

Technical assistance and capacity building

Because members of the Coalition understand that accountability must be paired with meaningful capacity building, they also give providers the technical assistance they need to make adaptations to their work, including guidance, suggestions for strategies, and training directly to educators.²¹ State partners such as the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators, and Maryland Family Network, are statewide entities with expertise in training providers to work with parents using research-based approaches. According to Paul Pittman, executive director of Head Start of Washington County, and a Coalition member, the federal Head Start program was a natural fit to assist Maryland with its family engagement capacity building, because it has experience in providing technical assistance and is grounded in collaboration with families.²² Furthermore, in some circumstances, the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Programs offer training and technical assistance to other early childhood programs throughout Maryland.

CONCLUSION

Maryland is developing a solid infrastructure for supporting providers, holding them accountable for quality work, and facilitating communication and knowledge sharing among them. It has sometimes been a challenge to convince stakeholders that this ambitious realignment is worth the energy and cost. However, given the inclusive nature of the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition, stakeholders have felt supported and motivated by their peers to proceed with these adaptive changes. Linda Zang emphasizes explicitly that the Coalition's role is to support family engagement providers statewide: "Our job is to make sure that all providers are able to work with all kinds of families."⁴⁶ In service of this goal, Zang and her team focus on developing orientation sessions, responsive professional development, and other forms of technical assistance across the state. Combined with a quality rating system, even more high-quality providers will have the opportunity to scale, giving more children and families in Maryland access to their work.

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Around the Clock: The Power of Anytime Learning

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¹ For an evaluation of the Judy Centers program, see: MGT of America (2004). *Judith P. Hoyer early care and education enhancement program evaluation: Final results brief*. Retrieved from http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B595A4C8-DF6E-4DE8-AC0C-F2450A8CB008/19478/1891_Report_Brief_BwUJ3_022004.pdf

² L. Zang, personal communication, January, 27, 2014.

³ State of Maryland (2011). *Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge: Application for initial funding*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applications/maryland.pdf>, p. 186.

⁴ Maryland Family Engagement Coalition (2013). *The early childhood family engagement framework: Maryland's vision for engaging families with young children*, p. 2.

⁵ Maryland Family Engagement Coalition, 2013, p. 3.

⁶ State of Maryland, 2011, pp. 186–187.

⁷ Maryland Family Engagement Coalition, 2013, p. 3.

⁸ State of Maryland, 2011, p. 187.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ State of Maryland, 2011, p. 185.

¹¹ State of Maryland, 2011, pp. 40–41.

¹² M. Williams, personal communication, January 22, 2014.

¹³ Office of the Governor, State of Maryland (2012). *Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge: Annual performance report*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/annual-performance-reports/mdfinalapr.pdf>, p. 32.

¹⁴ M. Williams, personal communication, January 22, 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Office of the Governor, 2012, p. 12.

¹⁷ M. Williams, personal communication, January 22, 2014.

¹⁸ Ibid.

²³ P. Isett & K. Reif, personal communication, January 17, 2014.

²⁴ Ibid.

²¹ Office of the Governor, 2012, p. 32.

²⁰ Criteria for rating at Level 1 are not included. According to the Maryland EXCELS website, “due to Maryland’s stringent licensing and registration requirements, all licensed and registered child care programs/providers are considered Check Level 1 upon acceptance into EXCELS.” Maryland EXCELS (2014). *Basics*. Retrieved from <http://www.marylandexcels.org/4562>

²¹ State of Maryland, 2011, pp. 38–39.

²² P. Pittman, personal communication, January 24, 2014.

²⁵ L. Zang, personal communication, January 27, 2014.