

Region 11 Discussion Notes

Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Moultrie, Shelby

General Comments

- The data matches what we are seeing and how we are targeting our Early Childhood work.
- There is a high level of poverty/a lot of families with young children living at the Federal Poverty Level. I'm not surprised by areas with the highest levels of poverty.
- I'm surprised that the number of Hispanic children isn't greater in this area.
- There is a high level of poverty in an area that has a high concentration of Amish families.
- Just about half of the children in the region have access to Early Childhood programs. This is consistent with other data (non early childhood) that identified needs, for example, food insecurity.
- There are not many Early Childhood resources in Douglas County.
- We have one district finding success in a Pre-k program working in partnership/ collaboration with 0-3 programs.
- Facilities and funding are roadblocks to expansion. It's hard to find building space for new programs and funding to help with starting new programs.
- One participant shared a story about the closing of a community college center – felt the community didn't utilize resources as much as they could, leading to business losses and eventual closure. Local voices provided important context to the data presented.
- Where are all the other children? Are they being served by other programs or family , friend, and neighbor care?

Strengths/Assets

- The COVID pandemic has impacted programs' ability to be as focused and effective as needed.
- There is a high level of knowledge about the region, commitment to work, and a willingness and opening to collaborate.

Needs/Challenges

- We need to break down barriers to open new programs in the region.
- Some barriers worth noting - not a lot of public transportation, less access to basic resources like grocery stores, etc.