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Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet

Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2024

5:00pm - 7:15pm

Co-Facilitators:

- Bianca S.
- Krysta C.

1. Legislative Updates

- a. Commissioner and team discussed the challenges arising from a change in the kindergarten entry age. The Commissioner discussed the Early Start CT bill which is a plan to consolidate various state-funded systems into one, aiming to make the system more accessible and easier for providers. She also discussed the budget, emphasizing increased funding for childcare and new initiatives like grants for childcare programs and a tri-share program in Eastern Connecticut.

2. Recruitment Updates

- a. Discussed the Parent Cabinet applications and the decision to extend the application deadline to March 24th to ensure more fatherhood representation. Harvard GPL Fellow presented record-breaking application numbers, with 85 applications received in three weeks. The team identified a need to focus on regions 3 and 5 for more applications and to increase fatherhood representation.

3. Parent Cabinet Updates

- a. Children with Special Needs
 - i. Parent Cabinet member Caitlin shared that CCDF Director Julie shared about CCDF funding and alignment with supporting children with special needs. The group discussed promoting awareness on resources that exist for children with special needs and supports or coaching in child care settings.
- b. Best Practices Guide & Handbook
 - i. The team also discussed the creation of a best practices guide and a parent cabinet handbook to better understand the roles and responsibilities of members.
- c. Community Engagement Spreadsheet
 - i. Consultant Janine proposed a central spreadsheet for planning and sharing community engagement ideas and activities for Parent cabinet members. The



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spreadsheet was designed to facilitate collaboration and enhance visibility of activities in advance of them happening. The team agreed to distribute the spreadsheet for further review and feedback.

- d. Nurturing the Nurturer
 - i. Some parent cabinet members shared their experience being on panel for the Nurturing the Nurturer webinar on parental self-care.
- 4. **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)** Julie Giaccone, Director & Kristen Dudanowicz , Manager-
 - a. Discussed the roles and responsibilities of the CCDF Lead Agency, the timeline for drafting a new CCDF plan. Partnering with Parent Cabinet members to help input family voice into plan and get word out to families when public comment is open.
- 5. **Logic Model/ Outcomes update & feedback -**
 - a. Dave Betchel Cross Sector Consultant & Kaitlyn H.
 - i. Dave presented a draft report on the evaluation of the parent cabinet's activities, highlighting the key findings, achievements, challenges, and recommendations. Dave sought feedback on a draft logic model for the parent cabinet's work, emphasizing the importance of short-term goals in achieving long-term outcomes.
- 6. **Two Gen**
 - a. Christina Morales, 2Gen State Coordinator , Janine McMahon, 2Gen Parent Consultant
 - i. Christina, introduced herself and shared her professional background and current role in prioritizing families in various initiatives. 2Gen is a nationwide initiative that focuses on early childhood development, parenting, and family literacy. The Two-Generation approach in Connecticut, combines education, training, and support for children and parents to succeed and pass on economic security to their children. She highlighted the issue of "benefit cliffs," financial barriers that limit economic mobility, and shared about the development of a suite of tools, known as the "benefit cliffs" tool, to help families navigate these challenges. Also discussed future planning for a 2Gen Parent Academy with parent cabinet members.