

CT Early Childhood Cabinet

Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2022, • 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Via Teams – Virtual Meeting

ATTENDANCE

Member Name	Statutory Designation	Present
Adam Joseph, Chief of Staff, OBO Susan Bysiewicz <i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	Lieutenant Governor, or Designee Cabinet Co-Chair	X
Beth Bye <i>Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Commissioner of Early Childhood, or Designee Cabinet Co-Chair	X
Holly Williams <i>Section Director, Office of Policy & Management</i>	Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or Designee	X
Deidre Gifford <i>Commissioner, Department of Social Services</i>	Commissioner of Social Services, or Designee	X
Shelly Nolan <i>Director of Women's Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services</i>	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or Designee	X
Michael Williams <i>Deputy Commissioner, Department of Children and Families</i>	Commissioner of Children and Families, or Designee	X
Lena Holleran, OBO Seila Mosquera-Bruno, <i>Commissioner, Department of Housing</i>	Commissioner of Housing, or Designee	DOH Deputy Commissioner Shante Hanks & Tawny Pho, DOH
Jordan Scheff <i>Commissioner, Department of Developmental Services</i>	Commissioner of Developmental Services, or Designee	X
Charlene Russell-Tucker <i>Commissioner, Department of Education</i>	Commissioner of Education, or Designee	X and Desi Nesmith, SDE
Manisha Juthani, MD <i>Commissioner, Department of Public Health</i>	Commissioner of Public Health, or Designee	X
Terrence Cheng <i>President, Board of Regents</i>	President of the Board of Regents, or Designee	Sean Bradbury, Senior Director of

		Government Relations and External Affairs
Elena Trueworthy, <i>Director, CT Head Start State Collaboration Office, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Director of the Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office	X
Steven Hernandez, Esq. <i>Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children & Seniors, and Equal Opportunity</i>	Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children & Seniors, or Designee	X
Julie Giaccone <i>CCDF Administrator, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Administrator of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990	X
Andrea Brinnel <i>619 Part B Coordinator, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for administering grants received under Section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	X
Louis Tallarita <i>State Coordinator, Bureau of Health, Nutrition, Family Services, and Adult Education, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for coordination of education services to children and youth who are homeless	X
Marlene Padernacht <i>Title I Coordinator, State Department of Education</i>	One who is responsible for administering the provisions of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Ac	X
Karen Pascale <i>Early Head Start Director, United Way of Greater New Haven</i>	Representative from the Head Start Association	X
Eva Bermudez <i>CSEA/SEIU Local 2001</i>	Representative of the Connecticut State Employees Association	X
Eliot Brenner <i>Executive Director & Trustee, Klingenstein Philanthropies</i>	Representative from the philanthropic community	
Patricia Bryant-Beausoleil <i>Director & Early Childhood Coordinator, Putnam Family Resource Center</i>	Representative from a public elementary school with a prekindergarten program	X
Karen Rainville <i>CT Association for the Education of Young Children</i>	Representative of an association of early education and child care providers	X
Edie Reichard <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>	Representative of a state-funded child care center	X
Caroline Austin <i>Parent</i>	Parent of a child attended a school in an education reform district	X
Kimberly Oliver <i>Director, Dept. of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation, City of Hartford</i>	Member of a Board of Education for a town designated as an Alliance District	X
Cathy Battista	Representative from Family Resource Centers	X

<i>Director, Meriden Family Resource Center</i>		
VACANT	Representative from the business community	
VACANT	Parent of a child attending or attended a School Readiness program	
VACANT	A representative of a local provider of early childhood education	

A. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

Commissioner Bye opened the meeting, recognizing that members of the Cabinet and the public are attending. At the conclusion of the meeting, there will be time for public comment. Commissioner welcomed Adam Joseph attending on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor. Joseph stated he is deeply interested in the market rate survey and looks forward to participating today.

B. Purpose and History of Cabinet

Julie Giaccone, OEC Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Administrator, reviewed agenda items – legislative updates, narrow cost analysis and market rate survey both required by CCDF, legislative update from the Department of Public Health, and a presentation from the statewide inclusion planning team.

Elena Trueworthy, Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, provided a brief history of the Early Childhood Cabinet. It comes from Sec. 642 of the federal Head Start Act, which requires that each state must designate a State Advisory Council (SAC) and examine early childhood systems with the goal to better serve children and families. In Connecticut, the SAC and Cabinet are the same entity.

C. Legislative Update

Commissioner Bye provided a legislative update and how the budget and legislative changes impact child care. Bye recognized the advocacy community that addressed the huge challenges facing the child care industry and the families and children served. She noted the tremendous shortage of infant and toddler spaces. Governor Lamont offered a \$25 million investment in infant and toddler care. Senator Fonfara advocated for and secured \$20 million to research which models and features in child care lead to success. The budget also includes \$30 million for School Readiness and Child Day Care for emergency stabilization funds. Another \$70 million will provide stabilization grants to supplement wages and compensation for all child care programs, including centers, group child care home, and family child care homes. Bye stated that Connecticut is leading the country, noting the Governor's leadership in this area.

Bye explained the legislation that passed in Senate Bill 2 that allows family child care providers to expand from 6 to 9 children if an assistant or substitute is present. This will allow a provider to care for up to 6 infants and toddlers, which will help address the shortage of care for this age group.

Bye noted other early childhood investments including:

- \$2.3M for universal home visiting and community health workers
- \$1M for home visiting in New Haven
- \$15M for facility renovation and construction
- \$10M for Care 4 Kids to delay a wait list

Sean Bradbury said House Bill 5301 passed that requires BOR and OEC to develop a plan to increase access to child care programs on or near public universities and community technical colleges. There is \$10M in the bond package to move that work forward.

Karen Pascale provided an update about federal Head Start eligibility. A new federal change makes families receiving SNAP as categorically eligible for Head Start. This will make the eligibility process easier for programs.

Commissioner Bye conducted a roll call of Cabinet members attending.

F. Narrow Cost Analysis

Julie Giaccone said this is the first time CCDF has required states to conduct a Narrow Cost analysis. It is different than a market rate survey. There will be an opportunity for public comment. Giaccone recognized the UConn School of Social Work-OEC Research Partnership and Social Finance for their work on the Narrow Cost Analysis.

Kate Parr, Ph.D., lead of the UConn-OEC Research Partnership, provided an overview of the Narrow Cost Analysis. This is a draft and comments are welcome. The final version is due to Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on June 30, 2022.

The Narrow Cost is expected to include an exhaustive list of all costs to provide child care. It is not: cost of quality, cost of accreditation, or a market rate survey. The analysis focused on the cost of care by age group - infant and toddler and preschool – and by setting - for-profits, and nonprofits, license-exempt, centers, and family child care. Data was gathered from existing resources including 15 cost analyses from other states. Stakeholder feedback begins with this meeting today.

Provider Costs of Quality Care (PCQC) is the industry standard approach to estimating the cost of child care, it functions as a balance sheet. The tool allows for many costs (eligibility, rent, water, food, phone, etc.) to be input and then compares this to the revenue side. In this case, revenues are largely determined by tuition. UConn then created sets of assumptions about costs and ran multiple scenarios. Ultimately, there was a point of data saturation where assumptions began to produce similar results. This PCQC tool is used by the Center for American Progress and other national entities.

Staff salaries make up 80% of costs. Credentials expect for different positions are taken into account. The estimates of workforce costs considered the following elements: workforce registry data, draft workforce compensation schedule, mid-career level salaries (the OEC compensation schedule did not account for experience), and specialized positions. Health, retirement, and other benefits were also reviewed. Benefits were challenging as they ranged widely from 0 to 14% of the wage costs at private providers. However, note that public school benefits make up 45% of wage costs.

The following is the per child cost identified:

Infant Toddler and Preschool Costs

- Average Preschool Cost Per Child - \$14,487
- Average Infant and Toddler Cost Per Child - \$28,149

- Average Public School Pre-School Cost Per Child - \$25,126 – based on the calendar school year, not 180 days. It should be noted that public school preschools are fundamentally different from private preschool as many focus on providing enhanced services to children with special needs.

Licensed Family Child Care Costs

Family child care providers have longer hours – as much as 68 hours per week. For this reason, the cost and returns to providers vary depending on whether you consider them being paid a ‘salary’ for all 68 hours or a ‘wage’ per hour.

- Base Cost - \$10,759 average cost per child (\$207 per week) (\$8.50 an hour for the child care provider) (\$30,000 annual salary)

Our cost findings are in alignment with what is published nationally.

DPH Commissioner Legislative Update:

DPH Commissioner Juthani provided updates about two pieces of legislation. The lead poisoning bill, House Bill 5045, passed. The bill lowers the lead threshold 10 to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter at which licensed health care institutions and clinical laboratories must report lead poisoning cases to DPH and local health departments. The bill lowers, from 5 to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter, the threshold at which local health directors must inform parents or guardians about a child’s potential eligibility for the state’s Birth-to-Three program. There is a gradual lowering over two to three years from 20 to 5 micrograms per deciliter for local health departments to conduct epidemiological investigations and take other actions.

The bill requires primary care providers to test for lead annually for children 3 to 6 years old. The bill requires DSS to apply for a Medicaid waiver associated with high lead levels. The bill also requires the DPH commissioner to convene a working group to address many lead-related issues including child care centers and schools.

This bill passed unanimously, indicating that legislators fully recognized that this is a problem and one that affects young children the most. DPH is getting more federal funding to change lead service lines in Connecticut’s water systems. DPH is going to be able to address lead poisoning from a multi-faceted approach.

House Bill 5500 creates a doula advisory committee within DPH. The committee is charged with developing recommendations for certification of doulas, including standards for a doula training curriculum. This bill will enhance our doula workforce and set clear standards and training. Standards and certification are required elements for Medicaid eligibility.

D. Inclusion for Children with Special Needs in Preschool Programs

The following entities have worked together as a part of the CT Early Childhood Inclusion Strategic Planning Team in efforts to promote inclusion of children with special needs in preschool programs: SDE, OEC, CT Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), Head Start, and the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), which is funded through the U.S. Department of Education – Office of Special Education Programs.

Andrea Brinnel, SDE Part B Coordinator, introduced Mary Louise Peters and Debbie Cate from ECTA who laid out a logic model.

Michelle Levy, education consultant at OEC, introduced a joint memo from SDE and OEC that focuses on children in child care settings who receive other supports such as Birth to Three, Early Childhood Consultation

Partnership, and Preschool Special Education. The memo addresses inclusion, integration, and coordination. In addition to the memo, the team produced a flyer, “Including Children with Disabilities in Connecticut Early Childhood Programs.”

Elena, Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, reviewed a series of meetings over the course of the year with early childhood programs and Head Start programs addressing this issue and soliciting feedback. The four meetings were held in Danbury, East Hartford, Stamford, and Enfield.

Julie Giaccone, OEC CCDF Administrator, said this work is critical and suggested the Cabinet support continued efforts building on the work of the CT Early Childhood Inclusion Strategic Planning Team.

Brinnel and Commissioner Bye asked for feedback from Cabinet members.

G. Public Comment and Questions

Christie Balka, from All Our Kin, asked about next steps after the Narrow Cost Analysis and Market Rate Survey public comment period.

Commissioner Bye said both the Narrow Cost Analysis and Market Rate Survey are CCDF requirements and they both serve as the agency’s “North Star”. Bye noted that the child care system works within a broken market system because programs cannot charge parents enough to cover the true cost of care. Both the Narrow Cost Analysis and Market Rate Survey will provide real cost analysis.

Merrill Gay, from the CT Early Childhood Alliance, asked how OEC will use the Narrow Cost Analysis study regarding Care 4 Kids rates.

Eileen Ward, Director of Children’s Community Development Center, asked if there are plans to provide incentives to LEAs to address inclusion. Bye noted there is a wide range of inclusion practices among public school districts. Ward also asked about early childhood apprenticeships. Bye said OEC and SEIU Child Care Union signed an apprenticeship agreement working with the Department of Labor. OEC is reviewing the funding for apprenticeships that passed in the state budget.

Cathy Battista asked if there should be a member of the OEC Parent Cabinet on the ECE Cabinet. Language passed in Section 1 of House Bill 5279 that accomplishes this.

Caroline Austin asked about more community feedback about inclusion. Bye said one strategy is having OEC Parent Cabinet members meet with community meetings in their region.

D. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm. The next Cabinet meeting will be held August 17, from 1 to 3 pm.