



MEETING NOTES

Region 12 Family Council Meeting

Date & Time: Monday, November 21, 2022, 4:30pm

Staff present: Donna Rardin, Ann Oswalt, Sophie Kershaw-Patilla
Council Members present: Mindy Evans, Sara Farmer, Emily Gullett, April Walls
Council Members absent: Cassi Fiscus, Sandra Hyde, Whitney McCullough, Whisper Shick

4:30 Welcome, Introductions and Icebreaker (9 minutes)

Notes: Donna welcomed everyone to the 2nd meeting of the Family Council. All participants provided an introduction and participated in an icebreaker activity.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

4:39 Community Agreement Review (3 minutes)

Notes: Donna reviewed, and members agreed to, the Community Agreement from the previous meeting – be respectful, value our differences, celebrate our uniqueness, don't be judgmental, and take part in ongoing engagement.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

4:42 October Meeting Recap and Review Roles and Responsibilities of Family Council (5 minutes)

Notes:

- Donna provided a summary of the previous meeting notes and reminded Council members of their role within our Region.
- Donna reviewed the schedule of only holding one virtual meeting in December then expanding to hold two meetings per month beginning in January 2023.

Decisions Made: Council agreed that meetings will remain on Monday at 4:30pm, with one virtual and one hybrid option per month.

Next Steps: Council members are asked to share contact information of any individuals who may be interested in joining the Family Council, especially from



underrepresented counties or community members. Donna and Ann will continue distributing flyers to area organizations for recruitment.

4:47 Regional Scan Overview/Questions (29 minutes)

Notes:

- Ann provided a brief overview of the Regional Scan and how the Family Council will assist in the creation of the report for Region 12. Ann reviewed the following questions:
 - What strengths have you identified from your own experiences?
 - What are the challenges facing the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce in the region?
 - What barriers do parents face with accessing ECEC in our Region?
 - What are the other needs/opportunities for growth?
 - How can the Region 12 Action and Family Councils support (potential) collaboration efforts?
 - What are parent/family/caregiver preferences for ECEC programs and services in our Region?
- Ann provided a background to Family Engagement from the provider/educator and Birth to Five Illinois standpoint. Council members are asked to think of recommendations for the following:
 - What are parent/family/caregiver experiences with access to ECEC in our Region?
 - Why is it important to include Family Engagement information in the Regional Scan?
- Donna asked for feedback from Council members regarding their own experiences, barriers, or challenges with accessing ECEC for their family. Council noted the following:
 - Financial struggles, particularly when income is just over the threshold to qualify for support or when childcare costs as much or more than income.
 - Availability of services and the schedule/hours of providers.
 - Screening for and provision of special education or services. Council discussed having a designated assessor for the Region, because providers/caregivers are often too busy to manage screenings on top of their workload.

Decisions Made: N/A



Next Steps: Council members are asked to consider the Regional Scan questions Ann noted and continue thinking about experiences/solutions for ECEC in our Region based on personal experiences.

5:16 Family Engagement (17 minutes)

Notes: Donna reiterated the importance of Family Engagement in our ECEC experiences and asked for the Council to recall a time when Family Engagement made a personal impact, either positive or negative.

- Feeling overlooked or looked down upon due to parent age or family circumstances, even though you have the child's best interests at heart.
- Open House – being able to have father attend (out of the norm) while mother was at home with kids.
- Family Fun Nights – great time for all family members to learn about a special topic, such as literacy, while the kids take part in an activity and take home a book.
- Touch a Truck and Trunk or Treat – when families are together and most involved.
- Monthly dinner or event to involve families in planning and discussion.
- No Family Engagement from single child care provider.
- Using an app to show families updated information about a child's experiences at care provider or school.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Next Meeting: December 19, 2022

Time: 4:30pm

Location: Virtual