

Region 1-B-B Discussion Notes

Cook West

General Comments

- The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in the region is similar to the State (38% in region vs 39% in the State).
- I appreciate the opportunity to see the data throughout the region.
- Access to early childhood services is not equitable.
- No surprises in the data - about what I expected.
- Access is not equitable
- There are not enough slots to meet the need; only 1 in 4 children have a potential slot available.
- There is a mismatch, especially in the areas with higher income eligible kids versus where the centers are.
- There are not enough child care spaces available for kids.
- There is not a lot of access on the south end of the region.
- Programs are under-enrolled.
- Some programs have been wanting to expand but cannot find the staff to do so.
- The needs of children that need services the most are not being met.
- There is a mismatch between population, need, and enrollment.
- Income guidelines can be a barrier; families making a few dollars more may not qualify for the services that will allow them to afford care.
- Families and children are not supported the same throughout our region
- It would be good to see the quality of available programs in the region.
- Knowing the number of families in need of full day services would allow us to prepare for future needs.

- I'd like to see the number of bilingual Early Childhood programs compared to where there is a high number of English Language Learners.
- Curious about the relationship between the type of child care/preschool a child received and their kindergarten readiness.
- Want to know the number of children who qualify for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in the region.

Strengths/Assets

- High rates of bilingualism is a strength in our communities.
- Quality programming in family child care is rising.

Needs/Challenges

- Staff shortages: teachers are burning out and leaving the field; teachers don't make enough money.
- Children in our community need special needs services.
- Bilingual education systems are more needed; some communities have great ones, but not others.
- Poverty.
- Need Early Childhood personnel who are knowledgeable of languages other than English.
- Getting teachers back into school and overcoming the barriers to get them in school to meet.
- Rising teacher qualifications.
- There is a need for teachers and providers to collaborate to serve families.