



MEETING NOTES

Region 30 Action Council Virtual Meeting

Date & Time: Thursday, February 16, 2023, 5:30p—7:30p

Council Members present : Sheryl Houston, Tangela Oliver, Tracie Griffith, M Stalls, Denise Henry, Colleen McLaughlin, Sandy Snowden, Dona Middleton, and Sheridan Johnson

Council Members absent : Debbie Bruns, Lindsey Baskin, Keeshia Carr, Cindy Rice, Patty Davis, Brittany Matthews, Kathy Swafford, Cheryl Graff, Van Ikner, Lashauna Cornelius, NaTasha Hubbard

5:30pm Welcome, Introductions, and review of Community Agreements (10 minutes)

Notes: Zena welcomed everyone to our second meeting of this month and thanked everyone for their time. Shared that we will have Council Members present information from their programs. Zena mentioned that we would start by her sharing a video called "How Are The Children" (link: https://youtu.be/dg_tlwkOUww). She asked if any had comments regarding the video and asked everyone: "Do you think our children are well in Region 30?". She mentioned that it is our ultimate goal to be able to truly state that our children are well in Region 30. Council Members expressed their comments about the touching video and also wanted to share it with others as well as confirm that our children are *not* well.

5:40pm Team Building (20 minutes)

Presenter: Akemi Walker

Notes: Akemi asked Council Members: "Would you like to be famous? In what way? If not, why? Everyone shared their answers and we got to interact with one another.

6:00pm Consensus Statements-Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Landscape (60 minutes)

Presenter: Zena Madison

Zena started Power Point Presentation:

1. Current Landscape:
 - a. What is the current landscape?
 - b. What stands out most to you?
 - c. What is most important to include in the Scan?



- d. What anecdotal information/ insights can you share with other members of the Council that you feel would be important to the scan?

Zena showed data of Licensed Child Care, Licensed Family Care Centers, and Licensed-Exempt Child Care Centers.

Comments:

- About 90% of parents use CCAP benefit
- Child care system is broken, high rates, still can't afford to pay staff, stressful job, hard to take a break.
- Not everyone receives full teacher benefits so it's a barrier

Home Child Care:

- Our Council Member, Sheryl Houston, Owner, Gentle Hands Childcare at Pulaski County, shared her perspective as a licensed, at-home provider.
 - Has been an at-home child care provider for 18 years and was previously a nurse. While she was a nurse, she decided to take classes and get her Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She was compelled to do so in order to provide a safe, healthy, clean, and educational environment to the kids in her community. Sheryl mentioned that she has always kept up with educational trends and always provided a high level of care. Because of her background in health, she had access to different resources. After COVID, she switched to only caring for kids after school and not all-day child care anymore. All her children were enrolled through CCR&R. Always made sure to provide a high level of care, good nutrition, education, and safety within a happy learning environment.
 - Challenges: educating parents, having to purchase items for the kids out of her own money, and not having enough money to pay into a retirement fund.

CCR&R:

- Our Council Member, Tracie Griffith, Case Manager, Childcare Resource and Referral, John A. Logan College (CCR&R/Coordinated Entry Staff), Jackson County, shared the following:
 - CCR&R helps pay for child care while looking for a job or while going to school
 - Follows IL income guidelines 163% poverty level



- \$1 co-pay from parents at child care centers
- Program strengths: the number of people this program supports
- Challenges: length and cumbersome application, parents get confused through the process, awaiting an update to a shorter application, parents are required to send different types of information and they often send it at separate times. Despite these items, the program overall is getting better.
- Sheryl Houston mentioned that child care providers are not making much profit. If kids don't attend they don't get paid.

→Zena presented the following question for all members: “How would you rate the overall Early Childhood Education and Care System in Region 30 in the scale from 0 to 5?”

0: 0 votes

1: 2 votes

2: 5 votes

3: 1 vote

4: 0 votes

5: 0 votes

Head Start:

- Our Council Member, Dona Middleton, Director, Southern Seven Head Start, Jackson County, shared the following:
 - Program is for children/families who qualify
 - 10 centers in the area
 - Also offers an at home-based program
 - Program is federally funded
 - Families are able to enroll in any center outside their own county
 - Tries to provide resources to the whole family
 - Funded 1965



- Region 30: only in Carbondale & Murphysboro
- Challenges: funding & staffing

→Zena presented the following question for all members: “How would you rate the overall Head Start Program in Region 30 in the scale from 0 to 5?”

0: 0 votes

1: 1 vote

2: 1 vote

3: 4 votes

4: 2 votes

5: 0 votes

Zena proceeded to show data from the Early Intervention & Special Education and the following comments were made:

- Numbers seem low
- Lack of Speech Therapists

→Poll taken: “How would you rate the overall Early Intervention & Special Education Program in Region 30 in the scale from 0 to 5?”

0: 0 votes

1: 4 votes

2: 3 votes

3: 1 vote

4: 1 vote

5: 0 votes

Zena then proceeded to mention that we will discuss Early Childhood Education and Care in the Workforce in our next meeting on March 2. Asked Action Council Members if anyone had questions or comments regarding today’s topic.

- Sheryl Houston mentioned that she was thankful for a helpful meeting with much insight into different areas.



- Dona Middleton thanked Zena for this meeting and for the new information that was learned.

Zena thanked everyone for “coming” tonight and for their kind words. A Member asked if we will continue meetings via Zoom and Zena said that in March we will meet via Zoom and then we will send a poll.

7:00pm Meeting adjourned

Next Meeting

Date: March 2, 2023

Time: 5:30pm—7:30pm

Location: Virtual