State of Connecticut
Blue Ribbon Panel Workgroup

Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care

September 2023

Agenda

1. **Blue Ribbon Panel Context**

2. **Blue Ribbon Panel Draft Outline Review**
   - **Pillars**
   - **Goals & Objectives**

3. **Next Steps**

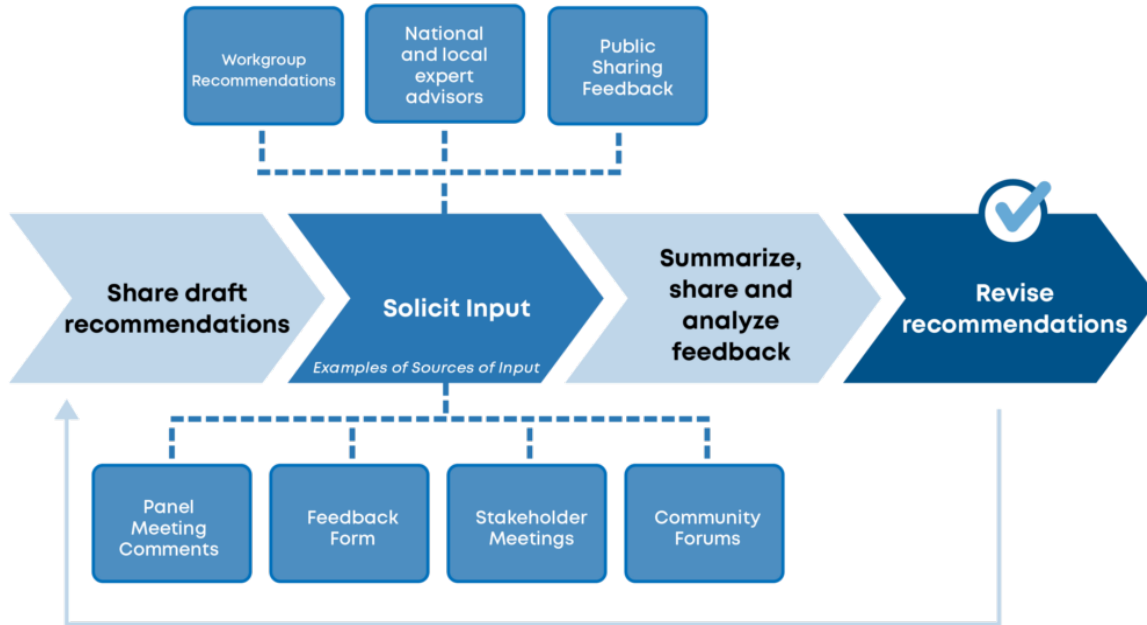Blue Ribbon Panel
on Child Care

Blue Ribbon Panel Context

The Charge to the Blue Ribbon Panel

- The Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care was initiated by Governor Lamont's Executive Order.

- The Panel is charged with developing a strategic plan for a child care system that works for families, providers, and Connecticut's economy.

- The Panel will outline a data-driven, actionable, 5-year strategic plan for Connecticut that supports family needs, business needs, and prioritizes equitable access to early care and education.

Feedback and Iteration

Workgroup Recommendations

National and local expert advisors

Public Sharing Feedback

Share draft recommendations

Solicit Input

Examples of Sources of Input

Summarize, share and analyze feedback

Revise recommendations

Panel Meeting Comments

Feedback Form

Stakeholder Meetings

Community Forums

- The recommendations presented today are the result of **several months of input and iteration** from workgroups, advisors, stakeholder meetings, and public feedback

- The draft outline will be **reviewed and updated by the Blue Ribbon Panel** and used to write the final plan that will be submitted to the Governor

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Draft Outline Review

Pillars of the Plan

EQUITY

Design the future ECE system so that investments and resources provide equitable opportunities for under-resourced families and communities

QUALITY

Support the development of both programs and providers to ensure all children have access to high-quality ECE

AFFORDABLE ACCESS

Build the system so that all families have access to affordable high-quality care that meets their specific needs

PROVIDER AND SYSTEM STABILITY

Support the ECE workforce - the bedrock of a stable and high-quality ECE system. Develop and fund the system for long term strength and stability
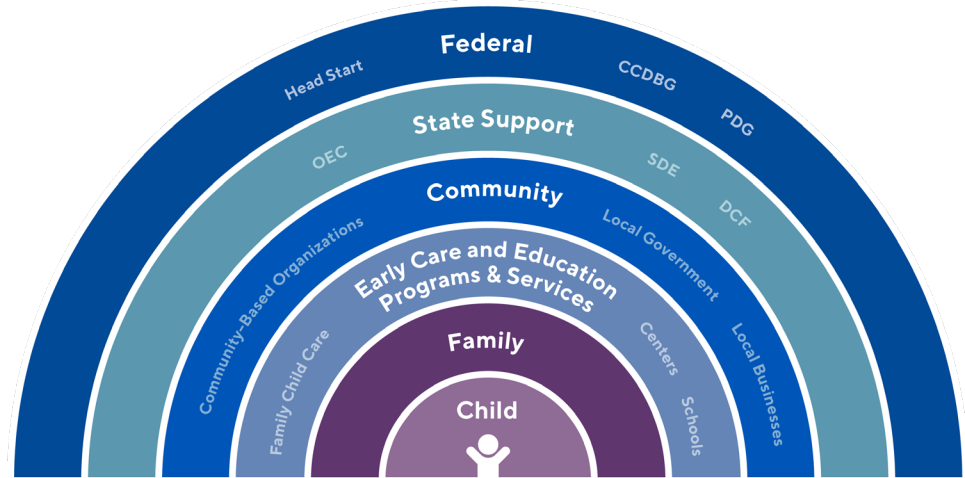
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VOICE

Embed family and local community input into system design to inform decisions. Foster communication and partnership with families, providers, communities, and businesses

Overarching Vision for the 5-Year Plan

WHEN: WHAT: All families will have access to an **equitable**, **high-quality**, and **affordable** early childhood education (ECE) system. Building on investments the State has made, this plan will **center on the needs of children and families**, enabling children to learn and thrive, and families to work.
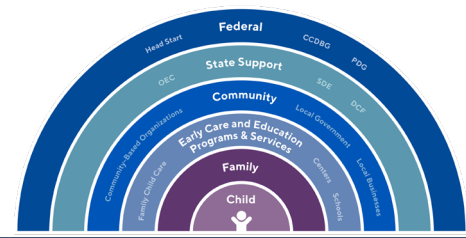
HOW: Implemented over 5 years, the plan will **prioritize historically under-resourced groups and communities** and will take care to **honor the existing workforce**.

WHY: A strong ECE system will benefit our **communities** and **economy** by helping to attract and retain young families, increase workforce participation – especially among women, and grow the State's economy.

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The envisioned system aims to benefit families, providers, and communities

Families	• More **accessible and affordable high-quality child care** that meets all families' needs • Access to **information and resources** to help families find the care they need • Greater opportunities to **lead and advocate** at all levels of the system
Providers	• More **funding and resources** to compensate and support the professional growth of educators • Access to more affordable **health insurance** options • **Simplified systems** to reduce administrative burdens on programs • Greater **enrollment and program operations support** to enable efficiencies and stability • **Facilities funding** and incentives for addressing unmet needs, accessible by all types of programs
Communities	• **Representation of all local stakeholders** to ensure that families, providers, local municipalities, schools, businesses and community leaders have a voice • **State-wide local governance structures** to efficiently and equitably allocate resources based on the specific needs of a community • Access to **accurate and timely local information** to make informed decisions that help communities thrive

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Blue Ribbon Panel Plan Goals

Goal 1	**<u>Workforce:</u>** Invest in and support the retention and recruitment of a professional, high-quality ECE workforce
Goal 2	**<u>Equitable Access:</u>** Increase affordable access that meets the range of family needs and prioritizes under-resourced groups and communities
Goal 3	**<u>Families and Community Voice:</u>** Elevate family and community voice to develop an equitable and responsive ECE system
Goal 4	**<u>Systems and Funding:</u>** Build a high-quality and well-funded ECE system that maximizes current resources, supports economically viable programs, and is poised to efficiently leverage future investment

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Workforce

Goal 1: Invest in and support the retention and recruitment of a professional, high-quality ECE workforce

Objectives

Objective 1A: Invest in and promote policies that support the professional compensation of early childhood educators in centers, FCCs, and schools

Objective 1B: Pursue strategies that support worker recruitment and retention, and build education and training programs for skilled, diverse ECE educators and staff (e.g., apprenticeships, high school CDA, retraining from other fields)

Objective 1C: Adopt a three-step career ladder that aligns with the Unifying Framework and links career advancement with compensation, following an implementation timeline and stakeholder input process that ensures any new system supports all providers

Objective 1D: Create and expand successful strategies to support educators in increasing the quality of early childhood programs

Equitable Access Objectives

Goal 2: Increase affordable access that meets the range of family needs and prioritizes under-resourced groups and communities

Equitable Access Objectives
Objective 2A: Expand affordability for low and middle-income families, committing to expanding Care 4 Kids eligibility to households earning up to 100% of State Median Income (SMI) over 3 years and phasing in a parent co-pay level of a maximum of 7% of family income (TBD) **Objective 2B**: Increase equitable access to high-quality programs to meet the needs of children and families, especially for infant/toddler care, children with special needs, and under-resourced families and communities (e.g., incentives for expanding infants and toddler slots, contracted infant and toddler slots, Smart Start, facility funding)

Discussion Break – 25 mins

Question 1	What resonates with you?
Question 2	Are there any recommendations that you feel need more consideration or clarification?
Question 3	Which recommendations are you most excited about?

Families and Community Voice Objectives

Goal 3: Elevate family and community voice to develop an equitable and responsive ECE system

Family and Community Voice Objectives
Objective 3A: Recognize, empower, and embed families as central and valued decision-makers in the development of an equitable ECE system
Objective 3B: Expand and fund community-informed governance with regional supports that utilizes a common needs assessment for an equitable and responsive ECE system

System and Funding Objectives

Goal 4: Build a high-quality and well-funded ECE system that maximizes current resources, supports economically viable programs, and is poised to efficiently leverage future investment

System and Funding Objectives
Objective 4A: Simplify state-funded system and better align with federal systems to reduce complexity and increase utility for providers, families, and the state
Objective 4B: Assess true cost of quality care and develop a plan to transition to funding based on this true cost, starting with infant and toddler care and high need communities
Objective 4C: Maximize existing resources by strengthening programs and partnerships to improve enrollment and reduce administrative burdens and redundant costs
Objective 4D: Develop data and information systems, including a provider and parent portal and navigation systems, to track and improve systems and outcomes
Objective 4E: Develop a flexible fiscal model to support implementation and help to prioritize and stage investments
Objective 4F: Identify new funding streams that will support sustained and significant incremental investment in ECE

Discussion Break – 25 mins

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Next Steps

Looking Ahead

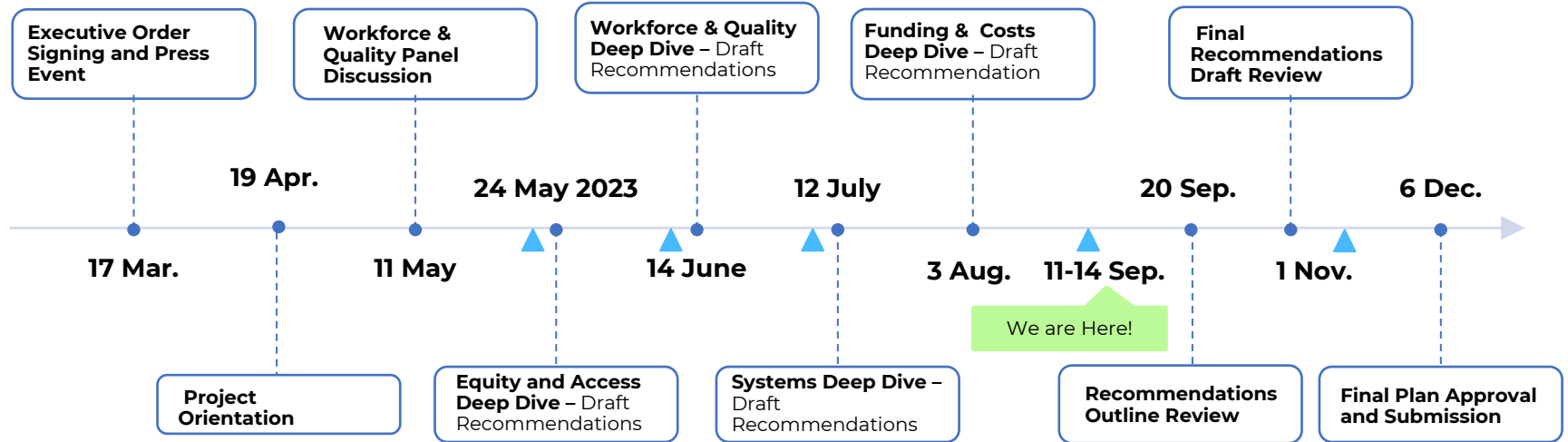Next steps for reviewing and finalizing plan recommendations:

- **Sept 20th:** Blue Ribbon Panel Meeting to review outline and suggest revisions
- **Sept 30th:** Deadline for feedback on draft plan outline
- **Nov 1st:** Blue Ribbon Panel Meeting to review draft of final report contents
- **Dec 6th**: Blue Ribbon Panel submits plan to Governor's Office

We are grateful for your partnership! It is vital that we work together to strengthen ECE in our state.

Please check out the Blue Ribbon Panel website for more information and share any questions or feedback on the outline by September 30th using this link: www.ctoec.org/blue-ribbon-panel/feedback

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Appendix

Blue Ribbon Panel Timeline

Executive Order Signing and Press Event

Workforce & Quality Panel Discussion

Workforce & Quality Deep Dive – Draft Recommendations

Funding & Costs Deep Dive – Draft Recommendation

Final Recommendations Draft Review

19 Apr.

24 May 2023

12 July

20 Sep.

6 Dec.

17 Mar.

11 May

14 June

3 Aug.

11-14 Sep.

1 Nov.

We are Here!

Project Orientation

Equity and Access Deep Dive – Draft Recommendations

Systems Deep Dive – Draft Recommendations

Recommendations Outline Review

Final Plan Approval and Submission

The recommendations presented today are considered **preliminary**; they will be discussed and updated by the Blue Ribbon Panel and then **further socialized with the field** before they are considered "final"

Indicates Public Listening Sessions For Collecting Feedback from the Field