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## Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet

### Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2024

5:15pm - 7:15pm

Virtual on Zoom

**Mission:** *To build strong connections, listen intentionally, and partner with Connecticut families of young children, communities, and OEC to incorporate the expertise of all parents throughout the early childhood system to ensure family-driven equitable policies and programs.*

#### Co-Facilitators:

- Casey R.
- Kaitlyn H.

1. **Legislative / Blue Ribbon Plan on Childcare Updates** - Maggie Adair & Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy

- a. Elena and Maggie discussed the progress of the ongoing legislative session in Connecticut. They highlighted the pace and content of this year's session as unusual, with only a few bills expected to pass due to time constraints. Key bills included the Governor's proposal to merge state-funded programs, the creation of an early child fund, and several proposed agency bills aimed at improving childcare. Elena emphasized the importance of the Early Start bill for improving the childcare system and asked for feedback and inquiries regarding the legislative session. Maggie clarified that House Bill 5051 proposed a shift from funding individual slots to funding classrooms which will be important for stability for providers.
- b. Elena led discussions on improving the application process for care for kids and addressing communication issues and mailing of items, from the experience of a family. Deputy expressed that digital Parent Portal is being pushed to be used by families. Deputy also discussed the need to reduce the caseload due to the current budget soon depending on this legislative session.

2. **Parent Cabinet Updates / Share the Good**

- a. Children with Special Needs ( Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council Family Focus Meeting)



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- i. Caitlin shared what a great event it was and hearing from parents. The parents on the ICC will be working on a video to help recruit more families.
  - ii. Joshua shared about a breakout he attended where conversations were had around what can be done for families to connect to different engagements for different communities. Some shared resources on how color codes are used by ambulances to show what special needs a child may have.
- b. Family Bridge Advisory Council
  - i. Kaitlyn shared a little of the work so far. It started in August but went live in October 2023 with just Bridgeport Hospital. Family Bridge which is a pilot program aims to ease transition from hospital to home for the parents of newborn babies by giving these families the option of having a nurse or community health worker visit their homes in the immediate days and weeks following birth. It is offered to all families at no cost and only eligibility is the birth must be at Bridgeport Hospital or Ct. Vincent's and live in Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Milford, Shelton, Stratford, or Trumbull.
  - ii. This not only checks on the baby but also for the Mom and family. There is mental health screening incorporated. There is linking to lactation if needed any other check in as needed. Community Health Workers (CHW) also come out.
  - iii. The main goal is to help bridge the gap between birth and bringing baby home and the after support for the whole house.
  - iv. This is a joint initiative of the Connecticut Office of Health Strategy, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut Department of Social Services, and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families
- c. Together We Will Conference
  - i. Parents shared recent experience and positive impacts from the conference.
- d. Other
  - i. Other successes were shared around leadership skills acquired where Casey speaking up about options for non-binary on a form at the library around gender and the Library followed up and made changes based on input.
  - ii. Black Women's Health and Maternal Health Care webinar
    - 1. Lorna shared about the webinar OEC hosted for National Minority Health Month and informed around the importance of addressing healthcare disparities, particularly in maternal healthcare.

### 3. Third Sector Support on Subcommittee/Advisory Committee structure



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- a. Introduced the next iteration of work for the parent cabinet, focusing on the incorporation of subcommittees and advisory committees.
  - b. The team's goal is to develop recommendations for the structure and processes of subcommittees, as well as how to join and participate. Joceline outlined the plan for an ad hoc subcommittee of parent cabinet members to lead this process and provide feedback. The subcommittees will meet three times from May to July, with each meeting lasting about an hour,
- 4. Elevate – Jeannie Regnier, OEC Elevate Manager**
- a. Presented on the 'Elevate' initiative, a quality improvement system for Connecticut, which now gearing towards awareness for families. Asked the parents for feedback on talking points for PC for talking with families. <https://www.ctoec.org/elevate-levels/>
  - b. Provided update on how to find a programs status on <https://www.211childcare.org/> which now has the Elevate symbols and what they mean.
  - c. Jeanne clarified the concept of 'Member Plus' within their childcare program, emphasizing that it signifies strengthening efforts, rather than a lack of licensing. She also explained the tiered 'Elevate' system for parents to better understand the quality of care provided. Chenae added that programs without the 'Elevate' symbol are not licensed, while those with it, even at the 'Member Plus' level, follow specific regulations and can enhance their offerings. The team also discussed ways to improve user-friendliness and accessibility of the 'Elevate' information for families.
  - d. Jeanne introduced the role of service navigators in supporting providers and families, emphasizing their role as a resource for locating training, professional development opportunities, and program information.
- 5. Mentorship/Onboarding work continued breakout**
- a. The group brainstormed on the importance of sharing connections, facilitating feedback loops, and establishing clear communication channels between mentors and mentees.
- 6. Public Comment – no public**