



MEETING NOTES

Region 51 Family Council Meeting

Location: Birth to Five Illinois Building

Date & Time: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 5:30-7:30pm

Council Members present: Hillary Kelly, Sara Trine, Mindy Parks, Megan Loberg-Simmering, Gail Waddell, Megan Reynolds, Kesha Harris
Council Members absent: Saunja Slater, Tabitha Williams, Antoinette Bidlingmaier, Megan Dennison
Hybrid: Tanika Jones, Jamie Aldridge, Monique Nally, Bushra Ali

5:45 pm: Community Agreements, Hybrid/Online Etiquette, Ice breaker, Future Meetings agenda and vote on April 26th Virtual Meeting, Announcements & Call to Action Report

Dive Deeper into Local Recommendation:

Increase slots in Licensed Child Care Programs?

- *Mentors to help teachers (at Lincoln Land Community College and with Community Child Care Connections)*
- *Educating High School students on the ECEC field and child development.*
- *Teachers who retire from school district, have them go into the ECEC field.*

Investing more in Home Visiting Programs?

- *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: Top 2 Local Recommendations were discussed, this will be revisited at next meeting.

Decisions made: We will meet Virtually on Wednesday, April 26th from 5:30-7:30pm

Next Steps: Amanda will make/send out Teams invite for this.

6:30pm: Data Review, Preschool for All/Expansion Overview, Landscapes of Child Care Programs and Publicly Funded Programs (What we know..),



Notes: Everyone reported out about the Preschool for All programs in their own respective school districts. Discussion about classes/prenatal courses. Discussion about reaching mothers regarding child care.

Data Answer Sheet Question:

- *How did you decide to pick your ECEC program?*
 - *"I picked our ECEC program with info from a trusted friend that had children in that program. We moved to Athens to enroll our daughter in the program."*
 - *"Lack of childcare in the community I lived in. I was forced to look elsewhere so care was available, then looked for a place that had a trustworthy reputation."*
 - *"I did not personally want to utilize home care, just a personal preference of mine, but I had no other options because we needed care, so they are there. This is a hard question for me as a mom to answer."*
- *When should families become aware of what programs are available to them?*
 - *All said "at birth/in the hospital/even before birth people should become aware of what childcare looks like around them."*
 - *"In the hospital, I got all kinds of information given to me, but NOTHING about Early Intervention or Preschool registrations, or education and things like that."*
 - *"In the hospital, they asked me what birth control I would be going on, but didn't ask me about my plans for child care or if I had any questions about child care."*

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

7:00pm: Went over ECEC Programs and Workforce Data looking at Directors, Teaching Staff, and Family Child Care Providers. Also looked at Credentials, ExcelRate IL, and Resources for providers.

Notes: Discussion about credentials, what qualifies someone as a Director, How staff goes about getting their credentials, what qualifies programs as the different levels/circles of quality, and resources that are available for providers.

Data Answer Sheet Question:

- *What stands out about this data or is there any data that is unavailable that would help in this discussion?*



- *Lack of diversity*
- *I find it hard to believe that there are so many directors that only have a high school diploma or just some college.*
- *Women are doing the majority of educating children, this is important because America does not value the work of women/less money.*

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: Ask Action Council/Research about Directors being able to be “Director Qualified” with just a high school diploma -from the data.

Data Answer Sheet Question:

- *What does quality care look like?*
 - *Safe, educational environment with joyful learners and enough staff.*
 - *A rich environment where learning through play is primary. Literacy is a primary focus as well as social emotional education. Caring staff with highly qualified Director and staff.*
 - *Consistent, Safe, Compassionate care with an established and competent teaching plan.*

7:30: Vibe Check! Thoughts, Questions, Concerns. (15 minutes)

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

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

Follow-up/Next Steps: Be thinking of these recommendations and how we can really dive deeper at our next meeting.

Amanda will send out the Virtual Teams meeting for Wednesday, April 26th 5:30-7:30pm for next meeting to go over recommendations and Early Childhood Regional Needs Assessment.