



Early Childhood Coordinating Council
Wednesday, January 27, 2021
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, Richard Crump, Liran Laor, Lauren Martino, Charlene Muhammad, Taniesha Woods Myles, Bernadine Occhiuzzo, Kimberly Rusnak, Paula Sayag, Charisse Scott, Rebecca Smith, Louise Tolin, Vivian Yao

Members Absent: Amy Cropp, Joan Glick, Mary Manning-Falzarano, Carrie Meyer, Jade-Ann Rennie, Lynnette Weaver

Guests: Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta, Leah Bradley, Franca Brilliant, Cindy Chichester, Sharon Friedman, Andy Lett, Sherry Tsigounis, Sarah Wilch-Spamer

Staff Support: Taryn Billand

Jody Burghardt called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Convene Meeting: Jody Burghardt welcomed members and guests. Roll call was taken, 18 members were present, including one non-voting member. 13 voting members were required for quorum. The meeting minutes from November 18, 2020 were approved unanimously. Motion: Robin Chernoff, Second: Charlene Muhammad.

ECEPO Transition and Policy Work: Barbara Andrews shared that the Early Care and Education Policy Office (ECEPO) will be transitioning to Early Childhood Services (ECS) with Barbara as the interim Policy Officer. Michelle Gallipoli and Taryn Billand have moved to ECS and Sarah Wilch-Spamer will be working with the ECCC and supporting the ECAC grant.

MMF Entity Report: Franca Brilliant and Sharon Friedman from Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) provided an update on the [Recommendations for a Public-Private ECE Coordinating Entity](#) report, which was developed at the request of Montgomery County Council, and sent to Council in early January. The report gives the option of three different models; a new organization with both a governance body and management structure, converting an existing organization to a new independent entity with a governance body and management structure and a coordinating entity in the form of a new governance body supported by contracted management. The ECCC has been identified as a contributing party on whichever model is chosen by County Council. On January 28, 2021 at 1:30 p.m., County Council Committee will meet in a public session to discuss these recommendations. Franca and Sharon will attend the February 17, 2021 meeting of the Early Childhood Coordinating Council to provide an overview of the report, share the results of the County Council session and answer more detailed questions.

2019-2020 Early Childhood Coordinating Council Annual Report Vote: Members were given the opportunity to read the 2019-2020 ECCC Annual Report which will be submitted to Montgomery County Council in February of 2021. Members were asked for feedback or questions on the contents of the report. There were no comments and the report was approved unanimously. Motion: Taniesha Woods Myles, Second: Bernadine Occhiuzzo.

Local ECAC Quality Improvement Grant Update: Taniesha shared a brief overview of the progress to date for the grant. The grant committee is working with Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), DHHS and the Judy Centers to purchase children's books and supplies for activities related to the books.

A meeting date is being identified to choose titles, after which supplies will be purchased to build 200 kits. These will be disseminated to children enrolled in programs with the Family Involvement Centers (FIC). Any remaining funds will be used to build additional kits which will be shared with other programs in the county, such as Early Head Start programs, that work with families who have an identified need. Reserved as a backup are the food distribution sites around the county. Volunteers were requested to assist with building kits. Members of the group suggested reaching out to other ECE groups in the county to request funds to build additional kits to reach more children in other programs throughout the county. First Books was suggested as a possible vendor.

Action: MCPL will investigate using First Books as a vendor.

Early Childhood Coordinating Council Parent Survey Report: Jody Burghardt provided a summary of the report which was shared with members prior to this meeting. Several of the conclusions are that child care is still a critical need for parents, but cost, location and hours of availability continue to be the main barriers experienced by families of all income levels, including families with higher annual income levels. Finding care with operation hours starting early enough or ending late enough around the workday is difficult. An additional challenge for families is finding child care centers and family child care locations nearby their homes and places of employment. These trends are consistent with other areas in the state and continue to be exacerbated by the pandemic. It is expected that this will continue to be the norm and, as more of the population is vaccinated and more people begin to return to work, there is a real concern about the availability of child care and its ability to meet the needs of families.

Early Care and Education Initiative Steering Committee Proposal to County Council: In June 2020, the County Executive (CE), Marc Elrich, submitted a proposal to Council recommending that the ECCC be named the coordinating entity for ECE in the county. The ECCC would be reformulated as the Early Childhood Coordinating Board (ECCB) and would institutionalize the Early Childhood Initiative so that the voting group would include people from multiple representative groups throughout the county. These groups would include the seven Montgomery County Family Child Care Associations (MCFCCA) and the Commission on Child Care (CCC) as well as other groups and would form the steering committee for the Early Childhood Initiative.

CE Elrich has indicated that he is not in favor of MMF's proposal of a new independent, separate entity.

The group had concerns regarding the ECCB proposal around equitable representation of different groups such as Early Head Start, unlicensed family, friend, and neighbor care, and parents of children with different abilities. Several wondered if a letter with feedback could be submitted to Council, but it was determined that there is not enough time to collect all feedback, draft the letter and submit before the council meeting on January 28, 2021. It was noted that, with the length of time needed to develop the ECE coordinating entity model, there will be more opportunities for feedback, either individually or as a group. The group will revisit the topic in upcoming meetings.

Member Announcements, Updates and Commentary:

- Members of the group expressed concern about unregulated child care "pods", organized by families in the county, especially related to children with special needs or behavioral challenges and how the ECCC can assist these groups. However, the ECCC cannot step in to assist as county programs have restrictions in place related to unregulated child care. Jennifer Arnaiz from the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCCRRC) noted that existing grants are related to regulated child care, but noted that the county and communities have many supports families can access on their own.
- MCCPTA is having a training on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. on Leadership

Action: Information on the key goals of Maryland's Building Better Beginnings prenatal to age three plan will be shared with the group as part of the follow up information.

Action: Links and information shared in the chat will be disseminated to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.