Early Childhood Education (ECE) Business Collaboratory

Explore collaborative innovations to build stronger ECE businesses in your state
Are you looking to create or expand your state’s plan for using business approaches to increase access to quality early care and education? Would you like to learn more about successful initiatives to support child care businesses in your QRIS system? Are you concerned about the number of early care and education providers closing their businesses in your state? Is Minnesota on your bucket list of states to visit?

Consider applying to participate in the ECE Business Collaboratory!
October 3 & 4, 2017 | Minneapolis

Why Now?
The CCDBG Reauthorization Act of 2014 includes a provision that requires states to develop a plan to address the business needs of child care and early education businesses. Implementation of the CCDF Final Rule creates an opportunity for states to reassess initiatives to support child care businesses, examine opportunities for alignment and innovation, and develop strategies to improve the sustainability of child care businesses. Many of states have been making significant investments in quality care and the ECE workforce; however, if child care businesses cannot remain financially viable, these investments are wasted.

By taking a comprehensive approach, First Children’s Finance believes states can impact the sustainability of child care businesses and improve accessibility to high quality care for low income children. First Children’s Finance is hosting the ECE Business Collaboratory, a unique opportunity to consider actions that are promising practices for achieving long term economic sustainability for child care providers and the families they serve. First Children’s Finance is inviting states to apply as a team to participate in the ECE Business Collaboratory.

What the Heck is the ECE Business Collaboratory?
A combination of “collaboration” and “laboratory,” the ECE Business Collaboratory is an open, creative process where participants explore collaborative innovations that support child care and early education businesses. Participants will hear from state and national leaders about initiatives designed to support the businesses who are delivering early care and education. You’ll have a chance to ask questions, interact with experts, and discuss new ideas with your state team. The ECE Business Collaboratory encourages conversation, innovation and big thinking. Your suitcase packing list should include extra energy and an open mind. Lab coats are optional.

Who Should Attend?
The ECE Business Collaboratory provides an opportunity for small teams of key state leaders to learn together and create a plan to embed business supports within the early childhood systems in a state. To this end, First Children’s Finance recommends you send a team of 3-5 people, which could include senior level state department representatives, state child care administrators, QRIS system administrators, legislative representatives, or state-wide organizational partners. Pick big thinkers, change agents and people who can make things happen.

We strongly encourage you to coordinate your team to avoid multiple applications from one state. Space is limited and preference will be given to teams that include senior-level decision-makers.

Why Should You Participate?

a. The fall colors in Minnesota are amazing during October.
b. Your local cuisine does not include hot dish.

c. You are interested in alignment of resources and initiatives to support the performance of child care businesses in order to fund involvement in QRIS, workforce compensation and early learning environments.

d. All of the above.

Participants can expect to participate in engaging conversations, meet industry thought leaders and learn more about ECE system innovations taking place across the country. State teams will draft a plan to address child care business supports and will receive on-site planning assistance during the event. Additionally, First Children’s Finance will provide technical assistance and implementation support for a period of 6 months. State teams will also be provided with opportunities to connect with colleagues during cross-state webinars in order to aid planning and implementation or alignment of initiatives.

Lastly, participating in a Collaboratory just sounds cool. You’ll be the envy of all your colleagues when you begin your sentences with, “Well, while I was at the ECE Business Collaboratory…”

What Will State Teams Learn at the ECE Business Collaboratory?
At the ECE Business Collaboratory, participants will hear from national and state thought leaders, share their experience and current strategies, and discuss the following topics:

- Sustainable System Financing Strategies
- Strategic Cost Modeling for Systems, Communities and Individual Businesses
- Public – Private Partnerships
- Linking High Quality Care to Economic Development
- Community Engagement to Drive Solutions for Child Care
- Business Development Services that Impact Sustainability
- Facility Initiatives, including Bonding, Credit Enhancement, Lending, Programs to Increase Quality of Facilities
- Creating Access to Capital to ECE Business Owners

First Children’s Finance specializes in working on the business side of early care and education at the system level, the community level and the individual business level. We’ll do our best to represent all three levels during the ECE Business Collaboratory. We promise we’ll keep it interesting, inspiring and fun!

How To Apply
Complete and email the application form no later than 11:59 CST on July 31, 2017. Completed applications may be emailed to HeidiHB@firstchildrensfinance.org. First Children’s Finance will reimburse travel and hotel expenses for up to three team members. States are encouraged to send up to two additional participants at state/organization/individual expense (up to a total of five team members per state). Space is limited for this event and we encourage you to apply as soon as possible. After the application deadline, First Children’s Finance will select states to participate and will notify applicants. If selected, First Children’s Finance will contact you to provide additional registration, hotel and logistics information. Participants must be approved by First Children’s Finance before making travel arrangements. For more information, contact Heidi Hagel Braid, Director of National Programs, at HeidiHB@firstchildrensfinance.org or 612-279-6504.

Smart people. Big thinking. Innovative ideas.
A pragmatic plan to support ECE businesses in your state. And maybe – just maybe – a Prince tribute sing-along. Apply by July 31, 2017!