

MECA Board Identified Priority Areas to Consider

DPHHS reviewed the priority areas identified by the board and prepared a comprehensive update. This update outlines existing efforts addressing the board identified priorities, highlights any remaining gaps, and identifies potential funding opportunities to close those gaps. The intent was to ensure alignment between board priorities and current initiatives while exploring strategies to strengthen and improve services. At the end of the document is a list of priority areas that overlaps with Jobs 406.

Board Identified Priority Areas Currently Covered by DPHHS

Workforce Development

Priority Area	Priority Level	Current DPHHS Activity	Identified Gap	Subject Matter Expert(s)	Potential Investment
Study of Child Care Deserts & Targeted Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on known childcare deserts 	High	TA contractors actively recruit providers in desert areas.	Is it a true desert or are other solutions found? Hard to gather data in those areas on what the need is.	SPARK, Zero to Five	
High School Apprenticeship Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship to 	Medium	Apprenticeship efforts underway. \$14,000 currently used to support efforts	Outreach to FACS teachers HS students to find a worksite	DLI, OPI, ECP, ECSB	



<p>strengthen the entry-level workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.S. student - learn a career while in school – young workforce – grow with industry 			Lack of school based childcare centers		
<p>Business Training for Providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to support environment for staff. • More funding for infant/toddler work to offset the charging • I/T subsidy enhancement or grant program 	Medium	Delivered through current contractors.	Funding for cohort groups or train the trainer models.	Zero to Five	
<p>Scholarship for individuals going into Early Childhood Education</p>	Medium	Pay for up to 6 credits of early childhood courses. Currently fund \$26k.	<p>Additional funds could be used</p> <p>Additional degrees could be supported</p> <p>Additional credits could be supported</p>		\$27,000+



<p>Career Supports Beyond Higher Education (CDA & Higher Ed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create stacks of credentials with community/tribal colleges 	<p>Very Low</p>	<p>Limited higher education supports; CDA supported. \$206,000 currently to support this project.</p>	<p>Recruitment and reimbursement of CDA observers.</p>	<p>Higher Education Institutions</p>	
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Quality Improvement Initiatives

Priority Area	Priority Level	Current DPHHS Activity	Identified Gap	Subject Matter Expert(s)	Potential Investment
<p>Training for Individuals Serving Children with Special Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more staff to support service for children with special/behavioral needs 	<p>Critical</p>	<p>Supported through current contracts.</p>	<p>Sandbox training has sunset. Funding for OT and Speech therapists has ended.</p> <p>PDG grant, funding ended for training, materials.</p> <p>Behavioral and PT training support</p>	<p>MonTech, SPARK</p>	



<p>Could grow tier 2 (targeted) supports by increasing PD options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more Tier 2 support for zero- to five-year-olds 	Very low	Pyramid model training online.	Use pyramid model to fidelity (Coaching around the pyramid model for providers)	Marjorie Part C	
Sensory Diet Training		Delivered through an existing contract.	Limited to current contract scope and capacity.		

Affordability

Priority Area	Priority Level	Current DPHHS Activity	Identified Gap	Subject Matter Expert(s)	Potential Investment
<p>Employer Supported Family Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer supported family policies 	High			Zero to Five	



Innovation Initiatives

Priority Area	Priority Level	Current DPHHS Activity	Identified Gap	Subject Matter Expert(s)	Potential Investment
Public–Private Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen systems – coordination of services 	High	Supported through current contractor structure- Public/Private Early Childhood Partnership Cohort Pilot	Employee Sponsored Grant ended 12/30/25.	Zero to Five	
Local Partnerships & Coalition Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen systems – coordination of services • insurance providers that will insure providers – insurance cooperative? 	High	TA contractors support local coordination.	DPHHS Early Childhood does not directly fund coalition infrastructure.	Zero to Five	
Adult Learning Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support adult learning 	Low	Delivered through current contractors.	No substitutes for staff to attend training during regular business hours.	SPARK, CCT, ECP, Zero to Five, RAISE	



Priority Area	Priority Level	Current DPHHS Activity	Identified Gap	Subject Matter Expert(s)	Potential Investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Innovative training needs to be outside work hours					

Board Identified Priority Areas Not Currently Covered by DPHHS

Workforce Development

Priority Area	Priority Level	Identified Gap	Potential Opportunity for Impact	Subject Matter Expert	Potential Investment
Professionalization & Career Awareness Campaign		Lack of consistent messaging or materials elevating early childhood as a profession.	Invest in a statewide recruitment and professionalization strategy.		

Quality Improvement Initiatives

Priority Area	Priority Level	Identified Gap	Potential Opportunity for Impact	Subject Matter Expert	Potential Investment
Incentives for Serving High-Need Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more staff to support services for children with special/behavioral needs 	Critical	Sandbox project sunset. This project could also be reinstated for technical assistance from OT and Speech Language Therapists.	Reintroduce targeted supports for high-need populations through TA from OT/PT/Speech language/behavioral therapists. Utilize infant early childhood mental health consultation.	MonTech	\$80-156k/per fiscal year



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need more Tier 2 support for zero-to five-year-olds 					
<p>Quality Incentives for Providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality incentives for providers 	High	No ongoing financial incentive tied to quality improvement.	Assess feasibility of reinstating or redesigning incentives.		

Affordability Initiatives

Priority Area	Priority Level	Identified Gap	Potential Opportunity for Impact	Subject Matter Expert	Potential Investment
<p>Grants to Offset Costs for Families Not Eligible for BBS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency pool for income increase that lose Best Beginnings etc. Childcare worker through B-5 has sunset. 	Very low	Affordability gap for families above eligibility thresholds.	Consider one of the three options provided by DPHHS staff.		

Innovation Initiatives

Priority Area	Priority Level	Identified Gap	Potential Opportunity for Impact	Subject Matter Expert	Potential Investment
State agency coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen systems – coordination of services 	High	No funding after 12/30/25.	ECIDS- PDG project to share data between agencies	DPHHS Staff- Nathan Miller	
Provider Compliance & Infrastructure Grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing facility expansion or new facility expansion • Assistance to facilitates to overcome permitting, red tape, facility buyout requirements 	Medium	CCDF cannot fund structural or major safety upgrades.	Provide flexible funding for costs not allowable under CCDF.		



Not mapped from original chart paper statements:

- Landscape for preschool
- Before and afterschool care support
- I/T subsidy enhancement or grant program

Priority areas that overlap with Jobs 406:

- High School Apprenticeship Expansion
- Career Supports Beyond Higher Education (CDA & Higher Ed)
- Public–Private Partnerships