

Home Visiting Consortium Meeting – February 24, 2016

Minutes

Attendees: Elisabeth Teller, Kathi Bleacher, Margaret Donald-Miller, Lynn Johnson, Melissa Mendez, Michelle Holovach, Myra Jones Taylor, Judith Meyers, MaryBeth Kuzoian, Arietta Slade, Isabelina Rodriguez, Linda Harris, Mary Peniston, Mickey Kramer, Merrill Gay, Cathy Lenihan

Conference line participants: Pam Langer, Grace Whitney, Kareena Duplessis

9:30-9:45: Welcome and Update from Myra Jones Taylor

Karen Foley Schain the Director of the Family Support Services (FSS) division of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) resigned in late December and ended her state service on February 1st. Karen's resignation provided the OEC an opportunity to combine two divisions B-3 and FSS that both provide home visiting and family support. Lynn Johnson has become the division director of the combined division. Myra Jones Taylor has replaced Karen as the co-facilitator of the home visiting consortium.

9:45-9:50: The group reviewed the December Minutes. There were no changes requested. A motion was made by Arietta Slade with a second from Kathi Bleacher to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved by the group with no abstentions.

9:40 – 10:35 Review Recommendations of the Ct Early Childhood Home Visiting Plan

Melissa Mendez shared that at today's meeting the group will get back into the work around the home visiting plan and the recommendations. In preparing for the meeting Melissa tried to conceptualize the plan and a way of thinking about the work. The group in the past has considered selecting one or two priorities but Melissa shared that's difficult. The group has also brought in topic experts that included Heidi Maderia from CTAIMH and Deb Adams from OEC. A new suggestion presented to the group was to look at this from a work group structure, using the Early Childhood Comprehensive System progress matrix. The matrix identifies priority areas, goals, objectives and strategies, timelines, partners and progress. Each workgroup would meet individually and information would be brought back to the larger group. Melissa then shared that there are five recommendations but after looking at it more closely it seemed relevant to combine recommendations 4 and 5. Number 4 looked at ensuring program standards and number 5 was developing outcome measures and report on progress. The combined priority area would look at both program standards and program outcomes.

The group had a question regarding the first priority area which is identified as *Ensure that families have access to appropriate early childhood home visiting services*. The group asked if this was the best title and is the priority area about families or about access to a system.

Myra Jones Taylor sees this priority area as an access goal not as a referral piece. Judith Meyers stated that the goal statement helps to clarify the intent of the priority area. Mary Peniston agreed with the idea of combining the idea of referrals and access as one priority area and further stated that if there are not enough programs for families to access then strengthening referrals doesn't work.

Melissa Mendez agreed that referrals are a bigger issue if we don't increase capacity. Mary Peniston shared that we can do a better job of messaging if we have a better idea of what exists.

The group also discussed the combined priority area that includes both standards and outcomes. They agreed that this might eventually need to be split in the future but for now the group would look at what's out there currently. This priority area should look at what are the standards and outcomes that programs are currently answering to and further are there some standards and outcomes that all home visiting programs should all answer to? Judith Meyers asked if this is bigger than the MIECHV programs and are the MIECHV outcomes part of the larger discussion. Melissa Mendez confirmed that MIECHV outcomes will be part of the discussion.

Judith Meyers shared that in looking at these priority area's it looks like 3 relate to building a system and 1 pertains to referrals and messaging. Her suggestion is to start with the system building first. Elisabeth Teller is concerned that if the messaging piece is put off to the future would it ever be addressed?

Myra Jones Taylor shared that the work done by the work groups would be done in between the quarterly home visiting consortium meetings. She asked the group to consider the question - what would be a reasonable amount of time? Myra then asked the group if the work could be done by January 2017.

Mary Peniston encouraged the group to take this opportunity to position CT well for the federal picture and the MIECHV reauthorization.

Myra Jones Taylor recognized that there was some concern around collapsing access and referral into the same priority area and there was also some concern about collapsing outcomes and standards into one priority area. She asked the group if there were any objections to working with these four areas or should the group collapse access and referral into one area and break out outcomes and standards into separate priority areas. Noraleen Dunphy said it is better to have a good centralized referral system and the only way to be a statewide system is to have centralized referrals. Elisabeth Teller shared that it is important to strengthen the referral structure.

At the end of the discussion, the group decided that they would work on four priority areas:

#1 would look at the infrastructure and would also include access question and referral structure

#2 would now be more about Communication strategy

#3 would remain as written and look at competencies and training

#4 would remain as written and look at standards and outcomes

The group would concentrate on numbers 1, 3 and 4 and look at #2 six months from now.

The meeting moved into a discussion about the need and desire for an evaluation to understand the current landscape of home visiting in CT. Myra Jones Taylor discussed the challenges of understanding the current landscape and the difficulty in deciding how to expand and to cut programs as referenced from the December 2015 meeting. Myra shared a description of the evaluation that is part of the most recent MIECHV formula grant application as well as questions and support that her peers in other states had shared.

The purpose of the study will be to provide the state of Connecticut with information and recommendations that it can use to ensure the most effective use of the MIECHV funds.

Specifically:

- To help inform us as to which of our current programs work best for different family profiles – first-time moms, multiple births, noncustodial parents, fathers, grandparents raising children, those affected by substance abuse, those experiencing homelessness, children with incarcerated parents, etc.
- To identify research from other states which identify evidenced based or promising programs for these groups that are not currently used in Connecticut. Additionally, identify programs that lend themselves to additional federal funding sources, i.e. Medicaid
- Provide recommendations for the ideal constellation of home visiting services (primary prevention vs secondary prevention) should additional funds become available by HRSA or should funding levels remain flat or be decreased

Cathy Lenihan shared that this is in direct correlation with what Health Resource Service Administration (HRSA) is exploring and referenced remarks made by Dr. Willis at the Association of Home Visiting and Tribal Initiatives conference in January. Dr. Willis used the term precision home visiting.

Mary Peniston recommended we try to get private funding and break the evaluation into pieces. Her thought was to do something small and quick which might be able to define and inform a lot better. Judith Meyers thought that the Funders Collaborative might be an option and she will also bring it to the Early Childhood Collaborative meeting. Cathy Lenihan stated that we would have about \$150,000 of unused funds from the MIECHV sites to put toward this evaluation.

Myra Jones Taylor will schedule a call to look at questions and solicited interest and participation from the group. Mary Peniston and Judith Meyers might be interested.

Myra Jones Taylor left the meeting to attend a meeting at the state capitol.

10:35-10:50 - Work Groups

Melissa Mendez asked the group how they felt about making a decision today to select workgroups or should the group do workgroup selection electronically? The group agreed to start the workgroup assignments during the meeting but also look to expand participation to others in the field that are not home visiting consortium members.

Volunteers for workgroups are as follows:

Priority Area #1 workgroup (referral structure and access) – Kareena Duplessis, Merrill Gay, Mickey Kramer, Elisabeth Teller

Priority Area #3 workgroup (trainings and competencies) – Noraleen Dunphy, Arietta Slade, Pam Langer, Lynn Johnson will check with Deb Adams and Deb Resnick from B-3

Priority Area #4 workgroup (Standards and Outcomes) B-3 representation (Alice, Anna, or Lynn Johnson), Grace Whitney, Kathi Bleacher, Melissa Mendez, Judith Meyers, Margaret Donald Miller, Connie Heye

Arietta Slade shared her concerns about being too formulaic. She is concerned about the term precision home visiting. Mary Peniston agreed that we need a framework but let's not forget the relationship of the Clinical Supervisor and the family.

11:15 – 11:25 MIECHV Update

Lynn Johnson provided an update on the MIECHV grant. In January, FSS submitted the 2016 Formula Grant for 9.1 million. The application as well as the supporting documents can be found on the OEC website under MIECHV. FSS recently submitted the paperwork to HRSA to officially change the Program Director from Karen Foley Schain to Lynn Johnson.

Currently, FSS is working on completing the requirements of the competitive grant award. This includes training with David Mandel from David Mandel and Associates, scheduled in May, training with Doug Edwards from Real Dads Forever, scheduled for April and training with Mark Perlman from Nurturing Fathers scheduled for June.

Also, the second phase of the evaluation on the MIECHV Fathering Home Visiting with Partners in Social Research is underway.

11:25-11:40 Next steps

Melissa Mendez shared with the group her plan for sharing the outcome of this meeting. Melissa will create a visual of how the workgroups will work together with the home visiting consortium and Melissa and Myra will be reaching out to others to join the workgroups. Melissa and Myra will also be providing support to these workgroups but it will be up to the leadership of these groups to decide how they will move their work forward.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 4th at HRA in New Britain.

There was no public comment.