Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education in New Hampshire

The Implementation of a Statewide Agenda for the Strengthening Families Initiative
In New Hampshire

• There are approximately 93,000 children under six years old
• 65% of their mothers are employed outside the home, therefore over 60,000 young children need non-maternal care during some portion of the week
• There are approximately 36,000 licensed opportunities for children birth to six years
In New Hampshire

- There were 6,550 assessments of child abuse or neglect in 2004
- 3,775 (4% of the 93,000) children under six years old were involved
- 13% of the reports regarding young children were founded, including 491 children birth to six years
New Hampshire’s Strengthening Families Initiative

• New Hampshire was one of the original 7 Center for the Study of Social Policy Pilot States
• NH Division for Children, Youth and Families administers both child protection and child care
• In January 2005, the State Lead was the Head Start State Collaboration Administrator who transitioned into the CCDF Administrator position in September 2006
Ten Exemplar (pilot) Programs - These ten early care and education programs were chosen because they provide:

• High quality care and education for children
• Social connections for families
• Parenting education opportunities
• Resources and referrals in the community
Exemplar Child Care Programs

Ten Exemplar (pilot) Programs - These ten early care and education programs:

• Completed an intensive self-assessment
• Developed a program goal plan
• Focused on enhancing protective factors in families
• Became mentors to other early care and education programs in their communities
• Forged closer relationships with local child welfare offices
Strategic Decisions for Professional Development

• The State Leadership Team identified professional development as a means to transforming child care practice regarding supporting families

• The Leadership Team developed an independent Professional Development Committee to create and implement a two year plan
Professional Development Committee

• The Professional Development Committee had the following representation:
  – Parent of a child in child care
  – Child care resource and referral
  – 2 year college
  – 4 year college
  – Strengthening Families Exemplar Program
  – Child care providers organization
  – Head Start
  – Domestic Violence Prevention Program
Types of Professional Development

• Pre-service – 2 and 4 year colleges
• In-service – Workshops, conferences, etc
• Mentoring – Intense individual or small group, goal-directed professional development
• Technical Assistance – Intense program-based, goal-directed professional development
• Written material – Guidebook
• Co-training and fostering relationships
New Hampshire’s Professional Development Model

- Strengthening Families embedded in child care practice
- Articulation between training & college credits
- Early childhood training organizations
- Co-training child welfare & child care
- Child abuse prevention guidebook
- Mentoring and Technical Assistance
- ECE Faculty
- Professional Development System
- Child Care R&R
- Individual credentialing
- Child care program Quality Rating System
Lessons Learned

• Timing is everything: Look for opportunities to leverage change. Don’t be disappointed if there aren’t any at that moment
• Don’t under-estimate the power of status quo
• Relationships are key
• Everything is multi-level, multi-system