Early Learning Services (ELS) Open Office Hours #1 Fall 2020: **Tour of MDE 2020-21 Early Learning Guidance and Strategies for Family Outreach and Enrollment**

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August 19, 2020

Our Goal for Today:
Layer the Cheese Until we Get Rid of the Holes

Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

We Value Your Commitment!

1. Prioritize equity.
2. Start from within.
3. Measure what matters.
4. Go local.
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. Improve conditions for learning.
10. Give students options.

Open Office Hour Session Description

- Early Learning staff will provide a live tour highlighting information and resources that are updated regularly on the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) COVID-19 Updates webpage with the most current information from the governor's office and state agencies.
- Each early learning team will highlight key resources and answers to frequently asked questions to better aid you in your planning and decision-making for the upcoming school year.
- We will also provide and collect your strategies for family outreach, enrollment, and transition activities.

Virtual Session Reminders

- Make sure that your audio is muted.
- Use the “chat” function to send comments/questions throughout the presentation.
    - Select the “Host and Panelists” so that we can be most responsive to your questions.
- Please place resource links that are pertinent to the discussion in the chat box so that we can share the information after the session ends.
- Notes and the slides from the Open Office Hour session will be shared with participants.
- This session will be recorded and available upon request.

Tour of Guidance and Resources

2020-21 Key Guidance Resources to Check Frequently

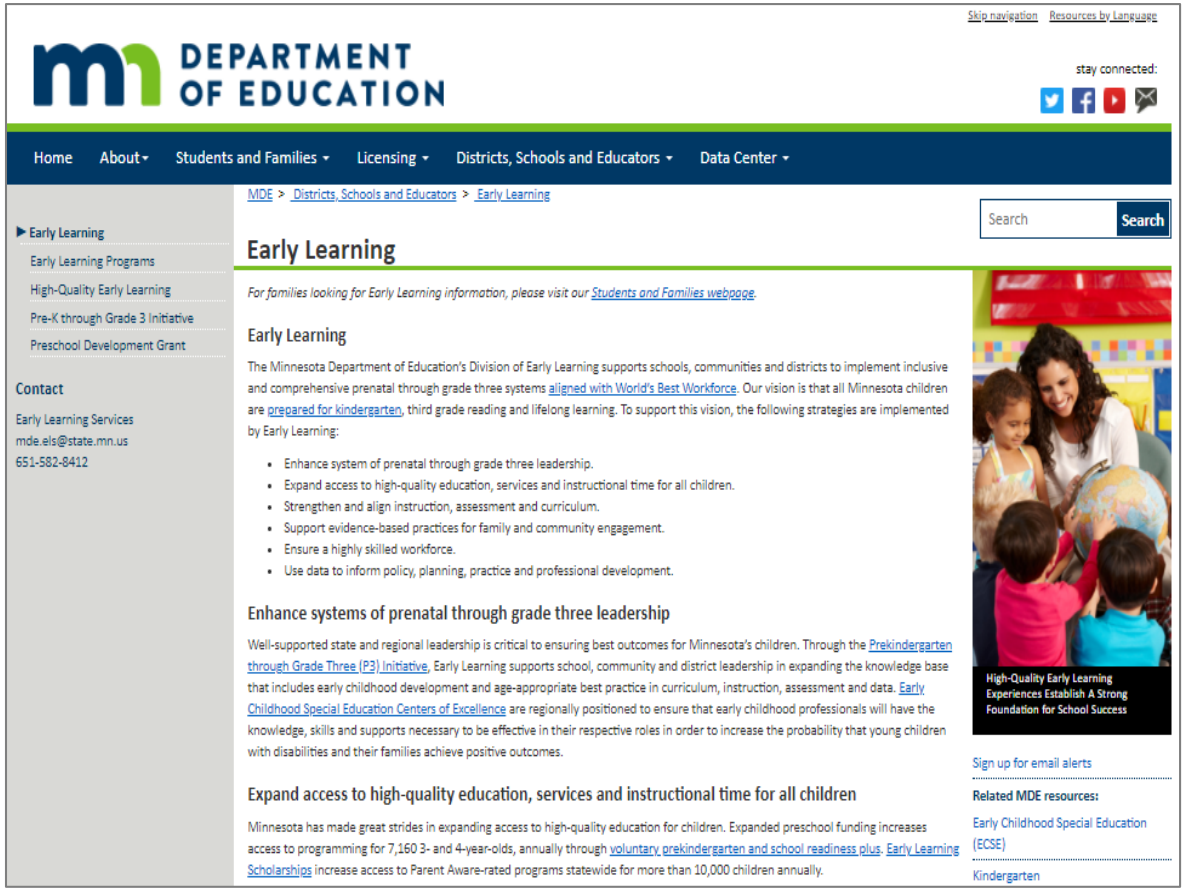
Check these key resources as they are updated frequently:

1. Governor's Executive Order 20-82
2. Safe Learning Plans for the 2020-21 School Year
3. MDE's 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Schools
4. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Schools and Child Care: COVID-19

Demonstration of the MDE COVID-19 and ELS Webpage(s)

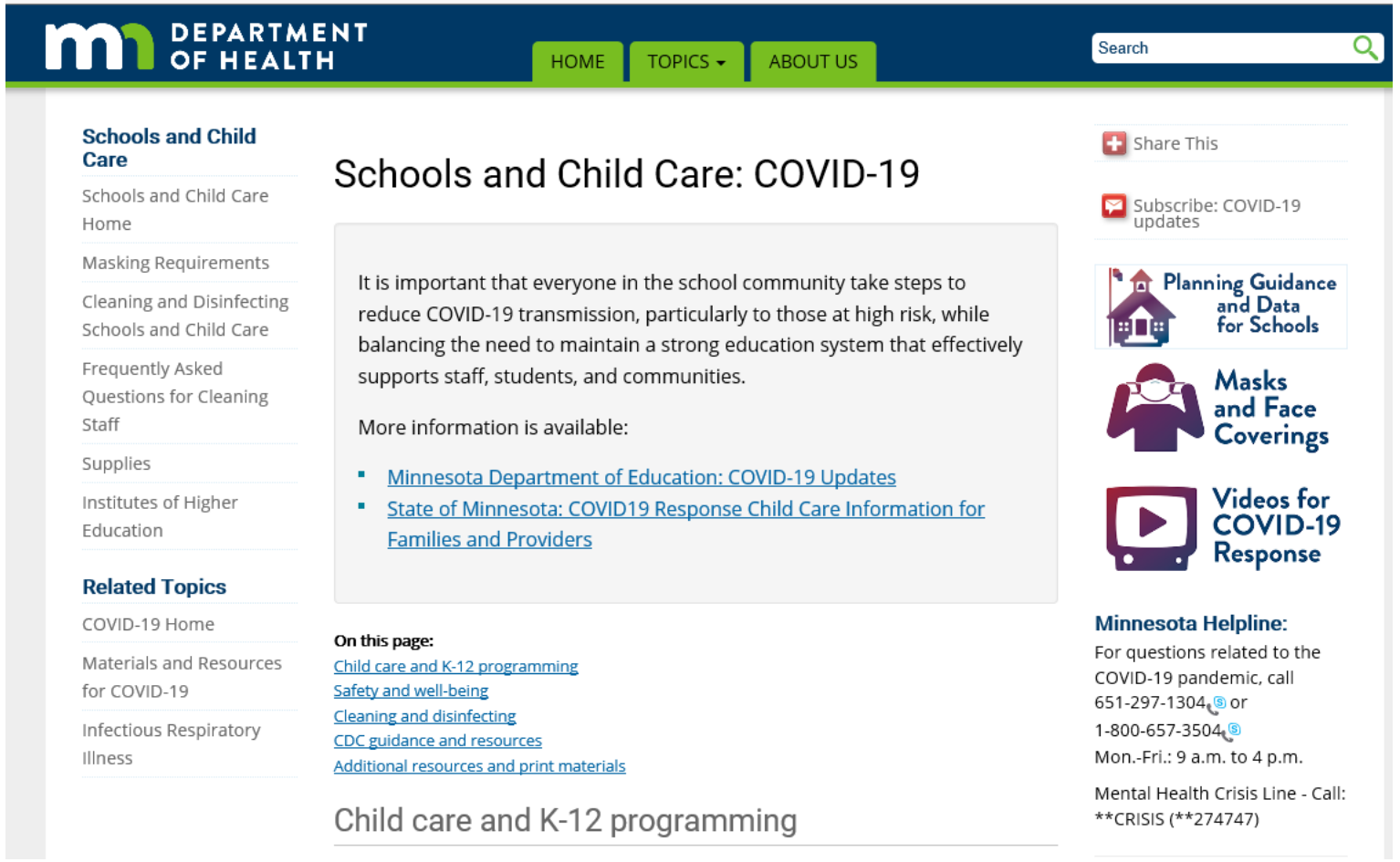
MDE COVID-19 Updates Webpage

MDE Early Learning Services (ELS) Homepage



Demonstration of the MDH Schools and COVID-19 webpage(s)

[MDH Schools and Child Care: COVID-19 webpage]



Changes and Support

COVID-19 is a novel virus and new information is continually being learned, thus guidance continues to evolve and sometimes change. We are learning together.

The Centers for Disease Control has awarded MDE/MDH a grant “1801” to help with professional development for districts. Live and posted training modules will be available this fall including:

- Transmission, prevention, health checks and exclusion, PPE.
- Cleaning, sanitizing, promoting healthy hygiene practices, chronic health conditions, risk factors, isolating and transporting sick individuals.

Take care of yourself and your team! Be gentle. Be nimble.

Prevention Guidance

COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth and Student Programs

- Social distancing
- Promote safe environment
- Maintain safe program spaces
- Require face coverings
- Strategize meal times
- Minimize mixing
- Encourage and reinforce social norms and health etiquette

Layers of Prevention: Details

MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools

- All scenarios or models (1: In-person; 2: Hybrid; 3: Distance)
- Required and Recommended
- Organize your program delivery to minimize exposures, for example:
  - Stagger arrival times
  - Clearly identify entrance and a different exit door if possible
  - Maintain prevention measures even during staff breaks

Monitoring and Excluding for Illness

MDH 2021 Planning Guide for Schools

- Regular screening for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout school day can help quickly identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure.
- Staff or students who develop symptoms must notify school health services or another point of contact.
- Each building will have a COVID-19 program coordinator.
- Page 13 Conduct symptom screening where feasible. What is your district plan for symptom screening? Communicate expectations and processes to staff, students and families. CDC Examples of screening methods

Face Coverings

MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools

- Staff face coverings.
- Pre-kindergartners over age 2 may wear face coverings if they can do so in compliance with CDC guidelines (without frequently touching and removing the covering).
- Wearing-masks-yes-even-most-kids-can-do-it
- Note cloth face masks offer higher degree of protection than face shields.
- Face shields – read details in this section to understand when it is ok to use.

Social (Physical) Distancing

- Registration or check in may be done in the parking lot or by phone.
- Plan visit to provide components by six foot distance whenever possible.
- Mark six foot areas on floor.
- Clearly identify the entrance point and if possible provide a way for exit to be a separate door to avoid congestion.
- Clearly mark traffic flow.
- MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools

Hand Hygiene

- Provide a way for staff and children to wash hands often for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol if this is not possible.
- Thoroughly washing hands with soap and water is more effective than frequent use of hand sanitizer.
- For a child, give a small pea size amount of hand sanitizer, need to supervise.

MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Staff: wear face covering and gloves if available.
- Wash hands before/after or use hand sanitizer.
- Have supplies available to clean stations between appointments. Read labels for amount of time to leave disinfectant on surfaces. See MDH 20-21 Planning Guide for Schools.
- Electronics are high touch, clean following manufacturers instructions, if no guidance use alcohol-based wipe or spray with at least 70 percent alcohol. Let dry thoroughly.
- Paper based materials do not require specific cleaning or disinfecting.
- Non-porous materials with plastic covers or coatings: wipe with disinfectant wipe.
- Materials that can’t be cleaned may be set aside for up to 24 hours.

Resources for Districts

Materials and resources for COVID-19 response:

- Video public service announcements, print materials, translated documents to assist in preparing for and responding to COVID-19.
- Poster with health screening checklist for building entrances.
- Poster with social distancing picture.

Quarantine if You Might Be Sick: this calendar visualizes four different scenarios.

What to do if you're waiting for COVID-19 test results: if you are waiting for results whether you are symptomatic or not, you need to remain home.

Questions on Open Houses

How do we do open houses?

Are other districts doing them in person?

- MDH Covid-19 prevention guidance for youth and student programs: MDH limit gatherings to #15 indoors and 25 outdoors.
- Also: 'If social distancing cannot be adhered to, cancel the activity.'
- Unless district can keep these numbers low with appointments, virtual is the way to go.
- Many are doing virtual open houses.

Questions on Snack Time

Should we skip snacks or may they be included in programming?

Some families take turns providing snacks. Is it ok if store purchased?

If child has allergies can they bring snacks from home?

MDH 2021 Planning Guide for Schools (page 5)

- Ask district food service staff. “Meals, snacks, and beverages served at school must be individually packaged *whenever possible*. *Where Individual packaging isn’t possible* food and beverages must be served directly to students.”
- If questions are not answered on the Food and Nutrition COVID-19 FAQ then forward to mde.fns@state.mn.us.
- Consider we want to avoid materials touched by others. Hand wash frequently. Local decision.
- Yes a parents may bring snack if allergies.

Question on Dropping off and Picking up children and visitors

If parents bring children to school will they leave them outside with a staff person to bring inside to classroom?

- MDH 2021 Planning Guide for Schools: Page 6 student pick up and drop should occur outside.

Should all guest presenters, volunteers and external groups or organizations be restricted?

- Yes, nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations should be restricted.

Question on Art Supplies

Should children have their own paintbrushes, crayons, etc.?

- MDH Covid-19 prevention guidance for youth and student programs
  Page 3, Avoid community supplies when possible. Read details in this section.
- Wash hands if you share materials after use.

Questions on Books, Other Materials, Mats

Can books still be used in classrooms?

Is there a safe way to have books for children?

What about playdoh, sandboxes or water play?

At naptime some districts do not have cots but their carpet has been removed. Is their a suitable mat to use?

MDH Covid-19 prevention guidance for youth and student programs

- Books: Pages 11 and 12. Although the guidance discourages use of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect, Items that may not be cleaned may be set aside for 24. Wash hands after using.
- Discourage use of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. If used, wash hands.
- Page 9-10. Mats that can be cleaned and disinfected daily are an option or child could bring a rug.

Questions about Outside Spaces

Can we take classes outside?

What about playground use?

MDH 2021 Planning Guide for Schools

- Page 6: whenever possible hold classes outside, especially for music, singing and keep six feet apart.
- Use of outdoor space is encouraged to support physical and mental health on a daily basis.

Playground Guidance for Schools and Child Care Yes, decisions about use are up to the local district. Keep six feet of distance, stagger use, maintain small groups, etc. Read through details.

Early Childhood Screening Follows the District Model

Distance – Executive Order 20-82: observational tool waived if distance screening. MDE guidance is to provide the parent report tool, ASQ: 3 (Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3) to meet the developmental requirement in distance screening.

Hybrid – generally the same as in-person, parent may still choose distance.

In-person – follow MDH Direct Service Guidance, parent may still choose distance.

- Kindergartners now have 90 days from first attending to complete screening per Executive Order 20-82.
- State funds to be consistent with 2018-19 for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Minnesota 2020 Education Finance Legislation Chapter 116/HF 4415 COVID-19 Formula Adjustments.

MDE Guidance Distance Screening

If your Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) team does not have the ASQ: 3 you may purchase it through Brookes Publishing (paper or online) or Patient Tools (online only).

- Brookes paper cost: $295/English + $295/Spanish.
- If short on funds, ask your supervisor if you may use ESSER funds to cover the cost of the new screening instrument.
- As long as the expenses can be justified as responding to the needs of COVID-19 and/or maintaining continuity of operations, services, and staffing, they are allowable under the ESSER 90% formula (per Michael Diedrich, MDE).
- ASQ 3 and ASQ SE-2 short free virtual screening training videos.

Screening: Face Coverings Required

MDH Direct Service Guidelines related to screening:

- Cloth masks or face coverings and/or face shield required for all staff.
- **Children are required to wear a face mask and/or face shield when receiving direct service unless they are not able to tolerate it (developmental reasons, etc.).**
- Examples of direct services within six feet include: vision, hearing, height, weight, observational tool, etc.
- Printable Resource: How to Safely Wear and take off your mask.

Resources for Working with Interpreters Virtually

Whether online or by phone, interpreters provide critical parent engagement as they interpret for families and children.

- Best practices for working with interpreters online.
- New interpreters may view Early Childhood Screening and Interpreters (20 minute training video) on the MDE Screening professional learning webpage.

Capacity and Group Size

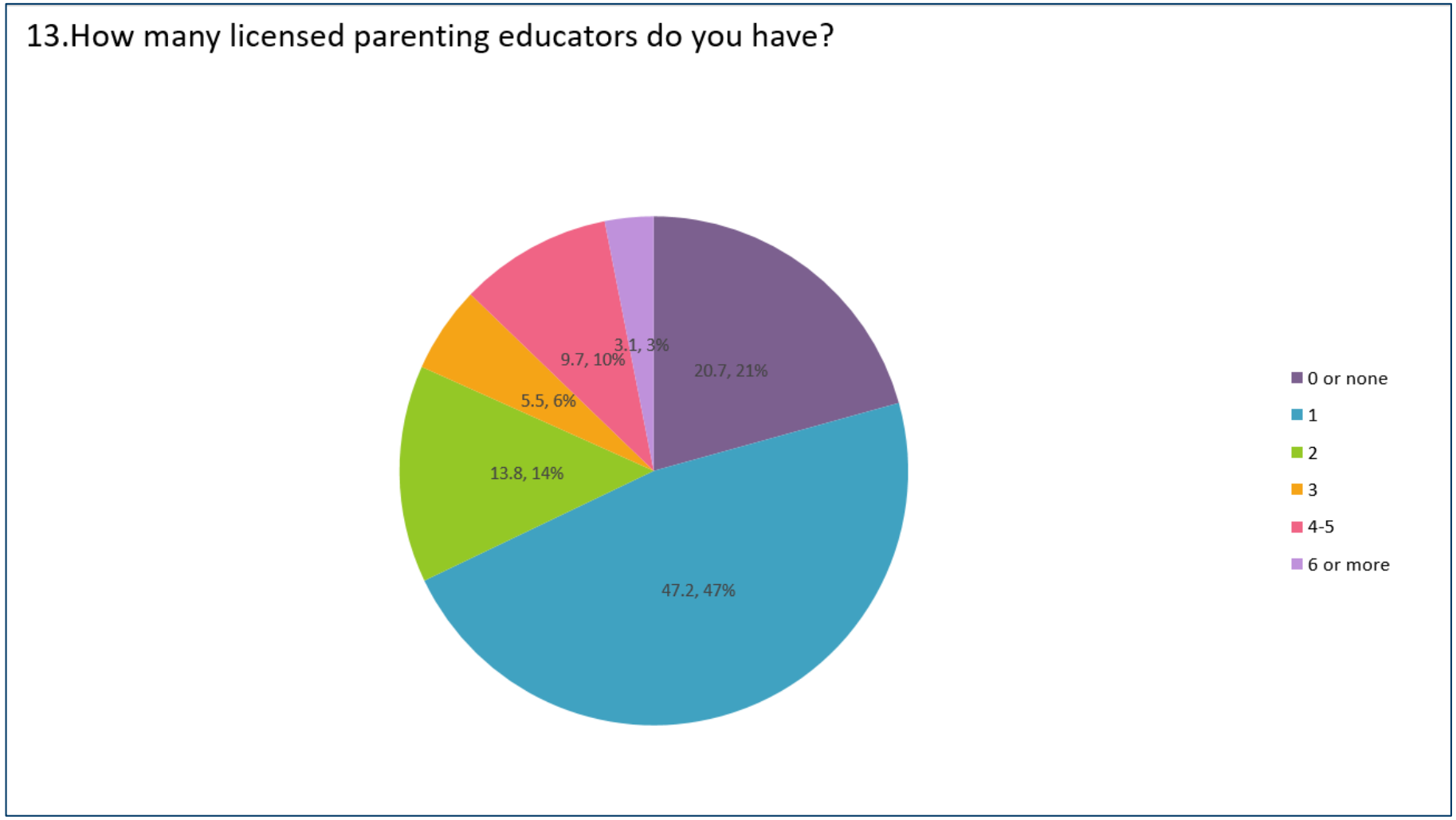
- Prekindergarten (VPK/SRP and School Readiness) and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) follows the same learning model as the elementary school.
- Current guidelines are drawn from current scientific recommendations for preschool-aged children.
- Current guidelines limit the group size to 10 including teacher (9:1).
- Considerations:
    - Capacity depends on square footage of available classroom space as determined by fire marshal.
    - Examine staffing patterns within your space and context.

Program Area Highlights

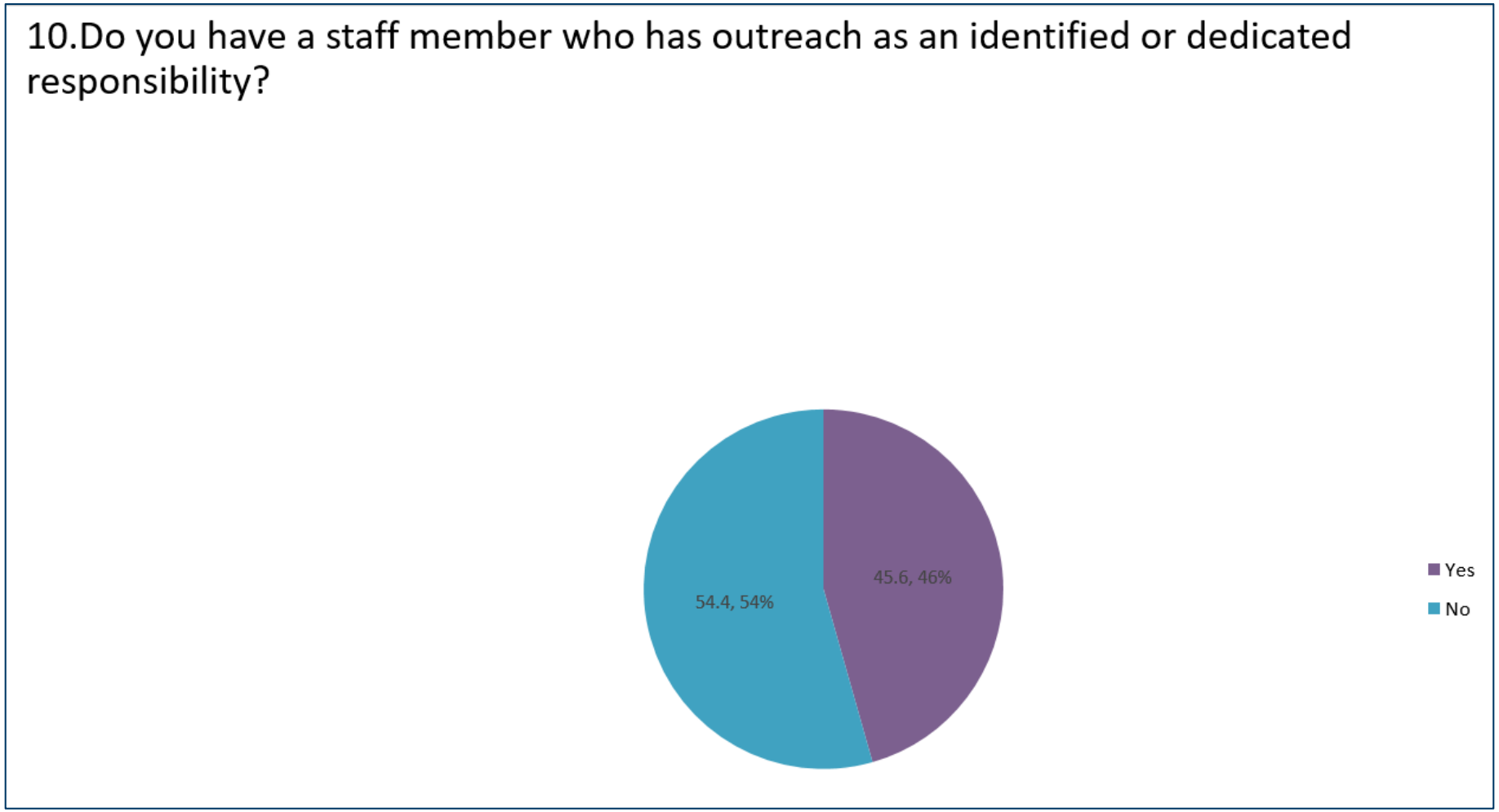
Program Area Updates: Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and School Readiness

- Contacts updated in MDE-ORG
- ECFE Needs Assessment
- Practice Committees and Community of Practice
- Networking group

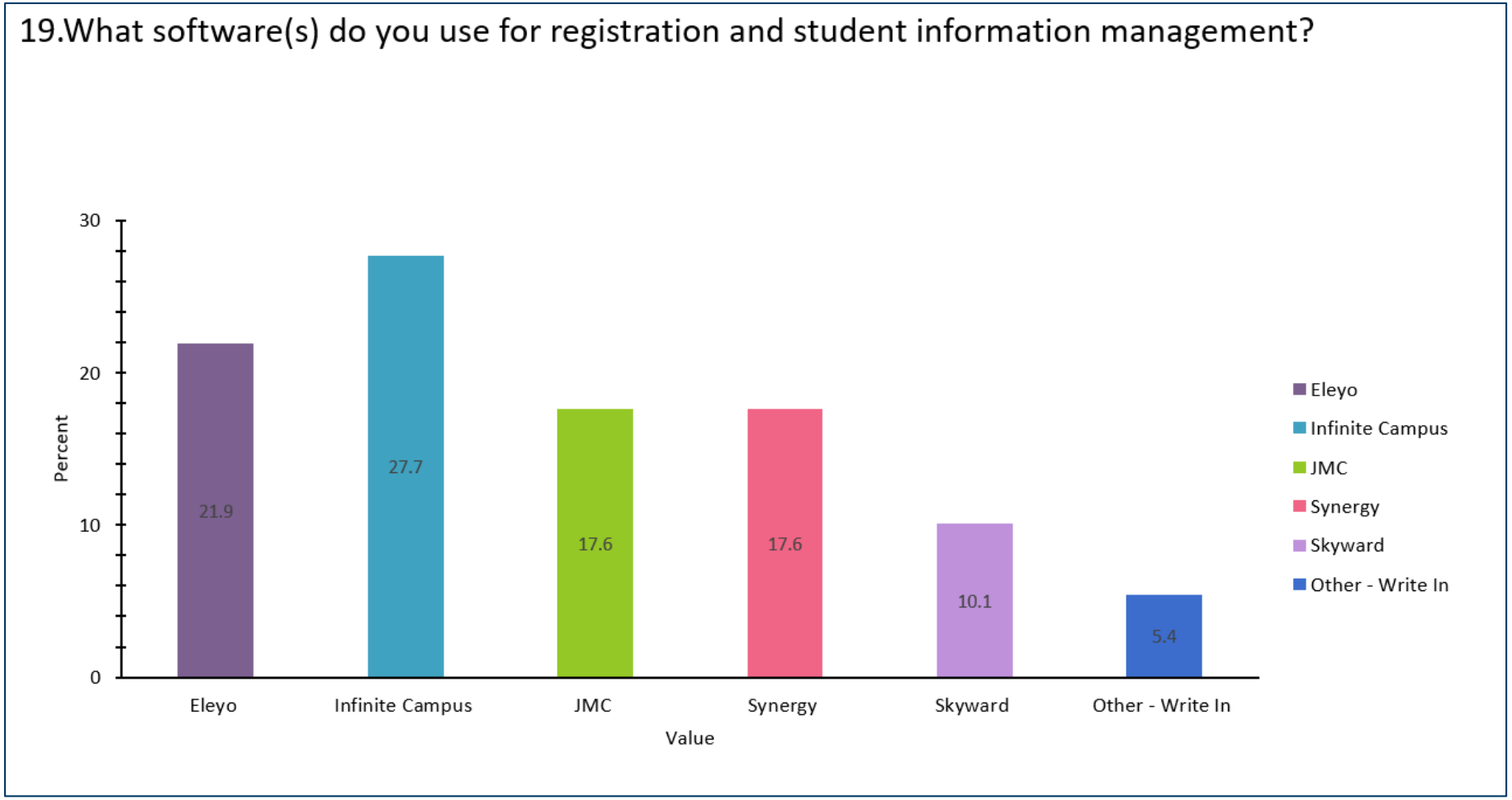
Program Area Updates: ECFE and School Readiness, 2



Program Area Updates: ECFE and School Readiness, 3



Program Area Updates: ECFE and School Readiness, 4



Program Area Highlights: Voluntary Prekindergarten(VPK)/School Readiness Plus (SRP)

- VPK/SRP is funded as a grade level and follows the same learning model as the elementary school.
- Use attendance and membership verification procedures outlined in the Minnesota 2020-21 School Planning Guidance.
- Contact June.Reineke@state.mn.us with instructional calendar changes (either a change in the # or length of days).
- 2019-20 Measuring Impact Data is coming!

Program Area Highlights: VPK/SRP, continued

- Breakfast Program Reimbursements:
  - The VPK/SRP breakfast invoicing system will work the same as last year. Review FY20 Meal Service and Meal Reimbursement Process
  - FY21 Breakfast Invoice templates with instructions will be sent next week.
  - Be sure to connect with your food service director to make sure that they are aware of prekindergarten food service needs.
  - Make sure you are aware of the district's food service delivery models as they may vary depending on the instructional model being used by the district.

Program Area Highlights: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

- Home visiting update.
- Bringing ECSE students into locations that meet MDH guidelines.
- Options for documenting services under various learning scenarios.
- Service hours, membership, and attendance.
    - Early Learning guidance for attendance.

Useful links:

- MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools
- MDH Guidance for Delivering Direct Student Support Services: Staff Protective Equipment
- MDE 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- FERPA and Student Privacy
- FERPA and Virtual Learning Related Resources

Program Area Highlights: Early Learning Scholarships

- Scholarships can be awarded to children for in-person, hybrid, and distance models.
- Scholarship should still be awarded based on instructional hours. See the "Attendance and Membership" section of the 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools when determining instructional hours.
    - 850+ hours at $7,500 per scholarship
    - 510-849 hours at $5,000 per scholarship
    - 101-509 hours at $3,750 per scholarship
    - 100 or fewer hours at $1,000 per scholarship
- Programs can amend their FY20-21 Application and Implementation Plan to include technology, partnerships, and staffing or other costs to meet MDH guidelines.
    - Contact MDE.PathwayII@state.mn.us to request an amendment.

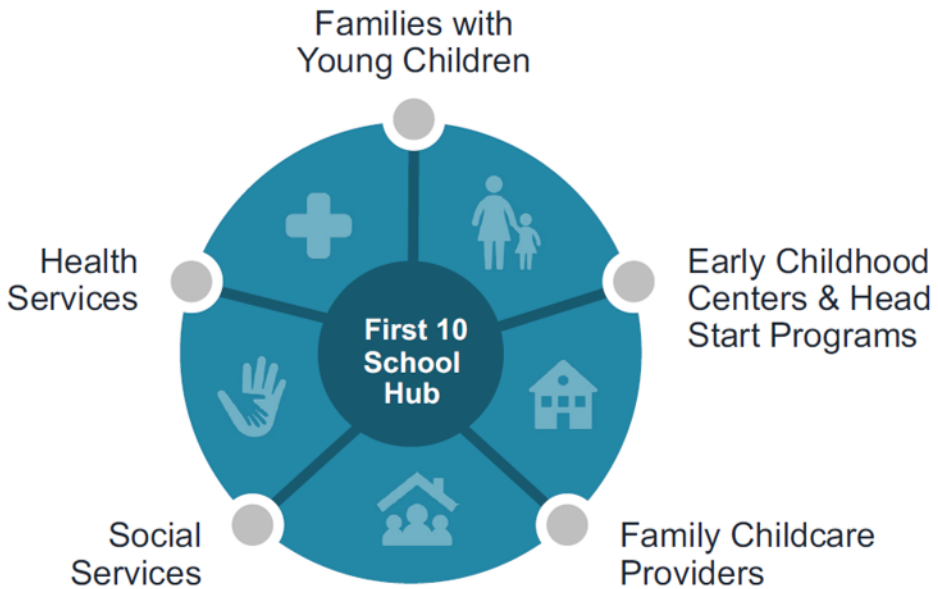
Early Learning Scholarship Reminders

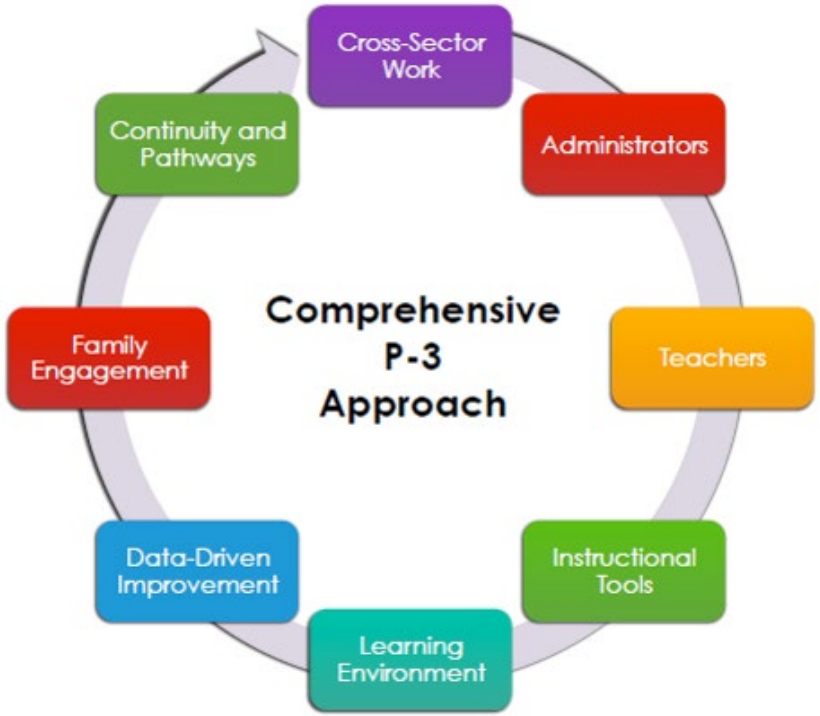
- Pathway II Applications and Renewal Forms can be submitted electronically (including electronic signature) if your program has a secure method to receive electronic files.
- As of July 1, 2020, children in a priority status are eligible for a scholarship cap of up to $10,000.
    - To award above $7,500, your program must keep cost per child documentation on file.
- Award 100% of FY 2021 funds by October 15, 2020.
- For payment requests, programs should still take the award amount divided by the number of months the child will be served, and bill evenly throughout the child's scholarship.

Strategies for Family Outreach, Enrollment, and Transition Activities

P3 Opportunities to Build Alignment and Coherence

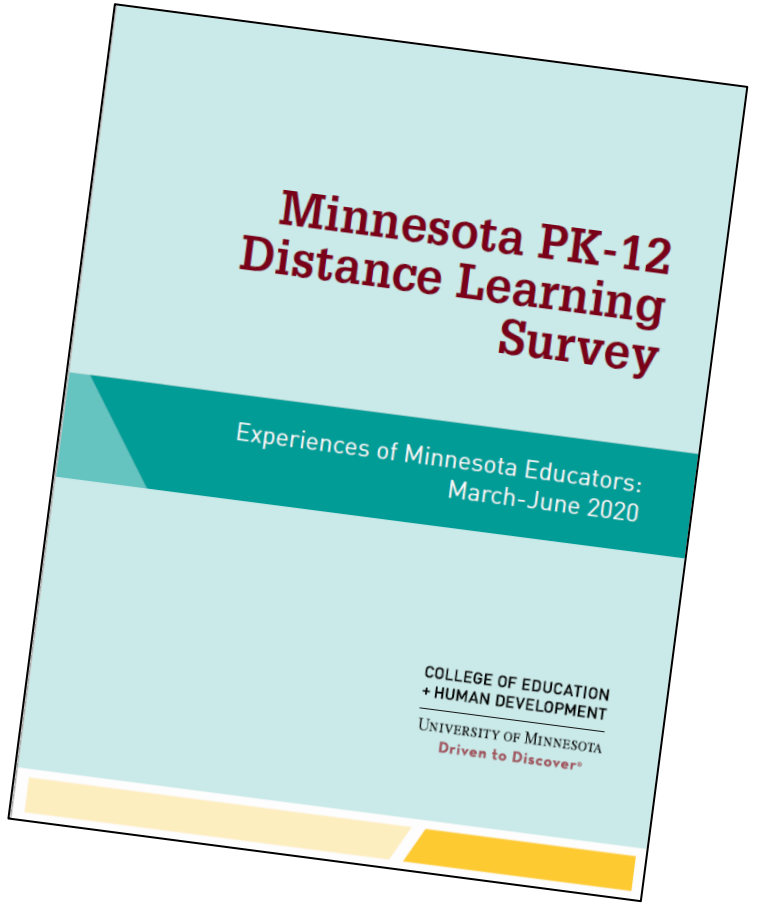
FIGURE 2: **First 10 School Hub**





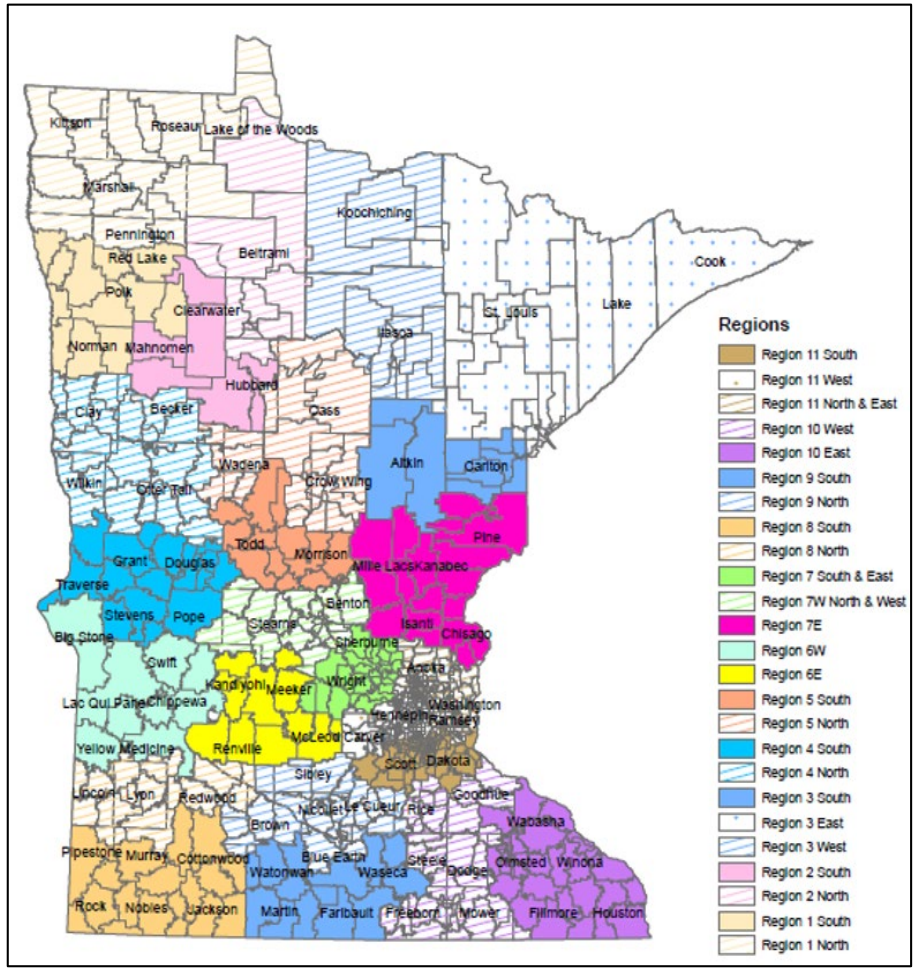
What We've Learned Since Spring: Instructional Models for In-Person, Hybrid, Distance Learning

1. It's all about relationships.
2. Consider the context of the family when planning programs.
3. We are all worried.
4. We learned a lot.
5. Develop processes that serve multiple purposes.

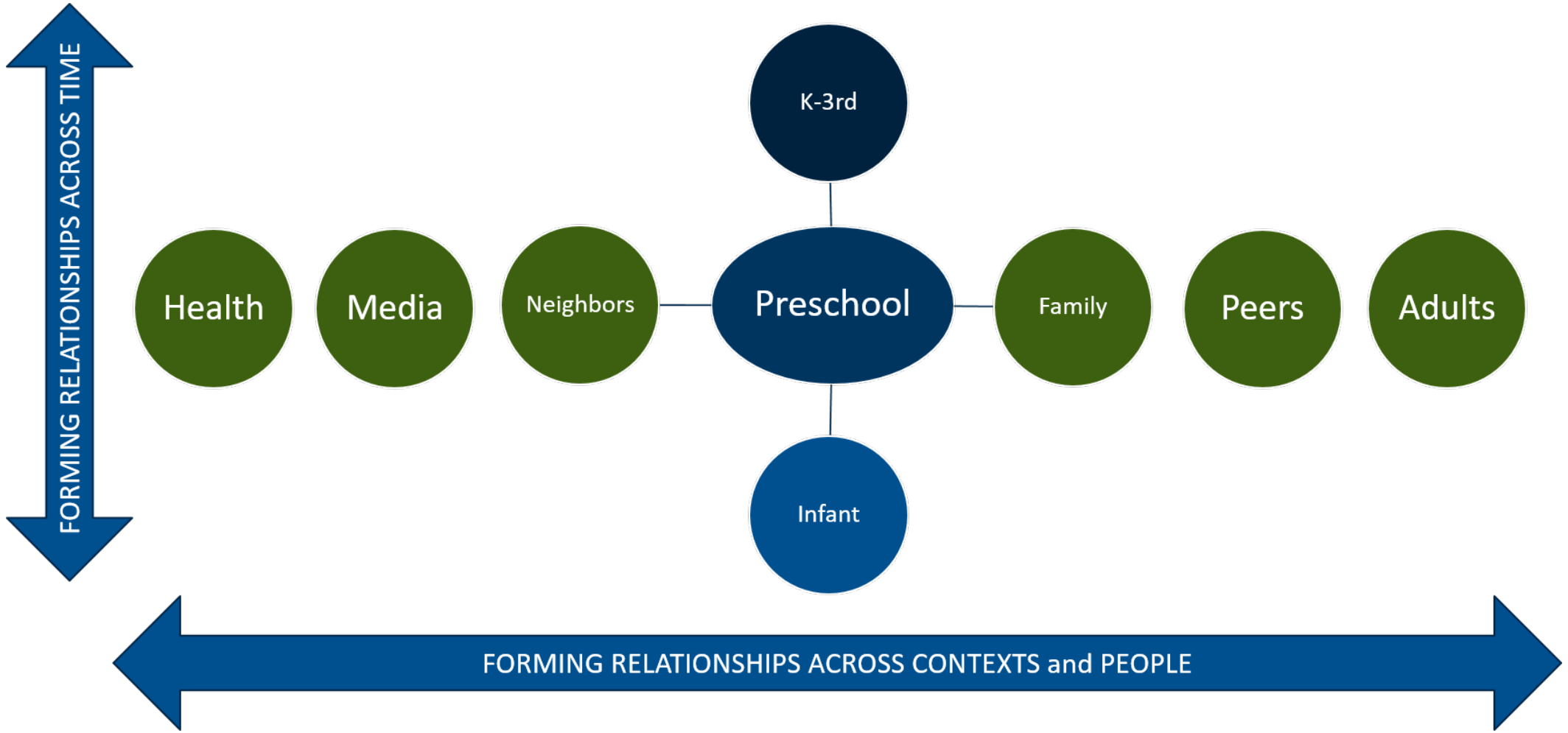


Alignment Further Developing ECE Communication Networks

1. Regional Networking Groups
    1. Early Childhood Administrators
        a) Screening
        b) VPK/SRP
        c) ECSE
        d) Early Learning Scholarship
2. ECSE Leadership Call and MN ECSE Centers of Excellence
3. Head Start Networking Groups



Think About Horizontal and Vertical



P3 Element: Instructional Tools for Planning, Instruction and Assessment

Early Learning Assessment guidance (i.e., KEP-Approved Assessments)

1. The framing (i.e. big picture view) of early learning assessment for SY 2020-21 can be found in the MDE's 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance.
   - This section was updated on 8/18/2020.
   - Search for "Early Learning Assessments" (page 90 of the 8/18/2020 document).
2. The detailed guidance (which items on each KEP-approved assessment) can be found on the Assessment in Early Childhood website and is named COVID-19 Early Learning Assessment Guidance: Required KEP-Approved Assessment Items.
   - There are four tables (one for each KEP-approved assessment) which list each required item.
3. **Under construction –** a resource that will provide specific strategies for teachers to assess students authentically via distance learning.

These assessments help us understand what children know and are able to do and the data can be used to (a) guide/individualize instruction (b) engage and partner with families in any of the three learning models.

P3 Element:
Instructional Tools for Planning, Instruction and Assessment, cont.

- No matter the learning model that is executed, VPK/SRP programs must use a KEP-approved assessment.
- VPK/SRP programs submitting KEP-approved assessment data to MDE must - **at a minimum** – use items in three domains of learning: (1) Social Emotional; (2) Language, Literacy, and Communications; and (3) Mathematics.
  - Only a subset of items aligned to the Social Emotional domain of learning are required.
- The reduced number of items/domains is a response to the unique demands and limitations due to COVID-19.
- ***Other early learning programs may choose to integrate the above guidance into their programs, as appropriate, though other federal, state, and local guidance specific to their program may supersede some or all of the guidance above. Example: Early Childhood Special Education Programs submitting data to obtain a Child Outcome Summary Score will need to add more items.***
- Programs and teachers may include additional items based on the needs of their program or students.

NOTE: Some reporting functionality in the online assessment system may be lost if you aren't adhering to the publisher's guidance about the percentage of items that need to be completed.

P3 Element: Continuity and Pathways

Outreach and Enrollment

- Success for students heavily depends upon the depth of relationships and supports provided by their families, schools, and communities.
- ***Coming soon new document:*** **Prekindergarten and Kindergarten: Outreach, Enrollment, Transition, and Instruction**
- *What are your strategies for building relationships with families who have had limited interaction with schools and school processes?*
- *How are you encouraging enrollment and practices that support families unsure about enrolling for the current year?*
- *How are you using data to inform your current outreach and enrollment efforts?*

P3 Element: Continuity and Pathways
Kindergarten Transitions

Kindergarten Transitions

- Ready Communities
- Ready Schools
- Ready Families
- Ready Children

MDE's Kindergarten Transition page

Kindergarten Transition Toolkit

MDE Kindergarten Transition Toolkit

Videos: Supporting children, classrooms, schools

Kindergarten: Where Play and Learning Meet

Both provide resources on the "MN School Readiness Definition" .

Q&A

Question and Answer Period

1. If you have a question or comment, enter it in the chat box and we will read it out loud.
2. Select the “Host and Panelists” so that we can be most responsive to your questions.
3. Any questions that cannot be answered at this time will responded to in a follow-up email.

Best Way to Get Your Questions Answered:

1. Check the webpages frequently for updated guidance.
2. Sign-up for updates.
3. Check with your teams and networking groups for instructional information.
4. When contacting MDE, please use the program specific email address (listed on the next slide). This helps us filter questions to the most knowledgeable person for a response.
    - If you are unsure which email to use, please create one email and send it to the MDE.ELS@state.mn.us.
5. Mark the question urgent (if it is). Otherwise we are working hard to respond within 24-48 hours.

List of ELS Contact Information

- Early Learning Services: MDE.ELS@state.mn.us
- Early Childhood Special Education: MDE.ECSE@state.mn.us
- Voluntary Prekindergarten/School Readiness Plus: MDE.VPK@state.mn.us
- Early Learning Scholarships:
  - MDE.PathwayII@state.mn.us for policy/implementation questions.
  - MDE.ELSA@state.mn.us for ELSA system questions.

Thank you for your tireless efforts!

The Early Learning Services Staff