

Early Childhood Task Force minutes 10-28-20

This meeting was held via zoom with the following present:

Ginger Knisley, Missy Park, Morgan Small, Carolyn Baker, Cheryl Flaatten, Jolene Dilks, Kathy Osipowicz, Melissa Daugherty, Rachael Patterson-Rahn, Malia Love, and Cyndi Mason

The agenda and previous meeting minutes were accepted as written

Ginger gave an administrative update including family support, fiscal, legislative, and board membership updates. One topic of discussion was how to spend the surplus funds from higher than normal carry forward from the previous year as well as the money held in reserve in anticipation of mid-year cuts that now do not look likely. Cheryl suggested that extra cleaning help or extra pay for staff having to take on extra cleaning duties may be helpful as well as “bonus checks” for Directors that have kept their centers open through COVID and all the added stress they have had. She also asked if there were ideas from other parts of the state. Ginger answered that there are many discussions taking place to share ideas of how surplus funds can be spent including a regional discussion of community parks getting musical playground equipment. Rachael pointed out that Bentley’s playground in Keokuk already has something like this so it may be good to look at an alternate idea for Keokuk. Rachael also shared that there is a need for dental treatment dollars as well as additional support of care coordination for dental.

Mental Health: Ginger shared there are more resources available now via virtual means.

Family Support: Ginger stated that there is currently some contention around the latest guidance from the state ECI office regarding procedures to return to face-to-face visits as well as whether or not virtual visits should be entered into DAISEY. Ginger will keep the ECTF posted on any new developments but in the meantime Children First funded programs are to continue as they are with virtual visits and entering them into DAISEY as they have been.

Missy shared that the MIECHV call this week included excitement around the idea of Santa pictures during porch visits. As face-to-face visits are currently not allowed, she will be investigating this further. She is also investigating the future of the free phones for families as there is some confusion on when and how the phones expire. She will keep Ginger informed so that the board can look into supporting the data plans if needed.

Melissa reports her staff are completing virtual visits at a higher rate than they were previously with in person visits and they have had good participation in group events virtually. Her staff attended the national PAT conference virtually as well.

Cheryl shared that the free phones for families program has now been expanded to other programs such as FaDDS. She has an upcoming PAT support call during which she will seek ideas on improving attendance at virtual group meetings as well as digging into what the benefits are to being a PAT model program as the cost is quite high. Melissa agreed that the topic of model vs. PAT-like program is a discussion they have had due to the high cost of affiliation. Cheryl mentioned the recording of a snack and learn session in which details were shared including timelines for the national family support

credential and she will share it with Ginger. There is debate around how long the credential is valid. Some are under the impression that it is renewable after a certain number of years and others believe it is one and done. Further research will be done to clarify this point.

Child Care/Preschool: Morgan reports being short staffed and having difficulty finding qualified applicants to fill the positions. She also shared that the Van Buren county sites are returning to full time mask wearing but the children have not had much of a problem with it.

Jolene says she is short staffed as well and they have a wait list. They are working on building staff so they can enroll more children. Ft Madison schools are returning to full time in person next week and that will free some space but transportation is still an issue as the school does not transport to the center.

Malia says that CCR&R is still not doing in person visits unless it is a health and safety risk issue. They are starting a Child Care Ready virtual class which is basically an orientation for people interested in becoming providers.

Cheryl shared that there was a CACFP training on picky eaters that had a mini grant component to it. One Lee County center took advantage of the opportunity. Cheryl has now learned she can apply on behalf of all the centers and has done so. The funds will be used to benefit 7 centers in our region.

Oral Health: Rachael reported that dental services have been started at Head Start sites by existing LCHD staff but they are still seeking a hygienist and a dental assistant. She has had only 2 applicants so far which is surprising since the hygienist position is a full time position with county benefits. She also reports that she is having some success with virtual outreach to medical offices encouraging pediatricians to do dental preventative work during well child exams. There is still concern for how the new collaborative services system will impact services and community health agencies. WIC will be the first program to go through the new grant process and they will begin implementing the new system October of 2021.

Other programs/business:

The next ECTF meeting will be November 18th at 9:30 am via zoom.

This meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

gk