



## 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: November 13, 2023

Time: 12p to 1:30p

### Attendees

Council members present: DeAnna Davis, Dona Middleton, Sonya Clark, Victoria Taylor, and Mikayla Wade.

Council members absent: Keeshia Carr, Sheryl Houston, Tracie Griffith, Denise Henry, Breanna Kobus, and Keosha Ingram.

### 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. Zena briefed everyone on today's agenda including an icebreaker with Linda and a presentation from Tammy Wrobbel, Ann Kremer, and Faith Knocke with Early Choices who will be presenting their work in our Region today.

2. Icebreaker: Linda asked everyone to share their two most favorite seasons of choice if they had the "power" to choose them. Everyone shared and discussed their choices.
3. Ann Kremer, Project Leader for Early Choices, shared their work with everyone. Early Choices was funded by the Illinois State Board of Education with State funds to support children with disabilities and to "ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living". It is a State-wide project. Its goal is to increase inclusive opportunities, and family outreach by creating community inclusion teams—currently in Collinsville, Springfield, Mannheim, Quad Cities, Peoria County, and Niles Township. Early Choices doesn't provide services but has been established to advocate for children with disabilities and their families. How do parents find out was a question asked? By pediatricians and other institutions like Star Net. They also provide training for



teachers, schools, and parents. How to bring more awareness to parents was discussed perhaps via brochures, etc.

“Inclusion is NOT about bringing people into what already exists; it IS making a new space, a better space for everyone” George Dei

4. Zena thanked the Early Choices Staff for presenting valuable information to us today and asked if anyone had questions.

### **Before the next meeting...**

- Share any information with us that may be useful as part of setting up goals for this recommendation.
- The next meeting will be a joint meeting with both Councils via Zoom on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 6p. The agenda and Zoom information will be emailed a week before the meeting.