



Pulling Together for the Children of Frederick County

Frederick County Interagency Early Childhood Committee

A Subcommittee of the Local Management Board

Mission Statement:

To promote the healthy development and well-being of young children and their families through community collaboration

Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2024

Attendees: Alyssa Palermo, Holly Sontz, Jilian Bleggi, Jim Lee, Karin Toth, Kathy Allen, Kelly Robbins, Nancy Hernandez

- FCPS Update– Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data is not quite ready for public information– it will be approved on 2/27 at BoE meeting; presentation for the group will be postponed until March.

Nancy Hernandez (Dept of Social Services, Kinship Services)

- Kinship navigation: supportive service for relatives raising other relatives' children without involving foster care.
- Typically falls in the cracks of the system– challenges with getting custody/legal guardianship, enrollments, support services. Falls under the umbrella of family preservation, but unique due to challenges getting custody.
- Purpose of the program is to nurture and support relationships. Services range from information and referrals to opening a Family Services Case– social worker going to home, monitoring for safety & making referrals.
- Monthly support group being held at YMCA on Market. The children are in separate room; they have a meal together afterwards. Helps to normalize and provide camaraderie between caregivers and kids.
- Attendee Q&A
 - People come in through a call line, not just through CPS. Outreach within agencies over the years has created a referral system directly to Nancy.
 - School-aged children are given McKinney Vento status. Leslie Frei confirmed that children qualify for McKinney Vento status.
 - “Notarized kinship affidavit”– same questions as MSDE affidavit– to assist family with enrollment in school. Internal form through DSS; there is a notary at DSS. Form is not available online in order to ensure validity of claim. They can assist with healthcare affidavit so that caregivers can take kids to medical visits.

- Approximately 220 families are on mailing list for support group. Typical attendance for support groups is 13 families. 4 or 5 cases per month receive home visits/ have more direct needs.
- Jim Miller is the supervisor and can act as liaison.

Subcommittee Report Out

Children's Festival

- Meeting with Mayor and Aldermen tonight to receive approval to use Baker Park for Children's Festival
- Recruiting help— Child Care Choices has conference the week before in Garrett County, April is a busy month for Mental Health Association. Entertainment, activity booth sign ups have already been sent out. Food is ready to go!
- Looking for photos of festival outdoors from previous years (2023 was indoors). If you have photos, send to Sarah Martin or to children's festival email (ChildrensFestival@fcmha.org).
- Advertisement/outreach in progress. Any info about groups to volunteer on day of— scout troops, college students, rotary clubs, etc. Anticipating large donation from PNC.
- Question— Do we have a list of volunteer contacts in the past? Unsure. Erin Gambrill to email.
 - Kelly Robbins from FCPS to email child development students.
 - Library can post a call for volunteers.
 - Hours would be slots between 9:00 and 4:00 on 4/27. The event is 10:00-3:00, takes longer to set up than take down.

Awareness Committee

- In the process of ordering the Vroom materials. The Division of Family Services signed the data sharing agreement. The materials will be handed out to community agencies to share with families.

Collaboration Committee

- Up to date on membership. Which agencies are required in the bylaws to be at the table? If someone steps away, who is responsible for finding a replacement? Within the IECC shared Google docs, there is an attendance record. Bylaws say someone from your agency must attend at least 50% of the time.
- Please double-check the IECC directory, so the correct people are identified with the correct organization.
- Desire to invite a medical professional (pediatrician). Steve to reach out to providers/offices.
- Bylaws are located in IECC shared drive. Last updated Feb 2020.

Data & Advocacy Committee

- Map of services & gaps to be created— where are our strengths and gaps within the committee.
- IECC report to be created to guide how the committee makes recommendations. Modeled after [Early Childhood Services Collective](#).
- Several presenters to come and help guide how we can use IECC's voice within advocacy world. Best policy practices and family wellbeing target goals to be established.
- What other organizations can help guide so we don't reinvent the wheel?

- Information in Google Drive: IECC>Data and Advocacy Group.

Childcare Market Study

In the process of wrapping up with consultant. First rough draft of final report has been submitted for review. Hope to have the final report completed within the month.

Partner Updates

- Feb 15 Safe Babies virtual training. Link to register: <https://forms.office.com/r/vDmKwfgYVL>
- Mid-March/Late April Pre-K registration to open (estimated). FCPS.org/ECEPreKRegistration. Poverty Guidelines have been updated for tiered levels of acceptance. Alyssa Palermo can assist with Pre-K enrollment.
- FCPL doing a mid-March launch of 1000 BBK! Check out local branch calendars. Once kiddos reach 500 books, they get a book; once they get 1000, they will get a tote bag.
RGoetz@frederickcountymd.gov