



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 12 Family Council Meeting

Monday, February 20, 2023, 4:30pm

Staff present: Donna Rardin, Sophie Kershaw-Patilla

Council Members present: Sarah Adams, Charity Bailey, Melinda Evans, Emily Gullet, April Walls

Council Members absent: Sara Farmer, Cassi Fiscus, Brandi Foster, Karyssa Garcia, Sandra Hyde, Whisper Shick

#### **4:30 Welcome and Introductions (4 minutes)**

Notes: Donna welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a brief introduction for those in attendance.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

#### **4:34 What does quality/good care look like to you? (5 minutes)**

Notes: Donna provided an overview of what was discussed during the previous Family Council meeting. The noon meeting allowed different Council members to participate. She then shared responses to a question posed during the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting – *describe your ideal vision for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services and programs* – and asked for further input.

- Council members agreed with suggestions from the previous meeting, including local/timely access to transportation and/or financial support for transportation costs; medical, dental, and behavioral health; wider acceptance of the Illinois Medical Card and other insurance; quality child care options
- Council members added the following responses:
  - Parents being able to stay home, if desired, rather than working simply to afford/receive insurance
  - Shorter work days and holidays/breaks aligned with the centers or schools, so children are not in child care as much
  - Affordability of ECEC services
  - Better pay for ECEC employees

Decisions Made: N/A



Next Steps: N/A

#### **4:39 Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce (6 minutes)**

Notes: Donna provided a brief description of the Action Council discussion regarding ECEC workforce. Sophie shared details regarding the certification and degree programming available to high school and college students through IECC and the potential for workforce development throughout Region 12.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: Specific questions were asked regarding local ECEC funding. Donna noted that it would be best to allow Ann to address these questions during the next meeting.

#### **4:45 The Governor's Budget Address (6 minutes)**

Notes: Donna, Sophie, and Council members discussed the proposed 2024 State budget, including Smart Start Illinois and other education and family focused investments, and what this may mean for our communities. Discussion returned to the "ideal vision" for ECEC in Region 12 and what could be supported with expanded funding.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

#### **4:52 Regional Scan Update (27 minutes)**

Notes: Donna provided a brief update on the progress of the Regional Scan for Region 12 and asked for feedback on the recommendations to be made. Council members noted the following:

- Transportation
- Centrally located centers, so transportation is less of a barrier
- Communication of services and programs available
- Scheduling of services and programs that offers more flexibility to better align with family work schedules
- More slots
- Lower teacher/student ratios (suggestions include additional aides in classrooms and updating the ratio per age groups)
- Mental health training and certification for providers

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: Donna asked Council members to continue considering recommendations they believe are most important to include in the Regional Scan.



**5:20 Do you feel supported by your community? (34 minutes)**

Notes: Donna shared an overview from a recent Focus Group and asked Council members if they feel supported by their community.

- While there are community supports in place, Council members agree that they are not always accessible (for families or potential employees) due to lack of child care.
- A family/friend support system is important to help fill the child care gaps and provide general support to families, but expanded community resources (including extended child care hours) would be beneficial.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps:

Next Meeting: March 6, 2023

Time: 12:00pm

Location: Virtual