Queen Anne's County
Early Learning Council
Results Accountability
Planning Report
September 5, 2013

Contributors:

*Peg Anawalt (Chesapeake College Childcare Resource Center)
Joan Brooks (Department of Community Services)
Dorothy Carpenter (The Family Center)
Jacki Carter (Character Counts)
Berth Clark (Shore UP! Inc.)
*Mike Clark (Local Management Board/ Community Services)
Cathy Dougherty (Department of Social Services)
Penni Doyle, (Community Mediation)
*Shelly Edwards (QACDH/Healthy Families)
Lynne Ewing (ESOL/Migrant Education Program)
Judith Gaston (Office of Oral Health)
Michele Hampton (Sudlersville Elementary School)
Mary Beth Johnson (MD State Department of Education/DLL/MD EXCELS)
*Stephanie Johnson (Board of Education)
*Elaine O'Neal (Board of Education)
Janet Sankur (Community Partnerships Board/ Parent)
Price Schuler (Office of Child Care)
*Geri Thompson (Judy Center Partnership/ Board of Education-Retired)
Mary Ann Thompson (Queen Anne's County Department of Health)
Kim Tucker (Child Find)
John Walden (QAC Free Library)
Linda R. Walls (Facilitator)
Christine Wright (WIC)
Lori Yarbrough (Judy Center Partnership)
*** Served on the Core Team**

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1. BACKGROUND and WHAT IS OUR DESIRED RESULT?
In collaboration with the Board of Education of Queen Anne's County and the Chesapeake College Child Care Resource Center, Queen Anne's County Community Partnerships for Children provided leadership to help establish the Queen Anne's County Early Learning Council. The Council was identified as the advisory stakeholder team to address optimal early childhood development for Queen Anne's County children ages 0-5. Representing key agencies, members of a core team attended Results Accountability (RA) training sessions hosted by the Annie E. Casey Family Foundation and the Maryland State Department of Education during FY 13 and FY 14. These training opportunities provided a practicum for applying a data-driven strategic planning framework in the team's home county. Results Accountability, created by Mark Friedman, is noted for its common language, common sense, and common ground features. A RA-trained facilitator worked along with Core Team to guide the Early Learning Council during two afternoons of focused planning on May 10 at Chesapeake College and August 29, 2013 at the Kramer Center in Centreville. The planning steps addressed at each session encompassed the following five key questions:

1) What is our desired result?
2) What are 2-3 headline indicators?
3) What is the story behind the headline indicators?
4) Who are the partners with a role to play in achieving the result?
5) What works to achieve the result?

The Council unanimously chose "Ready to Learn" as the response to "What is our desired result?" From there, the group addressed Questions 2 and 3 at the first large group meeting and Questions 4 and 5 at the second large group meeting. Prior to and between the meetings, the Core Team met one to two times per month to procure additional data, communicate with stakeholders, plan the details of the large group meetings, and provide parameters for facilitation.

2. WHAT ARE THE 2-3 HEADLINE INDICATORS FOR THE DESIRED RESULT?
Being aware of local demographics and economic conditions is an important foundation for early learning planning. During the first large planning session in May, the Council reviewed key demographic facts prior to consideration of the headline indicators.

According to the 2012 estimated Census there are 48,595 people living in Queen Anne's County. An official population increase of 17.8% between 2000 and 2010 was reported from the Census for the county. Nearly 90% of the population are white, 7% are black, 3.3% are Hispanic and less than 4% represent other races or a combination of races (U.S. Census 2012). At least 90.3% of people ages 25 and over have a high school diploma (2007-2011 Census). There are 14 public schools (8 elementary, 4 middle, 2 high schools) with a total FY 2013 enrollment of 7,752 students (MD Report Card) and 9 private schools with an estimated enrollment of 700 students, plus a community college (Brief Economic Facts, 2012). Of the 2012 estimated population totaling 48,595, 5.5% are under age 5, 22.9% are under age 18, and 16.1% are ages 65 and over.

Residents are employed locally in government, hospitality, manufacturing, and agriculture jobs – but the majority (60%) travel out of the county to work. The county has lower unemployment (6.4% for July 2013) and poverty rates (6.3% for 2007-2011) and higher per capita income ($37,366 for 2007-2011) than the national average. The county has 6,192 family households with children under age 18 and an estimated 1600 households with children ages 5 and under. The population distribution for children ages 0-5 is presented in the following table from the 2010 Census:

Population by Child Age Group for Queen Anne's County

Year ⬇ Age ➡	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2010	523	518	536	560	574	609	3,320

Source: Census.maryland.gov

Other local data pertaining to early childhood development was reviewed and included the following markers with a potential influence on early childhood development in Queen Anne's County:

➢ 24 babies were born to teen mothers in 2011 (MD Vital Statistics)
➢ 170 or 34% of 497 births were to unmarried mothers in 2011 (MD Vital Statistics)
➢ 80% of births were to mothers who received 1st trimester prenatal care (MD Vital Statistics)
➢ 8.9% (44) of babies born in 2011 had a low birth weight of 2,499 grams or less (MD Vital Statistics)
➢ 26% of public school children received free and reduced meals in 2011 (Kids Count)
➢ 11.8% of children live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, SAIPE)
➢ 14.2% of homes were vacant in the county from 2009-2011 (American Community Survey)
➢ The dropout rate in Queen Anne's County was 1.4% (35 students) in 2011-12 (Maryland State Department of Education)
➢ 10% of Grade 3 students performed below proficiency in Math and Reading in 2013 (Kids Count)
➢ 419 Grandparents were responsible for the care of their grandchildren in 2011 (American Community Survey); At least 52 grandparents in the north end of the county were counted as caring for their own grandchildren
➢ 5% or 579 people under age 19 did not have health insurance in 2011 (Small Area Health Insurance Estimates)
➢ There were 19 county children in out-of-home places at the end of April 2013 (Department of Human Resources: Data and Reports SSA)

After examining demographic and other relevant data, the next step in the planning process was consideration of the headline indicators supporting the desired result of ready to learn. School readiness has been tracked for more than a decade in Maryland. The annual Maryland State Department of Education Kindergarten Assessment – known as the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) – measures performance on language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development. The Maryland Content Standards and Maryland State Curriculum are included in the MMSR Framework defining early learning standards and indicators of what children should know and are able to do before they

begin formal education. The MMSR includes as its assessment component a customized Work Sampling System® (WSS) which is a portfolio-based assessment system that helps teachers document and evaluate children's skills, knowledge, behavior, and academic accomplishments across a variety of curricular areas.   Reporting of the scores reflects the percentage of students who have reached one of the levels of school readiness to include full readiness, approaching readiness, or developing readiness. As a key indicator, the planning team studied the trends in percentages for full readiness. For Queen Anne's County, the results are presented in the table below:

Overall and By Domain and Subgroups – Queen Anne's County % at Full School Readiness

Domain Area	2001/2002	2012/2013
Language and Literacy	41	73
Mathematical Thinking	50	79
Physical Development	73	94
Scientific Thinking	37	82
Social and Personal Development	70	87
Social Studies	59	85
The Arts	63	93
Overall – All Domains	64	88
African American –All Domains	38	82
Hispanic – All Domains	Not Tracked	64
Two or More Races – All Domains	Not Tracked	78
White –All Domains	68	91
Female – All Domains	76	90
Male –All Domains	56	86
Low Income –All Domains	34	80
Children w/ Disabilities – All Domains	45	73
Prior Care/Head Start –All Domains	38	78
Prior Care/ PreK –All Domains	64	86
Prior Care/Child Care Center –All Domains	63	94
Home/Informal Care – All Domains	59	84

Source: Maryland State Department of Education; ReadyatFive.org

Although there was a 3-point decline form 2011-2012 in the percentage of kindergarteners fully school-ready, Queen Anne's County showed an overall upward trend in readiness levels. The County demonstrated high readiness levels in all Domains of Learning, including Language & Literacy (73% fully school-ready for 2012-2013), Mathematical Thinking (79%), and Scientific Thinking (82%). Eighty-two percent (82%) of African-American children are fully ready to learn in 2012-2013, up from 38% in 2001-2002. The 44-point increase is significantly higher than the County's overall readiness gain. The percentage of Hispanic children who are fully school-ready climbed from 40% in 2002-2003 (the first year with more than 5 Hispanic kindergarteners) to 64% in 2012-2013, narrowing the school-readiness gap between Hispanic and white children to 27 points. Eighty percent (80%) of children from low-income households (as indicated by Free and Reduced Price Meal status) are fully school-ready. The 47-point increase from 2001-2002 reduced the readiness gap between children from low-income households and their peers from 36 points to 11 points in 2012-2013.   More English Language Learners (ELL) are fully school ready, up from 55% in 2002-2003 (the first year with more than 5 ELL students) to 59% in 2012-2013. This gain is significant because of the increasing number of ELL (a 39% one-year gain).

Children with disabilities made substantial school readiness progress: 73% fully school-ready in 2012-2013 – a 28-point jump from 2001-2002 reduced the school-readiness gap between children with disabilities and their peers from 21 points to 16 points. Kindergarteners attending public PreK the year prior to entering school continue to be well prepared with 86% fully school-ready in 2012-2013, up from 66% in 2001-2002. (Readyatfive.org)

After closely reviewing the school readiness indicators, the participants at the May 10th planning session discussed the question, "What are the 2-3 headline indicators for the desired result?" At the conclusion of the discussion, participants voted using the FLISTA.com polling site to select the top indicators as follows:

- ➢ Language and Literacy at 73%
- ➢ Low Income Children at 80%
- ➢ Sudlersville children are scoring lower on Readiness and Assessments

Other key indicators that the Council would like to monitor and address concurrently are:
- ➢ ELL (English Language Learners) students at 59%
- ➢ Gap between Head Start at 78% and Child Care Center at 94%
- ➢ Home and Informal Care at 84%
- ➢ Children with disabilities at 73%

Participants are especially concerned about children who fit into multiple lower performing categories and about children in specific geographical locations who are not fully ready (such as Sudlersville).

3. WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE HEADLINE INDICATORS?
At the first large planning session, participants pondered the question of the story behind the indicators. A lively discussion took place and participants from varying early childhood disciplines and agencies offered reasons and contributing factors for the position of the headline indicators.

- ➢ There are often fewer choices/ access to resources for the low income families
- ➢ There seems to be an increase in the number of children who are in the "gray area" missing out on services.
- ➢ Not all children who are eligible for Pre-K or for Head Start attend.
- ➢ There are an abundance of single families who do not take advantage of services.
- ➢ Not all families want their children in structured settings.
- ➢ A significant number of grandparents are raising children.
- ➢ Children who are raised by parents with a lower literacy level, may also have a lower literacy level.
- ➢ Nutrition and health, oral health may not be attended to. Even children enrolled in MCHP still do not get somatic services or do not get timely access.
- ➢ There is only one Head Start program in Queen Anne's County and the numbers are low.
- ➢ For Latino families in Sudlersville (now up to 17%), the learning curve must be taken into consideration – plus in Sudlersville, there are high FARMS numbers, low internet access (75%), transient families, pride, fear of immigrant reporting, lack of child care resources, and some families just will not access services

➢ Language & Literacy may be affected due to restricted verses elaborative language practices in the family and STEM initiatives.
➢ Materials for ELL families are not available in Sudlersville such as schools, libraries, public places.
➢ Since PreK is only half a day, some families will not take advantage due to work schedules, transportation needs, and other obligations.
➢ The north end of the county has very limited child care options.
➢ It seems the Purchase of Care dollars are not being accessed.
➢ Unregulated child care has increased.

Two common themes emerged around the "story behind" discussion. In the north county area, there are limited resources for early care, especially for low income and ELL families. Where there are resources, there seems to be difficulty in fully accessing and utilizing services, such as PreK.

4. WHO ARE THE PARTNERS WITH A ROLE TO PLAY?
The question of "Who are the partners with a role to play in achieving the desired result of ready to learn?" was asked of the participants at the second planning session on August 29th. Responses are provided next:

Families
Parents/Caregivers
Grandparents
Child Care/ Educare
  Providers
Office of Child Care
Schools/Board of
  Education
Public Agencies
Department of Social
  Services
The Local Management
  Board
Elected Officials
Community Services

QAC Free Library
WIC Program,
 Judy Center Partnership
Child Find
Character Counts!
Maryland State
  Department of Education
Casey Family Foundation
The Family Center
Community Mediation
Department of Health
Healthy Families
ESOL/ Migrant Education
Office of Oral Health
Media

Businesses (especially
 w/early child focus)
Chesapeake College
Chesapeake College
  Childcare Resource
  Center
Behavioral Health
  Supports
PNC Bank
Foundations
Parks and Recreation
Governor's Well Mobile
Washington College
 (interns)
MD Cooperative Extension

It was emphasized that including parents, caregivers, and family members of young children must be considered first and foremost in planning and in capacity building.

5. WHAT WORKS TO ACHIEVE THE RESULT?
The concluding portion of the August planning session was devoted to answering the question of "What works?" Participants were asked to focus on capacity building strategies first, keeping in mind that the pending grant opportunity is restricted to capacity building activities and the available funding for Queen Anne's County is restricted to approximately $23,000. Responses are summarized next and are listed by priority (via a FLISTI.com polling result):

Capacity Building Strategies (voters could each select three strategies)

Priority 1 (100% of voters):   Create a marketing plan that includes traditional and contemporary (social media) methodology and that takes into consideration the audience in terms of income, culture, language, geography, and experiences. Include resource information, not only about challenges, but specific to opportunities such as recreation leagues, school registration, parent groups, etc.

Priority 2 (64% of voters): Adopt and integrate the Strengthening Families approach throughout the county. This evidence-based approach (not a program) encompasses a continuum of levers, strategies, protective factors, and results. Parent Cafes can be an effective feature of this approach. It was suggested to convene a committee to examine which Strengthening Families best practices are already in place – so as not to recreate the wheel.

Priority 3 (45% of voters): Determine a list of training needs corresponding to key target populations (ELL, Low-income, Children w/disabilities), approaches (SEEFEL), and training leaders (professionals, teachers, parents, PTA, moms' groups, Day Care Association, Foster Care Association), then create training opportunities that reverberate, similar to a training of the trainers program. Ensure that mentoring and coaching are incorporated into the training process (avoiding a one shot approach).

Priority 3 (also 45% of voters): Establish internet access areas in the Sudlersville community at the schools, Sudlersville Library and other public spaces. Include (as a priority) Spanish language stations that prompt in Spanish (rather than English).

Priority 4 (36% of voters): Develop opportunities for bi-language training for staff to include professional, paraprofessional, front line, administrative staff. Support individuals who have had some Spanish training in high school and college with booster sessions to broaden core of people with bi-lingual abilities.

In case there might be future opportunities for funding program-oriented priorities, the group generated a list of desired programs and voted on these as well (allowing 2 votes per person in the FLISTI.com poll).

Program Oriented Strategies

Priority 1 (78% of voters):   Hire an Early Childhood Coordinator to conduct inventory, coordinate services, locate funding, mobilize resources, and support advocacy.

Priority 2 (11% of voters each): Sustain existing home visiting programs (i.e. Healthy Families) and supplement with bi-lingual staff.

Other suggestions included providing universal (full day) PreK, providing wraparound child care, and enhancing educare opportunities within child care centers or licensed providers.

Prior to adjournment from the second planning session, the participants declared next steps: 1) Convene the Core Team to present the plan at the next Casey Family Foundation training: 2) Create action teams to further develop the chosen strategies and to attach lead agencies and line item budgets to each; 3) Closely review the MSDE grant application for the $23,000 capacity building opportunity; and 4) Apply for the funding and submit the grant application by December 4, 2013.