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Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet

Meeting Agenda

January 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:

- Bianca S.
- Krysta Ch.

a. Parent Cabinet/OEC Check-in

- i. Blue Ribbon Plan on Child Care report follow up - There was a discussion about the legislative session, explaining its timeframe, key events, and the public hearing process.
- ii. Kindergarten age change guidance follow up- The team discussed the final stages of a joint memo between the State Department of Education and the Office of Early Childhood. The memo aims to guide families about what they should know and consider for their kindergarten-aged children.
- iii. December Events / Upcoming/ 2023 data



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1. The meeting involved discussions about various conferences attended by the attendees. These included experience at the Parent Connections Conference, Home Visiting Conference, and a staff professional development session on self-care. Mentioned an upcoming early childhood fair in Manchester where they plan to recruit for services.
 - iv. Chenae introduced a new activity data form and shared insights from the previous year's activities, highlighting the collective work and outreach efforts across different regions.
 - v. Behavioral Health Webinar for Parents – Invitation for members to help with planning and being in a webinar focusing on behavioral health, specifically the importance of self-care for parents and providers.
- b. Head Start / Head Start on Housing – Karen Pascale, CT Head Start Collaboration Officer, OEC , Dr. Shante Hanks CT Department of Housing**
- i. Karen discussed the Head Start program, a federal initiative aimed at providing services to children from birth to 5 years old and their families. Shante then talked about the Head Start on Housing partnership with OEC and Department of Housing, which provides housing assistance to families experiencing homelessness. They have already housed 133 children and 60 families, with an additional 40 families in the application process. The team discussed the importance of landlord and realtor



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recruitment for their program, highlighting successful partnerships with landlords who have committed to renting to their families.

- ii. There was discussion on the National Head Start Association conference, where OEC presented on their program and a Parent Cabinet member participated in workshops on fatherhood and diversity, equity, and inclusion. They were impressed by the data-driven approach to their program and the involvement of parents at every step.

c. Recruiting/Selection Process for New Parent Cabinet Members

- i. The team discussed the outreach strategy for parent cabinet recruitment. Emphasized the importance of parent cabinet members in recruiting through local community events and flyers. O'donnell team supporting community outreach where parent cabinet members may not be present.
- ii. The application is expected to go live on February 5th and will be open for six weeks. There was encouragement for Parent Cabinet members to join the selection committee, where they can evaluate applications and conduct interviews.

d. Next Steps/Closing

- i. There was discussion of the creation of a best practice guide for parent decision-making committees. A draft will be shared for feedback in a future meeting . Also the dates for upcoming trainings include a legislative education training and a facilitation training.