MEETING NOTES		
Date: September 25, 2019 **Start:** 10:08am **Adjourn:** 3:10pm	**L2Q Advisory Team Meeting**	**Place:** DCF 555 S Kansas Ave Topeka, KS

Present: Karen Beckerman, Rachel Anno, Nichelle Adams, Meg Roggero, Christi Smith, Jackie Counts, Kelly Cain-Swart, Amy Meek, Patty Peschel, Nis Wilbur, Kelli Roehr, Lisa Jeanneret, Jevan Bremby, Isabel Johnson, Jenny Welch Buller, Lindsay Sayre

Absent: Lori Steelman, Tiffani Blevins, Corinne Carr, Heather Staab, Hope Adame, Lori Steelman, Sandra Kimmons, Dawn Flores, Leadell Ediger, Deb Crowl, Lisa Chaney, Kristen Heuer

TOPIC	DISCUSSION
Welcome and Overview	*Rachel Anno* kicked us off with a welcome and overview of the agenda.
Introductions	*Rachel* introduced Meg Roggero (new to DCF program staff) and Lindsay Sayre (new to KU CPPR).

Pilot Update and Highlights	**PDG – *Karen Beckerman* gave an update on the Preschool Development Grant.**
	• Governor's Symposium on Early Childhood is coming up on October 7.
	   o There will be ways to attend virtually.
	   o There are parent slots still available. Lindsay will send information regarding these slots to Advisory Group members to share.
	• The PDG Needs Assessment is nearing completion and the Strategic Plan is in development.
	• Please check out the website and sign up for the weekly updates.
	• Renewal grant RFP has been released and references QRIS throughout.
	   o The group will look carefully at how and where L2Q can partner in the PDG work under this new RFP. Everyone is invited to share ideas for integrating L2Q and PDG.
	
	DCF – *Rachel* gave an update regarding the overall L2Q Pilot status.
	• The Family Partnerships link is complete.
	• The Program Leadership quality indicators revision process is almost complete.
	   o The All-Partner Team has worked to revise the indicators to reduce duplications, simplify language, and improve the overall user experience.

- o The indicators are currently being taken to provider focus groups. The final draft revisions will incorporate focus group feedback, and be presented to the Advisory Group meeting in December.
- L2Q Program Staff held an all-day meeting "summit" earlier this month (see agenda item below) to begin planning the transition between pilot and full implementation. The team wants to ensure no momentum or interest is lost after the pilot ends.

Child Care Aware – *Christi Smith*

Learning communities –
- These partnerships have significant impact
  - o opportunities for learning
  - o local resource sharing
  - o networking opportunities
  - o spirit of excellence
- Providers are strong leaders; peer groups are pushing each other
- Are we successful in inspiring providers to pursue quality improvement? Yes!

Family Partnerships – insights:
- Uniqueness of each program
- Learning from the pilot providers
- Providers learning from each other

NAP SACC
- The self-assessment has been used in Kansas for 10 years and is now available as a user-friendly online tool. It is costly, but funding partnerships are being sought.
- The assessment is now divided into several components in the online version, which allows providers to tailor their self-assessments to their program needs. The system also enables providers to select goals, set action plans, and track their progress.

Quality Improvement Plans
- Isabel asked, how well did this tool work, and is there room for further development of this tool?
  - o Providers found it narrow and busy, difficult to use
  - o Modifications have been made, seems to be improved
  - o Will continue to look at this during implementation planning

	Smartsheet
	• Challenges included a learning curve, especially related to providers' comfort with technology.
	• Positives included the flexibility and effectiveness of the tool, convenience of access to trainings and other pilot requirements and resources, and the provider experience has improved over the course of the pilot.
	• There are opportunities for additional technical assistance benefit of Learning Communities.
	
	Rachel reported out on the L2Q Process Evaluation on behalf of LTI at Greenbush:
	• The first year evaluation has been completed, showing providers feel positively toward L2Q, the Community Consultants and Learning Communities are highly-valued by providers, and providers had difficulty with some evidence and requested simplification.
	• An evaluation of the BAS/PAS pre-assessments was completed revealing providers overall scored below the national average. A post-assessment will be conducted at end of pilot.
	• The Strengthening Families self-assessment evaluation has been completed.
	• Current and upcoming evaluations include:
	   ○ The Family Partnerships End-of-Link survey. LTI is currently analyzing the data.
	   ○ The NAP SACC pre-assessment will be conducted soon with a post-assessment occurring in April.

Pilot Implementation Planning Update - CPPR	**Implementation Planning Summit** Management hosted an all-day implementation planning meeting on September 9, 2019. *Jenny Welch Buller* provided a brief overview of the purpose and activities of the day. *Isabel Johnson* walked us through the guiding questions and tools used in this process (also in handouts): **L2Q vision and mission** - *Isabel* reviewed the vision and mission and our intentions to: • Create statewide network of both resources and supports. • Personalize the definition of quality for Kansas. • Chose recognition rather than ratings – time has shown that this choice was wise.

Guiding principles (see handouts) - *Isabel* reviewed the guiding principles developed by DCF. Discussion followed:

- We wanted to create system where the indicators meant something – were child-centered, family-centered, supportive of providers
- *Jackie Counts* noted that the PDG renewal RFP puts priority on parent choice and voice, and these guiding principles really aligned with that!
- Moving from a top-down approach to a listening approach.
- Emphasizing recognition over ratings brings up good questions and conversations with other states and with other early childhood professionals in our state.
- Parental choice also requires informing and educating parents.
- L2Q is not for identifying quality and non-quality programs – rather, we want to help EVERY program improve quality by starting right where they are.

Big picture questions - *Isabel* reviewed the big picture questions that we began to address:

- Are we headed in the right direction?
- Have we done what we set out to do?
- What do we want the next stages of L2Q to look like?

Categorizing activity - *Isabel* walked us through the L2Q system components/categories and described the importance of each.

> **Categories:**
> Recruitment
> Provider Enrollment
> Provider Engagement
> Parent/Community Engagement
> Learning Communities & Technical Assistance
> Portfolio Review
> System Infrastructure
> Marketing & Communications
> Accountability

- In some categories, we had already learned a lot from the pilot. We spent time reviewing what worked, what did not work, and what we want them look like in the next phase.
- In some categories, we haven't yet activated. For instance, at the planning summit, we worked to envision and understand the goal for community/parent engagement, marketing and communications,

etc.
- System infrastructure will include practical elements and will also involve looking out and seeing how the QRIS system will work together with other early childhood agencies and systems in Kansas.
- Accountability – we need a system in place, so we know if we're hitting the mark or if changes need to be made

Guiding questions (see handouts) – *Isabel* introduced and explained the purpose of the guiding questions:

- These are the questions we are considering as we look at each component.
- Equity added – recent statements on equity (NAEYC) led to understanding that if we don't single out the pursuit of equity, progress toward an equitable system cannot be guaranteed
- What role do we want L2Q to play; what role is L2Q best suited to play; what does it mean to increase quality; how is L2Q best able to affect change in this area
- Worked hard to harness the passion and energy of the group into practical steps for achieving these goals

Prioritizing activity walk-through - *Jenny* explained the activity we went through at the meeting and invited the group to engage with the ideas we discussed and provide feedback/questions.

Provider Enrollment
- *Patty Peschel* asked whether enrollment into L2Q would be voluntary or mandatory for providers as it will impact how and why we make decisions moving forward. *Karen* shared the idea has generally been that participation would be voluntary.
    - *Kelli Roehr* noted that even if L2Q is made voluntary, Head Start providers would be required by their own standards to participate in their state's QRIS if it is fully implemented state-wide.
    - The group clarified that Phase 2, or the Transition Phase, will likely be a three years and will be an opportunity to try out some processes that we haven't had a chance to try yet (i.e. appeals process, communications, etc.) and determine what direction we do want to go for full implementation.
- *Patty* said the pilot evaluation looks at the pilot process, but she asked if we have evaluated the effect of the pilot on quality?
    - *Isabel* noted that the (research) literature and the examples of other states provide some confidence in the indicators and to achieve credibility in an evaluation of whether our system improves quality we would need to invite an outside group to conduct the evaluation. She also

	shared that continuous quality improvement means the impact can shift based on changes made during the process.
	• *Patty's* question led to a discussion of L2Q supporting providers to start wherever they are and strive for improvement.
	    o It is a quality improvement system, not a quality assurance system.
	    o Analysis of the Quality Improvement Plans was offered as a way to measure improvement.
	    o We should support providers in improving quality in a non-prescriptive, personalized, equitable way.
	
	Quality Statement - At the Implementation Planning Summit, the group decided that it would be useful to develop a definition of quality - "what does L2Q mean when we say quality"?
	
	Due to the interest in discussing quality today, *Jenny* suggested we move the quality statement discussion earlier in the agenda.
	
	Kelli mentioned that the vision and mission statements seem to emphasize families, but these definitions do not reference families.

Statement on Quality	After lunch, *Jevan* led a discussion surrounding the definition of quality drafted during the September 9 implementation planning summit. The definition was created to be a concise statement that most people would understand, could stand behind, and was general enough to indicate what quality is, while not being so specific that it would create problems for the L2Q system. General questions regarding the definition included: • Should it include a reference to families? • Is it too basic or general? • Is it intended to be used as the standard to aspire to? • Is it helpful, in its current form, to share with families? • Does it create confusion or questions about the purpose or intent of L2Q? • Should this statement replace the vision of L2Q? Should it be embedded within the vision? The group agreed: • Defining quality is difficult, and this definition is only a beginning step.

- It may be helpful to review other early childhood agencies' definitions.
- Marketing/messaging around this definition will be critical and will need to be carefully crafted, if it is to be used outside this planning group.
- As we encourage providers to customize their L2Q experience according to their unique programs, this definition could serve as an anchor, something that reminds them the overall goal—why they are participating in the program.
- The definition should reflect the priorities and the spirit of L2Q right now and should continue to be updated and improved upon as the program grows and changes.
- There are some desired elements in child care (i.e. increased numbers) that do NOT specifically point to quality.

We discussed the need for outward **messaging**, or a marketing and communications plan.
- *Patty* noted the vision and mission seems to have changed from the early pre-pilot workgroups. She shared the primary goal of L2Q was originally to empower families to make informed choices, but it seems the focus shifted later to the creation of a sustainable system that supports providers. The group discussed whether empowering families should be centered moving forward.
- *Jevan* mentioned that an organization's vision should be concise enough to fit on a bumper sticker.
- *Isabel* pointed to the Detroit Plan's use of the terms "imperatives" and "strategies" to highlight the priorities and mandates of our project—a distinction like this could be useful in the context of visioning for L2Q.
- The group discussed the importance of outreach, education, and communication when attempting to empowering families.
- Making choices about messaging to parents should be preceded by efforts to understand parent voice (see below).
- Jevan shared there may be feedback from community members regarding the Links to Quality branding. Specifically, he noted the imagery of links can bring to mind chains, the heteronormative family unit is not inclusive, and the use of all able-bodied people.
  - Add tag line – bumper sticker vision?

We discussed **parent voice** as a vital piece informing our purpose and planning for implementation
- This was discussed at the Implementation Planning Summit and identified as a L2Q phase two priority.
- Parent voice could be a strong piece for CQI and evaluation moving forward.
  - *Nikki Adams* noted that the PDG needs assessment will be providing child care stories data

with DCF for other projects, so that data could be leveraged as well. She noted the timing is good with PDG renewal and Governor's Symposium coming up in the near future (November).
- o How can we connect with PDG to coordinate getting the data we need?
- *Kelly Cain-Swart* provided Community Consultant perspective:
  - o Some learning communities could be rich sources of parent feedback, while others would be more difficult.
  - o Pursuing parent voice via L2Q participant providers is an option
  - o Survey to families? Parent evaluation; did they see changes in their provider over the course of the pilot; what do they want to see
- *Nikki* shared that DCF is in the process of seeking this type of parent feedback for other projects – "why did you choose your provider," etc.

We discussed the challenge of creating a **recognition (vs. rating)** system that is easy to understand.
- Specifically, the group discussed how much information should be made public regarding provider participation. Some of the questions raised were:
  - o How long it takes them to earn a link?
  - o What is involved in earning a link?
  - o Whether they tried and "failed" to earn a link?
  - o Licensing violations?
  - o These things may empower families, but would they detract from recognition?
- Perhaps we are aiming for a recognition system with an element of rating? *Nis Wilbur* shared that PAT badges providers based on the percentage of indicators met. *Christi* noted that CACFP does something similar.
- A recognition system may be more difficult to understand than a rating system, but adds value by indicating a provider's commitment, intentions, growth mindset
- Informing and educating parents and the community will require a large effort

We discussed the **purpose** of L2Q.
- The group discussed whether the creation of a purpose statement would be helpful in guiding planning efforts.
- *Nikki* noted that the PDG needs assessment data makes it clear that families aren't getting their basic needs met. If they can't find childcare that is available and affordable, they won't be worried about quality. While we want to increase quality, and educate and empower families, we must also be striving to increase access and availability, including:

- o Helping unlicensed providers become licensed
- o Bringing more providers into the subsidy program to increase affordability
- o Helping existing providers improve sustainability
- *Nikki* noted that CCDF funds also require that we increase access to quality child care.

The discussion returned to the **system categories/components:**
- We discussed mentorship:
  - o Should mentorships be specific to Link or Topic Areas (i.e. Program Leadership, Family Partnerships, etc.) or at the program-level as a whole?
- Recruitment:
  - o How do we ensure there are multiple, equitable pathways into the system and meet programs where they are?
- Learning Communities:
  - o Currently Learning Community participation is both mandatory and incentivized, but may not continue to be after the pilot.
  - o Participation in a Learning Community can be considered a type of professional development, but it may not be a powerful incentive to have this count toward KDHE in-service or clock hours.

We discussed the development of additional Links.
Highlights included:
- Should some Links be made mandatory (or foundational)?
- Mentorship Link for programs that support programs new to L2Q.
- Acknowledge what providers are doing with other agencies so programs avoid having to duplicate effort and L2Q avoids contradicting other agency standards (i.e. breastfeeding).
- Allowing programs to "test out" of Link requirements based on a score on related assessments.
- Creating a Pre-Link designation for newly licensed and not yet licensed programs, which would then connect them with the peer groups to support them as they work to become eligible for L2Q enrollment.
  - o The group discussed whether L2Q Links were awarded to the program or the provider. DCF and CCA shared the system has been awarding Links to programs, not providers. The group discussed the implications of this decision. Specifically, professional development and credentials are then tricky to incorporate into Link requirements and providers who move to another part of the state cannot take L2Q Links with them.

The group briefly discussed whether QRIS could integrate with a future Professional Development Information

	System (PDIS) in Kansas. Kansas does not yet have a fully developed PDIS, however the hypothetical future PDIS could hypothetically replace Smartsheet and serve as a one-stop shop for both providers and families.
Next Steps	The team will explore ways to leverage existing data sources (PDG, CLAS, etc.) to inform next phase priority decisions. The group will explore things to request on the PDG renewal. Possibilities offered in the meeting included asking for support in: • Soliciting parent voice/feedback • Developing a train-the-trainer or nested mentorship TA model • Communications and marketing to maintain interest, momentum, and engagement during the transition phase • Developing digital infrastructure, whether expanding Smartsheet or building a PDIS to include portfolio review access • Developing Smartsheet trainings
Additional Discussion	• Rachel invited all participants to send ideas or feedback on categories and priorities to her via email. • We plan to hold another Advisory Group meeting in December.
Next Meeting: December 2019	**Minutes taken by:** Lindsay Sayre