



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 56 Family Council Meeting

**Location:** Virtual - Zoom

**Date & Time:** January 12, 2023 at 5:00pm-7:00pm

Facilitators Present: Madalyn Snowden, Keven Kerr, Erica LoBurgio

Council Members Present:

- Krista Escamillo
- Latoya Johnson
- Juanita Quezada
- Erika Ortiz Wassenaar
- Victoria Theodossopoulos
- Raquel Young
- Heather Ramirez
- Takara Jalowiec
- Laura Kimmel
- Jessica Barclay
- Norma Romo
- Kashima Davis

Council Members Absent:

- n/a

#### **Introductions and Overview of Birth to Five Illinois (20 minutes)**

**Notes:** Region 56 Introduced themselves separately, presented a small biography about themselves, and the reasons they joined Birth to Five Illinois. Region 56 introduced the goals and agenda for today's meeting. Goals were introduced as rational aims and experimental aims. The agenda for today's meeting was given to each Family Council member. Community Agreements were shown and explained to all members, and Family Council members were asked to add more agreements to the board.

The "What is Birth to Five Illinois?" YouTube video was shown to all Family Council members as an overview of what Birth to Five Illinois is and why they are here.



Family Council members were asked to drag a heart on the Google Slides on which Values / Goals that are most important to them. There were three hearts moved onto “Family Voice,” two hearts onto “Racial Equity,” and five hearts moved onto “Collective Impact.”

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

### **Introduction of New Family Council Members (10 minutes)**

Notes: Family Council Members signed in and included a photo to share with their biographies. Each member introduced themselves and explained why this work is important to them.

Decisions made n/a

Next Steps: n/a

### **Updates: Focus Groups, Elected Officials, and Outreach (15 minutes)**

Notes: Region 56 moved on to explain about Birth to Five Illinois Regional Scan.

Region 56 explained:

- Birth to Five Action Councils will deliver a full Regional Scan, also known as a needs assessment, of the early childhood education and care service landscape.
- Using Regional Scans, Birth to Five Action Councils will identify gaps in early childhood needs and make recommendations to expand services.
- Birth to Five Action Councils in each region will amplify voices of families.

Region 56 also explained that Birth to Five Illinois is collecting the data, sorting, arranging, presenting visually, and essentially explaining with a story.

An explanation as to what a Family Council was explained to each member as being here to:

- Share personal experiences on ECEC in Will County
- Brainstorm ideas for program and service implementation
- Be an advisor to the Action Council



- Identify who is NOT at the table (Focus Groups/Interviews)
  - Finding Focus Group participants
  - Follow our Birth to Five Illinois: Region 56 (Will County) Facebook
- The mission was explained to the Family Council that the families have a voice personal and specific on how they have accessed ECEC and why this is driving the work. Family Council Members were asked to share the Facebook as well as share their stories.

Outreach events were shared that Region 56 have attended:

- Winter coat drive, Joliet
- Sensory friendly holiday party, Romeoville
- Holiday drive, Joliet
- Cookies with Santa, Peotone

Elected Officials that Region 56 has met with were:

- Senator Rachel Ventura
- Senator Meg Loughran Cappel
- Congresswomen Lauren Underwood
- State capitol visit

Focus Groups / Interviews that Region 56 has scheduled are:

- Spanish Community Center
- Grandparents
- Families impacted by homelessness
- Families involved in Early Intervention services

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

### **Break Time (7 minutes)**

### **Overview of Demographics and Region (20 minutes)**

Notes: Region 56 gave an break down on our Region and Will County demographics. Data maps, graphs, and percentages were shown in each Google



slide. IECAMS was explained as a public database that anyone can access, and this database used to pull and present the data. The website was shared with the Family Council members. Each member was asked to share “what are some things you know about Will County related to service options, language inclusion, accessibility, demographic, etc?” The Family Council members gave questions, concerns, and comments such as:

- Lack of Head Start options in Monee
- I need full day child care and more pre k offerings
- Not enough therapists to service young children.
- Early Intervention Coordinators needed. It seems that a lot of people are leaving the work.
- Large Hispanic population
- More pre-k programs in school districts that are not lottery based.
- I wish I knew more about child care services available in the area
- Lack of accessibility in schools, lack of pediatric therapy clinics, no inclusive playgrounds
- Not a lot of resources or programs for elder immigrants when they retired

Slides in the Google presentation were presented for the upcoming break out rooms to answer questions pertaining to Will County. The topics presented were:

- County verses Birth to Five Illinois
- Population Under 6 Years Old
- Council Quick Data
- Children Under 5 by Race and Ethnicity
- Council Race / Ethnicity
- Public Transportation
- Locations of Child Care Homes and Centers
- Household vs Family Size
- Federal Poverty Level
- Children Under 6 by Age by Federal Poverty Level

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

**Break Out Activity (25 minutes)**



Notes: Family Council Members and Facilitators are paired together with other group members in Zoom break out rooms. Each breakout room had to answer the same questions. The data maps, graphs, and percentages that were shown in each Google slide prior were that the members used to answer some of the questions. The questions given to each member were:

- What does this information tell us about our region (comment on what speaks to you and your family personally)?
- What do you notice about the location of different racial/ethnic families, location of early childcare providers, etc.? (Compare maps and list observations you notice)
- Are there any early childcare providers missing from the list/map (slide 37)? Where do you take your kids for child care? (i.e. unlicensed home daycare, full day versus part time, family?)
- Are there early childcare providers that are listed but no longer open? (List your experience navigating COVID, any child care change? Find your area on the map, do you use child care that is not listed on slide 37?)
- Are the early childcare providers near areas of high poverty, close to public transportation (if available), close to where children live, etc.? (Use maps on slides 39-44)
- What impact did Covid have on early childcare providers and family in the region? (Get personal here)
- What information is missing, or would be helpful to better understand this data?
- What is the current FPL, FPL 100%, FPL 200%? Can families within those FPLs afford childcare in our region? (See slides 39-44 what has been your experience with affordable childcare?)
- Why is it important to understand the demographics of our region?

Decisions made: n/a

**Next Steps:** Each group will present their answers to the group as whole and have a discussion about their answers.



### **Group Presentation / Discussion (25 minutes)**

Notes: There were three breakout groups. Each group had one member pick a few answers to share and talk about.

Some of their answers from the Family Council were shared:

- Our region of Eastern Will County doesn't have a lot of childcare opportunities available for this age group
- Families living well under the FPL are high, yet services and accessible childcare is lacking, especially in the southern half of the region
- Beecher shows a higher number of children under the age of 6; however, they have fewer options available
- All this information tells me what our needs for our community are and need to work on together for our children
- In Peotone, there are only two options for childcare providers and Beecher only has one available. Monee has some more options for early childcare services; however, according to the data, this area also needs many more resources available to families.
- Rural areas seem to have little to no childcare options.
- My family has relied on private play based preschool options as I am at home and don't need full day daycare. However, these are challenging to get into as enrollment is limited and the cost can be prohibitive.
- We haven't needed to utilize childcare up to this point; but the headache of finding/securing childcare was one reason that I decided to be a stay-at-home mom. Luckily, we were in a situation where this was possible; however, many are not.
- I don't know any child care programs since I'm a stay home mom I haven't looked for any.
- Average cost for childcare
- Will County has a thriving community. In the past 23 years but has seen a decrease in services. This includes lottery to receive services such (Pre-K) ...This includes EAP services. In Romeoville and pays taxes in Plainfield.
- Bus/Transportation issues, staffing issues/shortages. Contracted out transportation companies. Community was very innovative. Kids left at school without a bus, no communication about transportation issues...still ongoing concern



- Lottery system can easily be kicked out based on missed payments plus high payments. Lottery system is through school districts.
- Small number of slots of kids with special needs. limited options
- ECBG/Public care with half-day care is not realistic for working families
- Will County does a great job with CCAP
- Full day care providers, regardless of funding stream, is missing
- Licensed in home care, neighbor care
- Mentioned CCAP programs
- No resources in Peotone, so they must leave and drive about 40 minutes for any services
- A lot of the resources are in Joliet only
- Preschool in Peotone must add wheelchair access since it had no access
- Not enough resources
- DCFS doesn't give enough help and explain how to pay things
- The way they talked we would assume the money for resources would be there already
- Locations of child center areas on the map are mostly in Plainfield area which is a non-Hispanic areas
- Not a lot of public transportation in Plainfield even though there are a lot of care providers located there

**Decisions made:** Family Council members wanted more time to add more information on the slides. Region 56 made the slides available to each member after the meeting to add answers on their own time.

Next Steps: n/a

### **Closing / Scheduling, and Questions (10 minutes)**

**Notes:** Region 56 went over closing information such as: Stipend updates, Facebook, Family Council Interest Forms, and the next meetings.

A question from a Family Council Member:

- "If this took a year to roll out Birth to Five Illinois, how long will it take Birth to Five Illinois to roll out this information. Because if I have a two-year-old now, and it takes four to five years, it won't help my child now. What is the time frame?"



- “What is the average cost in each city/area of child care?”
- “Can I get additional poverty information including maps / number?”
- “Can I have hard copies of maps of our Region?”

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 12:30-2pm and Thursday, February 9th 2023 at 5pm-7pm

**Follow-up/Next Steps:** Region 56 explained how to have access to the Google slides / drive to add any information or questions as they arrive after the meeting and to be addressed for next meeting.