

# Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template

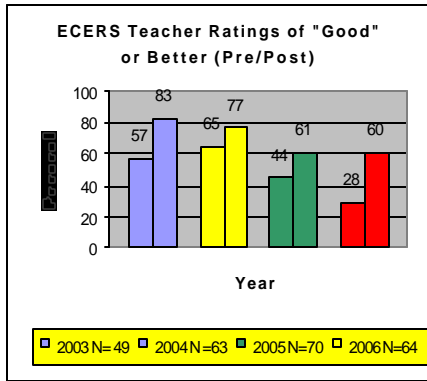
## Part II, Program Summary

**Program Purpose** To reduce the risk factors associated with suspension and expulsion of preschool children in early childhood care and education settings, thus maintaining the continuity of their early care and education environments/opportunities.

**Program** Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP), Department of Children and Families

**Performance Measure 1**

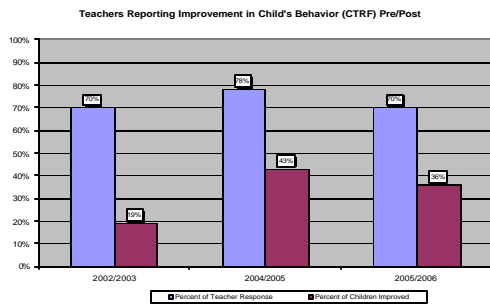
The number of trained teachers who reach a level of good or above on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECER's) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale ( ITER's )



See p 4 for ITER's Data

**Performance Measure 2**

Percentage of teachers who report positive changes in the target child's behavior, social/emotional skills after ECCP intervention



Key Budget Information	
Total Current Program Year Funding	2.6mil
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Population Result	
Program Funding As Percent of Total Agency Budget	3%
Funding Distribution	
Total Federal Funds	0
Total State Funds	\$2.6mil
Capital Projects Subtotal	0
Other Funding	0
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third Parties	100%

**Story Behind the Baselines**

Connecticut ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation for expulsions/suspensions of children 3-5 from preschool. The rate of suspension/expulsion is greater in preschool than at any other grade form K-12. In 2005 there were 450 expulsions/suspensions in Connecticut. Children suspended and/or expelled from preschool are less likely to have the experiences that lead to early kindergarten success, making them more likely to be at risk for later school failure.

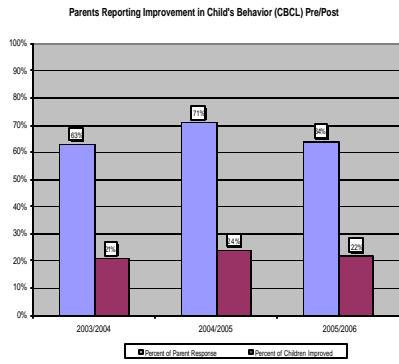
**Turning The Curves: What do you propose to do over the next two years and why?**

1. Increased and individually targeted teacher training based on pre scores.\*
2. Use of instrument such as the CLASS to identify the social/emotional climate of the classroom for more effective teacher assessment and instruction.\*
3. A minimum of three home visits per family to ensure school/home partnerships.

\*Indicates, low-cost, no-cost action steps, including reallocation of existing resources.

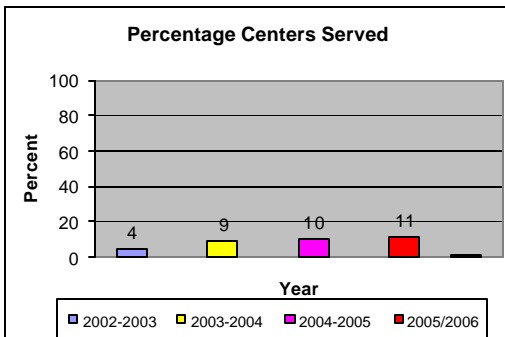
### Performance Measure 3

Number of parents/ guardians who report positive changes in their child's behavior, social/emotional skills after ECCP intervention.



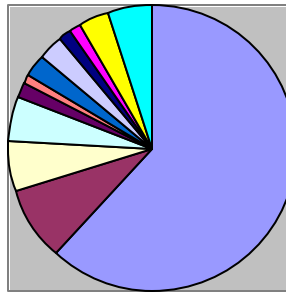
### Performance Measure 4

Percentage of publicly funded early care and education centers who have access to the services of an ECCP Consultant.



### Performance Measure 5

Percentage of Children who remain in their day care setting. See p 9 for Data



- 62% Remained in Class or Graduated
- 9% Planned Transfer
- 6% Changed Classrooms Within Center
- 5% Family Moved
- 2% Classroom Closed or Summer Program
- 1% Family Kept Child Home
- 2.5% Accepted To Special Educ Program
- 2.5% Parent Removed Child
- 1% Family Left C/O Financial
- 1% Child Did Not Return Following Break
- 3% Suspended/Expelled
- 5% Other

**Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template  
Part II, Program Accountability for  
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership**

**Program Purpose:** To reduce the risk factors associated with suspension and expulsion of preschool children in early childhood care and education settings, thus maintaining the continuity of their early care and education environments/opportunities.

**Program** Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)

**Contribution to Population Result:**

Children at risk of suspension or expulsion from a publicly funded day care receive access to the full range of behavioral health services and thus will be ready for successful learning in Kindergarten.

Total Current Program Year Budget	\$2.6mil
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Quality of Life Result	
Program Funding as Percent of Total Agency Budget	3%
Budget Distribution:	
Federal	
State	
General Fund	\$2.6mil
Capital Project Fund	\$0.0
Other State Funding	\$0.0
Other Funds (Not Federal or State)	\$0.0
Percent of Total Current Funding Spent on Direct Service	
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third parties	\$2.6mil

**Basic Program Facts:**

Children suspended and/or expelled from preschool are less likely to have the experiences that lead to early kindergarten success, making them more likely to be at risk for later school failure. In kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, suspension and expulsion are disciplinary measures used as a last result (Gilliam, 2005). However, in a random sample of 4,815 preschool classrooms across the United States, the preschool expulsion rate was 6.7 per 1,000 children. That rate was 3.2 times higher than the rate of expulsion for K-12 students, which was 2.1 per 1,000 (Gilliam, 2005). In Connecticut 450 children were expelled from preschool programs during the time of this study (Gilliam, 2005). The expulsion rate for pre school children in Connecticut was 12.48 per 1,000, the 9<sup>th</sup> largest rate in the country (Gilliam, 2005).

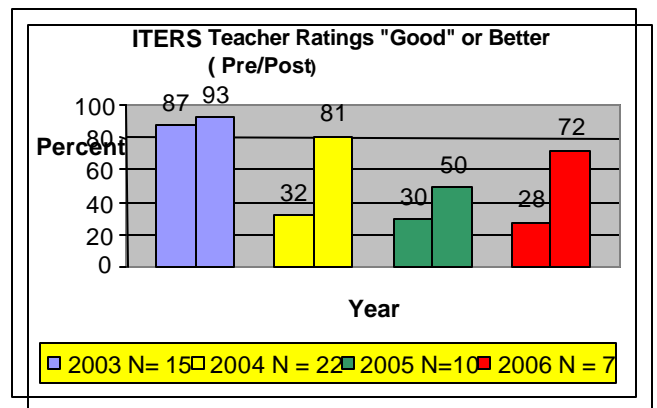
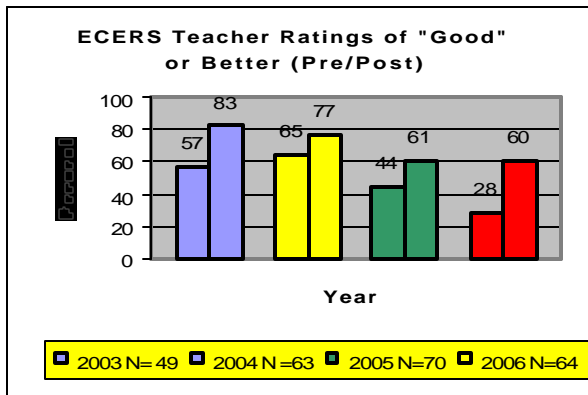
The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) began as a one-year pilot program in 2002, funded by the State of Connecticut's Mental Health Strategy Board. The program was one of the Strategy Board's five child-focused initiatives intended to provide services to populations where there were traditionally very few services available. The goal of ECCP was to reduce the risk factors associated with suspension and expulsion of pre-school children in childcare settings. During 2003, ECCP became incorporated into the Department of Children and Families regular budget. Complete data is available for the past three years.

ECCP provides the following services:

- A quality preschool experience
- Information and strategies that support social and emotional health and development to parents/guardians
- Individualized action plans designed to support the development of positive child behaviors and reduce challenging behaviors.
- Strategies for classroom teachers and teaching assistants that promote positive behavior, communication, resilience, and attachment.
- Information, resources and strategies for classroom teachers and teaching assistants that help them create a developmentally appropriate classroom environment.

**Performance Measure 1:**

The number of trained teachers who reach a level of good or above on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECER's) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITER's) The ECER's and ITER's are rating systems developed by Thelma Harmes, a prominent Early Childhood Researcher. They are intended to be used to assess and improve the quality of early childhood environments. The system consists of 15 areas of assessment. The instrument is psychometrically reliable and valid and has been employed nationally and internationally.



**Story Behind Measure 1**

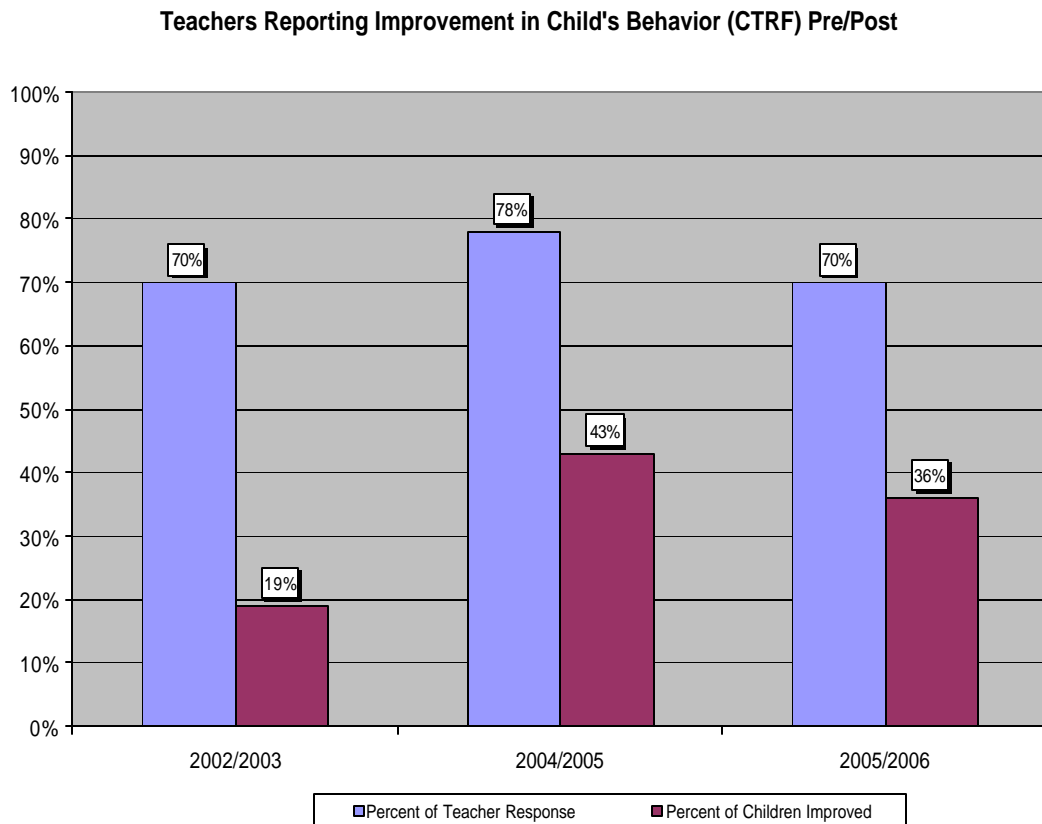
The ability of our early childhood system to assure success for every child is dependent upon the quality of its professional staff. Research indicates that children who are challenged with poverty, English as a second language and children of color frequently start school well behind their more affluent peers, experiencing a "preparation gap". If uncorrected, the preparation gap leads to disproportional failure among these students. Research further demonstrates that a "high quality" preschool experience can ameliorate the "preparation gap". High quality preschool education is directly related to the quality of the professional staff. Through access to ECCP consultation, center staff including directors, teachers and teacher assistants, receive support in implementing practices that promote social/emotional wellness by creating environments in which children can express their needs in appropriate ways. Consultants teach center staff how to modify classroom environments in order to promote children's attachment, resilience, positive behavior and social/emotional development. This in turn can lead to a decrease in challenging behaviors and the incidence of

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suspension/expulsion. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-R (ECERS-R) for children 3-5 years old and the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) for children age birth to 2 36 months provide a measures of change in teacher's effectiveness with young children. Scores range from Inadequate (1), Minimal (3), Good (5), or Excellent (7). A score of "good or better" is considered to provide an environment and stimulation appropriate to the development of young children. This measure includes scores of 5, 6, and 7 or "good" through "excellent". For each year recorded the first bar represents the pre-test score, while the second bar represents the post test score. The graphs demonstrate percentages of teachers reaching the level of "good" or "better" on either scale in a pre/post format. All ratings were performed by ECCP consultants. Over the four years of data collection it should be noted that teachers are consistently improving their pre/post rating and thus their teaching skills. It should also be noted that there remain a large percentage of teachers who do not reach the goal of "Good" or above after training and consultation. This may be due to the fact that the ECER's and ITER's are not sensitive enough to document change or the fact that some teachers are not improving. The reasons for this phenomenon will be addressed by further research.

### Performance Measure 2:

Percentage of teachers who report positive changes in the target child's behavior or social/emotional skills after ECCP intervention

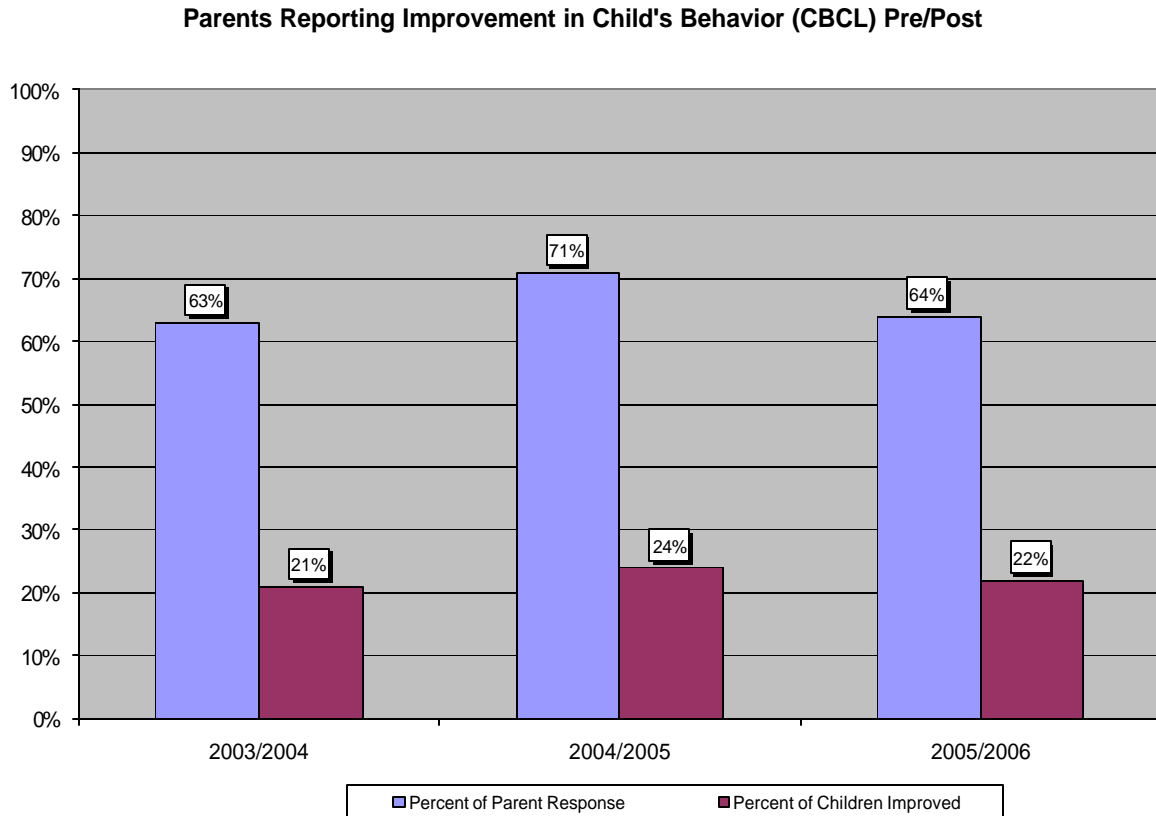


**Story Behind Measure 2:**

Early suspensions and expulsions disrupt family life resulting in stress, uncertainty, loss of income and loss of employment opportunities, creating undue economic hardship. Parents are left to cope with child behaviors without the benefit of resources, strategies and support. Children's behaviors do not resolve and often escalate. The impact on the child is severe. The memory of early educational experiences is one of being different and failing. Abrupt transitions interrupt the continuity of all aspects of development including: attachment to adults and peers, ability to learn effective strategies of internal coping, and developing the ability to solve social conflict through communication and problem solving. ECCP consultants offer specific child assessment with the goal of identifying behavioral challenges, implementing child specific plans, and identifying resources and strategies which teachers implement. Changes in children's behavior are measured by pre/post administration of the Caregiver/Teacher Report Form (CTRF); a checklist documenting changes in internal coping, ability to solve social conflict, social communication, and peer relationships. The blue bar on the above graph shows the percentage of teachers responding to the CTRF. The violet bar shows the percentage of child improvement by teacher report. Percentage of children improving increased from 2003-2006, with percentages clustering close to the 40% point. Response rate among teachers remains fairly consistent at approximately 70%; however 30% of the teachers do not respond. It is difficult to determine the true meaning of child improvement with this response rate. It is also difficult to determine why some scores decreased. This may be due to the fact that ECCP works with different cohorts of children each year. At any time, the severity of challenge presented by an individual child may depress a total score and be reflected by what appears to be an overall decrease in performance. At this time it is difficult to determine the reason for the drop in scores.

**Performance Measure 3:**

Number of parents/ guardians who report positive changes in their child’s behavior or social/emotional skills after ECCP intervention.



**Story Behind Measure 3:**

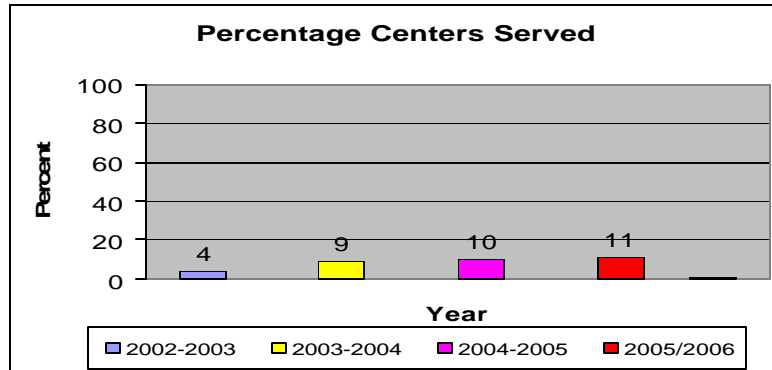
ECCP uses a team approach in gathering baseline information which describes current child behaviors. Changing a child’s behavior requires comprehensive observation of the child, environment and adults who interact with the child. It also requires the participation of all adults involved with the child, particularly parents/guardians. The Child Behavior Check List (CBCL) has been used successfully with parents to assist them in identifying children’s behavioral style. It is used by ECCP consultants to engage parents in planning for their child and implementing emotional/social supports. The CBCL checklist assists parents to identify behavioral issues which can be incorporated into the individual child action plan. The checklist provides examples of common behaviors. Parents check whether they have observed the behavior and assign it a rating of being more or less problematic. There is no formal training for the checklist. The CBCL has good psychometric validity and reliability with a wide variety of parents. Positive changes in children’s behavior are indicated by parents through completion of the CBCL after the child action plan has been implemented. The blue bar represents the percentage of parents responding while the violet bar represents the percentage of children improving based on parent response on the CBCL. Data indicates that 65-70 % of parents completed the CBCL. It is interesting to note that child improvement based on parent report did not improve significantly. This low percentage of improvement may be an artifact of low response rate or may actually represent what parents are

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observing. Regardless, research must address this finding in an attempt to explain contributing variables.

### **Performance Measure 4:**

Percentage of publicly funded early care and education centers that receive the services of an ECCP Consultant.



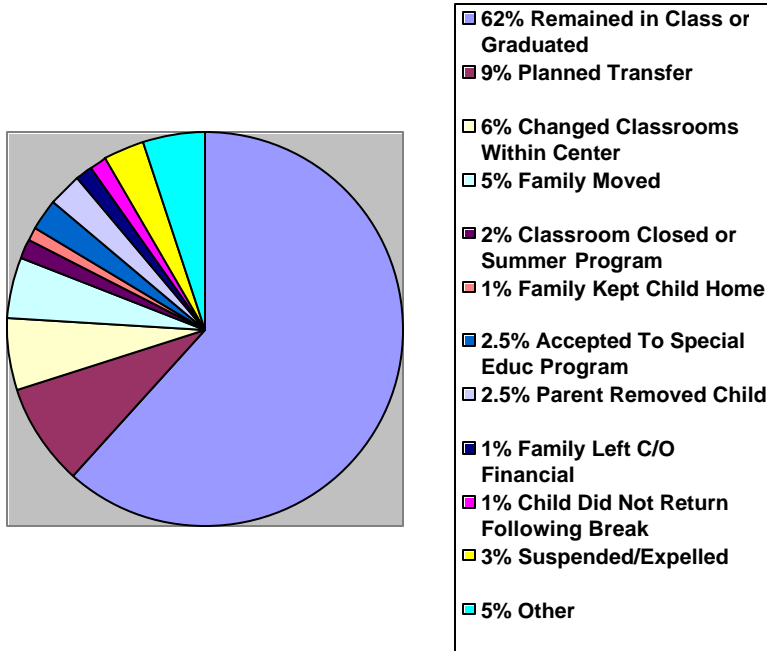
### **Story Behind Measure 4:**

There are currently 10 ECCP consultants providing consultative services to early care and education programs throughout the state. In June, 2006 the legislature awarded an additional amount of money which enables ECCP to advertise, hire and train an additional 11 consultants. Prior to this date, ECCP served 353 early care and education settings of a possible eligible 1,314 from 2003 – 2006 in all regions of the state. ECCP advertises their availability through community networking events. They have not attempted to assure that every early care and education setting that might potentially benefit from the service has information about the program. This is due to their realization that they cannot meet the needs of all the centers that currently request assistance. The graph represents the percentage of eligible centers served since 2002. One difficulty with the current data is that at this time they have no way of determining whether this is an unduplicated count. There have been occasions where center have requested and received services 2 or more times. Given the addition of additional staff, current staff experience and changes in site selection, it is projected that ECCP will be able to serve 22% of the eligible centers requesting services within the next year. The intensive site-based intervention will require sites to develop an action plan and implement strategies involving staff and parents that will build the capacity of the center to provide a supportive social/emotional environment as part of the overall center educational plan. As centers build capacity they decrease their need to depend on the consultant freeing the consultant to address the needs of newly referred children and centers.

### Performance Measure 5

Percentage of Children Remaining in Child Care Setting After ECCP Consultation

#### ECCP 2003-2007 Six Month Aggregated Data



#### Story Behind Measure 5

A major intention of the ECCP has been to provide technical assistance and training to teachers in an effort to reduce the risk factors associated with suspension and expulsion of preschool children in early childhood care and education settings. This is in response to the increasing awareness that continuity in care and education is of paramount importance to the social/, emotional, cognitive and language development of young children. Maintaining the continuity of early care and education environments maximizes a child's opportunities for uninterrupted exposure to new learning as well as opportunities to develop and practice critical social skills.. Frequent disruptions from early care and education environments are deleterious to development and in fact may reinforce feelings of inadequacy in a child which may have lasting and damaging effects. While the data presented above is aggregated it is important to examine what it reveals. Children who were referred for consultative services were maintained in their early care and education setting at the 1 month follow-up 86 % of the time. At 6 months the retention rate is 62%. At one month 7% of children either move to another class (perhaps due to birthdays), moved from the area or were planned transfers to another program setting. At six months that percentage increases to 20%. Some of the movement is due to planned transfers, family moving and transfer to another class in the center. Transfer within the center continues to maintain the continuity of educational services and opportunities for a child. Other forms of movement are not as well understood and bear further research.

### **Partners and Their Roles:**

- Parents refer child for service, participate in assessment, build Child Specific Plan, implement strategies at home, complete consumer satisfaction survey, complete pre-post assessment of child
- Teachers refer child for service, participate in pre/post assessment of child and classroom environment, build Child Specific Plan, modify classroom as required by assessment, commit to full participation and training, implement strategies in classroom, complete consumer satisfaction survey, complete pre-post assessment of child, classroom and teacher performance.
- Center Directors – pre /post assessment of policies and practices, pre/post teacher evaluation, provide staff and parents opportunities for training and refer children, recognize staff training plan intervention, implement intervention, evaluate intervention
- Community collaborators – referral, participate in training, participate in regional networking groups, provide opportunities for centers to meet together

**What steps are needed to improve performance in the next 3-5 years?** There are a number of “no cost” or “very low” cost measures which can be implemented immediately.

1. Increase number of classroom teachers who can demonstrate ratings of “good” or “excellent” on the ECER’S or a related assessment that provides information about the environment and quality of relationships children in early care settings are receiving. This will be accomplished by increasing the intensity of training as well as targeting specific skills sets identified by the ECER’s/ITER’s pre evaluation.
2. Currently teachers report improvement in the behavior of approximately 40% of the children provided ECCP consultation as reported on the CTRF. 60% of the remaining children are not accounted for on the CTRF. We don’t know if their behavior improved or not. There is a need to engage professionals in the process of accurate data collection. All professionals receiving consultation must participate in the process of re-evaluating children. If children are improving it should be documented in order to provide the foundation for a series of recommendations/ modifications in training, planning, implementing and evaluating changes in children’s behaviors as observed by teachers.
3. There is a very low rate of return for the post ratings of children’s behavior as reported by parent’s completion of the CBCL. In an effort to improve the rate of return ECCP Consultants will conduct a final home visit as part of a transition plan. At that time the post test and consumer satisfaction surveys will be completed.
4. Engage parents more meaningfully. Currently one home visit is offered at the time of referral. ECCP will increase parental participation by developing a joint home and school plan which provides both the home and school with strategies to effect positive behavioral change.
5. Increase the percentage of publicly funded early care and education centers having access to the services of an ECCP Consultant. The current number of centers served is very low (353) given the population of available centers 1,341. There is a need over the next five years to expand the ECCP program to include access to all publicly funded child care centers.
6. Continue to strengthen the relationship already created with New London Systems of Care and Building Blocks Grant. This effort is initiated to provide services to

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children with DSM IV diagnoses. These children need far more intensive mental health services than what exists in the ECCP model, however, ECCP can be a part of their services by assisting therapists and families to provide children environments which promote their social and emotional development with other children.

## **Appendix A**

### **Data Development Agenda**

1. Identify and implement a measure that captures teacher's interactions with children more appropriately that does the ECER's
2. Develop a process for collecting unduplicated counts of centers served.
3. Develop a process for tracking children who disrupt from current services or transition to another service.
4. There is confusion regarding whether the counts of centers served is an unduplicated count. Initiate a data collection process that provides an unduplicated count of centers served.
5. The contractor will design a system to track children who have participated in the ECCP program to identify those indicators that are related to success in Kindergarten, social/emotional skill development and to additional referrals.

## **Appendix C, Information and Research Agenda**

1. Explore the reason children continue to disrupt from early care and education settings despite the intervention of ECCP consultants. Determine what happens to these children. The reasons for disruptions should be identified and strategies should be developed to assure that children are provided services in the least restrictive environment possible.
  
2. The discrepancy between teacher's observations of improvement and parental observations of improvement may indicate a general weakness in the partnership created between home and school. This should be explored with recommendation provided to improve the partnering between home and school.
  
3. Additional research is needed to determine why more teachers do not reach the level of "Good" after consultation by ECCP Consultants.