



Early Childhood Coordinating Council
Wednesday, October 21, 2020
Virtual Meeting
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Barbara Andrews, Jennifer Arnaiz, JoAnn Barnes, Stephanie Brant, Jody Burghardt, Robin Chernoff, Cindy Chichester, Amy Cropp, Richard Crump, Joan Glick, Liran Laor, Mary Manning-Falzarano, Lauren Martino, Charlene Muhammad, Taniesha Woods Myles, Bernadine Occhiuzzo, Monica Ortiz, Kimberly Rusnak, Paula Sayag, Charisse Scott, Rebecca Smith, Louise Tolin

Members Absent: Carrie Meyer, Jade-Ann Rennie, Vivian Yao

Guests: Leah Bradley, Melissa Di Negro, Sharon Friedman, Michelle Gallipoli, Alice Gear

Staff: Taryn Billand

Jody Burghardt called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Convene Meeting: Jody Burghardt welcomed members and guests and informed the group that the meeting would not be recorded, due to technical issues. Roll call was performed, 21 members were present, including one non-voting member. 13 members are required for quorum. The meeting minutes from September 21, 2020 were approved with one correction: Lauren Martino was marked present but was not at the meeting. Motion: Richard Crump, Second: Robin Chernoff

ECCC Updates

- **Pritzker Presentation:** Met with Felicia Jones, Project Director with the Maryland Family Network to discuss a 2-year, \$1 million grant from the Pritzker Foundation: Building Better Beginnings. The goal of the grant is to partner with local ECACs to build integrated data systems nationwide which will identify gaps in current data and integrate systems to support:
 - young children
 - vulnerable populations
 - Equity

Several ECCC members are involved in the planning of the grant and the upcoming event. Members were asked to watch for an invitation to the kickoff of the initiative.

- **ECCC Interview with MMF Consultant for Study Project:** Several members participated in an interview with a consultant for the MMF study project, which is involved in a study around a public/private entity as the coordinating entity for early childhood in Montgomery County. Conversations with MMF will continue and members will be updated regularly. The deadline for recommendations is December 31, 2020.

ECCC Annual Goals: Members discussed the previous year's goals and accomplishments and developed areas of focus for the upcoming year. From the discussion, three committees were identified. Motion: JoAnn Barnes Second: Bernadine Occhiuzzo – The ECCC Annual Goals were unanimously approved.

- **Advocacy:** Focusing on communication with MSDE, as well as allowing the ECCC to shift its areas of focus to address a broad range of topics and needs as they come up throughout the year. It will also allow the ECCC to support different groups, projects and initiatives. MMF will partner with the ECCC on advocacy.
- **Child Care Sustainability and Systems:** Integrating a broad approach to the sustainability of child care as an industry, as a workforce and as a provider of enriching experiences for children.
- **Mental Health and Social/Emotional Well-being of Children, Families and the Early Childhood Workforce:** Supporting families and their children, as well as the early care and education workforce teaching those children.

PDGB-5 Grant Family Survey Update: The report for the family survey will be shared with members to use in their own organization but can also be sent to specific groups and used for presentations by the ECCC.

- Divided by age group: 0-5, preschool, and school aged.
- All parents, regardless of income group, were focused on cost as a barrier to child care
Location: the majority of parents wanted child care close to home, less interest in child care closer to work
- Hours of operation: many parents required traditional hours (8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) There were very few responses for overnight or evening care.

Action: Share link to report with ECCC members and MMF once the full report is completed.

Early Care and Education Initiative Update: Montgomery County is developing an action plan, which was intended to be released in April, but due to COVID-19, is not complete. DHHS is working with the County Executive's office to develop a release/press event and is currently identifying a date for that. A year 1 report and a year 2-4 action plan, with a focus on sustainability, as well as access and affordability, during COVID-19, will be included. If there are no delays, the action plan should be released in November.

Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCRRRC) Update: Jennifer Arnaiz provided an update on the ongoing programs and a recent survey. Numbers of child care programs that have reopened are being tracked weekly. All are required to submit a verification of reopening with MSDE.

- 80% of programs have reopened
- Family Child Care: 60% claim 0 children are registered currently. Those who have children registered have an average of 2 children
- Center based programs: 40% are operating at about 40-50% capacity
- On October 4, 2020, Governor Hogan stated that child care could return to COMAR regulation for both group size and ratios of children/teachers. (3- 4-year olds and school aged – ratio 14/1)
Montgomery County is still paused in its full reopening, therefore on October 9, 2020, MSDE issued a clarification that all programs in Montgomery County would be required to adhere to regulations for capacity (group size - 15 children) by November 30, 2020. If, after November 30, Montgomery County continues to hold at that group size, the county will require providers to adhere to ratios within the capacity set by the jurisdiction (15 children = 10/1 ratio: no more than 13 children with 2 adults). Providers cannot sustain their businesses at this rate and many providers have received grants to help them keep their businesses open, however Montgomery County says returning to COMAR ratios would run the risk of continuing to spread the virus.

Action: Jennifer Arnaiz will provide Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for providers and parents and Montgomery County Child Care Locate information to the group.

Presentation of Annual Priorities to County Council: It was determined through discussion that three annual goals would be presented to council in order of priority. Goals will be shared verbally with Council, but a document with more detail will also be provided. Motion: JoAnn Barnes Second: Jennifer Arnaiz. The ECCC Priorities were unanimously approved.

1. Mental Health and Social/Emotional Wellbeing of Children, Families and the Early Childhood Workforce
2. Sustainability of the Child Care Industry
3. Advocacy to MSDE and other groups with topics related to early care and education

Learning Hubs: Kimberly Rusnak from the Children's Opportunity Fund, in partnership with MCPS and the Black and Brown Coalition, provided information on the Educational Equity and Enrichment Hubs programs, which are being opened, with enhanced health, safety, and cleaning measures, to provide care for children and provide distance learning support at elementary school buildings in Montgomery County, MD. Children who participate in this program can be dropped-off at the program at 8:30am in the mornings so parents are able to have a safe environment for their children to learn and grow during the school day. After classes conclude in the afternoon, there is fun and enriching activities to keep kids active and engaged until they are picked up.

Please click on the link for more information: <https://www.equityhubs.org/>

Waterford UPSTART Project: Jody Burghardt provided information the Waterford UPSTART project, which provides four-year-old children access to the highest form of academic support in their early education at no cost to participants: personalized family education and coaching, a new computer and Internet if needed, and adaptive educational software.

The average Waterford UPSTART graduate enters kindergarten reading at nearly a first-grade level and maintains their gains for years to come. Please click on the link for more information: <https://www.waterford.org/upstart/how-it-works/>

DREME Family Math: Taniesha Woods Myles shared information on Development and Research in Early Math Education (DREME): In their homes and other early education and care settings, children make initial explorations into everyday mathematics, progressively developing and refining knowledge and skills as well as acquiring expectations, motivations, and beliefs about their math abilities. The Family Math project blends research and development toward the experimental testing of books, games, and activities designed to maximize high quality math interactions with preschool children. The ultimate goal of the project is to produce and disseminate resources and knowledge that parents, and caregivers can use to promote math learning among young children. Please click on the link for more information: <https://dreme.stanford.edu/projects/family-math>

Action: Information on these topics will be shared with the group

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.