

- **In developing an Early Childhood program, what were your initial goals? Do you feel those goals are being/have been met? How did you set metrics for determining success?**
 - Unique origin in that EC program was court mandated: Abbott vs. Burke in 1985 determined NJ needed to elevate public education for poorest districts in 28 (now 31) districts across state
 - Abbott case determined requirement that NJ puts high quality preschool programs in those districts
 - Developed sets of standards and guidelines to help districts put program in place: administrative code, learning standards, assessments, teacher certification, third party reviews, and required proposals to track spending and progress
 - Mixed delivery system: districts didn't have capacity to serve all children; state-provided contracts account for 54% of preschool provision (including Head Start); remaining 46% served by state
 - Additional support from coaches, family engagement, early intervention screenings, parent education support
 - Pre-K teachers paid comparable salary to school teachers
 - Abbott program began with 6,000 3- to 4-year-olds; now serving 45,600 (90% of their 50K+ universe of eligible preschoolers)
 - Common metrics driven by Early Learning Challenge grants
- **What is the structure of your program? Who provides governance and policy oversight? What are the funding streams?**
 - DOE responsible for oversight of program, but they keep collaborative partnerships with other agencies (e.g. DHS, etc)
 - Oversight broken into divisions and commissions (triangle set-up with Commissioners, Administrators, and stakeholder policy body):
 - Administrators of each division/office (e.g. within DOE = Division of Early Childhood; of Head Start; of Migrant/Homeless Ed; within HHS, Divisions of Subsidized Childcare; of Wraparound Care, etc.) meet minimum once monthly for planning and consistent communication
 - Commissioners (e.g. Secretariat level) get together quarterly to troubleshoot and connect for problem-solving
 - Stakeholder policy body called Council for Young Children that assists with policy review, studies, implementation, helps develop standards and workforce competency framework
 - Program emphasizes local/district based leadership and collaboration across agencies, rather than outright restructuring
 - Bulk of decision-making and collaboration between DOE & DHS
 - Budget built for flexibility: districts can tell NJ state what they need and state can approve it – limited, but open-ended
 - Automatic offsets in administrative part of budget

- Can transfer from Ed part of budget to help meet costs
 - Head Start enrollment easier by NJ accepting enrollment materials; they contract with Head Start
 - Initially, DHS funded classroom spaces and provided universal pre-k (as long as you're in district, you can attend program)
 - Now, wraparound services free only to eligible children where families work or attend school for 25+ hours/week
- **Were there any policy bodies that required disbanding? What sort of executive or legislative actions were taken to establish this agency and commit to funding?**
 - Initially court-mandated, but now codified in state legislature
 - Not known if policy bodies required disbanding
- **Which agencies were “at the table” during establishment and how did you ensure sustainability during changes in political leadership?**
 - Again, court mandate assisted most of development and, due to nature of the case, it was primarily DOE at table
 - Pre-K to 3rd grade; oversight of what happens K-3; best practices guidance and assessments, professional development
 - Human Services handles: workforce development, TANF/SNAP, wraparound services
 - Children & Families handles: home visiting, infant/early childhood mental health
 - FOR VIRGINIA: suggest elevating DSS Office of Early Childhood – consolidate all non-pre-k childhood services within Human Services; school readiness + childhood care (2 offices)?
- **What were the costs of organizing this department? What, if any, were the savings?**
 - Unknown
 - Still at district level (not entirely statewide) and primarily federally funded via grants
- **Where are services housed? What services, if any, got left out?**
 - Services housed within multiple departments:
 - DOE (houses Division of Early Childhood Education): all preschool, Head Start collaboration, Race to the Top grant manager, early childhood ed specialists,
 - Department of Human Services: home visiting, subsidized childcare, wraparound care, central intake
 - Department of Children & Families: behavioral/mental health
 - Department of Health (more minor role for pre-k services): Medicaid, behavioral mental health, central intake, early intervention
 - Because services not aligned under one agency, but rather coordinated, no services really left out
- **What sort of support did you have from the affected agencies going into this restructuring? Where was the greatest pushback?**
 - Court mandate eliminated pushback

- **What sort of data systems and measurements are in place? How does data tie into your organizational goals?**
 - Data component still a work-in-progress: recently hired a project manager and business analyst whose primary objectives are to work on data sharing agreements
 - Made simple changes within DOE (e.g. longitudinal data, including pre-k children), goal is to track longterm success
 - Currently do not have all preschool-eligible children in data system, so not yet able to compare outcomes with control group/children not in preschool
 - Privacy concerns are there, but all data utilized for running reports, so de-identified and not accessible to public
- **How does your agency facilitate getting the appropriate services to children who need them?**
 - Central intake for families within Dept. of Children & Families – connection to services so families don't have to reenter paperwork; connects them with childcare, medical homes, and enables them to track resources and application
- **How does your agency interact with service providers and what resources are in place to facilitate collaboration?**
 - Service providers are included in Council for Young Children; important to offer a seat at the table when discussing policy ideas and implementation
 - Central intake also designed to assist service providers as well as families
- **Looking back, what would you have done differently/what were some lessons learned?**
 - District is responsible for providing professional development, though there is coordination between state and district – initially not emphasized as much as they'd like, but because of Race to the Top grant, childcare is receiving better professional development
 - QRIS still voluntary since they are new to standards; eventual goal to make all QRIS mandatory