

QUESTION/COMMENT TOPIC:

COLLABORATION

Question/Comment

How is the collaborative effort extended beyond conversation with private non-agency based programs? Is there an avenue for placing 4-year-olds in settings in the private sector with the same subsidy or funding provided when they attend public pre-k, i.e. Vouchers?

How can individual providers and private schools collaborate effectively with established public agencies that receive government funding?

How can we encourage public school administration to partner with Head Start?

How can we ensure that Pre-K's incorporate best practice/DAP for ECE? - (See Head Start as experts in the field)

Are current preschool programs feeling threatened by the public pre-K movement? If so, how do we decrease these feelings when beginning partnerships/discussions?

In what ways do the Pre-K meet the family services for Head Start children? Are the Family Service staff?

Answer/Comment

A school can contract with a community program to offer the four year old program as long as that community program meets all current requirements (i.e. certified teacher) The contracted rate would be a local decision, made between the school and partnering agency.

If communities form early learning councils/collaborative to understand how each program/system operates and also the needs of each individual community, a plan could be developed that utilizes all quality programs. The key is communication and building working relationships with each other, keeping children at the forefront of all discussions.

We need to build relationships, and to do that we need to respect the expertise that each partner brings to a community approach. We need to be open to listening to each other, become educated and informed about each partner's program and administrative protocol. We need to keep children's needs at the forefront of all discussions. We need to be open to combining our collective wisdom and resources towards creating best practice and programs that retain the joy of childhood while offering opportunities for children to have equitable experiences and comprehensive supports for families.

Many area Head Start, child care and private nursery programs are nervous about the impact of the public pre-k movement. Head Start has some legitimate concerns that if a pre-k opens and draws enrollment from Head Start programs, that they will not meet federal enrollment needs and Maine could jeopardize a solid source of federal funding for young children. Ideally, Head Start programs and schools will begin to partner and offer programs together, getting the "best of the best" with the most \$ resources to do so. Child Care programs are concerned that with a lower enrollment overall, they may not be able to serve as many children overall, therefore jeopardizing the child care currently available to infants/toddlers. In the same way that a four year old program may rely on this count in the subsidy to help with overall elementary school costs, child care programs rely on the revenue to help with their overall costs. Another concern is that if many parents have a full day child care need and public pre-k offers a half day program, then young children are making more transitions in their daily lives.. I think the best way to decrease concerns is to initiate a discussion, understand what each program does and serves, look at what the unmet needs in a community are and try to forge a community plan. There is bound to be some "shift" but if more children are accessing programs, then this would be a good thing. Another way is to have joint professional development of all early childhood educators within a community. I think this may be the one most important piece that can build future relationships/understanding between different Head Start can bring enhanced, comprehensive services when partnering with a pre-k program.

Question/Comment Topic:

Funding

Question/Comment

Funding; Commitment from state for consistency with direction and funding; How flexible is it from community to community.

The funding streams are an area of confusion for me. Is there a clear list somewhere of what a pre-k, 4 year old program, must involve - e.g.. A certified teacher, access, free, etc. etc. ?

Need info on funding streams; Need info on certification

Answer/Comment

The funding is based on the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding model. The reimbursement rate varies per community. The feedback from the forum will give us a better sense of the need to relook at the funding formula based on the needs of schools as they serve a younger population of children.

Go to: [www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold] This site should contain much of this information. There is also a Funding Guidance document on this website. A public four year old program must be offered free of cost, as any other public school grade. There must be a DOE certified teacher and all assistants must come through the Ed Tech system. Currently enrollment can be universal (open to all), or targeted (enrollment criteria for selection). Some schools offer a first come enrollment basis. Ideally, we will eventually move to universal access so that any parent who chooses to will be able to access a free, public pre-k program for their child. Ideally this will happen within a mixed delivery system. Some programs in schools and some offered through community based programs.

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/funding.html> will give you funding

QUESTIONS GENERATED AT THE MAINE 4 KIDS! PUBLIC PRE-K FORUMS

standards; Need opportunity to visit various 'sites' and info on various sites; In a rural area, are there additional concerns, not showed today?

information. A Birth-Five endorsement will be implemented this fall and will become the certification standard for public pre-k teachers. <http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/index.html> has a link that will give you a list of current programs to contact for a visit.

Funding options

See www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold and click on funding. There is a funding guidance document with information about funding streams that can be used to fund public pre-k.

Specific ways that programs are funded. How to approach public school administration with ideas.

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/funding.html> will give you funding information. Set up a meeting with your area elementary principal, superintendent or a school committee member and ask to have a conversation about the future of public pre-k in your area. Suggest forming an Early Learning Council to understand the specific needs of your local community.

\$. Formulas; Roadblocks

We need to identify roadblocks and work on solutions that are in the best interest of the physical and emotional well being of young children.

Funding?

See <http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/funding.html>

Question/Comment Topic: Impact-Big Picture

Question/Comment

Answer/Comment

What are the implications of placing children in larger education institutions so young? Why are we doing it?

Close to 70% of parents are in the workforce with preschool aged children spending some portion of the day in out of home settings, ranging from informal to more formal settings. The development of public pre-k is meant to provide equal access to preschool experiences to all children and families. With good leadership and well trained teachers, we can create nurturing and creative environments that will foster each child's optimum development and also offer additional supports to families who may be able to take advantage of additional

Does the state have a time frame that they would like to see public pre-k happen?

Not at this time. DOE does encourage school districts to implement a four year old program, based on research that informs us that equity and access to a quality pre-k experience is an indicator of future success.

If all 4yearolds go into a state funded Pre-K program, how will Day Care Providers and Child Care Centers financially survive?

Ideally, some of those programs will be offered within a child care center, as you indicated in your comment. Some larger communities could have a diverse delivery model. Many schools currently transport children to and from a child care setting as part of their transportation routine. I think that we need to have continued dialogues about how these varied models of programs can best work together, keeping the needs of children and families at the forefront.

The impact this will have on child care centers? The impact it will have on parents that need to work all day?

If we are open to community dialogues and approaches, pre-k can help to strengthen the child care system. During the planning process for approval, schools need to demonstrate that they understand the needs of working families and develop programs/supports as the need determines. This will best be determined at a local level.

Question/Comment Topic: Planning

Question/Comment

Answer/Comment

Need the minimum state guidelines (hours, etc.)

www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold should cover most of this. There is a minimum of 10/hours a week of programming required in order to draw down a full per pupil subsidy. Teachers are required to come through the DOE Certification/Ed Tech system. The Early Learning Guidelines should guide curriculum practice. Transportation is required to be offered as to any other elementary school student. The legislature enacted LD560, which creates a new definition in Maine Education Statute of "public pre-k" as opposed to it being considered part of a two day kindergarten program, which will now let us look at specific standards (i.e. class size, teacher/child ratio, standards of care for the safe transportation of four year olds) that may not be explicitly addressed in statutes that guide elementary education.

QUESTIONS GENERATED AT THE MAINE 4 KIDS! PUBLIC PRE-K FORUMS

Future timeline? Who will ultimately make the decisions? Will private programs be able to partner with schools and still remain autonomous? How will quality be assured? How will the educational needs of teachers be met if we require a 4 year degree in early childhood? Not many teachers have this specific degree.

Will this be a full day or a half day program? Is there a waiting list? Is enrollment on first come first serve or are there other standards?

Will such a program be offered to 3 year olds, depending on DOB? How will consolidation affect school for 4 year olds? How will a 4 year old program relate to special education mandated cuts?

What about serving ALL 4yo kiddos. Will SPACE be available? What policies and needs for this population. How to fund program? Will the public pre-school use private schools for placement purposes?

How to conquer rural nature of our state? (Hard to share resources with such huge geography and sometimes limited kid numbers - i.e.. 6 kids in one community, 9 more 15 miles down the road, etc.); Could there be quarterly gatherings similar to this to get us all together throughout the year? How will we build higher education systems of quality to support more fine early childhood

I would have loved to get into a more detailed description of "standard of care" for safe access and gathered more info about what we need to implement for facility standards. --nuther whole meeting!

May need more how-to coordinates "multi-stakeholder" Pre-K models.

What will happen to the private PreK program in center base. Will this effect center base Pre-K? Will Public Pre-K be offered to all 4 Year Olds in the community? Who do you contact to make sure your Pre-K program is running within the Early Childhood Learning Guidelines?

How are children selected for the public Pre-K program? Who will be teaching the program? Qualifications? How far out is this program time wise?

What is the timeline for the implementing these public pre-k programs? How will this impact the state of Maine Learning Results? How can we ensure that these Pre-K programs do not become Kindergarten programs?

It is a local district/community decision as to partnering with community programs. Schools need to go through a planning and approval process, as well as local school committee approval, which includes consideration of community needs and approaches. Through the statewide Early Childhood Systems Initiative, chaired by First Lady Karen Baldacci, we are working towards cross systems standards to assure quality efforts everywhere. Community Colleges and four year universities, as well as RDCs, try to work collaboratively together to understand the training needs of each region so that teachers can continue professional development efforts. Maine Roads To Quality has a career lattice which can help teachers currently in the field create a pathway of professional development, leading towards a four year degree.

It is a local decision as to whether the program will be a half or full day. Currently, it is also up to local communities concerning enrollment. Some offer a first come, some have criteria (i.e. risk factors)..this is called targeted enrollment. Some communities have been able to serve all children whose parents choose to enroll there..this is known as universal access.

Currently Maine Education Statute only includes school funding per pupil if children are four by October 15 of that year. My belief is that consolidation will facilitate community approaches as the administration will be able to understand the more comprehensive needs of a geographic area (i.e. regional head start programs, working parents accessing child care). Districts will continue to need approval for each individual program. Four year old programs should also facilitate more effective means of delivering services to children with disabilities as schools, CDS and community programs work more closely together.

Universal Pre-K, meaning the availability of a free and appropriate program to any four year old child, is the long range goal. If schools use a community approach in understanding both family and program space needs, and by including partner agencies, space concerns can be minimized or alleviated. The programs are funded through the school funding formula and partnering agencies can bring other resources. See www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold and click on Funding for more information about the different streams of funding that can partner to support a four year old program.

These are great ideas. I'm hoping that the school consolidation process may help with a broader understanding of geographic needs. I would urge communities to begin early childhood learning councils to bring individuals from the different "system" together on some type of regular basis. There is an Aroostook County Preschool teachers' network, initiated by teachers years ago. I believe it meets twice a year and offers joint training based on what participants have identified as

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/transportation.html> This link will give you information about transportation and standards of care.

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/links.html> This link will help you access information about program implementation and standards of quality.

Yes, there is a need for more comprehensive information to guide partnership models. Maine is engaged at a national level where these same discussions are happening. Technical assistance is available from DOE's early childhood

At this point in time, it is a local school district decision as to implementation of a four year old program. Each district can also decide whether to offer a "Universal" (open to all) or "targeted" (enrollment criteria) program. In either case, there can be no cost to a family for the public pre-k program. This program can be offered in partnership with area early childhood programs. Partnering can take on many forms. A school can offer a part time program and provide transportation to an extended day child care program. A school can sub contract the program to a qualified area provider. The programs can be co mingled in one location (either the school or a community location.) Community members should contact their local schools with any questions about how a program

A child must be four years old by October 15 of a school year. A school can have universal access (open to all who choose it) or a more limited enrollment, chosen by lottery or first come/first serve or targeted enrollment (open to children meeting defined enrollment criteria. The goal is to have universal

The timeline is ongoing. The statute is "permissive," meaning that it is up to each local school district to decide upon implementation of a four year old program. It is the Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines that guide program practice. These guidelines are aligned with the Maine Learning Results.

Question/Comment Topic:

Program Model

Question/Comment

How are 4 year olds transported to the Brewer program?

I would have liked more details about the Phippsburg partnership: Cost to school department; Supervision, evaluation? What DOES need to be in place to transport 4 year olds?

Answer/Comment

Contact Joan Staffiere, Principal, Capri Street School, Brewer, directly for information about transportation to Brewer's four year old program. jstaffiere@breweredu.org

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/transportation.html> for transportation information. Contact Phippsburg directly for more specific information about their four year old program. To contact SU47 Supt: wshuttleworth@u47.k12.me.us

Question/Comment Topic:

Teacher Credentials

Question/Comment

Education/license/certification of future Pre-K Teachers; Space issues

Are schools going to insist a K-3 certification or wait for the Pre-K certification that is coming soon (I hope...)?

Answer/Comment

June, 2007:Both the legislature and state board of education have endorsed a Birth-5 endorsement through the Department of Education. Community approaches can allow each community to assess the most appropriate spaces availability for four year old programs.

Currently a K-3, K-8 or B-5,282 are relevant endorsements. The proposed B-5 will create another pathway. The most important point is that teachers have an understanding of child development and programming for preschool children, regardless of endorsement. Using the Maine Roads To Quality Career lattice would be a method to this and pathways of professional development.

Question/Comment Topic:

Transportation

Question/Comment

Transportation issues; "Professional relationships", pay scale, insurance, benefits are they shared? Or Public school responsibility? Do grants brought by private/public preschools get in the way for public school

The transportation dilemma. Ideal vs. Reality vs. Costs

When a public Pre-K occurs in outside the school settings, i.e. Phippsburg, is transportation required?

Transportation needs facilities requirements; funding sources

Answer/Comment

Grants could be used to enhance any programming. If a school employs the teachers, then the pay scale and benefits are the school's responsibility. If the partner employs any staff, then this becomes the community partner's responsibility. You are correct in that we need to work towards equity in pay scales and benefit packages offered. This can begin at a local level when forming community partnerships and creating memorandums of understanding (MOU) to guide implementation. We should be aiming for the highest standard of care when transporting young children, looking toward guidelines of the National Highway Transportation Agency as guidance.

We need to focus on the best standard of care for young children being transported, based on federal guidelines, look at the costs of this and how we can

Yes. Transportation must be offered to and from the pre-k portion of a program if a family needs that. If a family is accessing before care and then after care hours, then the parent is responsible for transportation at either end of the day.

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/transportation.html> This link will give you information about transportation and standards of care.

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/links.html> This link will help you access information about program implementation and standards of quality.

<http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/funding.html> This link will give you information about funding guidance.

Question/Comment Topic:

Other

Question/Comment

Millions--but that is because I am so new to this world!!

Thanks

Answer/Comment

See <http://www.maine.gov/education/fouryearold/index.html> for a good overview of different areas.

My thanks to all for your participation and commitment to Maine's young children!
