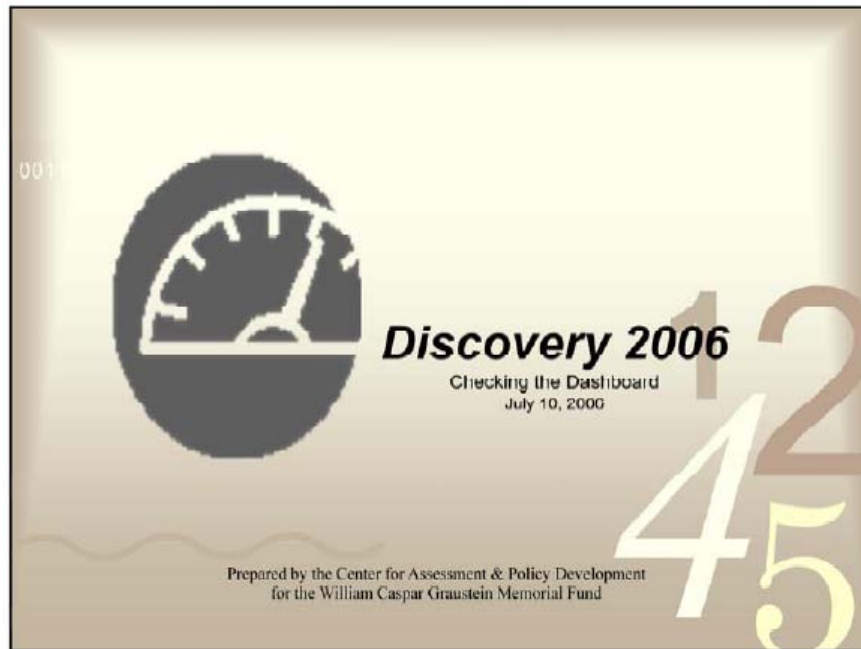

DISCOVERY 2006: CHECKING THE DASHBOARD



This report was prepared by the Discovery Initiative Evaluation Team based on a presentation to the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund Board of Trustees in December 2006. The information used in this report was collected in the Summer of 2006. Further details on the data collection are presented in the report.


We appreciate the input and feedback of the Memorial Fund staff, the members and staff of the Discovery community collaborative groups, and the statewide organizations receiving grants from the Memorial Fund. The analyses and conclusions in this report solely reflect the perspective of the Evaluation Team.

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At the time of this report, the Discovery initiative is mid-way through the implementation period.



Discovery 2006
 Checking the Dashboard
 July 10, 2006

Areas of Inquiry

1. How is Discovery's focus on **capacity building** contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?
2. How is Discovery's focus on **collaboration and parent engagement** contributing to what happens in CT on behalf of young children?
3. How has Discovery contributed to movement on **process, policy and practice changes** related to the 4 objectives?

1 2
4 5

Areas of inquiry:

1. How is Discovery's focus on capacity building contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?
 - At this stage, we are looking at whether capacity is indeed being built within communities and at the state level.

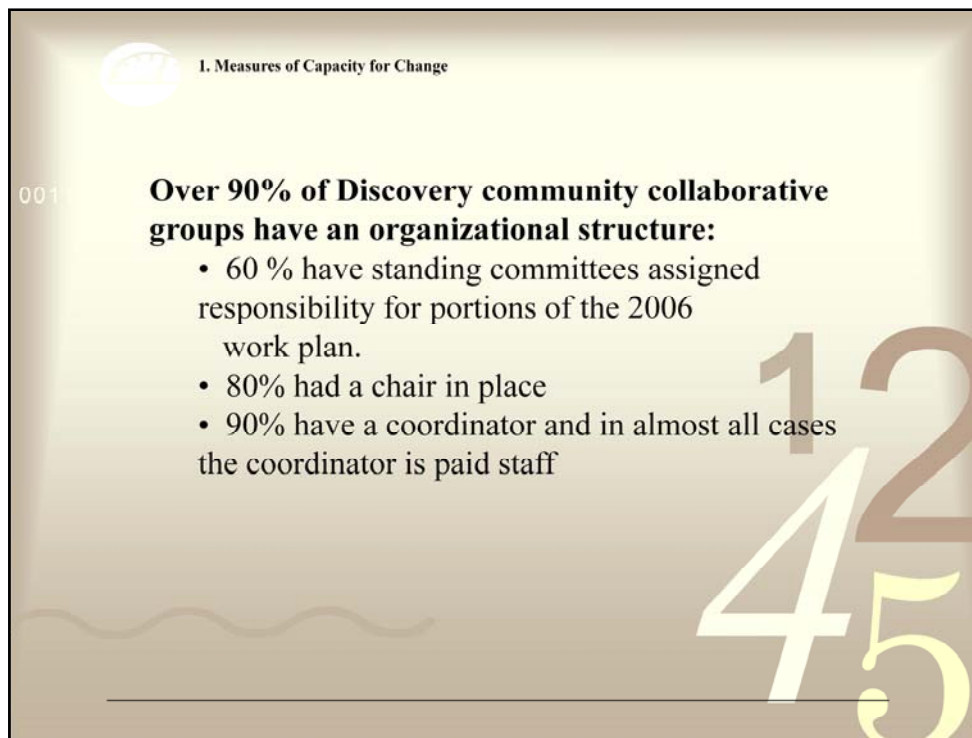
2. How is Discovery's focus on collaboration and parent engagement contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?
 - What evidence can we see that collaboration and parent engagement and leadership are taking place and being supported?

3. How has Discovery contributed to movement on process, policy and practice changes?
 - What early "wins" have been documented?

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1. Measures of Capacity for Change





1. How is Discovery's focus on capacity building contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

Looking at the capacity for change means looking at measures of individual, organizational and systems ability to adapt to and make change happen. At this stage, we are looking at whether collaborative groups are organized enough to have a chair, paid staff and a committee structure - and we are finding that 90% of them have one or more of these (see above and the charts on pages 5 and 6).

We have also noted that virtually all Discovery communities have a School Readiness Council and that in nearly 60% of them the SRC and Discovery have some relationship. This could mean that the greater resources and administrative support of the SRC could provide more sustained support. Or, the SRC's focus on the SR Grant could result in the SRC not being as focused on parent involvement. We intend to watch this closely as time goes on.

Emerging questions:

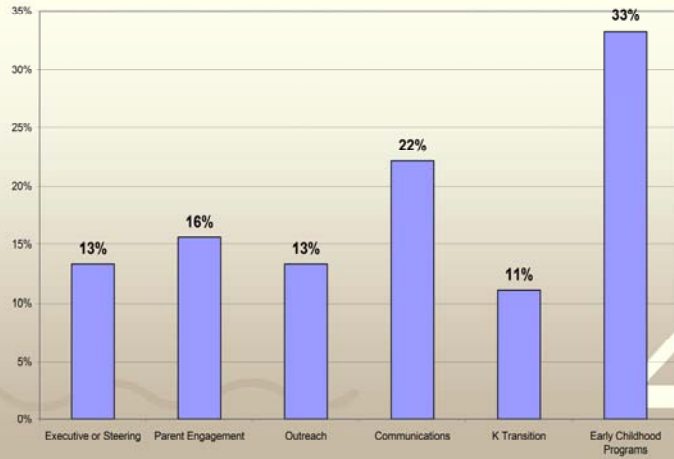
Have collaboratives with more evidence of structure been more successful in making changes? What differences are there in the structure, activities and results of the Discovery groups when they are linked with the local SRC?



I. Measures of Capacity for Change

Graph 1: Discovery focus on capacity building- Community – Types of Committees

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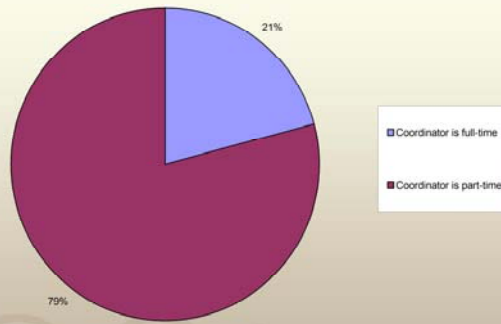




Graph 2: Discovery focus on capacity building- Community – Coordinator Full or Part Time

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Coordinator – Full or Part Time





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Over 90% of Discovery collaborative groups have leveraged additional resources to support their work:

- 82% have cash resources in 2006 budgets beyond Memorial Fund grant
- Nearly 60% have in-kind resources
- Total additional resources = more than 2.5 times Memorial Fund total grants
- Memorial Fund dollars are used to pay for functions that are hard to cover from other grants



1. How is Discovery's focus on capacity building contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

We are also looking at the capacity of the Discovery collaborative to leverage Discovery grant dollars as a measure of organizational capacity. In their 2006 budgets, over 90% of the collaborative groups had either in-kind (57%) or additional cash (82%).

In 2002 the local match totaled one half million dollars; that total grew to over \$3 million in 2004, and in 2006 the total again grew to nearly \$10 million dollars. Some communities, like New Haven, include school readiness and federal grants. (New Haven \$800,000 Federal Early Learning Opportunities grant – prorated over 17 months - \$562,000 for 12 months)

We have also noted that over 95% use their Discovery dollars to pay for support, primarily coordinators, and other things that are difficult to fund through other types of grants, such as meeting costs and public information.

Emerging questions:

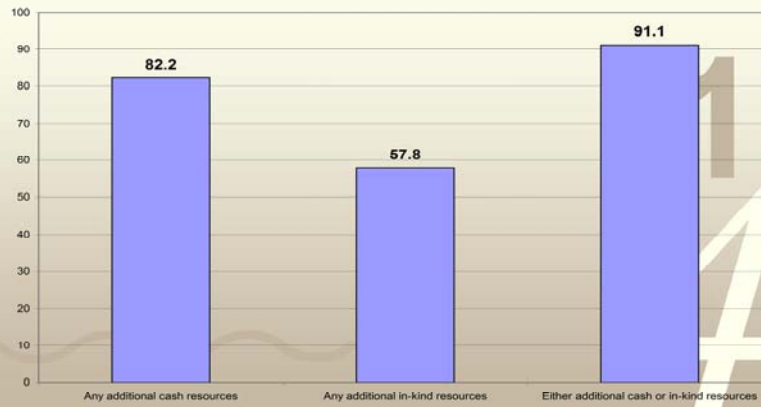
What is the mix of cash and in-kind resources that supports staff? Are communities that rely solely on Discovery grants to pay for staff different in other ways from similar (size and position level) communities that do not?



Graph 3: Discovery focus on capacity building- Community – Additional Resources

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Percent of Communities with Additional Resources in 2006 Budget



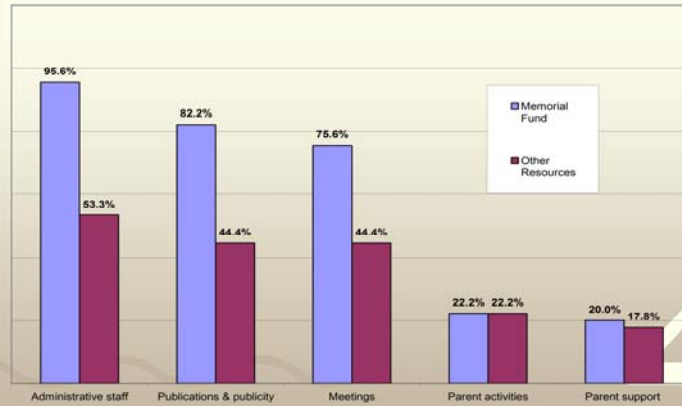


I. Measures of Capacity for Change

Graph 4: Discovery focus on capacity building- Community – Budgets

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Percent of Communities Budgeting GMF and Other Resources for Specific Purposes





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Statewide organizations have increased Connecticut's capacity to work on an early childhood agenda:

- Among the 9 statewide grants, 5 are working on research and analysis, 6 on advocacy, and 2 on parent engagement.
- In the policy arena, 7 out of 9 are working on early care and education, with 4 also working on school reform and 4 on health and mental health
- Products include policy briefs, research reports, tools and guides, and public information or educational materials.



1. How is Discovery's focus on capacity building contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

Among the 9 statewide grantees there is evidence of increased capacity in analysis, research, advocacy and parent engagement. The focus of their work is early childhood care and education, school reform and health/mental health.

Emerging questions:

How have Discovery grants helped to strengthen internal capacities? What capacities do the statewide organizations still need? How does the Memorial Fund improve the communication and collaboration among communities and statewide entities?

The statewide grants in 2005-06 included in this overview are:

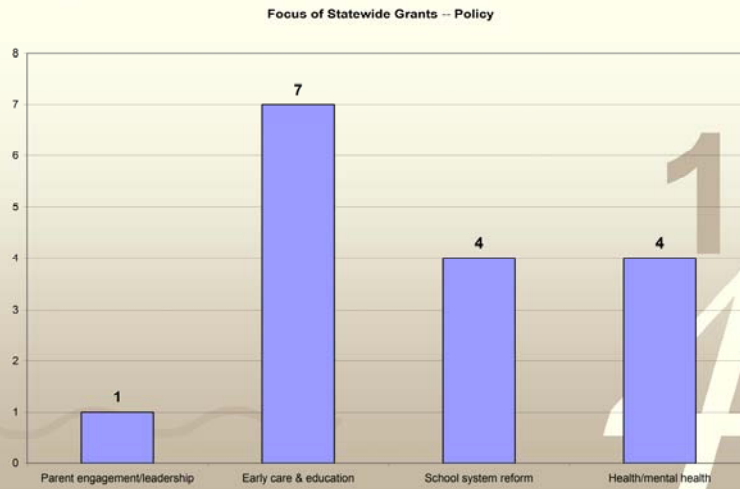
- Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
- Connecticut Asn. for Human Services
- Connecticut Center for School Change
- Connecticut Parent Power
- Connecticut Voices for Children
- DataCONNECTIONS
- LISC/Children's Investment Partnership
- LWV/Community Conversations About Education
- Public Agenda/Community Conversations project



1. Measures of Capacity for Change

Graph 5: Discovery focus on capacity building- State – Focus of Statewide Grants on Policy

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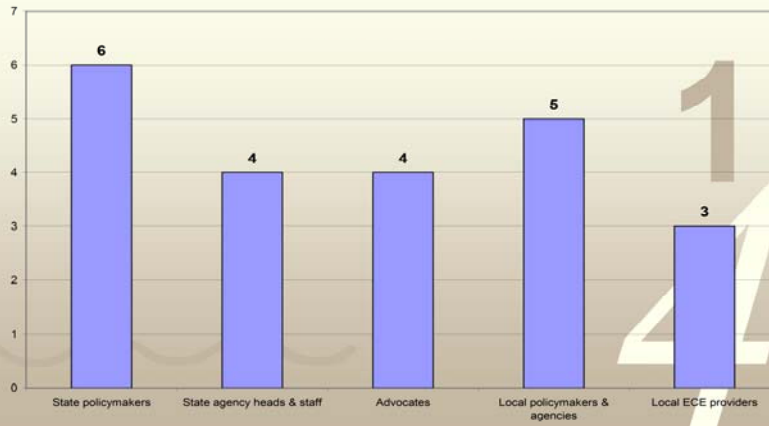


1. Measures of Capacity for Change

Graph 6: Discovery focus on capacity building- State – Focus of Statewide Grants on Product Audiences

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Statewide Grants -- Product Audiences





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Memorial Fund staff contributed to the start-up and development of a number of state-level groups and projects:

- The groups have focused on building models and tools, providing information, research, building public awareness, offering forums, advocacy, and coordination of efforts
- The Memorial Fund staff assisted in many ways: providing senior staff support in 6 cases and funding preliminary work in 4 cases

1. How is Discovery's focus on capacity building contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

Among these 7 groups are two that are now grantees of the Memorial Fund - Parent Power and the Alliance.

Emerging questions:

What is the long-term sustainability of these groups? What are the capacities that need to be in place to support them?

List of groups/projects supported by Memorial Fund staff:

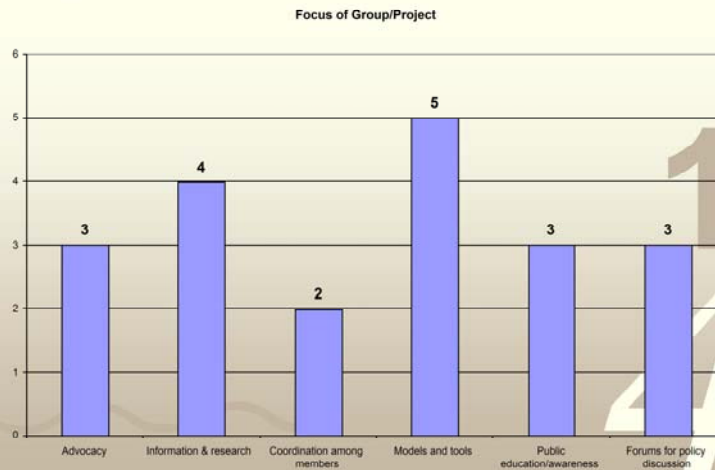
- Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
- Connecticut Parent Power
- Early Childhood Finance Work Group
- Early Childhood Funders Affinity Group
- Early Childhood Research and Policy Council
- Health and Learn Initiative/Funders Collaborative
- Opinion Research Work Group



I. Measures of Capacity for Change

Graph 7: Discovery focus on capacity building- State – Focus of Grantee Work

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2. Measures of Collaboration and Parent Engagement





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Discovery collaborative groups have engaged a broad range of constituencies:

- 55% have representation from 6-8 constituencies; 20% have 9 or more
- Almost all collaborative groups include parents, ECE providers, school system staff and community organizations
- Over 75% have city government representation

2006 work plans show an average of 27 people per group for a total of about 1,200 people involved in local Discovery tables across the state.



2. How is Discovery's focus on collaboration and parent engagement contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

Almost all collaborative groups include parents, ECE providers, staff from K-12 schools and community organizations.

2006 work plans show an average of 27 people per group for a total of about 1,200 people involved in local Discovery tables across the state.

Emerging questions:

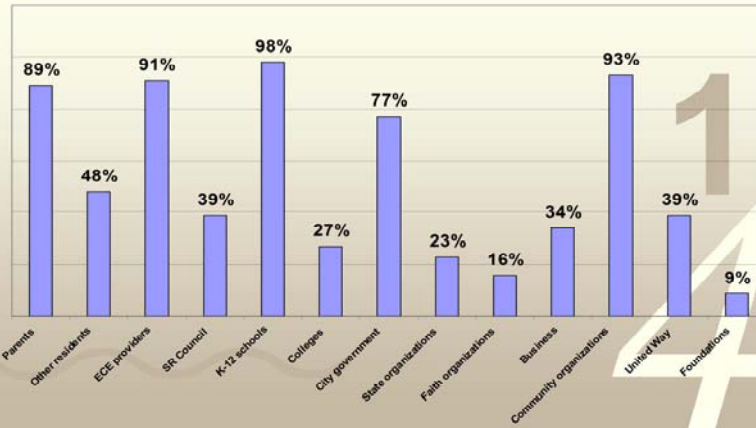
What characterizes communities with more diverse constituencies compared to those with fewer? What are the barriers to involving some constituencies?



Graph 8: Discovery focus on collaboration-parent engagement – Collaborative Membership

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Percent of Collaboratives with Constituency Represented





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Parents play many roles in Discovery collaborative groups:

- 89% have parents on collaborative group
- 16% have a parent engagement committee
- 42% have a Parent Trust Fund grant for parent leadership training
- 21% have parents as chair of collaborative and 40% as chair of a committee



2. How is Discovery's focus on collaboration and parent engagement contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

Communities are trying a variety of strategies to engage parents and build parent leadership. Most are finding that this is difficult work and that they need to use multiple and creative ways to keep parents actively and productively involved.

However as the graph indicates communities have made progress in engaging parents as leaders and participants in their collaboratives and committees.

Also, parents involved express deep gratitude for Discovery and will often report that before Discovery came to their community, the participation and opinions of parents were seldom, if ever sought.

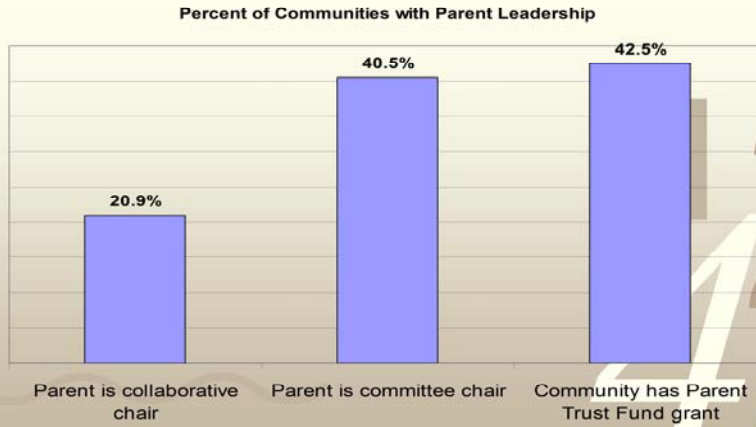
Emerging questions:

What characterizes communities with more parent engagement/leadership compared to those with less? How does the intensity of parent engagement and leadership contribute to the pace of change, the work of the collaborative and its results? What contributions will the Memorial Fund's capacity building guide , "Parent Voice and Action" make to the pace of change?



Graph 9: Discovery focus on parent engagement – Parent Leadership

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Statewide grantees work with other grantees in a variety of ways:

- Among the 9 organizations, 8 belong to common state-level organizations
- 6 organizations worked together to develop a plan for policy or practice change
- 4 took co-responsibility for a product or activity
- 5 statewide organizations provided assistance to individual communities off-site and 4 provided on-site technical assistance



2. How is Discovery's focus on collaboration and parent engagement contributing to what happens in Connecticut on behalf of young children?

Through the Alliance and other means, statewide grantees are collaborating and taking on shared work. As with community collaboratives, parent engagement remains a challenge for most of the statewide organizations. However, Parent Power is taking initiative to partner with Discovery communities and other statewide grantees to ensure parent voice and leadership in state level policy work.

Emerging questions:

How does the Memorial Fund contribute to the "connectivity" among grantees and communities that supports collaboration? Beyond Parent Power, what role might the Memorial Fund play in support of parent engagement at the state level?

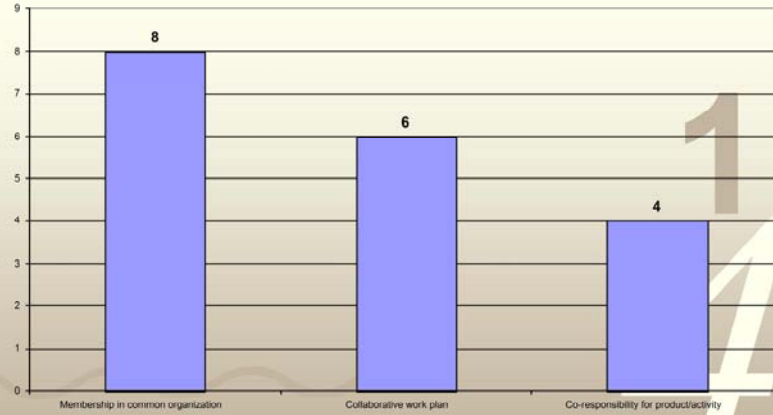


2. Measures of Collaboration and Parent Engagement

Graph 10: Discovery focus on collaboration-State – Links with Other Grantees

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Statewide Grants -- Links with Other Grantees



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3. Measures of Policy Change





Community and statewide groups have contributed to policy changes:

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- About 1 in 4 communities had a policy change that improved the supply or quality of early care and education
- In 1 of 5 communities there was a change in school policies, often related to K registration and transition
- At least 5 statewide grantees contributed to the stabilization or increase of state funding for child care for families, HUSKY health coverage for children, and school readiness programs for 3- and 4- year-olds
- 2 statewide organizations contributed to parent engagement policy change; 2 contributed to changes in data collection and reporting policies

3. How has Discovery contributed to movement on process, policy and practice changes?

Data collection to date has documented some of the practice and policy changes taking place at the community and state levels. However, we believe that there are others that go unrecorded and we are working to improve data collection efforts.

Emerging questions:

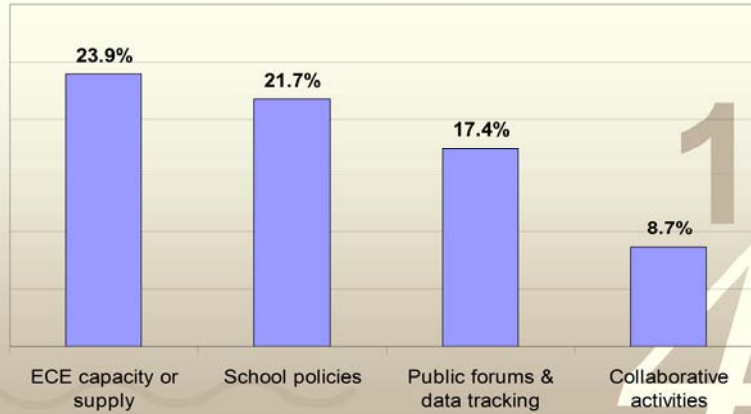
How has the capacity building work contributed to practice and policy changes within the communities? What is the best method for documenting policy and practice changes?



Graph 11: Policy changes in communities

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Areas of Policy Results in 2005





Graph 12: Policy changes in the state

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Statewide Grants -- Contributions in Policy Areas

