



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 40 Action Council Meeting

**Date & Time: February 28, 2023, at 6:30 pm**

Council Members present: Amber Nash, Marla Willard, Stephanie Emery, Kelsey Arnold, Cindy Rice, Kristine Stanley, Amy Hess

Council Members absent: Amanda Goben, Marcia Schulte, Sarah Schmidt, Jennifer Lubrant, Lisa Kallal, Laura Sams, Regina Lindsey, Lisa Goode, Jackie Vandoren

#### **6:30 pm: Welcome and Icebreaker (15 Minutes)**

Notes: What is something you are looking forward to this spring.?

Decisions made:

Next Steps: N/A

#### **7:00 pm: Overview of our Narrative (15 Minutes)**

The minutes from our last meeting have been updated on the website.

Governor's Budget Proposal – Focus on Early Childhood Education and Child Care, Smart Start Illinois.

- The Smart Start Illinois proposal includes program funding for the stabilization, expansion, and improvement of Early Childhood Education and Care programs and the workforce.
- Birth to Five Illinois will play a role in community implementation, but we are not a program provider.
- We can help in educating the community about decisions that are made about Smart Start Illinois, make others aware of those program improvements, and learn about how they can access dollars.
- We will continue to gather community-level input about Early Childhood programs and services and provide that critical feedback to the State.

Decisions made:

Regional Council Manager shared a little bit about the Narrative writing that has been started

- Submitted who is all on our Action Council and Family Council, all our council members will be named in the narrative.
- Submitted regional landscape, what does our region look like?



Next Steps:

Regional Manager will give feedback on the information that has been submitted currently in a draft form.

**7:15 pm: Workforce (40 minutes)**

The Early Childhood Education and Care workforce consists of professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteers who promote healthy growth.

Decisions made: We are aware that we need more slots in our region, but if families cannot obtain transportation to those slots that also seems to be a real problem in our area, also if we do not have the workforce, we will be unable to move forward. What are some barriers facing those who want to advance their education in ECE?

- Time
- Money, underpaid position
- The culture of the workplace
- What opportunities are in the communities, some want to stay in the community that they live in.
- Insurance cost for in-home licensed childcare.
- Navigating the packet/process from the Department of Children and Family Service (DCFS) is extremely hard to get through the paperwork for licensing.
- DCFS is understaffed and licensing representative is unable to assist in timely manner.
- We minimize our childcare workers/teachers any individual in education.

Decisions made: Workforce behind the workforce, what are some common stressors, and challenges in the ECEC setting or school setting? To carry out their role.

- Limited resources, funding, money, and insurance for their employee's costs.
- Transportation
- Time
- Family and parent cooperation, parents and families are frustrated.
- An increased number of children experiencing trauma.
- Poverty
- Understanding of the family dynamics and resources and experiencing what individuals are facing they are unable to relate to the individual. Maybe parenting is hard for them. (counseling, training, medical, dental having a collaboration that family can go to one place to be able to assistance of all types)



- Finding mental health services for pediatric individuals in our area. Must travel to Springfield, or St. Louis for any type of specialized care.
- Safety, Covid for the staff being exposed, bedbugs, lice, personal safety.
- Violence from children and families in the workplace.

Decisions made: What are the strengths of our workforce? What type of initiatives do we have going to support our workforce?

- Nurturing
- Dedicated individuals
- Want to have knowledge of developmentally appropriate growth.
- They truly want to be there.
- They are people who want to grow, such as continued education in the field.
- Providing education at low or no cost
- Being paid while continuing your education
- INCCRA has all kinds of free training, education, and or supplemental income.

Next Steps: What other job is taking them away from the education that they received to work in Early Childhood Education?

Decisions made: What is the perception of childcare in reference to public attitude?

- Unvalued workers
- Cannot see it directly.
- It's maternal employment.
- Unskilled

Next Steps: How do we change that perception?

### **7:55 pm: What is next (5 Minutes)**

Notes: What is your pie-in-the-sky dream for the workforce in ECEC?

- Free childcare for all.
- Higher paying wages.
- Increased financial resources.
- Sliding scale for daycare fees based on your income.
- One-stop shop for mental health, a clearing house of information, a system that shares information with one another. We spend so much time finding resources.

Follow-up/Next Steps: Next: Looking at our region as a whole, what are we meeting and what are we not meeting?



Next meeting will be:  
March 14, 2023  
6:30pm  
YonderWorks / ZOOM