



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 30 Virtual Family Council Meeting

**Date & Time: 3/7/2023, 6:00pm–7:15pm**

Family Council Members present: Veronika Parrone, Kimberly Myers, Denasha Oliver, Nicki Rathert, Amanda Hester, Sonya Clark, Breanna Puckett-Woods, Keosha Woods, Amanda Sullivan, and Alessandra Nicholson

Family Council Members absent: Micole Larry, Breanna Kobus, Lyndsey McCann, Shauna McGuire, and Victoria Taylor

#### **6:00pm March Birthday Acknowledgements, Team Building Activity: “Would You Rather” (10 mins)**

Notes:

- Linda welcome the Family Council to the March meeting and started by asking if anyone had/has an upcoming birthday this month. Amanda Hester’s birthday is 3/8/23 and a “Happy Birthday” song was played for her.
- Then, Linda proceeded to the group warm-up activity—Would you rather have a...nanny, maid, personal chef, or personal shopper? All members shared their choice and the reasons why.

#### **6:10pm Video: How Are the Children (10mins)**

Notes: Linda let the Family Council know that we wanted to share a very insightful video with them in hopes to bring awareness about early childhood education. A few members found the video impactful and requested the link for the video. Linda acknowledged that all voices and opinions are very important, and we want to continue to hear from everyone.

## **6:20pm Regional Strengths and Needs (40 mins)**

Group discussion notes:

### **What is our Region doing well and where the needs are in our Region?**

Jackson County parent: there are a few programs available like STEM, gardening, etc., that often get overlooked but are foundational to children.

### **Region needs:**

Alexander County parent: after 5p child care/night time care

Jackson County parent: agrees with the need for after 5p child care, enough slots, help with child care costs, and diversity and inclusion at jobs.

Alexander County parent: also agrees with the need for after 5p care, housing, jobs, stores, and gas station...city lost having a gas station.

### **Region strengths:**

Alexander County parent: has 2 kids currently enrolled in Head Start and had a previous child enrolled as well in the past and has always maintained a great relationship with teachers and staff. Loves how they have bonded with the kids and the resources that are provided to parents.

Perry County parent: Great Head Start, Public Library is a great, safe space for children to go to after school, where they are provided with help with homework by Librarian and staff in an attempt to fill gaps.

Jackson County parent: has had a great experience with a provider(s) to help her understand the development of her kids.

Jackson County parent: part of the Policy Council for Southern Illinois University (SIU) mentioned that Southern Illinois University (SIU) will be opening various classrooms for birth to 3 this coming August 2023. Will keep us informed.

### **Region Challenges:**

Jackson County parent: safety with teachers and true oversight at at-home child care services.

Jackson County parent: staff wages and student/teacher ratio in classrooms.

Jackson County parent: availability and cost

Jackson County parent: has three kids/two enrolled in an after-school program and one attending an at-home child care—all have raised rates but jobs haven't kept up with raising child care costs. Family must make it work with fewer resources.

After school care cost and options.

### **Barriers in our Region:**

Perry County parent: not enough slots.

Jackson County parent: classrooms have had to be closed, overbooked teachers, and new employees getting hired may not be as qualified.

### **Other Needs/Opportunities for Growth in our Region:**

Jackson County parent: enough support to be provided to various programs so they continue to operate like Boys & Girls Club, etc.

Jackson County parent: activities to continue through park districts, churches, etc.

Jackson County parent: expressed that the Carbondale Park District is costly and it adds up.

Perry County parent: shared that they own an Art Studio in Du Quoin with various free programs that have been funded by the community for 18 months so far.

Jackson County parent: would like to see more community activities not related to churches.

### **Where do you see the Early Childhood Education and Care System in five years?**

Alexander County parent: worse than it is now.

Jackson County member: worse if no help from the State is provided.

Jackson County parent: younger kids will suffer educational disadvantage and more pressure on elementary schools and teachers to help those kids be caught up with standards.

Jackson County parent: single parents will have to quit and stay home which would cause kids to not be prepared for kindergarten similar to what happened through/after Covid.

Jackson County parent: setting kids up to have other issues like anxiety, etc.

**Does your family have access to the Early Childhood Care and Education services and programs you need and want in our region? If not, why?**

Alexander County parent: yes but knows that other families do not.

Jackson County parent: no—had to look outside of the county of residence because of no child care options (child was #46 on the waitlist).

Jackson County parent: works in Murphysboro but the kids go to school in Carbondale. A parent needs to take off work early to be able to make it to pickup on time and not be late and be charged a late fee.

Union County parent: looked for child care outside of Union County because the parent has worked in various child care places in Union County and was not comfortable with the quality of care the children would receive. Also, due to no birth to 3 variety of programs being offered.

Jackson County caregiver: it is overwhelming when you are family watching kids for the family when the parent is not able to afford to pay the family member and no one else is available to care for those kids.

### **7:00pm Closing—(15mins)**

Linda proceeded to thank everyone for their stories, opinions, and recommendations. Family Council agreed not to meet in April due to busy Spring Break and Easter schedules. We will be in touch and communicate prior to the next meeting in May. Thank you!

### **7:15pm Meeting Adjourned**

Next Meeting: May 2023