



AGENDA

Region 1-B-D Cook North Action Council Meeting

Location: Virtual or in person

Date & Time: May 1st, 2023, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm

Action Council members present: Agnieszka Moroni, Bettye Cohns, Clare Giuffrida, Susan Cerza, Lisa Merdinger, Carrie Rafalski, Tina Vanderwarker, Cori Mohr, Chris Tokarski, Kristen Ford, Kate Warach, Amy Cocorikis, Vikki Podlipni, Michele Ramsey

Action Council members absent: Natalie Wood, Olga Khamichonak, Casche Knox, Peter J. Smith, John Ranieri, Edward Russell.

3:00 pm: Welcome/ Review of Community Agreements/ Regional Updates (15 minutes)

Icebreaker

Facilitator(s): Ilinca Wallace

Ilinca welcomed Action Council members and led an icebreaker activity. Action Council members discussed their concerns for the Smart Start CCAP requirements. Additionally, there were questions and discussions about the ISBE RFP. Ilinca offered to be a resource to anyone that has questions and shared that ISBE has a webinar. There was discussion about the ECACE scholarship and the positive experience working with the Higher Education Navigators. Ilinca shared that Family Council members will be invited to join the next Action Council meeting on May 15th.

3:15 Regional Strengths/Needs (45 minutes)

Ilinca invited Action Council members to go into two breakout sessions to take some time for self-reflection and then discuss as a group the Cook North Regional strengths and needs.

These are some highlights from the discussion:

- Affordable housing
- Ways to enhance well child visits – pamphlets for parents about EI in all pediatrician offices, observations along with ASQ screening, parents know their child best – that should be trusted
- Parents need a glossary for acronyms and professional language -EI, PFA, etc

Reflection Questions:

These were some of the strengths highlighted among others:

1. What strengths have you identified from your own experiences in the Cook North region?



- ECACE scholarship + higher education navigators to help with applications.
 - There are also a variety of languages throughout the Region – Skokie reports that there are 90+ languages in that city alone
 - Various organizations provide supports for families.
 - Various collaborations/coalitions across the region
 - Various programs and program models available in the region
2. What are the challenges facing the ECEC workforce in the region?
- Compensation in general and across all those working in birth to five
 - Benefits often not offered
 - credentials/degrees, not paid for student teaching or need to take PTO for ongoing professional development
 - Teachers dealing with multiple children in class who have special needs but not trained in helping the child or having the support system in their program to help.
3. What barriers do parents/families/caregivers face with accessing early childhood care and education in the region?
- Lack of knowledge on ECEC programs: what types exist, where are they located, how to find one that works for your family, what does quality look like,
 - Long waitlist
 - Find openings that have multiple spots for all of their children
4. Where are the other needs/opportunities for growth based on the data?
- **Need for quality subsidized childcare**
 - Need for full day program models for working parents
5. Where are the other needs/opportunities for growth?
- **More flexibility with schedules/hours for families**
6. What gaps still exist in the data? What questions did we want to answer but couldn't due to missing data?
- Immigrant voices
 - Families who have children with special needs
 - Military families
 - City Councils
7. Do families have access to the ECEC services and programs they need and want in Cook North? If not, why?
- Programs are not accessible to families who do not qualify for childcare subsidies but don't make enough to pay for private childcare



Google Document with Strengths and Needs presented based on meetings, Focus Groups, and Interviews

Facilitator: Ilinca Wallace

4:10 Break (10 minutes)

4:20 pm: Recommendations (30 minutes)

Ilinca shared a word document with a list of recommendations made by Action Council members and asked that they narrow down their local recommendations.

1. How can the regional Birth to Five Action and Family Councils support local collaboration efforts?
 - Document in simple terms, where can programming be accessed.
 - Parent outreach in a pop up like setting/ one stop shop for families
 - Part is marketing and part is a pop up
 - Parent outreach in a pop up like setting
 - Harness technology - Something like “have a concern with child’s development ... here’s xyz.
 - “Have a lot of great services but we are really disjointed”

2. What are parent/family/caregiver preferences for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs and services in your region?
 - Parents have various hopes for ECEC programming- more knowledge about programs, more access
 - Cost has been a big barrier for families not qualifying for the CCAP subsidy.
 - Families shared in focus groups and echoed in the council that they are interested in ECEC programming for their young children.
 - For children with an IEP, a more smooth delivery of service if children are enrolled in a community based organization
 - Enough spaces to enroll children without having to race to enroll or have to go through a lottery like process

4:58 pm: Questions/Comments/Reflections (2 minutes)

Next Meeting: Monday, May 15th, 3:00 pm- 5:00 pm