



Minutes

Region 1-B-D Cook North Action Council Meeting

Location: Virtual or in person

Date & Time: February 6th, 2023, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm

Members present: Kristen Ford, Agnieszka Moroni, Bettye Cohns, Kate Warach, Amy Cocorikis, John Ranieri, Carrie Rafalski, Vikki Podlipni, Edward Russell, Nancy Mendez, Tina Vanderwarker, Cori Mohr, Susan Cerza, Lisa Merdinger, Chris Tokarski

Council Members Absent: Clare Giuffrida, Olga Khamichonak, Michele Ramsey, Peter J. Smith, Casche Knox, Natalie Wood

Facilitator(s): Ilinca Wallace

Family Council Update: Irene Di Minervino

3:00 pm: Welcome/ Review of Community Agreements/ Regional Updates (20 minutes)

Icebreaker: "What Early Childhood Education and Care programs did you participate in as a child?"

Facilitator(s): Ilinca Wallace

Notes: Ilinca reviewed Community Agreements.

Ilinca shared the following regional updates for the Cook North Team:

- growing interest in focus groups and interviews
- thanked community partners for helping region 1 -B-D make connections
- Ilinca asked if anyone has contacts with programs/organizations that support immigrant/refugee families.
- attended several Pre-K fairs (Schaumburg, Arlington Heights, Park Ridge, Glenview) to meet with ECEC providers and families
- voted on holding or rescheduling our next meeting on Presidents Day, 2/20
- newly selected Action Council member declined her seat but will stay involved in the work in other ways

As an icebreaker activity participants shared fun stories from their childhood, answering the question "What Early Childhood Education and Care programs did you participate in as a child?"



Decision made: The majority voted to attend the next meeting on 2/20. Meeting notes will be in google drive for those that can't make it.

Next Steps: N/A

3:20 pm: Update from the Family Council (40 minutes)

Notes: Irene Di Minervino shared emerging themes from Family Council's response to the question: "It's 2023 what does programming look like in Cook North?"

Reflections on introduction to several ECEC program models

Follow-up discussion after Irene's Family Council update...

Families understanding of ECEC differs from the professional definition (School district vs. the varied program models that exist in communities)

- How can we have a unified definition that incorporates the standards, curriculums, and program models?
- Need to educate the consumer about ECEC standards, provider models, and learning opportunities through caregiver
 - educating parents and increasing the standards

Families spoke of the curriculum model as the "program type"

Faith Based

- Don't have an informed public... listen to social media to get their information regardless of the validity.
- Church programs have faith-based programming

Home based care

- Parents don't know what children should be learning at a certain age

Parent expectations based on own experiences...

- want to see evidence of learning → worksheets, tangible product, sitting at a desk working on something academic

A rich discussion occurred around play based education vs. K-12 priorities being pushed down to programming for children birth to five.

A key take away, that all were in agreement, was that "social emotional learning is the foundation."



“We don’t teach kindergarten in early childhood” – Barbara Bowman

TRUST!!!! – building trust among programs & repairing relationships.

Action Council members shared:

- NAEYC resource around play
- findings from surveys conducted in their programs and highlighted the importance of understanding different cultures when speaking to families about Early Childhood Education and Care.

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

4:00 pm: Break (10 minutes)

4:10 pm: Small Group Program Gallery Walk (40 minutes)

What are the benefits and barriers for each of the ECEC programs?

(Early Head Start (EHS), Head Start (HS), Preschool for All (PFA), Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE), Prevention Initiative (PI) IDHS Home Visiting, Home Visiting MIECHV, Early Intervention, Early Childhood Education Special Services, ExceleRate, Child Care Assistance program.

Notes: Used Illinois Action for Children ECEC Programs and Services Document for this activity. Three groups were created to discuss and note benefits and barriers.

Decision made: We will continue with this activity during our February 20th meeting. We were able to complete discussion on the following programs: Head Start, EHS, IDHS Home Visiting and MIECHV Home Visiting.

Next Steps: N/A

The following was shared in a google document:

Early Head Start:

Benefits:

- Family is an active participant; there’s an overlap/connection with Head Start
- Screenings help families see their child(ren)s development and keep track of progress
- Variety of programs can be used; braided funding
- 10% of the children have an IFSP



Barriers:

- Only 7 in our region; EHS are in 2 clusters- Evanston/Schaumburg/Palatine
- 90% of families enrolled need to be at 100% poverty level
- Income requirements make it challenging to get services they need

Head Start:

Benefits:

- 10% of children have an IEP
- Multi-disciplinary approach to support child and family

Barriers:

- Socio/Economic level pockets are not being served

Home Visiting IDHS:

Benefits:

- Supports pregnant people and families with children under 5
- 4 evidence-based models

Barriers:

- Business vehicle insurance for home visiting (additional cost than personal use, required by some organizations)

Large group discussion followed. The following ideas were shared:

- Majority are not able to access EHS services because they're only in pockets
- HV/MIECHV – Better assessment of child because conducted in the home environment (comfort, behavior, etc)
- Tie back to Family Council – how do you serve pregnant women? A Family Council member had this wondering.
- There might be some miss conceptions between PFA and HS/EHS
 - PFA is for enrichment vs. HS is for at “risk”.
- All families seeking same support but what ends up happening is segregation by income brackets, etc, due to requirements of different funding streams...
 - Children are only making friends with those in their classroom “program”
 - Use funding to support each other rather than divide!
 - Perception vs. Intention
 - Parents don't know what funding they receive, but feel it based on their child(ren)s placement and what they are experiencing.

Decision made: Continue with the rest of the program models in our next meeting

Next Steps: N/A



4:50 pm: Planning for Local Community Collaborations Meeting March 6th (5 minutes)

Who is part of a local community collaboration?

Who would like to present on the collaboration's goals/outcomes?

Notes: Ilinca asked if anyone could present on a local collaboration/coalition on March 6th

Presentations will include: The Association of Parents and Staff for TrueNorth, United Palatine, Evanston Early Childhood Council, Niles Township Early Childhood Alliance, Providers in Action, Evanston Cradle to Career, LIC CFC 6

Some information to be presented on the coalition/collaboration: Goals, background of the collation, outcomes that have been achieved.

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

4:55 pm: Questions/Comments/Reflections (5 minutes)

Notes: Ilinca asked the Action Council members:

How is everyone leaving this meeting:

- Pondering/thinking
- More informed
- Excited for change
- Ready to dig and make a difference

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Next Meeting: Monday, February 20th, 3:00 pm- 5:00 pm

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