



## Action Council Meeting

Date & Time: February 23, 2024, 11:00am to 1:00pm

### Notes

#### **11:05am: Welcome and Updates (10 minutes).**

##### **Notes:**

- Regional Council Manager, Valerie Varju shared about her attendance at the Governor's press conference at Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley in Villa Park on February 9, 2024, where he reiterated the importance of our Early Childhood Collaborations. Also provided were updates on the legislation status of the new Early Childhood Agency and the Governor's State of the State Address held earlier this week.
- Local update provided on the Villa Park Early Childhood Collaboration having had their first orientation meeting with the Illinois Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Acknowledged the sensitive nature of the Mental and Behavioral Health topic and the importance of self-care moving forward.
- Shared positive affirmations of ourselves and the importance of acknowledging our own mental and emotional states.

#### **11:15am: Birth to Five Illinois Survey Overview and Discussion (100 minutes).**

##### **Notes:**

- An overview of the Birth to Five Illinois Mental and Behavioral Health Survey results was provided. Information is embargoed until June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, not for public dissemination.
- Mentimeter board was utilized for discussion on the questions "What is the referral process like for families and children?", "What is preventing families and children from receiving services?", and "What is needed to ensure equitable access to Early Childhood Mental and Behavioral Health Services for children and families?". Council members discussed as below:
  - Referral process is challenging for families as there are many barriers including, but not limited to insurance/Medicaid coverage, transportation, and a waiting period of 3 months+.
  - Recognized teachers and school personnel are overwhelmed as it is and further education on Mental and Behavioral Health resources, that are available, is needed across the board, and utilizing collaborative care.
  - Recognized the collaborative care model is key and looking at the relationship Villa Park Early Childhood Collaboration has with the Illinois



Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is one to look to as they bridge the gap between local collaborations and Early Childhood Education and Care.

- Discussed that while DuPage County has many collaborations and organizations doing the work, communication between all is lacking, and needed. Collaborative care is key as is having the right people seated at the table for discussions.
- Asking the question and discussing whether stigma is a true barrier to receiving or looking for care, or is it mistrust of those who offer or refer care.
- Offered the invitation to send anyone who might have good information or a story to share to Valerie.

### **3:50 pm Next Steps (10 minutes).**

#### **Notes:**

- Council members were encouraged to utilize the Google Forms to provide additional input, especially if they are unable to attend the next meeting.
- Region 19 will host a limited number of Focus Groups, the first being one specific to Early Childhood professionals.
- Action Council members are encouraged to refer families that would be interested in sharing their stories and experiences with the Mental and Behavioral Health landscape.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 2:00pm – 4:00pm—Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations, Home Visiting, Prevention Initiative, and Early Intervention.