

MINUTES

Children's Cabinet Meeting September 19, 2023

Welcome and updates (Commissioner Lambrew)

- Major Policy Advances for Maine Children and Youth in the last legislative session
- Blog posted on DHHS website <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/blog/major-policy-advances-maine-children-and-youth-2023-07-21>
- Approximately \$400 million in next biennium and dozens of laws dedicated to programs/services to keep children safe, keep their families strong
- Supports, health care, child care, free school meals, free community college, paid family and medical leave, etc.
- 90-day effective date for new policies is October 25, 2023

Presentation on Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) Schools – Commissioner Makin, Associate Commissioner Megan Welter, Dr. Anu Sharma (Senior Research Scientist, BARR Center), Ron Metz (Deputy Director, BARR Center)
(see attachment)

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/BARRschools>
<https://barrcenter.org/>

- Evidence- and school- based; has been part of Maine schools for more than 13 years
- Model created in 1998; initial funding from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Serves as umbrella working with other existing programs
- Coaching and training model; work with existing staff
- 2 pillars - build intentional relationships (staff to staff, staff to student, and student to student) and utilize real-time data (quantitative and qualitative) to enable schools to achieve concrete academic, social, and emotional outcomes for every student.
 - Focus on the whole student.
 - Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators.
 - Use BARR's curriculum to foster a climate for learning and relationship building.
 - Create cohorts to cultivate connections.
 - Hold regular meetings of the cohort teacher teams to discuss each student. Establish time in the school day for teachers to meet and talk about students. Focus is not about the 5% of students whose problems are so big that they can't be solved. Rather they talk about each and every student, starting with that student's strengths and then move to concerns. What support does that student need? Is that student ready for more challenge, more acceleration. Teachers use real time data that's entered weekly or bi-weekly into a spreadsheet which includes student grades, attendance, missing assignments, etc. Teachers then design interventions and implement them that very week, then come back the following week and compare notes. What worked what didn't, what needs adjusting?
 - Conduct Community Connect meetings that engage the community. Teachers can refer the 5% of students about whom they are gravely worried. These students typically have

problems that originate outside of school and are bigger than what the school can fix. They are referred to community connect which consists of school staff, like the police resource officer, nurse, mental health, specialist and counselor and representatives of community resources. They work together to get students the resources to help with problems like homelessness or substance misuse.

- Engage families
- Engage administrators

Oak Hill in Wells Maine implemented BARR

- 9th grade critical year for students – BARR is effective at preventing 9th grade failure
- Relationships are critical – BARR systemically and systematically builds relationships all the way through a school. It happens intentionally with every adult and every student in the school.
- Teacher satisfaction increases/high retention rates - working on an interdisciplinary team allows teachers to make a difference in student lives.

<https://mainedoeneews.net/2023/09/11/71-maine-schools-begin-barr-model-implementation-to-increase-student-and-staff-wellbeing-and-increase-academic-achievement/>

Comments/Questions

Commissioner Lambrew - What would be the biggest barrier to expanding BARR in Maine?

Megan Welter - Two barriers:

1. *Financial: It's a 3-year commitment; were able to use the Federal funds to support the first year of implementation, have some ideas for subsequent years*
2. *Teachers and schools view it as "one more thing." Give staff an opportunity to see a BARR school in in action and understand what BARR is.*

Commissioner Liberty – What about using BARR in a correctional setting?

Rob Metz – BARR can be plugged and play in most settings; would welcome the conversation and explore the possibility.

Megan Welter – BARR is more of framework and can be adjusted depending on the setting.

Commissioner Lambrew - How does the data collection of the model work.

Rob Metz – teacher teams are tracking and collecting data. A typical teacher team of 3 or 4 teachers may be tracking 100 students. They're looking at their typical pieces of data, grades, attendance, discipline, etc. But more importantly, in the relationship building experiences that we provide, they're also collecting a whole bunch of qualitative data. What is the student's strength? What is their spark? Who has the best connection to the student in this school. We truly look at the whole child and the individual teacher teams are tracking this spreadsheet of data. Each school that uses BARR is assigned to BARR coach who interacts with teacher teams weekly. They look at the compilation of data. For example, they'll be tracking the ninth grade failure rate very closely - breaking that data down with the help of their coach. They will look at that ninth grade failure rate and ask, is it more boys than girls? is it more black than white? is it all in English or science? Where are the pockets of issues that the team can strategize to

address? On the day-to-day basis the individual teacher teams are tracking the data, but they're getting help from their BARR coach to look at it in a broader way and identify areas in the school that should be addressed.

Megan Welter - Empowers teachers to understand the data, but to use essentially a framework/protocol that centers student assets first starting with what are their strengths and then looking at patterns. Teachers become well versed at looking at data and patterns that they can use to have better success with students.

Anu Sharma - Schools do not turn individual student level data over to the BARR center. I think that's very, very important, because that's an obvious concern for families and school districts.

Ana Hicks – We've been very concerned about students who don't feel like they have a caring adult in their life, and don't feel connected to the schools. How do the teams build relationships? Could talk about how on a day-to-day basis these models help with some of those kids.

Anu Sharma - Teacher teams start with the student's strength and sometimes teacher teams have to work really hard to find a strength for students that feel disconnected and disengaged. It can be something as simple as the student held the door open for someone today. You start with a strength, and then find something, some spark, some interest, that that student has, and then you find some adult who can connect with that student. It only has to be one. And so teachers have to realize that they don't have to connect with each and every student but some adult does need to connect with each and every student. We find that person. We find that student spark. We make that connection. And then we build from there.

Rob Metz - BARR has built into it relationship building experiences. We are intentionally building relationships between adults and kids, between kids and kids and between adults and adults. BARR takes the staff already there and helps them work within this relationship building system so that almost every adult in that building is going to be able to build relationships much better than they did before. BARR is a system approach to relationship building which is the opposite of the "superstar teacher" method--trying to hire as many as you can "superstar teachers" who are both good instructionally and good at building relationships.

Child Care Toolkit for Employers (Partnership between OCFS, Coastal Enterprise Inc and Best Place for Working Parents) – Ana Hicks, Dr. Todd Landry
(see attachment)

What's been done:

- Infrastructure grants have expanded child care
- Pre-K expansion grants helping to expand public Pre-K
- Child care salary supplement for staff working in the field to support a strong workforce

Employers want to be at the table helping to secure child care for their employees

DOL and DECD Employer Summit - Cynthia Murphy from Coastal Enterprise, Inc (<https://www.ceimaine.org/>), Crystal Arbor, Child Care Program Manager from the Office of Child Family

Services and Ana Hicks, Children’s Cabinet Coordinator had the opportunity to talk to employers about ways that they can support their employees to access child care.

The Best Place for Working Parents <https://bestplace4workingparents.com/>

Employers fill out a simple survey around 10 policy areas (paid time off, parental leave, flexible hours, child care, etc.) - a number of Maine employers have earned the national designation as Best Place for Working Parents including the State of Maine.

Working with The Best Place for Working Parents to build a toolkit for specifically for Maine, employers were asked to consider business location, where their employees live, employee wages, ages of the children, what are they looking at in terms of recruiting, how will this help them to recruit employees, etc. Employers were made aware of policies in place for childcare subsidy program (moderate to moderate income families).

Child care is a significant barrier and this toolkit resource helps employers with that concern of their employees. The goal is to make it easy and reduce the stigma around the childcare subsidy program. It is a benefit for all eligible families.

Other options for employers include reserving slots in the local child care program, providing financial assistance, using existing space at work location to create a child care program, flexible spending accounts, partner with local child care provider, etc.

TimperHP and flexible spending accounts – employer provides (pre-tax) \$5,000 in a flexible saving account for eligible employees for child care/older dependent.



Next phase to close the child care gaps - significant employer involvement is critical

Closing comments from Commissioner Lambrew

Much progress has been made on child care in the last few years including recently passed legislation and funding.

Will need significant employer involvement to close the gap. Businesses in Maine have really been leaders in recognizing the value of childcare for the workforce and the economy.

Next Meeting

November 21st 10:30-11:30am

- Young children
- Perinatal Systems Roadmap



BARR[®]

Same Students. Same Teachers.
Better Results.

Tuesday, September 19
Maine Children's Cabinet

Introduction



Dr. Anu Sharma, Senior Research Scientist

- Original evaluator for the BARR model in 1999 and has been integral to testing its effectiveness over the past 20 years
- Over 30 years of experience in directing applied evaluation and research projects in the fields of public health, education, and psychology
- Served as a project evaluator on local, regional, and national prevention projects at Educational Development Center, Inc. and was the regional evaluator for the Central Region of SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT)
- Served as Co-Investigator for the Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study at the University of Minnesota's Center for Twin and Family Research
- Held a license in psychology for over 25 years and worked clinically with adolescents from varied different cultures and countries
- Published in Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, Behavior Genetics, Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse, Evaluation Review, Applied Developmental Science, Child Development, Developmental Psychology, Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Psychological Bulletin, and Journal of Counseling and Development, among others.
- Co-authored chapters in the second edition of the American Psychological Association's Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity and the third edition of The Handbook of Resilience in Children

A photograph of a student in a blue and white striped shirt sitting at a desk, writing in a notebook with a pen. The background is blurred, showing other people in a classroom or school setting. A teal-colored text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Building protective factors, addressing risk factors

BARR is a school-based program that integrates the Developmental Assets Framework, Risk and Protective Factor Theory, and Attribution Theory of Student Motivation.

Two Pillars

INTENTIONAL
Relationships

REAL-TIME, ACTIONABLE
Data



Staff-to-Staff
Staff-to-Student
Student-to-Student



Quantitative
and Qualitative
Data



BARR is an evidence-based and proven educational system that creates a unified and personalized culture of support and success for every student, both inside and outside the classroom.

Same Students.
Same Teachers.
Better Results.



Most Researched. **Most Proven.**

20 years

of research and development

78 schools

Involved in randomized control trial research (most rigorous possible)

20 areas

Areas of statistically significant outcomes

Listed as an evidence-based program on SAMHSA's NREPP, BARR demonstrated powerful results in reducing risk behaviors (i.e. failures, substance use, truancy) and increasing thriving behaviors.

The BARR model is the first and only school-improvement intervention to successfully climb the three tiers of evidence required under the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) program.



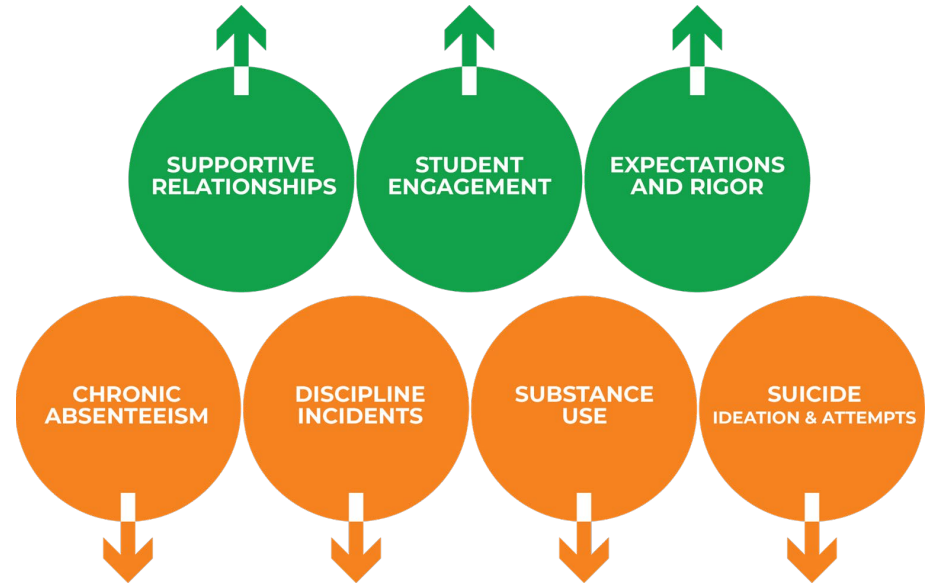
Student Attitude and Behavior Outcomes

BUILDING ASSETS

- Students feel that their teachers are more supportive of their interests and invested in their emotional well-being.
- Students believe teachers have high expectations for their performance, provide clear guidelines, and encourage them to be successful.
- Students actively prepare for and participate in class activities, ask questions, and are interested in the lesson.

REDUCING RISKS

- Decreased risk factors and increased protective factors
- Decreased use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Decreased student behavioral issues (e.g., suspensions)
- Decreased suicide ideation and attempts



A Systems Approach

1. Focus on the whole student
2. Professional development
3. U-Time and I-Time curriculum
4. Create cohorts of students
5. Block Meetings, collaborative problem solving
6. Community Connect for higher level concerns
7. Engage families
8. Engage administrators

all strategies
work together in
a systems
approach



“**BARR is a system** that helps us, as educators, to not let any child fall through the cracks, in any way shape or form.”

Pender Makin, Commissioner of Education



“I always build a relationship with my teachers as a student so they can help me with my education. But **they also know me as a person**, in case I ever need additional support.”

Saif, Student, Westbrook High School

“Right away, when I was introduced to BARR, I could see it was based on building relationships and creating a safe, caring environment that supports the needs of all students.”

Jim Boothby, Superintendent of Schools, RSU 25

Dr. Anu Sharma

Senior Research Scientist

anu.sharma@barrcenter.org



Maine.gov

Child Care Toolkit for Employers

Meeting Child Care Needs,
Boosting Organizational Success

Best Place for Working Parents Designated Employers

- Allagash Brewing
- Androscoggin Bank
- Avesta Housing
- Bar Harbor Savings and Loan Association
- Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
- Brinker International
- Central Lincoln County YMCA
- Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine
- Community Dental
- CST Holding Co.
- Down East Family YMCA
- Eastern Area Agency on Aging
- Foundation for Portland Public Schools
- Full Plates Full Potential
- Furniture Friends
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
- Hollywood Casino Hotel & Raceway Bangor
- House of J. Henry
- Island Housing Trust
- Katahdin Trust Company
- Kennebec Valley YMCA
- Ledgemere Country Day School
- Lifeline for ME, LLC
- LOCALiQ
- Loon Echo Land Trust
- Maine Association of Nonprofits
- Maine Bankers Association
- Maine Community Bank
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
- Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program
- Maine Savings Federal Credit Union
- Museum L-A
- National Association of Wetland Managers
- Norway Savings Bank
- One River CPAs
- Penobscot Bay YMCA
- Portland Downtown
- Saco & Biddeford Savings
- Schooner Estates
- Sebago Technics
- SeniorsPlus
- State of Maine
- The Genesis Fund
- The WindowDressers
- United Way of Mid Coast Maine
- Waldo County YMCA
- YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston

The researched Top 10 Policies speak to benefits for families and their positive impact on business' profitability.



Company-Paid
Health Care
Coverage



Paid Time Off



Parental Leave



Nursing Benefits



"Best Place"
Designation



Onsite Child Care



Child Care
Assistance



Backup Child Care



Flexible Hours



Working Remotely



THE BEST PLACE FOR
WORKING PARENTS®

Maine.gov

Child Care Toolkit for Employers

Meeting Child Care Needs,
Boosting Organizational Success

Understanding Your Workforce's Child Care Needs

Gain a deeper understanding of employees' caregiving status and their needs related to child care to ensure policies meet the needs of your workforce.

Info to know

- ① Your work location(s) & proximity to where employees live
- ① Employees' wages & ages of their children
- ① State child care subsidy [income guidelines](#)
- ① Job creation & recruiting plans (type of jobs, wages, location)

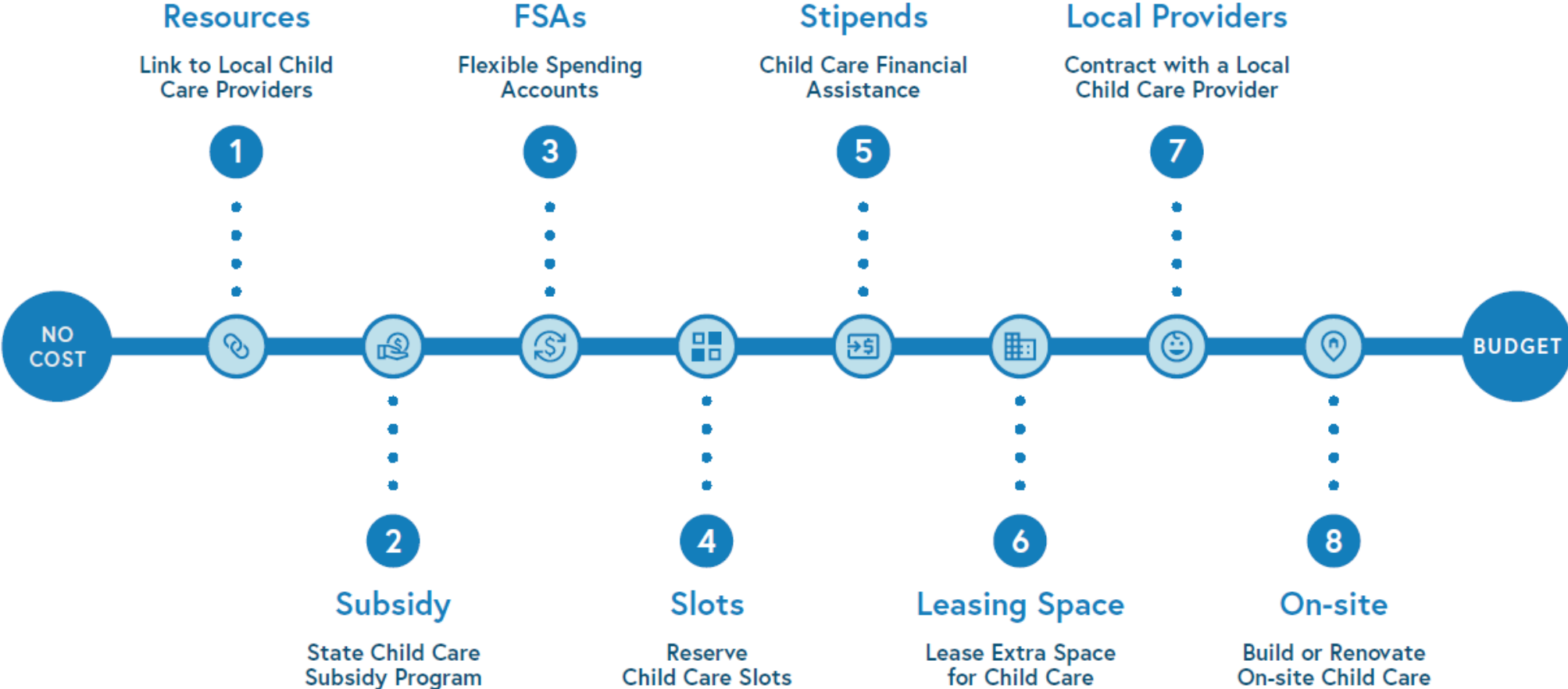
46% of Portland, Maine employers said lack of affordable quality child care affected employee retention.⁵

82% of working parents say the pandemic has made employer provided child care benefits more important to them.⁴



How Can Employers Help with Child Care?

Employers can implement a variety of family-friendly programs no matter their budget size.



Flexible Spending Accounts

Offer Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), enabling parents to use pre-tax dollars for child care.

How it works

- ✓ Employers establish a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plan through an insurance broker. (An employee cannot establish their own FSA.)
- ✓ Employees and employers can contribute up to a combined total of \$5,000 per year per employee. There is no requirement for an employee or an employer to contribute and there is no match requirement. (An employee can withhold up to \$5,000 from their paychecks or the employer can contribute the entire \$5,000 or each can contribute up to a combined \$5,000 total.)
- ✓ All FSA contributions are free of payroll and income taxes; FSAs are funded with pre-tax dollars. Consult with your tax advisor for more information.
- ✓ Employees pay for child care expenses out of pocket and are reimbursed through the Dependent Care FSA after submitting receipts.
- ✓ There are some "use it or lose it" restrictions; check with your FSA Plan Administrator for more information.

Info to know

- ① Average one-time start-up costs for a business with fewer than 100 employees is less than \$1,000 total.
- ① Average recurring costs (paid by the employer) are less than \$20 / year per participating employee.
- ① Using pre-tax dollars to fund child care, employees save an average of 30% and employers save an average of 7% in taxes.
- ① Call your local insurance agent and tax advisor to learn more.





TimberHP

- Assessed the needs of their employees
- Examined a variety of options for their employees, including purchasing slots at a local child care program.
- Still considering options, but landed on providing \$5000 for eligible and interested employees with dependents to put in a Flexible Saving Account for dependent care.
- Not provided as stipend or payment so don't have to worry about how the funds are taxed or provided to the employee.



Questions?