Partner Input Session on Matching Families to ECE Options and Subsidies
Meeting Notes
November 3, 2016

The Office of Early Care and Education's input session on November 3rd included a wide range of about 30 stakeholders and focused on gathering input on the future of our local centralized eligibility list. After an overview of the system improvement strategies that OECE is proposing, participants were asked to discuss what they view as strengths and challenges with the current centralized eligibility list (SF3C), and OECE shared the following emerging goals for the future of the centralized eligibility list:

- **Family-centered:** Enhanced prioritization of families' needs
- **Inclusive:** Include all families looking for publicly-funded ECE services
- **Efficient:** reduces administrative burden on providers, families and outreach staff
- **Multiple Organizations:** Outreach and guidance by multiple organizations to assist families
- **Connected:** Links to other data systems to increase accuracy and efficiency

Participants then broke into small groups to discuss their reactions to these emerging goals. To view the PowerPoint presentation from the meeting, please visit sfoece.org.

Below is a more detailed summary of the feedback gathered from participants.

Strengths of the Current Centralized Eligibility List:
- Families notified rapidly and responding in greater number and faster than getting a letter notify.
- Families have options and access to resources and referrals.
- Local needs of families captured
- Centralized in one place
- Ready pool of families when subsidy or PFA slots available
- Multiple communications methods with families – letter, email, text, robocall
- Provides an opportunity for families to learn about all child care options -- both types of care and types of funding that are available for them
- Place for providers to locate children needing childcare
- Personalized to parent needs, preferences, type of care…
- Wide variety of providers
- Providers receive tailored lists of interested families and timely family prescreening form
- Providers can connect with families
- Families can choose their site of preference
- Main vehicle to access connect families and providers
- Capture data relative to local needs analysis and trends
- Community partners with language access are able to support families in SF3C process

- When families apply to SF3C, if through the Resource & Referral then families receive help navigating through the complex subsidy system and get screened for all subsidies

Challenges of the Current Centralized Eligibility List:
- "Double dipping" some families' eligible for multiple funding streams?
- Gender not listed in filters for selecting children
- Expectations and requirements of funding type are often unknown to families
- Providing families with multiple options is key to maintaining data
- Ability to capture true family need and what parents are looking for
- Ability for providers to tailor their pulls according to classroom program needs (i.e. male/female balance, diversity in ethnicity)
- Families only get offered one option at a time
- System doesn't capture enough info about what families are looking for to facilitate matching
- Improve only 50% parents' response to pull notifications
- Families still on the list that already have care; should they be considered active?
- Parents' choices about the kind of program they prefer
- Challenges around keeping family data current
- Not the same system from county to county
- No personalized assistance for families and providers
- Families that are eligible but in higher rankings are rarely selected; policies are not in alignment
- Not as efficient
- Need more man power to contact families that have been selected
- Families getting selected multiple times for same program or many programs while others never selected
- Easier access for parents; apps or easier ways to access login information.
- Countable vs. uncountable income-- why do they have to include uncountable income on sf3c?
- Inadequate info for providers to make selections from list
- Many children on list already enrolled
- Process takes too long from pull to enroll
- Family needs/wants change and profile updates are slow to capture those changes if they're even able to be captured
- Not knowing how long until a family will receive care
- Communication with parents on availability
- Matching on what's open, not based on family needs
- Meeting needs of families while they are waiting
- Information on families and sometimes on providers is outdated

Small Group Discussions about OECE's Emerging Goals for a New System:
Four small groups each discussed the following four questions:
   a) What do you like about OECE's emerging goals for a new system?
   b) What do you have concerns about?
   c) What else should OECE be considering?

Red Group

Like

- Family centered; aim for a better match
- Inclusive is an opportunity
- Multiple organizations and coordinated support
- Connected; linking and incorporating program info as well
- Family need is the focus
- Broad, but complementary focus

Concerns

- Ambitious, but what will it really look like?
- Having multiple organizations will require a lot of planning and communication
- What do families do when waiting for care/not happy with current care? What services might be available while waiting?
- Technology to support multiple organizations using the system
- How to balance family focus while meeting needs of providers (controls)
- Would like historical notes to track children across programs

Considerations

- Consistency of communication to parents
- How to keep data on families updated? How to clean data (remove duplications, etc.)?
- Need clear policies and procedures if multiple organizations involved
- Ensure training of staff maintained and consistent
- Will multiple organizations share same goals and communication?
- Multiple organizations bring community assets
- Do we have clean numbers now?
- How we define ranking? Primarily on income or will other criteria be counted in ranking ?

Group Green
Strengths
- Connectivity of different systems
- Family centered approach/family as focal point
- Intentionally matching families to ECE slots
- Simplified, direct, understandable, more resources
- Better
- Single point of contact at OECE
- Newer technology

Concerns
- Maintaining need/income of families so it is current; eligibility updated frequently
- Contact at time of enrollment
- Helping partners with unrestrictive money
- What will outreach and approach look like?
- Keeping the list up to date when families already have a ECE spot; how to keep the system updated when a child is enrolled
- Increased number of staff/capacity

Considerations
- Don't discourage families from using state/fed money
- Who/how sharing data from CEL with state
- Road map for providers
- OECE maximize state income stream
- Track families' needs, changes , goals
- How to track progress through the system

Yellow Group
Strengths
- Very family centered; child-centered; ecological system
- Mobile, not linear
- Linkages to multiple data systems
- Helpful to providers
- Use provider info from R&R system
- Compliance to CDE? and blended funding
- Multiple orgs= 1 – stop shop "pathways"
- How can we connect providers?
- Capture full profile of families

Concerns
- Decentralized
- One hub can be counter-productive; why is it important to centralize?

- Will need same messaging and training!
- Training and prof. dev is needed to keep up with fed/state policy changes re: eligibility
- Inclusive of all families to prioritize need
- Getting the sites to buy in is very difficult

Considerations
- Challenges with families updating info with incorrect info; how can the data be relied upon if families and others can edit it?
- Waitlist doesn't really exist it's about priority; "wait pool"
- Parent engagement that allows parents to utilize info
- Incorporate needs of providers
- Need comprehensive counseling on front end
- More provider focused
- Technology issues
- Streamline language between feds and state
- Use of technology of families
- Better job promoting to families; broaden outreach formally and informally

Blue Group
Likes
- Idea of someone following a family from interest to enrollment (especially during peak season of August – Sept)
- Inclusive of all children
- Family-centered
- Single connected data systems
- Multiply organizations, warm hand offs, and shared info
- Centralized

Concerns
- Equity from providers' perspective
- How communicate realities to families that there is more need than can be met
- Varying levels of tech savvy among providers and families
- Ranking when multiple funding streams are available for lowest income families
- Gender
- How will technology do matches?
- Need outreach/focus groups with families
- How communicate to families the changes with the new system?

Other ideas
- Better data on openings and quicker info on enrollments
- COCOA and SF3C as one; and connected to R&R database
- Clarify roles of SF3C versus R&R

- Implications for training, consistency the more you decentralize the "guide" function across multiple organizations
- Embracing multiple languages
- App or tech to interface with parents to update their info and empower them
- Embracing specific needs of family (space, needs, schedule, etc)
- Agencies to pull reports in real-time
- Incorporate Head Start
- Projected timeline for wait
- See how long family has been on list and why they turn down offers
- As soon as openings available, there should be offers out
- Name/brand/language about the system should be asset and goal driven

Reactions to the idea of a 3rd party compiling Need and Eligibility paperwork:
- Concerns around 3rd party – quality of their work and CDE contract ramifications
- It is more about educating parents on what to bring when they come to enroll
- Timing of when paperwork is handed off
- Would miss out on conversations about goals, etc. related to case management of families; how child care fits in to bigger goals
- All subsidies including vouchers