

Meeting NOTES

Region 32 Family Council Meeting

Location: KCC, North Extension Campus, 450 N Kinzie, Bradley, IL

Date & Time: Monday, February 13, 2023, 6:00 – 7:45 pm

Members Present: Teage Drinnon, Brenda Mohr, Sarah Gowler, Emily Rodriguez, Natasha Ashford, Laura Ziegler, Ali Denault, Alison Chandler, Ami Kring, Kasira Potts, Tahlia Guimond, Cheme Williams, Amber Bramer, Ashley Chappell

Members Absent: DeAnna Booker, Danielle Norton, Jazmine Mancha, Coen Clark, Hailey Siegel, Sarissa Johnson

6:04: Permission to Record, Welcome & Introductions

- Council Members agreed.
- Introductions of new Family Council members
- Icebreaker

6:10: Community Agreements & Focus Groups

- Council Members approved.
- Kennilyn reviewed upcoming Focus Groups' dates and times. She asked Council to spread information and give suggestions if possible.
 - A member suggested having Bourbonnais Park District with our After School YMCA Focus Group. Another suggestion was First Taste and Thresholds.

6:30: Review Demographic Data

- Kennilyn reviewed our data from the characteristics and stereotypes shared about our communities.
- Liz thanked the Council for their honesty and said the comments were shared with our Action Council.

6:32: Regional Scan Topics

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Kennilyn shared IECAM data on the number of child care centers in our region and the number of sites/slots.
 - Comment made that there are many child care centers in Kankakee, yet there were no openings for her family.

- Kennilyn explained Early Head Start, PFA, PFA Expansion, Head Start, License-Exempt & Licensed Child Care Centers, and Family Child Care Homes.
- Council member defined what licensed exempt entailed.
 - Another member commented on the confusion between the programs.
 - Member-defined licensed-exempt child care centers: child care centers that do not have to follow DCFS regulations because care is under 2 hours, under school district or church, etc.
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) data was shown and the discrepancy between Kankakee & Iroquois, Kankakee was much more than Iroquois.
- Kennilyn shared actual numbers collected from our Action Council comparing actual enrollment to funded enrollment.
 - There are several open slots across the region.
- How are parents supposed to know about these programs?
 - Members answered: social media, school district, mom's groups, CCR&R is supposed to have a list available, but CCR&R is not known.
 - A member shared her issue with finding child care "it's hard because my husband switches shift every few months and my job is part-time- it's hard to find a center that is available."
 - Another member, "I wish we had more tools to get the information out there, so we know what's available."

Slot Gap

- Kennilyn defined the Slot Gap: when there are more children for enrollment in early childhood education and care than actual slots available, the number of state or funded slots for children, provided funds vs. missing/needed funds for remaining children who do not have slots, and these "slots" need to be paid by another funding source such as out of pocket, other funding sources, etc.
- Kennilyn shared data from the Publicly Funded Early Childhood Education and Care Slot Gap (Early Head Start, Head Start, Prevention Initiative, Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, and IDHS Home Visiting Programs).
 - A member explained up north she worked for a program where PI included classrooms (not just home visits).

- Data was shown on Child Care Capacity Slot Gap (Licensed Child Care Centers, Licensed Family Child Care in the Home, and Licensed Exempt Child Care Centers).
- Discussion how families are deciding which providers to choose from:
 - Trust, “Concerns about education requirements and preparation of teachers.” “I don’t trust many with my children, especially with all that’s currently happening in the world.”
 - “We choose friends and neighbors for childcare because of trust and cost.”
 - “Word of mouth but normally whoever has openings.”
 - Employer and interviewing facilities.
 - “My youngest goes to the daycare that had full time availability. Honestly, it wasn’t our first or second choice, but we have been on waitlists for 3 other facilities since before she was born.”
- Discussion on where and when families should be made aware of available programs:
 - Hospitals at birth can include resources in their take home care packets.
 - Social workers or a designated person assigned to OB/GYN units to provide resources.
 - CCR&R need to have more presence in our community by attending events, updated website, etc.
 - Doctor offices (Health Department) need to have knowledge of resources available for parents.
 - Comment made that if hospitals alone give information about day cares “It’s too late. Infants child care spots are hard to find.”
 - Local moms’ groups in person and social media.
 - Central website that is up to date. “This is the info that we need simplified and put in a handout for parents” (parent after visiting KanHelp website).
 - Libraries
- Discussion on resource barriers for families when considering access to care:
 - “Our area lacks quality child care- No NAEYC centers.”
 - Cost
 - Transportation “Transportation is huge; specifically for 2.5-hour Pre-K in Iroquois.”

- Availability: hours, full and part time
- Children with disabilities and staff knowledge of disabilities.
- Discussion on the time it takes the community to start EI therapy once the child is evaluated:
 - Reports that families may have upwards of a 6 month wait to get the initial evaluation and after child qualifies there may not be a service provider.
 - Services only on Zoom due to limited amounts of providers and many forfeit their services because Zoom is not working (then unable to transition to school-based services because of forfeited services)
 - “Major lack of early intervention in our county: speech is very nonexistence.”
 - “It takes months and months with high turn over of staff. Service caseloads are extremely high.”
- Discussion on waitlist/open slots and attaining these spots:
 - Child care in Iroquois is extremely limited. “The waitlist for preschool is unreal, only having 1 preschool classroom.”
 - “There was one day care that did have openings, but I couldn’t afford the prices that they charge, as I do not get any state aid.” (Kankakee)
 - “I am on 6 waitlists and hoping someone will have an opening before my babysitter is on maternity leave.” (Iroquois)
 - “My oldest daughter was unable to attend preschool in our district, so we had to find a private preschool- it was costly and 25 minutes from home.”

7:30

Q & A

- Liz defined Community Collaboration and shared the recap from our last Action Council meeting with our Local Community Collaboration agencies (United Way/Success by Six, Aunt Martha’s, Project Sun, and Local Interagency Council).
- Kennilyn reminded the Council to use “Parking Lot” in Google Folder for questions or concerns.

7:45

Adjourn

Next Meeting Date/Location: March 13th, 2023

6:00-7:45pm

KCC NEC and Virtual