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A Learning Table to Improve State Early Childhood Teaching and Learning Policy:

Reflections and Recommendations After Three Years of Implementation

Prepared by Kate Tarrant, Ed.D.
with insights from Debi Mathias, Jana Martella, Lori Connors-Tadros and Jim Squires

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OVERVIEW

From 2014-2017, the BUILD Initiative (BUILD) and the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) co-facilitated a State Policy *Learning Table* to support state leaders in their efforts to strengthen policy focused on early childhood teaching and learning. These organizations came together because of their shared missions to help leaders build more effective early learning systems in states. BUILD's Quality Rating and Improvement Systems National Learning Network brings together leaders dedicated to using QRIS to elevate the quality of care in state learning systems and to support and improve children's development. CEELO works to build the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs), and their partners, to lead sustained improvements in early learning opportunities and outcomes for children birth through third grade. Both organizations situate their work within the complex early learning system-building context.

To prepare for the state policy *Learning Table*, BUILD and CEELO brought together selected state and national leaders in October 2014 for a Think Tank to identify the central questions, key research, and best practice to assist states in implementing high-quality programs, supporting effective teaching, and, most importantly, improving learning outcomes for young children. The meeting provided an opportunity for participants to address the following questions:

- What are the consistent supports and sensible accountability systems needed to drive teaching quality that results in improved outcomes for children?

- What guidance, advice or best practice can we give to states about the "powerful and few" core state policies that improve teaching quality and result in significant outcomes for children?

Based on the proceedings, a working paper was developed to guide the first *Learning Table*'s goals and focus. In 2015, "Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching That Improves Learning" was released. This paper provided both a foundational document and accompanying resources used by the Learning Table participants, and other stakeholders.

CEELO and BUILD facilitated three cohorts of state policy teams, from 2015-2017, to advance this work. Now, at the conclusion of the third cohort, we are taking stock of the technical assistance (TA)

What do we mean by "early learning"?

Research on child development and learning trajectories strongly suggests that birth to age eight are the pivotal years for language development and learning. To achieve their full potential, children need high-quality learning experiences throughout these years. In the long-term, states should build toward an aligned birth through third grade approach including Pre-K, Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, and elementary schools.

and mutual learning we shared with state leaders. This paper offers a retrospective on the design and delivery of the *Learning Table,* along with lessons learned to inform development of future opportunities to improve early learning policy. Specifically, we a provide information to answer the following five questions:

1. What was the **purpose and structure** of the *Learning Table*?

2. How did we **change** the content and structure of the Learning Table and why?

3. What **impact** did we have in supporting participating states to improve state policy?

4. What is the **expertise, experience, and skills** that TA providers need to effectively implement TA to state leaders?

5. What are the **lessons learned and recommendations** for the design of future TA?

? QUESTION 1: What was the purpose and structure of the *Learning Table*?

This project was a collaborative effort by our organizations, selected state leaders and national experts. Our goal was to facilitate joint problem-solving with stakeholders responsible for guiding early childhood policy and practice in their states. To do so, we engaged states in a peer learning community and asked each participating state to develop cross-sector teams to identify and work to achieve policy goals

that would improve teaching and learning for children from birth through 3rd grade.

State Policy Learning Table Cohort 1: March to August 2015

What We Did:

In January 2015, we released an application to state leaders and invited them to join a 6-month Learning Table. The *Learning Table* began with an introductory webinar followed by a two-day face-to-face meeting. Participants in the meeting included at least two members from each state's team. We also invited national experts to serve as thought partners to help state leaders identify their burning issues and develop strategies to make progress. The first policy problem – ensuring racially, culturally, and linguistically competent teaching for each and every child – drove much of the discussion. The group discussed strategies for leading change, such as stakeholder engagement and data-driven decision-making. We facilitated four monthly webinars in which national experts sparked conversations about policy problems and innovations, and state colleagues shared ideas. During this time, state teams developed strategic plans for shifting policy in their states.

We routinely heard that state teams especially valued the opportunity to engage with one another, so we leveraged participants' expertise by using the problem-of-practice to structure our discussions. This core strategy has four steps that allow each participant to contribute to addressing the problem presented:

(1) one state team presented the policy issue they sought to change and related challenges they encountered;

(2) the other state team members asked clarifying questions;

(3) the other state team members and TA providers offered solutions; and

(4) the presenting state responded to the clarifying questions, solutions, and resources shared during the discussion.

In addition to the problem-of-practice discussions, we invited national experts to present their work to the group and created a curated resource library for each cohort that was available to participants on an online member-only landing pad.

The first cohort concluded in August with each state team giving a presentation about their goals, progress, and next steps. We also hosted a webinar for Alliance partners in which state teams shared their work and we shared our purpose and process.

What We Learned:

During this first cohort, we learned about the major issues states confronted to achieve their goals, and synthesized our learning in the publication, "Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching That Improves Learning."[1] This paper summarized key research and explored challenges state

leaders faced related to implementation. Our paper made the following four recommendations:

1. States have a professional learning policy that promotes positive teaching conditions for all roles in the birth-3rd grade workforce.

2. States have an educator evaluation policy that promotes professional learning for all roles in the birth-3rd grade workforce.

3. States amend early childhood educator and leader credentialing and licensure policies to assure the birth-third grade workforce has demonstrated competence specific to early childhood education and culturally responsive teaching.

4. States embed expectations for the use of developmentally, individually, linguistically, and culturally appropriate instructional tools within QRIS, Pre-K, and other program standards.

In addition to learning about the pressing issues that state leaders were focused on,

1   Tarrant, K., et.al. (2015). Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning. BUILD & CEELO Policy Brief. Retrieved from http://buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/TeachingLearningPaperMaster.pdf

we were also learning about structuring the Learning Table. We asked participants for feedback and they shared that:

- o among the supports provided, resources materials were rated as very helpful whereas webinars were rated as moderately helpful

- o many participants felt they needed more time to engage stakeholders in the process

- o an in-person meeting was critical for allowing participants time for reflection and learning

- o goal alignment is needed to create meaningful exchanges

- o it is important for state team members to be actively engaged from the onset and have a designated facilitator/lead on their team to keep moving forward

State Policy Learning Table Cohort 2: March to August 2016

For the second round, we invited the first cohort to participate and then broadened the invitation to include other states working with BUILD and CEELO. Fourteen states participated, which we divided into two groups. One group focused on policy recommendation related to improving *early educator and leader credentialing and licensure* while the other focused on the recommendation related to improving use of *appropriate instructional tools.*

What We Did:

As in cohort 1, we brought state teams together for a two-day, in-person meeting

at the start of the *Learning Table*. Together, we explored the importance of equity in efforts to improve early childhood teaching and addressed cross-cutting themes related to the policy change process: leadership development and advocacy. Then, with the two groups of states, we essentially ran two sub-cohorts simultaneously in which the state teams that were focused on similar policy changes could support one another.

What We Learned:

The second cohort created a space for us to see whether tighter goal alignment could enhance the quality of the *Learning Table* experience for participants. Within this cohort, we were able to dive into some of the specific implementation issues that states grappled with and provide more targeted resources to advance each state teams' goals. Differences among states' contexts and specific goals sometimes limited peer engagement. Participants also had varied levels of participation in the webinars.

We also learned more about the need to understand the state's internal capacity and readiness for engaging in system or policy change. We had some state teams initially indicate interest in participating in the Learning Table, and even attended the first meeting but eventually dropped out because other state priorities and staff turnover or leadership changes prevented them from working on policy change during the timing of the Learning Table.

We routinely heard that state teams wanted to have more time to engage with one another on substantive issues, as well as individualized specific expert guidance and

feedback on their goals and strategic plans. As we looked to cohort 3, we recognized that states would benefit more from having more focused TA by learning table facilitators with their entire state team as well as selective peer engagement and outside expertise.

State Policy Learning Table Cohort 3: March to August 2017

For the final cohort, we invited states that had participated in cohorts 1 or 2 to continue working with us. Our goal was that selected state teams would move their plans into implementation during the third and final round, with the benefit of having a more intensive and focused technical assistance opportunity. Three states joined us.

What We Did:

During the third cohort, states were assigned TA leads from BUILD/CEELO facilitators who worked alongside the CEELO team member assigned to that state, since CEELO's engagement with the states would extend beyond the duration of the *Learning Table*. The third-round TA was highly customized as we dug more deeply into the particulars of each state's policy goals. Our webinars addressed common themes of advancing equity, system building, and data-driven decision-making. Then, TA leads went to each state for a full state team meeting including dedicated time to flesh out

strategic plans and identify central questions they needed to answer as they moved toward implementation. Lastly, we held a face-to-face meeting at conclusion of the *Learning Table* to ensure states had the time to articulate their plans and action steps needed to achieve their goals. During the meeting the discussion centered on strategic communication skills and frameworks. This was an issue all state teams identified as an area to address. We also engaged mentor states who had implemented the policies each state team was focused on. Our participants were able to speak to others in role-alike positions about specific strategies and challenges that came with improving teaching and learning policy.

What We Learned:

Within the more focused TA we provided to cohort 3, we were able to more deeply engage around each state's context informing the group's goals and progress. As states experienced natural changes in team leadership composition, we saw the value in having a process like the *Learning Table* in place where diverse stakeholders could learn from one another as they drove toward making policy changes. We also saw the importance of flexibility within a sustained commitment to reaching the goals. Establishing a designated state team liaison as well as a state team facilitator to keep the group on track greatly enhanced the third cohort's progress.

QUESTION 2: How did we change the content and structure of the *Learning Table* and why?

When BUILD/CEELO launched this collaboration, we knew the design and content would evolve as we learned from one another as well as from participants. Indeed, helping our organizations become more adept at providing TA was a key outcome of this project. We learned about the policies we were focused on as well as the process through which we provided technical assistance. As a result, we modified the assistance we provided to state teams. In essence, the changes fell into two categories: content and process.

CONTENT CHANGES

The content we covered as a group evolved and included several important shifts. To begin, we elevated the importance of focusing on equity in our efforts to improve teaching and learning. When we launched our collaboration, we quickly realized that our goals were deeply tied to addressing disparities related to race, ethnicity, gender and social class of both children and teaching staff. We asked state teams to use an equity lens and intentionally work to mitigate disparities in the early childhood workforce. To support states in this work, we recognized that we needed greater expertise to substantively integrate issues of equity throughout the process. We consequently asked Dr. Aisha Ray, an expert in this area, to serve as a senior faculty member to the *Learning Table*. With her guidance and mentoring, we infused an equity framework throughout the work with states and built our internal capacity to support states to address equity. Although truly addressing these issues in a meaningful way needed more time and intensity than our Learning Table offered, it was critical to embed TA with specific content, tools and resources that address equity issues.

Second, states increasingly focused specifically on improving workforce policies. When we began, our scope was broader. Many states were grappling with demands to develop teacher accountability approaches that were coherent and developmentally appropriate, but federal policy changes took this challenge off the table for many states. The issue of teaching conditions was also important at the beginning of the Learning Table but did not gain traction, perhaps because states were more focused on improving and streamlining existing policies rather than exploring new policies that would need to be in place to address teaching conditions. Moreover, release of the Institute of

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Changes to the *Learning Table*

- Shifted webinars from presentations about exemplary or innovative approaches to sharing states' goals and strategies

- Offered more individualized substantive TA for state teams

- Engaged CEELO team leads who had ongoing relationships with state leaders

- Elevated the importance of addressing equity to achieve goals

- Identified leadership capacity building as central to the work and transcendent

- Focused on improving workforce development systems

Medicine's [Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation](#)[2] report may have contributed to states' recognition that policies to support early childhood educators' career pathways and professional learning had the greatest potential to improve young children's development.

The nature of the content changed over time from an emphasis on issue-oriented content (e.g., workforce competencies) to

an emphasis on systems-change (e.g., stakeholder engagement) that would be relevant to all of the participants. We made this change because states' goals and capacity differed and we realized that regardless of these differences, states were taking on important changes to their early learning systems. For example, in the second cohort's credentialing group, one state focused on improving elementary principal licensure, one state focused on creating professional learning policies, and

another state focused on career pathways and compensation. Even though all three states were tackling the issue of early educator credentialing and licensure, the content knowledge needed to implement these changes were quite different. We also noted that state team capacity for implementation differed – some states teams were just coming together for the first time or lacked authority to make policy changes while others had a long history of early learning system-building. Given these differences, it was critical to identify content that would enhance all states' progress. We therefore, focused our cross-state team time on system-building issues relevant to all states, such as strategic planning and stakeholder engagement. We coupled the transcendent themes with more individualized assistance to state teams focused on their specific goals.

Process Changes

The process we used to support state teams shifted over the three years. We added an in-state technical assistance visit into the cohort structure. Our intention was for the entire state team to learn more about the state's early learning system and focus on their goals. We added this component because implementing the desired policy changes would require strong relationships among the team members and firm commitments to action that could best be fostered face-to-face in the state context. During these visits, TA leads shared resources about promising state practices and facilitated planning for strategic action.

We also minimized the role of webinars to deliver content and promote peer exchange

2   Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, LaRue Allen and Bridget B. Kelly, Editors, "Higher Education and Ongoing Professional Learning," in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation,* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2015).

over the three years of the Learning Table. As one participant noted, "*The webinars were interesting and sometimes helpful but often the information was not closely aligned to what we were working on. We didn't seem to fit neatly with what the other participating states were doing.*" We learned that in-person engagement was more effective to draw connections between the states.

In the final round, we held the in-person meeting at the end of the *Learning Table*. We invited mentor states to the meeting to provide targeted advice and support to state teams. We pursued this approach based on the intention that the state team would have a strong sense of their goals and implementation considerations after several months of working together and so they would be able to make the most of in-depth TA engagement at that time.

QUESTION 3: What impact did we have in supporting participating states to improve state policy?

Throughout each cohort, we consistently asked participants to share their progress. **Appendix A** summarizes the action steps that state teams reported they had taken to improve early learning polices. For example, *Massachusetts* set a goal of considering credentialing and compensation. Through the course of the *Learning Table*, they developed a working paper and position statement about how they could tackle these issues. *Georgia* set a goal of developing a coaching credential and two years later, the

credential is in place. ***Mississippi*** worked toward increasing the number of licensed early childhood teachers and one of their early achievements was the publication of a career and college brief to be distributed throughout the states. Mississippi is also engaging Aisha Ray to advance their higher education faculty workgroup to consider how their programs can improve to support black early education candidates and more culturally responsive practice.

The *Learning Table* helped move states forward on these complex challenges. It created the time and space for state leaders to think about their systems and learn together about possibilities for improving teaching and learning. It was a catalyst for engaging diverse stakeholders together to consider their goals and ways in which they could achieve them. In the words of the ***Massachusetts*** team:

> "Since its inception, the Massachusetts' BUILD/CEELO *Learning Table* has had representation from all three state agencies and has been the place where all key representatives have been engaged. By convening regularly, the *Learning Table* has been the forum to orient new members, to continue to engage in continuous learning, and to keep momentum around a common vision."

The team from **Georgia** had similar reflections, emphasizing the benefit of having an opportunity to engage with partners as part of a long-term process:

> "Participation in the Learning Table was helpful in that it allowed us focused time to conceptualize our vision. Our goal is an

adaptive one and will take time, multiple approaches and projects to realize. The Learning Table also built relationships within the department and externally with participants from other agencies."

The **Washington State** team emphasized the opportunity of learning from other states that had pursued specific strategies to reach similar goals, noting that "The Learning Table helped us make connections with those in other states doing similar work"

Reflecting on our impact, we understand changing state policy and practice is incremental and iterative. Most states are working on deeply entrenched challenges and long-term policy problems. Issues like compensation, retention, and the restructuring of regulations and pre-service professional preparation pathways take time to address and evolve over time. We are well aware that when it comes to improving teaching and learning policy "layers and layers" of TA combined with state team members' expertise, patience, and perseverance are all needed to create change. In many cases, progress was slowed by changing team membership or roles, other state policy priorities, and/or the need for deep collaboration and relationship building across sectors within states. Many of the states have already signed up to additional national technical assistance opportunities – through BUILD and CEELO and with other

national partners. Through ongoing engagement and with national TA that is available, the states we have worked with are committed to continuing to improve early childhood teaching and learning.

? QUESTION **4: What is the expertise, experience, and skills that TA providers need to effectively implement TA to state leaders?**

As we reflect on our team's contribution to state policy change, we recognize that our technical assistance was stronger because our team had diverse experience, capacity, and perspectives. A rich constellation of abilities and competencies shaped the TA that we provided, individually and collectively, to each state team. Our TA team included individuals with experience leading state policy, developing state leaders, and research. Our team had content expertise in building professional development systems and in elevating policy to support more equitable early learning systems. Our organizational missions and commitments also informed our process. For example, CEELO's guiding principles articulate a commitment to ground policy and practice in research; promote sustainable change; foster innovation and results-focused approaches; and, reflect and respect diversity. Likewise, BUILD is committed to providing states with consultation, learning opportunities, tools, cross-state peer-to-peer

exchanges, and in-state planning and implementation assistance. These efforts help

The Learning Table engaged experienced technical assistance providers in an ongoing intensive, complex project with multiple dimensions. Our team - this paper's author Kate Tarrant, BUILD's Debi Mathias, CEELO's Lori Connors-Tadros and Jana Martella, and our resident expert on equity Aisha Ray - met frequently throughout the project. We discussed the content we wanted delivered based on our emerging knowledge of participant needs, and we reflected on what would best move teams along a policy trajectory on behalf of the educators and children in their states. In addition, our frequent meetings were an opportunity to reflect on what we were learning about the states, and to adjust how we designed the TA to support policy change. As a consequence of this collective work and our group reflection, we have become better TA providers.

state leaders to increase quality, expand access, and promote equitable outcomes for our youngest children.

We believe some of the most important skills and competencies for state TA liaisons include:

- Responsive—listen to states' interests and goals and match them with appropriate supports

- Systems thinking—support states to consider the big picture and how their specific goals intersect with the early learning system

- Pragmatic—support states to pursue the doable goals in the time frame available to build momentum for change

- Resourceful—connect states with subject matter experts and resources to advance their goals

Each member of the TA team grew professionally as a result of working collaboratively over multiple years on this project, learning both from each other and the states. The time we had to collaborate—with bi-monthly planning calls during each *Learning Table*–added to the depth and breadth of work with participating states. This collaboration also contributed to our independent TA efforts by each organization.

? QUESTION **5: What are the lessons learned and recommendations for the design of future TA?**

This paper documents our TA effort to improve our work with states and support the work of the broader TA community working with the state leaders who have the tremendous responsibility of implementing early learning policy. As we look to the future, our lessons learned and recommendations fall into three categories: (1) the facilitators responsible for designing the *Learning Table*, (2) *Learning Table* group composition, and (3) state team characteristics.

1 **Recommendations for *Learning Table* design:**

- *Lengthen the duration of the Learning Table.* Policy change takes time and we saw greater progress and engagement from states that participated in two rounds. Moving forward we would pursue ongoing engagement over one to two years to sustain momentum for change and the active participation of members.

- *Host at least two face-to-face meetings of state team leads.* A meeting at the onset setting the stage for the *Learning Table* provides important foundational content and creates the opportunity for participants to develop relationships that are needed for deeper peer support. A meeting at the end or mid-point of the *Learning Table* allows state team leaders to support one another after their state team has clarified its goal and they are wrestling with specific issues related to implementation.

- *Carefully design webinars to be relevant and interactive for all participants.* In order for webinars to be useful, there must be clear expectations about topics that will be covered and how they may be worth participants' time. A Learning Table may host subject matter webinars that are designed for all participants from each state team to learn about important

innovations or research. Because these types of webinars are largely one-way exchanges that may not provide actionable information, it is more important to also host more process-oriented webinars with state team leads. These types of webinars create a space for peer support with a more intimate give-and-take in which participants can ask questions of one another about specific policy design and implementation.

- *Engage mentor states.* Participants can gain valuable information from leaders from other states who have similar responsibilities and who have accomplished policy changes that are highly aligned with participants' interests. The *Learning Table* context is a safe space to have specific discussions about the nitty-gritty issues involved in implementing new policies. Mentors provide concrete, valuable, and actionable advice to state leaders seeking to make policy changes.

- *Address cross-cutting issues.* There are some commonalities in all states related to implementing early learning policy change: equity, system-building, communications, sustainability. Provide expertise and resources in these areas to build leaders' capacity to take on these issues in their states as they strive to address policy changes.

- *Assess state team's readiness and capacity:* When considering participation, establish a process to help the state team members through an assessment of their "readiness" to engage in the work given their state's context and engagement of key leaders. During the process, be responsive to states regarding their ongoing involvement when policy shifts may limit their capacity to pursue Learning Table goals.

- *Designate state team liaison.* Within the facilitation team there should be one person responsible for communicating with each state team. Having one point of contact allows the facilitator to build relationships with state team members and become familiar with policy issues and context and therefore provide more relevant resources and supports.

- *Define clear deliverables and expectations for the State teams.* Given how busy each state is, clearly defining the expectations and shared responsibility for the team and each member helps keep the team on track, and ensure that abstract ideas become a concrete reality leading to change. The TA liaison and/or the state team lead facilitated this process, for example by creating a workplan or editing and co-authoring a report.

2 Recommendations for *Learning Table* Group Composition

- *Create a Learning Table composed of 4-6 states.* The number of states that participate in the *Learning Table* greatly impacts the quality of the peer engagement. A smaller group does not ensure diversity of ideas and perspectives, whereas it is difficult to cultivate deep peer support and active engagement with a larger group.

- *Ensure state teams' goals are aligned.* In order for states to truly engage with one another on policy change, there needs to be some degree of alignment in the issues states are tackling. In addition, states with similar political contexts (e.g., states with fiscal issues, states with supportive legislatures, state with strong early childhood governance structures) can be more supportive of one another in terms of managing the policy change process.

3 Recommendations for *Learning Table* State Policy Team

- *Designate a team facilitator or co-facilitators.* It is essential to have someone responsible for setting up the meetings (including calendar invitations) and for taking and disseminating notes about decisions. Careful attention to logistics is critical to ensuring that participants' time is well-spent and

that meetings are efficient and action-oriented to keep the group moving forward.

- *Identify goals that are achievable.* Making early learning policy change is a complex undertaking and it is critical that the group identify goals that are achievable and that can be broken into doable actions within the duration of the *Learning Table*. In order to achieve the goals, the group also needs access to key decision makers throughout the process so that plans are supported and able to gain traction.

- *Select team members with diverse perspectives.* The team should have representatives from across the early learning system. Cross-sector representation and a diversity of perspectives should be brought to the conversation and planning.

- *Engage the full state team early in the process.* Part of the value of the *Learning Table* is that it creates a structure for stakeholders to build relationships with one another and work on common goals. To maximize this opportunity, the state team should come together as a group early in the process and then set standing meetings for regular communications on progress. A structured and predictable process for the state team facilitates greater group cohesion and active engagement.

Concluding Thoughts

From the outset of our collaboration, the State Policy *Learning Table* evolved to accommodate the specific goals of each state. Additionally, we reflected on our technical assistance and adjusted both the early learning policy resources and the types of professional learning experiences that we felt could benefit the state leaders. As we look to the future, we are committed to sharing our expertise to advance the understanding of our technical assistance colleagues and state leaders about how best to engage strategic processes to improve state policy. CEELO and BUILD will continue to work with state leaders, collectively and individually, as we pursue our organizations' respective missions for children, families, educators, and policy makers.

APPENDIX A: Goals and accomplishments of state teams from April 2015-July 2017[3]

ROUND ONE STATES: April 2015-August 2015	
Goals	Accomplishments
Georgia	

• Strengthen cross-sector professional development system
 	
• Increase focus on leadership for ECE administrators
	• Re-convene the Professional Development Leadership Team (cross-agency group)
	   o Explore interest in and feasibility of a Birth – 8 Summit
	   o Explore effective teacher leader models to increase knowledge and practice of teacher leadership
	   o Evaluate our professional development system using NAEYC Professional Development Systems Indicators tool
	• An internal DECAL group is meeting monthly to discuss the *Transforming the Workforce* report and discuss implications for our work.
	• Implement Director Leadership Institute for child care center directors and family child care providers.
	• Review the requirements for the existing 40-hour Director Course for consistency with current research and make recommendations

New Jersey	

• Develop a plan to ensure that appropriate supports are in place to allow practitioners across all levels to utilize Grow NJ Kids
 	
• Develop a plan to ensure that the above supports are sustainable
	• Implement a Directors Track in the NJ Training Academy that promotes culturally responsive practice
	   • Before comprehensive offerings for program directors can be designed, a workforce inventory on offerings for Directors must be conducted
	   • The NJCYC has been working on this inventory since May and presented results to all state agencies
	• Support teacher effectiveness by revising performance standards and developing Infant-Toddler credential that emphasized cultural competent teaching

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3   Note: The accomplishments reported in this table reflect feedback and presentations from states teams as they completed their participation in the Learning Table. Sates may have made additional progress or shifted course since sharing this information.

ROUND ONE STATES: April 2015-August 2015	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Pennsylvania	
• *Keystone Stars Goal:* Inform the STARS revision work so the standards reflect what is known about supporting effective teaching practices in education. Identify policies that will provide a clear path to the development of supportive working environments for teachers in early learning programs."	• Inquiry due to be published by end of August • Stakeholder meetings/feedback and field communication • Revisions of Performance Standards in the mindset of "Plan, Do, Study, Act" • "Tweaking" current Professional Development to provide a clear path to the development of supportive working environments for teachers in early learning programs. • Usage of CLASS and other teacher interaction supports/ guidance as a Continuous Quality Improvement activity. • Usage of Peer Mentors to build strong relationships and support STARS movement. • Alternative pathways for teaching staff who have many years of experience without a degree. • Revision of QRIS formatting and other related research for making effective decisions.
• *Infant Toddler Credential Goal:* Include intentional conversations and decision-making around ensuring cultural competence in the development of the new Infant/Toddler credential within Pennsylvania.	• Workgroup made recommendations for Pennsylvania's Infant/Toddler Credential. A workgroup was created with representation from Early Intervention, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Head Start, Pennsylvania Key, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Higher Education, Bureau of Certification, and Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute. • Utilize NAEYC's Pathways to Cultural Competencies Tool for Programs as a guide and any other evidence-based resources • Start consultation work with Zero to Three organization
Rhode Island	

• Identify essential teaching practices that Rhode Island will promote to move child outcomes forward and develop a plan to identify mechanisms for achieving this at the SEA, LEA, and school level.	• Align and clarify expectations/ evaluation processes for ECE teachers and align professional development to support expectations
	  o Strengthen Implementation of the Danielson Framework in ECE Classrooms
	  o Examine alignment with professional development*
	    ▪ Identify existing aligned PD
	• Examine and Improve Connection between PD and Evaluation

• Identify essential aspects of working/teaching conditions that Rhode Island will promote to move child outcomes forward and develop a plan to identify mechanisms for achieving this at the SEA, LEA, and school level.	• Align, clarify, and improve expectations/evaluation processes for ECE administrators and align PD to support expectations
	• Use to Revise (Draft) Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Administrators
	  o Strengthen Administrator Evaluation Systems for ECE Context
	  o Examine Aligned PD
	    ▪ Create aligned administrator certificate
	    ▪ Identify Aligned Existing PD
	  o Examine and Improve Connection between PD and Evaluation

ROUND ONE STATES: April 2015-August 2015	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Illinois	

• Ensuring Racially, Culturally, and Linguistically Competent Teaching for Each and Every Child	• Coordinate work across agencies to support EC workforce by conducting
	  o Workforce study
	  o Review credentials
	  o Develop toolkit on job-embedded professional development
	• Explore opportunities to support cross-sector professional development

• Integrating Teaching Conditions into State's Professional Development and Accountability Structures	• Develop toolkit for administrators to implement embedded professional development

ROUND TWO STATES: March 2016 - June 2016	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Florida	
Goal 1 - Early learning providers in Florida understand, utilize, and are supported in the use of appropriate instructional tools and corresponding data for continuous quality improvement efforts.	Partially met objective related to development of policy and practice protocols to assist providers in using CQI tools, substantive work has occurred that focuses on resource gathering and dissemination to stakeholders. Other work is ongoing.
Goal 2 - Early learning programs in Florida screen all children with ASQ and ASQ-SE and are able to access infant mental health consultation.	Partially met objective related to develop a model implementation policy for the use of ASQ and supports for providers and families. Survey to providers has been completed on current use of ASQ and FL team has sought guidance from other states and ZERO to THREE
Goal 3 - Florida has child outcome standards that responsibly and appropriately integrate developmentally appropriate learning gains.	Goal not addressed at this time.
Georgia	
Goal: Develop a policy around professional development that endorses professional learning (why professional learning is important and the benefits for children's outcomes) in order to empower and educate early care and education professionals to thoughtfully approach their professional learning. Goal: To develop consistent standards for high-quality job-embedded professional development (JEPD) in early childhood programs across varying settings and funding sources. This will empower and encourage programs to count JEPD toward in-service clock hours required by the States' licensing process, early childhood funding streams and educator credentialing systems.	• The Georgia team is developing a framework and policy to establish and govern professional learning practices/communities (PLC). • Georgia has identified a number of sources of evidence within the state that can help them meet their policy goal, including (1) existing resources within the tech schools, (2) existing PLCs, (3) Quality Rated system manual and other in-state documents that have language about a professional learning plan. The GA team has also identified potential out-of-state and national resources that can assist them in developing a professional learning policy and associated resources. • Georgia has articulated a number of resources and barriers to implementation, including existing regulations governing annual required training hours (40) for early childhood directors, and the capacity of existing organizations to develop PLCs (e.g., CCR&Rs in the state). • LT team has organized opportunities into immediate and future, including strengthening the CCR&R system and the connections between that system and independent providers as a means of increasing capacity.

ROUND TWO STATES: March 2016 - June 2016	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Louisiana	
Goal: Teachers in all program types (child care, Head Start, Pre-K) receive observation debriefs as part of their twice annual *CLASS* observations. These debriefs provide insights into each teacher's strengths and weaknesses. However, access to strategies and information that promote a maximized potential for change in teacher practice may vary between programs and sites. Louisiana's Learning Table Team will create the foundational structure and plan for a toolbox of resources that will support teachers to make sustainable action plans based on debrief results	The LA team did not articulate a specific goal or set of objectives, rather they shared with the Build/CEELO team their plans for developing a "Beyond the Debrief Toolbox." Status report is derived from that document. The LA team has set forth a set of steps in achieving this goal/product of a Toolbox and has phased these steps, with Objective 1 having been completed during Spring 2016 (see also, LA report for the Toolbox structure). Objective 2 is underway. • Objective 1 – Develop organizational structure for the Toolbox • Objective 2 – Identify criteria and create rubric (Summer 2016) • Objective 3 – Call for materials – both in-state, and national materials for Toolbox (Fall 2016) • Objective 4 – Create a workgroup to review materials and develop contents (Winter 2017) • Objective 5 – Publish toolbox (Spring 2017).
Massachusetts	

Goal: Create a unified model of credentialing in ECE, which sits within an integrated system across all 3 sectors EEC, ESE, and DHE; maintains the cultural and linguistic diversity that is the MA early educator workforce; and advances better compensation for all qualified early educators.	• MA identified a number of state-specific data sources they could leverage to help them complete their work. These resources are too numerous to list here but include sources from the EEC and the ESE Departments, as well as data on the ECE workforce and workforce standards. MA also included in the sources of evidence Build's scan of state's credentialing systems.
	
	• MA team has split into two workgroups – one focusing on compensation and one focusing on connected pathways (see also, "MA final report outline" submitted with strategic plan)
	
	• The MA team identified two objectives to meeting their policy goal. No timelines for or status of the work to date were provided in the strategic plan report:
	
	   o Objective 1 – Continue bridging EEC Course Content and Alignment Project with DHE Early Childhood Academic Transfer Pathways work
	
	   o Objective 2 – Create a plan to establish the B8 or BG3 I, II, III at EEC including a final decision on nomenclature (e.g. B8 or BG3)

ROUND TWO STATES: March 2016 - June 2016	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Nebraska	
Goal: Examine existing professional development opportunities and introduce additional research-based strategies that will enhance the learning environment for all children independent of race and place	Nebraska identified 5 objectives to meeting their policy goal. Substantive work has been completed on the first objective, and planning has taken place regarding the second. • Objective 1 – Examine Nebraska Core Competencies (NCC) and ELGs (Early Learning Guidelines) to see if they are current. The team has developed a working alignment document between the Preschool and K standards. Other tasks, including potential hiring for a Grade 1 to 3 transition and alignment specialist, and revision of other sets of standards, are underway. • Objective 2 – Proceed with a cross walk between what we expect educators to know (NCC) and what educators are being expected to teach or the tools they are expected to provide according to (ELGs / State Standards). Thought has been given to this crosswalk by the LT team, but they are waiting for the NCC and the B-3 standards to be revised before proceeding with development. • Objective 3 – Analyze data from various EC sources to determine how professional development can improve upon child outcomes (education, training, technical assistance); develop list of current PD and determine whether aligned with NCC. Work on this objective has not yet begun. • Objective 4 – Examine final outcomes and create a plan showing how NDE-EC can best address the needs of children and educators through professional development opportunities (education, training, TA). Work on this objective has not yet begun. • Objective 5 – Determine what changes / procedures / trainings will be implemented to better meet the needs of children and families. Work on this objective has not yet begun.
North Carolina	
Goal: Investigate policy implications and legislative strategies that will lead to ensuring: (1) Principals who oversee early childhood programs in public schools have the requisite early childhood education pedagogy necessary to be an instructional leader, and (2) Higher retention levels for elementary school principals	• NC articulated a plan that includes in-service PD for elementary school principals, a reworking of preparation pathways and IHE capacity for principal prep, and an overhaul of the structures for retention and compensation. • NC articulated a procedure for achieving their goal that begins with a survey of NC principals, incorporates research on badging and licensure policies in other states, and enlists the support of the Dept of Public Instruction, State Board of Ed, the Governor's Cabinet, and the legislature

ROUND TWO STATES: March 2016 - June 2016	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Washington State	
• Create a roadmap to achieve common credentialing, support articulation across higher education institutions and across early learning professions/positions. • Develop a vision for competency-based degrees that highlights the demonstration of skills, competency and incorporates practice-based learning. • Identify a plan for addressing the supply and demand in early learning and P-3 education, using data to inform the conversation	Supported by the Department of Early Learning, Washington's ECE faculty professional organization, the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Council (ECTPC), has been working on the following: • Dedicated work group to update the advising templates. These templates list course requirements for transferring students as they move from the common State Stackable Certificates, into the common AAS-T (transfer) degrees, and onto ECE BA degrees. The options for ECE BA degrees have greatly increased. Recently community technical colleges have been granted the ability to offer Bachelor of Applied Science degrees. Three colleges have enrolled cohorts and 5 colleges are in the pipeline to start up. Scholarships administered through Child Care Aware and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges support staff currently working in Early Achievers (QRIS) sites in earning ECE certificates and degrees. College enrollments are at all-time highs. • Another ECTPC group of professionals is updating the student outcomes of 16 common courses, which make up the State ECE Stackable Certificates. At the request of Head Start partners, one more area of specialization has been added to the common certificates, Home Visiting/Family Engagement. Members of the work group are also engaged with high school vocational teachers, establishing means for dual credit courses and filed experience in early learning. The rollout of the new common course templates and recommended resources is expected April 2018. • Conducted a CDA inventory, looking at how the CDA is currently articulated at community and technical colleges throughout the state. There has been some discussion of how the CDA can be merged into credit-bearing programs. Washington has created an Early Childhood Education Workforce Council, funded and staffed by the Department of Early Learning, with representatives from state agencies, postsecondary education programs (both two- and four-year), nonprofits, and early childhood educators. The Council's mission statement is to support the development of Washington's qualified, diverse and competitively compensated educators across all early learning settings. The Council will focus on ensuring that the degrees, certificates, and endorsements for early learning are progressive, valued, and transferable. The Council has formed three workgroups, looking at compensation, standards & equivalents, and career pathways.

ROUND THREE STATES: January 2017 - July 2017	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Mississippi	
Goal 1: To increase the number of state licensed early childhood educators	1a. Met with some college and university deans/chairpersons and instructors along with state officials to discuss the deficit of early childhood licensed teachers and barriers to licensure.
	1b. Updated current higher education courses for early childhood.
	1c. Adopted community college child development technology competencies by both the community and 4-year colleges in Mississippi.
	1d. Requiring early childhood special education teachers to have a general education pre-k or pre-k/k endorsement.
Goal 2: To develop supports to assist early childhood students	2a. Created a document to pass out to high school CTE, 2yr, and 4yr colleges/universities.
	2b. Secured funds to support a cohort of students to get tutoring for the Praxis Core.
Massachusetts	
Work across the Departments of Early Education and Care, Higher Education, and Elementary and Secondary Education and with partners from Strategies for Children and Higher Education to use research and information from other states to: Inform policies and actions to **create a more aligned and cohesive** early childhood career **pathway**.	• Supported the Department of Higher Education's creation of an Early Childhood Education Mass Transfer Pathway that gives undergraduate early educator-students in public institutions the ability to transfer required course credits in 4 specific foundational courses from institution's early childhood program to another. (Two-year process that involved 2- and 4-year institutions with support from BUILD/CEELO Learning Table and is now in effect as of fall 2017). Obtained support from Commissioners of DEEC and Higher Education and a Board of Higher Education which resulted in vote to modify the Early Childhood Educator Scholarship program in the following ways: a. priority was given to students who are in degree programs nearest to completion of degrees in early education; b. institutions are required to advise student-educators educators to support degree completion and early educators are required to seek advising; and, c. began to implement changes to ensure students are aware they have the scholarships in time to use the funds to register for fall classes. Changes were authorized April 1, 2017 and changes in IT and other systems are being made currently to support the smooth implementation of these changes
Inform an agenda to address the low **compensation** of the early care and education workforce.	• Partners developed a report that summarizes policies and practices from other states and the Department of Defense to address early childhood compensation. • The research report has been used to gain support from stakeholders' including Speaker DeLeo's Business Advisory Group on the EEC Group support policies that would lead to enhanced compensation. • The report, along with other information was used to inform the Massachusetts State Legislature in supporting the approval of rate increases that give salary enhancements to some early educators working in contracted programs. Total amount of rate increase was $38.5 million. Learning Table was part of a larger effort to seek enhanced compensation for the workforce.

ROUND THREE STATES: January 2017 - July 2017	
Goals	**Accomplishments**
Nebraska	
Goal 1: Determine knowledge and skills that our workforce needs, wherever they are in their continuum of learning, to teach the skills needed by the children in their classroom	Revising Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals B-5 (larger focus on DLL and a crosswalk with leading EC documents- NAEYC, etc.) [objective 1 on original action plan – revise Core Comps and begin work on B-3 ELGs revisions]
Goal 2: Determine how to best work with the current workforce to engage and energize their steps toward acceptance of needed skill acquisition and implementation.	Additional training offerings for EC providers overall *provide needed skills to existing workforce- working on *focus on DLL regarding online learning opportunities – reviewed and will offer through WIDA (previously part of objective 3 on original action plan– filling in gaps of previously offered trainings)

ABOUT CEELO: One of 22 Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) will strengthen the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to lead sustained improvements in early learning opportunities and outcomes. CEELO will work in partnership with SEAs, state and local early childhood leaders, and other federal and national technical assistance (TA) providers to promote innovation and accountability. For other *CEELO Policy Reports*, *Policy Briefs*, and *FastFacts*, go to http://ceelo.org/ceelo-products.

ABOUT BUILD: BUILD Initiative is a national effort that helps advance state efforts on behalf of young children (prenatal - five), their families, and communities. BUILD Initiative partners with early childhood leaders focused on family support and engagement, early learning, health, mental health, and nutrition to create the infrastructure necessary for quality and equity. BUILD Initiative supports these leaders by providing consultation, learning opportunities, resources, tools, cross-state peer-to-peer exchanges, and in-state planning and implementation assistance. These efforts help state leaders to increase quality, expand access, and promote equitable outcomes for our youngest children.

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