work to achieve those goals. Informants also provided an overview of the progress made during the 2014 calendar year. For initiatives included in the 2013 Great Workforce annual report, interviewees received an initiative description, key goals, and 2013 progress from that report. They discussed what had changed and what still held true since the previous year.

Collaborative Meeting

The Improve Group facilitated one focus group-like meeting with key informants across topic areas and individual initiatives. This meeting served to inform the content of this report, as participants shared information about collaborative efforts. Overall, 18 stakeholders participated in this meeting, including representatives from the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and other partnering organizations.

Overall, this meeting contributed to the 2014 Great Workforce annual report by ensuring that all findings were placed within a shared context and that all recommendations would be realistic and actionable. Where the series of interviews helped to gather information and perspectives from individuals and key contacts, the collaborative meeting helped to ensure that the full group contributed to and understood the findings and that the report captured ideas from a shared perspective.