



Evaluation Report X:

June 2010 – May 2011

State Maternal & Child Health
Early Childhood Comprehensive
Systems Grant Program

Prepared by the Indiana Youth Institute

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The **Sunny Start: Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds Initiative** is a comprehensive, collaborative, statewide effort to implement a strategic plan designed to support a coordinated system of resources and supports for young children from birth through age five and their families in Indiana. With funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau's (MCHB) Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant, the goal of the project is to ensure that Indiana's children arrive at school healthy and ready to learn.

Table of Contents

- Sunny Start History 3
- Evaluation Methods 3
- Sunny Start Vision 4
- Sunny Start in Indiana 6
 - Strengths: 6
 - Barriers 8
 - Concerns 10
- Core Partners 12
- ECCS Critical Components 15
 - Access to Health Insurance and Medical Homes 16
 - Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development 17
 - Early Care and Education/Child Care 20
 - Parenting Education 21
 - Family Support 22
- Conclusion 24
- Appendix A - Core Partners List 26
- Appendix B – Fact Sheet List 27

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Sunny Start History

The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant began in July of 2003 with funding from the Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). The initial focus of the grant was the development of a strategic plan to support a coordinated system of resources and supports for young children from birth through age five and their families. Indiana recognized the need for improved coordination among existing early childhood programs and services. The purpose of Indiana's ECCS initiative was identified as engaging state agencies, community partners, and families of young children in a collaborative process to ensure that Indiana's children arrive at school healthy and ready to learn.

The first two years after the grant was awarded were dedicated to infrastructure building. Toward that goal, a Core Partners Group and five subcommittees were formed. The Core Partners began to meet regularly to develop a program vision and mission, service standards, desired outcomes, and identify key issues. Community Dialogues were also conducted to capture the needs of early childhood providers and families with young children across the state.

In 2005, Indiana's ECCS program was renamed Sunny Start: Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds. MCHB continued its commitment to funding the project in three-year cycles. Over the years, much has been accomplished, and the Sunny Start Core Partners and subcommittees continue to meet regularly to form a coordinated, comprehensive, community-based system of services for young children and their families.

Evaluation Methods

The grant provided by MCHB and the strategic plan of the Sunny Start Initiative both mandate an evaluation of the initiative. Starting in 2006, evaluations were completed quarterly in collaboration with the Center for Health Policy at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis. These evaluations included both the accomplishments of the Sunny Start Initiative and statistics on the wellbeing of Indiana's children.

Sunny Start:

Ensuring all young Hoosier children and their families have access to the programs and services that they need.



This year marks the tenth evaluation report, which is now developed annually as part of a new partnership with the Indiana Youth Institute. The evaluation for year two of the ECCS grant cycle, June 2010 through May 2011, will consist of two documents: (1) the *State of the Young Hoosier Child* report, which will aid the evaluation committee in determining the changing needs of Indiana’s young children, and (2) an evaluation of the Sunny Start Initiative, which will aid the Core Partners and initiative staff in identifying opportunities for growth in the future.

Information for this report was gathered from reports, meeting minutes, and a series of interviews with 14 Sunny Start stakeholders. This report focuses on accomplishments during the first two years of the current funding cycle as well as areas of opportunity for the Sunny Start Initiative moving forward. The evaluation is based on the goals and tasks created by the Sunny Start Initiative, as well as the five ECCS components that have been nationally recognized to result in a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system of resources and supports for Indiana families and their children.

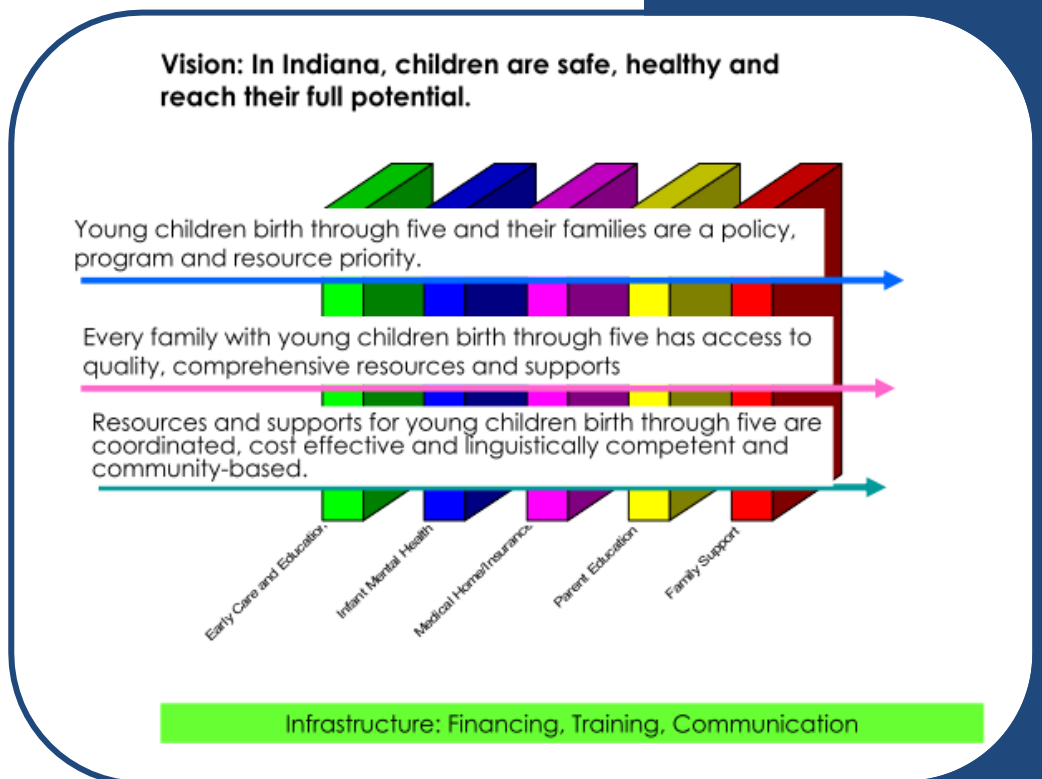
Five ECCS Components:

- Access to Health Insurance and Medical Homes
- Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development
- Early Care and Education
- Parenting Education
- Family Support

Sunny Start Vision

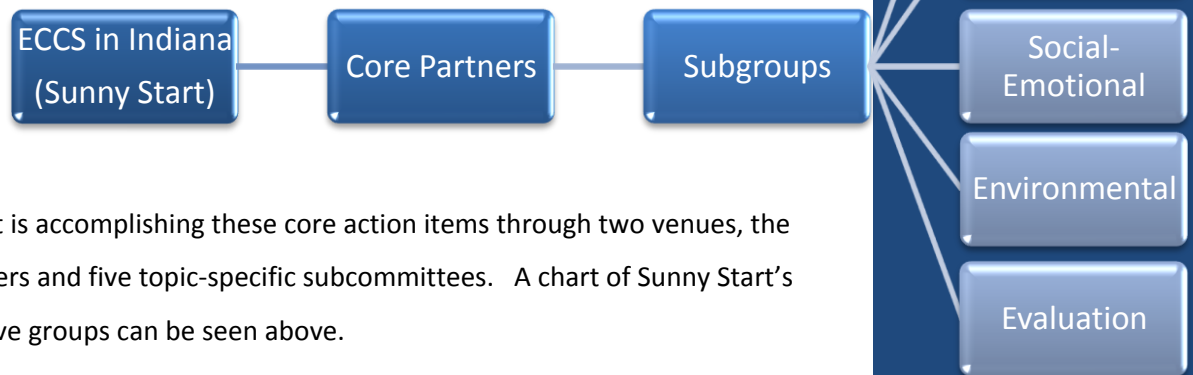
Sunny Start’s ultimate goal is to ensure that all of Indiana’s young children and their families have access to the programs and services they need.

Building on previous successes, Sunny Start has focused on three themes that carry throughout each of the five ECCS components, as seen to the right.



Sunny Start is currently at the end of year two in a three-year ECCS grant cycle that extends from June 2009 to May 2012. During this cycle, the following action items are being emphasized:

- Developing opportunities for Family Leadership
- Supporting the development of a highly qualified early childhood mental health workforce
- Expanding the Early Childhood Meeting Place website
- Developing a *State of the Young Hoosier Child* report
- Implementing a Medical Home learning collaborative
- Integrating activities related to parent education and the medical home into early care and education efforts.



Sunny Start is accomplishing these core action items through two venues, the Core Partners and five topic-specific subcommittees. A chart of Sunny Start's collaborative groups can be seen above.

The Core Partners group and the five subcommittees (Medical Home, Family Advisory, Evaluation, Environmental and Social-Emotional), work collaboratively to achieve the cross-program goals outlined by the ECCS core components. Work and ideas are passed between the Core Partners and subcommittees to ensure the most experienced individuals are working on and making program decisions in each area.

In July 2010 Core Partners and subcommittee members were asked to identify priorities in a survey. Twenty-nine responses were received, and survey results revealed Medical Home as the top priority. The Community Integrated Systems of Service (CISS) project focuses on this issue (read more on page 16). Child abuse was also identified as a critical area; the Department of Child Services (DCS) has

Encouraging the **Medical Home** concept was identified as a top priority for the ECCS initiative in the state of Indiana.

Core Partners, and Sunny Start project managers continue to make impressive progress with relatively few grant dollars.

One success the initiative has found is in building relationships that lead to collaborative funding and implementation of projects that utilize various resources around the state.

A prime example of Sunny Start's ability to leverage its resources is in the Social-Emotional committee's endorsement project (read more on page 19). Because of the relationships formed through Sunny Start, the Social-Emotional subcommittee was able to secure collaborative funding to purchase a license for Indiana to adopt the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH) endorsement process. Sunny Start's infrastructure and support opened the door for a collaborative group within Indiana to impact training for early childhood mental health providers throughout the state.

Sunny Start also contributes to early childhood providers by serving as a reporting mechanism for groups of organizations that work side by side, but are not mandated to report together. Sunny Start is able to add value by compiling information that shows the overall wellbeing of young Hoosier children.

Additionally, individuals who were interviewed as part of Sunny Start's evaluation process found value in Sunny Start operating at the state level, rather than local or county. State level efforts are seen to have a more widespread impact than local efforts, and Sunny Start relationships allow resources to be shared at both levels.

Reducing duplication & increasing collaboration

Another way Sunny Start adds to Indiana's early childhood systems climate is by aiding the reduction of duplicate efforts across providers. By providing information-sharing forums, the initiative has increased communication between agencies in early childhood sectors. This communication is essential to ensuring

The State of Mental Health white paper can be accessed here:

<http://www.iaitmh.org/publications/StateofInfantMentalHealth2008.pdf>



"Sunny Start helps early childhood care providers to communicate regularly and collaborate in meaningful ways."

that services are not duplicated and that providers are working together to fulfill the needs of Indiana’s young children.

One interviewee stated that the ability to work collaboratively is a strength of Indiana’s early care providers, and Sunny Start is an asset in that often difficult endeavor. “We don’t have as formalized a system as some states, but we work together and collaborate very well.”

Sunny Start has gathered and supported individuals and organizations in Indiana by providing structure around the collaborative projects happening in each subcommittee. Sunny Start’s ability to “take the burden off” of other organizations through convening, meeting planning, and taking minutes has been integral to the success of the Core Partners and subgroups.

Sunny Start also fosters a community of collaborators by example through a commitment to support, not supplant, current resources in the state. One Core Partner commented that Indiana is unique because Sunny Start is needs-focused and encourages resource sharing between organizations.

National Network

Participating in the national ECCS network has allowed Indiana’s Sunny Start stakeholders to benefit from the successes and challenges of other states. The national conference also has allowed Indiana stakeholders to gather in Washington D.C. for a period of brainstorming and problem solving on issues specific to early childhood in Indiana.

External Barriers to Success

Interviews with Sunny Start stakeholders revealed that reliance on state government for structure and funding is an external barrier that may affect the initiative’s opportunities over time. First, those interviewed suggested Sunny Start may be better able to fulfill its mission if it were able to advocate or lobby for policy changes benefiting Indiana’s young children.

“The greatest impact **Sunny Start** has is in giving people a convening place.”



Barriers for Sunny Start:

- Inability to advocate or lobby
- Upcoming change in government administration
- Future funding

Second, it was noted that being housed within the state’s government means that changes in administration could potentially affect the initiative. In order to increase sustainability, Sunny Start has been strategic about supporting initiatives within organizational structures that are likely to thrive even without Sunny Start’s future support. However, there is continued discussion among program managers about Sunny Start’s long-term sustainability and structure.

Third, many of those interviewed thought that future funding may be an external barrier for Sunny Start. Unlike many other states, Indiana’s ECCS initiative is neither a stand-alone organization nor a permanent part of state government structure. If funding were cut or diminished, the initiative may not be able to provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure that Indiana is providing a comprehensive system of services for young children and their families.

Furthermore, any cuts in Indiana’s state budget will have major implications for those programs that Sunny Start currently supports. This change may make it even more important for the state of Indiana to have a dedicated initiative to encourage the collaborative projects among early childhood providers. Because of potential state-level budget cuts and Sunny Start’s past successes, one interviewee suggested that increasing funding for the initiative may be one of the most cost-effective ways of helping young children in Indiana.

Concerns Voiced about Sunny Start

When asked what concerns stakeholders have about the Sunny Start initiative, one clear question emerged: What is Sunny Start’s reach? Three types of reach were paramount: the initiative’s visibility in the community, whether representation in the initiative is statewide and culturally diverse, and if having a more direct connection with the state legislature would benefit the initiative.

In interviews with stakeholders, Sunny Start’s visibility was discussed in two very different ways. First, individuals noted that Sunny Start is a “behind-the-scenes”

Indiana’s ECCS initiative is neither a stand-alone organization nor a permanent part of state government structure.



What is Sunny Start’s Reach?

initiative that supports other community projects. Under this theory, it is not necessary for the initiative to have a strong, visible brand because it serves a support role for projects that have their own marketing strategies. “Visibility doesn’t matter; only making a difference does.”

The second theory is that without visibility, Sunny Start cannot serve as the go-to resource for early childhood providers and families with young children in Indiana. The question arose: Do a critical mass of early childhood service providers and families with young children know about Sunny Start resources? Stakeholder’s concern is that many parents, teachers, and medical providers have not heard about the resources offered through Sunny Start or the Early Childhood Meeting Place (ECMP). Two comments on this topic were, “Recognition and community support for Sunny Start are not quite there,” and “[Sunny Start resources] are effective, but not visible.”

While stakeholder interviews revealed a consensus that Sunny Start’s work is ‘felt’ throughout the state, there is some concern that certain groups within the state did not have a voice at the initiative’s table. Specifically, there is concern that representation from rural areas and culturally diverse populations may be low in both Core Partners and in the subgroups.

The final concern interviewees expressed was Sunny Start’s relationship with those in Indiana who influence legislation. Some interviewees said that the initiative needs greater involvement from someone with an ear to what’s happening in legislation, and others suggested including organizations with a legislative voice. Regardless of the method, Sunny Start stakeholders felt that the initiative should be more connected to the state’s legislative decision makers and advocates.

Opportunities for Sunny Start

The individuals who were interviewed identified many opportunities for Sunny Start’s future impact. One such opportunity is the upcoming *State of the Young*

“Visibility doesn’t matter; only making a difference does.”



“Sunny Start resources are effective, but not visible.”



Concerns:

- Visibility
- Statewide & Cultural Representation
- Legislative Voice

Hoosier Child report. The initiative and its partners may be able to use the report as a platform for community awareness and engagement in important areas affecting the care and education of young children.

There is also excitement about a new partnership between Sunny Start, Lead and Healthy Homes division at the ISDH, Improving Kids' Environment, and others to focus on environmental health and safety issues for young children. Activities in this area will include: the development of fact sheets related to environmental health, the distribution of a documentary and study guide on lead poisoning, a workshop to be conducted at the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC) conference, and the establishment of a workgroup to begin developing a report on the Environmental Health of Young Hoosier Children.

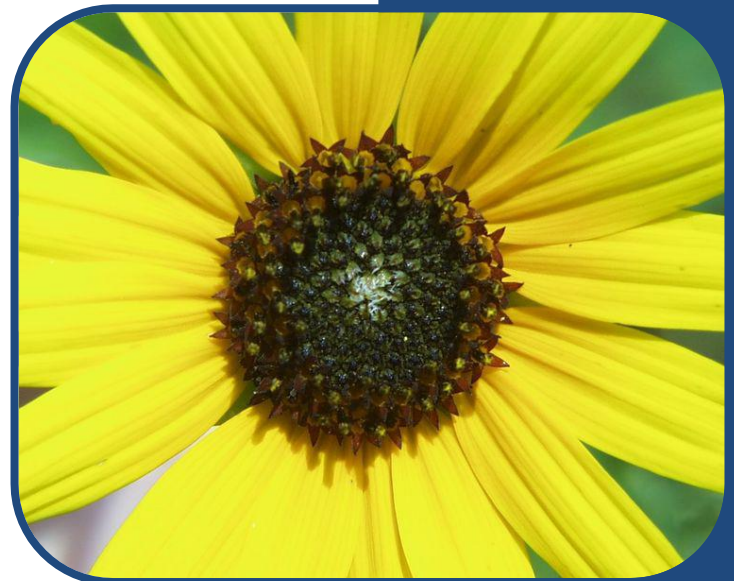
Another opportunity grew out of the interview question "Is there an issue the early childhood sector needs to tackle, that the Sunny Start initiative is uniquely positioned to take on?" A few interesting issues arose from this question, but one main topic in particular emerged as an important opportunity for the initiative to consider: raise awareness of the importance of the "whole child" in early childhood.

One interviewee stated that Sunny Start is one of the only Indiana groups that are well positioned to lead an effort for Indiana to focus on the "whole child" in early childhood. Because the initiative reaches across state departments and early childhood organizations, and because it has a focus on comprehensive systems of care, Sunny Start has a unique ability to tackle big-picture issues. Those interviewed believe that Indiana is not currently in a place where early childhood issues matter to the whole community and they would like to see that change.

Opportunities:

- *State of the Young Hoosier Child* report
- Environmental subcommittee
- Emphasis on "whole child" in Indiana

New Partnership to improve young children's environment.



Raise awareness of the importance of the "whole child" in early care and education.

Other issues in which interview participants see opportunities for Sunny Start to become more involved include:

- Examine how Sunny Start fits into the home visiting and nurse home visiting programs in Indiana.
- Help those working on Nutrition & Obesity in Indiana to increase collaboration.
- Sunny Start could do more to encourage early intervention.
- Sunny Start committees may want to look at the transition out of pediatrics or into elementary school.
- The state of Indiana seems to be ignoring the ways in which healthcare reform may help children.
- Sunny Start may be able to get more involved with the prevention and intervention of child abuse and neglect.
- More effort towards educating families about Medical Homes may be useful in Indiana.
- All-day kindergarten and the importance of literacy need to be emphasized in Indiana.
- Sunny Start could do more to address the gap in service for prenatal and perinatal care in Indiana.

Core Partners

Sunny Start's Core Partners include representatives from state and local agencies, service organizations, and families. This group convenes quarterly to fulfill the following goals:

- Share and disseminate information about Indiana's early childhood programs
- Build the groundwork for collaboration between groups
- Provide input and support for Sunny Start action items

Because of the group's unique combination of members from various agencies and entities throughout the state, Core Partners meetings are ideal for spreading and sharing information, updates, and new resources. During meetings, each subgroup is given the chance to update all members on challenges faced, successes achieved, and current work status within the subgroup. In addition, representatives from various agencies are also given time to share updates or

Core Partners meetings provide a place to learn about what other early care and education providers are doing in Indiana.



resources that may pertain to the wider audience of Core Partner members. Minutes from each Core Partners Meeting are publicly available at www.sunnystart.in.gov.

Benefits of Core Partners

In the past 3-year grant cycle, Sunny Start was committed to strengthening partnerships and deepening system-building activities within the Core Partners. Currently, those partnerships and systems are providing opportunities to decrease duplication and increase collaboration among early childhood providers in Indiana.

Interviews with Sunny Start stakeholders revealed that individuals from Indiana’s early childhood programs found great value in participating in the Core Partners group. Many individuals noted that the infrastructure provided by the ECCS grant is integral to pulling the Core Partners group together. Without Sunny Start, Indiana’s early childhood providers may not have a venue to communicate with each other.

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was a deep appreciation for the information-sharing forum offered in Core Partners meetings. “The greatest impact Sunny Start has is in giving people a convening place.” Helping get the word out about projects, providing input on ideas, and serving as a resource for updates and news were all mentioned as benefits of attending Core Partners meetings.

An additional benefit of participation in Core Partners is the opportunity to network. One interviewee specified that Core Partners has provided the context necessary to reach across agencies and contact the best person possible when answering questions that are out of her realm of expertise. Relationships forged through Core Partners have opened doors to collaboration and new funding opportunities for many stakeholders.

“The **infrastructure** provided by the ECCS grant is integral to pulling the Core Partners group together.”



Core Partners meet quarterly to serve as a steering committee for the Sunny Start Initiative and to share information and resources about early childhood care and education in Indiana.

Members of Core Partners

A list of Core Partners group members can be found in Appendix A. Strategically adding members to the Core Partners group is an ongoing effort for Sunny Start. In the past, such additions have included representatives from the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, the Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

The individuals interviewed for Sunny Start's evaluation were pleased that Core Partners includes representatives from the Parental Information and Resources Centers, the early childcare liaison from the state Department of Education, as well as individuals from direct-service child care organizations. The following suggestions were made regarding future members to include in the Core Partners:



- The early childhood education program from an academic institution like Purdue University or Ball State University
- The Indiana University School of Nursing
- Potential funders or supporters of early care initiatives, e.g. businesses or foundations
- Private insurance groups
- Additional early childhood education representatives
- An organization dedicated to the transition from early childhood into elementary school
- Individuals or organizations with a legislative voice; child advocates
- Individuals with a legislative ear, such as a representative from state government
- Greater cultural and regional diversity

Those interviewed also expressed concern that forthcoming elections and budget cuts may change some individuals' ability to regularly attend Core Partners. It was suggested that Sunny Start note which members regularly attend Core Partners meetings and reach out personally to those who are habitually unable to attend.

Overall, consensus held that Core Partners meetings have good turnout and that electronic communication with partners has been very helpful.

ECCS Critical Components

The Core Partners and the Sunny Start subcommittees have developed a strategic plan for achieving the goal of coordinated services for children ages birth to 5. The strategic plan encompasses seven primary objectives:

- All children in Indiana will have a medical home.
- All children will be covered by a source of payment, either public or private, for medical and developmental services that are identified by the medical home.
- The medical home will facilitate developmental, behavioral, and mental health screening with appropriate treatment referrals to community resources.
- An information clearinghouse will be established to provide resources for families of young children and providers of early childhood services at both the state and local level.
- Quality resources and supports will be integrated to create a coordinated and accessible early childcare system.
- Parents will have the necessary information, support, and knowledge about child development and will be able to recognize their child's progress.
- Families will have timely access to resources to address their child's health, safety, and developmental needs.

Sunny Start seeks to fulfill these seven objectives through the framework of ECCS's five core components, as seen in the following sections. Each component is further defined by goals and objectives to ensure the implementation of basic steps that will ultimately fulfill the purpose of the Sunny Start initiative.

ECCS Critical Components:

- Access to Health Insurance and Medical Homes
- Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development
- Early Care and Education
- Parenting Education
- Family Support

Access to Health Insurance and Medical Homes

The goal of this component is to ensure that all children have access to healthcare services. The following objectives were identified:

- Objective 1: Recruit and train a group of medical homes in Indiana
- Objective 2: Increase families' awareness of and involvement in medical homes
- Objective 3: Promote developmental screening in the medical home

To facilitate achievement of this goal, the ECCS program advocates the medical home model. A medical home provides a consistent point of entry to the medical system through a primary care physician or a team of caregivers.

In 2008 the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) received a grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) to develop Community Integrated Systems of Service (CISS) for children and youth with special health care needs. Because many of the same people were involved in both groups, the IN CISS Medical Home subcommittee and the ECCS Medical Home workgroup have been combined. Developing the medical home concept in Indiana is a major objective of the IN CISS project.

The group has formed a medical home learning collaborative to aid Indiana family and pediatric practices in developing and implementing quality improvement efforts to aid with the implementation of the medical home concept. In 2010, more than 35 pediatric and family practices expressed interest in joining the collaborative. However, the collaborative was only able to add nine new practices to the existing group of nine practices just in time for all 18 practices to attend the October 16, 2010 CISS annual meeting.

To participate in the medical home learning collaborative, practices participate in an annual CISS meeting, bi-weekly half-hour conference calls, and site visits every 2-3 months. Site visits include time to share the following Sunny Start resources: *Sunny Start Fact*

At A Glance

Goal: Every Indiana child will have access to comprehensive health care.

Objective 1: The Medical Home Learning Collaborative - implemented through the Indiana CISS grant - has recruited 18 pediatric and family practice teams.

Objective 2: A parent liaison is involved in each CISS Medical Home improvement team and a fact sheet has been created about the concept of medical home.

Objective 3: CISS Medical Home personnel have been trained on and given materials to support developmental screening in their practices. Sessions on developmental screening and medical home have been offered at conferences through the CISS



Sheets, the *developmental calendar*, the *Wellness Passport* and *special health care needs addendum*, *Sunny Start thumb drives*, and the *Early Childhood Meeting Place* flyer. Practices also are required to include a parent/family partner on their planning teams and to utilize the American Academy of Pediatrics Medical Home Tool Kit (a free resource) as a guide for building their medical home. Collaborative members also complete the Medical Home Index to assess their “medical homeness” two times, at the point they join the collaborative and at the end of the project.

Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development

The goal of this component is to promote healthy social-emotional development in *all* young children. The following objectives were identified:

- Objective 1: Increase the number of mental health providers for young children
- Objective 2: Increase the quality of mental health providers for early childhood
- Objective 3: Implement recommendations of the Prenatal Substance Abuse Commission
- Objective 4: Increase access to perinatal depression screening

The social-emotional subcommittee was formed to enable the fulfillment of this goal. Sunny Start’s commitment to the centrality of social and emotional capacity in young children’s development has resulted in several products and outcomes that have furthered the awareness and training of mental health services for children ages zero to five.

In July 2010, the Commonwealth Fund released a case study that featured Indiana’s strategies for change in infant and early childhood mental health systems. The study reviews Indiana’s implementation of an innovative mental health screening initiative for children receiving child welfare services. Sunny Start

At A Glance

Goal: Promote healthy social-emotional development in *all* young children.

Objective 1: Sunny Start has supported speakers at conferences that broaden the early childhood mental health field and has encouraged the development of early childhood mental health through courses IUPUI’s Department of Social Work.

Objective 2: The Social-Emotional committee has brought an endorsement process, trainings, and mentoring opportunities for early mental health providers in Indiana.

Objective 3: Work towards this goal is continuing through the Cross Agency Prenatal Substance Abuse Committee.

was highly active in strategic planning, training, and social marketing for the project that resulted in nearly three-quarters of children who were removed from their homes being screened for mental health risks between 2005 and 2009. The study also mentioned Sunny Start's role in convening cross-system constituents and updating the *Early Childhood Meeting Place* website that houses information and resources for families.

The social-emotional subcommittee of Sunny Start has recently focused on offering opportunities to early childhood mental health providers, such as an academic certificate program, intensive training and mentorship opportunities, and an endorsement process to support competency-based training in Indiana.

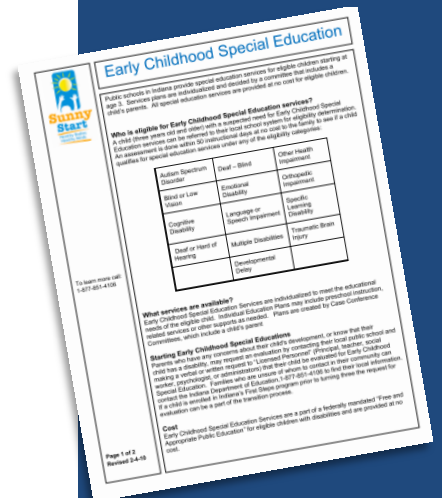
Certificate Program

In partnership with the Indiana University School of Social Work, members of the social-emotional subcommittee have prepared three syllabi, with plans to present the courses through the School of Social Work in summer 2011. This project will increase the number of highly trained mental health providers on a long-term basis.

Intensive ECMH Training and Membership

Funding from the Department of Mental Health and Addictions (DMHA) has allowed the social-emotional subcommittee to provide training to 10 mental health professionals from Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC). Training to help build competencies for mental health and early childhood professionals was also provided at the Indiana Infant & Toddler Mental Health Annual Conference, the Healthy Families Indiana Institute, the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children's conference, and a Summer Institute for strengthening families.

In August 2009, the 11th annual conference on Infant Mental Health focused on Early Childhood Systems of Care and was highlighted by keynote speaker Charlie Biss. Over 100 Hoosiers registered for the conference.



Sunny Start supports trainings that foster a more robust and well-educated workforce in early childhood care and education.



The social-emotional committee has also supported mentorship groups in the following Indiana cities: Batesville, Indianapolis (north), Clarksville, Noblesville, Columbus, and Vevay.

Adoption of the Michigan Endorsement

Because of the relationships formed through Sunny Start, the social-emotional committee has identified the opportunity to collaborate with Indiana early mental health care providers to bring an endorsement process to Indiana. Adoption of the endorsement supports competency-based training in social-emotional areas for a variety of providers, places a priority on continuing education and mentorship, and increases agreement and coordination across disciplines. The endorsement process will result in a more highly trained and integrated workforce serving young children and families. An additional benefit to Indiana's adoption of the endorsement is the ability to participate in the League of States, a group comprising all states that have undertaken this process. Information on the Michigan endorsement is available at www.mi-aimh.org.

Funding has been obtained to purchase the license to use the Michigan AIMH endorsement in Indiana, and a contract was signed in August 2010 with the Indiana Head Start Collaboration Office in partnership with other Sunny Start core partners including the Department of Child Services, the Indiana State Department of Health, the Bureau of Child Care, and the Division of Mental Health and Addictions.

Next steps include beginning a peer supervision group for those who will be eligible for Level 4 (Mentor) endorsement and recruiting providers interested in earning endorsement, including Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, First Steps, Healthy Families, and others.



Developed by the Michigan Infant Mental Health Association, the endorsement program promotes and recognizes the professional development and work experiences of care providers focusing on culturally sensitive, relationship-based infant and early childhood mental health.



Early Care and Education/Child Care

The goal of this component is to develop quality early care and education services for children from birth through five years of age. The following objectives were identified:

- Objective 1: Support increased educational opportunities for early care and education providers
- Objective 2: Support quality standards programs for early care and education

There are several strong organizations in Indiana working to improve the state of early care and education in Indiana. Sunny Start is currently serving those institutions through Core Partners meetings. Interviews with stakeholders revealed several opportunities for Sunny Start to become more involved in this area. However, it was noted that the ability to impact this area is heavily dependent on political will that may not be accessible in this state.

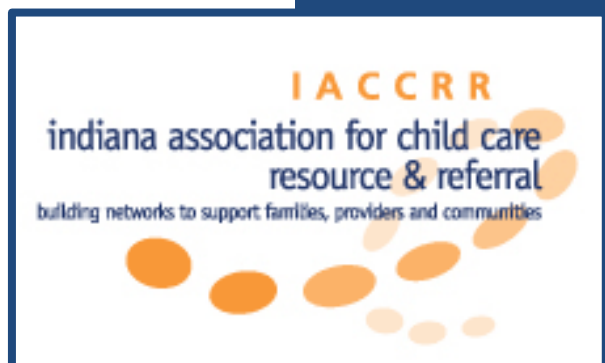
Suggestions for further involvement in this area were to strengthen new relationships formed through the reorganization of Indiana's Department of Education, and to build on the standing relationship with the Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral (IACCRR). No specific ideas were mentioned regarding projects or initiatives for Sunny Start to support, but multiple interviewees suggested that there may be unexplored opportunities in this area.

At A Glance

Goal: Develop quality early care and education services for children from birth through five years of age.

Objective 1: Sunny Start has supported trainings for early care and education providers on issues like asthma, medical home, and immunization by child care health consultants.

Objective 2: The Paths to Quality program is supported by Sunny Start through Core Partners.



Parenting Education

The goal of this component is to increase opportunities for parent involvement and leadership in early childhood policy, service delivery, and decision-making at community and state levels. The following objectives were identified:

- Objective 1: Support parent leadership training
- Objective 2: Involve more parents in Core Partners and subcommittee work of Sunny Start



Sunny Start encourages family member involvement in each subcommittee and in the Core Partners group. Additionally, the Family Advisory subcommittee, a group of individuals in families with young children, provides input on all Sunny Start products and works to train and mentor other families in their communities to become more civically engaged. Sunny Start tried to implement a Family Stipend program to alleviate the costs involved for families to participate in the subcommittee, but many families declined the financial support.

The Family Leadership Initiative (FLI) is a collaboration involving Sunny Start, the Riley Child Development Center, and a diverse group of family leaders and organizations. FLI seeks to create a structure to support families on their Leadership Development journey, and has begun the process by creating a set of competencies for family members to support their leadership skills. The *Family Leadership Competency Model* is included in the “Gap Analysis: Family Leadership Skill Development Resources” document and may be found on the Sunny Start website, www.sunnystart.in.gov.

Many of the projects that Sunny Start is known for have been completed with Family Advisory subcommittee guidance. For example, a *Wellness Passport for Indiana’s Kids* was created as a personal healthcare record-keeping tool allowing parents to collect and store information about their children’s growth and development. A recent addendum to the *Passport* provides additional sections for families raising children with disabilities and special health care needs.

At A Glance

Goal: Increase opportunities for parent involvement and leadership at the community and State levels.

Objective 1: Members of the Family Advisory Committee train each other and their direct communities on how to be involved on boards and in committees.

Objective 2: Parents are involved in Sunny Start activities through the Family Advisory committee, which provides feedback on many Sunny Start projects.



The creation and distribution of a *developmental calendar* for families and providers has also been guided by the Family Advisory subcommittee. This calendar highlights important health and safety information, and is provided both in English and Spanish.

The Family Advisory subcommittee, along with other groups of stakeholders around the state, has also provided input for recent updates to the *Early Childhood Meeting Place* (ECMP) resources. All of the fact sheets that have been created for placement on the ECMP website have been submitted for review by the Family Advisory subcommittee. A list of fact sheets that are posted on the ECMP website can be found in Appendix B.

One suggestion brought up in evaluation interviews was for Sunny Start to hold community forums or town hall meetings around the state to gain input from and assess the needs of families with young children. It has been five or six years since this type of community forum was hosted by Sunny Start. These forums may result in a broad range of cultural and regional input as well as greater visibility for Sunny Start's projects throughout the state.

Family Support

The goal of this component is to increase availability and utilization of family support services that address stressors impairing the ability of families to nurture and support the healthy development of their children. The following objectives were identified:

- Objective 1: Create a resource for families to find information and resources on early childhood
- Objective 2: Ensure families have access to resources via ECMP

The **Early Childhood Meeting Place** is an information clearinghouse of events and resources for Indiana's early childhood professionals and families with young children.

At A Glance

Goal: Increase access to family support services that impact children.

Objective 1: The *Early Childhood Meeting Place* (ECMP) has been revised to better suit the needs of families and early care providers.

Objective 2: Information about the ECMP has been distributed to families through Medical Homes and other Core Partner agencies.

In order to fulfill this goal, Sunny Start has championed the revision of the *Early Childhood Meeting Place* (ECMP) website. The site can be found at <http://earlychildhoodmeetingplace.org>

The passport, a tutorial for its use, and the *developmental calendar* are all available on the *Early Childhood Meeting Place* website and on a *Sunny Start flash drive*, which contains informational materials as well as a place for families to keep medical and other information electronically. The Department of Child Services is using the Sunny Start thumb drives in regions 5, 11 and 12 for Foster Care. The site now provides easy access to news, a comprehensive calendar, and professional and family resources. Several family resources, including some of the resource fact sheets, are provided in a dedicated Spanish-language section.

Recently, several of the fact sheets have been updated to reflect system changes, and fact sheets on the following topics have been added: Financial Resources; Medical Home; Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPDST); Area Agency on Aging; and Bureau of Developmental Disability Services (BDDS).

In evaluation interviews, this website was often mentioned as the most useful tool that Sunny Start has supported, and many groups appreciated the opportunity to be involved with ECMP revisions during the year.

Interviewees also reported that the site was used not only by parents, but also by social workers, case managers, and early child care professionals because the resources and trainings are pertinent to the whole state, not just the Indianapolis area.

During the current grant cycle, there have been continued efforts to expand the resources on the ECMP website and market those resources to providers of early childhood service. Information about the site was conveyed at ten conferences in 2010 and shared with all practices in the Medical Home Collaborative.

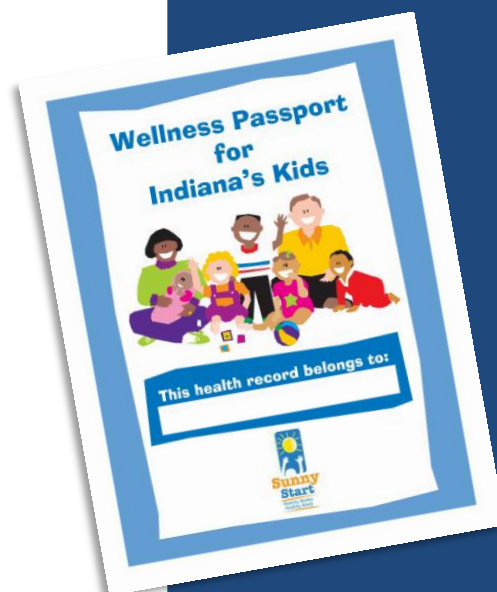
This year, Sunny Start embarked in the area of the impact the environment has on child health. ISDH in conjunction with the Marion



INFORMACIÓN Y RECURSOS PARA FAMILIAS

Many products on the **ECMP website** are available in Spanish.

The **ECMP website** was used by parents, social workers, case managers, and early child care professionals.



County (Indianapolis) Health Dept, Improving Kids' Environment (a State children's environmental health advocacy group) and WFYI (Indianapolis' PBS affiliate), created a DVD on the impact of lead on young children. Sunny Start has also created a new Environmental subcommittee to develop a report on the *Environmental Health of Young Hoosier Children*.

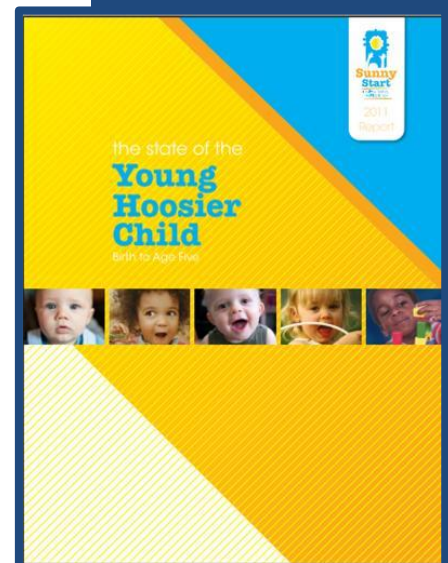
Conclusion

At the conclusion of year two in Sunny Start's 3-year ECCS grant, the initiative has made progress towards its goal of supporting a coordinated, comprehensive, community-based system of services for young children and their families. The initiative supports this effort by providing structure around collaborative projects that have been created around topics that impact young Hoosier children. Over the year, Sunny Start's strengths in collaboration and leveraging resources have yielded such successes as:

- The implementation of an endorsement process for Indiana's early mental health care providers. Made possible by collaborative funding of approximately \$150,000, the endorsement process will result in a more highly trained and integrated workforce serving young children and families.
- A report on the *State of the Young Hoosier Child*, which will provide a data-based overview of the wellbeing of Indiana's children ages zero to five. This product will aid the evaluation committee in determining the changing needs of the state's young children.
- The creation of a new environmental workgroup to develop a report on the *Environmental Health of Young Hoosier Children*.
- The development of a Family Leadership Initiative to create a structure to support families on their Leadership Development journey. This group will ensure that families and family organizations are informed and engaged in leadership positions in National, State,



Sunny Start's strengths in **collaboration** and **leveraging** are the basis for the initiative's successes.



and Local communities.

- An increased knowledge and utilization of early childhood resources throughout the state by leveraging relationships with statewide early care providers and updating resources on the *ECMP website*.

Interviews with the initiative's stakeholders brought forth a variety of possible action items for Sunny Start staff to consider. Though Sunny Start staff has strategically contacted a variety of partners to participate in the initiative, anecdotal feedback suggests an ongoing need for greater diversity and statewide representation in Sunny Start committees. Opinions were divided on whether increasing Sunny Start's visibility in the state would lead to better outcomes for the initiative. There was also some interest in Sunny Start taking a lead on promoting community buy-in for recognizing the needs of the "whole child" in early care and education.

In the culminating year of the current grant cycle, Sunny Start staff and subcommittees will work to strengthen and uphold the collaborative projects that have shown success over the past two years. Staff also will continue to plan for the long-term sustainability of the projects supported by the initiative, including the Medical Home partnership, parent training through the Family Leadership Initiative, and early mental health endorsement process.

By the close of state fiscal year 2012, the initiative will promote and disseminate findings from the *State of the Young Hoosier Child* report, will explore a relationship with the ISDH Pregnant and Parenting Adolescent projects, and will work with the Environmental subcommittee to produce a report on the *Environmental Health of Young Hoosier Children*.

Implementing a comprehensive strategic plan to support a coordinated system of resources and supports for young children and their families in Indiana is the primary objective of the Sunny Start program. This evaluation has shown that the program is making efficient and effective strides towards its goal. By identifying both what the program is doing well, as well as areas in which it could improve, this assessment helps to provide a road map to continued future success.

Work in year three of the ECCS grant cycle will focus on strengthening and upholding the collaborative projects that have shown success over the past two years.



Appendix A - Core Partners List

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Judith A.	Ganser, MD, MPH	ISDH, Maternal and Child Health; Sunny Start Project Director
Andrea L.	Wilkes	ISDH, Maternal and Child Health; Sunny Start Project Manager
Karen	Amstutz, MD, MPH	Anthem
Julie	Brillhart	Anthem, Hoosier Healthwise
Melanie	Brizzi	FSSA Bureau of Child Care
Michael	Conn-Powers	IN Institute for Disability and Community
Janet	Deahl	FSSA, Bureau of Child Care
Dawn	Downer	FSSA Bureau of Child Development - First Steps
Meredith	Edwards	Indiana Academy of Family Physicians
Carl	Ellison	Indiana Minority Health Coalition
Audie	Gilmer	Healthy Families
Melissa	Hahn	Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning
Lisa	Henley	Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral
Gayla	Hutsell	ISDH EHD Program
Dana	Jones	Indiana Department of Education
Phyllis	Kikendall	Dept. of Child Services
Emily	Krauser	Indiana Youth Institute
Melissa	Lewis	Indiana Academy of Family Physicians
Susan	Lightle	Indiana Head Start State Collaboration Office
Danny	Lopez	Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Ted	Maple	United Way - Success by Six
Allison	Matters	Indiana Academy of Family Physicians
Paula	McClain	FSSA, Bureau of Child Care
Cheryl	Miller	Indiana Head Start Association
Kimberly	Minnear	ISDH, Children's Special Health Care Services
Mary Jo	Paladino	Family Voices
Sarah	Patterson	Indiana Youth Institute
Kevin	Porter	The Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction
Isaac E.	Randolph Jr.	Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives
John	Rau, M.D.	Riley Child Development Center
David	Roos	Covering Kids & Families
Jane	Scott	About Special Kids
Sarah	Stelzner, M.D.	Dyson Community Pediatrics Initiative
Karen	Teliha	Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management
Marsha	Thompson	IN Child Care Resource & Referral
Julia	Tipton-Hogan	Indiana Perinatal Network
Angela	Tomlin	IN Association for Infant and Toddler Mental Health
Dianna	Wallace	Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children
Mary	Weber	ISDH, Maternal and Child Health

Appendix B – Fact Sheet List



Resource Fact Sheets

The Indiana State Department of Health's Sunny Start initiative has created a series of fact sheets to highlight the basics of key resources available for Hoosier families. Fact sheets on the following topics are now available:

- Assistive Technology
- Autism Mandate
- Child Care Vouchers
- Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS)
- CHOICE
- Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)
- Dental
- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- First Steps
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Medicaid
- Medicaid Disability
- Medicaid Waivers: Aged, Disabled & TBI
- Medicaid Waivers: DD, Autism & Support Services
- Medical Home
- Other Funding Options
- Prescription Drugs
- Private Health Insurance
- Resource Organizations
- Section 504
- Supplemental Security Income
- WIC-Women, Infants & Children Program

Fact sheets can be found at <http://earlychildhoodmeetingplace.org>

1. Click on "Family Resources"
2. Click on "Resource Fact Sheets"
3. Select the sheet you would like to see (sheets are listed on 3 pages)

Please share this information with families and the professionals who serve them!