School Readiness through Partnerships: Model for Supporting Children and Families

May 16, 2018
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AGENDA

• Background – Work leading up to the current School Readiness Project
• Overview of current project – Regional Hub Leader model
• Implementation of programs and activities – Library partner
• Questions
MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) articulated its vision for strengthening the basic foundation of our early learning system by increasing capacity and support from other agencies and private sector partners in the community.

From 2012- 2015 EEC invested $600,000 to implement a statement strategy that provided a shared framework and set of resources that bolstered the capacity of museums and libraries, in partnership with EEC’s Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Programs (CFCE) grantees, to support the optimal development of all children, especially those with high needs, and support families in their essential work as their child’s first teacher.
Background: Museums and Libraries in MA

• In alignment with all of EEC’s work with families, this initiative incorporated the **Strengthening Families Framework approach**, which had widespread support from social science researchers, early childhood practitioners and policy experts.

• Through this collaboration, **EEC strengthened existing relationships and further integrated an evidence-based framework for early childhood programming and family engagement** into Massachusetts children's museums and libraries.

• These collaborations **extended the reach of EEC initiatives, such as the Brain Building in Progress public awareness campaign**.
Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant

- Federal dollars for innovation in early education and care
- Boston Children’s Museum first Museums/Libraries project ever funded
- Four focus areas: STEM, Brain Building in Progress, Kindergarten Readiness, and Literacy
Growing Young Minds:
How museums and libraries create lifelong learners
What does the report say?

“Libraries and museums can play a stronger role in early learning for all children. As our nation commits to early learning as a national priority essential to our economic and civic future, it is time to become more intentional about deploying these vital community resources to this challenge.”
Kindergarten Pop-Up Kit
Literacy through StoryWalks
Collective Impact – Stone Soup

“If Massachusetts is going to succeed in narrowing or closing gaps in opportunity to learn, achievement, and access to career and life success, we must take a much broader view of the problems that contribute to the achievement gaps and then devote sufficient resources to address them.”

Citizen for Public Schools - MA
Promising Strategies

• Develop **intentional partnerships** between neighborhood/zones and local libraries and museums

• **Better educate families** on what museums and libraries have to offer and how they can help children learn

• **Link museums and libraries** to non-traditional locations like health centers to establish relationships with families

• **Provide early learning professional development** for museum and library staff
School Readiness through Partnership: 
Museums, Libraries and State Early Learning Systems Project

The goal of the project is to work collaboratively with museums, libraries and community organizations across the state through a “regional hub model” to:

• Strengthen and grow the existing museum, library, community organization and early care and education provider network across Massachusetts

• Build professional capacity to implement high quality informal learning experiences for children across the state

• Foster family engagement and learning, especially among hard to reach and underserved families
School Readiness through Partnership

• Key to achieving the goal of the project is the role of the “Hub Leader” organizations.

• Hub Leaders serve as leaders in their regions to actively reach out to local institutions and organizations in the cities and towns across their geographic regions to strengthen and increase collaboration across museums, libraries, CFCEs, and community organizations to disseminate content and activities developed through the project.

• Partnerships are the formal and informal collaborative relationships that exist between Hub Leader organizations and other institutions that provide opportunities to work together, share information and expertise, leverage resources, and engage in project activities.

• Key outcomes for Hub Leaders and their partners include: increasing organizations' capacity to serve children, strengthen and grow the regional network, and promote the sustainability of family engagement beyond the project.
Regional Hub Leader Meetings
Three-Year Project Timeline

**2016**
- Achieved Objectives:
  - Project launched.
  - Project Director brought on board.
  - Project goals clarified.
  - Advisory Board convened.
  - Hub Leaders and Active Partners identified.
  - 1st All Region Hub Leader Meeting and Family Tinker Kit Training.
  - Regional boundaries finalized.
  - Expansion planning with BUILD.
  - 1st Annual Hub and Partner Surveys.

**2017**
- Achieved Objectives:
  - Hub Leaders strengthened existing partnerships and cultivate new partnerships.
  - Hub Leaders & partners shared kits, resources, expertise.
  - Hub Leaders encourage & facilitate family programming, including Family Tinker Kit trainings for partners.
  - BCM delivers Play Training to Hub Leaders & Family Play Events were held.
  - Parent Outcomes Surveys distributed and collected.
  - BUILD expansion planning continues.
  - Annual Hub Leader and Partner Surveys implemented.

**2018**
- Anticipated Objectives:
  - Hub Leaders continue to strengthen and cultivate partnerships.
  - Continued family programming.
  - BCM works with Hub Leaders to deliver relevant trainings within the network.
  - BUILD Expansion: 2 new states.
  - Final Hub Leader and Partner Surveys.
  - Reflect on lessons learned and develop sustainability strategies.

**Project Goals**
- Grow and strengthen a network of museums, libraries, community agencies, & early care providers.
- Build professional capacity to implement high quality learning experiences for Massachusetts children & families.
- Foster family engagement & learning, especially among hard to reach & low income families.
- Develop a partnership model that will expand beyond Massachusetts.

**Hub Leader Organizations in Nine Massachusetts Regions**

**Western Mass.**
- Craig Langlois
  - Berkshire Museum

**Pioneer Valley**
- Larissa Murray
  - Springfield Museum

**Central Mass.**
- Stephanie Young
  - Woods Memorial Library

**Worcester**
- Pat Crawford
  - Ecotarium

**Metro West**
- Jane DeHaven
  - CFCE

**North Shore**
- Jessica Brenes
  - Imajine That

**South Shore**
- Jo-Anne Sonega
  - Children’s Museum of Greater Fall River

**Metro Boston**
- Kathryn Jones
  - Boston Children's Museum

**Cape and Islands**
- Cape Cod Children's Museum

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January 2018
School Readiness through Partnership – Project Activities

- Advisory Board convened and Hub Leaders identified
- Project goals clarified
- Regional boundaries finalized
- Regional meetings and conference call held
- Family Tinker Kits developed and distributed; train-the-trainer sessions held
- Play Training conducted
- Summer Learning materials developed and distributed
- Evaluations conducted: grown-ups surveys, participant surveys, Hub Leader and partner surveys
Family Tinker Kit & Summer Learning Activity Back Pack
Partnerships – Challenges and Opportunities

• Clarifying the definition of “partnerships” for hub leaders and organizations involved in the project

• Supporting hub leaders in making connections with new organizations located in their region

• Working collaboratively helped to broaden regional connections and reach families

• Building new partnerships to engage in activities beyond the School Readiness Project

• Resource: “BUILDing Supportive Communities with Libraries, Museums and Early Childhood Systems. A Toolkit for Collaborative Efforts to Improve Outcomes for Young Children and Their Families.” A publication by the BUILD Initiative and the Institute of Museum and Library Services
Partnerships Through a Regional Hub Model

- Demographics of the Central MA Hub
- Train the Trainer Tinker Training
- Tinkering around the region
- Play Initiative
- Creating a lending model
- Feedback, Lessons Learned
Hub Leader Organizations in Nine Massachusetts Regions

Central Massachusetts
Stephanie Young
Woods Memorial Library
Tinker Training
• Created “sub-hubs” to provide accessible training
• Sessions across the region
• Partnered with “sub-hubs” to invite local participants
• Day and evening sessions
Tinker Programs – Lending Tinker Items
Play Initiative
Lending Grant Materials – Imagination Playground Blocks
“It was wonderful for our small school to be able to borrow the blocks. This is something we would never have the funds or storage to obtain ourselves. This also helped me realize that the local libraries have more to offer than just books.”

“It was great to observe all the block play and how children would solve problems, cooperate and deal with disappointment.”
Questions?
For more Information
www.school-readiness.org

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