



## REGION 8 FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 p.m. Feb 23, 2023, Stewart Centre Freeport

ATTENDING ON ZOOM DUE TO WEATHER: Casey, Brooke, Becky, Ashley, Bethany, Lauren, Brianna, Samantha.

Family and Community Engagement Specialist Dean Wright called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Regional Council Manager Lou Ann Hayes updated council members on what was discussed in the Action Council meetings. She talked about discussions regarding collaborations, also the local United Way received a \$52,000 grant, and what they will do with the money. She also talked about priority populations and how we are identifying them to include them in our work.

Dean gave highlights of Gov. Pritzger's speech where he emphasized Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). He then showed a presentation on slot gaps with the population of children in our region. He said every school district but one has seen a decline in enrollment for a number of years. He presented a map that showed in Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties, there are few facilities open with most child care occurring in private homes.

Members agreed but said positive news was one facility in Lanark was re-starting after-school care again and offering preschool too. They said they have not interacted with collaborations except for All Our Kids Network in Stephenson County.

Dean asked members if they had a neighbor who needed child care, and where would they tell them to look. Answers included school district, pediatrician, village hall, chamber of commerce, Facebook, and word-of-mouth to get suggestions. This is one area where a strong collaboration could fill a need.

Dean then talked about child care subpopulations and what ones are present in our region. There are homeless, domestic violence victims, special needs kids, and second/third shift workers' kids. Brianna talked about her child care search for her



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special needs child and how she found it difficult to get anywhere to accept her. She finally found one place but there needs to be more and child care centers need more staff experienced in special needs.

Casey said another situation is nurses who only work three days a week, but have to pay for a full week of child care per the provider agreement. Members did not know if any providers had someone who spoke Spanish. This will become a bigger issue as the Hispanic population is growing in our region.

The next question to members is how to do we do this better. Members said we need to find ways to make better connections between families and providers. Also, we need to get the resources available to the places where they need to go. Dean said in talking with providers and school districts in our region, he was shocked there is no real way for them to connect directly with the subpopulations.

Samantha said she was interested in possibly starting up a child care service in her home, so she would like to know more information on the process to do that. She also said she is pursuing becoming a parent ambassador for the AOK Network. Lauren already is one and said she would pass along some insights and information.

The Next Family Council meeting was scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on March 23, 2023, in the Stewart Centre.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Todd McKenna  
Administrative Support  
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