

Our Children, Our Future Steering Committee
Recommendations for WV Early Childhood Planning Task Force

Bold Idea – Additional Funding

- Expand In-Home Family Education (evidence-based early childhood home visitation) programs to serve all 55 counties - to be implemented during next 5 yrs.

Utilize School-Aid Formula to Strengthen State’s Early Childhood System

- Increase access to unserved 4 year olds through:
 - Additional collaborative classrooms operated by childcare centers
 - Addressing transportation issues
- Withhold support for expanding Pre-K to 3 year-olds UNLESS it requires a higher requirement of collaboration with child care centers and does not adversely impact childcare centers.
- Address the needs of 3 yr olds transitioning from Birth to Three who don’t qualify for an IEP and therefore early entry into Pre-K.

Low to Moderate Cost Ideas

- Implement QRIS elements to ensure quality. (*Not necessarily at the same level as analyzed in MU-CBER Study.*)
- Expand eligibility for childcare subsidies to 200% of federal poverty level.
- Create new cabinet-level agency for early childhood development, which consolidates early childhood programs into a single agency / department.
- Universal post-partum depression screening
- Strengthen *Help Me Grow* infrastructure to assist families navigate the system of social services to support child development
 - expand access to services as needed.
- Every family gets a home visit (ideally pre-natally) for screening, referrals, and support.
- Strengthen early childhood data systems including addressing impact of *Feed to Achieve* on Free and Reduced Lunch data.

Minimal Cost

- Enact *A Child’s Right to Nurse* and other efforts to promote breastfeeding.
- Become national leader on Family Leadership at every level and expand *Circle of Parents* statewide.
- Recruit 1,000 early childhood partners / mentors by developing mechanism / process so that every Labor Council, every religious institution, every PTA, every Chamber of Commerce, etc. can become certified as an early childhood partner that is contributing in some significant way.

Research

- Research feasibility of social impact/pay for performance bonds for early childhood development efforts (*may include interventions to prevent low birth weight babies with short-term return on investment*)
- Research feasibility of policy to provide Paid Parental Leave for state employees (Maternity leave and Paternity leave)
- Research feasibility of enacting refundable tax credits for:
 - Parents who have children in quality childcare programs
 - Early child development staff members
- Research strategies to ensure wages and benefits for early childhood workforce exceed the state self-sufficiency standard.
- Research ways to enhance quality of early childhood programs by:
 - Implementing strategies to reduce staff turnover for early childhood development programs
 - Addressing disparities in salary
 - Removing barriers to educational advancement and professional development