COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE FACT SHEET
Program Quality Improvement Pilot

As you know, Communities of Practice (CoP) is a component of the Program Quality Improvement Pilot. Since this term is widely used, we wanted to clarify what we mean by CoPs.

What is a CoP?
"Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."[1]

What are the characteristics of a CoP?
There are three basic characteristics of a CoP as listed below:

● Domain: Members have a shared interest, commitment or passion for the subject of their CoP, in this case the field of early education and care.

● Community: Members form a community where they learn from each other, share information, and develop trusting relationships. Since members get the knowledge they need, CoPs are considered peer-to-peer professional development.

● Practice: Members are practitioners who, in discussing their subject matter, develop a shared practice.

What types of discussions take place at a CoP?
Members of each CoP will decide what they want to discuss. Research shows that topics fall into some of the following categories:

● Problem solving
   ○ What do you do when the EEC licensor says children's coats can't touch when they are hung up in cubbies?

● Requests for information
   ○ Besides *When the Door Bell Rings*, what books do you read to develop children's numeracy skills?

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[1] Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner: Introductions to Communities of Practice (2015)

- Sharing of assets or resources
  - I was able to get a one-to-one aide for a child who didn't speak at the age of 3 through EEC's flex pool.

- Coordination and strategy
  - Can we share a substitute teacher between our two sites?

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What will the Birth-3ʳᵈ Grade Partnership do to make CoPs successful?
- Provide a CoP facilitator who will plan and organize meetings. The facilitator will ask members what practice areas they would to focus on in CoPs.
- Ensure that differences in practice and philosophy are discussed respectfully in order to contribute to everyone's professional development.
- Communicate with CoP members if meetings are cancelled due to weather.
- Present articles and/or videos that enhance participants understanding of focus areas.
- Provide 12-hour training certificates that may be used to meet EEC's 20 hours training requirement

What will Program Improvement Pilot educators be asked to do to make CoPs successful?
- Attend 6 out of 8 CoPs.
- Notify CoP facilitator if they are not able to attend a CoP.
- Participate in CoPs, including reading notes or materials discussed when the educator is absent.
- Provide honest feedback that will help the Partnership improve CoPs.

Will CoPs be evaluated?
- Yes.
- Members will be asked to do a meeting debrief at the end of every meeting.
- Members will be asked to fill out a survey twice in 8 months.
- The Partnership's outside evaluator may interview a few CoP members in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data.

Will Pilot sites receive any compensation to offset additional payroll costs?
- Yes.

- If site educators attend 6 out of 8 Cop meetings, they will receive will receive a stipend of $2,000.
- Funds can be used to pay staff for any overtime incurred or for substitute teachers.