



Meeting AGENDA

Region 16 Family Council Meeting

Location: 2500 N. Annie Glidden Rd, Suite F DeKalb AND Zoom

Date & Time: Thursday, January 12th, 1:00-2:30pm

Present: Samantha McDavid, Elena Pizano, Gretchen Sprinkle, Kurleisha Philips, Asheli Mann-Lofthouse, Bridgette Troutt, Diana Abraham, Kenyetta Jefferson, Jaclyn Rogers,

Absent: Courtney Walz, Olivia Adams, Samantha Balentyne

- I. Welcome & Introductions
 - a. Ice breakers, favorite thing about parenting, wrong answers only
- II. Review
 - a. Regional report scan to include Family Council feedback to ensure we capture needs of our region, this will occur in every region
- III. Discuss: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs
 - a. What would we like to see continue and change for example.
 - b. What resource barriers exist do you notice when trying to obtain access to care? Goal to ensure barriers are identified to governor's office, will remain confidential
 - i. Very expensive, would be able to be able to afford it without depending on family
 - ii. Knowing where to go, who to call
 - iii. Transport and document filing for supports such as 4 Cs
 - iv. Hours of operation, example, third shift hours no childcare open during those times without paying a



- premium above the already high cost and do have family in the area that can help
- v. Extremely expensive, especially with more than one child, was not worth it to work to pay close to entire paycheck toward childcare
 - vi. Local childcare facilities that are not equipped to meet the needs of special needs children
 - vii. Multiple children with different schedule/needs, ie. IEP, special care necessities, going through insurances exacerbates the battle
 - viii. Quality care cannot always come first due to being limited to what you can afford
 - ix. Some places may be at capacity
 - x. We have to go by cost and availability but in the long run we ended up with me leaving outside work and I baby sit from home and as far as Preschool, public was too much, 5 day a week/half day was \$300 a month. we ended up with private at \$300 a quarter for 3/ half days.
- c. Removing cost, what would be of most importance:
- i. Trust, safety, and quality of care
 - ii. Same here. Lots of situations of neglect -- you can't control in any environment BUT if there is a place that has the financial stability to create the safest and more educational environment you feel better
 - iii. But they cost triple
 - iv. After money is trust and safety. i need to know my kids are safe or I can't function.
- d. How do you define quality care?
- i. Not being sat in front of a tv all day
 - ii. Someone that will be responsive to the child's needs
 - iii. Engaging activities and play with kids



- iv. educational elements, appropriate food, consistency, physical care like potty breaks/diaper
- v. enough teacher to parent ratio
- vi. time outside activities, structure
- vii. reading to them
- viii. Safe clean environment
- ix. Appropriate food
- x. More than just keeping them alive, that sounds harsh, but I think it's a reality in some situations
- xi. Developmental needs being met
- xii. Reading, sing songs, dancing, exploring outside, looking at and examining things and how they work, creative art time
- xiii. Quality childcare setting will have a smaller adult to child ratio, smaller settings, it's so easy to get overwhelmed when kids far outnumber the adults in charge
- xiv. Making children feel wanted
- xv. Developmental assessments regularly is something that I have experienced being essential and must be cultivated
- xvi. Knowing how to work with different children,
- xvii. age-appropriate activities
- e. How are families finding out what care is available?
 - i. By word of mouth, talking to other mom's/parents
 - ii. Government agencies that provided resources
 - iii. google, moms' pages/groups on like Facebook, word of mouth
 - iv. Word of mouth, maybe on facebook. sometimes you'll get lucky and see a flyer, but thats tough
 - v. Insight from groups like Dekalb Basics and their programming, Barb Food Mart



- f. Early Intervention (EI), how do families feel about the time it takes their family to start EI once a family is identified as needing services?
- i. Takes way too long, example, speech delay concerns at age two, evals and results and everything in place took a year which is a year lost in services delaying their progress
 - ii. Parents had to do all the pushing to obtain needed info and if you are not involved in educational field, may take even longer d/t not knowing who to contact or how to obtain the services
 - iii. Theres SO many "proof" points needed as well. Sometimes the resource needs are less than "the norm" and to fight for intervention on the spectrum of different abilities and needs takes far too long.
 - iv. I'm in Somonauk, the neighbor that has a child with and IEP (Speech and ADHD), she has been going back and forth Somonauk school district since Sept and STILL does not have the help her child needs. Multiple meeting, doctor appts and still, his IEP is NOT being met and the second half of the school year has already started.
 - v. The initiation, communication and pushing is so heavily on the parents! Very inequitable for so many reasons
 - vi. Aging out of program is also a concern, aging out when child could definitely benefit from further services
 - vii. they have instead had to pay out of pocket for private services, rather than being able to take advantage to what the school offers on site with the lag in resource
 - viii. Many parents just give up



- g. What would make that system easier or more equitable?
- i. Not enough resources/staff
 - ii. Parents not being made aware of what they can ask for in terms of help
 - iii. Information not readily available
 - iv. More qualified individuals working with school district to support school in evals and outreach and communication
 - v. Information on how to obtain supports, feels isolating
 - vi. Task force needed, the teachers then act as a conduit for what the resources and parents identify
 - vii. Can be daunting
 - viii. Parents are left to fight for it but do not know how to go about it
 - ix. A lot of time it seems to get delegated to the home room teacher
 - x. Schools do not have the resources
 - xi. you're forced to give up, take them out of school or put them in therapeutic schools which is a while different conversation
 - xii. Knowing what to do PRIOR to your child entering care, educating the parents on processes before and after entering the educational system or laws for example, new policies regarding truancy,
 - xiii. Parents not understanding the ability and process of obtaining an IEP or 504 for their child
 - xiv. Difficult to navigate systems, information unclear, poor and lack of communication about the systems and/or how to start
 - xv. Having opportunities like virtual spaces as an option for inclusion to parents do not have access to transportation/internet/computers



- h. How do families feel about transportation availability to their school, time it takes to get there
 - i. Having opportunities like virtual spaces as an option for inclusion to parents do not have access to transportation/internet/computers
 - ii. Children with demanding needs lose consistency when facilities change locations and may take longer to get to new facility
 - iii. Gas money and car repairs
 - iv. A huge reason why kids may be truant, especially when there is no bussing available
 - v. Some bussing kids spend up to an hour on busses which are also not air conditioned
 - vi. Transportation to child care options or between child care and early intervention services
 - vii. Doctor, after school programs, or even sports...i don't know how many times I see busses broke down on the side of the road as well
 - viii. Have to depend on family due to times transportation needed, not everyone has this option
 - ix. I drive my child. or we finagle schedules so my husband can take her to school. however I have several friends that pay specifically for someone to pick their child up from preschool or day care and take them to afterhours care or have to pay for a sitter at home after they are pick up/dropped off
 - x. School days do not align with typical workdays
 - xi. After and before care is typically offsite and pricey, not enough drivers to cover all bus routes, bus drivers covering additional routes
 - xii. Higher pay for bus drivers, better benefits would help. A lot of time the hours are weird as its before



- and after but large gaps of time in between which doesn't always mean solid working hours.
- xiii. Often times bussing is a separate company from district, schools having their own busses and not having to depend on a separate bus company
 - xiv. Focusing resources to the issue would be immensely helpful.
- i. How do your child care options align with your childcare?
 - i. Work hours do not coincide with hours outside 8-5
 - ii. Some employers have rigid rules or strict schedules, despite weather or childcare hours
 - iii. I left work to stay home because we couldn't afford for me to work and pay for the odd hours of care. from 6am to 6pm is just not realistic for most family to pay for
 - iv. If employers had inhouse childcare would eliminate many barriers
 - j. When children are sick:
 - i. Typically the illness works its way through the family causing one or more child being home over a length of time further exacerbating the situation surround new truancy laws
 - ii. Technology was incredibly helpful for kids that are out sick but becoming less and less available since the height of covid, would need additional supports for teachers in classrooms to manage that

IV. Discuss: Slot Gap

- a. The number of kids that need childcare and the number of slots available. Availability of care:
- b. How limited are the slots and what are the limitations?



- i. Create larger daycare facilities with more classrooms to eliminate waits (being wait listed)
 - ii. We don't have the resources... yes. BUT should we have the support needed-- every child. EVERY child should get what they need, when they need it
 - iii. Slot systems are tricky, trying to equitably identify who is in the most need, remove slot systems? Allow everyone gets everything
 - iv. Well funded and well staffed facilities available to all, no slots, every child no matter the need, would have the resources available to meet those needs without being waitlisted, would open so many doors for so many people and remove this huge obstacle, life changing
 - v. Combats further challenges in the long term preventing putting parents into potentially neglectful situations because they do not know what their child needed
- V. Joint Action Council & Family Council Meeting – March
- a. Would like to have a joint meeting of both councils
 - b. Family Council will be expert panel answering questions provided ahead of time by Action Council
 - c. Family Council members ok with this format
- VI. Closing
- a. Next meeting in February
 - b. Will discuss workforce
 - c. Received guidelines on childcare for meetings, will provide info regarding childcare supervision for future meetings

Next Meeting

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Time - TBD

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