PDG Preschool State Grantees

PDG TA CENTER

PROMISING B-3 STATE LEVEL STRATEGIES

Introduction

Outcomes of an aligned, coherent B-3 system...

- Reduces achievement gaps
- Focuses on the whole child
- Facilitates successful transitions
- Creates aligned standards, curriculum, and instructional practices
- Enables communication and data sharing
- Engages families as partners throughout the B-3 continuum

States Have a Role in Building a Birth-3rd Grade System

A growing recognition of the importance of the first eight years of life for children's healthy and optimal development in all areas has focused attention on the Birth-3rd grade (B-3) continuum[1]. But the policies, programs, and services available to children in their first eight years are typically fragmented and a schism between prekindergarten (Pre-K)[2] and kindergarten-third grade (K-3) often exits. What can states do to change the status quo? States have a role in building a B-3 system, from policies, to revisioning early learning programs and services, and funding B-3 initiatives. This brief builds the case for a more aligned B-3 early childhood system and shares state level strategies implemented by Preschool Development Grant (PDG) states.

Understanding the Need

Early childhood policies, programs, and services at the state level are often fragmented; they are administered by multiple state agencies and departments with different funding streams and priorities. Early childhood programs such as child care, Head Start, early intervention, and state preschool programs are typically housed in different agencies (e.g., Human Services, Department of Education).[3] Siloed early childhood programs and services can lead to conflicting eligibility requirements and regulations, duplicative processes, and inefficiencies. It also leads to confusion and discontinuity for children and families.

SPOTLIGHT ON PROMISING PRACTICES

- A B-3 approach seeks to tear down silos and bridge the divide between 0-5 and K-3

- Strengthening early childhood systems through aligned and integrated state-level governance contributes to improved services for children and families

- A B-3 system eases transitions for children and families

- A good starting point for B-3 reform is to create a shared B-3 vision

- States can support a B-3 approach by aligning learning standards, curriculum, and assessments; cultivating B-3 leaders; and offering joint professional learning opportunities

A B-3 approach to an aligned early childhood system requires expanding our lens to encompass ages 0-5 and grades K-3. However, doing so intensifies the level of fragmentation and discontinuity between these systems at the state and local levels. In many instances, the transition for children and families going from Pre-K to kindergarten is often perceived as entering a new world. A B-3 approach seeks to tear down silos and bridge the divide between Pre-K and K-3.

Rationale for a B-3 approach:

The most rapid period of development is the first eight years of life. Not only is development rapid, it is accumulative and continuous. For children to reach their potential in all domains of development (e.g., cognitive, social and emotional, linguistic), their experiences from infancy through the early elementary grades should reflect the consistency, coherence, and accumulative nature of their development.[4] A B-3 approach embodies the principles of continuity, consistency, alignment, supporting the "whole child," and establishing partnerships with families.

Research has found that quality preschool programs have a significant positive impact on the cognitive and social-emotional skills of children. These research findings have led states, local communities, and the federal government to invest in quality preschool programs as a strategy for closing achievement gaps that persist among certain populations of children (e.g., families who live in poverty). However, another body of research has shown that the gains children make from a quality preschool experience may be lost by the time children are in third grade. The "fadeout" effect of preschool gains is attributable to factors such as the quality of children's K-3 learning experiences, and the misalignment and inconsistencies across preschool and K-3 standards, practices, and philosophies.[5]

A B-3 approach attends to the entire continuum of children's experiences from infancy through third grade. It not only advocates for high-quality preschool programs, it also advocates for quality infant and toddler and K-3 programs and services. Quality infant and toddler experiences lay the foundation for quality preschool experiences that increase kindergarten readiness and then become the foundation of an aligned and supportive K-3 system. An aligned B-3 system provides long-term positive impacts for children, especially for children living in poverty, and thereby reducing fadeout and achievement gaps. It also smooths children and families' transitions across the B-3 continuum.

PDG At a Glance

- Federal four-year grant awarded to **18** states (AL, AZ, AK, CT, HI, IL, LA, ME, MD, MA, MT, NV, NJ, NY, RI, TN, VT, VA)

- Grants support states to expand high-quality **preschool** programs in high-need communities and to **build** or enhance their infrastructure for providing high-quality preschool programs

- Funding to provide **high-quality preschool** education and **comprehensive services** to support 4- year-olds and their families living at or **below 200% of federal poverty level**

- PDG quality standards

A B-3 aligned system can yield many benefits; however, some states continue to only tap the surface of these efforts. Establishing a system that encompasses the B-3 continuum requires implementing innovative, customized strategies to overcoming challenges posed by the status quo at the state and local levels. The table below identifies some of these challenges and suggests state-level strategies for tackling these issues.

Challenges to Establishing a B-3 System	Suggested State Level Strategies
• *State Governance Structures:* B-3 programs and services administered by different state agencies with different funding streams and levels of authority	• Investigate the three major types of state-level early childhood governance systems presented here (i.e., creation, consolidation, coordination) • Create and/or empower an Interagency Coordinating Council • Utilize the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council
• *Learning Standards* for children 0-5 and K-12 exist in isolation of each other	• Create one set of learning and developmental standards that includes full B-3 continuum (ex. Washington, Vermont) • Intentionally and explicitly align learning and development standards across B-3 (e.g., crosswalks)
• *Conflicting Attitudes and Philosophies:* The prevalent view in 0-5 programs and services is developmental and comprehensive, both in terms of focusing on all domains of development and of supporting the family. In contrast, academic achievement is typically the focus in K-3 • Play has a different role in 0-5 (i.e., how children learn) than it does in K-3 (e.g., pressure release valve)	• Develop a shared vision of a B-3 continuum with representatives of B-3 programs and services • Collaboratively identify desired outcomes for children and families across the B-3 continuum • Create a shared common language for the full B-3 continuum
• *Qualifications for Staff Differ Across B-3:* States require teachers to be certified or licensed to teach K-3. The qualifications for teachers of children 0-5 vary by type of early childhood setting. In a preschool operated by a public school a teaching certificate is usually required, whereas it's typically not required to teach in a Head Start or childcare center • Some states' educator certification or licensure systems do not include a B-3 option	• Working with representatives of B-3 programs and services, examine the certification and educational requirements for professionals across the B-3 continuum • Develop a Career Pathway that appropriately differentiates the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed for educators across the B-3 continuum
• Lack of B-3 Leaders: Few administrators and leaders at the state and local levels understand what the B-3 approach is and how to implement it • It's difficult to fill the void when an informed and supportive B-3 leader leaves or retires	• Offer B-3 leadership academies for current and aspiring 0-5 and K-3 leaders • B-3 leadership academies can be college credit-bearing or provide professional development credit • Establish state policy requiring preparation programs for elementary principals to include coursework in early childhood
• Separate 0-5 and K-12 data systems	• Incorporate child-level data from 0-5 programs into the K-12 State Longitudinal Data System
• The logistics of braiding or blending funding from different sources are challenging	• Provide technical assistance to communities seeking to implement a B-3 approach • Develop and disseminate resources explaining how to appropriately braid or blend funding streams to guide local communities

Promising Practices from the Field

What can states do to advance a B-3 approach? As shown in the list of state-level strategies presented, states have a pivotal role in not only promoting but furthering a B-3 approach. Some states are taking small steps towards B-3 and others are making huge leaps forward. States moving towards a B-3 approach typically use a two-prong approach: creating a B-3 state policy agenda and supporting local B-3 initiatives.[6] Items on the state policy agenda can be grouped into three categories: (1) Governance, (2) Alignment, and (3) Professional Learning. An overview of B-3 policy agenda items and a few examples of B-3 work is presented in this section. The examples are drawn from the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) states. The examples presented are not a complete list nor are they limited to efforts PDG funding supported.

GOVERNANCE

State-level early childhood programs and services are typically scattered across several different agencies. This fragmentation may lead to conflicting priorities, eligibility criteria, processes and accountability, as well as inefficiencies and duplication. To stem this fragmentation and establish greater coherence, some states intentionally design a governance structure that supports collaboration, communication, and cooperation across the B-3 continuum. Essentially there are three types of early childhood governance structures: creation, consolidation, and coordination.[7] *Creating a dedicated early childhood agency* is the strategy of pulling early childhood programs and services housed in various state agencies into a newly created entity. Alabama, Connecticut, and Massachusetts are PDG states that have used this strategy. Moving all early childhood programs into an existing agency describes a *consolidated governance* approach. Maryland consolidated many early childhood programs in its Division of Early Childhood in the state Department of Education. States such as New Jersey and Illinois have forged greater coherence through *collaboration and coordination*. These approaches to governance are illustrated in the pullout Spotlight section that follows, and in the video that is part of this series.

ALIGNMENT

Aligning early learning standards for children 0-5 with early elementary standards (K-3) ensures that there is continuity across expectations for children throughout the B-3 continuum. These aligned standards should be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. A strategy Vermont used was to recreate its early learning standards to include standards showing knowledge and skill progressions from infancy through third grade in one document. The more commonly used strategy for aligning standards is to include early learning standards for children 0-5 in one document and align them with the state's K-3 standards. Arkansas, New York, and Rhode Island are examples of PDG states that have utilized this strategy. Montana worked to align both program and content standards from birth through third grade.

Aligning standards is a crucial but not sufficient step for implementing a more coherent B-3 approach. Learning standards identify WHAT the knowledge and skills expectations at each developmental level or grade are, but not the HOW for getting there. *Aligned B-3 instructional and assessment practices* look differently across the B-3 continuum, but they are guided by a shared philosophy and a developmental view of learning and development. New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York are examples of PDG states that are working towards more consistent, developmentally appropriate

practices across preschool, kindergarten, and grades one and two. The strategies these states are using to realize that goal include developing practice guides and videos for K-2, offering joint professional development on curriculum, and supporting pilot sites. Nevada aligned the assessments used in publicly funded preschool programs with screening tools used in kindergarten, which in turn are aligned with *Nevada's Ready by Grade 3 Initiative.*

The *alignment of policies for educational level, certificate or license requirements for early childhood educators across the B-3 continuum* results in greater consistency and quality of experiences for children across settings. "Aligned" does not mean "the same" although there are those who advocate for a minimum of a bachelor's degree for all early childhood professionals. Vermont has established core educator competencies that are the foundation for both its early childhood educator license (Pre-K through third grade) and its requirements for teachers in child care programs. Like Vermont, several states have teacher certificates that span all or most of the B-3 continuum. Alabama was successful in adopting policies that helped align early childhood educator qualifications and it also adopted policies that aligned compensation for teachers in its state preschool program, *First Class,* across private and public school settings.

The nexus of the 0-5 and K-3 systems is the transition from Pre-K to kindergarten. The *alignment between Pre-K and kindergarten practices* is the most common starting point for states and communities implementing a B-3 approach. Research indicates that children and families who experience successful transitions to kindergarten are more likely to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. Connecticut focused its B-3 efforts on bridging the two systems to create smoother transitions for children and their families using two strategies. Connecticut provided co-training to PDG Pre-K and kindergarten teachers in the *Parent Teacher Home Visiting (PTHV)* model, and it is launching Hello Kindergarten!, an online toolkit for families whose children are transitioning to kindergarten.

A kindergarten readiness assessment (KRA) is a common strategy among states that have adopted a B-3 approach. A KRA *establishes a shared definition for what is meant by "ready for kindergarten."* A KRA is a tangible link between children's early developmental and learning experiences and K-3. KRAs are administered in the first few weeks of kindergarten; hence, the results refer to the quality of the child's 0-5 experiences. KRAs can also indicate the degree of coherence and alignment between those early experiences and kindergarten. Maryland has been a leader in developing, refining, and implementing a statewide KRA. Maryland's newest version is called *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.* Virginia developed the *Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program* as its KRA.

Most states have developed or are in the process of developing a comprehensive K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to track children's progress. Adopting a *B-3 approach necessitates collecting and aligning early childhood 0-5 data in order to track children across the B-3 continuum.* Since comprehensive 0-5 child data are housed in various agencies and early childhood settings (if collected), this is a complex issue of getting data sharing agreements, logistics, and solving technological issues. Nonetheless, some PDG states have worked or are in the process of tackling this area of B-3 alignment. With the support of the PDG grant, Vermont was able to complete mapping early childhood data elements onto its K-12 SLDS. Arizona was also able to connect Pre-K data to its SLDS. Nevada made strides in this endeavor by assigning unique identifiers to children in early childhood settings, and by starting to build the infrastructure for a B-12 SLDS.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Leaders need to be cultivated to move a system or a community from the status quo towards a B-3 approach. They need to learn about developmentally appropriate practice, the Common Core, brain development, the role of play in children's learning, and language and literacy development. Leaders need to understand what the B-3 approach is, champion it, and acquire the tools to implement it. PDG states such as Connecticut and New Jersey have worked in partnership with higher education institutions to offer early childhood leadership institutes for public school and community-based program leaders. As part of its PDG grant, Illinois provided onsite leadership support. With PDG support, Hawai'i offered an annual *P-3 Early Learning Symposium* for charter school cross-grade teams, community members, and principals to work on plans for preschool through third grade alignment. Memphis, one of Tennessee's PDG subgrantees, implemented a *Principal Early Learning Summer Institute* for principals to learn about core topics in B-3 (e.g., brain development, play, developmentally appropriate practices). Rhode Island developed a Graduate Certificate of Early Childhood Leadership for school principals, child care administrators, and education coordinators. Lastly, Illinois requires principal preparation programs to include content in early childhood development and education.

Shared professional learning experiences for educators across the B-3 continuum lead to shared knowledge and contribute to bridging the gaps between the 0-5 and K-3 divide. One PDG example of a state offering joint professional development is Tennessee. It hosted an early learning conference for prekindergarten through second grade teachers. Louisiana offered joint professional development for Pre-K and kindergarten teachers four times a year, and Virginia provided the *Effective PreK-3 Models for Virginia Schools Institute* for teams of Pre-K through third grade teachers and administrators. Maine has taken a different approach to joint learning. It has supported every school district in the state to create a B-3 Team that includes representatives from the B-3 continuum. These B-3 Teams are developing their local B-3 Professional Learning Community implementation plans.

Early Childhood Governance Systems: Spotlight on Selected PDG States

There are three major types of state-level early childhood governance structures for early learning and care programs and services. These are: (1) creating an independent agency focused on early learning and care, (2) consolidating early childhood programs and services in an existing agency with broader responsibilities, and (3) maintaining early childhood programs and services across multiple agencies but under the purview of a coordinating entity.[8] The following PDG states illustrate these different governance structures.

Massachusetts: Creation of An Independent Early Education and Care Agency

In 2005, Massachusetts launched the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), an agency focused exclusively on early childhood programs and services. EEC was designed to be a sister agency to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Board of Higher Education, all under the Secretary of Education. Programs and functions that had existed in other state offices became part of EEC. These included child care licensing and subsidy, prekindergarten, the Head Start Collaboration Office, Early Learning Advisory Councils (ELAC), and the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). The key early childhood programs that did not move into EEC were early

childhood special education (remained in DESE), and the Department of Health retained home visiting and early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities. The new EEC was able to resolve some of the issues that prompted its creation. It was able to clarify confusion the field had about funding sources, become more efficient, have less overlap, and increase access for children and families. Initially, the EEC also faced some challenges such as the tension in philosophies between education vs care.[9] Now, 15 years after its inception, the EEC continues to serve families, children, and community-based early care and education providers. It has successfully implemented the state's Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant and its Preschool Expansion Grant.

In terms of addressing the B-3 continuum, the EEC, DESE, and the Board of Higher Education are formally linked to the state's *Birth through Grade Three Advisory Group* (aka, P-3 Advisory Council).[10] The P-3 Council developed *Building the Foundation for Future Success for Children from Birth through Grade Three,* a document that "presents essential [B-3] competencies as 'precursors' for the knowledge, skills, and qualities of the [state's] college and career readiness definition."[11]

According to Jocelyn Bowne, the PDG grant manager at EEC, the EEC regularly collaborates with the Early Learning Team at DESE. The *Guidelines for Preschool and Kindergarten Expectations* and work on the state kindergarten entry assessment are a few of the areas of DESE and EEC collaboration. Dr. Bowne said that the EEC governance structure is working well; she especially values EEC's focus on families and on supporting children from infancy through elementary school (i.e., in after-school childcare). She added that there is still work to be done. "We need to think more intentionally about preschool." Currently, preschool is bifurcated between EEC and DESE with DESE having authority over preschool in public schools, and EEC has authority over preschool in all other settings.

Maryland: A Consolidated Early Childhood Governance System

Maryland's Division of Early Childhood in the state's Department of Education includes many key programs and services that support children and families along the B-3 continuum. The "primary missions of the Division are to ensure safety and health in child care programs and to improve the early education experiences of young children so that they are prepared for and successful in school."[12] To fulfill its mission, the Division is comprised of three offices:

- The Office of Child Care includes childcare licensing and subsidy, credentialing, and Maryland EXCELS (the state's TQRIS)

- The Early Learning Branch includes publicly funded Prekindergarten, the Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) Comprehensive Assessment System, Children Study Their World – a free curriculum for four-year-olds, and collaboration with other Divisions to support Prekindergarten through age 8.[13]

- The Collaboration and Program Improvement Branch manages the state's early childhood initiatives and administers contracts and grants including the Judy Centers, the Head Start Collaboration Project, the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project, the Family Support Centers, State and Local Advisory Councils, and family engagement initiatives.[14]

In addition, the Division connects with the Division of Curriculum, Instructional Improvement, and Professional Learning, the Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Information Technology, the Office of Research, and the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services for supporting children ages 0–8 with disabilities.

Maryland's consolidated governance system concentrates authority for many B-3 programs and services within one division. The potential benefits of this governance system are consistent policies and priorities, improved communication, greater efficiency, and streamlined consideration of and actions on related issues.[15]

New Jersey: A Coordinated Early Childhood Governance System

In New Jersey, most programs and services related to young children and families are administered by four different departments: the Department of Education (state funded preschool, Preschool Special Education, Title I, Homeless and Migrant teacher credential and licensing), Department of Human Services (child care subsidy, First Steps Infant/Toddler Initiative, family worker outreach), Department of Children & Families (child care licensing, Child Protection and Permanency, Family and Community Permanency, Family and Community Partnerships, home visiting, Family Success Centers), and the Department of Health (IDEA Part C-Early Intervention, home visiting program). Since 2011, these departments have worked collaboratively to better connect and align programs and services.

New Jersey's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant prompted the state to establish a coordinated and more cohesive governance structure. For the past five years, three bodies–the Early Learning Commission (ELC), the New Jersey Council for Young Children (Council), and the Inter-Department Planning Group (IPG)–have worked collaboratively to leverage and coordinate the standards, programs, and services that support young children and their families.[16] The ELC is composed of the Commissioners of the four departments and the Chair of the Council. The ELC makes final funding and policy decisions based on recommendations and other input from the IPG and the Council. The 24 members of the Council represent all state agencies that oversee programs for families and children from infancy to age eight; and representatives from Head Start, advocacy groups, schools, universities, and foundations. The Council's role is to make recommendations to the Commission and to the IPG. The IPG originally consisted of senior administrators of the four departments mentioned above. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Strategic Planning and Outreach) has now joined the IPG. The IPG meets monthly to coordinate work across departments, review the feasibility of recommendations made, and plan how to implement recommendations. The IPG seeks to integrate early childhood programs and services offered across state agencies.

According to Tonya Coston, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Early Childhood, New Jersey has several accomplishments in the B-3 space such as: creation of Grow NJ Kids, the state's quality rating and improvement system; Central Intake hubs that provide a single point of entry for families to access a wide array of services; a P-3 Principals series; a K-3 self-assessment system that is comparable to the approach used in Pre-K; and first through third grade guidelines for best practice. New Jersey has made remarkable progress in implementing a high-quality early childhood care and education system and coordinated governance system focused on children from infancy to age five and their families. Ms. Coston said there is still much work to create a coherent early childhood system but restructuring state governance using a coordinated model has had positive impacts. Cary Booker, the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Early Childhood Education at the NJ Department of Education, stated that "much of our success in the birth to eight space can be linked to collaboration across state agencies and, to deepen our impact, it will be necessary to continue working closely together to support our young children and their families."

Illinois: A Different Approach to Coordinated Governance

Illinois' early childhood governance system also comes under the category of "coordinated governance" but it differs from New Jersey in some ways since Illinois has a Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD). GOECD was created by executive order to "lead the state's initiatives to create an integrated system of quality, early learning, and development programs to help give all Illinois children a strong educational foundation before they begin kindergarten."[17] GOECD manages the Early Learning Council (ELC), oversees ExceleRate Illinois (the state's quality rating and improvement system), and is responsible for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. In addition to GOECD, key early childhood programs and services are overseen by three different state departments. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) administers the state B-5 Early Childhood Block Grant programs and IDEA Part B 619 services. The Department of Human Services oversees childcare subsidy, IDEA Part C, home visiting, and the Head Start State Collaboration Office. Childcare licensing is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Children and Family Services.

The ELC is an advisory body made up of public-private partnerships created to strengthen, coordinate, and expand programs and services for children, birth to five, throughout Illinois. The ELC structure includes the Executive Committee and four committees (with subcommittees). The Executive Committee is comprised of 21 early childhood leaders (across state agencies and private partners) charged to "...advances a comprehensive vision for early childhood systems, including quality, access, and integration and alignment. and...connects and leverages priorities of other bodies whose focus includes early childhood and education (ex. P-20 Council, Cabinet for Children and Youth)."[18]

Illinois' early childhood programs and services are coordinated by GOECD in collaboration with the ELC, and the Interagency Team (IAT) (led by GOECD) comprised of representatives from the state agencies mentioned above. Illinois RTT-ELC grant enhanced the capacity of GOECD and strengthen the IAT so that they could work to address cross-system issues. Each of these three entities has specific roles. The GOECD and ELC co-create a comprehensive vision for early childhood systems and provide leadership on cross-agency issues. The ELC brings the public's voice and a cross-sector perspective to inform decisions the GOECD and IAT make. The IAT's role is to align approaches across agencies, consider recommendations from the ELC, and operationalize cross-agency initiatives.

Illinois has several accomplishments in the area of B-3 alignment such as the ELC Executive Committee connection with other B-3 advisory bodies and the committees and subcommittees focusing on B-3 strategies. For example, the Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee reviewed kindergarten transition practices and submitted a report of recommendations for policy levers[19] some of which PDG B-5 funds are being utilized to pilot. The Birth Through Third Grade (B-3) Continuity Project that defined a framework to navigate through the areas that comprise an aligned B-3 continuum will continue in ISBE and at the local level. Nonetheless, Illinois' coordinated governance system focuses on children from infancy to age five and their families.

Considerations for Implementing State-Level B-3 Reform

As you contemplate engaging in B-3 reform, you may ask, Where to start? What's the best path to take? There are several opinions as to where to start, and there is no one perfect answer that will suit all states. Some guidance on likely first steps can be taken from a recent Education Commission of the States (ECS) paper describing a B-3 Policy Academy for B-3 education teams from Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Mississippi held in December of 2018.[20] The sequential steps state teams took were to:

1. Convene a diverse group of policymakers and stakeholders
2. Identify concerns and their root causes
3. Establish a shared vision related to the B-3 continuum and identify goals
4. Form policy solutions to address the concerns and their root causes
5. Build broad consensus among team members

Prior to convening a working group or team, it's suggested that an inventory of early childhood programs and services across state agencies, identifying who is doing what, should be completed. This will help ensure the B-3 working group represents all key stakeholders and policymakers.

Conclusion

An aligned B-3 system contributes to more consistent, coherent, and improved programs and services for children and families. A B-3 approach builds bridges across programs resulting in more successful transitions for children and families. There is research indicating that an aligned B-3 system reduces "fadeout" of the gains made in quality preschool, especially for vulnerable populations of children.

There are many state-level B-3 strategies of which a few were discussed here using PDG state examples. These include aligning state governance systems; aligning learning standards, practices and assessments; supporting B-3 leadership development; and offering joint professional development. Although not discussed here, providing state funding for local B-3 initiatives is another way states have promoted and supported a B-3 approach.

Helpful B-3 Early Childhood System Resources

The table presented below lists resources and research related to state-level strategies for supporting the B-3 continuum.

Resource	Why is it helpful?	Where to find it
Governance in Early Childhood Education **Education Commission of the States**	This policy report presents the rationale for an aligned B-3 early childhood governance system across multiple state agencies. It examines the types of state agency organization and provides state examples of each. It identifies challenges and questions regarding early childhood governance that state leaders should consider.	https://www.ecs.org/governance-in-early-childhood-education/
Research Base for a Birth through Age 8 State Policy Framework **Alliance for Early Success & Child Trends**	This B-Age 8 framework is a tool that can inform decision-making and guide state policy choices. One section of the document presents the research base for state policy areas that are critical to children's development and well-being. The areas are health, family support, and learning. The other section details standards, assessment practices and accountability systems. Policy options are described.	https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2013-42AllianceBirthto81.pdf
Building State P-3 Systems: Learning from Leading States **Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes**	This report examines strategies three states – Massachusetts, Oregon, Pennsylvania – used to further a P-3 (i.e., 0-5 and K-3) approach. The author identifies key elements and themes of the states' P-3 efforts. Recommendations for states seeking to launch or enhance their P-3 efforts are provided.	http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ceelo_pdg_P3systems_AligningEarlyEducFINAL.pdf
A Different Way of Doing Business: Examples of Pre-K to Third Grade Alignment in Practice **Center for American Progress**	This report is the result of a series of interviews the authors conducted. The report first presents the rationale for aligning Pre-K to third grade. It then presents state and local examples to illustrate successful strategies and initiatives that have been implemented.	https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/13050005/Pre-3Alignment1.pdf
Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Pre-K-3rd Grade Approaches **Kristie Kauerz & Julia Coffman**	This Framework is a tool to support the development of comprehensive Pre-K-3rd grade efforts. It is intended to be used for self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement at the community level. This Framework is widely used in B-3 reform efforts.	https://sehd.ucdenver.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd_Framework_Legal%20paper.pdf
Strengthening the Early Childhood Education Continuum **Education Commission of the States**	This report summarizes the P-3 policy efforts of the five states that sent teams to a Policy Academy hosted by the Education Commission of the states. The P-3 policy areas chosen represent a wide range from third grade reading proficiency, governance, and workforce development. Brief discussions of the policy areas are included in this report as well as a brief P-3 planning "guide."	https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Strengthening-the-Early-Childhood-Education-Continuum.pdf
Birth to Grade 3 Indicator Framework: Opportunities to Integrate Early Childhood in ESSA Toolkit **Council of Chief State Officers**	One feature of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the opportunity it provides states to align early learning from birth through third grade (B-3). This toolkit provides states with a framework and research base for B-3 alignment. It includes actionable steps for states to take to achieve a more aligned B-3 system and to fully integrate 0-5 into their K-12 accountability and school improvement systems.	https://ccsso.org/resource-library/birth-grade-3-indicator-framework-opportunities-integrate-early-childhood-essa

Endnotes

[1] Kelly, T., Evans, A., & Atchison, B., *Strengthening the Early Childhood Continuum* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2019), https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Strengthening-the-Early-Childhood-Education-Continuum.pdf

[2] "Pre-K" is used in this brief to represent programs and services for infants through preschoolers (i.e., children 0-5 years of age).

[3] Atchison, B. & Diffey, L, *Governance in Early Childhood Education* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2018), https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Governance-in-Early-Childhood-Education.pdf

[4] National Research Council, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.17226/19401

[5] Tout, K., Halle, T., Daily, S., Albertson-Junkans, L., & Moodie, S., *The Research Base for a Birth through Age 8 State Policy Framework* (Alliance for Early Success and Child Trends, 2013), https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2013-42AllianceBirthto81.pdf

[6] Jacobson, D., *Building State P–3 Systems: Learning from Leading States.* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, 2016). http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ceelo_pdg_P3systems_AligningEarlyEducFINAL.pdf

[7] Ibid. Atchison, B. & Diffey, L., *Governance in Early Childhood Education.*

[8] Ibid. Atchison, B. & Diffey, L., *Governance in Early Childhood Education.*

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