

ECTF Minutes

11-15-17

Keokuk

This meeting of the ECTF was called to order at 9:35am by chair, Cyndi Mason with the following present: Cyndi Mason, Ginger Knisley, Carolyn Baker, Missy Park, La Phanthouvong, Kathy Osipowicz, Sarah Tweedy, Jamie Beskow, Cheryl Flaatten, and Julie Meir.

The agenda was approved as written

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted as written

Administrative Update – Ginger shared a written Administrative update including budget, Summit and Community Planning updates. On the topic of the board retreat/community planning it was further discussed that our area is seriously lacking in certified lactation consultants, child care providers are still dropping from licensure/registration, we need a better system for people to handle utility bills including education on being more thrifty/weather conscious, and it is an issue that a bachelor degree in early childhood does not make you eligible to be a licensed teacher. On the issue of utility bills it was also discussed that United Way should be contacted regarding a weatherization kit program again. Ginger will share the issue of education vs. licensure for EC professionals with Dawn Oliver to include in her work and advocacy through the Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF). Ginger shared that the IWF is planning to tackle to child care issue statewide including promoting child care as a career, getting business buy in and providing a toolkit for statewide messaging. IWF is looking for Lee County representation for this committee work over the next year. Sarah shared that she attended a NAEYC sponsored event in Mt Pleasant "Power to the Profession" regarding improving the status of early childhood professionals. She was discouraged that some in attendance were skeptical of seeing change in this area.

ECTF Goals – Cyndi handed out copies of the ECTF goals for review. Each was read and discussed. It was agreed that the goals are still what the ECTF is working towards and should be working towards. It was also discussed that the listed goals really are strategies and not goals and perhaps when the Children First board gets through the community and strategic planning process next year, the ECTF can revisit their process and revise the document. Cyndi will add "safety" to the list of supporting healthy children. Cyndi will also add the topic of transition teams to the ECTF agenda occasionally throughout the year so Ginger can be given some guidance on reviving that practice. In the meantime Sarah noted that transition activities are something all EC providers should be doing within their communities.

Mental Health – Missy shared that the psychiatrist at FMCH is retiring in December and he had been seeing some pediatric patients.

Family Support – La has three families enrolled and is doing well with them. She is struggling with parents being rude to her and hanging up on her. There are a few possible referrals coming in from other Young House programs but those children are not yet enrolled in EC settings and that is a

requirement of the In-Home preschool HV program. Ft Madison schools had previously reported great need for the program but referrals are not coming in. Cheryl suggested La could attend some parent group events to share information about the program. Missy is working on a new incentive program for HOPES families in an effort to increase parent participation in scheduled home visits. In the first quarter only 22 of her 60 families met the benchmark of keeping 90% of their visit appointments. Cheryl reported she is serving on the state level Family Engagement Component group through ECI and will report back to the ECTF as she learns things. Ginger shared that Decat and CPPC are looking into bringing an “Engagement” training to our area. It was agreed that this is a major issue across sectors. We seem to have a disconnected society.

Oral Health – Sarah reported she had 100% participation in the dental daycare program at both of her sites and the children really enjoyed it.

Child Care and Preschool – A question was asked about the number of children allowed in care for a non-registered provider and Julie shared that the limit is 5. Ginger shared that the child care complaint hotline phone number is 844-786-1296 if anyone has concerns about a particular provider. Julie reported that Rosie Posie site 2 is opening in the next few weeks and they are currently taking applications. She encouraged any new parents to get on the waitlist right away. Julie also shared that a new center in Bonaparte has already closed due to compliance issues despite having worked with Julie and Cyndi. It was stated that parents have a preference for either home or center care and tend to stick with that preference but families are running out of choices as there are more providers quitting and we have a serious shortage of care. Providers are puzzle piecing children and hours together to try to serve as many as possible. Cheryl observed it is also important to learn to say no in order to stay within compliance and be able to give good quality care. Sarah shared that child care is an overwhelming career choice and is very demanding. Also noted was the need for young parents to be taught skills such as keeping a schedule, notifying providers when they will not be there, being on time, etc.

Other programs – Kathy reported that she had the opportunity to visit with the Holy Family Altar and Rosary Society and they gave her \$300 to be used to purchase car seats as needed. She and Ginger also shared that they conducted a car seat check up event at Burlington Head Start and had 2 staff but no participants take advantage of the service. Ginger also shared that she and Chad attended the safety walk in Mt Pleasant to provide car seat safety checkups and had only one family participate there. Ginger provided a follow up report to Head Start with information to give to parents and plans are underway for a spring event when the weather is better. Sarah stated that AEA is exceedingly difficult to work with. It is difficult to get them to come out to do an observation or assessment of any kind. When they do come they are not professional and say things that make it seem as though they don’t want to do their job. Missy agrees that AEA is very difficult and has been rude to HOPES families and offended them and the families have subsequently refused services. Head Start has also had trouble with them. Providers have to prove the need before AEA will come out (can take as long as a year) and often times they adopt a “wait and see” approach and children are not assessed or given services until after they are in the k-12 system.

The next meeting of the ECTF will be held on December 20, 2017 at Fort Colony.

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