

## **Sustaining Systems Change**

July 12, 2006

JOESEPH ZOGBY: Welcome to the fourth in this series of webcasts. This one is Sustaining Systems Change. I'm going to read a few technical comments here and then I'm going to turn things over briefly to Chris Botsko who will give an overview of the presentation. Slides will appear in the central window and should advance automatically. The slide changes are synchronized with the speaker's presentations. You do not need to do anything to advance the slides. You may need to adjust the timing of the slide changes to match the audio by using the slide delay control at the top of the messaging window.

We encourage you to ask the speakers questions at any time during the presentation. Simply type your question in the white message window on the right of the interface. Select question for speaker from the drop-down menu and hit send. Please include your state or organization in your message so that we know where you are participating from. The questions will be relayed onto the speakers periodically throughout this broadcast. If we don't have the opportunity to respond to your question during the broadcast, we will email you afterwards. Again, we encourage you to submit questions at any time during the broadcast.

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will close automatically and you will have the opportunity to fill out an online evaluation. Please take a couple of minutes to do so. Your responses will help us to plan future broadcasts in this series and improve our technical support.

CHRIS BOTSKO: Hello, everyone. I'm Chris Botsko and I am project director for technical assistance with the ECCS grant, I'm with health systems research here in Washington D.C. I'm going to provide a very brief overview of sustainability and then turn it over to our main speakers for today. This will be the second slide which is, and this is just a brief definition. It refers to actions taken with the goal of ensuring that initiatives or system changes will persist over time even if funding sources change. And virtually every federal government grant asks you to put some issues, put some description of how you're moving toward sustainability into it, with the idea that funding sources will change and especially in a lot of grant initiatives. And most of the folks who refer to this refer to what is on the top of the next slide, which is securing financing, being a part of sustainability, and one of the things that I have seen over and over again is in federal grants and not just ECCS grants, but other grants when people talk about sustainability, they often times restrict themselves to discussions of securing financing. It's pivotal and critical, there are other important components that are also essential. For instance, you need to work on creating a political and cultural environment that fosters sustainability. And what I mean by that, an environment in many ways where certain things are expected. When it becomes the expectation that children and families will be able to access particular resources or services people are more likely to insist on getting them. They are more likely to put efforts

into requesting things and encouraging the political representatives to also obtain particular things.

One of the goals of public engagement campaigns that many of you are going to be implementing is the notion of creating a political and culture environment that fosters sustainability, creating an idea that early childhood is important and needs to be addressed. Also political and cultural environment that program staff sees themselves improving the condition of children and families, not just those enforcing the rules of particular programs. And also the services that people need and speak up about. One of the appeals of 4-year-old kindergarten in many states is something that many parents want, given the society we currently live in; many parents have a need for their 4-year-old to be, to be involved in some activity. There is also a very big interest in doing some activity that is related to school readiness and learning and 4-year-old kindergarten represents that. It's likely to remain in place. Because there is going to be an expectation that it's going to stay there. Also an expectation -- we expect new people --

The third one, the last point on the slide is that you need to ensure that system change becomes entrenched deeply enough it survives personnel changes. We expect new people to make change, we want to be able to show that some things are working so well that regardless of the political views or thoughts of the people that come into the new position, they see the system changes made were good and need to be continued. One of the biggest challenges I know the grantees face is what do they do when there's a change in administration. How do they present the case that what they are doing is making sense

and is useful. And I think that's part -- that's an intimate part of sustainability, it clearly relates to financing but also goes beyond financing. On the next slide I have a couple more examples of important aspects of sustainability.

The last two have looked at data and evaluation. There's a reason that they have, this has been a series. Those two topics are connected to sustainability because you need to be able to amass evidence that the changes you made are having positive effects on children and families. If you want to be able to sustain an initiative, you need to be able to show that the initiative has been a success. And last, you need to be willing to make changes or adjustments in what you are doing in response to evidence, new opportunities, and new threats. Sustainability does not always mean stability. And sometimes stability -- you can sometimes obtain sustainability when it's not clear that what's being sustained should be sustained over time. When you spend time doing site visits and examining social programs and health services which is a big part of my job, you routinely come across the initiative that achieves sustainability and is not really working that well. It's one of the things that can give social programs a bad name. We want to commit ourselves to effective systems change. We need to be willing to discard things that are not working. To always be on the lookout for new opportunities which will contribute to more extensive change. And to be on the lookout for threats so that we can attempt to diffuse them.

Over the last few days and weeks I have talked to a number of grantees and one of the things that becomes apparent is that it's important for folks to know your opponents. A number of grants have run into opposition, for instance, in Wyoming, there was some

home school opposition to the quality rating system from people who are home schooling children and opposition to early childhood screening I was heard about in a number of places, in Oklahoma opposition also to addressing early childhood issues. It's not unusual to run into opposition and I think it's important to know what the source of the opposition S to talk to people who may be opposed to what you are doing and try to understand what, why they are opposed and try and be prepared to address those things. These are essentially threats to the kind of changes you want to make, and if sustainability succeeds, you need to be aware of some of these things. I think those are some of the important aspects of sustainability. In the end, financing is a key part of sustainability and I understand why people talk about it. But in many ways, there are other things that need to be talked about if you are really to achieve sustainability. I want to turn things over to Gerry Cobb from North Carolina Smart Start who will talk about an initiative sustained over many years but that still keeps sustainability at the forefront. Gerry.

GERRY COBB: I thought I was second. But I can go first. That's fine.

CHRIS BOTSKO: Actually -- I think that was -- I'm sorry. I made a mistake. It was going to be Oklahoma first, and then Gerry, you are going to be second. Thank you for pointing that out. So I'm going to turn things over to Nancy vonBargen who is the director of Oklahoma Smart Start. It was the Smart Start that confused me. So Nancy, you take it away.

NANCY vonBARGEN: Yes. Thank you very much, and thank you Gerry. I never want to follow you because you are our mentor, so I appreciate your pointing that out. First thank you for the opportunity to share what we are doing in Oklahoma. Chris asked me to tell you our story, and I think that that's a helpful way to illustrate some of the lessons that we have learned about sustainability.

On my second slide it says history at the top. There are many lessons in our history. We started in 1999 with Bank of America, United Way of America grants with a statewide project and six communities, and I think the lesson for that from us was that you take advantage of opportunities when they come your way. Because that was the opportunity that really launched our program. In 2000 we had a governor's task force on early childhood education, and the lesson from that is that wonderful things can happen with just one champion. And that group was convened when the former mayor of Tulsa, Bob Lafortune stood up at a press conference the governor was holding, he was going to talk about what he was going to do for roads and prison, and Bob said if you don't do anything about early childhood education none of that is really going to matter. And as a result of that, the governor convened this task force of business leaders who became passionate about early childhood. In 2001 we partnered with the Oklahoma department of human services and they founded six new communities in addition to the Bank of America United Way communities to focus on child care issues at the local level. And probably the single most important lesson I would share today is no matter how much private sector money you can raise, the most significant funding is always going to be with state government.

Possibly federal government, too, but with your state agencies, so it's really important to foster strong relationships with them.

In 2003 our Oklahoma partnership for school readiness act passed. The lesson here is don't give up. It took us three times to get that legislation passed. And that's a long story, I'll tell you another time, but basically what the task force did when we had gubernatorial election coming up, they invited each of the candidates to come and talk to them about early childhood and the governor-elected had pledged to find the legislation, and we were finally successful. And an opportunity in terms of media attention and her convening groups of business leaders. The value of champions. In 2004 we were able to add four new communities and so now up to 16. And then in 2005 the governor, by himself, made sure we got a \$2 million state appropriation we'll get for the third year this time. So again, if you have a governor who supports you, you are way ahead of the game. But always be looking for those champions.

On the next slide Smart Start Oklahoma, our network created in statute, is the OPSR board, and they are primarily a working board. The OPSR foundation, and their primary responsibility is fundraising. The 16 Smart Start communities which are basically the heart of our organization, and then our staff. And we do have staff that focus on public engagements, a staff person that works on policy and systems analysis, several staff that provide technical assistance to communities, and what I would point out here is that two of our staff are loaned from state agencies. One of them is Peggy Beyerly, a critical way to sustain funding. All Oklahoma children will be safe, eager, ready to learn when they enter

school. We focus on birth to 5. It helps to build support if your focus is all children and you address the whole child. Because then there is something that everybody cares about.

The next slide, and I won't go through these, but basically this is what we share with people about our concerns about what's happening in Oklahoma. And you don't want to paint such a bleak picture that people are overwhelmed and they feel like there is nothing they can do to bring about change. But sometimes these statistics are really compelling. I think you've got to point out the challenges, the data, the concerns. But then you also focus on things that your state is doing well. So in Oklahoma we talk about our pre-K program, stars quality rating system, parents as teachers program, so people can also take pride in your success and feel like they are part of a winning team.

On the next slide, that explains our working board. It's 29 members appointed by the governor. Again, the state agency directors and I'll say I am biased because I did come from state government, but these directors bring amazing resources and knowledge and credibility, so they're important contributors and I would also encourage you to not forget the less typical agencies to include. We have department of libraries on the board, public broadcasting people, and we just met with them yesterday. And they have so much going on in terms of provider training and children's programming and resources for parents that we didn't even know about. So they're a great resource. And department of commerce. As you all know, we are trying to frame this as an economic development issue. Our mission is to lead Oklahoma in coordinating an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children. And 16 private sector

representatives, make sure you have good cross sections. People that have different perspectives, like teachers and pediatricians.

On the next slide are our four strategies and really all of them, as Chris said, are essential to sustainability. Public engagement we use to try to change people's priorities, to put children first. We use that to distribute information to parents, and just increase awareness in support of Smart Start Oklahoma. Public policy is critical because that helps you frame your message and move your agenda forward. Resource development and on a positive note, we have just been so pleased with the level of support from corporations and foundations. We basically have not yet been turned down when we have requested funding. So that's been really exciting for us. And then community mobilization.

The next slide is the quote that people closest to a situation are best equipped and highly motivated to identify and define problems, then pursue effective remedies. And that basically is our philosophy. We provide a lot of technical assistance and resources to the communities. They, in turn, give us the local perspective on what's needed and they are out there doing the real work of the organization.

The next slide, we have 16 community coalitions. They do serve about 60% of the children in Oklahoma. Using the state dollars that the governor got for us, we give them annual grants of anywhere between \$50,000 and \$150,000. They all have paid staff because we believe very strongly it has to be somebody's job to do this or it won't get done. Wonderful work is done by volunteers. But volunteers have a lot on their plate, too. Our communities

have brought you amazing stakeholders, the bankers, ministers, police chief, they have done a great job of outreach, and they assist local needs. Strategic plan. Work on public awareness and with a lot of technical assistance from us they build relationships which is what it's all about. And collaborate to better serve children.

The next slide, because we can't reach all parts of the state, our board felt very strongly we need to have several statewide products so all families would get some benefit from Smart Start Oklahoma. So our public engagement efforts go statewide. We used North Carolina's parent guide as they grow and we do have that available in all the hospitals for new parents, so the lesson there is there's wonderful resources out there and you don't have to recreate them. Raising a reader which is a literacy program. And then we also do a kindergarten survey every two years of all kindergarten teachers in the state on readiness issues.

The next slide, we have four outcomes. And I have some detail here on this first outcome. I have discussed most of these infrastructure items but I did want to point out the last one, which is evaluation is integrated into all aspects of the system and drives public policy and funding decisions. That is just so critical and people have told me for years that if you don't count something it doesn't exist. And we have legislators who, if I go into their office and I say we have got to ensure outcome, they just perk right up. They just love talking about accountability and outcomes and evaluation. So you have to be able to demonstrate outcomes if you are going to sustain your program. On the next slide are next three outcomes, and those really are familiar to all of you with your system building work. I

would just add that it's important for us politically to always focus on support for families, no matter what we are talking about. If we can bring it back to parents and families then we have a better chance of being successful and being heard.

Okay. Next slide, successes. Business champions for us have a tremendous influence. And when you talk about political pressure and Chris mentioned some of the issues that we had had in Oklahoma, that has really been reduced because our business champions have been very vocal on their support for early childhood education so we have really come a long way in that regard. State agency support, I mentioned the resources they can bring to the table. Some of our agencies now are offering funding so our communities can explore issues that are of interest to that state agency. If the health department is concerned with childhood obesity or prevention about wellness, they can give small grants to local communities to actually implement a project at the local level to address that. So we are really excited about that. Local advocacy, we have found that it's the relationship at the local level with legislators that can make a difference and build political support.

Our community coalitions have legislators when they are working on their strategic plan. They attend all the town hall meetings. They really have a relationship and that's what's going to make us successful. Relationship with media representatives, we have found that they now are bringing opportunities to us. And they are very creative and so that has just brought us a lot of opportunities. Growing community capacity, our communities are really maturing and making positive change happen. And then growing donor support, as I said, you know, you go to one donor and they make a commitment and then they encourage

you to go see somebody else that they work with, and so that network, we are learning that network. It's a small world with corporate and foundation donors on the discovery.

The next slide on challenges, probably the biggest challenge we have faced is this public/private partnership which just sounds wonderful. But trying to combine state and private funds can be difficult. And private donors are very unappreciative of the constraints you have with state dollars, and so that's an ongoing struggle but I think well worth it. The conservative climate, the term that they had used in Oklahoma is that we wanted to turn Oklahoma into a nanny state. But because now we have so many public people writing editorials and speaking to newspapers, that has diminished. Measuring outcome, I know I told you how critical that was. But it's something that is really hard for us because when you're trying to make a difference in so many ways, it's hard to separate out what programs have made that difference. I mean children are impacted by so many factors so it's hard to take credit for things when there are so many impacts. But we are trying to do that. Ensuring diversity and parent involvement, I know that that's a really common problem. We just talked about it recently at a North Carolina ITAG conference. It doesn't make it any easier that everybody is struggling with it. And then lastly leadership development. Because time and time again, when it's at the state level or the local level, leaders are the ones who build success. So you always have to be looking to cultivate and mentor new leaders because they're the ones that move the program forward. And then the last slide is our web site, and I would encourage you to take a look at that, and let us know if you have any suggestions for us. Thank you.

GERRY COBB: Should I go ahead and start?

CHRIS BOTSKO: Yes, Gerry.

GERRY COBB: Okay. Hi, I'm Gerry Cobb, director of Smart Start national technical assistance center. I've been asked to talk about the ongoing challenges Smart Start faces in North Carolina. How are we showing that it's working, how are we mobilizing stakeholders, and what do we see as the key challenges to maintaining success. As I listened to Nancy I wanted to say ditto to everything she said, so I hope I won't bore you with too much repetition. But it's a very familiar story. We could start with the slide that says Smart Start vision at the top. For those of you that don't know, it was created in North Carolina in 1993 by then Governor Jim Hunt, creating a system to ensure every child would arrive at kindergarten and healthy and ready to succeed. And everything we do with early childhood wraps around that vision statement. The next slide, in terms of our current status, a structure includes a state level non-profit, North Carolina partnership for children, and then 80 local non-profit, call them local partnerships, and they cover all the counties in the state. Some are single county organizations and some a regional area.

We had appropriation of \$191 million in state general funds. I'm happy to report the legislature approved another, an increase in funding of \$13.5 million for 2007, we had several years of flat funding because of a budget deficit. It's nice to get the big increase. From the Department of Health and Human Services to the North Carolina department for health and children, and we have a funding that we use to allocate the funds. And I should

say that those Smart Start funds we call them, are in addition to funding for the state subsidy programs and also don't include approximately \$80 million that goes to the pre-K program. In addition to the funding for early intervention and the child health insurance program and things like that. The Smart Start funds are separate as well, they are in addition to what we already have going into the early childhood system. We take a comprehensive approach to the work, focusing on developing a system at the early childhood level, access to health care, and support to families.

The next slide, early keys to sustainability. The founders of Smart Start were intentionally put in several keys to the future sustainability right from the very beginning. First of all, and Nancy said this, we emphasize what we were creating was about all children, every child in the state should have these opportunities. Not some children are being impacted by different services more than others, but what we are creating is a system that's about every child and that was important that every family feel some ownership of this work. We also emphasized local flexibility and decision-making, that it's communities that know best what the needs are for their families and young children, and that they should be the ones creating the plan and making the decisions about how to use these additional resources. So it's these local boards, part of the local partnerships that come together to make the decisions about how to use their smart start allocation, how to blend it with all the other funding sources and how to create a system that really meets the culture and the needs and the resources and the reality of the particular communities.

Also as part of this local flexibility in decision making we made a decision early on there needed to be an infrastructure to support that. It wasn't an all-volunteer process, collaboration, decision making needed a staff to back it up. Each one of the local partnerships has one to two staff, and some have more. As part of the total appropriation, we are allowed to use 8% for administration. And that's broken up in different ways across the state to ensure there's an adequate infrastructure for the work. Another key to our sustainability is the fact we wanted to take a statewide approach. We implemented over a five-year period and so we didn't do statewide from the very beginning. Some states have done that, but we chose to phase in 12 to 15 counties at a time until we had all 100 counties in the initiative. Felt it was very important that what we wanted to do needed to be in every corner of the state, that every child, every family needed the opportunities. And politically it was important as well. So that everybody felt like they had a vested interest in this work and were going to advocate for it long-term. As Nancy also said, it's, we also took the approach that we needed to have, that it was a public/private partnership, public resources and private very resources, both a public sector and private sector component to it. We specifically created the non-profit at the state and the local level to help lead this work, feeling that those non-profits had a lot more flexibility than if we were embedded in government.

A lot of our work is funded by state funds, but the state funds are going out to the non-profit organization. That non-profit also has been able to raise additional funds, to blend with government funds and other funding strengths as well, non-profit is made up of those

public sector officials as well as persons from the private sector as well. So we tried to think in terms of the public/private partnership with all different dimensions.

Business advocates also key to the sustainability in the early days, and now as well, 13 days later. The first chairman of the board of directors at the North Carolina partnership for children was a CEO of a broadcasting corporation. He was also a Republican appointed by a Democratic governor, and he has been the best advocate anyone ever had, literally he had a heart attack at one point as he pounded the pavement in the legislature pushing for Smart Start funding. At one point he got so irritated with our opponents and what they were saying but, their own disinformation campaign, he funded and produced a documentary on Smart Start to kind of refute everything our opponents were saying. It's nice when you have that kind of advocate, with that kind of influence. We also have a lot of donors from corporations who not only gave money, also gave their time to the legislature and add volume -- advocate for funding. And when you have a CEO of a major bank, Food Lion, IBM, and more, went to legislators and said we think this is important and we have given money, and we want you to give money as well. Business advocates are very, very powerful.

Accountability is another key to our sustainability. And I have to say that we did not think about the accountability piece, did not put that into place at the very beginning. This opportunity came to us. We didn't have a lot of time to plan. We immediately had to start implementing so we had to go back and put the accountability piece into place a few years later. When I say accountability, I mean the financial accountability. In the early days when

we were just getting started we didn't have the infrastructure in place, we had terrible audits, and they made the front pages of the newspapers. Important to clean up that as quickly as possible. At the same time we were doing that, we had to think about how are we going to measure or progress and our success so we have a success story to share that will show that they need to continue funding this and increasing this funding going forward. So think about, we started to everybody that we talked to across the country, if you have the time to plan, think about the accountability piece, how you will measure your success from the very beginning, and put that into place. It's a lot easier to put it into place at the beginning than later on.

How are we showing that Smart Start is working? We started in the beginning talking about outputs. It takes a long time to show real change. And to show things are working. And so in the beginning all we could talk about were counts, how many children were able to take advantage of the service, parents were getting education programs, how many children were getting health screenings, how many new child care slots will be created, lots of things like that. And from an evaluation perspective, it doesn't show you whether you are being successful or not. That works with legislators, that is fine, they like hearing the big numbers that all of the children and families are impacted by the funds they have appropriated. So giving the counts in the early days is a good thing and not to be discounted. We also had from the very beginning funding for evaluation of how the resources are being used. It was done by an institute in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. And their challenge in evaluating something like this, we were blending all of our funds together, hard to separate how one dollar is impacting a child.

In addition to the fact every county was doing different programs with resources and you know, doing programs, some the same, some slightly different. And some children were getting the benefit of multiple programs and resources and other children, you know, were only getting them indirectly. How do you evaluate something like that? They took the approach they were going to do different studies that looked at different components of the work we were doing under Smart Start. They also did a longitudinal study that followed children in the counties first funded by Smart Start, from the early days up through the time they were in kindergarten and then third grade, and that's the most powerful study. It wasn't statewide, just six-county area, but that showed that children who received the benefits were receiving with a higher level and sustaining the readiness through third grade. It's a powerful study we have been able to point to over and over again. Our local partnerships do evaluation of their programs, so every program that receives even one Smart Start dollar has to have an evaluation each year, so whether they continue funding based on the local program evaluation. And now we have PBIS, performance based incentive system. And that lets us measure on a statewide basis progress across certain indicators, early education, health and family support, as well as administration.

And so each partnership, each community may be doing different programs but we are able to say are the programs hitting these particular indicators, and we have state data sources that measure progress toward the state indicators. Measure county by county. They get a report card every year which shows their progress toward those particular indicators. I'm happy to say in the five years that we have implemented that, our trend

data shows we have been able to make progress in all of the indicators every year, it's a positive thing, and it's really resonated with legislators as well. Sometimes say in the history of the world there is no program more accountability than Smart Start and legislators used to say we like it but it needs to be more accountable, there's not a lot of talk of that. They believe we are accountable.

Next slide. Key successes. As I said in the evaluation, children are arriving at a higher level at school. More than 70% of children in licensed care are in higher quality care. That compares to about 20% when we first started in 1993. More than 80% of child care teachers have a college level education or credits towards one that compares to about 34% when we first started. We have much higher immunization rates. We were at the bottom of the statistics in the country when we first started and now I think we are number two in the nation in terms of immunization. And evaluation shows we are providing much greater support to families.

The next slide, advocacy, and we cannot emphasize this enough, it's really been the key to our success. We learned very early on to play the political game and to think in terms of political strategy. And if you need the cons of public funds, the level of public funds necessary to get the work done to make the change you want to make, you have to think in terms of politics and be willing to wade into the political process. We activate our troops across the state to help move the political agenda. Grassroots advocacy is the key to it. And there's local partnerships, the infrastructure I talked about that we created across the state is the key to advocating to activating that grassroots advocacy. We can mobilize the

people at the push of a button with a phone call, with an email, get out, let their legislators know how important it is that they do XYZ in terms of agenda. And I'm talking about parents, child care providers, business leaders, community, a whole range, faith community, a whole range of different types of people advocating.

Legislators respond to the voters and they are in the community. They are the grassroots level. That's who legislators want to hear from, and that's the most effective thing you can do, building the grassroots base. We also have some kind of organized political programs that we do as well. We have something called Tuesdays for tots. It's our goal to make sure volunteers, representatives of the local partnership, meeting with state legislators and let them know how Smart Start is making a difference in their communities. When legislators are back in the district, we want to make sure they are hearing from volunteers, from supporters about how it's making a difference for them as well. So we want it to be a year 'round effort, particularly organized during the legislative sessions as well, that there is somebody in the legislator every week. We also have something called keep the promise day. As part of our legislation it says legislator promises to offer this opportunity to every child in the state. And so we have taken that as our, the name of our rally, keep the promise. And this year we had 8, 900 people at the rally from all across the state. Talking to their legislators and letting them know how important it was to support Smart Start.

We also have an E advocating program, we can send out an email to a huge mailing list and let them know if we need to target a particular legislator, hear from somebody in their district. It goes out and they are allowed to just click on a link that connects them to the

email address for their particular legislator, and get out a message pretty quickly. There were several times during this legislative session we needed to get messages out on a targeted basis to particular legislators and it's like pushing a button to make that happen. Very, very effective, to the point legislators say okay, okay, we have heard, stop, tell them they don't need to do this anymore. We also have a corporate champions for children program that activates business leaders at the local and state level to support our advocacy efforts.

Next slide. Some of the key messages that we have used for all children, we emphasize that in everything we say that the work we are doing is about every child in the state. We also really push the message that Smart Start and everything we are doing around early childhood is the foundation for a sound basic education. All the polls in the state show education is really important to people in the state, to voters, and so we make sure we make that connection in their minds and the legislator's minds over and over again, that without the early investment in young children our public education system, future, future education of our future work force is not going to be as successful as it needs to be. We have also emphasized the message of where North Carolina's economic success begins, that pushing that economic development message, and that's simply in the last few years when the state was in an economic decline. We have had higher unemployment rates, budget deficits.

One year I know we would have been cut but we had just released an economic impact report talking about how the child care industry translates in terms of jobs and numbers of

parents that can work and revenues, taxes, all of that, and so the message really resonated with legislators and continues today. That's important to integrate in your work as well. This year's message, 200,000 North Carolina children are left behind before they even start and we pulled that number out of some sort of formula that someone created that looked at when our goal is for funding in North Carolina, for Smart Start and what we are getting now and how many children are not able to access our service, you know, the services we fund and others fund because we are not at a full funding level.

The next two slides you'll see, the first one shows three banners, and these were part of this year's advocacy campaign. And the fact that we are leaving children behind. Just says the faces of three children that aren't receiving Smart Start services, or services from other programs. The second one is also another picture from our keep the promise day, it shows all the different people that were there for the rally and some of the signs they were holding up as well. The next slide is headline North Carolina poll numbers.

Probably getting ahead of the process of clicking, I'll keep going, I'm running out of time. We did a poll last year that was funded, and they allowed us to do a poll that looked at support for birth to 5, not pre-K, but everything we are trying to do in North Carolina. The pollsters who did the poll were national pollsters who do these polls all the time and they were still blown away by the numbers in the poll in North Carolina. The numbers that came back were the 81% favor expanding Smart Start, 71% favor expansion to I think we put the number in \$300 million at the time, we wanted to see if we put in a dollar number would it make a difference. Got big support. When we pose the question in investigating in

early education versus money into K-12, 67% said no, it's important to expand early education now. If it made a difference who they voted for, if they had voted for early education programs, 59% said it would make a difference who they voted for. The numbers were pretty powerful and we have used those in our advocacy as well.

Legislators know that the voters do want this, and this is making a difference, and that they are watching. In terms of some of the challenges, state budget deficits for the last six years have been a huge challenge for us. The governor that is currently in office literally for the first six years said that he was in office the first term and then into a second term, literally we were having to look the budget every year and then when everything was on the chopping block and for two of those years, Smart Start was on the chopping block as well, when every human service program took a cut, we took a cut as well and so that was tough. Fortunately, this year we had a surplus situation in our budget so we were able to start getting an increase again. But you never know when the deficit situation is going to resolve again, and you know, at that point it's hard to argue against having to take a cut because everything is taking a cut.

Competition for funding is always an issue. There are so many great needs out there and important parts of the early childhood systems that have to be funded. You find yourself competing for the funding and you don't want to do that. You can create a coalition so we are all speaking with one voice and not competing against each other, that's the best thing you can do. We also have a situation where because we phased in over five years there's still some local partnerships who don't have the same level of

funding as those that came in the early years in Smart Start and you want to make sure you keep the whole coalition together so they are not breaking off and advocating for funding for their community versus funding for the whole system. And so that's something we worried about the last few years with flat funding and then the cuts, how are we going to keep that from happening. This year because we have gotten a big increase it's going to help us reduce the inequity a little bit. You say full funding will never happen and maybe we need to think about something differently, we are not ready to think that way.

We are going to full funding, \$350 million for Smart Start and then other amounts for other programs. But always thinking how are we, you know, what political strategy can we use to get us to that much bigger level of funding? And then maintaining community -- a minimum at the community level. We have been at this for 13 years now, but we still have so much more we need to do, how do you keep the momentum going political, keep the energy going community level in terms of programs and the system building work, it's a huge, huge thing. I don't think we have that figured out yet. And that's kind of the community by community issue.

The next few slides -- I think he was going to read through these yourself, and they are pretty obvious on what they say. I'll wrap up my remarks now. I know I have gone over time. Former Governor Hunt was in office, people said Smart Start would not survive after he left office and there could have been truth in that statement if we hadn't gotten ready and geared up ourselves politically, and he taught us that lesson. Six years since he left office and now no one talks about getting rid of Smart Start anymore, or even about

making us more accountable. We are proven we are accountable. We are in the second term with another governor, he says he supports Smart Start, but he started his own program. And more money has gone into the early childhood system but we have had to work hard to wrap that into the bigger system we were creating through Smart Start. Some people say oh, there's no money in my state we can't do anything. The pre-K program -- there's always more money.

We were cutting a billion, \$2 billion for the budget for several years running and at the same time he launched more pre-K programs and found money in the budget for us. I was just up in another state with a huge budget, and Republican legislators say to me there is plenty of money, just a matter of what the priorities are and making people see early childhood is a priority, and having to make cuts other places but thought early childhood was important. We have to get over the hump we are on right now with funding, and the increase we have gotten this year is helping us and will help us move forward. Smart Start is the glue helping build and connect together our system in North Carolina. More money is definitely needed to meet our goals and our vision. We have to think strategically in terms of the next gubernatorial race, the next legislative elections and the strategy for the next session.

A key to our success politically goes back to the state and local approach. It's developing the materials and messages and creating the venues for advocacy. Always pushing the partnerships to maintain a similar focus. I think without the state level push our local organizations would focus where they are most comfortable on programs and also

different messages and not a common theme. But having a statewide message and approach, and having the local organizations create the statewide grassroots advocacy, it helps us move ahead. Legislators listen to voters and that's who they are hearing from with Smart Start. With that, I will stop and turn it over to everyone for questions. Thank you.

JOESEPH ZOGBY: Our first question from Bob from Vermont, and he submitted a question for Nancy. You said there are 16 community coalition that is have developed a plan. Are the formats and content of their plan similar, are they linked, or is it a separate process for each coalition? Nancy.

NANCY vonBARGEN: Sure. I think in the beginning there was a lot of diversity among their plans because money of these communities were doing the work before the state organization had their own strategic plan. So now that we have our strategic plan, they use that as a starting point. They do have to focus around our four outcome areas. Like Gerry said, we try to balance that with giving the communities the flexibility to respond to the needs that they have identified in their needs assessment, and some of the more creative strategies that their local partners bring to the table. One of the things I love the most about the community work, they try to be incubators for creative and innovative responses to problems. One community will create a solution and when they have demonstrated success, then the other communities want to try it as well. So that's been very successful. So I guess my short answer would be there was not a lot of consistency

in the beginning, but as they grow stronger and we grow stronger, they are becoming more consistent.

JOESEPH ZOGBY: Thank you, Nancy. Our next question is from Lorraine from Wisconsin. And I think it's also for Nancy, but I don't have any indication here for sure. You stated local community members were most successful in educating legislators. What strategies were used to convince the legislators that early childhood investments pay off?

NANCY vonBARGEN: Well, I think that it's probably a lot of the things that Gerry and I have mentioned, and I'll ask Gerry to piggy-back on this. I think the number one most important thing in advocacy is relationship. Because if I go to a legislator who I don't have a relationship with, they tend to see me as being self-serving and aligned with state government where if it's your neighbor or the person that you go to church with, you're much more likely to trust their intentions. And so I think there have been a variety of strategies. They have not always been able to get legislators to take an active role on the board, but they make sure that any time there is a forum or even a candidate forum when elections are coming around, that they're there to be the voice of early childhood education. So I think the number one thing I would say is the relationship.

GERRY COBB: And I would agree. I mean it's those local persons talking to legislators about the communities in their issues, and having some unlikely voices as well, having them hear from parents, but also having them hear from business leaders and from faith leaders. Ministers that meet with legislators are always, they always seem to listen to

them even more than they will listen to a regular community person. So I think in terms of some of the unlikely voices. And also law enforcement community has been powerful advocates as well. It's the local voices talking to their legislators, the people they know, the people they go to church with, eat dinner with, makes a big difference. And also localizing the stories as well. Letting them understand the realities in their community and how the early childhood investment will make a difference. That really resonates with legislators too.

JOESEPH ZOGBY: Thank you. We have another question from Bob for Gerry. Can we hear more about how Smart Start measured greater support to family?

GERRY COBB: The family support piece has been the biggest challenge in our trying to create a statewide measurement system. Because our communities are all doing different types of family support programs and, or maybe similar programs but doing them in slightly different ways, there's no kind of statewide measurement for, for how you're making a difference in family's lives, and we have gone all over the country looking for that. And so with everything else we are measuring, we have had actually state level data sources. For family support we actually had to create a survey method that would be collected by our local partnerships and inputted into a state web based data system that we would then use to kind of measure the progress on family support issues. And I would be happy to, if you want to email me, I'd be happy to give you that information on that family support survey process. My email is on the last page of the slides.

JOESEPH ZOGBY: Thank you very much. I do not have any more questions. Unless I get some right now, I want to remind you to please fill out the evaluation before signing off of your computer. This information will help us for future broadcasts. Thank you very much, everyone.