

eye on early education

A blog of Strategies for Children, Inc.

Workforce Boards Learn about Early Education Workforce

November 9, 2010 by Irene Sege



Photo: Michele McDonald for Strategies for Children

The early education workforce was the topic of the month for the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association in what WBA Executive Director Don Gillis called “an exciting opportunity to have this conversation.”

Representatives of the Department of Early Education and Care’s six regional Educator and Provider Support grantees 16 regional employment boards at the association’s November meeting.

shared their experiences with leaders of the state’s

The early education workforce is one of the economy’s most pivotal workforces. It allows today’s parents to work and, as research on the lasting benefit of high-quality early education amply demonstrates, plays a critical role preparing tomorrow’s workforce. It is a workforce that increasingly is seeking higher education yet remains chronically underpaid.

“Child care is paid for on the backs of parents and the low wages of workers,” EEC Commissioner Sherri Killins told the group. “What does it look like for us to close that gap?”



Eye on Early Education focuses

on the twin goals of ensuring that Massachusetts children have access to high-quality early education and become proficient readers by the end of third grade.

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Registry and described the pilot Quality Rating and Improvement System. "We've increased our expectations of the workforce," she said.

Rosemary Hernandez, program manager for the Hampden County Regional Employment Board, and Eve Gilmore, director of partnership development at Edward Street Child Services in Worcester, described innovative workforce development initiatives in Springfield and Worcester. The initiatives were funded through Workforce Competitive Trust Fund grants administered by the Commonwealth Corporation. The programs provide valuable lessons for building a statewide system of professional development – lessons that are outlined in a [report](#) and [executive summary](#) released by Strategies for Children earlier this year.

The Springfield program engaged 192 early educators, 30 early childhood programs and eight institutions of higher education. According to Hernandez, 93% of the early educators completed the coursework they had enrolled in; among the 163 already working in the field, 68% received a wage increase and 41% received a promotion.

In Worcester, 124 early educators completed 233 college courses. Eight earned degrees, 23 received wage increases, and 13 received promotions. "This field," Gilmore said, "is moving from a job to a profession."

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Gwen Morgan

on [November 9, 2010 at 10:02 AM](#) | [Reply](#)

Our field is making great progress recently by developing relationships with the Workforce Boards. A next step might be to try to influence the DOL workforce categories that distort our field. DOL categorizes the same role as either a child care worker or a child care teacher. The salaries in these categories are different. We need to get that fixed.

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THE BLOGGER

Irene Sege is communications director for [Strategies for Children](#). Prior to joining SFC in 2009, Irene spent more than 25 years at The Boston Globe, where, among other things, she covered education, demographics and urban affairs and often wrote about children and families.



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