



Early Childhood Experiences

Rethinking our approach to early childhood services

Interim Human Services Committee | August 3, 2021
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman

NORTH
Dakota
Be Legendary.™

Human Services



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.**



EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES – WHY NOW?

Childcare licensing | Workforce Dev & training | Head Start | Best in Class | Quality rating | Part B
Early Special Education | Part C Early Intervention | Home Visiting

73%

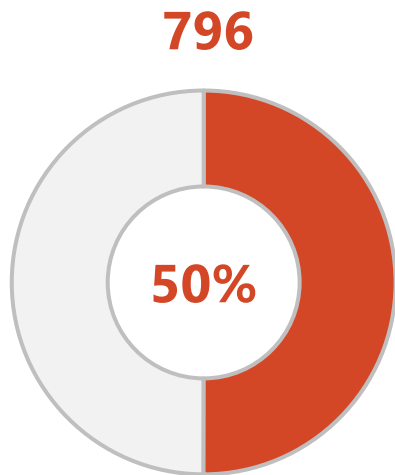
Parents in workforce

73% of the 44,237 North Dakota households who have children younger than age 5 likely have at least some need for child care as all available parents are in the workforce



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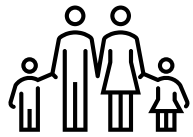


1 in 2 age 0-7

Half of the 1,591 children in foster care in North Dakota are age 7 or younger. (2020)



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

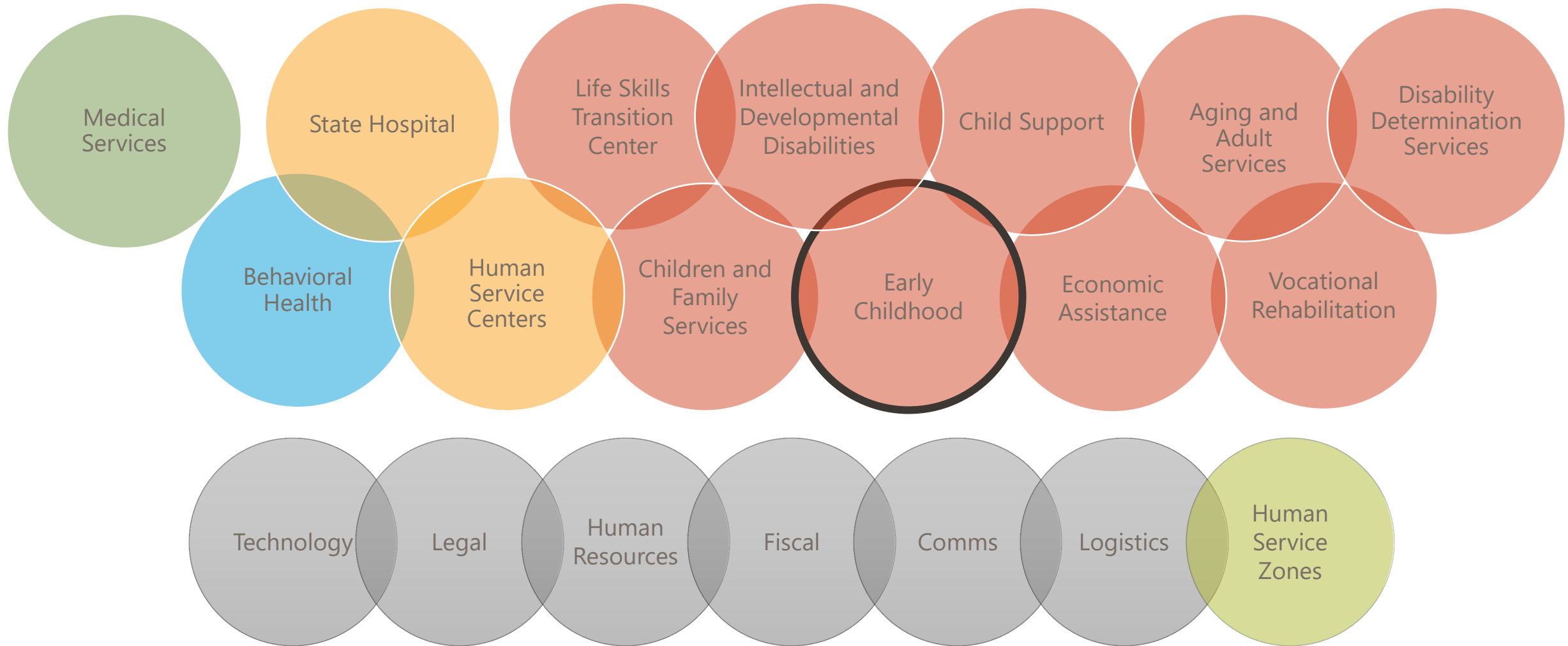
- Develop a One DHS Team culture
- Engage team with opportunities for learning and development
- Implement fiscal scorecard to drive efficiency and effectiveness

Reinforce the Foundations of Well-being

Economic Health | Behavioral Health | Physical Health

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

September 2021

- Best in Class 1st cohort begins
- Award RFPs for EC services
- Open applications for provider and workforce grants
- Hunt Institute EC transition and policy supports begin

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 CCDBG plan

August 2021

- Award Best in Class grants
- Let's Chalk 0-5 milestone celebration
- Finalize MOUs and contracts
- Waterford Upstart outreach & enrollment

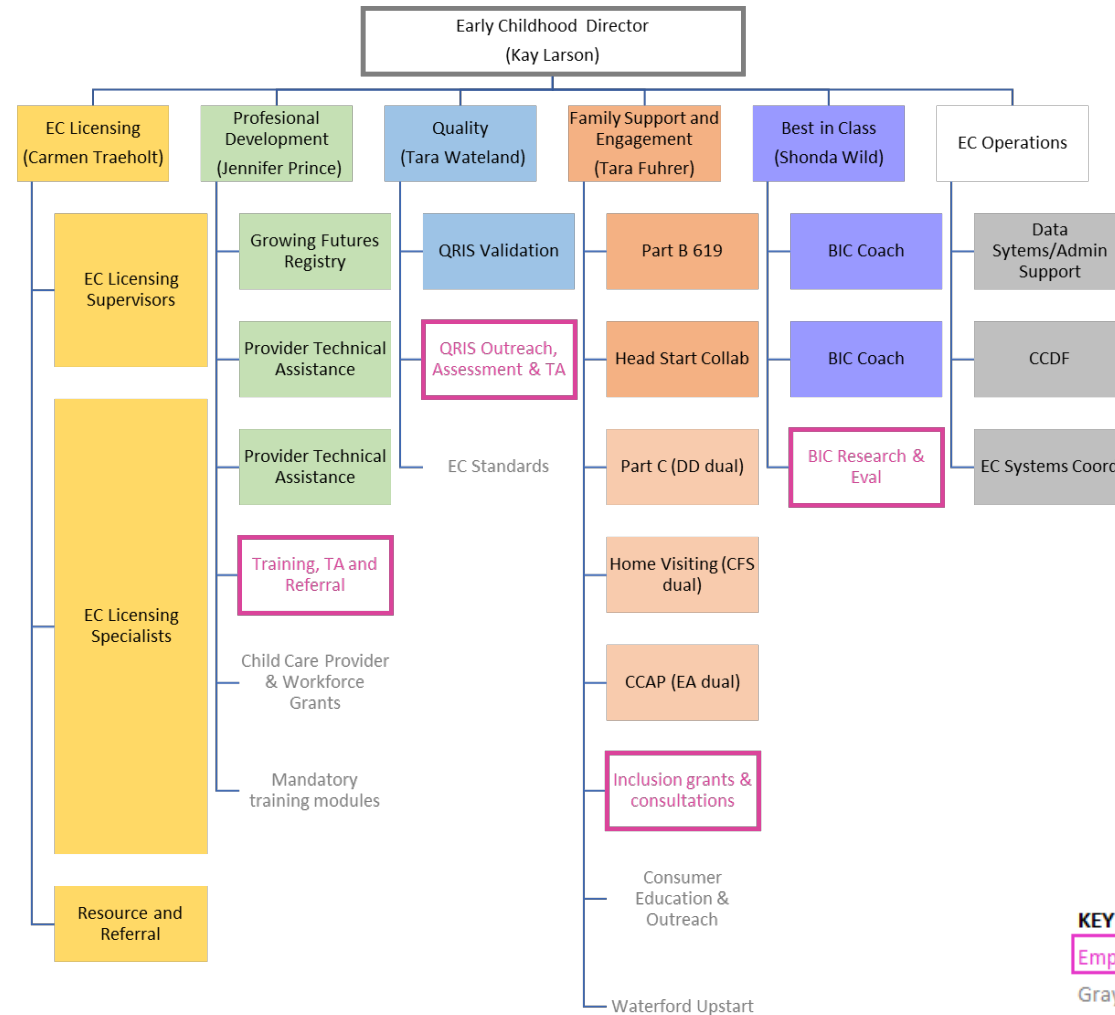
FUNCTIONAL ORG CHART FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION (8-1-21)

Assembling a team of early childhood professionals



The EC team will establish from its inception, an expectation that the **work is interconnected** – both within the division and with those who work outside of it – which means that connections will always be more horizontal than vertical.

Over the next several months, DHS and DPI will work together with the Hunt Institute and others to explore ideas and practices that will help refine the state's approach to early childhood services.



KEY

Empty pink box - RFP

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