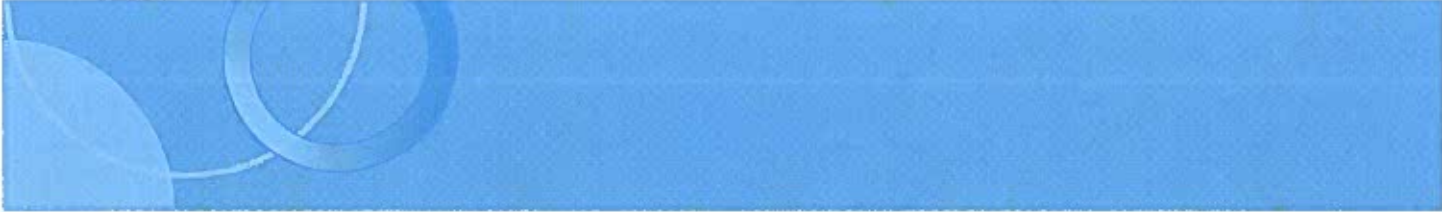




SHARED SERVICES IN VERMONT

Business Plan
Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS)
Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative
(NEK ECC)
Updated February 2019



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Building a Community-Driven Partnership to Bolster Early Learning



Problem:

While high quality early childhood education is essential for parents to work and for young children to become school ready, the challenging business model for child care undermines the stability of the sector. Child Care providers in Vermont face particular challenges:

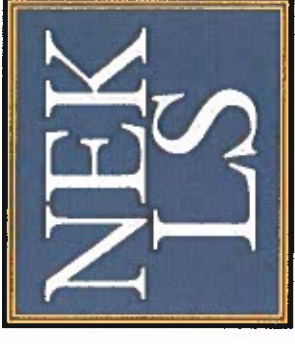
Inadequate supply – Nearly half (47%) of infants and toddlers who likely need access to child care do not have access to regulated childcare programs; 79% do not have access to quality care.

Staff compensation – Median hourly wage for child care providers at licensed centers is \$11.25.

Affordability – In Vermont, families pay 25 – 53% of their median income to access early care and learning programs; according to Child Care Aware, Vermont ranked 13th on the list for having the least affordable center-based infant care; 3rd on the list for having the least affordable center-based four-year old care.

Small program size – Average size of a child care center is 33 children (60 children is the national average); while small is preferable for service delivery, it is difficult to achieve operational efficiencies.

Building a Community-Driven Partnership to Bolster Early Learning



Innovative Solution:

Create a local Network Hub by identifying a trusted and capable community based organization to support business operations and pedagogical leadership with the goal of maximizing efficiencies and promoting best practice. Activities include:

- Develop and deliver back office solutions through the use of data-sharing technology, Smartcare, and a shared staffing infrastructure for providers participating in the network.
- Develop and deliver Pedagogical Leadership resources to support best practices for providers participating in the network.
- Provide financial support and technical assistance to enable providers to transition their operations and professional development practices to a Shared Services approach.

Approach: NEKLS in partnership with Vermont Birth to Five

as supported by Opportunities Exchange

VB5 is investing in Shared Services as a critical strategy to achieve their mission:
Ensure that every Vermont family has affordable access to high-quality child care by 2025

Investment in statewide services available to all providers in Vermont:

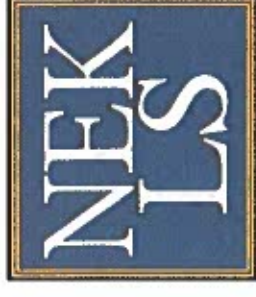
- Financial and technical support for childcare management software to help simplify, streamline and strengthen fiscal and administrative tasks. Automated child management software will:
 - Enable efficient transfer of information required by funders and state agencies
 - Reduce cost (staff time), minimize errors, and facilitate vigilant financial management
 - Online knowledge hub www.sharedsourceVT.org which serves as a one-stop for resources needed by the early childhood education sector, including document templates, discounts on products and services, etc.

Investment in financial and technical assistance to local communities by:

- Supporting NEKLS to host the Shared Services Network as a strategy to provide business supports and professional growth opportunities to local providers
- Supporting NEKLS in the identification and onboarding of Network members



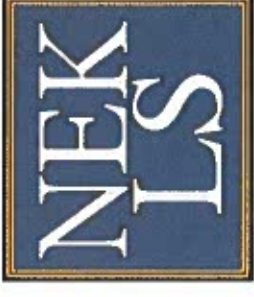
Role of Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS) as Shared Services Hub



Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS) has been identified as the Regional Hub for the communities in the greater St. Johnsbury and Newport regions. In this role, we will work with Network members to identify and develop desired business supports in categories such as:

- General Administrative
- Fiscal
- Human Resources
- Professional Development
- Discounts and Bulk Purchasing
- Leveraging Local Resources
- Curriculum and Programming
- Marketing

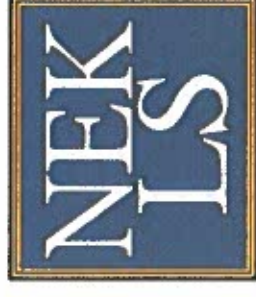
Role of Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative (NEK ECC) as Shared Services Hub



NEK ECC will also serve as the host for Pedagogical Leadership services as a strategy to improve program practices and child outcomes. In this role, NEKLS will develop and deliver the following pedagogical supports to Network members:

- On-going opportunities for professional development that meet the requirements of the early childhood system in Vermont and support continuous quality improvement in the program.
- Access to individualized professional resources including curriculum support, pedagogical coaching, comprehensive services personnel (health, early intervention, family resources, etc.)
- Additional supports such as substitute pool, career advising, etc.

Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative (NEK ECC) Mission & Vision

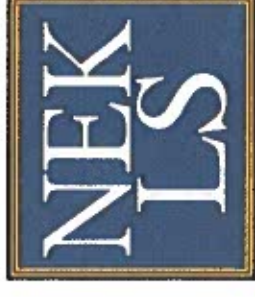


The ***mission*** of the Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative (NEK ECC) is to support the sustainability of the member businesses by identifying needs, leveraging resources and sharing expertise with the goal of providing high quality services for families with children in the NEK.

The ***vision*** for the Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative (NEK ECC) is

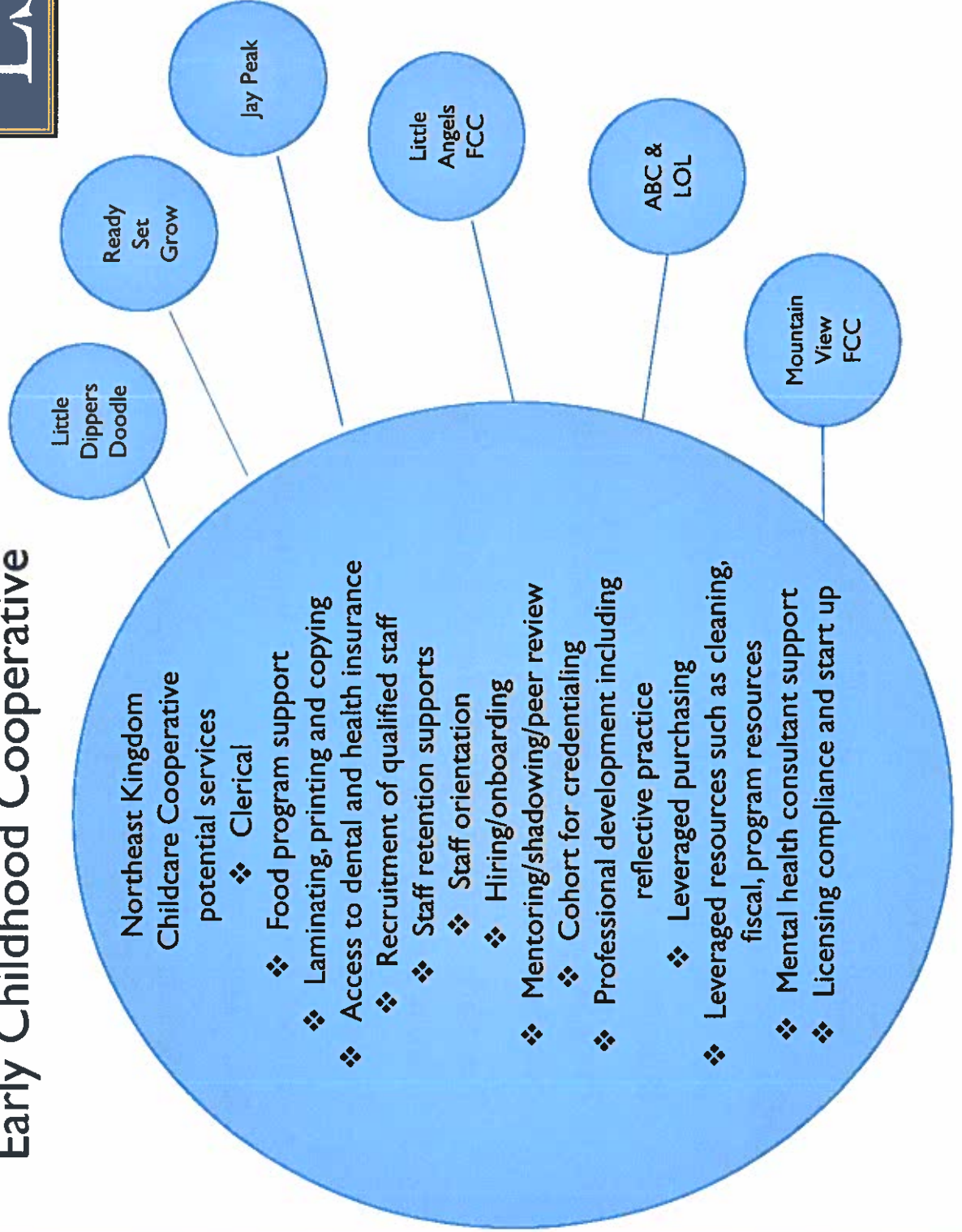
- ...a foundation of a strong economy and healthy communities with a strong early care and education system.
- ...early childhood programs in the NEK are high quality, sustainable and strong businesses.
- ...families in the NEK have access to a variety of high quality early childhood programs.

Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative (NEK ECC) Beliefs and Values



- All child care models are valued, offering a variety of options for families.
- Programs provide services that are respectful, relevant and high quality.
- Education and early learning experiences provided are research informed and quality driven.
- Families are respected partners.
- Early Childhood Professionals are supported, well compensated and respected.
- The NEK ECC supports, strengthens and creates sustainable early childhood businesses.
- Programs in the NEK ECC are stronger together, than apart.
- Regional success reflects individual success.

Proposed Structure of Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative





Proposed Structure of Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative

The Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative will launch with four centers, three existing programs and one in development:

- Little Dippers Doodle Children's Center – Serving 150 children in St. Johnsbury
- ABC & LOL Child Care Center & preschool – Serving 45 and 90 children in two sites in St. Johnsbury
- Jay Peak – Serving X children in Jay
- Ready, Set, Grow – a new child care center which will be licensed to serve 88 children in Newport, scheduled to open prior to March 1, 2019.

Additionally, there are two home based providers who have expressed interest in joining the network:

Lisa Duncan, Little Angels FCC

Chris Nelson, Mountain View FCC

Proposed Staffing of Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative



Network development and activities will be led by NEKLS staff:

Michelle Tarryk - Executive Director, NEKLS

Responsible for meeting with partners regularly to review progress and develop strategic direction/opportunities; negotiate with 3rd party vendors/funders; coordinate fundraising efforts to avoid conflict/duplication

Tricia St. Onge – Business Manager, NEKLS

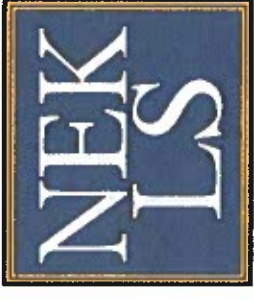
Manage fiscal services of centralized administration for the Network partners as defined by members

Lisa Daigle-Farney– NEK ECC Coordinator, NEKLS

Oversee implementation of services to partners including: utilization of Smartcare, communication with Network members to ensure services are running smoothly and adding value, assist with expansion of efforts.

Technical Assistance provided by Vermont Birth to Five staff

Business Performance Metrics



The Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative (NEK ECC) will collect the following business metrics to be reported monthly to individual providers to inform their business decisions:

- Iron Triangle data: enrollment, collection rate, and cost per child
- Metrics related to fiscal health (when applicable)
- Metrics related to staff compensation (when applicable)
- Others to be determined by Cooperative members

In addition, the NEK ECC will prepare an annual aggregated report to be shared with appropriate stakeholders as a mechanism for understanding the fiscal health of the sector and informing policy decisions

Pedagogical Performance Metrics



The Northeast Kingdom Early Childhood Cooperative will develop and implement a Pedagogical Leadership plan to support teaching practices in cooperative member sites. NEK ECC will meet with seek support and guidance from and work with existing professional development systems including but not limited to: Wonderschool, Sharma's MWFK, Career Centers, Northern Lights, CCV, Starting Point networks and Adult Education. Once implemented, the NEK ECC will collect the following pedagogical metrics to be reported to member agencies to inform their program practices and professional development decisions:

- Child Assessment data (in partnership with statewide Hub managing the data)
- ERS scores (Quality rating data)
- Annual summary of professional development activity

In addition, the NEK ECC will prepare an annual aggregated report to be shared with appropriate stakeholders as a mechanism for understanding the programmatic strength of the sector and informing policy decisions.

Implementation Timeline



- Jul. 2018 Complete selection of founding members of the NEK ECC
- Aug. 2018 Develop and ratify Cooperative Agreement to define roles and responsibilities of Cooperative stakeholders
- Sep. 2018 Develop job description, advertise for and hire NEK ECC Coordinator
- Jan. 2019 NEK ECC is able to access program data: Development of dashboard to monitor business metrics/reports
- Mar. 2019 Begin planning and development of pedagogical leadership plan
- Mar. 2019 Use tracked metrics to develop site based sustainability plans to improve program revenue
- Mar. 2019 Begin implementation of back office services as identified by NEK ECC members
- Apr. 2019 Begin implementation of pedagogical leadership plan
- Jun/Jul 2019 Identify and onboard new NEK ECC members

Next Steps



- Finalize and formally accept Governance Documents
- Secure commitment from authorizing agent to participate in the Cooperative (Board of Directors, owner, etc.)and sign off for a Cooperative Agreement
- Enable NEK ECC to view data collected through Smartcare
- Convene team and schedule Pedagogical Leadership planning meetings