



MEETING NOTES

Region 47 Action Council Meeting

Location: Zoom

Date & Time: March 1, 2023, 2:00pm-3:30pm

Council Members present: Rachael DeSpain, Maggie Fern, Lois Meisenheimer, Kris Noble, Lisa Lilja, Monica Wolfley

Council Members absent: Liz Buckwalter, Andrea Cossey, Kimberly Crump, Anji Garza, Aaqil Khan, Diane Lynn Ott, Diana Merdian, Krista Peterson, Beth Smaka, Lauren Stafford,

2:00pm Welcome and Family Council Update and Findings (15 minutes)

Notes: Stephanie King shared updates on the Family Council meetings including information about prior meetings and common questions asked. Action Council members asked additional questions to take back to the Family Council.

2:15pm Early Childhood Workforce Presentation (15 minutes)

Notes: Presentation on data related to the workforce that includes:

- Demographics of Family Child Care providers
 - Including languages, gender, and race
 - Level of education and Gateways ECE credentials
- Child Care Center Demographics
 - Licensed center directors' race/ethnicity
 - Licensed center teaching staff race/ethnicity
 - Education levels of directors and teaching staff
- State and local initiatives that support Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

2:30pm Workforce Discussion (45 minutes)

Notes: Members discussed the workforce by answering questions related to the landscape of the early childhood workforce, barriers to staff retention/recruitment in Head Start and School districts, and the impact it has on programming. Some discussion points were:

- Community colleges are working to build the Early Childhood workforce through their programming and scholarship opportunities. There is currently funding for individuals who want to pursue higher education in Early Childhood.



Once people start the process and learn how much goes into being a great educator and the pay associated with it, it turns people away.

- Smaller number of teachers and qualified staff entering the workforce will lead to bigger gaps.
- Significant changes are needed in how we value our teachers and support staff.
- Not only higher compensation is needed but also: supportive staff & administrators, and support from families & the community.
- The child care field has low retention of their employees also due to the difficulty of the work. Many child care centers, homes, and programs are stretched thin. Teachers, support staff, and administrators who do stay end up taking on multiple roles.
- The pandemic caused many families to lose their jobs, or many families chose to have parents stay home with their children. This is also in part because of school closures, low availability of child care, and concern for sickness. The ECEC workforce is primarily women who may have retired early or made the decision to leave the field to care for their families or find work elsewhere.
- There are many different qualifications for ECEC teachers and staff that make it difficult to find and keep quality staff. Passionate teachers who may not have the credentials find there is little incentive to pay for college courses to be qualified under the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- With few substitutes or staff to cover when someone is out, classrooms have had to close causing families to find last-minute care or take off of work.
- Best practices for children can't be followed which is providing consistent quality care when there is much staff turnover.
- Providers need resources to address the growing behavior changes in children. Many children have not had opportunities to socialize due to the pandemic, the result is children need a lot of support.

3:15pm Questions and Updates (5 minutes)

Notes: Members wrapped up the discussion of the workforce and will continue in the next meeting for part two of the workforce suggestions.

Follow-up/Next Steps: We will have an in-person meeting April 20th from 9am to 11am to do a data walk of highlights in the scan to gather feedback from the Action Council.

Next Meeting:

Date: March 14th, 2023

Time: 10:15am-11:15am