



Spark NH Vision: All New Hampshire children and their families are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.

Spark NH Mission: Provide leadership that promotes a comprehensive, coordinated, sustainable early childhood system that achieves positive outcomes for young children and families, investing in a solid future for the Granite State.

Spark NH Policy Committee Meeting Summary

Monday, March 2, 2015, 9:00-10:30

Two Delta Drive, Concord NH

Committee Charge: Coordinate the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan for early childhood in NH and collaborate with state agency and policy leaders to identify/support changes in policy regarding expectant families and children from birth through third grade and their families.

Present: Jackie Cowell and Julie Sackett (Committee Co-Chairs), Alysse Coffey, Effie Malley, Cherie Bammarito, Janine Lesser, Julie McConnell, Kim Firth, Kelley White, Sue Meehan, Marjorie Droppa, Danielle Cole, Cindy Wallace, Jackie Sparks, and Laura Milliken.

Meeting summary recorder(s): Jackie Cowell

Agenda Items:

1. Introductions
2. Update on “A Blueprint for Action for New Hampshire’s Young Children”
Peggy Kieschnick and Erika Argersinger
3. Discussion on the Release of the Blueprint
4. How to Keep the Blueprint Alive and Updated Moving Forward
5. Update on Task Force on Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan
6. Update on Regional Partnerships
7. Update on Alliance for Early Success’ Technical Assistance
8. Family Leadership and Engagement
9. Meeting Evaluation

Summary: Introductions were given. The January meeting summary was reviewed and accepted. The February meeting was cancelled due to weather.

The Spark NH Policy Committee reviewed the latest draft of the ten, recommended early childhood policy priorities. There are three recommendations each in the sub-sectors entitled Healthy Children and Families, Positive Early Learning Experiences and Strong Families and one recommendation in the area of Coordinated Early Childhood System. The new title, “Blueprint...,” may be too similar to the work underway with the Spark NH Workforce and Professional Development Committee, so it was agreed that the title would be changed to “Framework...” The draft policy recommendations were shared with the Office of the Governor, and the feedback was positive.

The next steps are: continued background research by NH Kids Count on the recommended policy priorities and, using the research provided by NH Kids Count, Peggy Kieschnick will prepare a white paper to be reviewed by the committee soon. Once finalized, Spark NH will continue to promote the recommendations of this committee. The committee discussed the format for releasing the priorities and the importance of outreach to advocacy organizations to turn the policy priorities into legislative or other policy work. It was agreed that a quick timing of the release of the "Framework" is less important than a thoughtful, effective release later on. It was also agreed that, prior to the official release of the "Framework," partner organizations are free to use it to bolster their ongoing advocacy work during this legislative session.

There were no new updates on the Alliance for Success / Strategies for Children work on advising a small working group, convened by the Endowment for Health, on advancing early childhood advocacy.

Laura Milliken gave an update on Spark NH's regional partnerships with: the Coös Coalition for Young Children and Families, the Belknap County Early Childhood Council, and Project Launch in Manchester. Marjorie Droppa gave an update on the work of Spark NH's regional partner, Impact Monadnock.

An update was given on the Child Care and Development Fund taskforce by several members of the Policy Committee who also serve on the taskforce.

The meeting evaluations were positive.

Next meeting date: Monday, April 6, 2015 9-noon