### Office of Child Development and Early Learning

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<th>Location</th>
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| General description       | The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is a recently created state government structure that oversees early childhood (birth to 5) programs and services in Pennsylvania’s Departments of Education and Public Welfare. OCDEL is building a comprehensive early childhood system through the cohesive administration of multiple programs and the systematic alignment of its services and programs. Substantive links to the K-12 system are being made through the alignment of standards and assessments, as well as through the creation of longitudinal assessment data systems. |
| Goals                     | • Promote opportunities for all Pennsylvania children and families by building systems and providing supports that help ensure access to high quality child and family services  
• Create a seamless system of quality early education from birth to age 5 |
| History                   | Created in phases starting in 2004 and concluding in 2006, OCDEL is a joint initiative between the Department of Education and Department of Public Welfare. OCDEL’s programs and services had previously been spread among the two departments. The Office oversees early childhood (birth to 5) programs and services for children and families in these bureaus, putting the programs and services under one umbrella. |
| Services and activities   | The programs and services OCDEL oversees include:  
• Child Care Certification  
• Child Care Works  
• Early Intervention – Birth to Five  
• Family support programs: Children’s Trust Fund; Nurse Family Partnership and Parent-Child Home Program  
• Full-day kindergarten  
• Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program  
• Keystone STARS/Keys to Quality  
• Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts  
• Public-Private Partnerships  
• In addition, OCDEL is creating a statewide longitudinal data collection effort called the Early Learning Network as well as a comprehensive information technology system, PELICAN, to support all of its programs. |
### Evaluation results

The Office’s programs serve over 350,000 children in PA.
- In 2008-2009, twice as many 3-year-olds in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms demonstrated proficiency in personal social development and scientific thinking at mid-year than at the beginning of the school year. Twice as many 4-year-olds demonstrated proficiency in language and literacy and mathematical thinking at mid-year than at the beginning of the school year.
- 30% of STARS programs moved up at least one STAR level in 2008-2009; 45% of children receiving Child Care Works are enrolled in Keystone STARS programs.
- In one year, the number of children in Early Intervention receiving their services in typical early childhood programs (e.g., child care, Head Start, preschool) increased by 9% to 58% in total.

### Funding sources

OCDEL’s budget was $1.36 billion in 2008-2009. Funding comes from the state and federal governments, as well as private foundations.

### Lessons learned

To enact sweeping organizational change, many moving parts must be active at once. This requires the clear articulation of a broad vision as well as a roadmap for change at the departmental and program levels. Although piloting efforts is useful, the goal is to make progress, not to achieve perfection. Celebrating relatively small achievements along the way helps to sustain support both within and outside the Office.ii

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### Pedagogy

Through its efforts to bring the content of multiple programs into alignment and to collect data that can be used to alter instruction, this initiative affects pedagogy.

### Programmatic

With an innovative governance structure, this initiative affects the design and implementation of early childhood policy.

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ii H. Dichter (personal communication, July 24, 2009)