

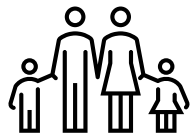


Report re 4-Year Old Program (Best in Class) and DHS Early Childhood division

Senator Judy Lee, Chairman | Interim Human Services Committee | October 21, 2021

NORTH
Dakota | Human Services
Be Legendary.™

DHS 2021-2025 KEY PRIORITIES



Strong Stable Families

- Maintain family connections
- Improve stability and prevent crises
- Promote and support recovery and well-being



Early Childhood Experiences

- Support workforce needs with improved access to childcare
- Help kids realize their potential with top quality early experiences
- Align programs for maximum return on investment



Services Closer to Home

- Create pathways that help people access the right service at the right time
- Engage proactively with providers to expand access to services



Efficiency Through Redesign

- Embrace process redesign to find efficiencies in our work
- Leverage technology to support greater efficiency, quality and customer service



High-Performing Team

- Develop a One DHS Team culture
- Engage team with opportunities for learning and development
- Implement fiscal scorecard to drive efficiency and effectiveness

Reinforce the Foundations of Well-being

Economic Health | Behavioral Health | Physical Health

BEST IN CLASS

Quality Early Childhood Experiences for children in the year before kindergarten



- Is a competitive grant award program for child care, head start, and school districts
- Builds on program characteristics that drive results
- Is based on 25-plus years of research
- Represents a targeted investment in families that wouldn't necessarily be able to access an early childhood experience
- Was authorized in HB 1466 during the 2021 North Dakota Legislative Session

BEST IN CLASS

Quality Early Childhood Experiences for children in the year before kindergarten



Operate at least 400 hours

Incorporate 10 hours research-based family engagement

Offer various health screenings

Utilize TS GOLD assessment

Maintain a 1:10 teacher to child ratio

Charge tuition on a sliding-fee scale (if charged)

Participate in coaching sessions

Work with a Best in Class monitor and the research team

2021-2022 BEST IN CLASS PROGRAMS

Timeline

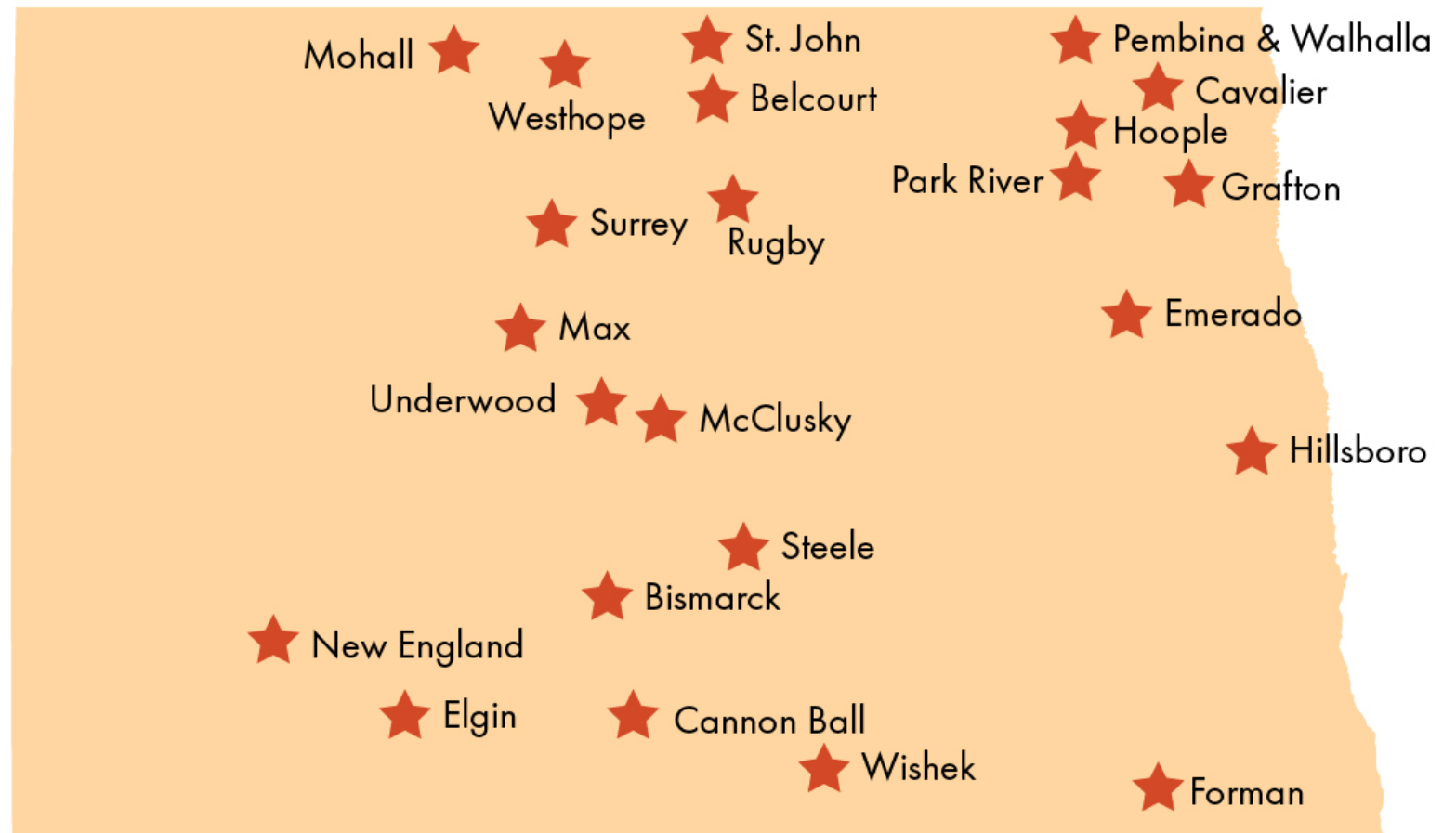
- Applications opened June 28, 2021
- 42 programs applied for 78 classrooms
 - 1 Head Start/Child Care
 - 17 private child care
 - 22 public schools
 - 2 Head Start/public school partnerships
- Announced awards August 2, 2021
- First on-site coaching visits August 23, 2021



2021-2022 BEST IN CLASS PROGRAMS

Where are they?

- 23 programs
 - 1 Head Start/child care
 - 1 private child care
 - 1 Head Start/Public School
 - 20 public schools
- 29 classrooms
 - 18 with approx. 9 children
 - 11 with approx. 18 children
- 374 children enrolled
(as of 10-19-21)



BEST IN CLASS

Early observations



- By including both **small and large group size** options – BIC opened door to participation by smaller programs
 - 62% small size / 38% large size rooms
 - 43% of children in small size room / 57% in large size
- Higher than expected **participation by public school** pre-K programs
 - Affordability and household income, inclusion of children with special needs, definitions of quality
 - Connecting early childhood staff in K12 setting with early childhood Best in Class coaches and supports
- **Increased interest** by private child care providers in Bright & Early **quality** rating system

BEST IN CLASS

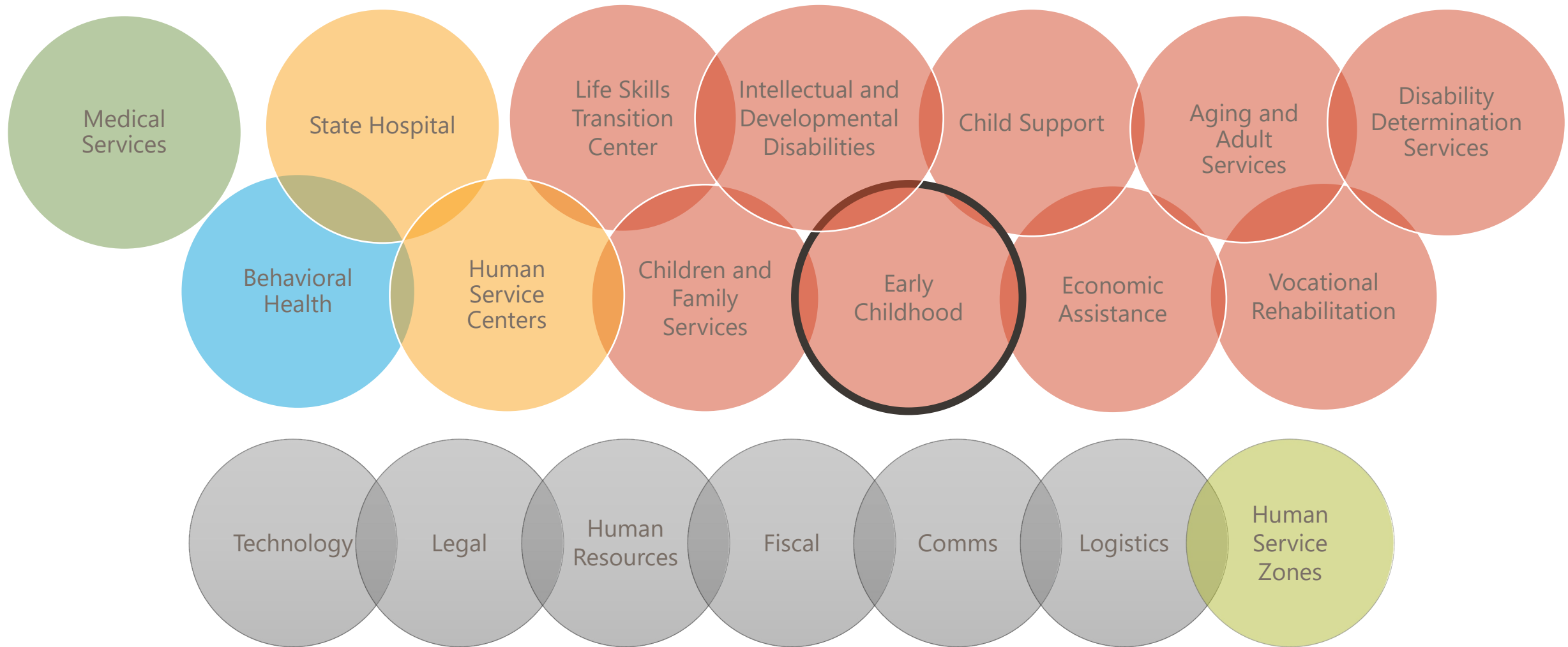
Next steps

- Professional development sessions for staff who work in Best in Class settings
- Data collection
 - Quality improvements
 - Evaluation of services available to Best in Class programs
 - Connections made to health screenings
 - Child outcomes
- Applications will open in early 2022 for the 22/23 program cohort



EARLY CHILDHOOD IN DHS

A team built to embody the interconnectedness of human services work, who through their work will emphasize the essentialness of a two-gen approach



EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION

Purpose

The purpose of the Early Childhood division is to build greater access to quality early childhood experiences so kids age 0-5 from all backgrounds and circumstances have the opportunity to reach their potential.



EARLY CHILDHOOD

In ND early childhood is a mixed delivery system, involving both public and private partners using both federal and state funds



Dept of Human Services

- Early Childhood division
- Children and Family Services – home visiting, child protection, abuse prevention
- Dev Disabilities – early intervention, in-home supports
- Economic Assistance – child care assistance program

Training and Early Childhood Supports

- Training providers
- Coaches, mentors and consultants
- Health and wellness consultants
- Business success and quality improvement consultants
- Consumer education resource and referral

Early Childhood Experience providers

- Early childhood programs, including center-based, group, and family
- Public Pre-K programs
- Early Childhood Special Education services
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Home visiting providers
- Developmental Disability & Early Intervention providers

Dept of Public Instruction

- Office of Special Education
- K-12 Coordinating Council
- Comprehensive State Literacy program

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION

What we do



Licensing

- Issue licenses and certifications to early childhood programs in North Dakota
- Monitor compliance with early childhood health and safety regulations
- Maintain child care provider profiles for both licensing and resource/referral

Professional Development

- Maintain workforce registry in support of early childhood workforce
- Provide technical assistance to providers to support health, safety and continuous quality improvement
- Provider start-up and expansion support

Quality

- Operation of Bright & Early – the ND quality rating improvement system
- Maintenance of early childhood standards and practices
- Assessment and validation of quality rated EC programs across ND

Best in Class

- Grant program to grow access to high quality EC experiences delivered in the year before kindergarten
- Targeted coaching and professional supports
- Active monitoring for fidelity to quality standards

Family Support and Education

- Head Start Collaboration
- Early interventions for children with disabilities
- Behavioral supports and interventions
- Child Care assistance for lower income households
- Family education and outreach

EC Operations

- Early Childhood Integrated Data System
- Child Care Development Block Grant state plan
- EC Technology System coordination and support

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION TIMELINE

Update on Progress in 2021



May 2021

- Develop BIC application
- Begin drafting RFPs and transitioning data system contracts

July 2021

- New EC division launches, coinciding with new biennium
- Complete hiring of state EC team
- Publish RFPs for EC services

Sept/Oct 2021

- Best in Class 1st cohort begins
- Award RFPs for EC services
- Open applications for provider grants
- Child Care lic benchmarking study
- DPI SpEd/DHS B-5 plan for Part C to Part B transitions
- CCAP outreach initiative

April 2021

- HB1416 moves Office of Early Learning from DPI to DHS
- HB1466 establishes Best in Class program
- HB1012 authorizes 8 FTE for EC division
- Begin co-pay relief for families receiving CCAP

June 2021

- Open applications for Best in Class
- Draft plan for COVID-related childcare grants and incentives
- Begin hiring EC team members
- Finalize 3-year CCDBG plan

August 2021

- Award Best in Class grants
- Let's Chalk 0-5 milestone celebration
- Finalize 1416/1466-related agreements
- Waterford Upstart outreach & enrollment

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION TIMELINE

On the horizon



Dec 2021

- Award contract for QRIS supports
- Launch COVID-funded child care worker incentives

Feb 2022

- Open application for Best in Class 2022-23 cohort
- Launch QRIS supports by new vendor
- Website updates

May/June 2022

- Training for new CCL / Go Live June 2022
- Projected go live for CCAP self service portal enhancements
- Complete reporting from 2021-2022 Best in Class cohort

Nov 2021

- Launch of inclusion supports by USpire
- Launch of Child Care Aware TA/coaching/referral services by SEEC
- Pyramid Model and NCEDTL courses available via Growing Futures
- ECIDS project planning

Jan 2022

- Child care/workforce barrier study
- Finalize integrations for CCL development
- ECIDS priority use cases

Mar/Apr 2022

- Testing of new child care licensing database
- Award 2022-2023 Best in Class cohort



During the **first 5 years** of life, emotionally nourishing relationships lay the **foundation** for lifelong health and well-being.

The caring adults who touch the lives of infants, toddlers and preschoolers can maximize our long-term impact in ensuring all children have an **opportunity to realize** their **full potential.**





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