

Meeting Notes

Region 44 Family Council Meeting

Date & Time: 3/7/23 5:00-7:00pm

Council members present: Brittany Henricks, Jamie Herron, Alan Diaz and Ann Lindstrom

Council members absent: Shannon Lampe & Thalia Garcia

Guest Presenters: Jamee Potash; Friendship House, Crystal Lake

5:00 Welcome, Introduction of Nicole Davis; New Regional Council Manager for Birth to Five Illinois; Region 44

Ice Breaker & Review of Community Expectations (15 minutes)

Notes: Nicole introduced herself and then the council reviewed community expectations and answered the ice breaker question "What is your favorite smell?"

Decisions: All members in attendance agreed to expectations and participated in ice breaker activity.

Next Steps: N/A

5:15 ECEC Collaborations (15 minutes)

Notes: Reviewed the previous meetings presentation information. Speakers were Trish Rooney, Vice President of Programs/SPARK and Jim Menzer and Matt Tabar from Early Childhood Community Coalition of Lake County. These gentlemen are also Regional Liaisons for McKinney-Vento. The council also heard about the I Grow program and viewed the website.

Decisions: N/A

Next Steps: Encouraged council members to check out the websites of the different programs. These websites were sent to the council in an email.

5:30 ECEC Workforce (30 minutes)

Notes: Guest Speaker: Jamee Potash, Assistant Director of Friendship House, Crystal Lake. She spoke about some of the concerns in the field of child care which included not enough staff, lack of benefits, not enough respect in the workforce for these staff working with children, and the waitlist for children to be enrolled. She also spoke of some positives which included some centers have benefits, the rewards of working with children and the dedication staff have in this field. There needs to be more support for this field financially for students interested in pursuing this career and

more benefits to attract workers. Various council members shared they weren't aware of the staffing shortage or lack of benefits. They questioned why doesn't Pre K staff receive benefits or a union like elementary and higher education staff do.

Information was shared about the directory of early childhood collaboratives and the Little Hands Network for family childcare. Partner Plan Act directory was shared in the chat with the group. Reviewed with group some of the data that was discussed at the last meeting pertaining to workforce staff and various demographics.

Decisions: N/A

Next Steps: All links discussed tonight will be emailed to the council members.

5:55 Break

6:05 ECEC Workforce Discussion (30 minutes)

Notes: The following questions were discussed, and all ideas were typed into a community Jamboard.

1. What is the early childhood education and care workforce landscape in the region?
2. How diverse is the ECEC workforce and is the workforce representative of the communities they serve?
3. From your perspective, why is it difficult to keep staff in ECEC? In your opinion, what is causing Early Childhood staff to leave/stay?
4. Do you feel your child is receiving quality care within their ECEC program?
5. What were the strengths within the staff? What were the weaknesses within the staff?

Decisions: N/A

Next Steps: Council members may view and add to the Jamboard if they desire.

6:35 Check-Out and Share-Out (10 minutes)

Notes:

1. Birth to Five Illinois; Region 44 staff will be attending the County Easter Egg Hunt on March 25th to handout information and discuss our mission with families who are interested.
2. We are still trying to develop focus groups if the council knows of anyone who may be interested.
3. We are looking forward to distributing surveys to gather more perspective in the community about early child care and education needs in the county.

Decisions: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Upcoming Meetings:

3/21/23 5:00-7:00pm; Hybrid