

Interim Report
December 2010



The CAYL Institute Study Circle on the Massachusetts Child Care Resource and Referral System

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Purpose

In a grant funded from September 29, 2010 through June 30, 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) contracted with The CAYL Institute to facilitate a process that would help identify practices that would lead to an improved information and referral, consumer education and voucher management services provided by the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies (*See Appendix A*). This report provides EEC and CCR&R agencies with an overview of the process for the “Study Circle” as well as highlights from what has been learned thus far.

The ultimate purpose of the CAYL Institute Study Circle on Child Care Resource and Referral is to make recommendations to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care by June of 2011 regarding next steps in the evolution of a strong, high quality and responsive statewide CCR&R system (*see Appendix B*).

Activities to date:

Since the Study Circle began, the CAYL Institute has engaged a Study Circle Team consisting of The CAYL Institute President, a lead consultant, six field staff, and six members of an advisory group who are identified in *Appendix C*. This Team held one formal meeting, which included the EEC Commissioner and her staff liaison for this project as well as a staff person from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA, by telephone). The purpose of that meeting was to generate key questions, issues and priorities for the Study Circle.

Using information from the Team meeting, The CAYL Institute then organized and conducted two focus groups held in Worcester and Cambridge in December that have engaged all of the CCR&R agencies in Massachusetts. Also, the CAYL Institute developed materials for, organized and implemented a training session for Field Staff to support their 2011 site visits to all CCR&R agencies. As of December, all of the activities proposed by the CAYL Study Circle for 2010 had been accomplished on time. In addition, the CAYL Institute has maintained ongoing communication with the EEC Liaison assigned to the CAYL Study Circle project in order to have access to historical, fiscal and monitoring data that informs the process.

Recent History of CCR&R in Massachusetts

The Study Circle acknowledges values and celebrates the fact that, for decades, the CCR&Rs in Massachusetts have played important historic roles in providing regionally based resource and referral services to parents, licensing and training for providers and subsidy management for income eligible families. In so doing, CCR&Rs have created many of the leaders in the Massachusetts early education and care community, some of whom as members of the Study Circle. Due to the economic recession in FY10, the Governor instituted 9C cuts that essentially shrunk the budget for CCR&R services by nearly 35%. The EEC Access Management account that funded CCR&R information and referral and voucher management functions was reduced from \$9.8 million to \$6.4 million. In light of the cut back, EEC instituted measures to streamline various CCR&R tasks, including initiating an Income Eligible Voucher Reassessment Pilot project. This pilot would allow contracted providers to reassess the income eligibility of the families they were serving and bypass the need for CCR&R involvement.

In addition to the changes generated in response to the 9C cuts, EEC issued a new RFR for CCR&R services in February 2010. Bidders had an opportunity to apply for funding to provide either one, two or three levels of service as outlined on the RFR Addendum: Level One services are for subsidy management and information and referral service to subsidized families only. Level Two services include information and referral service to all families, and Level Three services provide enhanced consumer education to families about the value and quality of early education and care programming (*see Appendix D*). Awards were issued in mid- 2010 for a renewable 3 year funding cycle for FY 11-13. While the RFR was an open bid process, none of the awardees was new to the CCR&R system in Massachusetts.

In July 2010, the Commissioner gave a Power Point presentation that summarized her vision for a CCR&R system that would be integrated into a larger early education and care system, that would implement a Strengthening Families approach, and that would provide high quality service to all families, but particularly to fragile families.

In late September 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) contracted with the CAYL Institute to facilitate a Study Circle process. As part of this process, at the request of the CAYL Institute, EEC developed a synthesis chart of the changes that it has made in support of CCR&Rs during 2010; the chart (*see Appendix E*) identifies some additional

changes planned for the upcoming fiscal year. The CAYL Institute, in its December 2010 focus groups with CCR&R agencies, shared this chart with grantees and requested their input about it.

Almost simultaneously, in October 2010, NACCRRRA contracted with the Massachusetts CCR&Rs to provide up to two years of funding for a pilot project that would help establish, strengthen and support a State Network that would require the resource and referral agencies to incorporate as a 501©3 organization, develop and commit to a statewide public policy agenda that promotes quality and adequate funding for child care at the local, state and national level and design a data management system for reporting on the state of child care in Massachusetts. This project is running concurrently with the Study Circle; while the two projects have distinct goals and agendas, both support the development of a positive and collaborative relationship between the CCR&Rs and EEC.

Activities and Lessons Learned

Four preliminary lessons have emerged from the initial activities of the Study Circle:

FIRST: THE CAYL STUDY CIRCLE TEAM IS KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HIGHLY ENGAGED

As preparation for the Study Circle, in November 2010, the Team of the CAYL Institute staff, Advisors, Field Staff and consultant held an orientation meeting in which CAYL provided an overview of the Study Circle purpose, responsibilities, and goals; the Commissioner of EEC articulated the importance of providing high quality resource and referral services to families; and a spokesperson for NACCRA reviewed national CCR&R best practices and trends.

The Study Circle Team is highly engaged and deeply committed to building a more effective system of serving Massachusetts children and families. At its November 2010 meeting, the Team not only generated thoughtful questions about the process and goals, but a list of questions that they would like to see asked of the CCR&Rs during the individual and group interviews. Seven advisors and field staff attended the focus groups to hear from the CCR&Rs. All of the field staff and advisors will reconvene in the spring 2011 to review the responses to the CCR&R interviews and help formulate a final report that includes an analysis of the current activities of the CCR&Rs and recommendations for next steps in developing a continuous

improvement model for this state system.

SECOND: THE STATE COMMISSIONER IS FOCUSED ON IMPROVING SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The critical role that the CCR&Rs play in the lives of families who need information and either financial and/or emotional support around child care issues has been emphasized by all parties who are participating in this Study Circle. In July 2010, EEC Commissioner Sherri Killens identified several core functions for the agencies that included helping families make informed choices about the types and quality of care available for their children and assisting income eligible and vulnerable families overcome language, geographic and other barriers to successfully access child care subsidies. She envisioned a CCR&R system in Massachusetts that would be characterized by the provision of accessible, responsive, and high quality services to families of all socio-economic backgrounds.

THIRD: NATIONAL TRENDS REVEAL MANY CHANGES IN CCR& R NATIONWIDE

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA), as an effective advocate and voice for CCR&Rs, has outlined the multidimensional role and valuable services that they provide to families, communities and partnering institutions

CCR&Rs provide services to over 99% of the regions in the country and 86% of CCR&Rs offer provider training around licensing requirements. Seventy-three percent offer on-site technical assistance to providers and 59% offer accreditation support. While the majority of CCR&Rs are clearly involved in increasing the quantity and quality of child care services, it is important to note that only 31% of CCR&Rs administer the child care subsidy system in their states. When this responsibility for overseeing subsidy management services is added to their scope of services, CCR&Rs have significantly larger budgets and this additional source of revenue is often the largest activity in their agency.

In a review of 2007 data, several trends have emerged. CCR&Rs are consolidating and they are now fewer and larger than their predecessors. There is a significant decline in standalone resource and referral agencies with the majority (59%) of CCR&Rs being part of a larger organization. More states are moving toward a Managing Network model with a single entity providing services and, at times, with this entity existing within state government. There is an

increased demand for accountability from funders of CCR&Rs and with opportunities to take on new tasks such as market rate surveys and the implementation of QRIS systems. CCR&Rs are involved with a wider range of quality enhancement and professional development programs for providers, more research and advocacy initiatives around child development issues and an increase use of technology for data management and online learning for providers and parents.

FOURTH: CCR&R AGENCIES RECOGNIZE THAT CHANGE IS NEEDED WHILE CLEARLY ARTICULATING THAT THERE ARE SYSTEM AND FISCAL CHALLENGES FROM THE STATE ADMINISTRATION

In early December 2010, CAYL facilitated two focus groups for CCR&R agencies so that these agencies would have formal opportunities to ask questions about the Study Circle process and goals and to share their comments and concerns about the roles and responsibilities that face CCR&Rs in Massachusetts (*see Appendix F and Appendix G*). All of the R&R's and the newly hired executive director of the Massachusetts CCR&R Network attended a focus group. Virtually all of the participants spoke (only 1 did not). They came to the focus groups well-prepared and had no difficulty identifying issues which prevent them from doing their work as well as they would like.

In most cases, agency staff understand the expectations of EEC and agree with high professional standards, but believe that they are unable to meet these expectations due to increases and changes in workload. For example, R&R's report spending an inordinate amount of time trying to clarify EEC policy; time is wasted and frustration runs high, e.g. the recoupment process is seen to be particularly time consuming. Generally, the focus groups stayed at the practical level of "what improvements are needed to make the current contracts work;" the big-picture questions about what is national best-practice, what are national trends, how has technology changed the work of the R&R, how have the needs of the 21st century family changed and has R&R practice changed to meet those needs, will be the focus of the on-site, in-depth interviews.

Focus Group participants were given EEC's Changes Made/Changes Planned Chart (*Appendix D*) in advance and were asked to identify additional changes which they felt would strengthen the current working relationship between the CCR&R's and EEC. Participants were assured

that their comments were confidential and that neither individuals nor agencies would be identified in any reporting format.

The work of the Focus Groups was specifically defined as identifying changes needed. After listing those changes, each group was asked to identify the issue that was of greatest importance to the CCR&Rs. Significantly, in comparing the level of importance of the seven topic areas on the EEC chart (financial assistance policy, paperwork reduction, funding, waitlist, performance management, communication and other) both groups essentially shared the same priority concerns. Clearly, the 9C cuts and a follow-up reduction in funding were of preeminent concern to the CCR&Rs. A large number felt that the current level of funding doesn't match their contractual relationship with EEC and doesn't support quality service to families. While fiscal issues ranked highest in their level of importance, communication with EEC ranked second to both focus groups. Efforts like appointing an EEC liaison to the CCR&R network meetings were viewed as very constructive. However, the majority of comments proposed more timely and informative communication from EEC and emphasized the need for EEC to consult with CCR&Rs prior to making decisions that affect their work, for example re-instituting the PUG. Third in importance was the need to develop effective financial assistance policies, followed by the need for an efficient performance management system. Participants also cited a need for paperwork reduction and training for individuals who are entering data on the waitlist.

Specifically,

- The CCR&Rs agree with EEC that the self-employment policy needs attention. They find it complicated and increasingly difficult to implement in the current recession where parents have multiple jobs and frequent job changes.
- CCR&Rs have suggestions for the new waitlist procedures which EEC has planned; they suggest that the current number of parties entering children's names leads to duplication, errors and a number which far exceeds the actual demand.
- At the time of the focus groups, CCR&Rs noted they had not yet received the survey about the Voucher Reassessment Pilot.
- There is some confusion about the current quarterly reporting form; R&Rs seem to be using different calculations, leading to inaccurate data for performance management.
- EEC listed Massachusetts 211 in the changes planned category. CCR&Rs noted that the variability of performance of Massachusetts 211 agencies across the state was a

significant issue and in some cases there is a perception that this collaboration has actually increased their workload.

Next Steps

During the first three months of 2011, trained field staff will visit every CCR&R program in the state and conduct a confidential interview with the Director in order to maximize his/her input to the Study Circle and identify unique challenges that face individual CCRRs. The interview questions and format were formulated by CAYL staff and consultants and informed by feedback from the participants of the November meeting. CCR&Rs received copies of the questions at their December network meeting in order to have time to consider their responses. A preliminary outline of the interview questions is in *Appendix H*.

In Spring 2011, The CAYL Institute will compile and synthesize interview data, meet with advisors and field staff to discuss preliminary findings, develop and review a draft report with field staff and advisors, and provide a Final Report to EEC by June 2011.

APPENDIX A



Announcing: A Study Circle about Child Care Resource and Referral in Massachusetts

The CAYL Institute has been contracted by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (*EEC*), from October 2010 through June 2011, to organize a Study Circle on the state's child care resource and referral system. The CAYL Institute will convene a small group of experts, practitioners and analysts capable of understanding the work of the CCR&R agencies of Massachusetts within the context of mixed services delivery, with an appreciation of how the system has evolved through Commonwealth history, and an understanding of how agencies – and the CCR&R system – must continue to evolve in order to function and responsively meet the needs of children, families and providers across the state of Massachusetts.

This work will further be enhanced by

- discussion and involvement with the staff from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies or NACCRRA;
- focus groups that invite all of the CCR&R agencies in Massachusetts to share their accomplishments and perspectives;
- individual structured interviews with each CCR&R to understand the unique challenges and needs of each region;
- analysis of historic and current documentation about CCR&R in Massachusetts.

The CAYL Institute will

- employ and train a team of field staff who will support local site visits;
- convene a group of advisors to formulate interview questions and guide the process, and
- prepare both interim (December 2010) and final (June 2011) reports that will inform *EEC*'s strategic plan for improved information and referral, consumer education and voucher management services provided by the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.

The work of the CCR&Rs is vital to families and has a significant impact on the wellbeing of children. The hard work of constructing a shared purpose, knowledge base and sense of responsibility across early learning sectors is only beginning in Massachusetts. We invite you to partner with us once more as we create a unique opportunity to assess the performance and scope of the CCR&R system with one focus in mind: enhancing opportunities for success for ALL children and families across the Commonwealth through better service delivery from a dynamic Child Care Resource and Referral system!

Questions about the project should be directed to Valora Washington, PhD, President of the CAYL Institute.

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APPENDIX B

Purpose of the CAYL Institute Study Circle on Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

To keep pace with the needs of Massachusetts children, families and child care providers, this Study Circle will make recommendations to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regarding next steps in the evolution of a strong, high quality and responsive statewide CCR&R system including:

- Proposed redefinition of the core functions of Massachusetts CCR&R with respect to the delivery of voucher management, consumer education, and information and referral services;
- Quality control and efficiency processes for service delivery;
- Selection of essential data elements for accountability

APPENDIX C

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Quincy Community Action Program (QCAP)

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Region 5

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Child Care Network

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www.childcarenetwork.cc

Child Care Works

Pamela Kuechler
105 Williams Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
Tel. 508 999-9930 x 105 - (508) 561-7965 ©
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Region 6

Child Care Choices of Boston

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Boston, MA 02111
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Appendix E

Fall 2010 EEC Chart of changes made in support of CCR&Rs during 2010 as well as additional changes planned for the upcoming fiscal year.

Changes Made:	Changes Planned:
<p>Financial Assistance Policy: changes since 1/10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Reporting • Disability/Special Needs Form • Citizenship, Residency and Identity • Adding Travel Time to Service Need • Variance Policy • Continuity of Care – siblings, flex pool • Approved Break in Service • Financial Assistance Policy Guide on Line with Red-line format requested by CCR&Rs • Expanded access to wait list via CFCE grantees and EEC Regional Offices 	<p>Financial Assistance Policy: on the docket for review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Employment • 2nd Parent/Child Support • Waitlist Update • DOR/RMV data matching • Voucher Manual Update • Absence and Special Needs Policy • 1D reassessments • Expanded access to wait list via MA211
<p>Paperwork Reduction</p> <p>Last year EEC conducted an analysis of the Federal, State and EEC-specific requirements for documentation of eligibility for subsidized child care and issued the following EMBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB FY 2010-02: Streamlines the reassessment process, to reduce the administrative burden on entities managing child care subsidies and to assist families seeking to achieve self-sufficiency in the Commonwealth • EMB FY 2010-03: In addition to restructuring and clarifying the requirements for citizenship verification, this new policy also updates the current policies related to Residency and Identity. This policy changed the requirement from two forms of ID to one photo ID. It also expanded the list of what EEC will accept for proof of residency. 	<p>Paperwork Reduction</p> <p>EEC will continue to review the requirements in order to revisit if additional reductions are possible.</p>
<p>Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan – June 2010 \$1M increase to CCR&Rs for Voucher Reassessment Pilot • Sept 2010, \$560K in ARRA Funds made available to support CCR&R Transition to FY11 Contracts. 	<p>Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25K Market Rate Survey Contract Amendment

<p>Waitlist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirmation and renewal letters and enabling EEC regional offices, contracted providers, Head Start programs and Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grantees to enter families on the waitlist EEC has commissioned a study of the waitlist by Public Consulting Group 	<p>Waitlist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new wait list underway.
<p>Performance Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly data reports provided to CCR&Rs from EEC's Databases. Quarterly report requirement included in FY11 Contract. Audit of CCRs Underway 	<p>Performance Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning with Oct 2010, reporting schedule moves to monthly reports required from CCR&Rs to EEC. Analysis of the effectiveness of the Voucher Reassessment Pilot will be implemented in Nov/Dec via Survey monkey tool. Audit will continue through Dec 2010.
<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anita Moeller and Sandra Sherriff appointed as Liaisons to CCR&Rs Site visit to each CCR&R underway EEC Staff attend monthly meetings with CCR&R/ 	<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEC will continue to attend monthly meetings and will bring staff able to respond to current issues/questions raised by CCR&Rs.
<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation of collaboration with MA211 	<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation of data sharing with MA211

Appendix F

Focus group Comments from Worcester

Focus Group Responses

WORCESTER

Financial Assistance Policy

1. Self Employment needs changes; too complicated **(16)**
 - Don't know what to do with taxes; can't access tax transcript
 - Computing fees correctly is difficult; need explanation on how to calculate or simplify
 - Decision needs to be clear enough for local staff
 - Hard to document certain types of self-employment; need thought put into non-traditional self-employment (multiple job self-employment)
2. Job-changing → some employers refuse to fill out forms; easier for parents to bring a letter; eliminate employer tax ID number. **(7)**
3. Collecting documentation that isn't used; use taxes instead of self-reporting forms; self-declaration does not always match tax form. **(3)**
4. Concur with EEC's plan to change re-assessment period form.

Paperwork Reduction

1. Eliminate Redundancy in re-assessment process **(2)**
 - do via email to provider from CCIMS
2. Can we centralize re-assessment letters, send out automatically through system **(4)**
 - -want to pre-populate with zip codes
 - sort by end date not zip codes
3. Can recoupment process be automated? **(8)**
 - -use CCIMS to do it
 - put in recoupment adjustment function, similar to billing adjustment function
4. Being able to adjust the fee in the system and not doing manual calculation – CCIMS **(11)**

Funding

1. Get back to at least post 9C amount to 6.4 as opposed to 5. **(86)**
2. Recognize the relationship between quality and funding -> gives value to relationship between families, providers and children
3. Recognized caseload range that is acceptable
4. Match the funding to EEC's expectations **(9)**
5. Need cost-quality analysis **(4)**

6. Inadequate funding for core services **(16)**
7. What is the plan when ARA funding is gone? **(8)**
8. Voucher re-assessment pilot not working **(8)**

Waitlist

1. CCR&Rs not contacted in study by PCG **(2)**
2. Renewal letters should go out once a year; parents review online **(3)**
3. Funding for conversion to KinderWait **(4)**
4. Need in-depth training to anyone accessing KinderWait; quality control **(11)**
 - Need guidelines on how many people accessing it
 - Need cost analysis on waitlist
 - Contract providers just as responsible for entering children on waitlists
 - Waitlist quality is diminished with too many points of access

Performance Management

1. Monthly service reports need clarification **(4)**
2. Performance standards should be built into new CCIMS system; should include report function for R&R and EEC **(5)**
3. Monthly audits are not overbearing for R&Rs
4. Like to participate in development of monthly service reports.
5. Pilot program should be completely revamped to get survey done quickly **(16)**
6. Survey monkey survey not out yet
7. Should create reports, forms that allows us to get info we need. Standardized reports statewide from data system.

Communication

1. Questions
 - No time frame from when we ask questions to EEC and get a response from helpdesk; would like EEC to reply to request in certain amount of days; need standard.**(9)**
 - Bulletin answers not shared with others **(9)**
 - EEC says no response is a response → unacceptable
 - Give simple, concrete policy; simplify codes; need *matrix* → consistently update to reflect changes **(13)**
 - Need notes when address policy in meeting; written follow-up to policy discussions to all R&R's **(5)**
 - EEC's website needs to be easier to navigate to find policies and other info
 - Policy document should be updated to incorporate new EMBs; highlight changes **(11)**

Other

1. Update and support CCIMS until new product comes out; same for any program **(8)**
2. EEC be careful and work closely with 211; do test calls
3. 211 is a duplication of services and less accurate **(15)**

- 211 is dependent on the local United Way and is inconsistent across the state
4. 211 referring to CCR&Rs?
 5. 211 not user friendly to parents **(2)**
 6. There is no process for request for reviews/recoupment/double billing (no instructions) **(15)**
 7. Provider monitoring **(1)**

Appendix G

Focus group comments from Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE

Financial Assistance Policy

1. Disability/special needs form needs further work **(1)**
2. Approved break in service policy needs clarification on who is eligible, for all families; clarity on what documents are needed
3. Self-reporting policy has caused extra work because usually resolves in recoupment; parents are not self-reporting **(7)**
4. Annual re-assessment needs to be re-assessed; parents are recouping large amounts **(2)**
5. Expanded access to waitlist needs further work; waitlist access needs to be standardized and managed; CCIMS & ECCIMIS not connected **(2)**

Paperwork Reduction

1. Self-employment paperwork a lot of work to explain and go through; should simplify process; on tax form, should take line 7 and divide by 12; use letter from employer instead of verification form **(6)**
2. Could design a system that is consistent across state agencies; consistent intake rules between programs **(2)**

Funding

1. Increase in funding came after \$3 million cut to work on pilot that was supposed to streamline the process; did not streamline; this does not make things easier for parents; negatively impacting service to families **(27)**
2. Decrease in destabilized R&Rs'; funding needs to be restored to R&Rs' with functions best suited for R&Rs'; funding does not match contractual obligations; does not support service and mission **(23)**
3. Lack of planning and funding for transition **(4)**

Waitlist

1. Not accurate or functioning as intended **(2)**
2. EEC staff doing waitlists not trained; need to figure out who exactly is responsible for putting people on waitlists; need one agency responsible **(3)**

Performance Management

1. Reporting process not consistent **(5)**
2. CCMIS does not work consistently; reporting does not equate to workload and does not capture all the work; spreadsheet is not user friendly **(5)**

Communication

- 1) Up-front input from R&Rs before systems designed by EEC **(1)**
- 2) Inconsistent information between contract providers & R&Rs
- 3) Why was there no communication prior to the 35% cut regarding our concerns? **(1)**
- 4) Who created the RFP?
- 5) Should reinstate the PUG group more regularly
- 6) **Network meetings with Anita are productive and meeting with department people is valuable; helps in resolving issues**
- 7) Communication needs to be shared more widely regarding policy clarification and technical decisions **(1)**
- 8) Response time from bulletin can be months or can be inconsistent **(4)**
- 9) All of the above **(21)**

Other

- 1) Need clarification on eligibility in general
- 2) Why did 211 happen and why was there no discussion with R&Rs prior? It is inefficient.
- 3) Who will train MA211 to use our databases?
- 4) Funding is going to someone else, money is being fractured, when we are still doing our jobs; others not being held to same standards; not of value to the families; is this of value to the Commonwealth? **(9)**

APPENDIX H

CCR&R Study Circle Questions for Site Visits

Directions:

1) Review the following purpose of our Study Circle:

Purpose of the CAYL Institute Study Circle on Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

To keep pace with the needs of Massachusetts children, families and child care providers, this Study Circle will make recommendations to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regarding next steps in the evolution of a strong, high quality and responsive statewide CCR&R system including

- *Proposed redefinition of the core functions of Massachusetts CCR&R with respect to the delivery of voucher management, consumer education, and information and referral services;*
- *Quality control and efficiency processes for service delivery;*
- *Selection of essential data elements for accountability.*

2) In order to make those recommendations, we would value your input and would like your responses to today's questions. I will record your answers with your agency's name and today's date, but only to keep track of the data. No personal or agency names will be used in our report.

Questions:

I. HISTORY

- A. Please tell us a brief history of CCR&R in your community.
- B. How have your agency's functions changed over time?
- C. If you have any written materials about your agency's history, may we have a copy of this material?

II. NEW INITIATIVES

Much has changed in the evolution of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR and R) agencies in the past thirty years. In Massachusetts today there are many efforts to build a system of early care and education.

- A. What are your unique functions in the new mosaic of EEC/ECE initiatives in MA?
- B. Can you please give examples of how your CCR&R collaborates with other community agencies that serve families and children?

III. CORE FUNCTIONS (Voucher management, consumer education and information and referral services)

A. Local Level

1. How have the changes in EEC contracting for levels 1, 2 and 3 impacted your agency's services?
2. What is working well and should be maintained?
3. What are the challenges you have encountered with the changes?

B. State Level

One of the emerging national trends in CCR&R is consolidation of services into regional or statewide call centers.

1. What recommendations do you have for MA to provide statewide referral services for all families?
2. Do you support a statewide call center?
3. What are your recommendations for the delivery of voucher management statewide?
4. How have the changes to the waitlist management affected voucher management?
5. How will KinderWait (EEC's new waitlist management system) affect voucher management?
6. Is there a model of CCR&R working in another state which you think would work well in MA?

C. National Level

1. As you observe trends for CCR&R at the national level, which ones do you see as having potential application in MA?
2. Do you support the idea of having a national call center?

IV. QUALITY CONTROL AND EFFICIENCY

A. Local Level

1. What are the quality controls and efficiency processes you use in-house at your agency?
2. How are you using technology to improve your quality and efficiency?
3. How often do you update your NACCRRAware database?
4. Have you identified resources (other than funding) which would help you provide high quality CCR&R services?

B. State Level

1. How does the MA CCR&R Network work together or plan to work together to improve quality control and efficiency statewide?

2. What reports has the network generated (or does it plan to generate) to demonstrate statewide continuous improvement?
3. How has collaboration with MA211 affected your quality and efficiency?
4. What do you think could be done at the Dept. of EEC level to increase quality control and efficiency?

C. National Level

1. How does using nationally developed and recognized software (NACCRRAware) contribute to your quality control and efficiency?
2. Is there other nationally available software which you would recommend for MA?

V. ESSENTIAL DATA ELEMENTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Local Level

1. How do you measure success?
2. If you could choose the data elements for reporting which you think best represent your agency's greatest contributions to children, families, providers and communities, what would they be and how would the data be collected?

B. State Level

Statewide data collection helps build support for CCR&R in communities and in state government.

1. Which data elements do you think are essential to report to constituencies and funder to demonstrate accountability/
2. How would those data be captured statewide?

C. National Level

Nationally, the greatest source of funding for CCR&R's is the Child Care and Development Fund, administered by the states.

1. How would you describe your agency's participation in the national trend for accountability?
2. Are you Quality Assured by NACCRRRA? Are you in process?

VI. OTHER

- A. What are the strengths of the current MA CCR&R system?
- B. Please make any additional comments on the state of CCR&R locally, in MA, and nationally which we have not already covered.

Do you have other ideas to for next steps in the evolution of a strong, high quality and responsive statewide CCR&R system in MA?