

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

*If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.*

*In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.*

**(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.**

Data collection, analysis, and utilization are essential elements of an overall system that links together, coordinates, and supports the continuous improvement of other parts of Minnesota's Plan (see A2). As described in this section, our Plan for Minnesota's Comprehensive Assessment System will build on existing infrastructure and strengths to:

- Review and refine assessment and its linkages at every level—from child to classroom, classroom to program, and program to state—and across all ages and types of programs to ensure that we have the best possible assessment instruments and approaches for all subgroups of Children with High Needs (Goals 1 and 2);
- Provide ongoing professional development and program-level support for understanding the purposes and best uses of these assessment instruments and approaches, and provide ongoing training to administer assessments and use the results of these activities to improve outcomes for individuals, classrooms, programs, and the system (Goal 3); and
- Align and continuously review linkages across assessment instances and instruments, and produce a more coherent, coordinated, and efficient system for professionals serving Children with High Needs (Goals 1 and 4).

Program providers who collect data, refer to it, and use it to change their behavior and their program's practices have learners with better outcomes than those who do not collect and refer to data in a regular and meaningful way (Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984; McConnell, Priest, Davis, & McEvoy, 2002). This is specifically true for caregivers and educators of Children with High Needs (e.g., Landry, Anthony, Swank, & Monseque-Bailey, 2009). Minnesota has the building blocks of an infrastructure to support high-quality and rigorous data collection and use of assessment data for ongoing program improvement. As in other parts of our Plan, our work described here will build upon, expand, and improve this existing infrastructure.

While Minnesota's current system has a variety of options to assess and improve programs and to help parents and programs build the best possible ELD experience for individual children, we need to improve our ability to tailor this system to best meet the needs of individual children and to improve system components based on experiences and observed outcomes. Our Plan includes a Comprehensive Assessment System that describes performance and growth from the individual child to the classroom, program, and state; and that serves as our ELD "global

positioning system,” providing information about which route to take and telling us to change course when we are not headed in the right direction.

Minnesota’s existing assessments are various, which is both a strength and a weakness. ELD Programs make use of a range of child and environment assessments, but these points of data are not linked well enough to chart a course and maintain direction. Our High-Quality Plan for implementing a developmentally appropriate, Comprehensive Assessment System will address this by:

1. Establishing an Assessment and Data System Task Force to review and recommend improvements to Minnesota’s Comprehensive Assessment System;
2. Improving the delivery of developmental screening, by implementing online and audio versions of ASQ and ASQ-SE for use by service providers to and parents of Children with High Needs;
3. Improving the ability of ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators to choose, use, and interpret assessment data;
4. Increasing capacity to connect and coordinate intervention across data sources to increase synchronization and efficiency of ELD services; and
5. Developing and producing a School Readiness Report Card that describes both program operation and child outcomes in a connected, coordinated, and actionable way.

### **Context for Support of these Actions**

Minnesota, like other states, has taken a fairly broad approach to approving the selection of assessment practices and instruments in all early childhood assessment arenas, with no single instrument required, nor any single instrument used in any one aspect of early childhood development. Rather, in Parent Aware, Early Childhood Screening, Early Learning and Development Standards, and assessment of school readiness, the Departments of Education and Human Services have specified broad parameters for reviewing and approving assessment practices and instruments, and in practice the Departments have developed lists of instruments that can be used with approval. Currently, public and private ELD Programs in Minnesota use a small but varied set of child and program assessments for both periodic assessment—including Age Three Screening and kindergarten entry—and ongoing progress monitoring. While useful for implementation and maintenance of local authority and control, this approach also produces a patchwork of disparate, hard-to-connect assessments of varied psychometric quality, and it

makes coordinated approaches to collection, use, and reporting of results cumbersome and of limited utility.

While this variation in assessment practices and instruments has served initial system development well, continued use of multiple instruments also presents a challenge to development and refinement of a comprehensive system of care and education for our youngest citizens. Thus, through both the ongoing work of the Minnesota Office of Early Learning and the Plan proposed here, we will move strategically to expand and improve our parameters for assessment practices and instrument review, while encouraging all early childhood programs to move toward use of a smaller set of child and program assessment practices.

### **Relation to Other Parts of Early Learning Challenge Grant Plan**

The Comprehensive Assessment System components described here will interact with our vision for Kindergarten Entry Assessment (E1) and Data System (E2), as well as our efforts to promote quality and increase access to effective programs for Children with High Needs. The assessment practices described here will be indexed conceptually and evaluated empirically to our Kindergarten Entry Assessment. This level of linkage is critical to building a coordinated and effective system; put simply, we must measure and act on smaller units of data (e.g., child status and progress measures, age three early childhood screening assessments) that predict and relate to larger and later units of assessment (e.g., Kindergarten Entry Assessment). This ensures that data used to improve individual child and program-level services are related to our desired long-term goal of improved school readiness.

Similarly, assessment practices described here must contribute to and benefit from our state's overall Data System. Without question, some data are of primary interest to one professional for one particular moment in time. But, there are many instances where data linkage and sharing increases the efficiency and effectiveness of program services within and across programs and time. Data collected in classrooms about individual children can and should be retained and aggregated, and, when appropriate, used in concert with other data to describe and coordinate child services and improve system operation.

Finally, assessment practices and data utilization described here will produce the greatest benefit when they relate and contribute directly to ongoing efforts to assess and improve program quality and, in turn, improve outcomes. We envision a system where select program inputs (most notably, Parent Aware) relate to and predict program outcomes (child assessments), and where

both inputs and outcomes are used in concert to expand and improve both aspects of assessment. This level of connection and coordination will only come with deliberate effort, as described in this Plan.

Taken as a whole, the activities described here and in E1, E2, B1, and B3 will create a system of evidence-based decision making that will inform classroom and home-based practice, program service delivery, parent choice, and policies at the local and state levels. This Assessment and Data System will inform decisions and impact factors both proximal (caregiver behavior) and distal (public policies) that influence and improve children's development. The components of our proposed Assessment and Data System are:

**1. Universal individual child assessment (C2, E1)**

- a. Information will be collected about individual children's overall development at three universal time points: screening, kindergarten entry, and kindergarten exit.
- b. Benchmarks will be set at these time points such that data can be linked to children's developmental trajectories and inform programmatic and instructional decisions.

**2. Targeted child assessment (C2)**

- a. Providers will collect assessment data about children in Parent Aware rated programs, Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, and school-based pre-kindergarten programs and will report child progress data annually to the Minnesota Office of Early Learning.
- b. Providers in Parent Aware rated programs, and other Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, and school-based pre-kindergarten programs will also conduct ongoing, formative assessments, to inform instruction, improve their environments, and report to parents.

**3. Program quality assessment (B1 and B3)**

- a. An environment assessment self study will be created to assist ELD Programs in "getting ready" for Parent Aware rating.
- b. All ELD Programs in Parent Aware will conduct assessments on the quality of adult-child interactions.
- c. Parent Aware ratings will include examination of each ELD Program's assessment practices and related teacher training.

**4. Substantially improved pre-service and in-service training on assessment selection, use, administration, and reporting—especially for ELD providers of Children with High Needs (C2, D2)**

- a. Substantially expanded pre-service and in-service training opportunities will be offered on how to choose, use and interpret assessment tools.
- b. Coaching, mentoring, and other real time technical assistance will be provided to ensure that Early Childhood Educators can appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

**5. System level assessment (C2)**

- a. A “School Readiness Report Card” comprised of 15 indicators of school readiness and 14 additional context measures from existing data sources will be created for tracking progress towards meeting the goal of all children ready for kindergarten.
- b. Data will be publically reported with analysis from outside of the Office of Early Learning.

**6. Data structures: Student information software system and data warehouse (E2)**

- a. Use of a student information software system (such as ChildPlus.net) will be expanded, and the system will be timely, relevant, and accessible for ELD providers to make classroom- and program-level decisions, with links to a Data Warehouse for policy-level decisions.
- b. The data warehouse and analytic tools will allow meaningful linkages among child level assessment data, program data, and provider data.

**GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Goal 1: Establish an Assessment and Data System Task Force to review and recommend improvements to Minnesota’s Comprehensive Assessment System**

*Activity 1.1:* Appoint members and charge Assessment and Data System Task Force to make evidence-based recommendations for design, implementation, and ongoing refinement of a comprehensive system of child, program, and state-level assessment of developmental achievement that reflects state and professional practice standards for school readiness and its development, and for high-quality assessment of all associated components.

This Task Force will articulate an approach for better aligning and integrating

assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple ELD Programs.

- Task Force develops a broad architecture for child, program, and state-level assessment that relates directly to desired outcomes as represented in the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.
- Task Force describes general principles for each level of assessment, reflecting standards and recommendations of the National Research Council (2008), assessment and measurement guidelines in early childhood education (Greenwood & McConnell, in press), and standards of national professional and scientific organizations (AERA, 1999).
- Task Force reviews assessment practices currently employed, as well as emerging or new approaches that show particular merit or promise.
- Task Force recommends a coordinated, aligned system of instruments, applications, and approaches going forward, and procedures or principles for reviewing and refining these recommendations over time.
- Minnesota Office of Early Learning and the Early Learning Council appoint Task Force Members. A Task Force of 12-14 individuals will include members of the Early Learning Council; staff from the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services; representatives of the academic community with expertise in this area; parents; and program managers.

**Activity 1.2:** Establish and produce deliverables.

This Task Force will:

- Propose top-level design of a coordinated assessment system, with broad parameters for selection of all measures and specific parameters for specification of measures at age three and kindergarten entry, with progress measures leading up to each of these time points;
- Produce substantive analysis of existing Minnesota practices and other evidence-based options for assessment at each time point;
- Recommend measures and practices (including professional development to support implementation and ongoing use of this system); and
- Recommend ongoing evaluation, analysis, and refinement of the coordinated assessment

system.

**Goal 2: Improve delivery of developmental screening, by implementing online versions of ASQ and ASQ-SE for use by parents of and providers of service to Children with High Needs.**

Minnesota has a solid, existing set of health and developmental screening programs: Head Start; Early Childhood Screening; Child and Teen Checkups/Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT); and screenings provided by independent health care providers. These programs are coordinated and standardized by an Interagency Developmental Screening Task Force, which includes the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services. The most substantial of these programs is Minnesota's Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Program (ECS), which is operated by the Department of Education. Through ECS and a related early intervention program, health and developmental screening that is aligned with EPSDT is available to all Minnesota children from birth through age five in each of Minnesota's 339 school districts. School districts are required to offer screening to all children at least once before school entrance. Participation in screening is a requirement for children prior to public school kindergarten enrollment. As part of ECS, school districts are required to report screening data at the child level to the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System, a process that includes assigning the screened child a unique identifier.

Implementation of the online screening tools will increase access to valid and reliable health and development and mental health screening instruments and will improve the provision of high-quality screening across systems, including education, local public health, home visiting, health care, social service, and Head Start. This strategy will also improve fidelity of the scoring of the screening results. A Wilder Research evaluation (Holm-Hanson, 2009) of 500 children participating in the Ramsey County Foundations for Success grant found that the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) screenings administered using paper were scored incorrectly 35% of the time (even when additional training was offered), and families were often given an incorrect questionnaire based on the age of the child. Using online, audio, or other technology platforms will virtually eliminate errors in administration and scoring of the instrument. (Note that the ASQ and ASQ-SE are available in Hmong, English, Spanish and Somali audio versions.)

**Activity 2.1:** Develop detailed training and implementation plan to conduct on-line assessment with both instruments in the seven-county Metropolitan Area, Itasca County, and on the White Earth Reservation. Included in this plan are strategies to secure appropriate participation of clinics and programs serving Children with High Needs.

**Activity 2.2:** Provide online access to both instruments through existing websites designed specifically for parents (e.g., Minnesota Parents Know, <http://mnparentsknow.info>, and Is Your Child Ready, <http://www.isyourchildready.com>).

**Activity 2.3:** Monitor frequency of use and penetration within pilot areas for online access to screening.

**Activity 2.4:** Provide specific outreach to encourage parent access and use through targeted service providers (health care providers, Head Start, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs).

**Activity 2.5:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the online screening in reaching Children with High Needs and increasing valid and reliable developmental and mental health screening.

**Goal 3: Improve the ability of ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators to choose, use, and interpret assessment data.**

**Activity 3.1:** Improve the skills of Early Childhood Educators to use both formative and environmental assessment data already collected in their programs to identify factors promoting (or inhibiting) child developmental achievements, and to use these data to systematically change programs, services, or supports to improve child outcomes.

A recent Minnesota survey of early childhood professional development access and needs (Pierce & Chase, 2007) notes that while all or most early childhood professionals have training in health, nutrition, and safety, only 35% of family child care providers and 59% of center-based providers have had any training on assessment and the use of assessment data to meet individual needs. According to this survey, professionals indicated that the largest barriers to participating in further training were the cost of that activity and the scheduling challenges related to getting time off and traveling to a distant site. Participants of current online offerings by the University of Minnesota Assessment and Training Center at the Center for Early Education and Development (Appendix 28), the operational partner here, note flexibility of scheduling as one particular asset. As a result, our approach will build online training resources (i.e., always-available, always “local” training activities) developed by the Assessment and Training Center

(an academic center with expertise in assessment and in the development of online training).

Steps include:

- Specify focus and delivery mechanisms for future training by reviewing survey data collected from existing Centers of Excellence (regional, cross-sector councils responsible for professional development in their area; see D2 for more information), with a specific focus on benefits and gaps of past training and needs for future online offerings.
- Assess training needs of providers who serve Children with High Needs, as well as barriers to participation (e.g., incentives, time off).
- Develop six to eight modules for online instruction (including online and ancillary materials), then test and refine delivery of these modules for Early Childhood Educators throughout the state, including provider satisfaction evaluations, direct or indirect measures of provider behavior, or program feature change as result of training. Modules will be aligned with Minnesota's Workforce Knowledge and Development Framework.
- Provide modules for dissemination and use through existing professional development and training channels, including Departments of Education and Human Services and regional Resource and Referral agencies.

**Activity 3.2:** Build capacity for sustaining improved professional developmental around child and environmental assessment in communities with high ratios of Children with High Needs.

Given the relatively short history of development of environment rating scales and their use in Minnesota, we know that less capacity exists in ELD Programs or the professional development resources that support them to provide training in this area. This goal is related to Goal 1, Activity 1 in Section D2, which includes coaching, consultation, and mentoring on child and program assessment and services to children with special needs. Implementation is most likely to be effective when professional development information-sharing is paired with more intensive and applied coaching work (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Steps include:

- Conduct detailed analysis of relation between Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards) and environment rating assessments currently used in our state to identify ways in which assessment information relates to, or indicates, aspects of these Standards. Review this information with staff from Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services, as well as administrators

and program directors. Identify assessment instruments that best represent or describe program performance relative to these Standards.

- Develop, test/evaluate, and refine relationship-based professional development protocols that can be disseminated to Centers of Excellence throughout the state for on-site assessment and coaching. These protocols will include specification of data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis and utilization standards, development of intervention targets, and coaching strategies for meeting these targets in family- and center-based ELD Programs.
- Test implementation fidelity and efficacy when implemented by Centers of Excellence staff, and design or refine protocols as needed.

**Goal 4: Increasing capacity to connect and coordinate intervention across data sources to increase coordination and efficiency of ELD services**

Activities in this goal will expand the use of electronic Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans (CPLPs), a virtual “early warning and response system” developed by TIES (Appendix 29) for individual decision making with leading indicators about children’s development and behavior. Assessment data is only useful when it is used for making decisions. The challenge of multiple settings and little time for program planning make it difficult to put assessment data, from indicators to more comprehensive data, into practice. Web-based software tools such as the CPLP are designed to support educators and can also provide a form of coaching, by guiding the user—not by making decisions for them, but by providing a restricted range of options that prevent inappropriate decisions from being made (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). The CPLP allows adults in a variety of settings to see leading indicators of children’s skills and behavior, allowing for changes in instruction and activities that will improve the child’s developmental trajectory.

**Activity 4.1:** Form a Pre-kindergarten Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans expansion advisory group to review the current CPLP, survey potential users (e.g., parents, Early Childhood Educators, various geographic and cultural groups) and to plan for revisions and refinements that will increase its utility in ELD Programs.

**Activity 4.2:** Adapt existing software to produce a web-accessible format appropriate for use in ELD Programs.

**Activity 4.3:** Pilot improved version in ten sites, including the four Early Learning Challenge Target Communities.

**Activity 4.4:** Develop a plan for statewide use, including a business plan for long-term sustainability.

**Goal 5: Implement a public, system-wide School Readiness Report Card with indicators of how our system is doing.**

Monitoring the effects of a comprehensive assessment and data system—including investigations of whether it builds the capacity of staff, how well it reaches Children of High Needs, the extent to which resources are targeted in appropriate and effective ways—is a critical aspect of that system’s success (Baker, Linn, Herman, & Koretz, 2002). Minnesota’s key findings will be highlighted in 10 fact sheets, providing information on the status and well-being of Minnesota’s Children with High Needs (Appendix 30). Topics may include children with disabilities, healthy development in low-income families, and access to quality early learning in high need communities. The final topics will be determined in consultation with the Early Learning Council.

**Activity 5.1:** Working in public-private partnership, identify important trailing indicators of system development, implementation, and effectiveness, and select data elements to be reported describing these indicators over time. Develop School Readiness Report Card public-private planning and implementation team with Department of Education leadership and data staff and in conjunction with Wilder Research staff.

**Activity 5.2** Gather data for all indicators for previous five years.

**Activity 5.3** Develop reporting and query formats for Department of Education website, with data reports that align and provide public access to School Readiness Report Card.

**Activity 5.4** Continue data collection and reporting until 2021, with annual analysis of differences and trends by program type, income group, race, ethnicity, and region.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>C2. Comprehensive Assessment System</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Establish Task Force</b>																

1.1: Appoint members and establish scope																	
1.2: Establish deliverables																	
<b>Goal 2: Improve screening availability</b>																	
2.1 Develop training and implementation plan																	
2.2 Launch online access																	
2.3 Monitor use and penetration																	
2.4 Provide outreach to parents																	
2.5 Evaluate effectiveness																	
<b>Goal 3: Improve ability to choose, use, and interpret assessment data.</b>																	
3.1 Improve skills of educators to use formative and environmental assessment																	
a. Specify focus and delivery mechanisms																	
b. Assess training needs																	
c. Develop training modules.																	
d. Provide modules																	
3.2 Sustain improved professional development																	
a. Analyze ECIPs and environmental rating tools																	
b. Refine relationship-based professional																	



Task Force recommendations with members of the Children's Cabinet and for planning next steps to implement selected Task Force recommendations.

The Minnesota Office of Early Learning will oversee Goal 2, in collaboration with the Departments of Health, Human Services, and Education; and the Interagency Developmental Screening Task Force.

The Assessment and Training Center (ATC) at the University of Minnesota's Center for Early Education and Development is the lead party for Goal 3, under the direction of the Minnesota Office of Early Learning. The Minnesota Office of Early Learning will be responsible for leading discussion of final module topics and outlines. The Minnesota Office of Early Learning will be the lead on Goal 4 and will work with TIES, a Minnesota-based educational technology collaborative and the original developer of the Comprehensive Personalized Learning Plan.

Goal 5 will be led by a public-private partnership between the Wilder Foundation, the Minnesota Office of Early Learning, the Minnesota Early Learning Council, and data analysts from the Departments of Education and Human Services.

### **Appropriate Financial Resources**

**\$ 18,912,824 Public Funds (Part C and EC Screening)**

**\$ 2,225,166 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$21,137,990 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 28: Summary and description of Assessment and Training Center
- Appendix 29: TIES Cooperative Personalized Learning Plan description
- Appendix 30: School Readiness Report Card Report
- Letters of support: TIES, University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education and Development

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

The activities in Goal 1 will build on work described in other aspects of this plan (especially B1, program quality assessment; E1, Kindergarten Entry Assessment; and E2, coordinated data system) and will ultimately provide recommendations for implementation across all program types.

Many of the work products of these goals will be immediately accessible to ELD Programs. Because of the accessible nature of the online versions of ASQ and ASQ-SE, all types of ELD Programs will have access following the activities in Goal 2. The Comprehensive Personalized Learning Plan is, as one of its central design elements, intended for use across a wide variety of education and human service programs. As a result, with the tailoring expected for use in ELD Programs planned here, the resulting CPLP is expected to be both feasible and useful for implementation across ELD Program types. And, the School Readiness Report Card will, as a matter of design, report status and changes over time for each ELD Program type.

To the extent possible or appropriate, given needs data, training in Goal 3 will be “generic” across program types; however, we also expect needs data to highlight program-specific needs that can and should be addressed in module development. We also expect information gathered during design and testing to highlight needs to target or localize these protocols. These program-specific alternatives will be considered in review of design plans with the Office of Early Learning, and will factor directly in protocol development and testing.

#### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

Nowhere is the expression “a rising tide lifts all boats” more true than in system-level descriptions of school readiness efforts. Keeping that in mind, the work described throughout this section is designed to meet the needs of Children with High Needs (as well as other children) by coordinating assessment data collection and making the tools and results accessible and comprehensible to all.

Goal 1 increases the rigor, efficiency, utility, and coordination of data collection and utilization in ways that contribute to both individual-level monitoring and program improvement, and to overall system improvement over time. The subsequent rollout of online screening in Goal 2 will help provide more opportunities for providers and families of Children with High Needs to complete accurate screening by increasing access in a variety of time-efficient and linguistically appropriate ways. The Contractor hired for implementation and outreach for this improvement will work most closely and do outreach with public and private programs that reach Children with High Needs and their families.

We expect the training in Goal 3 to support improved services to Children with High Needs directly by bringing expanded capacity to programs that serve these children, and by

giving the professionals in these programs greater capacity for using data that support both individual and program-level improvement.

The Office of Early Learning will work with Assessment and Training Center, other institutions of higher education, and training groups to develop a plan that will focus especially on providers of Children with High Needs and the gaps and barriers they have in assessment training. This will include connecting providers with mental health professionals trained to assess and serve young children with mental health conditions. This is consistent with 2007 state legislation that allocated funds to develop early childhood mental health professionals and provide clinical mental health services to uninsured and underinsured children birth to five and their families (2007 Minnesota Laws chapter 147.HF1078-3E, article 8, section 8).

Complexity of individual and family needs, and an attendant variety of services and supports from multiple child and family-serving programs, is characteristic of many Children with High Needs. Further, the duplication or fragmentation of services and supports that accompany these varied needs is a major obstacle to effective services for these children and their families. As a result, the CPLP to be refined and pilot-tested in Goal 4 is designed specifically to improve all programs' ability to meet more of the specific needs of this population, and to do so more efficiently.

Finally, Goal 5 delivers a report of results directly to Minnesotans. Given the intent of our statewide system to promote school readiness for all children, including those with high needs—and the School Readiness Report Card's design to report outcomes for all children and for many subgroups of children (including those living in poverty, who have disabilities, or who are members of new immigrant communities)—parents, tax payers, program staff, and policymakers in Minnesota will have a close-up and moving picture of the success of their efforts to serve each as they work to serve all.