

Early Learning Study: Move and Standards

Testimony to the Early Childhood
Finance and Policy Division
March 11, 2010

Legislative directive

- The 2009 Legislature directed DHS, in conjunction with MDE, to study how to effectively transition child care programs from DHS to MDE.
- Legislature also directed that the study determine how to create an Early Learning system with one set of common standards.

A shared focus

- MDE and DHS share a policy focus on children ages birth to kindergarten
- Departments collaborate in support of state's goal that all children are school ready by 2020.
- Areas of collaboration include: Early Childhood Advisory Council, QRIS pilot, Part C advisory committee, Professional Development Advisory committee

3

Department of Human Services

- How DHS is structured, and how that structure supports accomplishment of child care functions
- How functions are financed
- How functions that occur outside the child care teams might be transitioned to MDE

4

Child care functions

- Some activities occur within the child care teams.
 - Examples include – implementation of new initiatives, support of efforts to improve quality, research, policy analysis, and technical assistance to counties and child development services grantees.
- Other activities are centralized at various levels of the department.
 - Examples include -- financial operations, communications, constituent contact and grants management.

5

Child care functions, continued

- DHS recently implemented the Minnesota Electronic Child Care system (MEC²):
 - provides automated support for CCAP case management at the county level
 - is a part of MAXIS which supports multiple programs, including cash assistance and food
 - State makes payments to providers or parents
 - interfaces with child support and licensing systems

6

Federal administrative funds

- Federal CCDF pays costs of administering CCAP and child development services programs.
- Capped at 5% of total CCDF allocation.
- In FFY10, DHS budgeted \$3.3 million for administration (or 3.1% of allocation).
- Covers three primary areas:
 - Child care staff and administration
 - Child care licensing
 - Indirect costs

7

Functions, Issues and Potential Solutions -- examples

- CCAP payments to providers/parents
 - MDE does not currently make client-based payments at the magnitude made by DHS.
 - Significant training of MDE staff would need to occur.
- CCAP forecast/fiscal notes
 - MFIP and CCAP forecast/fiscal notes are closely linked for program and federal funding interactions
 - A plan would need to be developed for coordinating forecast/fiscal notes across agencies

8

Functions, Issues and Potential Solutions -- examples

- MEC²/Data warehouse
 - Agencies would need to plan for maintenance, operation, updates and access
- Case reviews/program integrity
 - Agencies would need to develop a plan for maintaining these functions

9

Department of Education

- Public Information
- Technical Assistance
- Policy analysis and development
- Research and evaluation
- Contract and grant management
- Federal reporting

10

Department of Education

- Relationships with local units of government, including funding, analysis and technical assistance
- Program policy development and implementation
- Forecasting
- Computer systems and database

11

Conclusion -- move section

- Study has presented issues that must be addressed for the child care programs to effectively transition from DHS to MDE.
- Decisions regarding the transfer must result in the achieving the state policy goal of improved educational outcomes for Minnesota's young children.

12

Common Standards

- Legislation also directed the departments to “determine how to create an early learning system with one common set of standards.”
- Similar efforts are underway:
 - Early Childhood Advisory Council
 - QRIS framework report due in March 2011.
 - Report provides an update on those efforts.

13