

## **Early Childhood Task Force minutes 11-17-2021, 9:30 am**

This meeting was held via zoom with the following present:

Ginger Knisley, Rachael Patterson-Rahn, Melissa Daugherty, Jolene Dilks, Malia Love, and Venissa White.

The agenda and previous meeting corrected minutes were accepted as written with a motion from Jolene and a second from Rachael.

Ginger gave an **administrative update** including updates regarding FY22 funding, IWF projects, Resilient Communities work, and Designation. Malia commented she is hearing from providers that children are having behavioral issues and delays just as Ginger has been hearing.

### **Child Care/Preschool**

Jolene reported working on trainings and trying to hire staff. They still have about 30 children on the waiting list. They are working on how to revise their ARPA application and Malia is coming to observe and offer suggestions on dealing with a child they are having issues with. Good news to report is that they are receiving 62 boxes from Discount School Supply with new equipment and materials to use at the center as a result of their IICC grant.

Malia reported encouraging providers to complete their QRS applications before the new IQ4K system drops in April. She is fielding a lot of questions from providers regarding the governor's press conference and does not have the answers. CCR&R is working on finalizing the IIC applications. Melissa shared that families are struggling to find child care in Van Buren County and seem to be accessing unregistered providers for care when they can find them but it is not easy. Malia also asked if there were any events coming up in Van Buren County where CCR&R could table with information on becoming licensed/registered for child care. Melissa is not aware of any until spring. Ginger suggested a press release or education piece to the Keosauqua newspaper may be a good avenue to pursue.

### **Oral Health**

Rachael shared that CHC dental clinics are short on staff and anticipating further staff shortages due to the upcoming vaccine mandate deadline. They are wait-listing everyone until after the first of the year. Ginger asked if it was time to look at Children First funding treatment dollars again and Rachael said the trouble with that is if a dentist is listed as a Medicaid provider, even if they only see a handful of patients in a year, it is illegal for them to accept private pay from a Medicaid enrolled person. Rachael believes that silver diamine may soon be a viable option. Rachael will research what local dentists are not Medicaid providers in order to determine if there are any we could send children to for treatment with private pay.

### **Mental Health (no update this month)**

#### **Family Support**

There is concern for programs already having slots to fill while the state is pushing for only serving children through age 3 and only first time parents.

Melissa reports that the vaccine mandate looming could mean a loss of 50% of her staff across the three programs she manages. This is very concerning as Van Buren County does not have a large employee pool to pull from. As a county, Van Buren is only about 50% vaccinated and the VBCH employee pool is about 55% vaccinated. At this time, any entity receiving Medicaid funds has to have staff fully vaccinated by January 4, 2022. VBPAT is in the process of national endorsement and it is very intense. They have a self-study due in March and have to meet 80% of the 81 standards. It is a whole new process and

language to learn. Also, VBCH is looking at market study increases to staff pay besides merit increases which is concerning when a program is operating on grant funding.

**Other programs/business:**

There was no other reports.

The next ECTF meeting will be on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 9:30 am via Zoom

gk