



Meeting Minutes

Region 1-B-D Cook North Family Council Meeting

Location: Virtual or in person

Date & Time: April 12th, 2023, 12:30 pm-2:30 pm

Family Council members present: Julie Center, Najma Nishat, Nancy Salvador, Safiyyah Hassan

Family Council members absent: Arisbet Figueroa, Charlotte Erickson, Molly Mejia, Sharmishtha Goel, Lizz Merdinger, Wendy Mamola, Betty Williams

12:30 pm: Welcome/ Review of Community Agreements/ Regional Updates (15 minutes)

Icebreaker: “What activities do you enjoy doing with your family?”

Notes: Irene welcomed everyone and asked how they are doing. The agenda was reviewed and the Evanston is Family Strong event was shared with the Family Council members.

Irene invited members to answer the icebreaker question. Some answers included going to the park, being outdoors, storytime, shopping, laughing and talking, praying, playing in the backyard, having movie nights, having BBQs, and going to the dog park. Community agreements were reviewed. No changes were made.

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Facilitator: Irene Di Minervino

12:48 pm: Workforce (76 minutes)

Overview of the data 15 minutes

Small Group 30

Large Group Discussion 15 minutes

Notes: When you think of the word workforce what comes to mind?

Available people to work in a particular field;

Irene shared the workforce data available with Family Council members and let everyone know that the Excel document is available in the google drive folder.



Discussed the following reflection questions in a large group and these were the highlights...

1. What does the data tell you about the workforce in Cook North?

Shows lack of diversity - historically white, English-speaking women
“How does that look as far as quality?” some programs expect higher education versus others that require licensing requirements as a basis.

2. How diverse is the workforce and is the workforce representative of the communities they serve?

It is not very diverse and therefore, does not represent the communities in Cook North. The majority are white and speak English.
Lack of cultural knowledge and acceptance in the workforce

3. From your perspective, why is it difficult to keep staff in ECEC?

Overworked
Compensation
Child to teacher ratio is very high.
Higher-end childcare centers attracting staff
Management turnover – new styles to get used to

4. In your opinion, what is causing Early Childhood staff to leave/stay?

Some teachers are being taken advantage of. I used to come in and drop off when the center would open and she was there when I was picking my daughter up. She was working 12+ hours each day, five days a week.
Double sided – educators are leaving because they recognize a conflict within their own values and the way the center runs their everyday.
When the good ones leave the center gets compromised. Once they leave, it's hard to find the ones that can “fill their shoes” which makes the center suffer.
During covid people left due to safety and health and then around masking requirements if they didn't believe in it.
During covid, people reflected on what their needs were. Self-care was a big topic. Some left the field because teaching was no longer meeting their needs.

5. Do you feel your child is receiving quality care within their ECEC program?

I think it's not good for the kids when there is a high turnover. Children get used to a certain teacher and then a new person comes in and it's totally different.



Both children received quality care but I advocated for them; I made sure to make visits and chose programs that worked best for each of them; that was different for each of them. It took a lot of time and effort from my part to find a place that suited the needs I had as a parent.

I am happy with my teacher but I know other parents that are not happy with their teachers at the same school

When I think of quality I think of intentional teaching

“When they are speaking to me I value the comments about my child as a human being and respecting her as an individual with her own unique needs and recognize my child as an individual not a standard.”

6. What were the strengths within the staff? What were the weaknesses within the staff?

Staff are intentional, care about my child, plan intentionally for my child’s development, passionate

Weaknesses: substitutes who don’t know children, don’t understand their development

Teachers who focus on standards more than a child’s needs.

7. What does quality care look like for the locations that accept Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) compared to the places that do not?

I feel like CCAP programs are trying to help families pay and if a center accepts it doesn’t mean they are less of quality. Does funding equate to quality?

Quality is the qualifications, the environment, and the culture and training equate to quality not funding.”

8. How to reignite the passion in the field?

“People need to understand the impact of early childhood, not just the ones in the workforce but those outside of the workforce. Families enroll their children because they know it’s important so others have to acknowledge that too.”

Value and respect people in the ECEC

You can have a high school degree and grow from there -I expect you to continue CDA, associates ...etc. Show that you understand child development.

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Facilitator: Irene Di Minervino



2:04 pm: Break (6 minutes)

2:10 pm: Updates from the Action Council (14 minutes)

Feedback from the Action Council

Recruitment efforts

Community Events

Notes: Ilinca shared responses from the Action Council regarding engagement and participation in collaborations. Further questions were asked by the Family Council, specifically around communication and how the collaborations ensure all families have access to information and events.

Ilinca informed the Family Council about the Wellness Fair on April 29th and the Evanston is Family Strong event on April 30th. Nina shared flyers with the members present.

Ilinca shared information about the Focus Group survey for any families that were unable to attend a Focus Group but would still like to share their perspectives.

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Facilitator: Ilinca Wallace

2:25 pm: Questions/Comments/Reflections (5 minutes)

Notes: Irene shared that she will share the survey link via email.

Decision made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Facilitator: Irene Di Minervino

Next Meeting: Monday, April 24th, 3:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Virtual or in-person