

Statement of Need/ Opportunity

The healthy development of our state's youngest children is fundamental to New Hampshire's future. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk. A rapidly growing body of research from neuroscience, molecular biology, genomics, and child development shows that the best way to create a next generation who can lead our communities and grow our economy is to provide children with stable, interactive early childhood experiences--conditions that literally build the architecture of children's brains. However, there is a lack of understanding that brain development in early childhood is vital to later learning and development, leading to weak support for comprehensive early childhood systems.

Spark NH works to build awareness of the importance of early childhood using carefully framed material grounded in communications science. We believe the messaging will convince leaders in our state that the future prosperity of our state depends on investment in early childhood. We have found that audiences respond well to our messaging, but we need increased capacity in order to reach enough influencers to achieve better commitment to investment in the early years.

Project and Grant Description

During the grant period, Spark NH will contract with a public awareness consultant to help to promote the importance of investing in early childhood. A consultant would increase Spark NH's capacity to reach a broad audience of influential New Hampshire leaders with our "Children: the Bedrock of the Granite State" (Bedrock) presentation. Additionally, they would help us to better coordinate those who have agreed to take action to increase broader awareness about the importance of the early years. In addition to the Bedrock message, the consultant would help us to deliver messages about the soon to be completed Spark NH "Blueprint for Action": the policy priorities developed by the Spark NH Policy Committee that are intended to show what policies young children and families in New Hampshire need in order to thrive (Blueprint). Communication about the Blueprint will further educate leaders and the public about the specifics of the need for investment in the early years. The consultant would help us to develop our press and social media strategy and capacity, to promote early childhood and the Blueprint. Finally, the consultant would help us to build our ambassador base and regional capacity in a way that will ensure that we can keep achieve maximal message saturation and continue delivering the message when the grant period is over.

In order to best influence thought leaders in the state to understand the importance of early childhood investment, the consultant, advised by the Spark NH Communications and Public Awareness Committee, will expand and implement Spark NH's plan to strategically deliver the Bedrock presentation to leadership groups in the state such as legislators, businesses, Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, etc. At each presentation, Spark NH will ask audience members to complete our form: "4 Actions New Hampshire Leaders Can Take to Build a Brighter Future." Spark NH will help these volunteer leaders to take further action, including writing a letter to the editor, taking the "Pledge to New Hampshire's Children" and connecting to Spark NH. Spark NH will support these volunteers becoming "ambassadors" of the messaging themselves to influence their peers and communities to understand the importance of investment in the early years.

The grant funded consultant will increase Spark NH's capacity to better follow up with and use volunteers who agreed to take action to further increase awareness. For example, aided by Spark NH's communications consultant, Lynn Davey, the new public awareness consultant will put together a sample bank of letters to the editor and talking points related to the Blueprint making the case for the importance of specific policies that are vital to children and therefore vital to the state. Likewise the consultant will help to coordinate talking points and materials related to each of the policy priorities in the Blueprint. We will also cultivate new ambassadors to reach out to others through letters to the editor, participating in WMUR's "Conversation with the Candidates," joining a Spark NH Committee, or hosting their own Bedrock presentation. The consultant will also help to increase the number of people who sign Spark NH's "Pledge to New Hampshire's Children" and will help to redesign the database and create procedures to ensure that all volunteers are regularly contacted. The consultant will be able to proactively suggest venues and audiences and to schedule those who wish to give further Bedrock Presentations for Business Lunch and Learn events to build out Spark NH's capacity to reach more leaders.

Using a plan created by the consultant and advised by the Spark NH Communications and Public Awareness Committee, leadership groups around the state will be targeted to ensure they hear the Bedrock message. At the same time, Spark NH will strategically build a base of ambassadors from different geography, professions and affinity groups, especially those who are "unlikely" messengers. We have found that the most effective presentations include someone well versed in the messaging, accompanied by at least one ambassador who is an "unlikely" messenger. For example, when we speak to law enforcement leaders, we might invite a former police chief ambassador to present with us.

During the grant period, Spark NH will increase its capacity to reach broad audiences about the importance of early childhood investment through earned and social media. The Public Awareness consultant would create and implement a plan to use earned and social media to promote Spark NH and the importance of early childhood. For example, the plan might include strategy for press releases during the Month of the Young Child or Child Mental Health Awareness Month other regular calendar events. The consultant will also build capacity to respond to news events in ways that demonstrate the importance of the early years. Additionally an earned and social media plan will be created for promoting the Blueprint during such calendar events and on regular basis using Facebook and Twitter to help New Hampshire understand the importance of investment in these policy priorities. A responsive strategy for promoting policies in the Blueprint will be created so that we can take advantage of times when news events draw attention to young children or families and Blueprint policies that benefit them. Finally we will encourage our partner organizations to "follow" and "like" our Twitter and Facebook pages so that they can then re-post and re-tweet messages to ensure that our messages have a broader reach.

In order to continue to build capacity and reach broader audiences, Spark NH will work with staff from existing regional early childhood initiatives around the state to support Bedrock presentations and use ambassadors. When we first developed our public awareness logic model we had hoped that most ambassadors, once trained, would be able to turn around and make their own presentations to others in their communities. While some have done this, we find that the most effective model is for presenters who are well versed in the messaging to accompany local and/or "unlikely messenger ambassadors." Because the "ask" in the Bedrock presentation was designed to be adaptable, regional early childhood initiatives benefit from using it and thus are motivated to use it themselves. We have already had success with this approach in the Coos and Belknap County regions. During the grant period, staff from regional

initiatives around the state will learn to effectively deliver Bedrock messaging, using key ambassadors without support from Spark NH. Because they have a stake of their own in this messaging we believe these messages will continue to be delivered. Additionally this also enables us to have local leader ambassadors speak to their own communities in a way that we have found to be effective. We will ask them to report their presentations to us so that we can track and report on their success as well as the continued presentations by Spark NH.

Organizational Capacity

Early Learning NH is the governor-designated coordinating body of Spark NH. (See attached MOU). Early Learning NH, a 501(c)3 agency, is the state's premier early childhood education organization. The clout of the Board of Directors of Early Learning NH is unparalleled for early childhood organizations in New Hampshire. By remaining one organization, Spark NH leverages its own strong and diverse structure with the experienced leadership of the staff and board of Early Learning NH. The Council and committee structure of Spark NH currently relies on the work of a full-time director and support staff. The director is an attorney with a successful background in consensus-building and systems coordination. The public/private partnership includes inter-and intra-agency participation from staff of the Departments of Education and of Health and Human Services, children's advocates, early childhood educators, policymakers, early childhood health and family support professionals, the philanthropic and business sectors, higher education officials, community leaders, and parents of young children. The accomplishments of Spark NH have demonstrated the need for and importance of coming together in this effective way.

Since Spark NH's launch in September 2011, it has coordinated the creation of the governor-approved New Hampshire Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Early Childhood and begun to oversee its implementation; designed a comprehensive early childhood website; created a PORTAL to help early childhood professionals to access job and professional development opportunities; produced a statewide needs assessment, two reports on early childhood certificate and degree programs in higher education; a report on early childhood data integration; a survey and report on access to early childhood programs and services; produced an alignment of New Hampshire's Early Learning Standards with national best practices and the Common Core; and created carefully framed public awareness materials. Spark NH has also secured private and federal funding to ensure its sustainability for at least another year.

Collaboration

Spark NH is an organization built to foster collaboration and coordination in the early childhood system. The Council itself has a membership of both private and public organizations and agencies across health, family support and early education. Each member of the Council represents a constituency from whom they bring experience, initiatives and issues and to whom they bring information about the Council's work at the state level.

The Council currently has seven committees and one task force. These groups include representatives from health, family support and early education professions, who work with expectant parents and children from birth through grade three and if possible, representatives from all geographic areas in the

state. Committee members include pediatricians, nurses, therapists, members of the legislature, parents of children from birth through grade 3, representatives of New Hampshire institutions of higher education, private non-profits, advocacy groups, state agency employees from the New Hampshire Department of Education and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, and parent and family support organizations.

In addition, Spark NH is creating connections to regional early childhood efforts. Spark NH works with the Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families on messaging and on early childhood data systems. Spark NH is the state level arm of Project LAUNCH, a SAMSHA grant funding early childhood direct service and systems work in Manchester. A member of the Spark NH Council leads the Belknap Early Childhood Council. Finally, Spark NH, with Monadnock United Way, has been chosen to provide backbone functions to Impact Monadnock, the Monadnock area's early childhood collective impact initiative. These connections allow Spark NH to be linked to early childhood work at the local level and for these local initiatives to link to work at the state level.

This initiative will be collaborative in that the Spark NH Communications and Public Awareness Committee will help to create and oversee the work of the Public Awareness Consultant. The Committee includes a broad cross section of professionals from the groups listed above. Additionally we will rely in part on local initiatives to help us to define which leadership groups to target and the initiatives will in turn help us to continue to coordinate and deliver the messages.

Project Workplan

Project Goal Statement: To promote the importance of investing in early childhood by increasing the capacity of Spark NH to reach a broad audience of influential New Hampshire Leaders with “Bedrock” messaging

OUTCOME #1: *“Children: the Bedrock of the Granite State” message reaches influencers around the state*

OUTCOME #1 WORKPLAN

Activity	Inputs	Time Frame	Responsible Person	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Seek and achieve Governor and Council approval to receive grant award	Spark NH Staff DCYF Governor and Council	April 15-Jun 15	Laura Milliken	Governor and Council approves receipt of grant award	
Hire consultant to coordinate and deliver messaging	Spark NH Staff Communications Committee	April-Jun 15	Laura Milliken	Public Awareness consultant hired	
Create plan to reach influencer audiences – including legislators, affinity groups, and geography	Spark NH staff Communications Committee	April-July 15	Consultant	Plan created	
Coordinate and/or deliver the presentation to groups of influencers	Spark NH staff	June 15-March 16	Consultant	At least 150 leaders hear Bedrock message	
Invite influencers to sign “4 Action” forms	Spark NH staff	June 15-March 16	Consultant	At least 30 leaders sign up to take action	

OUTCOME #1 EVALUATION PLAN

Outcome #1: Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Evaluation Results (Complete for Final Progress Report Only)
- Plan created # presentations/# leaders in audience # influencers who agree to take action/categorize by action chosen # influencers who sign the “pledge”	Project records Database Database Database	

OUTCOME #2: Influencers take coordinated action to increase awareness about the importance of early childhood investment

OUTCOME #2 WORKPLAN

Activity	Inputs	Time Frame	Responsible Person	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting (Complete for Progress Report Only)
<i>Influencers are invited to sign pledge to New Hampshire's children</i>	<i>Spark NH staff</i>	<i>June 15-March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>At least 75 leaders add their names to the pledge</i>	
<i>New influencers are entered into database by geography, affinity</i>	<i>Spark NH staff</i>	<i>June 15-March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Database is increased</i>	
<i>Database is used to inform and support public awareness and policy work</i>	<i>Spark NH staff</i>	<i>June 15-March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Influencers who have agreed to take action are contacted and coordinated</i>	
<i>Create procedures and infrastructure for ensuring effective follow up with influencers based on action volunteered</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff</i>	<i>June 15-March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Procedures and infrastructure created: e.g. database reordered, opportunities identified for further action</i>	
<i>Coordinate with interested influencers additional opportunities to present Bedrock messaging</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff</i>	<i>June 15-March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i># additional opportunities to present</i>	
<i>Write sample op-eds/ letters to the editor</i>	<i>Lynn Davey</i>	<i>June – August 15</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i># of sample letters to the editor that support the policy priorities of Spark NH</i>	
<i>Influencers participate in WMUR "conversation with the candidate" activities</i>	<i>Save the Children Jackie Cowell</i>	<i>April – December 15</i>	<i>Consultant Jackie Cowell</i>	<i>Influencers meet Presidential candidates to highlight the importance of early childhood investment for Granite Staters</i>	
<i>Influencers get involved with Spark NH</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>June-March 15</i>	<i>Laura Milliken</i>	<i>Influencers sign up for the newsletter, join a committee, agree to be an ongoing ambassador</i>	

Project Workplan

OUTCOME #2

Outcome #X: Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Evaluation Results (Complete for Final Progress Report Only)
• # sample op-eds developed • # op-eds authored by influencers • # influencers participate in “conversation with candidates” • # and type of involvement with Spark NH	Project records	

OUTCOME #3 Spark NH will enhance its communication capacity to reach broad audiences about the importance of early childhood investment through earned and social media

OUTCOME #3 WORKPLAN

Activity	Inputs	Time Frame	Responsible Person	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting (Complete for Progress Report Only)
Create a press and social media plan for promoting Spark NH	Spark NH Staff Lynn Davey Communications and Public Awareness Committee	July 15-March 16	Consultant	Press and social media strategy for promoting Spark NH created	
Create a social media plan for promoting Blueprint for action	Spark NH Staff Lynn Davey	July 15-March 16	Consultant	Press and social media strategy for promoting	

Project Workplan

Activity	Inputs	Time Frame	Responsible Person	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting (Complete for Progress Report Only)
	<i>Communications and Public Awareness Committee</i>			<i>Spark NH created</i>	
<i>Ensure regular social media messaging about Spark NH and its Blueprint</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff Lynn Davey Communications and Public Awareness Committee</i>	<i>July 15- March 16</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff</i>	<i>Messages are posted on Twitter and Facebook at least twice a week</i>	

OUTCOME #3 EVALUATION PLAN

Outcome #3: Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Evaluation Results (Complete for Final Progress Report Only)
# Twitter followers # tweets # Facebook followers # Facebook posts # op-eds related to Blueprint for Action	<i>Project Records</i>	

Project Workplan

OUTCOME #4: *Trained Ambassadors increase capacity of regional early childhood initiatives to deliver coordinated messaging about the importance of early childhood investment*

OUTCOME #4

Activity	Inputs	Time Frame	Responsible Person	Anticipated Outputs	Progress Reporting (Complete for Progress Report Only)
<i>Identify, recruit and train ambassadors to deliver the bedrock messaging</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff Lynn Davey Laura Milliken Jackie Cowell</i>	<i>June 15- March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>At least 20 new ambassadors will be trained around the state</i>	
<i>Coordinate with regional early childhood initiatives to coach and co-present the Bedrock Presentation with regional “influencer” ambassadors</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff Regional Early Childhood initiatives</i>	<i>June 15- March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Regional EC initiatives prepared to support and coordinate ambassadors</i>	
<i>Ambassadors are available by geography and, affinity group</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff</i>	<i>March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Each regional Early Childhood Initiative (Monadnock, Coos, Project LAUNCH, Belknap) will have at least 4 ambassadors to call on in their area</i>	
<i>Representatives of regional initiatives become proficient enough to deliver presentations without Spark NH assistance</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff</i>	<i>October 15 - March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Spark NH tracks presentations</i>	
<i>Representatives of regional initiatives increase their base of ambassadors and increase the number of those who agree to take action</i>	<i>Spark NH Staff</i>	<i>October 15 - March 16</i>	<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Spark NH tracks presentations</i>	

Project Workplan

OUTCOME #4 EVALUATION PLAN

Outcome #2: Outcome Indicator(s)	Data Collection Method and Timeframe	Evaluation Results (Complete for Final Progress Report Only)
• # Ambassadors trained • Of those trained, # ambassadors involved in regional and statewide presentations	Database Database	