



Region 39 Action Council Meeting Notes

Location: Decatur Public Library

Date & Time: April 6th from 10:00 am-12:00 pm

Council Members Present: Bekida Williams, Kristine Hansen, Megan Broderick, Megan Myrick, Stephanie Strick, James Keith, Amy Steck, Cathy Lucas, Jeff Dase

Council Members Absent: Michelle Witherspoon, Tammy Robinson, Karen House, Brian Rhodes

10:00 Introductions and Community Agreements

Notes: Regional Council Manager & Action Council members introduced themselves and new members of Region 39 were introduced.

Update given on meeting cadence for remainder of year, next year's focus, and regional scan timeline.

Council Member stated that the Child Behavioral Therapist at Heritage is no longer available.

10:15 Transportation

Notes: Bus lines have been extended through Sunday but are not accessible to a lot of jobs and child care facilities. The available times do not coincide with job start times and child care openings. Council Member advised that a positive is that the director of transportation just got approved for looking at all the bus routes. This would be a suitable time to look at how we get the bus routes to connect to child care facilities and jobs it is currently not reaching. Another thought by a member was shuttle buses available for families.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: Transportation meeting Thursday April 13th at 10:00am.

10:40 Early Intervention

Notes: Information was provided on what Early Intervention is, the number of children with active IFSPs in Macon and Piatt Counties, and the number of children on waitlist for specific types of therapies. Information was provided by the Regional Council Manager on what Child and Family Connections have given for waitlists: lack of therapists, service coordinators, and lack of local higher education learning opportunities for those wanting to into the field.

One member stated that they wished they did not have IEPs and kept a family plan due to the family plan running out and the parents then put all the blame and support on the



schools. Montessori schools focus on observation, so they are doing assessments for development, such as speech, which do not require certification. This information is entered into a system and printed out for parents. Referenced the Bright Start program that used to be offered through MRI for developmental assessments but stopped before the pandemic.

Other issues discussed regarding early intervention:

- Getting parents to communicate with therapist if needing to cancel.
- Parents do not understand why it is important for their children to receive these services
- Communication from therapists
- Parents do not understand how to advocate for their children to receive services.
- How to resolve waitlists.
- Getting to the root of the issue as to why therapists do not want to come to Decatur.
- Importance of getting children screened before going into kindergarten.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

11:15 Crisis Nursery

Notes: Information provided to define crisis nursery and the numerous ways for funding the program. Discussion was had regarding the need for a crisis nursery, who houses the program, along with staffing.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

11:30 Staffing issues in the Community

Notes: Child Care staffing issues exists in every area around the county. Discussion arose regarding foreign national sponsorship to fill voids in the local workforce. Association Montessori International (AMI) teachers have bachelor's degrees and Montessori Certifications but do not meet the qualifications of DCFS lead teachers.

Further discussion:

- Having the resources to support the families.
- Background checks for teachers taking too long.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A



11:55 Questions & Concerns

Notes: No questions or concerns currently.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Homework given to Action Council Members to review and strengths and needs list and communicate to RCM any changes or additions.

Next meeting:

- Thursday, April 20, 10am-11am - Zoom
 - Thursday, May 4, 10am-12pm – In-person
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