



MEETING NOTES

Region 34 Action Council Meeting

Date & Time: 04/21/23 10:00 AM-01:00 PM

Council Members present: Dane Cruz, Maria Pizano, Pankti Jani, Anani Moy, Bobbie Hinden, Jamie DiCarlo, Jennifer Cordova, Joan Battley, Jon Ashworth, Lauren McArdle, Maria Colunga, Martina Rocha, Dr. Michael Karner, Nicole Johnson, and Taishiya Nix

Council Members Absent: Arnita Hodge, Cheryl Caesar, Janie Metzger, Jessica Medina, Kerry Stokes, Melissa Ferguson, Natalie Udstuen, Rosa Herrera, Treana Moore, Dylan Olthoff, Judy Armstrong, and Lupe Rodriguez.

10:00 AM: Welcome and Introduction (10 min)

Facilitator (s): Dane Cruz

10:10 AM: Review of Demographics, ECEC Programs, and Slot Gap (30 min)

Facilitator(s): Dane Cruz

Notes: **Reviewed Information Regarding the Number of children under 6 years old**

- Lake County has 50,660 total children, out of which 23,865 children from age birth to two years and 26,795 children from age three to five years,

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Reviewed Information Regarding children under five by Race and Ethnicity**

- Out of a total number of children 19,604 i.e., 47% of children are identified as white (Non-Hispanic/Latino),
- 13,337 i.e., 32% of children are identified as Hispanic or Latino,
- 3,410 i.e. 8% of children are identified as Asian (Non-Hispanic/Latino),
- 3,106 i.e., 7% of children are identified as Black or African(non-Hispanic/Latino),
- 1,997 i.e., 5% of children are identified as Two or More Races(non-Hispanic/Latino),



- 121 of the children are identified as Some other Race (Non-Hispanic/Latino),
- 65 of the children are identified as American Indian or Alaska Native,
- 20 of the children are identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic/ Latino).

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Reviewed Information Regarding children under five with All Parents**

Working

- Out of the total number of children 11,536 children are living with one parent working in the family,
- Out of the total number of children 24,725 children are living with two parents working in the family.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Reviewed Information about children under six by Federal Poverty Level**

(FPL)

- 2,275 children five and under are 0-50% FPL,
- 4,930 children five and under are 0-100% FPL,
- 7,690 children five and under are 0-130% FPL,
- 11,850 children five and under are 0-185% FPL,
- 12,902 children five and under are 0-200% FPL,

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Review Program and Services & Slot Gap information**

- RCM gave an overview and differences between Licensed Child Care Centers, License Exempt Child Care Centers, Family Child Care Centers, Prevention Initiatives, Early Head Start, Preschool for All, and Preschool for All Expansion.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Reviewed Information about Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Services (ECEC)**

- Early Head Start (EHS) has one site and 70 capacities, by publicly funded,



- Head Start (HS) has five sites and 299 capacities,
- Prevention Initiative (PI) has eight sites and 553 capacities,
- Preschool for All (PFA) has 29 sites and 2,880 capacities,
- Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE) has two sites and 155 capacities,
- IDHS Home Visiting no site and 71 capacities.
- Licensed Child Care Center (LCC) has 120 sites and 12,599 capacities,
- Licensed Family Child Care Center (LFCC) has 368 sites and 4,021 capacities,
- Licensed Exempt Child Care Center (LECC) has 10 sites and 684 capacities.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Determine the Slot Gap between Licensed Child Care, Licensed Family Care Centers, and Licensed Exempt Family Care Centers**

- 17,304 Total ECEC Slots,
- 33,356 Children with No seat 66%.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Determine the Slot Gap for Publicly Funded Early Childhood Education and Care**

- From age Birth to Two, 623 Children are with publicly funded slots while 5,461 are without slots,
- From age three to Five, 3,334 children are with publicly funded slots, and 3,484 are without slots.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **What gaps still exist in the data? Are there any questions we cannot answer due to missing data?**

- Sources of the data collected,
- Requirement of breakdown in data of 0-2 years and 3-5 years of child care facilities,
- Data is missing the number of undocumented families,
- Data about people already working in daycare to see if they want to continue getting more education,
- More updated data are needed for future planning,



- More detailed data for household income with the total number of family members.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

10:40 AM: Review of Strengths, Opportunities, and Needs (40 min)

Facilitator(s): Dane Cruz

Notes: **Strengths within our Region**

- Lake County has a strong community college,
- We have the capacity to train and educate the younger populations,
- Resources are available in the form of Grants and Scholarships,
- We have a strong Action Council member team,
- ECEC providers are more willing to collaborate in the future,
- Data shows assessments have been completed but not current,
- The superintendent of the Regional Office of Education (ROE) is very involved in ECEC,
- The Head Start program in Lake County is with Child Care Resource and Referral Services,
- Home visiting Programs are becoming very strong and relevant in Lake County,
- Spanish-speaking home visiting programs are growing in the right direction throughout the Region,
- Active communication with the community helps to gather data,
- Lake County has an international diversity of people,
- Lake County has strong communication channels with different organizations,
- Lake County has several models of ECEC programs and bachelor's programs,
- Unified presence throughout the county,
- Higher capacity/enrollment in programs is founded.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **What are the needs and opportunities for growth in our Region?**

- More needs for allocation of resources,
- There is a pool of substitutes,
- Awareness of current opportunities and how to access those opportunities should be spread,



- Needs for a centralized place for Birth to Five Programs where resources can be searched,
- Needs for Kindergarten kids' development survey and ensure that providers and parents know what it looks like,
- Increase voices for underrepresented people like pregnant mothers,
- Build off of Dr.Karner's plan to work with Birthing hospitals and pediatricians of Lake County,
- Increase funding for more community-based Doulas,
- Increase the Birth to Five staff,
- Needs to increase pay and benefits for child care providers,
- Build and sustain the ECEC workforce,
- Simplification in the process of enrolment and pieces of literature should be easy to understand and in the home language so parents can understand easily,
- More child family planning programs are needed as we do not have the capacity to survey everyone, the average point for referrals is two months pregnant,
- Improvement in children for the staff ratio is needed,
- More partnerships are needed,
- More need of faith biased awareness to make education a priority,
- More embedding of resources in programs for parents and family, screening done by CLC or University Center,
- Availability of more professional development programs across the agencies,
- There should be a one-stop shop-No wrong door.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **What barriers do parents/families/caregivers face with accessing early childhood care and education in the Region?**

- Barriers are within the schools if teachers and student ratio is not sufficient,
- There is a lack of night and weekend care for families,
- To find care for children with special needs is difficult,
- Public schools need to have information resources about their area,
- Parents are facing language barriers like interpretation, Application forms, etc.,
- Use and availability of technology is a challenge for some parents,
- Some culture encourages families to keep their children at home as long as possible,
- Illegal immigrants are afraid to ask for child care support,



- Some families are having trust issues as they do not feel comfortable leaving kids at different culture providers,
- Transportation cost is also a barrier for parents,
- Child care cost is one of the obstacles for parents,
- Families choose to have full-time care even if they do not need it for the full day.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

11:20 PM: Recommendations (90 min)

Facilitator(s): Dane Cruz

Notes: **Who are the children in our county that currently lack access to high-quality early learning opportunities?**

- Children with special needs,
- Pregnant women,
- Children of single mothers, dads, and grandparents,
- Children of second and third-shift workers,
- Children of unemployed parents,
- Neighborhoods of Lake County that have a harder chance to receive staff, support, and sources,
- Children of families with lower income,
- Children of incarcerated parents,
- Children of homeless parents and teen parents,
- Children of undocumented community members are lacking access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **What do children and families most need in terms of program type, length of day/years, and comprehensive services?**

- Night and weekend care programs are needed for families working second, and third shifts and weekends,
- More home visiting programs are needed in Lake County,
- Mental health for staff and children is one of the essential programs needed,
- More Preschool for All (PFA) spots are needed,
- Some families are looking for drop-in programs where they will have to pay for the amount of child care hours they need. Application and file for each child will



be needed for this program. Family Focus has a drop-in program where the parents can stay,

- More free /low-cost programs are needed for low-income families,
- Providers that speak the family's native language are needed for better communication,
- Extended lengths of days in child care are needed for families working long hours,
- Nutrition programs for parents to learn what is healthy for children,
- More summer programs for school-age children are needed as parents are still working during summer break,
- More spaces for children of undocumented/immigrant families are needed in child care,
- Programs such as parental support for new parents,
- More sensory programs for children and families needed to be offered by the library.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Where would services best be located to maximize access for families?**

- Child care services are needed everywhere,
- Communities that have the most slot gaps needed more services,
- Libraries are a great place to connect in and out of the programs,
- Churches are the best place where families can maximize access to services,
- Round Lake St. Paul's church is accessible to families,
- Avon, Waukegan, Warren, and Lake Villa townships would be the best locations to maximize access for families,
- Community college is easy to access services,
- Places where transportation is available.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **What facilities are available for programming beginning next school year?**

- St. Paul's Church and St. Joe's in Round Lake,
- North Chicago abandon schools,
- Culture and Civic centers of Lake County are the facilities available for future programming for child care.



Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **What other resources and services do we need?**

- Internship programs for high school students where they can shadow childcare providers to get people interested in the ECEC field,
- CCAP Application process needs to be easier and online which is beneficial for families, as the current application form has 17-18 pages which is lengthy,
- Mental health support for child care staff and children is needed,
- More funds are needed for providers to take children on field trips,
- Shared benefits such as health, dental, retirement, etc., to child care providers,
- Frequent safety training should be offered to both child care providers and children,
- Child care providers should be offered higher wages,
- Financial support should be provided to child care providers to encourage them to pursue or continue education,
- College of Lake County is offering ECEC apprenticeship programs, they are working with North Chicago high school,
- College of Lake County is also offering a dual credit program where high school students can take nine credit hours before they come.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Notes: **Which programs and services require Federal/State Funding?**

- Home Visiting programs,
- Night, weekends, and extended care services,
- More Preschool for All (PFA),
- Nutrition for parents' program to learn what is healthy for children if is part of Early Head Start and Head Start,
- Programs for mental health for staff and children,
- Parental support in the new parent's program,
- Drop-in programs that allow parents to drop off the children for a few hours require Federal/State Funding.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A



Notes: **What could we solve with local funding?**

- Programs for mental health for staff and children can be locally funded,
- Drop-in programs that allow parents to drop off the children for a few hours can be locally funded,
- Night, weekends, and extended care services can be locally funded,
- Summer programs for school-age children can be locally funded,
- Nutrition for parents' program to learn what is healthy for children,
- Creative ways to integrate nutrition support services from other community-based programs like partnering with food banks,
- Enrichment programs by Kohls Museum and libraries can be locally funded,
- ESL classes for adults offered by Mundelein high school,
- Parental support for new parents' program,

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

12:50 PM: Closing and Reflection (10 min)

Facilitator(s): Dane Cruz

Notes: **Announcements**

- Lake County Action Council members are continuing to find ways to create awareness throughout the Region. Working together helps everyone with what is happening, what the opportunities look like, and what is the coordination of our efforts.
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Request for Proposal (RFP) grant that the Governor has realized for child care providers due June 14,2023.
- Our goal is to disseminate the Reginal needs assessment as wide as we can.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Next Action Council Meeting on May 19, 2023, @10 am at LCHD 3010 Grand Ave Waukegan, IL, or Microsoft Teams