

# Early Learning Leadership Advisory Council

Investing in Young Children  
Investing in our Future



# Edward Street Child Services

- Established in 1883, was the oldest childcare center in Worcester
- Always on the cutting edge of quality improvement
- Proactively partnered with local agencies to assist families with other issues that impacted child growth and development

# Edward Street

- Provides advocacy, resources and support to early childhood educators and the children they serve

# The Current Crisis

- 14 centers have closed since 2000 – one since September 1, 2006
- Local centers lose, on average, \$7.00 per child per day for state subsidized slots (\$1,750 per year per child)
- 601 young children in Worcester, eligible for subsidies, are on the waiting list
- Many more families are not eligible for assistance but cannot afford care

# Cost of Care

- The annual cost of licensed early education ranges from \$9,100 for preschool and \$12,735 for infant care.
- A family earning \$30,000 would have to devote a third of its income toward the cost of preschool for just one child.

# Quality Issues

- Increasing educational requirements for teachers with no increase in salary
- As teachers increase education they leave for higher paying jobs.
- New accreditation standards and fees are becoming cost prohibitive
- Families cannot afford increased fees

# Impacts on Children

- High teacher turnover negatively impacts the development of children
- Children most in need of early childhood education may not receive services because system is dependent upon parent activities, not child need



# Worcester

- 61% of third graders do not meet proficiency in reading on MCAS
- 18.8% of children are enrolled in Special Education (15.3% state-wide)
- 7.4% drop-out rate (3.5% state-wide)
- 46.1% of births in 2000 were paid for by public funds

# Early Childhood Industry

- Generates \$1.5 billion annually in gross receipts
- Directly supports nearly 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs
- Brings state and federal dollars to the community

# Economic Development

- Studies indicate a ROI of between \$8.00 and \$12.00 for every \$1.00 invested
  - Reduced costs of juvenile justice, special education, teen pregnancy, welfare dependence
  - Higher educational attainment

# Economic Development

- Child care allows parents to work
- Programs employ members of our community
- Early Childhood education programs prepare children for success in school and life



# Why Now?

- The state has increased focus on the early years
  - New Department
  - New Commissioner
  - New Hope
- Boston and Springfield have groups planning for the implementation of universal pre-school
- A new system will be built. If we do not craft our own plan we may wind up with a system we do not want

# Why Now?

- Legislative Response
  - Together For Kids
  - Early Education for All
  - Massachusetts on the forefront

# Why Now?

- We know that the most rapid brain development occurs between 0 – 6 years.
- Our children are our future. They deserve the early education that will allow them to develop to their full potential, for the community, but most importantly for themselves.



# National Response

- Business Roundtable
- Federal Reserve
- Minnesota Business for Early Learning
- Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center

