



CT Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet Meeting Minutes May 19, 2025

Time & Location: 6pm-7pm , Zoom

Facilitators: Tricia Hamlin, Parent Cabinet region 4, Stephanie Thompson Parent Cabinet region 6

Members' Present : Regan, Jenny C. (region 1), Shannon, Raquel (region 2), Tiffanie, Jessica and Christina (region 3), Tricia, Cris, Kelly S. (region 4), Stephanie and Jennifer S. (region 6)

Meeting Purpose (*Why is this meeting needed?*):

- To continue to strengthen relationships and communication amongst members
- Ensure members have tools and information needed to succeed

Intended Outcomes (*What do we want to achieve by the end of this? What will success look like?*):

- Members have continued identifying groups/people in the region they will connect with
- Members learn more about the Family Support Division – Home Visiting & Doula support
- Members learn more about Doula services

Agenda Item/Topic	Facilitator	Notes	Key Takeaways and Implications for Parent Cabinet Members
OEC / Commissioner Office Items	Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy, OEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Governance Partners Sharing Session: A sharing session was scheduled for the following evening (May date not specified) to discuss local governance partners, with a focus on the role of the intermediary, Shine Early Learning. • Legislative Session Update: The legislative session was in its final weeks. There was hope for an early childhood bill to pass, 	Members to share about the Campaign for Play initiative Let's Play! - Connecticut Office of Early Childhood - utilize the flyers for families Let's

		<p>particularly the Governor's endowment proposal .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign for Play: OEC launched a "Campaign for Play" to highlight the importance of play for children's learning and development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Play materials (posters, informational flyers, family flyers) are available on the OEC website and would be mailed to licensed centers. ○ Feedback was requested on the materials and how to best distribute them to parents and families. ○ It was confirmed that these materials could be shared immediately 	<p>Play Materials - Connecticut Office of Early Childhood</p> <p>Packets will be mailed to members also</p>
Subcommittee & Advisory Committee Feedback	<p>Amber, Region 5</p> <p>Kelly S., Region 4</p> <p>Tricia, Region 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and Affordability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussed a "one-point portal" (name TBD) being developed ○ The portal aims to allow parents to see center availability, costs, locations, upload documents, communicate with providers, and register for programs ○ Clarified it's in early stages and will help families identify services they qualify for (e.g., Birth to Three, childcare), aligning with the Blue Ribbon Plan • Statewide Early Childhood Inclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Padlet is being used to gather resources, agencies, and programs for families, focusing on those with special needs or disabilities for all backgrounds ○ The goal is to break down resources regionally to identify strengths and needs. Padlet link was shared for members to input what they know or where there is a need and no resource aware of. • Parent and Caregiver Survey Committee : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OEC and UConn are collaborating to update the parent survey, which will be digital and take approximately 13-15 minutes to complete 	<p>Members will soon give feedback on the portal.</p> <p>Members continue adding resources to the Padlet https://oec.padlet.org/Che-naeRussell/resources-agencies-and-programs-supporting-young-children-wi-dyrg5yorc8w9kmcj</p> <p>Members continue adding parent survey recruitment ideas to the Slido https://app.sli.do/event/e2Uh6ji8dECMMk6K2Cd16E ; 4217299</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The committee is seeking recruitment ideas and strategies (excluding social media due to bot concerns) to reach parents ○ Ideas shared via Slido included: public schools, WIC offices, libraries, pediatrician offices, childcare centers (QR codes), community centers, Head Start, and Early Head Start 	
Regional Breakouts		<p>Groups had 20 minutes to discuss region mapping, connection goals, outreach strategies, or community challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region 3 (Tiffany): Plans to attend local collaboratives, research past/current family advisory boards (e.g., RACFAB in Colchester), and connect with existing family groups to share information • Region 4 (Tricia): Focused on strategies to reach out to more fathers and include their voices, as they are often less visible at community events and childcare settings • Chenae's Suggestion: Encouraged members to wear Parent Cabinet t-shirts or name tags at public events (like sports games) to spark conversations and share information about the Parent Cabinet and OEC. Jennifer shared success with this approach. Jenny highlighted the need to reach those with varying work schedules. 	
Home Visiting + Even Start+ Doula support for women impacted by incarceration	Luz Rivera (OEC Family Support Division)	<p>OEC Home Visiting Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEC funds four evidence-based home visiting models, all free and voluntary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child First: Serves children prenatal to age 2. Involves a mental health clinician and care coordinator, focusing on child-parent psychotherapy and parental competencies ○ Healthy Families America (HFA): Serves children 	<p>Share out with their regions and if any questions please share with Chenae and Luz.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on becoming a

		<p>prenatal to age 3-5. Focuses on nurturing parent-child relationships using a strength-based approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nurse Family Partnership (NFP): Serves first-time mothers prenatal until the child is 2. Registered nurses provide visits focusing on prenatal/maternal health and child development ○ Parents as Teachers (PAT): Serves families prenatal to age 5. Curriculum-based, focuses on parent-child interaction, school readiness, and community resources ○ Approximately 3,100 families were served in FY24 →. Program information is searchable by town on the OEC website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even Start Program: (Overseen by Haley Scott) Serves families with children up to age 7. Requires parent enrollment in a GED program. Includes adult education, early childhood education, parenting support, and literacy activities. Home visits are once a month. Three sites available • Doula Services at York Correctional Institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ OEC collaborates with Lawrence Memorial Hospital, YCI, and Empowered Beginnings to provide doula services to incarcerated mothers ○ Currently 13 pregnant women at YCI; 30 births supported since 2022 ○ Initiatives include housing pregnant/postpartum women in one unit, resulting in increased breast milk pumping ○ L&M Hospital provides PAT home visiting, Circle of Security, and Peace and Love groups at YCI, and donates supplies ○ Doulas from Empowered Beginnings offer prenatal/postnatal groups, attend births, create baby books, provide essential needs, and make referrals to home visiting programs ○ Home visiting services are now also offered at York 	<p>certified Parent as Teachers (PAT) educator to be shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those interested in volunteer opportunities can contact: Empowered Beginnings Doula contact- Ashley Minihan, Empowered Beginnings Lead Doula, and the best way to reach her is via email: ashley@empoweredbeginningsct.com
--	--	--	--

		<p>for women released before giving birth, and services are extending to halfway houses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mallory shared a personal connection and expressed interest in volunteering 	
Golden Radiance Village Doulas	Shannon Knox (Region 2) & Brittany Needham (Golden Radiance Village Doulas)	<p>Golden Radiance Village is a 501c3 non-profit grassroots organization founded by Shannon and Brittany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission: To ensure the holistic well-being of Melanated mothers throughout their maternal health journey and major life transitions • Vision: To cultivate joy and connect families with individuals, organizations, and systems that honor them, based on the principle of Ubuntu ("I am because you are") • Focus: Specifically supports melanated families to address harm, racism, and microaggressions experienced during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum • Services & Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Melanated Mama Support Group (virtual, open to all, including out-of-state participants) ○ Black Doula Collective (connects families with doulas) ○ Dona-certified doula training ○ Community events (all free): Matriarchal Blessing Way, annual Black Maternal Health Walk, community baby showers (Hartford, New Haven), Maternal Health Hub (New Haven) ○ Advocacy and research partnerships • While the support group is centered on melanated, their doula services are available to all clients 	<p>Share this resource and here is Linktree to stay connected:</p> <p>https://linktr.ee/goldenradiancevillage</p>
Third Sector Consulting- Parent Cabinet & OEC Goal alignment support	Third Sector Consulting (Shaniece Faulkner &	<p>Third Sector is a non-profit consulting firm that has previously assisted OEC and the Parent Cabinet with governance, member staggering, and subcommittee structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Project Goals: 	<p>Governance subcommittee will be involved with this work</p>

	Katherine Mercado)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance cross-engagement with the Parent Cabinet to improve collaboration, ensuring Parent Cabinet input is sought ("nothing happens without touching bases with you all first") ○ Strengthen feedback loops and decision-making processes between the cabinet and OEC divisions ○ Ensure sustainability by designing, piloting, and refining effective tools and processes for OEC-Parent Cabinet interaction ● Project Timeline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phase 1: Work planning and project design (current) ○ Phase 2: Data collection and tool development ○ Phase 3: Implementation and sustainability of tools/processes ● Parent Cabinet members (especially the Governance Subcommittee) will be engaged through surveys, interviews, and testing of piloted tools 	
Feedback/ Discussion/ Questions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shanae is working on an FAQ document for Parent Cabinet members, including information on who to contact for Care4Kids and the licensing complaint line (which allows anonymous complaints) ● A how-to guide for mobile versions of Outlook and Teams is also in development ● Kelly inquired about creating a Padlet for fatherhood initiatives and resources ● Exciting News: Cris (Parent Cabinet member region 4) has been newly appointed to the Early Childhood Cabinet as the Parent Cabinet's representative ● Chris will also participate in a fatherhood-focused video with Jen Wilder (OEC Home Visiting), which will feature fathers and organizations from across New England 	

<p>Next steps</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation link shared • An upcoming facilitation training for Parent Cabinet members was announced (potentially a two-part series) • A reminder was given for the June 6th Parent Leadership Learning Community event <p>Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: A Monday in June (specific date TBD via poll) • Time: TBD (likely evening) • Location: Virtual <p><i>(A potential in-person meeting is being considered for July, details TBD)</i></p>	
--------------------------	--	--	--