

## Greater Waterville Alliance on Early Care & Learning

### Background

Since 2005, the United Way of Mid-Maine's Child and Youth Community Impact Team (CIT) has identified early childhood as one of their priorities for capacity-building and service delivery towards positive outcomes.

At the same time, Greater Waterville's Communities for Children and Youth Coalition (GWC4CY) gathered data and interest among partners to create meaningful change in the area of early childhood supports for families with young children in our area.

In late July of 2006, members of both groups come together to draft the first Purpose Statement and Goals with which to convene a broad-based stakeholder group deemed the Greater Waterville Alliance on Early Care and Learning.

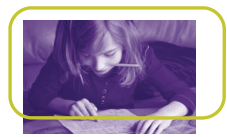
### Mission Statement

To align community organizations and resources to coordinate support of Greater Waterville's youngest children resulting in a positive impact on school-readiness and the economic success of our communities as a whole.

The Alliance serves the towns of Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, Oakland, Benton, Sidney, Belgrade, Clinton, China, and Vassalboro.

### Core Values

- We believe in advocacy for young children prenatal to age five and their parents and caregivers
- We believe in community education focusing on quality early care and education
- We believe play and exercise, are essential to healthy development



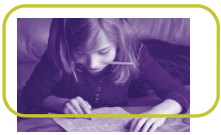
## Greater Waterville Alliance on Early Care & Learning

### Priorities

- Provide consultation services and supports to Educare Central Maine;
- Provide comprehensive community feedback to issues and services related to families with young children;
- Assess the validity and utility of information relating to services and supports to young children;
- Identify appropriate funding sources for quality early care and learning;
- Provide leadership to integrating service partnerships and communications in support of children in early childhood in order to enhance their ability to enter school healthy and ready to learn;
- Help build an early childhood service system that addresses the critical access to comprehensive pediatric services and medical homes; social-emotional supports for young children's early care and education; parenting education, and family supports.
- Ensure the municipal and business infrastructures are aligned to support accessible; quality childcare for area businesses and their employees to ensure improved productivity and reduced workforce loss due to insufficient care;
- Support parents of young children in their efforts to obtain needed resources and education, early connections to other parents, and the schools to which their child/ren will enter.

### Guiding Principles

- The work is a comprehensive and multifaceted approach designed to enable developmental success, as children enter into K-12 systems;
- The work aligns and coordinates priorities for the welfare of the community's children;
- The work is designed to support employers, local non-profit strategic plans and city/town government;
- The work is focused on prenatal to age 5 children, their parent/s and caregivers;
- The work is population-based and universal, although with specific attention to those who most need support in order to be successful;
- The outcome of our work is to enable children to be successful.



## Greater Waterville Alliance on Early Care & Learning

### Accomplishments 2006-2010

- Formed Alliance between United Way of Mid-Maine and Greater Waterville's Communities for Children and Youth Coalition partners
- Collected child care needs data from over 20 employers with over 400 responses
- Collected and organized data on early childhood capacity and economic impact
- Organized and hosted Breakfast Forum with 40 Area leaders
- Engaged Hathaway Developer in quality early care center planning
- Responded to Educare Maine RFP and was awarded demonstration site
- Established as Advisory Committee for Educare Central Maine
- Model for statewide early childhood collaborative



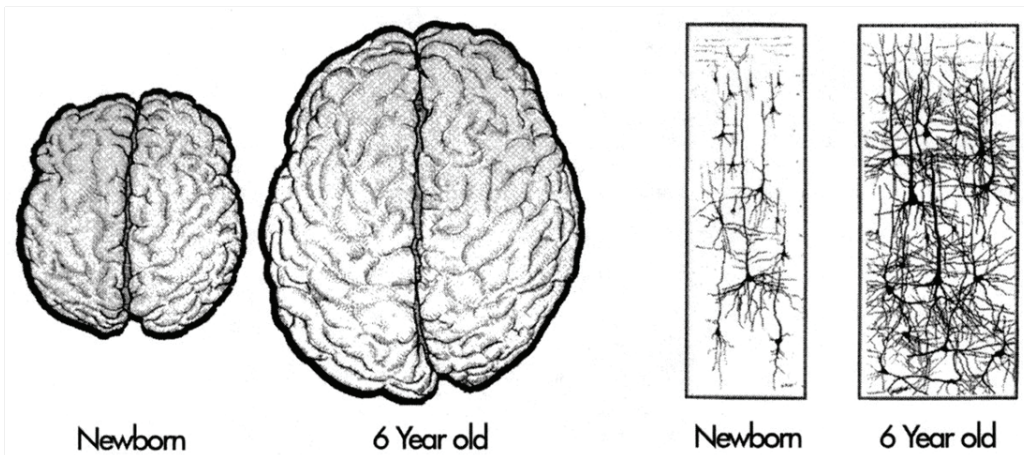
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### Why? Research

- Only 2-4% of babies are born with genetic disabilities or development delays; yet
- 18% of Maine youngsters are receiving special services;
- Statewide, Maine taxpayers spend \$300 million annually on special education costs to support students who enter school already behind in their learning;
- We spend less than 4% of public funds on early childhood education; and yet
- 90% of the brain is developed (wired) by age five. How well the brain grows is shaped by what does—or does not—happen in a child's first days, months, and years
- Nobel-prize-winning Economist report that investing \$1 dollar in birth to age five yields between \$7 (minimum) and \$17 in returns or savings.

## Important Connections are Made Prior to School-Entry

90% of brain growth occurs before kindergarten



Newborn brain size compared to that of a 6-year old brain

Newborn neural networks compared to networks of a 6-year-old

*Source: Paul Lambroso, "Development of the cerebral cortex: VI. Growth Factors I." Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 37(6): 674-675, 1998.*



## State Goals to Support Families with Young Children

### **Invest Early: FAMILY**

Establish Maine Family Networks

- Provide high quality Home Visiting Services Currently \$4.8M/yr --reaching 20% of first time families
- Cover all areas: \$275K/yr

Offer a continuum of parenting education

- Support Family Literacy Programs Dropped from \$1.1M (2006) to \$378K (2008)
- Family Place Libraries (\$10K/ea)

### **Invest Early: HEALTH**

Infuse health/safety programs with prevention, early intervention and care model philosophy

- Share and work with evidence-based practices and practice-based evidence (EBP): costly for statewide support, depends on model and evidence
- Coordinate system of infant mental health, Workforce development, training, payments
- Child Care + ME: \$250K/\$750K/\$1M

Ensure appropriate lead exposure screenings and assessments

- Improve/expand Child Care Health Consulting \$400K/\$800K ongoing
- Routinely immunize \$5M/yr for vaccine purchase

Provide preventive oral health care

### **Invest Early: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

Improve access to quality and affordable programs

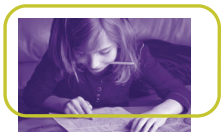
Increase subsidies and restore funding: \$3M/yr to return to FY02 levels

For Infant/toddler care by 20% and increase eligibility to 100% median income: \$750K/ \$1M/ \$1.5M ongoing

For at risk families not otherwise covered: \$250K/ \$500K/ \$750K ongoing

Expand Early Head Start for 0-3: \$250K/ \$750K/ \$1.5M ongoing

Improve licensing/enforcement capacity: \$500K/yr



## State Goals to Support Families with Young Children

### **Invest Early: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

Ensure a stable, high quality, qualified ECE workforce Quality Child Care Education Scholarships\$200,000/yr

- Implement Quality Rating System and its supports\$500K/ \$1M/ \$3M ongoing
- Increase tax credit for child care expenses: \$1.4M/yr

Coordinate and integrate quality services in public and private ECE settings

Support Community Collaboration Coaches\$175K/yr (DOE/DHHS partnership)

- Meet the social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs of developing children
- Establish model quality program in two communities—Educare (\$4M each)
- Address Child Development Services for children with special needs

### **Invest Early: LOCAL COMMUNITY**

Develop public private partnerships for “hubs”or co-located quality services

- Explore the viability of Family Resource Centers or Family Resource Coalitions Pilot Six Sites: \$320K/ \$520K /\$750K

Expand Community-based work supporting young children and families

- Include early childhood in municipal planning
- Increase access to Quality Child Care investment tax credit \$50K/yr

Ensure access to resource directories

### **Invest Early: STATEWIDE COMMUNITY**

- Coordinate the message about investing in young children
- Seed an endowment fund to match state and federal dollars
- Marketing campaign
- Engage the public in the work of the Task Force/Growth Council at [www.maine-eccs.org](http://www.maine-eccs.org)