



6th Meeting Notes

Region 4 Family Council Meeting

Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlqd-6upjkeE9UnMJTF_jEDtXm2SFXhGHNK

Meeting ID: 86707682591

Passcode: 797590

Date & Time: Tuesday, March 15, 6pm-8pm

Attendees: Kelly McNeal, Livia Bane, Lisa Coen, David Q., Jennifer Simms, Megan Kerr, Megan Schultz, Ursula Sobattka, Teresa Fillers, Catherine (Cammie) Richards, Amber Merrimon

Absent: Trisha Brondyke, Becky Durrick, Jessica Olmo

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.
- Recap Community Agreement
- National Incredible Kids Day, March 16

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

- Access to Childcare
- Effects of Covid on ECEC, especially as it relates to children.

III. **What's Working in ECEC** (40 min) Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement Specialist

- There is a genuine interest in ECEC in our region.
- Teachers support parents and children where they are.
- Passionate teachers are *working*.



- There seems to be an emphasis on social and emotional aspects of education.
- Training children to understand just who the safe adults are.
- Requesting and receiving speech therapy was a streamlined process and everyone was helpful. Only needed birth certificate.
- Need to make individuals aware of the importance of ECEC.
- Need additional resource and funding.
- We are in a mental health crisis (i.e. mass shootings, Covid), and kids are coping with these issues daily.
- This generation is more open to differences and loving all.
- Work to create a better “work/life balance” than previous generations.
- Previous generations believe our kids are “too soft”, but we are making the “clarification” that ECEC is important.
- The goal of equitability and accessibility are forefront.
- More children are learning multiple languages.
- Children are learning social and emotional life skills which will make them a productive member of society.
- Equity and positivity are being built up at an early age.
- It is a different time now and most families have two working parents.
- It Takes a Village. Who is your village?
- Not all kids have the same experiences.
- Children need life skills, not just testing.
- Focus is different because the world is different. (In regard to Gen X vs. Millennials)

Shift Through a Parents Lens

Speech therapy via Zoom and paying out of pocket because child required immediate need.

Was told by the school that since speech delay was not affecting education it did not meet requirements for intervention.

Because her private preschool is working, mom determined paying out of pocket was the only option as her insurance would not pay unless the child was part of the public preschool program. Mom has since learned you can request "walk-in " services but was not made aware of that at the time of request.



Screening determined her child was “not far enough behind” for speech therapy until 2nd grade. If child had received therapy at a younger age, their speech would have been corrected earlier. Child fell behind because of delay in services.

Gaps based on demographics.

- “Preschool for All is not for all.”
- Harlem School District has extremely limited capacity.
- Turned away because there were not enough seats.
- Rockford is currently at full capacity.

- Child had a late (August) birthday and was not eligible for 1st choice preschool by the time they are eligible to test. In August there are no spots available in 1st choice school and child had to go 20 minutes away to attend preschool. Mom believes that if the child is eligible for school that calendar year, they should be eligible to screen at any time. (This is a grant requirement issue).

If not for _____, I do not know where I’d be.

- Harlem School District (Seat Saving)
- Visiting tutor.
- Comm events
- Laundry Love
- Knowledgeable daycare provider sharing resources.
- IE
- CCR&R
- Grant Funds
- Mentorships
- Family/Village
- Park District (paid programs)
- YWCA (paid programs)
- WIC
- Professionals
- Friends
- Parent often seeks out programs in Rockford and surrounding areas as Rockford is at capacity.
- The Park District is open when area schools are closed.



- Illinois Dept of Health allowed member to return to college with child care provided. Allowed parent the opportunity to go to school to make more money. College was paid for, and she had day care. Attended RVC and Rockford Univ. Chemistry program. (Ursula)

Barriers

- Child care deserts.
- Grant funds have requirements for eligibility.
- DCFS requires a teacher to have a certificate.
- Need access to programs and a “systems change.”
- Need additional workforce.
- Classrooms are currently closed due to inability to staff them.
- School District does not have enough physical space.
- Need child care assistance.
- Grant for licensed teachers RVC/RU.
- Limited seats and exceptionally long waitlists.
- Zoom Speech therapy is a plus. Feels she “over advocated” for her child to receive services as she knew they were needed.
- ECACE offers the ability to work in child care and receive clinical hours at the same time, as many cannot afford to work a semester unpaid.
- Mention Silvia Diaz ECACE program. Will send details to council members.
- Need to make more individuals aware of the connection between access to ECEC and a strong workforce.
- Need to market the programs more widely.

IV. **Break** (5 min)

V. **Regional Scan Component Discussion** (35 min) **Facilitator(s): Kelly McNeal, Family & Community Engagement**

- Preparation of Scan.
- Disseminate data and information.
- Will have an April and May meeting then take a break.
- Will share data report with council members.
- Council members will become ambassadors to the work of Birth to Five Illinois.
- Will be recruiting additional council members after a break in June.



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

- The importance of mentorships. Taylor of Taylor's Tots is a mentor to several home care providers. Provides information on funding and offers her knowledge and experience to benefit others. She is a wonderful network provider.
- There is a need to create a "network" of providers who work together.

Next Meeting:

Date: April 11, 2023

Time: 6:00pm -8:00pm

Location: Zoom