



MEETING NOTES

Region 47 Family Council Meeting

Location: Zoom

Date & Time: March 16, 2023, 6:00pm-7:30pm

Council Members present: Charis Allen, Candace Antczak, Sasha Gomes, Brittany Howard, Shayla Johnston Maggie LaFever, Carly Rodriguez
Council Members absent: Angie Danielson, Jessica Higgins

6:00 pm Welcome, Icebreaker & Community Agreements (15 minutes)

Notes: Members did an icebreaker activity where they answered what they looked forward to when Spring arrives. We went over community agreements to ensure all members were still in agreement.

6:15 pm ECEC Program Overview (5 minutes)

Notes: A quick refresher on publicly funded programs and child care programs.

6:20pm Report Card Activity (55 minutes)

Notes: The Family Council participated in a "Report Card" activity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs in our region. Members looked at programs, but also various components of these programs. Those topics included transportation, waitlists & enrollment, marketing, parent education, referrals, and kindergarten readiness. Some key points from the group discussion were:

- Referrals are developing within the region. Some members said they were able to get a referral for Early Intervention through their doctor. Another member shared that their pediatrician did not do the Ages and Stages screening or share any information on referrals.
- Marketing and outreach vary from town to town. Some members stated they never see information in their community for ECEC services or programs even when they go to their gynecologist. WIC and the health department have online flyers families can look up for information. Families rely on following community pages on social media or word-of-mouth recommendations. If you don't have connections, it can be difficult to find the right information.
- Families have to travel sometimes over 30 minutes one way to reach programs that have services for their children.



- Information for LOTS (Lee, Ogle Transportation System) or other transportation systems in the Region is not widely known. School based transportation is lacking, and parents are not properly informed on these services.
- Waitlists are a huge concern with many families waiting up to a year for evaluations or a spot in a child care setting.
 - Some places do not add you to the waitlist because of the number of families waiting for a spot.
 - There was still a need for the expansion of ECEC programs before the pandemic and now the need is greater.
- Staffing in child care programs or service providers is a problem. There is a high turnover rate, which leads to less quality in ECEC programs.
- More is needed for parent education and the expansion of therapy and mental health services.
- More family events are needed such as parent coffee meetings. The pandemic caused many families to not go out to socialize. Transportation to these events may need to be a consideration.
- Many children are not prepared for kindergarten and are lacking important self-help skills, socialization, and many important skills needed to be ready for kindergarten. Without preschool, children are having a hard time transitioning into kindergarten, especially with the high expectations that are set for that age group.
- Finding quality child care is difficult when there are barriers such as waitlist, costs, and transportation.

7:15pm Workforce and Wrap up/questions (15 minutes)

Notes: Members discussed the ECEC workforce and their thoughts on the current workforce climate. Some members discussed the difficulty of the work that goes into caring for children and the low compensation. Child Care teachers bounce around different to different programs in search of better opportunities but the consistency in quality affects the children.

Follow-up/Next Steps: We will be having an in-person meeting on April 27th from 4:00pm to 7:00pm.

Next Meeting:

Date: April 6th, 2023

Time: 6:00 pm-7:30 pm