

**Report on Contract Implementation Progress
to the IGA Governing Board
Period Covered by Report: 11/1/15 – 1/31/16**

The Collaboration is pleased to present this report covering the period since the last report provided by the Collaboration for Early Childhood in November 2015. It discusses the program and organizational activities in five key areas:

- (1) Incorporating Developmental Screening in Child Care and Health Provider Settings**
- (2) Providing Information and Support for Families of Infants and Children**
- (3) Conducting Professional Development for Early Care Providers and Promoting High Quality Public Preschool Programs**
- (4) Building and Implementing a Unified Early Childhood Database**
- (5) Efforts to strengthen the Collaboration's internal operations**

(1) Developmental Screening and Referral System

We continue to work to ensure that more children receive early and periodic screening to assess for developmental delays and social-emotional issues. The Developmental Screening Project now includes twenty-eight early learning sites, including 15 child care centers and preschools, nine family child care providers, one social service agency, and three medical practices. These sites implement a formal developmental screening program using the web-based Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE). Staff at child care centers, preschools and family child care homes received 15 hours of training for implementing a successful screening program. The Collaboration's Developmental Screening Coordinator provided up to six hours of technical support each month to participating sites in their first year of implementation and 2-3 hours of support each month to sites in their second year of implementation.

Through December 31, 2015, 1,128 children have received a developmental screening: 1,109 have received the ASQ-3 Screen and 1,003 children received the ASQ: SE/SE-2. Nine hundred, twenty-three (923) children have received both screenings. The second screening window opened on February 1. Two-hundred and twenty-one children are being monitored, meaning they scored in a watch zone for their development. Thirty-five children have been referred for further evaluations: 8 have been referred to the Early Intervention System; 16 have been referred to Early Childhood Special Education; six have been referred to private providers and reports show an additional 5 children were referred but the type of service was not indicated. The Collaboration is working with the project participants on ways to accurately record the number of children receiving services. Currently, this information is recorded by the type of screen children received: the ASQ:3 screening reports show 45 children are receiving services and the ASQ:SE/SE2 reports show that 37 children are receiving services. Some children may be included in both of these counts.

We have provided 656 children with hearing and vision screenings at 36 childcare and preschool sites in Oak Park and River Forest. We anticipate this number will increase by more than 1,000 by the end of the fiscal year.

Efforts are under way to identify new child care centers and medical practices to participate in the Developmental Screening Project during 2016-2017. Additionally, Shannon Ellison, the Collaboration's Developmental Screening Coordinator, presented this project to the staff at the

lab school for Oakton Community College. Easter Seals DuPage County also requested a meeting to better understand our project and how we worked with child care centers.

(2) Parent Information and Support Programs

The Collaboration provides information, resources and supports to families with young children so that they effectively foster their child's development. The Collaboration's contract with Parenthesis Family Center ended December 31, 2015. On that date, Parenthesis reported that 56 families were actively engaged in the Parents as Teachers Program. In addition, Parenthesis reported more than 900 contacts with parents of very young children through an array of activities including workshops on child development and parenting issues, facilitated playgroups, parent coaching, discussion groups, print and electronic information about parenting and child development, and welcome baby visits. Of the 900 contacts, 490 consisted of information packets distributed at outreach activities and events.

As reported in November at the Tri-Board meeting, Parenthesis notified the Collaboration in early November that it had obtained significant private funding and intended to continue serving the families they had engaged in home visiting services through our contract. Parenthesis informed the Collaboration at a meeting between a board representative and the executive director of each agency in late November that they had sufficient funding to support services for the families through June 30, 2017. The Collaboration then worked to reach agreement with Parenthesis around their ongoing provision of service to these families, including data sharing so that program impact can continue to be measured, and protecting confidential information that had been shared by families while they received services under the contract with the Collaboration.

A joint letter was sent to the families advising them of the termination of the contract funded by the Collaboration. As requested, Parenthesis has notified the Collaboration that, per the provisions in the contract, it has destroyed confidential information (electronic and paper and all copies) of confidential information collected under the contract. Thus far, we have not received formal confirmation of Parenthesis's intention regarding data sharing.

Parenthesis's retention of the families actively engaged in Parents as Teachers impacted the work plan for the Collaboration and Easter Seals. Active work on implementing the new initiative with Easter Seals, Partnering with Parents, commenced in January. Easter Seals hired a program supervisor who began work on January 4 and a parent educator who began work on January 19. They have begun the work of establishing referral relationships with local providers and creating a presence in Oak Park through involvement in meetings and outreach activities. Marketing materials have been developed and are being made available throughout Oak Park and River Forest. They have begun to receive phone calls from interested parents and referrals from local service providers and are following up with the families.

Easter Seals has already begun to work with the technical advisor from the University of Illinois to ensure that their data collection is accurate and complete and that they use their data to improve program quality. They have also met with the Infant Mental Health Consultant who will be supporting them through our relationship with the MIECHV program. Parenthesis continues to receive these supports as well.

As reported in November, the private funding secured by Parenthesis Family Center has added capacity to meet the needs of families and ultimately to serve more families beyond the 150 originally planned. Hephzibah Children's Association acquired an Early Head Start program through a sub-contract with Children's Home + Aid for twelve children bringing the number of home visiting service providers to three. We have initiated the work with Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago, Parenthesis Family Center, and Hephzibah Children's Association to develop a coordinated outreach and intake process through the work of the Home Visiting Task Force to ensure that families meeting risk criteria are placed in the program that best meets their needs.

Parenthesis's program director volunteered to participate in the committee that will help guide the assessment of parental needs and develop the plan for a revised Parenting Resource Program. We plan to continue to offer the technical support, training and guidance we've been providing Parenthesis for the developmental screening of children participating in their programs. We will provide Parenthesis with the support and information we provide all of our partners such as the Early Childhood Resource Directory, and the Watch and Help me Grow book. We welcome Parenthesis's participation in the Collaboration's longitudinal database as a way for all of us to understand the impacts of the collective efforts of the early childhood providers in Oak Park and River Forest.

The Home Visiting Task Force met on January 19 and agreed that having information about the home visiting programs offered by each of the three agencies and referral information in a single document was important. Many attendees also stated that they believed having a single contact that would work on behalf of all three agencies when referring a family to home visiting would work best and help ensure that every family receives needed services. There is much work to be done to achieve this type of coordinated outreach and referral, including identifying what agency would best fill that role. Working collaboratively to set up efficient referral systems and effective communication between the three organizations will be an important program effort over the next couple of years. Coordinated outreach, referral and intake is a strategy that other communities have utilized effectively to ensure that families most in need of home visiting supports receive them and that they are enrolled in the programs that best meet their needs. The Director of Illinois's Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting program in the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development has offered to have staff attend the Home Visiting Task Force meetings to support this work.

The 2016-2017 edition of the Early Childhood Resource Directory was produced in December 2015 and distribution of 12,000 began in January 2016. The new edition has been well received and is being promoted broadly by Collaboration partners including Districts 97 and 90. It is also available on the Collaboration's website, www.collab4kids.org, and the capacity to use the directory online is greatly improved.

The Collaboration is on track to retain a consultant by early March to plan the redesign of the Parenting Resource Program. This work will involve facilitating focus groups and conducting a survey to better understand the needs of families with very young children, conducting a community scan to assess knowledge of the resources currently available and developing a

strategy to address unmet needs. Collaboration partners, including the library and park district, will be better able to coordinate their engagement with young families and provide additional services as needed, by working collaboratively and monitoring families' needs and satisfaction with services.

(3) Professional Development and Public Preschool Coordination

Our 13th Annual Symposium, "Turning Obstacles into Opportunities: Navigating the Tough Stuff" is scheduled for Saturday February 27th, 2016. Our theme covers topics such as appropriate expectations for children's development and how to address developmental delays in the child care and preschool settings, addressing staff conflict, dealing with stress related to the challenges of meeting young children's needs, effective communication strategies with parents and colleagues, developing effective curriculum to promote children's development, and more. Holly Elissa Bruno, MA, JD, an educator, author, attorney, internationally acclaimed keynote speaker, and radio host will be delivering the keynote address: "Play's the Thing: Using Humor and Fun to Uplift Your Workplace." The Symposium is an approved professional development activity by Early Intervention (EI), Continuing Education (ISBE) and Early Childhood Gateways Registry. Attendees will earn up to five professional development hours.

We are working with providers to apply for their professional credential with the Gateways System. Credentialing recognizes educational accomplishments and is a natural step into the Illinois Quality Rating System, ExceleRate. Twelve family child care providers have applied for the new Family Child Care Credential; Melody Robinson is the first local provider to receive a Family Child Care Credential along with three other credentials. We are also supporting staff in early childhood centers with the application process for credentials. Our annual "Staff Qualifications" survey (August 2016) will help us measure our progress in this area. As part of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, Illinois has created a credentialing system to promote educational achievement and professional development activity as a way to recognize highly trained early learning providers.

Training this year focuses on implementing Creative Curriculum in center-based and home-based settings. Creative Curriculum meets the criteria for use established by the Illinois State Board of Education. Since our report in November, we have decided that science and math should be covered in separate workshops. Math and science are content areas that traditionally have been grouped together in early childhood and have received less attention. Separating them reflects our effort to begin to increase the focus on these two important content areas. The series of nine workshops will provide participants up to 19 hours of professional development enabling them to receive one point (equivalent to one college credit hour) towards an early childhood credential.

During this report period, we provided five workshops on two content areas: social studies and creative arts. A total of 112 people (95 child care center from 19 sites and preschool staff and 17 family child care providers from 23 sites) have participated in these workshops.

Publicly Preschool Coordination:

We continue to support the use of the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment (GOLD) in the three Preschool for All programs and the Head Start program as a way for teachers to monitor each child's growth and to modify instruction when needed. We have identified the areas of literacy and math as a special area of focus. We have found that teachers have consistently recorded fewer pieces of documentation in these two areas. We are working to understand how they understand these domains in relation to the other domains. We will work to ensure that they are devoting appropriate instructional time to these domains throughout the day and also provide additional guidance on how to collect documentation in these areas.

We have worked over the past few months to ensure that all of the teachers in the programs are current on the inter-rater reliability certification. To date, twenty-three of twenty-five staff required to complete inter-rater reliability have updated their training and passed.

4) Unified Early Childhood Database

Work over the past three months has been focused on developing the second set of values for the 11 indicators that are incorporated in the Collaboration's contract to monitor its progress in implementing an integrated system of high-quality programs and services. This work is reported on in a separate report provided to the IGA Governing Board for this meeting as an information item.

Because the report provides a second data point for each indicator, the work was more complex. It required more filtering and effort to link data in order to create a strong foundation for the longitudinal aspects of the work. Additional thought and work is required over the next three months to make sure that we have a strong conceptual framework for the longitudinal analyses.

The current report will be shared with the Collaboration committees for them to determine if there will be any adjustment in the strategies and activities they identified in the September reports. Any changes based on this second set of data points will be provided with the May report.

Chapin Hall continues to work to obtain permission to use some of the state administrative data sets for Oak Park and River Forest that it holds as a result of its work for the state. While progress has been made, agreements have not yet been finalized. This effort and status is more fully described in the report.

Establishing a culture that supports the importance of data collection, dedicated staff time for the effort and use of data for continuous quality improvement and progress/impact monitoring is an ongoing challenge. The Collaboration continues to look for ways to support agencies in their effort to institute structured plans for data collection and its use for program improvement.

(5) The Collaboration's Organizational Growth and Increased Visibility

The Collaboration launched a monthly newsletter as a way to keep our partners, donor and community members informed about our work. We have increased our Facebook postings to 2-4 postings per week. We have also begun to place targeted ads on Facebook for our events and to drive families with young parents to our website and Facebook page.

Dana Suskind, author of *Thirty Million Words: Building A Child's Brain* spoke on November 12 at Holmes Elementary School. This event was co-hosted with District 97, the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation and the Oak Park Public Library. A private reception was held at the home of Carollina Song for major donors and community leaders and supporters of the Collaboration. The events were well-attended and very well-received.

The Board worked on the fall appeal to individual donors. This led to increased donations. We continue to work to grow our donor base and are planning a spring fundraising event that we hope will attract new donors and participants to the Collaboration.

Theresa Hawley, PhD, immediate past executive director of the Governor's Office for Early Childhood spoke to Board and Collaboration Council members at the Board's retreat on January 16, 2016. She provided a detailed overview of state and federal programs and outlined ways in which local early childhood systems, like Oak Park's, play a role in establishing a vibrant and comprehensive web of support for young children. Attendees deeply appreciated her review of the programs, the strategic directions in which they are heading and her assessment of the state's current capacity to meet the developmental needs of very young children.

The Collaboration continues to pilot the new Illinois Family Child Care provider credential, created by a state committee co-chaired by Diana Rosenbrock. Our new Professional Development Coordinator, Penny Williams-Wolford also serves on that committee and the Professional Development Advisory Council. Diana is the co-chair of the Qualifications and Pathways Committee for the state.

Carolyn Newberry Schwartz and Debbie McCann, chair of the Collaboration's Measurement and Evaluation Committee presented the work on the database and our measurement activities to the Early Childhood Funders Group on November 18. This group is comprised of foundation leaders who are making investments in early childhood such as the McCormick Tribune Foundation, J. B. Pritzker Foundation, Boeing Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation and others.

The Collaboration deeply appreciates the ongoing investment, interest and support for building an integrated system of high quality services by District 97, District 200 and the Village of Oak Park. We look forward to presenting the report in May regarding on progress in all areas of our work.