



OPERATING GUIDELINES

BrightStart – Early Childhood Advisory Council

I. The Council's Mission

1. To build, maintain, and strengthen a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system in Louisiana that ensures families and communities provide young children (0-5 years) with opportunities for optimal emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development.

II. The Council's Responsibilities

1. The Council will undertake all of its responsibilities assigned by the Executive Order of Governor Bobby Jindal dated July 5, 2011 ("Executive Order"). Section 5 of the Executive Order obligates the Council to:
 - a. Identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination among Louisiana community based activities, child development programs, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders responsible for child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services;
 - b. Make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and a strategic plan to meet those learning standards; and
 - c. Coordinate and develop recommendations, in collaboration with Louisiana's child-serving agencies, to ensure Louisiana is taking advantage of all available opportunities to support and sustain our early childhood efforts.
2. The Council will undertake all of its responsibilities required of state advisory councils under federal law (42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(1)(D)). These include the responsibility to:
 - a. conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an

These Operating Guidelines were adopted by the Executive Committee of the BrightStart Early Childhood Advisory Council on October 10, 2011.

- assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in Louisiana;
- b. identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally-funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering such programs;
 - c. develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;
 - d. develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the state;
 - e. develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the state;
 - f. assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the state toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or pre-kindergarten program; and
 - g. make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.
3. The Council will hold public hearings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the activities as required under federal law.
 4. As required by Section 9 of the Executive Order, the Council will report to the Governor's Children's Cabinet by every January 31 and July 31.
 - a. At least one of these reports will be prepared so that it complies with any requirements for the federally-required strategic report on the Council's activities, and will be submitted to the state Director of Head Start Collaboration and the Governor in fulfillment of the Council's federal reporting obligations.
 - b. As required by federal law, after submitting the statewide report, the Council will meet periodically to review the implementation of the

recommendations in such report and any changes in state and local needs. These reviews may take place at regularly-scheduled full meetings of the Council.

5. As required by Section 5 of the Executive Order, the Council will accept any additional tasks assigned to it by the Governor or Executive Committee.

III. The Council's Philosophy and Approach to Its Work

1. The Council's philosophy includes the following elements:
 - a. The Council will seek to operate with "the whole system in the room." This means that the Council wants involved in the discussion those who have the authority, resources, experience, and information to address the issues at hand.
 - i. As many of the Council's members represent agencies and organizations, the members are responsible for bringing with them sufficient authority to act on items noticed on the agenda.
2. The Council will seek to help members to understand the perspectives of their colleagues around the table before taking action.
3. The Council members will take responsibility for acting on what they learn in Council meetings.
4. The Council will seek to build genuine consensus, and Council members will take responsibility for acting on that consensus.
5. The Council will be respectful of the work of other multi-stakeholder or collaborative groups in Louisiana, and will seek to minimize the duplication of effort across multiple bodies.

IV. The Council's Membership

A. Designating and Appointing Council Members

1. As required by Section 3 of the Executive Order, the membership of the Council will be established by the Executive Committee of the Council, in accordance with all relevant laws, rules, and regulations.
2. As required by Section 2 of the Executive Order, the Council includes an Executive Committee with the following members:
 - a. The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, or the secretary's designee;

- b. The superintendent of the Department of Education, or the superintendent's designee;
- c. The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals, or the secretary's designee;
- d. The Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet; and
- e. One (1) family representative.

All members of the Executive Committee will also serve as members of the Council.

- 3. As required by Section 3 of the Executive Order, the Council's membership will include all members required by the federal Head Start Act. In addition to the members included in the Executive Committee, this includes the following members:
 - a. Local educational agencies must be represented on the Council. If a new representative is needed, a nomination or nominations will be sought from a statewide organization or organizations representing local education agencies. A vote of the Executive Committee will be needed to approve and appoint a nominee.
 - b. Institutions of higher education must be represented on the Council. If a new representative is needed, a nomination or nominations will be sought from the Louisiana Board of Regents. A vote of the Executive Committee will be needed to approve and appoint a nominee.
 - c. Local providers of early childhood education and development services must be represented on the Council. If a new representative is needed, a nomination or nominations will be sought from a statewide organization or organizations representing local providers of early childhood education and development services. A vote of the Executive Committee will be needed to approve and appoint a nominee.
 - d. Head Start agencies located in the State must be represented on the Council. If a new representative is needed, a nomination or nominations will be sought from the Louisiana Head Start Association. A vote of the Executive Committee will be needed to approve and appoint a nominee.
 - e. A representative of the State agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A vote of the Executive Committee will be needed to approve and appoint a nominee.
 - f. The Executive Committee will seek to identify a representative of parents of young children, and will seek nominations from any appropriate

organizations. A vote of the Executive Committee will be needed to approve and appoint a nominee.

g. The State Director of Head Start Collaboration.

4. The Executive Committee may add any other members it determines would help the Council achieve its goals and fulfill its responsibility.
5. As required by Section 6 of the Executive Order, members of the Council will serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority. The Executive Committee will serve as the appointing authority for all members who are not employees of the state of Louisiana.

B. Participation and Attendance Requirements

1. When an issue is raised that cannot be addressed within the scope of a member's authority, it is the responsibility of that member to ensure that he or she (or another representative of the agency) attends the next meeting with sufficient authority to act on the issue.
2. If a member will be represented by a designee at a Council meeting, the member will notify the chair in writing in advance of the meeting, and ensure that the designee is fully prepared to act on items on the meeting agenda.
3. A member may resign from the Council by providing written notice to the chair.
4. If a member representing a required department resigns or leaves his or her department, the chair will request that the department head appoint a new member in his or her place.
5. A member who is absent for three consecutive meetings without sending an empowered designee may be removed at a subsequent meeting by a majority vote of the Council. The Council will provide notice to any member being subject to a removal vote at least 14 days in advance of the vote.
 - a. If the member absent for three consecutive meetings without sending an empowered designee is the representative of a required department, the Council may not act to remove the member, but may act to formally request that the department head appoint a new representative.
6. All members are required to comply with all state ethics requirements, and recuse themselves in the case of any conflicts of interest as defined by any relevant federal or state law.

C. Council Leadership

1. As required by Section 6 of the Executive Order, the Chair of the Council will be selected by and from the membership of the Council.

- a. The Chair must be approved by a majority vote of the Council.
 - b. The Chair will serve for a term of two years from the date of first appointment. During that term, the Chair may be removed at any time by a majority vote of the Council. After the conclusion of the two year term, a new vote must be held to approve a new Chair.
 - c. A Chair may seek consideration for consecutive terms.
2. As required by Section 6 of the Executive Order, the Council may create other officer positions by amending these Operating Guidelines to define the role and responsibility of the additional officers.

V. The Council's Meetings

A. Notice and Conduct

1. The Council will provide notice of all meetings and agenda items in accordance with Louisiana's Open Meetings Act, including the date, time, and location of the meeting.
 - a. A quorum of Council members is needed to conduct a meeting. A quorum means a simple majority of the total designated or appointed membership of the Council.
 - b. A designee will count as a member for purposes of determining quorum and voting.
2. All votes of the Council will take place viva voce and will be recorded in the minutes. Designees may vote on behalf of the member they are representing.
 - a. For any agenda item on which a vote will be taken, the Council will provide for public comment prior to the vote as part of the agenda item requiring the vote.
 - b. Recommendations may be approved by a majority of Council members present. If a vote is not unanimous, the minutes will note the reasons stated by those voting against a recommendation, if any.
 - c. Written minutes of each Council meeting will be prepared in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and will include the date, time, and place of the meeting; the members of the public body recorded as either present or absent; the substance of all matters decided, and, at the request of any member, a record, by individual member, of any votes taken; and any other information that the public body requests be included or reflected in the minutes. The minutes will be made available within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the meeting.

3. Council members or designees will be expected to prepare for meetings by reviewing materials and conducting their own research as needed.
4. The chair may use Robert's Rules of Order to conduct meetings when necessary.
5. Committee meetings will use the same procedures for notice and conduct.

B. Scheduling

1. The Council's regularly scheduled meeting will occur every two months.
 - a. In general these will be on the afternoon of the second Tuesday of the month -- the days that the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board meets. However, the chair may set a different meeting date and time if needed to maximize attendance and participation.
2. The Chair, with the approval of the Executive Committee, may cancel regularly scheduled meetings when appropriate. The Council will hold at least three regular meetings per year.
3. The Chair, with the approval of the Executive Committee, may schedule special meetings when necessary.
 - a. The special meeting must be properly noticed under the Open Meetings Act, and all members must be given direct notification in advance of the meeting.
4. Committees are free to schedule their own meetings at whatever intervals are most appropriate for their work plan, unless directed otherwise by the Executive Committee.

VI. Preparing Council Agendas

1. The agenda for regularly-scheduled Council meetings will be approved by the Executive Committee at least five business days before the date of the scheduled meeting.
 - a. The Chair is responsible for preparing a draft agenda to be considered by the Executive Committee.
 - b. The Chair is responsible for distributing the agenda to Council members at least three business days prior to the meeting.

VII. Managing Communications and Recommendations

1. The Executive Committee will approve a template for all committee recommendations that will show the elements each recommendation must include, such as the reason for the recommendation, the specific recommended

changes, the proposed timeline for the recommended changes, and whatever other elements the Executive Committee chooses to include.

2. When the Council approves a recommendation, the chair will transmit the recommendation to the governor's office, to the leaders of each chamber of the legislature (if the recommendation calls for statutory change), and to the agency head of all affected state agencies, upon approval of the Executive Committee.
 - a. Recommendations may be transmitted to other relevant recipients, such as the members of relevant legislative committees or specific agency personnel.
3. The Chair, or his/her designee, will be expected to represent the Council and its interests inside and outside the state of Louisiana. The Chair will report regularly to the Executive Committee and Council about his or her activities on behalf of the Council.

VIII. Staffing and Administration

A. Staffing

1. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that Council meetings, Executive Committee meetings, and committee meetings are properly staffed in accordance with the grant application, as approved by the Executive Committee.
2. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that committee staff is coordinating across committees.
3. As required by Section 6 of the Executive Order, the Director of the Council will be selected by the Governor. The Director will provide monthly reports to the Council and DCFS regarding all staff activities.

B. Administration

1. Hiring and contracting will comply with all relevant federal and state posting requirements and with approval/authorization of the Executive Committee. Notification will be circulated to all Council members when positions or contracts are posted.
2. All contracts and monitoring reports that are publicly available will be circulated to the entire Council.

IX. Committee Structure

A. Committee Form and Membership

1. The Council will maintain three standing committees as described below.

2. In initially forming the committees, each Council member will have the opportunity to join any committee or committees.
 - a. Once committees of Council members have been formed, the committee members will nominate a chair. The chair nominations from each committee will be voted on by the full Council. The chair of the Council will not be the chair of a committee.
 - b. Committees may elect to have co-chairs at their discretion.
 - c. Anyone may join a committee – including, after the selection of an initial chair, people who are not members of the Council – but they must commit to participating in all committee functions, within reason, as approved by the Executive Committee.
3. Once a chair has been approved by the Council, the committee may accept members who are not members of the Council.
 - a. In the event that a chair needs to be replaced, all members in good standing of the committee will be able to participate in the nomination of a new committee chair, even if they are not Council members. However, the chair of the committee must be a Council member.
4. Each committee will be responsible for developing a work plan in response to the “charge” from the Executive Committee (explained in the next section).

B. Executive Committee

1. As required by Section 4 of the Executive Order, the Executive Committee will set policy for the governance of the Council. The duties of the Committee will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Establishing policy and monitoring adherence;
 - b. Setting standards;
 - c. Monitoring the quality, cost and adherence to these standards;
 - d. Defining target populations; and
 - e. Providing multi-departmental oversight.
2. As required by Section 7 of the Executive Order, the Chair of the Executive Committee will be an agency head, or agency designee, and selected by and from the membership. All other officers of the committee, if any, will be selected by and from the membership. Members of the committee will serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

3. The Executive Committee will be responsible for developing a "charge" for each standing committee, and assigning policy topics to standing committees when necessary.
 - a. The "charge" will, at a minimum, address the relevant responsibilities as outlined in the approved grant proposal.
4. The Executive Committee may create ad hoc committees or work groups when appropriate.
5. The Executive Committee will be empowered to act on behalf of the Council in situations where rapid response is needed, and will provide advance notice to all Council members by email or other direct communication in advance of any action to be taken under this paragraph. The Executive Committee will report any such actions to the full Council by email within 24 hours.
6. The Executive Committee will as a general matter review recommendations from individual committees.
 - a. If the Executive Committee believes that the committee should consider additional issues before the recommendation is forwarded to the Council, the Executive Committee may by majority vote return the issue to the standing committee with specific requests for action. Otherwise, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Council for its consideration.
7. The Executive Committee will determine minimum criteria for continued membership on Council committees, to ensure that committee members attend regularly and participate appropriately.
8. The Executive Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the Council's activities continue to be complementary to and supportive of the efforts of other multi-stakeholder coordinating councils, or other efforts to improve outcomes for young children in Louisiana.
9. The Executive Committee may recommend changes to these operating guidelines, which must be voted on by the entire Council.
10. The Executive Committee will have responsibility for keeping the Council and its committees focused on the Council's mission.
11. The Executive Committee shall exercise oversight of and evaluate the Director.
12. As required by Section 7 of the Executive Order, the Executive Committee will meet at regularly scheduled intervals (at a minimum of six times annually), and at the call of the chair.

C. Standing Committees

BrightStart's 2010 application for federal state advisory council funding identified the following objectives:

1. To create a Planning Framework to address strategic planning, the ongoing early childhood needs assessment, barriers to collaboration, outreach, standards and promotion/marketing of the importance of early childhood and to develop recommendations for increasing participation in high quality state and federally funded early childhood programs.
2. To create a Professional Development Plan for Early Childhood Educators to include core competencies, articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement, practice or internships for students, and to assess higher education capacity to train early childhood educators, as well as to participate in the revision of the Early Learning Standards.
3. To develop a framework for a Unified Data Collection System with a focus on school readiness.
4. To address the physical well-being of children through Improving Birth Outcomes.
5. To support the Mental Health and Social Emotional Development of young children through building infrastructure, including providing training and clinical consultation, for the Early Childhood Supports and Services program, and training for early childhood professionals on infant and early childhood mental health.
6. To support the expansion of high quality early care and education through expanding opportunities for Diverse Delivery of public pre-k programs and assisting child care centers to improve their quality.
7. To support the expansion of the Louisiana Parenting Education Network and the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), including support for Infrastructure and Training for Parenting Education.
8. To improve Child Safety through the development of policies, tools, and trainings that standardize and improve data sharing and child safety practices across agencies in selected key risk areas, and through support of existing initiatives that work toward enhancing the safety of children, including Nurse-Family Partnership.
9. To pilot the Early Development Instrument (EDI) which measures groups of children in five key domain areas: 1) Physical health and well-being, 2) Social competence, 3) Emotional maturity, 4) Language and cognitive development, and 5) Communication skills and general knowledge.

The following standing committees will be created:

- Systems Planning, Data, and Assessment Committee (1, 3, 9) will focus on:
 - developing a planning framework to address ongoing needs assessment, barriers to collaboration, strategic planning, outreach, standards and the promotion of the importance of early childhood.
 - developing the framework for a statewide, unified early childhood data system that is coordinated with the existing P-20 data system efforts in the state.
 - developing proposed multiple assessment tools to consider to measure children's outcomes at the community and neighborhood level.
 - developing the roadmap to assure that the Council is accountable and achieves its goals including setting targets, detailing action plans, and establishing measures of progress.
- Professional Development Committee (2, 6) will focus on:
 - creating a professional development plan that addresses professional standards, career pathways, articulation, data, and financing that supports a professional development system that trains and prepares early childhood educators and other early childhood professionals.
 - assisting in the revision of the Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards.
 - supporting the expansion of high quality early care and education through expanding opportunities for Diverse Delivery of public pre-k programs and assisting child care centers to improve their quality.
- Family Support, Child Health and Child Safety Committee (5, 7, 8) will focus on:
 - addressing mental health and social-emotional development of young children and their families by building infrastructure and training/consultation to improve and expand clinical capacity of the Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) program, and provide trainings to other early childhood professionals in infant and early childhood mental health.
 - assisting the Louisiana Parenting Education Network (LAPEN) in providing support for parent educators, and to assist in the implementation of evidence based models of parenting education, including Triple P, by providing infrastructure, technical support trainings and ensuring fidelity to the chosen models.
 - ensuring collaboration in Louisiana's diverse efforts to improve child safety and reduce risk of abuse/neglect to infants, toddlers, and pre-school children.
 - ensuring collaboration in Louisiana's diverse efforts to improve child health.

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Adopted October 10, 2011
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The application also proposes a Birth Outcomes workgroup to address objective 4. However, that work will be conducted by the DHH-led Birth Outcomes Project. The Council will pursue a formal agreement with the Birth Outcomes Project to ensure that the work is coordinated with the Council. The Executive Committee will be responsible for establishing the terms of the agreement with the Birth Outcomes Project.