

Early On[®] Redesign
Causes & Forces Workgroup Report
April 22, 2005

BACKGROUND

Step One of the *Early On* redesign process was initiated on April 22, 2005. A group of 80 stakeholders (see *Participant list*) with important knowledge of the *Early On* system discussed the most significant forces and causes impacting *Early On*. This work was critical as it established the context within which the redesign will take place.

Causes/Forces were defined as:

- A strength or energy that is exerted or brought to bear upon something - producing motion or change;
- Can be political, economic, social, intellectual, financial, of nature, etc.; and
- Can produce a positive or negative impact.

Examples of a cause/force are:

- **Research** regarding the critical importance of the first three years of life;
- **Funding**/Economic circumstances.

Causes/forces generally fall into three types:

- Cyclical - short-term, problems that will go away over time;
- Structural - Long-term, persistent and getting worse; and
- Fiscal - Revenue short fall, spending increase or both

PROCESS

- Individually and in small groups, participants identified causes/forces that they felt were impacting the *Early On* system, using the definition of a cause/force provided above.
- Similar causes/forces were then grouped into categories.
- Participants then voted for the causes/forces they believed were the most critical related to the *Early On* system.
- Participants identified whether the cause/force was cyclical, structural, fiscal, or a combination.

RESULTS

- Eighty participants identified 159 examples of causes/forces impacting *Early On*.
- The 159 causes/forces were sorted, resulting in 20 different overall categories of causes/forces.
- Participants identified the following as the 10 most critical causes/forces impacting *Early On*:
 1. Policy
 2. Parent Involvement/Leadership
 3. Funding/Economics
 4. Accountability
 5. Systems Philosophy
 6. Coordination/Collaboration
 7. Communication/Information
 8. Research
 9. Legislation
 10. Cultural Issues
- All of the 10 most critical causes/forces were identified as structural, many with cyclical aspects.

MEETING RECORD

The following chart contains all 159 causes/forces, sorted by categories. The chart also indicates the type of cause/force as identified by participants. The 10 most critical causes/forces are above the yellow line; the remaining 10 categories of causes/forces are being retained as a critical part of the meeting record.

Other materials from the Causes and Forces Workgroup meeting are also available for viewing at www.earlyonredesign.com:

- Causes/Forces Workgroup Participant list;
- PowerPoint Presentation that was used to support the day's work;
- Meeting Evaluation results.

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Policy	Structural/Cyclical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth Mandate State • Cohesive standards for all Early On programs • Bureaucracy tends to perpetuate itself and resist change • State level standards sometimes exceed federal standards • K-12 system demands particular outcomes (e.g. narrow focus on literacy, deficit-based eligibility, etc.) • Lack of summer services due to traditional school calendar • Conflict between concept of a system of care and mandates of program requirements • Lack of universal access to services • Funding cycle too short for long term planning • From birth to death, not using person/family centered model • Lack of standardization • Cumbersome/complex planning process, always being reworked • Early On not a primary priority for agencies - always secondary add on. • Standardized outcomes conflict with diversity
Parent Involvement/ Leadership	Structural with Cyclical Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Education • Parents not given information/options/choices to make decisions they feel are important to their family/child • No parent training • Family centered practice • System does not empower parents to have dreams and expectations, families are overwhelmed • Parents need to be valued • Parent participation on advisory/policy-making committees • Lack of valuing the partnership with the family • Parents need to know their rights and how to advocate for their children • Parent advocacy

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Funding/Economics	Structural with Cyclical Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of service coordination not acknowledged • Disparity in the distribution of funds to local areas • Funding: state and local • Funding streams drive segregated services • Siloed systems including funding • Understanding expectation of federal funding • Flat line federal funding with increased expectations • Preschool funding • Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Government o Family o Funding priorities at federal, state and local level - linear streams • Proportion of funding in relationship to population density • Lack of resources available to families • Inequitable distribution of human services funding, i.e. rural vs. urban, local control system • Priorities for funding • Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Unfunded mandates, absence of funds • Level funding impedes creative approaches to services • Early On funding • Difficulty accessing resources • Services needed for Part C • Economic contraction/collaboration collapses • Uncertainty about funding options • Fiscal reduction at federal, state and local levels • Michigan economy shifts priorities • State fiscal crisis • Changes in the system impacts service delivery vs. needs for services

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Accountability	Cyclical Structural at times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing federal regulations focus on enforcement • Cohesive standards for all Early On programs • Conflict regarding who we are accountable to • Lack of outcome tracking system • Increased focus on accountability • Lack of requirements and expectations for compliance • No consequences to specific agency for lack of participation or compliance • Monitoring goes to intermediate school district only • The push for results • Process driven system versus results driven system • Outcomes emphasis versus documentation of gains
Systems Philosophy	Cyclical but ideally structural construct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility criteria clarification • Tightening of eligibility • Privatization of human services (public moved to managed care) • Changes in services that Early On relies on • Constant change of programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bureaucratization o Complexitization • Over-emphasis on the process, not the person/child
Coordination/ Collaboration	Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of language and mandates among Reconciliation between expectations of Early On and resources available • Splintered efforts and competing efforts in 0-3 • Lack of continuity/consistency(county-county, state-state) • Coordination of services with little service to coordinate • All children who need early intervention will get it • Transportation, access to services • Access to services is complex (jumping through hoops) • Dual systems serving Part C children (special education vs. non special education)

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Communication/ Information	Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information and communication between community partners • Lack of understanding and operation of Early On as a system instead of a program • Not a shared understanding of what Early On is/does • Too many sources giving out information that is not accurate • Lack of Early On public relations • Hard to communicate accurate information in a timely way • Lack of information that resources exist • Inaccurate interpretation of regulations • Rift between local level practices and state level expectations • System of communication disjointed/ineffective • Lack of consistent understanding in what constitutes early intervention service • Lack of knowledge about the importance of social-emotional development of infants/children • Clear directives do not exist throughout agencies (top down)
Research	Structural Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict of perceptions of best practice • Recognition of importance of early childhood • Lack of research to support a proactive approach • Not consistently using evidence-based practices • More demand for evidence-based research • Understanding of research on most appropriate interventions to assure best outcomes • Brain research-increased public awareness of the early years by the public policymakers in the state • Knowledge of children's health, emotional, well being affecting their development

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Legislation	Structural with cyclical implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive philosophy of Early On • Disconnect between No Child Left Behind and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act • Part C structure - laws/regulations no longer work • CAPTA legislation • Impact of federal and state legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Example: CAPTA (impacts resources, tight fiscal situation) ◦ Example: FERP/HIPAA (impacts communication/ partnership) • Federal mandates causing linear systems that creates disconnect for a system intended to blend and coordinate Early On. • Special education laws versus Early On requirements • Legislative/executive loss of institutional memory and knowledge • Federal legislative changes • Changing requirements from OSEP
Cultural Issues	Structural with Cyclical components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major change in family dynamics of work for economics • Historical pattern of reactive as opposed to proactive • Work-family, Work-stay at home • Quality of enforcements/regulations vs. government stay out • Cultures/diversity • Environment • Medical advances • Demographics, concentrated poverty • How children are valued in our culture • Increased children needing services due to societal changes • Cultural belief related to maturationist theory - "s/he'll grow out of it" • Politically divisive climate

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Cultural Issues (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing recognition that children with special needs are part of their communities and their families • Increase in non-English speaking families • Change in family structure • Society may have preconceived ideas about children with disabilities • Society devalues children • Teen pregnancy • Family vs. government • Distrust of government (pay fewer taxes, the roles of government, term limits • Difficulty for many individuals to meet adult standards for full participation in society
Partnerships		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie in with universal early childhood services • Turf wars • Lack of partner agency participation other than education • Lack of understanding and public will to form partnerships with communities, agencies and families
Leadership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Action Network • State staff passionate and committed to changes in early On • Low influence of county Early On coordinator • State leadership "Team" for Part C • Lack of power of Part C - do the best you can • Early Childhood Investment Corporation • Loss of institutional knowledge as a result of the 2002 "early out"

Cause/Force	Type of Cause/Force	Participant identified examples of Causes/Forces
Professional Development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent clear training for all providers across the system • Lack of trained personnel, sustained preservice and inservice for birth -3 and family-centered practice • Interagency process has not been accepted • Lack of trained staff to meet needs efficiently • Impact of new technology • Institutions of higher ed-sw/ed, recognition of Early On
Demographics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved identification • Increase in the number of potential eligibles, e.g. Low birth weight babies surviving, autism, CAPTA, earlier identification of problems • Changing demographics: Poverty, Age, Culture, Language
Technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced/improved medical technology • Various data systems do not link
Access to Health Care		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Behavioral and Medical • Lack of prenatal care • Lack of knowledge, willingness, motivation to change unhealthy behaviors
Young Children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Fear/Distrust		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of change encourages stagnation • Stigma of getting help • Uncoordinated systems resist change
Community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not acknowledging change and structure of communities at the grass roots • Community at large does not value early childhood/families • Lack of communal spirit "all our children", i.e. Lack of shared ownership, collective responsibility
Political		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Toxins • Beliefs of policymakers, priorities/philosophies