



MEETING NOTES

Region 1-B-C Family Council Meeting

Date & Time: May 18, 2023, 5:00-7:00 PM Zoom Meeting

Council Members present: Brenda Lopez, Regina Harden, Aisha Esquivel, Simone Gatlin, LaDonna Reynolds, Marisa Covington, Kemi Robbin
Council Members absent: Tiara Harris Magee, Sharell

5:00 PM: Welcome & Introduction (5 mins)

Notes:

- Jaime Garibay, our Family & Community Engagement Specialist, starts the meeting by letting Family Council Members know that this is our last meeting before submitting the Regional Needs Assessment.

Decisions made: Jaime G. informed Family Council Members of us hosting an office hour soon, and we will send more information.

Next Steps: Ice Breaker

5:05 PM: Ice Breaker (15 mins)

Do you have any weird collections?

Notes:

- Family Council Members discuss their weird collections.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Review of Community Agreements

5:20 PM: Review of Community Agreements (5 mins)

Notes:

- Family Council Members review the community agreements.

Decisions made: Family Council Members decided not to make any changes to the community agreements at this time.

Next Steps: Parent & Family Engagement-Recap

5:35 PM: Parent & Family Engagement-Recap (10 mins)

Notes:

- Jaime G. places Family Council members into breakout groups to discuss the parent & family engagement of Region 1-B-C. Family Council members are to



add their thoughts to the Google slide shared in the chat. Family Council Members' responses are below:

- ECEC providers need mental health release space to cool off and take a breather, quiet space/sensory space.
- Continuing education courses and certifications for ECEC providers and the time to complete these courses/certifications.
- ECEC providers need to enforce sick/illness policies.
- A space for ECEC providers to network/mingle (quarterly, every six months, annually). A mental health event.
- Health and sanitation improvements.
- More virtual training for providers that can be used as professional development.
- Information on available virtual PD training.
- Business owner-specific education.
- Training on new digital application processes.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Regional Strengths & Needs

5:45 PM: Regional Strengths & Needs (15 mins)

Notes:

- Jaime G. places Family Council members into breakout groups to discuss the regional strengths, needs, and barriers of Region 1-B-C. Family Council members are to add their thoughts to the jam board shared in the chat. Family Council member's responses are below:

What strengths have the council members identified in their own experiences?

- Other advocacy groups on different platforms.
- More accommodations are being made to help more families needing CCAP, changing the guidelines and making it easier for families to get involved in the program.
- More resources are being provided to needy families (diapers, formula, clothing, etc.).
- That we are not alone in many of the struggles we face.
- The desire to be more educated regarding services available at each site for the needs of each child. To be selective.
- The willingness to advocate for other parents and their children.
- The ability to be patient and more understanding.

What are the challenges facing the ECEC workforce in the region?



- Staffing shortages.
- Low pay wages, no benefits, no retirement plans available.
- Behavioral challenges in children.
- Making purchases for classrooms out of pocket and using personal funds.
- Changes in parental child-rearing.
- Increased training requirements by DCFS.
- Understanding the difference between setting boundaries and allowing choices (families don't always agree with ECEC providers).
- Co-pays not being received from parents.
- Lack of family involvement/support in the classroom and program.
- Not being paid promptly for subsidies received from the state.
- Payment systems are not operating correctly, causing missed payments or drastic delays in receiving payments.
- Scheduling that mutually works for parents and providers.
- Parents who expect caregivers to raise their children.
- Demanding parents.

What barriers do parents face with accessing ECEC in the region? Do they have access to the services and programs they need and want?

- Not having access to high-quality care for their children results in a lack of trust in the programs they do have access to.
- Difference in education system/program offered depending on location and area (city vs. suburbs).
- Long paperwork process and not understanding the eligibility guidelines.
- Language barriers.
- Not having a local directory of service providers.
- Teachers whose attitudes are unsatisfactory with their sites or pay and lack supplies are unenthusiastic with their job.
- The desired sites are not the caregiver sites that we want. Parents want their children to have better resources but are limited to locations within a specific service area, not the desired areas.

Where are the other needs/opportunities for growth that your council members have identified?

- Expanding the membership and adding new members to the group.
- Spreading the word about the benefits to families and children on ECEC advocacy work.
- Become more engaged with social media shares about the council.



- Better regional recognition so families and providers know that resources/advocacy groups exist.
- Have a table with council-related materials at school board meetings.
- Rely more on local elementary schools, churches, and doctor's offices to help get the word out.
- Share flyers with the school to send home with kids.
- Join community resource fairs.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Regional Recommendations

6:00 PM: Regional Recommendations (30 mins)

Notes: Jaime G. places Family Council members into breakout groups to discuss the Regional Recommendations of Region 1-B-C. Family Council members are to add their thoughts to the jam board shared in the chat.

How can Birth to Five Illinois: Region 1-B-C Action and Family Councils support local collaboration efforts? How can the councils support the Birth to Five Forum?

What are parent preferences for your region's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs and services?

- More full-day programs.
- Summer programs.
- More center-based programs from 0-3.
- More transportation.
- Multiple languages must be taught to children at school (not just Spanish but French or Italian).

Decisions made:

Next Steps: Q&A/Parking Lot

6:30 PM: Q&A/Parking Lot (15 mins)

Notes:

Decisions made:

Next Steps: Council Palooza

Follow-up/Next Steps:

Next Meeting:



Date: June 24, 2023

Time: 1:30-4:30 PM

Council Palooza