



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 39 Action Council Meeting

**Date & Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm. Thursday, March 2, 2023

**Location:** Decatur Public Library- A.E. Staley Jr. Manufacturing Company Conference Room

**Council Members Present:** James Keith, Cathy Lucas, Bekida Williams, Megan Meyrick, Karen House, Tammy Robinson

#### 10:00am- 10:30am Introductions & Community Agreements & Video

Notes:

- Staff showed the video “*How are the Children?*” Council members introduced themselves and shared what they felt we need in our community to be able to say, “All our children are well!”
- Members shared: systematic changes, family involvement, 3–5-year-old slots in programs, more family supports, neonatal care.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

#### 10:30am-12:00pm Large Group Discussion on Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) Programs and ECEC workforce

**Notes:**

- Our children deserve qualified, passionate teachers.
- Parents are not considering themselves as their child’s teacher. Parents need: more understanding of ways to incorporate developmental activities into their busy daily lives; more support systems such as family, neighbors, and friends; and parents need more home visiting supports that utilizes curriculum that empowers them to be their child’s teacher.
- Parents not aware of quality rating scale, looking for any open slot. Currently no Gold rated child care centers in Region 39.



- Discussion around problems with CCAP system resulting in delayed payments, centers requiring parents to pay cost until they are approved by CCAP, and CCAP covering 3 months of care while parent searches for a new job. ECEC needs to be subsidized by state/ federal government or create state/ federal programs. Possibly looking at local businesses to help fund ECEC (ex: local factories looking for workforce). Teachers are currently being paid right at Federal Poverty Level or slightly above. Great Start Wage Supplement not enough to raise teaching staff out of poverty. Typically, it is African American or Hispanic females working as teacher aides, which equals lower wages.
- Lack of institutions that offer ECE degrees. To increase staff education levels, they need professional development options that are closer to community, after work hours, and funded by local, state, or federal resources.

Decisions Made: N/A

Next Steps: Birth to Five Illinois staff to ask teaching staff in Focus Groups why they joined & stayed in ECEC workforce. Work with centers to determine number of staff that hiring vs losing each year.

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, March 16, 2023 10:00am-12:00pm – Zoom

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