



## Meeting Minutes

### Region 1-B-D Cook North Family Council Meeting

**Location:** Virtual or in person

**Date & Time:** April 24<sup>th</sup> 2023, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm

**Family Council members present:** Julie Center, Najma Nishat, Betty Williams, Wendy Mamola, Arisbet Figueroa, Charlotte Erickson

**Family Council members absent:** Molly Mejia, Sharmishtha Goel, Lizz Merdinger, Nancy Salvador, Safiyyah Hassan

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

**Notes:** Irene welcomed Family Council Members. Irene shared with the Family Council the change of the Regional Scan to the Regional Community Needs Assessment. Irene shared the results from the poll regarding meeting time for our Wednesday meetings. To get the most participation, it has been decided based on the poll results to meet on Wednesdays from 3-5 pm.

Irene asked the icebreaker question and members answered.

#### **If you were enrolled in your dream early childhood program what would that look like?**

Some family members mentioned a place where culture and language are honored, teachers would allow creative thinking, small ratio of teacher to children, some Montessori practical life skills being taught, the balance of finding something that is part-time or offers options for families to decide between all week or maybe just 2 days a week or half day or full day. In a dream world, it would be free. It would also be nice to include more of the parents' voices and have more interactions with staff and other parents that take their children there.

**Decision made:** N/A

**Next Steps:** N/A

**Facilitator(s):** Irene Di Minervino

#### **3:15 pm: Early Childhood Access Consortium For Equity (ECACE) Scholarship (15 minutes)**

Discuss the ECACE scholarship opportunity shared by Illinois Action For Children (IAFC) Higher Education Navigators



**Notes:** Irene introduced the ECACE Higher Ed Navigators: Ashanti Roberts, Candyce Cabral, and Sandra Rojo. Ashanti presented a PowerPoint on the ECACE scholarship including eligibility criteria and goals. If you were or are a teacher, teacher aide, teacher assistant, assistant director or director in a program serving children from birth to age 5.

For this academic year, if you have a BA you would not qualify to apply.

However, starting in Fall 2023, eligibility will be extended to those who have a BA or Master's Degree. That application will open at the end of April 2023.

For the current year, the deadline for applications is May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Other funding opportunities: Gateways GREAT START, Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship, Minority Teacher of Illinois, and Institutional funding.

### **Facilitator(s): Higher Ed Navigators**

#### **3:30 pm: Parents, Caregivers, and Families (34 minutes)**

**Notes:** Reviewed past Family Council and other caregivers' quotes/takeaways for demographics, early childhood programs, priority populations, slot gap, and workforce.

Parents shared the ideal age for entering a center-based or family childcare program: A few members mentioned being 1.5 years old when starting the daycare program, for some 3-4 years old. Ideally, the center will offer flexibility on hours and days. Parents shared that they use their own relatives or family members for childcare support.

**Decision made:** Group will discuss reflection questions after the break.

**Next Steps:** N/A

### **Facilitator(s): Irene Di Minervino**

#### **4:04 Break (10 minutes)**

#### **4:14 pm: Parents, Caregivers, and Families Group Reflection Questions (31 minutes)**

**Notes:**

1. Who or what agency/organization do you go to when you have questions about your child(ren)'s education, health, and/or mental health? (For example: A friend, family member, WIC office, pediatrician/family doctor, school, daycare, website, etc.)



- a. What has been your experience finding information on education, health, and/or mental health services for your child(ren)?
  - Pediatrician was a commonly shared response by parents
  - The childcare program or school was a trusted source for education questions.
  - For information parents shared talking to friends or hearing information by word of mouth. Further, some Family council members shared finding out information from the public school their child attends or the experience of other parents in the program. They felt that word of mouth works better than an advertisement because you can hear the real experience of those parents.
  - Communication with teaching staff is key for parents.
  - EHS program has been a huge support for wraparound support: when I have questions about health, or mental health; it is a great support to have a mental health consultant.
  - WIC office provides support; for example, with the formula shortage- they were very supportive
  - Family Members and Friends
2. Who or what agency/organization do you go to when you have questions about finding childcare for your child(ren)? (For example: A friend, family member, WIC office, pediatrician/family doctor, school, daycare, website, etc.)
  - a. What has been your experience getting information about finding child care for your child(ren)?
    - Friends
    - Word of Mouth
    - Husband is on the park district board- got advice from others
    - Park District is a good place to find out information about programs

**Decision made:** N/A

**Next Steps:** Irene will send an email with the rest of the questions to the Family Council members:

3. What positive experiences have you had with services (such as home visiting, early intervention, therapy, Special Education, etc.) for your child(ren)?
4. What positive experiences have you had with child care (such as preschool, daycare, family care, etc.) for your child(ren)?
5. Tell me about a time when you've needed child care or services for your child(ren), but you've been unable to find it.
  - a. How were you able to find care or services for your child(ren)?



6. What are parent experiences with access ECEC in the region?
7. Why is it important to include this information in the Scan?

**Facilitator: Irene Di Minervino**

**4:45 pm: Updates from the Action Council (7 minutes)**

**Notes:** Ilinca shared some upcoming events: Wellness Fair and Evanston is Family Strong

Ilinca requested that Family Council members submit recommendations for the team to compile and discuss at the next meeting.

**Decision made:** N/A

**Next Steps:** N/A

**Facilitator: Ilinca Wallace**

**4:52 Reflections on the Regional Scan (7 minutes)**

Review Collaborations and Coalitions and Early Childhood Education and Care System (ECEC)

**Notes:** Family Council members began reviewing the parts of the regional scan. The council members were invited to add notes and comments to the shared document.

**Decision made:** N/A

**Next Steps:** N/A

**Facilitator: Irene Di Minervino**

**4:59 pm: Questions/Comments/Reflections (5 minutes)**

**Decision made:** N/A

**Next Steps:** N/A

**Facilitator: Irene Di Minervino**

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm- 5:00 pm