

Interview Questions by Stakeholder Group

	School-based Stakeholders	State Agency Stakeholders	Partner Stakeholders	Family Stakeholders
Groups	Public school prek teachers Superintendents, School Boards, Principals UPK Coordinators	AOE CDD	Head Start Directors Regional Head Start Office Community prek teachers	
Value Needs	<i>What should we think about in order to evolve into a prek4 system? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same?</i>	<i>What should we think about in order to evolve into a prek4 system? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same?</i>	<i>What should we think about in order to evolve into a prek4 system? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same?</i>	<i>What should we think about as we plan for this moving forward? What will be important for families to know and understand?</i>
Practical Needs	<i>What will this look like practically? What support, information and resources will we need? What tools already exist?</i>	<i>What will this look like practically? What support, information and resources will we need? What tools already exist?</i>	<i>What will this look like practically? What support, information and resources will we need? What tools already exist?</i>	<i>How will this impact family experience day-to-day? What support could help families navigate it?</i>
Legal Needs	<i>What legal implications must be considered?</i>	<i>What legal implications must be considered?</i>	<i>What legal implications must be considered?</i>	
System Oversight	<i>What should we consider as we think about system oversight? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same? What will stay the same? What impacts can we imagine?</i>	<i>What should we consider as we think about system oversight? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same? What will stay the same? What impacts can we imagine?</i>	<i>What should we consider as we think about system oversight? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same? What will stay the same? What impacts can we imagine?</i>	<i>What should we consider for families as we think about system oversight? How might families experience this? What might change and what might stay the same?</i>
Transitioning 3-year-olds	<i>What should we consider as we think about transitioning 3-year-olds out of the 10-hour prek</i>	<i>What should we consider as we think about transitioning 3-year-olds out of the 10-hour prek</i>	<i>What should we consider as we think about transitioning 3-year-olds out of the 10-hour prek</i>	<i>How might this impact family experiences and choices?</i>

Interview Feedback by Stakeholder Group

	<i>benefit? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same? What will stay the same? What impacts can we imagine?</i>	<i>benefit? What will this mean for us? What might change and what might stay the same? What will stay the same? What impacts can we imagine?</i>	<i>benefit? What will this mean for us? What changes will be necessary? What will stay the same? What impacts can we imagine?</i>	<i>What should we be thinking about to support families?</i>
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STATE AGENCY STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Group	CDD & AOE Leaders Facilitated by Janet
Value Needs	<p>“Mixed Delivery” system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognized as national best practice to maximize Access for families and maximize funding streams (recent joint letter from federal HHS and ED) ● Supports variety of family needs – some need full-day, full-year programs; some want part-day programs; multiple children; availability/access in rural areas ● Limiting income-drive stratification of program options <p>Developmentally-Appropriate Practice – national best practice for teaching aligned with developmental needs of young children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● not “pushing down” academics inappropriately ● allowing for 3s and 4s to be together when possible ● recognizes that some 4s need naps ● recognizes wide-range of development for children in this age group ● recognized strength of diversity in classrooms (children from all different backgrounds) <p>Other PreK specific best practices (NIERR as key source):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Two years of PreK before K is better than one ● Dosage - 10 hours/week to full-school-day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there middle option? ○ Options for choices by districts, programs, families? ● Program Quality Standards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current system set to prioritize “universal access”, while building towards those quality standards. ○ How to strengthen pipeline of qualified educators, how to establish PD/coaching systems <p>Financially responsible funding plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to consider one-time costs for facilities/transition support as well as ongoing costs of PreK4 ● Need to consider in context of Education Fund pressures and conversations related to potential Educational delivery and financing reform ● How to align practice with K-12 and also understand/assess costs? <p>Health/strength of early childhood education and afterschool programs overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UPK has supported both quality and capacity of community-based ECE programs ● How to support those ECE programs through transitions (esp in more 4yos served directly by schools, or school more selective of their partners) and not negatively impact program quality and financial stability (and thus children served by those programs)
<p>Practical Needs</p>	<p>Consistent and coherent financial model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appropriate ADM for PreK students in full-day programs ● Appropriate PreK tuition from LEAs to PreK partner programs <p>Consistency for UPK Partner Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Often work with multiple SUs/SDs ● Different applications, contracts, attendance, training, invoicing needs can be tricky for partner programs <p>Clearly defined roles for LEAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administration, oversight, support for partners and families, transition to K, special education ● UPK Coordinator Role (often on Regional basis) appears to be very valuable <p>Clearly defined roles for State staff – both AOE and CDD teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prequalification? ● Monitoring? ● TA/Support to SU/SDs? ● TA/Support to specific Programs? <p>Background checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would these changes impact this in PreK settings?
<p>Legal Needs</p>	<p>IDEA Part B – Early Childhood Special Education transitions to LEA responsibility at a child’s third birthday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to still be able to offer ECSE to 3yos in Least Restrictive Environment (best case is usually “regular” classroom in program they regularly attend) ● Need to do Child Find to identify 3yos at risk <p>Alignment with State Board of Education rules with a new “PreK 4” grade</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational Quality Standards systems don't include PreK right now ● School Accountability system doesn't include PreK now ● Truancy – if an enrolled 4yo doesn't attend, are they truant? ● Transportation – what is required both public and contracted settings? <p>Ability to ensure safety of young children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Right now, Child Care Licensing licenses public school PreK facilities as well as community-based programs (classrooms + playgrounds) ● Licensing also mandates group size/ratios <p>Ability to ensure PreK 4 meeting academic standards (built into State Rules)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UPK mandates use of VELs (aligns with Common Core) ● Twice-yearly individual student assessments through TS GOLD (right now districts have choices on what tools to use for assessments on other grades) <p>How to align Afterschool and Summer practices/policies/programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afterschool/Summer programs currently have different rules/policies for 4yos than programs that serve school-agers (generally defined as having started kindergarten) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ratios/group size ○ Exemption from child care licensing requirements <p>Partnership with the Head Start programs (which provide full-family, wrap-around services to some of highest-need Vermont families in addition to UPK now)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How to ensure those families still get HS-level of support
System Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is best done by State and what is best done by LEAs? ● If this is essentially another grade for 4 yos, should State oversight of PreK be structured like other grades? ● How to right size
Transitioning 3-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No options for 3yos that would really benefit from a preschool program but are not eligible for CCFAP (for example, at least one parent not working) and parents can't afford to pay for child care. ● Child may need to transition multiple times - from one family-selected child care for up to age 4, to another school-selected program for PreK 4 (plus potential for a different afterschool/summer provider for those who need full-time care), to their assigned public school for kindergarten. ● Impacts opportunities for earlier identification and service provision for 3yos who may need additional support (including kids who will not longer be in any formal programs, and those who will be in programs without UPK required Developmental Assessments)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impacts ability to place 3yos in Least Restrictive Environment for IDEA/ESCE services. Schools won't be able to offer that directly (if can't serve 3yos) and won't have partnerships established with private programs that may serving those children. ● Limits incentives for PreK-level quality and deeper partnerships between schools and private child care programs if PreK is offered primary through schools or only with programs selected by the school district ● May limit options for families seeking part-time preschool for the 3yos since many child care programs are oriented to full-time care
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SCHOOL-BASED STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Group	<p>UPK Coordinators Facilitated by Becca In person at 4/9/24 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 28 People Present ● 24 SUs represented ● Those present included Special Services Directors, Early Childhood Coordinators/Directors, School based PK teachers. ● Additional feedback was requested through sending to the UPK coordinator list with a link to this document.
Value Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importance of adult-child relationships ● Play needs to be incorporated into most of the day; day needs to be age- and developmentally appropriate in all developo should provide benefits to children. ● Need for rest at this developmental age. Discussed how this works in a public school building. ● Impact of long day on children during this developmental stage: social emotional needs, rest/physical needs, are childr ● Reduction in transitions (across spaces and people) for preschoolers. ● Impact of changes to current multi-age classrooms. ● Viability of community programs without 4 year olds.
Practical Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff, Substitutes, Aftercare (room, staff), play has to be embedded in the majority of the day, one oversight body, space, measurements of quality (STARS, NAEYC, CLASS). ● Dual vs singular oversight changes the amount of administrative time that SU/SD staff need to account for- paperwork ● Discussion about class size and ratios as dependent on oversight (CDD regulations vs AOE class size). NAEYC accreditat ● Inequality of teaching opportunities are present.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There will be some years when the programs have low numbers of 4 year olds and it might not make sense cost wise to potentially combining prek programs, but then leads to distance/transportation questions ● Transportation is an issue. Conversation included: staffing, safety and car seats on buses, districts without infrastructure to bring y/os into one central location. Also discussed how transportation may make the access to school based preK more accessible. Need to factor in mid-day transportation into the decision of where their children attend pk. ● Aftercare: In some districts there isn't aftercare even for kindergarteners. Staffing. Transportation. Parents pay tuition for preschoolers vs K-12 models? *Does aftercare fall into the regulations for CDD currently in place and how does that interact with regulations/oversight? Transitions in staff and spaces are not best for this developmental stage. Summer and vacation care at schools. Loss of local programming capacity if children are in schools. ● If public school directs the curriculum and use of VELs then equity within the school district of what 4 y/o (incoming K) are well-versed in early childhood education in order to make sure that there is not a "push down" of inappropriate academic content ● Capacity questions in terms of providing PK 4 to all residents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are we talking SU or SD when described in the considerations? I.e: a larger district may have options for physical space and staffing that towns that are individual school districts within larger SUs don't have? ● Capacity considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small schools ○ Small numbers of 4y/os ○ Geographic concerns (both school buildings spread out and population density) ○ Staffing (ratios and breaks in alignment with master contracts) ○ Ability to continue partnerships where they are working - with state-level accountability for private programs to guarantee space? ○ 2 specific examples brought up in conversation: school that during covid when numbers were low combined PK and K. Other example is program that has only 3 Kindergarten students would PK/K students be combined into one classroom decision. How to maintain developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum in PK/K classroom ● Licensed teacher in front of students. Currently the community need to be onsite vs in classroom designing curriculum ● Physical space/facilities that meets preschooler needs: e.g. fences, bathrooms, playgrounds, classrooms. Do all of our schools have this? ● Start-up costs for renovations, supplies & equipment are substantial. ● What data do we have related to quality standards in public schools and community programs? CLASS observations in community setting. What systems are in place or in development to improve quality?
Legal Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are we talking SU or SD when described in the considerations? I.e: a larger district may have options for physically combining towns that are individual school districts within larger SUs don't have?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FAPE/LRE: Recent guidance from AOE suggests a new unfunded mandate that FAPE is not the state determined UPK hours. Special ed is that some students are entitled to more than the amount of hours of PK that's happening in a district. This is 10 hours per week of public prek: districts are expected to pay additional hours to UPK partner sites when these students are in two sessions of public prek, which impacts availability of public PK to other students in the district. ● LRE: is determined by student needs. Parents can choose to send their student to a UPK partner site, and the district may have a restrictive environment as they may not have access to a licensed teacher (current law only requires teacher be "onsite"). Dear Colleague Letter from Jan. 9 2017 issued by the DOE regarding PK LRE states, "LRE must be selected in consideration of the child or on the quality of services that the child needs," which can be interpreted that a UPK site may not be a student's best option. ● Agreement that dual oversight is an increased administrative burden, but also discussed the role that the CDD regulations play in early education. Discussion of possibility to have specific regulations for preK age- perhaps in the form of CDD regulations. *Current regulations have several regulations specific to preK in public schools, but the discussion is that there are other options for public school locations would not impact child welfare due to duplication with education and business practices that exist. CDD regulations are often protective of best practices in serving the PK age group (ratios, play-based learning, fences and safety requirements in the classroom, rest and outside time, family partnerships). Without school leadership that has a deep understanding of childhood needs and developmentally appropriate practice, early educators sometimes need the backing of CDD regulations to do what they need. ● Transportation as access need ● Aftercare as an access need. ● Special education considerations - particularly for 3s ● Would families have the ability to send children part-time? Is it a full day or not? Would this create a tiered system of funding? ● Discussion that .46 (-.54) is not enough funds for a preschooler. ● Does the weighted pupil count discussion include preschoolers?
System Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One system oversight body, which will include AHS Health & Safety components ● CDD regulations provide a level of "protection" when thinking about this specific developmental age. For ex: the staffing regulations promote lower staffing ratios than other grades; requirements for 90 minutes of outside time are used to promote recess. Examples are things we know about developmental growth needs for this age range. See also notes under legal ● Duplication of employee documentation is currently needed for SU/SD Human Resources and for CDD. ● Currently need to do CDD fingerprints if new to pk and every 5 years, AOE fingerprints to be licensed educator, SU/SD fingerprints are the "deeper dive" would one option be that everyone move to that system? (Fingerprints are not kept for long) ● Number of ECE/ECSE licensed educators. Building school and AOE leadership understanding of early childhood education ● Impacts on infant/toddler care and 3s - quality, capacity, oversight systems.
Transitioning 3-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If 3s were unfunded from education funds how do we provide an educational environment to the students who are at risk of not needing to provide support to decrease special education needed later in K, multilingual or unhoused children. What happens if...

	<p>they've been expelled from private programs (or multiple programs). Impact on at-risk, non-working families in particular access to <i>universal</i> preschool. What do we know about current progress and skill development for 3s in preschool? What are the challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would districts need to ask for local tax dollars to support enrollment of 3s if no state funding? Would that result in funding being allocated to other programs? ● result in school boards/community voting for special education classroom funds? ● Benefits of having students receive 2 years of preschool (perhaps part time) vs 1 year full time. ● Family impact- will parents of 3 year olds be able to afford tuition for their three year olds to attend private preschool. even with increased eligibility there is a segment of population which doesn't qualify, but whose children would benefit from preschool. ● Is there a model that has tiered so 4s would be eligible for x amount of hours and 3s would be eligible for x amount? So that 3s could be in private preschool and 4s could be in public preschool? ● Financial impacts to districts of losing currently-served 3s in ADM counts AND being expected to begin operating full-day preschool (or at least 4 hours a day in school). For most districts, this would be a large additional expense in conjunction with a loss of the 3s in ADM (which is higher than in community programs, but also lack of equity in professional credentials/planning time/wages and benefits). Equity? Still unknown.
<p>Special Education Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ECSE going/no longer going to private programs to provide services ● Less children without visiting 4s, less flexibility to visit community programs? ● If public programs do decide to offer services in house it could lead to special ed only classrooms vs inclusion models in classrooms or serving them in classrooms intended for older children. ● If 3s were unfunded from education fund how do we provide educational environment to the students who are at risk. How do we need to provide support to decrease special education needed later in K, multilingual or unhoused ● What about the 3s with higher special education needs? More services involved? More time (length and frequency), more support? mean they'd be in district preschools to receive this level of support. ● LEAs are responsible for providing special education services to children 3-22, but we already have a system where LEAs are responsible for who transition at their birthdays for special education system, but miss the PK cut-off. I.e: student with needs that is at risk to not receive UPK funding for them because they turn 3 after September 1. ● For some communities providing special education services in community locations is the model and is successful. Are there other models (e.g. group?) can learn from those models? Why does this work in some areas and not others? Geography? Staffing? Funding? ● Tension between student needs and needs of setting due to factors such as ratios. Family choice in setting and FAPE considerations.
<p>Other Questions & Comments</p>	<p>Are we making decisions based on adult needs or student needs?</p> <p>Impact of language in discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What we call this 3-5 year old developmental period impacts what issues we address: Child Care, early education, etc. ● Private vs public

Decision about model impacts SU/SD considerations and decisions for example:

- if CDD regulations are in effect then this impacts class size which impacts staffing model. CDD regulations as “protective” and safety (recess, facilities, ect.)
- If full school day would there be higher or lower enrollment due to family full day needs for supervision

Developmentally Appropriate practice:

- Consensus that learning through play is an important model. Need to recognize that preschool curriculum/classroom to a higher academic model.
- In public school classrooms there is both more control over curriculum/use of VELs.
- Importance of consistent, nurturing adult-child relationships in this age group
- What is the purpose of PK? (current and future) To provide high quality learning experiences? To offer inclusive preschool ready for Kindergarten? Discussion about if “getting ready for K” was a belief we shared as early educators. Recognize Age 8 (3rd grade) in research and practices.

Much conversation about staffing impact:

- Transportation availability? But safety and staffing supervision on bus
- Lack of/decrease in Higher Education availability (within VT) as source of licensed teachers
- Discussion about difficulties already meeting CDD regulation requirements- not necessarily licensed teacher difficulties
- Discussion about end of provisional waiver in community programs
- Discussion about difficulties with staffing in general

FAPE/LRE:

- What is educationally necessary?
- Where can children receive what they need to access education?
- Recent guidance from AOE suggests a new unfunded mandate that FAPE is not the state determined UPK hours of 10. It is that some students are entitled to more than the amount of hours of PK that’s happening in a district.
 - This impacts two things in districts that offer 10 hours per week of public prek: districts are expect to pay additional for these students are already in a public PK, *or* students are in two sessions of public prek, which impacts availability in district.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LRE: is determined by student needs. Parents can choose to send their student to a UPK partner site, and the district must provide the least restrictive environment as they may not have access to a licensed teacher (current law only requires teacher b ○ Using the Dear Colleague Letter from Jan. 9 2017 issued by the DOE regarding PK LRE states, “LRE must be s ○ harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that the child needs,” which can be interpreted that a <p>Aftercare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is actually before and after elementary school day, plus summers and vacations ● Staffing ● Length of day for children/students and staff ● Tuition- Currently some districts don’t have parents pay tuition, some do, some grant funded, capacity of afterschoo <p>Early Education as career:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career Centers/High schools decreasing offerings ● Colleges decreasing offerings ● End of community provisional license waivers ● Pre-covid had many 65-70 y/os who would work in aftercare. For many that workforce source isn’t robust at this poi
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PARTNER STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Group	Head Start Directors/Regional Head Start Office Facilitated by Renee 4/12/24
Value Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The importance of family choice and the benefit of a mixed-delivery system that allows families to make choices about their child’s educational needs in alignment with their own cultural needs and preferences. ● Collaboration over competition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The VHSA expressed a sentiment that since the inception of UPK, preschool-age children now have dollar signs attached to their backs. This has spurred competition in communities where LEAs have opted to create their own school-based programming without regard for their communities’ existing composition of high-quality care and education programs. This has created competition for a skilled workforce and has

	<p>limited the amount of federal dollars that Vermont has historically accessed in support of its comprehensive early childhood system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity and Access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is concern around the potential for disparities in access and quality of ECE options for children and families in underserved and very rural communities. ● Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opportunities to explore innovative approaches to address the unique needs of children and families affected by changes in UPK eligibility, ensuring that programs remain responsive and adaptable to evolving community needs.
<p>Practical Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The VHSA anticipates proposed changes in UPK will lead to decreased enrollment of four-year olds as families opt for UPK programs outside of Head Start, particularly when families have older children already in the school system as it would simplify drop-off/pick-up routines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This exodus of four-year olds could lead to a reduction in the amount of federal funding coming into to state to support the high-needs populations Head Start currently serves. ● ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At-risk families with four-year olds currently enrolled in Head Start could lose access to comprehensive health/wellness services, inclusive child development services, enhanced parent and family engagement supports, and connections to social services that address socio-economic needs and support family self-sufficiency if they are forced to choose between receiving services at a Head Start program or enrolling their child in a UPK program within a school setting (see Systems Oversight #1) ○ There is a concern about equity and accessibility of comprehensive services for children and families in regions with limited ECE options. If changes in UPK result in more 4-year-olds being enrolled with LEAs rather than in Head Start programs that they qualify for, at-risk families will lose access to comprehensive services they currently receive. Head Start provides a full-time social worker for every 30 children on average, as well as individualized supports for families from registered dietitians, registered nurses, registered dental hygienists, and licensed mental health workers. Some families rely on this level of support to be successful, and there is a concern their needs will not be met should there be inequities in the way UPK is expanded throughout the state. ○ Changes in program funding and reimbursement mechanisms may impact the availability and sustainability of comprehensive services in Head Start programs. ● Changes in Head Start program operations and service delivery models will result from changes in UPK.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligning state funded UPK standards and nationally mandated Head Start performance standards to support clear communication to families about program features and benefits, to support families in transitioning children to kindergarten, and to minimize administrative burden. ● Communication channels and protocols that ensure effective coordination and collaboration with LEAs and other stakeholders will need to be built and/or strengthened. ● RE: WORKFORCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changes in UPK will result in increased demand for qualified early childhood educators. ○ Recruiting and retaining staff as competition for qualified professionals intensifies poses a potential challenge. There are also concerns about pay parity within school and private settings as public programs will have more access to increasing compensation and benefits packages. ○ There's a concern about increased staff burnout and turnover rates due to changes in program expectations and staff workload, particularly if work isn't done to ensure alignment between the state and federal systems. ○ It will be important to foster supportive working environments and implement retention strategies to retain experienced staff and reduce turnover. ● Concerns about continuity and stability of care for children transitioning between Head Start and UPK settings. ● Should changes in UPK result in a reduction of 4-year-olds within private settings, the fiscal stability of such programs will be in jeopardy. Currently, most infant and toddler classrooms within private child care settings rely on funding from 3- and 4-year-old enrollment to support their overall operations. The State of Vermont will need to consider how to adjust compensation for these age groups if UPK expansion happens predominately within LEA settings. Without CCFAP adjustments being made in tandem with the proposed shift, these programs will need to reduce staff compensation or no longer be viable as a small business, and we will lose capacity within the entire birth to five care and education system. ● Any disruption in current funding streams would require a reduction in capacity for children and the current workforce. The success of Head Start as a model is dependent upon its integration with other services and streams (e.g., childcare subsidy and current UPK funds). Entire Head Start programs and the mix of care and comprehensive services they provide are in jeopardy should significant changes be made to other components.
Legal Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations governing the provision of special education services for children with disabilities within Head Start settings, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ● There's a concern that changes could result in a reduction in the delivery of federally mandated special education services within private center-based locations. Head Start Directors report that since the inception of UPK, LEAs have reduced or eliminated special education services within Head Start classrooms and instead inform families that in order for their child to receive their special education services, they must enroll their child in the UPK

	<p>programming offered within the public school setting. This violates federal IDEA law, creates a hardship for families who then need to manage transportation for their child to and from the LEA mid-day, and is disruptive to children who need consistency and routines to be successful, particularly children on the autism spectrum, with social-emotional and behavioral challenges, or with substantial developmental delays.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential strains on program resources and infrastructure to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities, particularly in regions with limited access to specialized services and supports. ● Ensuring continuity of care and support for children with disabilities as they transition between Head Start and other ECE settings, requiring strong partnerships and communication between providers. ● Collaboration and partnership with LEAs to coordinate assessments, services, and supports for children with disabilities within Head Start settings, ensuring seamless transitions and continuity of care. ● Compliance with IEPs and other legal requirements governing the provision of special education services for children with disabilities, ensuring that services are delivered in accordance with established goals and objectives.
<p>System Oversight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the potential for inconsistencies in UPK delivery throughout the state, leading to inequitable access to marginalized populations, particularly if LEAs are given the ability to decide independently whether to contract with private providers. ● There will be a need for additional resources to support staff training and professional development related to addressing the unique needs of vulnerable children and families in the context of expanded UPK. ● Ongoing assessment and evaluation to monitor the delivery and effectiveness of both high-quality child development services as well as access to comprehensive services will be necessary. ● Potential for increased administrative burden and compliance requirements as Head Start programs adapt to align with changes. ● Enhanced coordination and alignment between oversight mechanisms for UPK may promote greater accountability, transparency, and quality improvement efforts across ECE settings. ● Balancing program autonomy and flexibility amidst changes in oversight mechanisms for UPK, particularly in regions with diverse programmatic needs and priorities. ● Potential for increased administrative burden and reporting requirements as oversight mechanisms for UPK become more standardized and rigorous, necessitating streamlined processes and systems. ● RE: RECOMMENDATIONS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish cross-sector task forces or working groups to facilitate collaboration and communication between oversight agencies. ○ Develop standardized reporting and data collection protocols to ensure consistency and comparability in oversight processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement joint training and professional development opportunities for staff and administrators involved in oversight processes to promote alignment and shared understanding of program requirements and expectations. ○ Conduct regular cross-agency meetings and workshops to exchange best practices, address challenges, and identify opportunities for collaboration and alignment between oversight processes. ○ Establish clear communication channels and points of contact between oversight agencies to facilitate information sharing, problem-solving, and coordination efforts. ○ Develop cross-agency memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreements outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations for collaboration and alignment between oversight processes. ○ Incorporate stakeholder input and feedback from families, providers, and community members into the development and implementation of oversight processes to ensure relevance, responsiveness, and accountability. ○ Invest in technology infrastructure and data systems to support integrated oversight and monitoring enabling real-time data sharing and analysis to inform decision-making and quality improvement efforts.
<p>Transitioning 3yos</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The need to develop strategies that address potential gaps in service coverage for three year olds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Head Start serves children ages 3-5 and research suggests greater benefits for children the longer they are enrolled. ● Potential strain on Head Start program resources and infrastructure as three-year-olds transition out of UPK programs, requiring additional funding and support to maintain program quality and effectiveness. ● Potential for increased demand for Head Start services for children age three will necessitate adjustments in enrollment, staffing, and programmatic capacity to accommodate the influx of new enrollees. ● Challenges in ensuring continuity of services and supports for three-year-old children and their families transitioning from UPK, particularly in regions with limited access to early childhood education services and supports. ● Importance of family engagement and partnership in the transition process to ensure that children and families are supported and empowered to navigate changes in early childhood education settings and services. ● Potential for changes in program demographics and enrollment patterns as three-year-old children transition out of UPK, requiring strategic planning and resource allocation to address evolving programmatic needs and priorities. ● Importance of collaboration and communication between oversight agencies responsible to ensure alignment and coordination in transition planning and support efforts for children and families. ● Challenges in maintaining program stability and continuity amidst changes in the enrollment of three-year-olds, requiring proactive planning and collaboration to support program sustainability and growth. ● Need for ongoing assessment and evaluation to monitor the impact of proposed changes in transitioning three-year-olds out of UPK and identify areas for improvement and support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are concerns about the potential reduction in the provision of special services for 3-year-olds in their natural setting. Head Start programs provide services for a disproportionate number of children in low-income households and families with various barriers to getting their child to services provided only in the LEA setting. ●
Family Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthened partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, healthcare providers, and social service agencies to provide wrap-around supports for children and families. ● Development and expansion of culturally responsive programming and services to better meet the needs of children and families from diverse backgrounds. ● Development of targeted outreach and engagement strategies to ensure equitable access to comprehensive, high-quality ECE programming. ● Implementation of trauma-informed care practices and mental health support services to address the social-emotional needs of children and families facing adversity. ● Provision of additional support services, such as transportation assistance and family advocacy, to overcome barriers to participation. ● Development of transportation plans and logistics to support safe and efficient transport of children to and from various ECE sites that meet family needs (e.g., full-working-day), particularly in rural or underserved areas. ● RE: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration with parents and caregivers to identify and address the unique needs of their children and families, empowering them as partners in the educational process. ○ Increased family engagement and empowerment in decision-making processes regarding early childhood education options, ensuring that families are informed about their choices and have the support they need to access program services. ● Family engagement and collaboration in the development and implementation of IEPs and support strategies for children with disabilities enrolled in Head Start programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of families and communities in the implementation of new benchmarks and best practices to ensure that program offerings are culturally responsive and responsive to local needs and priorities. ● Transparency and communication about changes. ● Access to clear and comprehensive information about changes in UPK policies and practices, including eligibility criteria, enrollment processes, and available options. ● Guidance and support from trained professionals, such as family advocates or case managers, to help navigate potential transitions or adjustments resulting from changes in UPK policies and practices. ● Assistance with practical considerations, such as transportation, childcare arrangements, or scheduling conflicts, to ensure smooth transitions or adjustments for families affected by changes in UPK policies and practices.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Access to language and cultural support services to ensure that all families, including those from diverse backgrounds, can fully understand and participate in the decision-making process regarding early childhood education options.● Collaboration and partnership with community organizations, childcare providers, and other stakeholders to provide families with comprehensive support and resources throughout the transition process.● Access to childcare or early education programs that offer wraparound services, including before and after-school care, to ensure continuity of care and support for children and families during transitions or adjustments.● Ongoing communication and collaboration between Head Start programs, LEAs, and families to address concerns, provide updates, and ensure that families have the information and support they need to navigate potential transitions or adjustments resulting from changes in UPK policies and practices. |
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