

MEETING NOTES

Region 1-B-C Action Council Meeting

Location: Zoom Meeting

Date & Time: April 27, 2023, from 4:30-6:30 pm

Council Members present: Janis Jones, Kelly Burke, Leatha Asbury, Janice Martin, Michelle Zurita-Sharpe, Felicia McBride, Adelicia Brienzo, Aisha Esquivel, Marisa Covington, Simone Gatlin

Council Members absent: Gretchen Bailey, Rochelle Golliday

4:30 PM: Welcomes/Icebreaker (15 mins)

- **What would be the name of your autobiography if you wrote one?**

Notes:

- Ashonti Jackson, our Regional Council Manager (RCM), speaks with Action Council about the RFP (Request for Proposals) Block Grant that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) introduced and how Birth to Five IL will provide Technical Assistance.
- Action Council members talk with Region 1-B-C on the FY 24 Early Childhood Block Grant breakdown.

Decisions made: Jaime Garibay, our Family & Community Engagement (FACE) Specialist shared the ISBE RFP link with Action Council to give them more information and updates.

Next Steps: Review of Community Agreements & Best Practices

4:45 PM: Review of Community Agreements & Best Practices (15 mins)

Notes:

- Action Council Members decided not to change the Community Agreements or Best Practices.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Parents, Caregivers, & Families-Their Voice & Their Story

5:00 PM: Parents, Caregivers, & Families-Their Voice & Their Story (20 mins)

Notes:

- Ashonti Jackson (RCM) introduces Family Council Members. She opens the floor for them to share their story on why they joined the Birth to Five Illinois Council and what made them want to be involved in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECEC).

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Review of Kick-Off Event

5:20 PM: Review of Kick-Off Event (10 mins)

Notes:

- Ashonti Jackson (RCM) speaks with Action Council about the Birth to Five Illinois Kick-Off Event and what were some responses from the Focus Groups/Interviews:
 - Attendees thought the area was above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) except for Harvey. The number of children below FPL shocked some attendees.
 - There was a surprise that the percentage of children in south suburbs unprepared for KDG was higher than that of all of Illinois.
 - There are fewer Early Head Start (EHS) programs than expected.
 - Children aged 0-3 are underrepresented.
 - There are some very transient areas, so the services often do not follow the family.
 - Transportation

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Review of Focus Group Parent Feedback

5:30 PM: Review of Focus Group Parent Feedback (10 mins)

Notes:

- Ashonti Jackson (RCM) speaks with Action Council about the Birth to Five Illinois, Parent Focus Group Feedback, and what were some of their responses:
 - Not familiar with EI services.
 - EI services not providing transition of services to Elementary Schools.
 - Parents need more ways to socialize with children.
 - Long wait times/waiting lists.
 - Safety concerns.
 - Not understanding how to find services, what is available, or what they qualify for.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Breakout Session 1

5:40 PM: Breakout Session 1 (10 mins)

Notes: Think about the parents when answering these questions:

1. What are parents' experiences with access to early childhood care and education in the region?
- Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. Scheduling/work conflicts - before and aftercare.
 - b. Lack of translation/interpretation/bilingual staff.
 - c. Lack of navigator/difficulty accessing information.
 - d. Cost - CCAP eligibility and knowledge of access.
 - e. Too much paperwork and intake process.

- f. Transportation - to and from program/home/daycare.
 - g. Mistrust daycare centers have received a nasty rap, always showing the negatives in the media.
 - h. EI services- there are many gaps in parents' access to early intervention services through their pediatricians/Medicaid clinic.
 - i. Many parents still do not know their community's available early childhood services. Can we have a consistent place that holds all this information?
2. Whose voices are still missing? How can those be captured in the future?
- Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. English as a second language families. Lack of support with communication and understanding.
 - b. Community agencies (faith-based centers, churches, park districts).
 - c. Families in crisis/experiencing trauma.
 - d. Immigrant families.
 - e. Multilingual and Limited English Proficient families.
 - f. Geographically or culturally/linguistically isolated families (without social networks to receive 'word of mouth' support).
 - g. Families with children with disabilities.
 - h. Youth in care.
3. Do current services/supports seem sufficient for how the community is growing/changing?
- Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. Current support does not seem sufficient for the community.
 - b. No - English Learner/Multilingual populations are proliferating in many areas—lack of multilingual staff, culturally responsive PD, and EL services.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Review of Caregiver's Feedback

5:50 PM: Review of Caregiver's Feedback (10 mins)

Notes:

- Ashonti speaks with Action Council about the Birth to Five IL, Parent Focus Group Feedback, and what were some of their responses:
 - Transportation.
 - Income Guidelines.
 - Documentation requirements.
 - Employers can support employees through an enhanced FMLA system.
 - Providers also need support from their children.
 - Smaller classrooms.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Breakout Session 2

6:00 PM: Breakout Session 2 (10 mins)

Notes: Think about the providers when answering these questions:

1. What are the caregiver's experiences in ECEC in our Region?
 - Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. There seems to be much confusion about how to gain access to services. Or just not knowing who to call. The voices of parents are still missing. How do we encourage them to join childcare communities or focused groups?
 - b. Providers have their own (personal) childcare needs.
 - c. Burnout - insufficient "downtime"/"self-care."
 - d. Lack of information/access to information.
 - e. Lack of accurate, up-to-date, accessible data.
 - f. Lack of qualified support/staffing - to attend training, meetings, etc.
 - g. OVERWHELMED! Too many demands!
2. Whose voices are still missing? How can those be captured in the future?
 - Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. Father/father-figure voices are lacking- extended family voices (grandparents).
 - b. Multilingual providers, Monolingual Providers work with multilingual/LEP families.
 - c. Providers that support children with disabilities.
3. How can we better compensate our ECEC Workforce?
 - Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. For Payment: What else can be offered? Supplementing benefits, housing offerings for working in marginal areas, and educators getting free childcare could be a bonus and tax credits.
 - b. Infant-Child Mental Health Consultants / Reflective Supervision.
 - c. Time off / shorter hours / flexible schedules.
 - d. Childcare support.
 - e. FAIR AND EQUITABLE WAGES.
 - f. Increased resources and support (social work, materials, behavioral specialists, instructional coaches).
 - g. Tuition reimbursement / Training and certification/licensing /higher education support.
 - h. More planning/collaboration/training time.
4. What support do Caregivers need in our Region?
 - Action Council Member's responses to the above question:
 - a. Free higher education for teachers/teaching staff.
 - b. Up-to-date data!
 - c. Free mental health services for teachers.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Final Questions

6:10 PM: Final Questions (10 mins)

Notes:

1. Why is it essential to include this information in the scan?
2. Can families access the ECEC services and programs they need and want in this region? If not, why?
3. What support should be in place for families, caregivers, and providers?

Decisions made: Region 1-B-C Team will email Final Questions to Action Council Members. Questions will be discussed at the next meeting

Next Steps: Next Steps/Closing

6:20 PM: Next Steps/Closing (10 mins)

Notes:

- Ashonti Jackson speaks with Action Council on the following steps:
 - Regional Strengths and Needs
 - Regional Recommendations

Decisions made: Changing the date of our May 25th Meeting.

Next Steps: Next Meeting

May 11, 2023-Regional Strengths & Needs

4:30-6:30 pm