



MEETING NOTES

Region 51 Family Council Meeting

Location: Virtual Teams Meeting

Date & Time: Wednesday, April 26, 2023 5:30-7:30pm

Council Members present: Sara Trine, Megan Loberg-Simmering, Kesha Harris, Jamie Aldridge, Monique Nally, Bushra Ali, Tabitha Williams

Council Members absent: Saunja Slater, Antoinette Bidlingmaier, Megan Dennison, Mindy Parks, Gail Waddell, Megan Reynolds, Megan Dennison, Hillary Kelly

5:30 pm: Community Agreements, Hybrid/Online Etiquette, Ice breaker, Future Meetings agenda and Diving Deeper into Local Recommendations:

How can we increase capacity in ECEC programs caring for children from birth to five? *Increase Capacity in Licensed Child Care Programs?*

- *Increase staff by using mentors/recruiters (at Lincoln Land Community College and with Community Child Care Connections) to help teachers in the high schools and keep the staff in the ECEC programs connected to scholarships and grant programs. (Council selected this option for their recommendation)*
- *Businesses or employers to have ECEC on sight for employees.*
- *Teachers who retire from school district, have them go into the ECEC field.*

Notes: It was shared that the PORTA School District in Menard County has a program for high schoolers interested in working in the Early Childhood Field. The council determined they would need to reach out to see how PORTA runs this program and then engage in conversation with District 186 to see if this is something possible for them to take on as well. It was then shared with the Council how the Birth to Five staff has not been able to connect with information (other than Website info and word of mouth from some community members) about the Capitol Area Career Center. This would be a great connection to make in order for us to see their program which we know is put in place for high schoolers who are interested in the ECEC field.

Decisions Made: n/a

Next Steps: Ask Tracie from the Action Council more information about PORTA's program and who can we contact with at the school. Possibly go in and see the



program in place. Then, have a future discussion with other school districts in our region.

How can we investing more in Home Visiting Programs to help aid pregnant persons after the child is born?

- *Develop a Home Visiting brochure to pass out to Hospitals, Dr offices & ECEC programs in order to recruit more physicians and community leaders to promote Home Visiting, and make referrals through Sangamon Heart while in conjunction with a community campaign on the importance of Home Visiting. (Council selected this option for their recommendation)*
- *More funding to reach more children*
- *Develop a Home Visiting consortium in conjunction with Sagamon Heart*
- *Another place to visit, outside the home (since many do not want a visitor in their home.)*
- *More reflective supervision on what is a “safe home.”*
- *Educating families at prenatal classes about home visiting*
- *Create more prenatal classes*

Notes: Council would like to see this recommendation implemented and the information about Home Visiting be distributed wherever families go; i.e. churches, food pantries, doctors’ offices, grocery stores, etc. in order to show the importance to those who can invest the money to make Home Visiting bigger and more robust in our area.

Decisions Made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

How can we do 211 Campaign and ECEC Resources Campaign

- *Billboards/Social Media through United Way of Central Illinois*
- *211 Cards going into Doctor’s Offices and schools with the help of United Way of Central Illinois*
- *All Non-Profits going into the 211 database so when families call they are able to be connected to every available resource.*

Notes: It was shared by a Family Council Member that billboards are in Sangamon, but not Menard County at this time for 211. It was also shared that cards are being distributed right now, but how can we get more? It was also asked how can we make sure that all of the local non-profit organizations are in the 211 database? The



Council Members did not make a final decision on this recommendation. This will be done by the Action Council.

Decisions made: Schedule a meeting with Mitch Baker of United Way for clarity on how the 211 system works and how we can all work together on pushing out 211 to the community in the best and most effective way.

Next Steps: Talk to Mitch at Action Council meeting or set up a one-on-one meeting with him.

How Can We Implement Community Navigators?:

- Utilize local volunteers to fulfill the role of “Community Navigators”
- Who would take on this role in the community?

Notes: The Council Members wanted to know if there are any non-profit organizations in our communities that maybe has the capacity or interest in taking this on. They also voiced, if they could recruit people to be “community navigators?” The Council also wondered if this could be something that is connected to 211, as 211 is just a jumping off point to let people know of services, it is not a wrap around service that helps guide a person through the community/makes sure they get to the appointment, fill out the paperwork, etc. The Council Members did not make a final decision on this recommendation. This will be done by the Action Council.

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

6:30pm: Questions and Discussions for the Needs Assessment

Data Answer Sheet Question:

- ***What is/has been your experience with accessing Early Childhood Education and Care within Region 51?***
 - *“We didn’t really have a choice—we just went with what we could get. You just kind of have to give up quality, because it’s just what we could get into.”*
 - *“There is no child care available at all for my kids.”*
 - *“Disorganized and not able to find care for all her children in the same program. We are not expecting to have another child, but we are on a waitlist for a child care program just in case I do accidentally have another child.”*
- ***Has anything in particular been helpful in making the program you’re using work for you and your family? What is working and what is not?***
 - *“It was helpful that early intervention came to the house instead of meeting else where. My child was comfortable at home and less*



distracted. In a new environment I can see him getting distracted and less focused.”

- **What sacrifices or decisions have you and your family made surrounding these issues?**
 - *“When my son was in early childcare, we had to switch providers 3 times to find the best fit. Each time with a wait list, so that was a bit stressful.”*
 - *“I haven’t had any issues with the program. But I would’ve loved to hear from my doctor about this program. I had to do my own research in order to find it.”*
 - *“Lack of choices, there was not a choice of different types of quality of care”*
- **Do we know how many children are reaching out on behalf of their parents due to language barriers, translating for their parents to deliver or receive a message?**
 - *No Responses Given*
- **How long does it take to have a message returned or a phone call back? And can anyone answer on behalf of those who are not native English speaking?**
 - *“The center I use doesn’t seem very organized when it comes to waitlists . They often forget to put people on or have no info on when there might be a spot or what capacity is. I’ve heard this from others.”*
 - *“I did not have any issues with getting a response from early childhood centers, but they all had a waitlist.”*
 - *“Not long at all. I had the email and phone numbers on hand. I would also text the therapists one on one and got responses right away.”*
- **Why do you think this information is important for the Needs Assessment?**
 - *“I think it is good to get the parents’ experience first hand to see how the program runs. Also see what can be done to make it better and more accessible for new parents.”*
 - *“To help fix issues for new parents”*

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a



7:00pm: Looking over and reviewing Needs Assessment Section: *Early Childhood Education and Care Programs*

Notes: Edits Suggested

Decisions Made: Amanda and Ashley will make edits. Overall, no significant issues, just a few wording changes.

7:30: Vibe Check! Thoughts, Questions, Concerns.

Notes: Amanda went over how to connect and the next steps. Then thanked everyone for coming!

Decisions made: Family Council agreed to meet with Action Council at the June 8th Meeting.

Next Steps: Amanda will get a reminder of that date change sent out and updated on Family Council Member's Outlook Calendars. Google Drive will be updated after notes are done and data sheets are collected.

Follow-up/Next Steps: Family Council will not meet during May, but will continue to have correspondence with Amanda, regarding the Needs Assessment and other important conversations throughout the month.