

Early Childhood Task Force (ECTF) minutes 3/16/22

This meeting took place at Charleston Board of Trade in Donnellson, IA at 1:30 pm with a zoom option

Present: Ginger Knisley, Missy Park, Amy Hayes, and Carolyn Baker

Joining via zoom: Jolene Dilks, Melissa Daugherty, Arin Jones, Malia Love, Rachael Patterson-Rahn, Kathy Osipowicz, Morgan Small, and Breanna Kramer-Riesberg

Children First Bidder's Conference: Ginger opened the meeting asking for any discussion on the currently open FY23 RFP process.

Rachael asked that programs impacted by the new Collaborative Services system be allowed an additional one page to address the changes. Ginger stated that would apply to Dental and CCNC and would be permitted. Amy stated that the CSA is quite confusing and it is not clear which agencies will serve what communities. Ginger expressed it is her hope that whatever agency ends up with the MCH contract for the region serving Van Buren County will subcontract with LCHD for VB County.

Administrative Update

Ginger shared the child care market study should begin April 1st and Breanna is encouraging First Children's Finance to take care of planning aspects in advance so the project can be completed in 6 months or less as Lee County B of S is holding decisions on ARPA funds until they have the study. It is not known the status of the study in Van Buren County.

Ginger also shared the calendar of meetings for the remainder of the fiscal year and updated board membership information.

Child Care/Preschool

Kathy visited HTC ECC and they were thankful for the STEM supplies. Kathy also heard a rumor there was a child care center on X23 near West Point that was closed and others in attendance verified it was an unregulated site caring for too many children.

Rachael reached out to Kids Zone in Burlington regarding an unrelated grant and learned they plan to build the child care center at Ft Madison hospital to be open this fall serving 84 hospital staff children. Rachael also shared a science experiment for children related to tooth decay. Using a Styrofoam cup, sprinkle with pepper (bacteria), then pouring finger nail polish remover on it to represent the acid and the cup dissolves. Kids really enjoy it and it is a good visual for them.

Amy shared she likes the new IQ4K tool that will be in full use in April that replaces multiple other tools and is more provider driven.

Jolene had nothing new. They are still trying to hire staff in order to bring kids in off the waiting list. They have tried multiple advertising avenues including Facebook and Indeed. She

verified that employees get a significant discount on their children's tuition. Missy will continue to promote this as a good option for HOPES families.

Malia reported that as of Monday CCRR was no longer accepting the old QRS applications. Everyone will now use the IQ4K system. She is working on assisting sites in updating their IPower accounts.

Morgan reports she was able to complete and submit the QRS applications for both Douds and Harmony. She too is trying to hire and has been shorthanded all school year. Recruitment numbers for the fall are looking really good for both VB sites and they even have families applying from out of the district due to the appeal of full day care.

Rachael shared that they are excited to start using the silver diamine treatment at Head Start sites and is happy to report it appears the CHC in Keokuk is lightening up on wait-listing people.

Mental Health

Ginger reported the EC-PBIS program is funded and underway in the active planning stage and hope to have consultants hired July 1 or shortly thereafter.

Ginger also shared there is concern for the lower funding in the SEIL region for mental health services since the switch to how the regions are funded and some services like crisis care don't even have any providers responding to bids for service in the region.

Family Support

Melissa has been consumed with completing the national PAT quality endorsement process. They are still low on case numbers and could use referrals to the VB PAT program. There is a car seat event coming up in April and they hope to get some referrals from it.

Missy reports HOPES has had an abundance of referrals in the last month but are still not at capacity. Some unusual referral sources have been FaDDS and DHS. She believes being visible in the community is key.

Other issues

There is concern that families are not prepared for their food stamp benefits to be potentially much lower in April as the COVID subsidy is done. Kathy reminded that the food pantry is well stocked and has deer meat and other meats, fresh produce etc. Morgan wonders if the free school meals for everyone will also end. Arin heard it was ending in June.

Arin reminded April is CAP month and for members to shout out to her if pinwheels are needed.

The next ECTF meeting will be at Charleston Board of Trade with a zoom option on Wednesday, April 20th at 10:30 am