



Action & Family Council Workgroup Meeting

Recommendation #2

Increase staffing, training, and equipment for programs to provide care and education for children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities

Date: October 16, 2023

Time: 12p to 1:30p

Attendees

Council members present: DeAnna Davis, Tracie Griffith, Dona Middleton, Denise Henry, Sheryl Houston, Mikayla Wade, Victoria Taylor, Breanna Kobus.

Agenda

1. Group agreements were read and reviewed by Linda who asked Members if anyone had any questions or comments. No comments were mentioned.

Zena proceeded to welcome everyone to today's meeting and introduced everyone to our new Family Council Member—Mikayla Wade. We are thankful and excited to have her be a part of our Region's Family Council representation.

2. Action Plan: Zena mentioned that after brainstorming today, we will be coming up with an Action Plan that will lead us into working through our Recommendation #2.
3. SMART—Zena shared her screen and shared a Smart Goals video for everyone to watch which mentioned steps to consider which include making the goals specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timely.
4. Icebreaker: Linda asked everyone to share their favorite childhood book. Everyone shared their favorite book from childhood or a parent/caregiver perspective.
5. Review of recommendations chosen by Councils
Workgroup 2 Recommendation:
-A Council Member shared that a parent from Jackson County cannot find anyone to watch her child with disabilities.



-Another Member shared that her child has never attended a child care facility because of not able to trust the staff to be able to properly care for her son. He is currently enrolled in Head Start and they are doing wonderful but couldn't attend until he was 3 and right now Member is stressed about him going to kindergarten next year.

-Member has met a mom with a possible child with autism and couldn't get the child enrolled because of this situation. The Member stated that their son has attended different child care facilities and a lot of facilities don't have the training so they often asked her to "go get him" because they don't know how to handle him and asked her to keep him out for a few days so they can "get a break."

-Per Member, the Educational Environmental Data supports all of this information that various Members are sharing. Children with disabilities aren't being served. A member asked what kind of programs we were talking about? Child care programs? Zena explained we are talking about everything as a whole and we can work on the goals and be specific to share resources, information, etc.

-Member mentioned grant funds to pay 1 or 2 teachers, training, and salary can be given to work on child care facilities in Alexander and Pulaski with children with special needs. The Southern Illinois Special Education Collaborative...grant info.

-A Member mentioned forming a Community Inclusion Team which would collaborate with a school district to get training, etc.

- Member also shared that a community inclusion team may utilize the Stress and Trauma Center in Carbondale and work together to support them and other organizations like them.

-A member stated lack of child care providers in Alexander and Pulaski Counties and that DCFS requires to take training for special needs but it's not in-depth. Stated most representation is for Jackson County and Alexander and Pulaski Counties seem to be left out often.

-Zena stated it is a good point to make--they are smaller counties but agreed with Member.



-Member shared: to read all about the Community Inclusion Team:
<https://www.eclre.org/planning-tools/implementation-of-inclusion-project>.

-Members and Zena discussed contacting different entity directors in the area to collaborate and work together. Zena mentioned that it is a great goal but will entail a lot.

-Member mentioned that her mom has been a Para all her life but can attest that they don't receive appropriate training and school districts seem to have their own battles they are dealing with.

-Another Member mentioned that the school district being involved is needed for funding. The Trauma and Stress Team seems to be established and have mental health services for ages 0-5, therapeutic, and behavioral training. Maybe we can talk to them and get more information. Zena mentioned we could perhaps have a guest speaker to get more insight.

-From an educator standpoint, I think that the increase in the number of children with IEP's/IFSP's and the lack of staff training to adequately prepare to serve is a very big part of why the recommendation was made.

-Zena thanked everyone for their valuable input today and asked if anyone else had other comments that may have been left out. The next meeting will be Monday, Nov. 13th at noon as well, and we will send out the invitation a week before. Feel free to contact us and share any other information. We have great information to start with. Thanked everyone for their time spent with us today.

Before the next meeting...

- Share any information with us that may be useful as part of setting up goals for this recommendation.