

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 77

WHEREAS, preparing all of New Jersey's students for college and career is a critical mission for this Administration; and

WHEREAS, meeting that mission requires all of New Jersey's children to enjoy access to high-quality early education and development programs to prepare them for the challenges of life and learning; and

WHEREAS, providing high-quality early learning and development programs requires exceptional educators, a comprehensive curriculum, meaningful standards for measuring child growth and development, and the support of strong community programs to assist families; and

WHEREAS, providing these critical resources requires the combined efforts and expertise of several State agencies, including the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Health and Senior Services, and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, coordination and collaboration across multiple State Departments, including the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Health and Senior Services, and Human Services are therefore required to provide high-quality early learning and development programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRIS CHRISTIE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby created the New Jersey Commission for Early Learning and Development, hereinafter referred to as the "Early Learning Commission."

2. The Early Learning Commission shall consist of five members as follows: the Commissioner of the Department of Education; the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families or her designee; the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services or her designee; the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services or her designee; and the chairperson of the New Jersey Council for Young Children. The Commissioner of the Department of Education shall serve as the chairperson of the Early Learning Commission.

3. The Early Learning Commission shall organize as soon as practicable, but in no event shall it convene its first meeting later than one month following the effective date of this Order. Thereafter, the Early Learning Commission shall meet at least once each month, and more often if needed.

4. The Early Learning Commission is charged with recommending improvements to the quality of, and access to, early learning and development programs in the State of New Jersey in the most cost-effective manner possible.

5. In meeting that charge, the Early Learning Commission must, at a minimum:

a. Review existing programs and budgets across the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Health and Senior Services, and Human Services and determine the best way to coordinate those programs and budgets, as well as the delivery of services, to expand the number of high-quality early learning and development programs in New Jersey in the most cost-effective manner possible;

b. Identify ways to promote New Jersey's Quality Rating Improvement System, Grow NJ, in order to provide parents with

meaningful information on the quality of early learning and development programs throughout the State;

c. Enhance curricular and other supports for early childhood educators by, among other things, developing best practices and training modules and disseminating those practices and modules to early learning and development programs;

d. Coordinate social, health, and family supports for children with high needs enrolled in early learning and development programs by, to the extent permitted by Federal and State law, integrating data systems maintained by the Departments of Education, Children and Families, Health and Senior Services, and Human Services connected to early childhood programs; and

e. Regularly consult with the New Jersey Council for Young Children and the Coordinating Council for Part C of IDEA in discharging the above-enumerated duties.

6. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
18th day of October,
Two Thousand and Eleven,
and of the Independence of
the United States, the Two
Hundred and Thirty-Sixth.

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Jeffrey S. Chiesa

Chief Counsel to the Governor