



REGION 8 ACTION COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

1 p.m. Jan 4, 2023, Stewart Centre Freeport

ZOOM ONLY: Sarah Kuhlemeier, Kenny Lewis, Ashley Harms, Stephanie Lewis, Jenine Patty-Anderson, Amanda Meyers, Emily Dixon, Amiee Schoenhaar, Devan Spellman.

Regional Council Manager Lou Ann Hayes called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and began with Council members introducing themselves. This was a Zoom-only meeting at the request of the members.

Lou Ann then gave a short PowerPoint presentation to review the information presented in December and then added a slide depicting a racial breakdown of kids age 0-5 that live in Region 8 according to census figures. Some Council members thought the numbers looked low for our region. Members thought it would be interesting to compare numbers they have from the regional school office to the census numbers from 2017 to the present to see if they match up.

Lou Ann had sent Council members a brief survey before the meeting to get their thoughts on the environment that exists regarding Early Childhood Education and Care in Region 8 since they are our experts on the ECEC world here. Members' responses indicated the region needs support in many areas. One of those areas not mentioned but should be added is the behavioral and mental health needs of both kids and teachers/staff.

Discussion then turned to why this information needs to be included in the Regional Scan to be prepared for Region 8 and submitted to Birth to Five Illinois at the State level. Lou Ann said this scan will be the road map as to how to proceed in the future to address ECEC needs.

Lou Ann then showed a map of where the ECEC centers are located in Region 8, however, we know there are some that don't exist anymore and some that do and are not included. Members agreed not enough childcare is available. Areas that need a center include outlying Stephenson County and one each in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties depending on the location with most need.



Phone
(309)-245-1873



Email
tmckenna@birthtofiveil.com



Address
50 W. Douglas St Suite 605
Freeport, IL 61032

Since Jo Daviess County appears to have a need, members discussed how best to address that.

Apparently, the ARC agency in Galena oversees most childcare options. Attempts to form a collaboration with the staff there haven't been successful and members talked about ways to help reverse that. Members also reviewed the list to remove ones no longer in operation or do exist and are not listed. They also said they do not have much contact with providers in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties. Lou Ann suggested hosting a meet and greet for in-home providers so they can meet others and not feel so isolated.

Members also said another issue to address is how best to prepare Hispanic children for kindergarten. These kids need more direct and intentional support and there is a lack of ways to communicate with these families due to a language barrier. There also is a lack of trust by the families over giving any type of information for fear it will affect their status to stay in the US. Suggestions to solve these issues were discussed.

The next topic for discussion was how Covid has impacted providers. Members had strong opinions and listed many ways they have had to adapt their operations. They are seeing kids needing basic services such as speech therapy, potty training, mental health, and social and behavioral issues.

Home visits to engage families and provide services have decreased significantly. Providers' staff are feeling frustrated they can't do their jobs properly because they are forced to spend time meeting the basic needs of the kids first.

The meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m. The next meeting is 1 p.m. on Jan 18.

Todd McKenna
Administrative Support
Birth to Five Illinois Region 8

