



## 3rd Meeting Minutes

### Region 4 Family Council Meeting

**Zoom:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlqd-6upjkeE9UnMJTF\\_jEDtXm2SFXhGHNK](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlqd-6upjkeE9UnMJTF_jEDtXm2SFXhGHNK)

Meeting ID: 86707682591

Passcode: 797590

Date & Time: Tuesday, January 10, 2022, 6pm-8pm

Attendees: Kelly McNeal, Livia Bane, Lisa Coen, Becky Durick, Amber Merrimon, Catherine Richards, Jennifer Simms, Meagan Kerr, Megan Schultz, Ursula Sobattka, Teresa Fillers

I. **Welcome & Icebreaker** (10 min) Facilitator(s): Livia Bane, Regional Council Manager and Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist

- Welcome and reminder of key role of Family Council members.
- Revisit Mission
- Region 4 Community Agreement

II. **Recap of last meeting** (10 min) Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist

- Region Landscape/Demographics
- ECEC Programs
- Kudos to Family Council members for sharing their wealth of knowledge about the ECEC Landscape.

III. **Regional Scan** (15 min) Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist

Digging into the Regional Scan – [Dash \(illinois.edu\)](https://dash.illinois.edu)

IV. **Understanding Data Discussion & Video** (40 min) Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist



V. **Break** (5 min)

VI. **Slot Gap Discussion and Breakout Sessions** (35 min) Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist

Based on the data, how many open slots are available for preschools, early child care and infant toddler care?

Questions and comments:

Have you had a child who had to sit on a waitlist or know someone who has?

- 6-mo. waitlist and eventually had to drive to Springfield for special resource.
- Meagan Kerr and son on a waitlist for a year.
- Daily calls asking if there were openings.
- Parents pay to hold seats for expectant mothers.
- Pay for spot in the summer to not lost their spot.
- Spots often age dependent
- DCFs regulations consider “infants” up to 2.5 yrs – further reducing availability.
- Limited after school care openings.

What are the availability guidelines for special needs, income, lower income, single-parent household?

- State funded seats are extremely specific to allow for priority access to “at-risk” students.
- Preferred seats for kids who receive a “higher score” in state funded requirements.
- Parents in the building get first dibs to the programs.
- Families re-engaging but often placed on a waitlist as far as a year out and then do not meet age eligibility.
- Parker Center had extremely specific requirements for placement. Child did not qualify and went to private church daycare.
- Teresa Fillers indicates that there is often not enough space or instructors for more kids.



### Review Community Report – Comments by Family Council Members

- Preschool for all is not federally funded and it could be more effective if it were.
- Where are we serving the children under 2 years?
- Early Head Start? It is difficult to see the entire picture when we aren't given all the data.
- 12,000+ Birth to 2 kids and only 180 Early Head Start slots???
- Where is data showing median income and what programs are based on income requirements?
- How is Federal funding distributed?
- Preschool for all and Head Start work together (which may affect numbers reported).
- How are we supporting lack of transportation?
- How are we supporting families who need childcare for additional hours?

### Early Care and Education Sites Map –

- What are families finding care in rural areas?
- West Rockford has sparse daycare options.
- Lack of licensed child care centers.
- Non-licensed child care homes are *not* included on the list.
- Family friend/family neighbor care filling in the gaps in NW quarter?

### Infant Toddler Slots –

- Not meeting the needs of all families.
- All programs have a stop point with staff challenges.
- What do waitlists look like (what is the demand vs. what is available)?
- Are services stuck in “pilot program” mode when they need to be expanded?
- How to get into different programs? Are parents aware of these programs?
- Data “on paper” doesn't tell the entire story. Need more information to develop a better plan.



### Home Visiting Slots IECAM Map –

- Slots vs. need is “sad”.
- Numbers show a “lack of interest” in supporting families with young children and babies.
- How are the programs accessed? Do parents know about these resources?

Kelly and Livia provided a brief description of Home Visiting services.

[Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting \(MIECHV\) Program | MCHB \(hrsa.gov\)](#)

- Rockford Public Schools receive MIECHV funding to offer baby/toddler programs.
- Parents Too Soon (Qualify based on age and specific poverty level)
- Where is the single point of entry for childcare services? (ex: YWCA).
- How do parents find information?
- What is the best way to give referrals?
- Why is there not a clearly set up and defined system?
- Jennifer Simms – Many of the job opening through the City of Rockford are Head Start openings and require a bachelor’s degree.
- What do we need to do to get more staff and kids into these programs? How best to educate people and then retain them long term? There is *clearly* a need.

### Community Report – Comments made by Family Council members

- Is there a report of the amount of COVID dollars were given to these sites?
- It will be interesting to see 2022 stats as COVID clearly effected these numbers.
- Effects of COVID on our kids will become more prominent over the next several years.
- Kids missed early childhood education and care during a very crucial time of development.



VII. **Individual Takeaways** (10 min) Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist

**What surprised you?**

- Surprised by programs offered.
- Surprised by lack of available slots offered (but need to know how many families are waiting for care)
- Surprised by “daycare desserts in our region.”
- As a State and a region, we are “not supporting these kids.”
- *Who* are these providers reflected in the scan?
- Kids learn best when involved with other kids. Families need more program options.

**Why should it be included in the scan?**

- Neighbor and family care data is not available.
- Need to capture more data.
- Need more data to improve the system.

**Conclusion —**

*Thank you all for your time and comments. Your willingness to share is informing the direction of early childcare.*

**Discussion of proposed “Power Hour” to begin in February.**

- Combined FC and AC discussion group
- Possible face-to-face meeting with a data walk was well-received by the group.

Next Meeting:

Date: February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Time: 6:00pm -8:00pm

Location: Zoom