

**Draft Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council
February 21, 2020, SCC Jack Huck Continuing Education Center, Lincoln NE
9:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.**

Council Members Present: Mary Barry-Magsamen, Susan Borchert, Carol Bowen, Amy Bunnell, Tracy Burns, Julie Docter, Gwen Easter, Bernie Hascall, Melody Hobson, Stephanie Knust, Krynn Larsen, Dr. Karla Lester, Joan Luebbers, Cathy Mohnike, Mary Phillips, Paula Thompson, Nicole Vint, Allison Wilson

Council Members Absent: Allison Cunningham, Sen. Kolowski, Brenda McNiff, Brittni Waters

Also in Attendance: Council Facilitator, Eleanor Shirley; Council Staff, Karen Hoffman; Technical Assistants, Jennifer Aumen, Amy Bornemeier, Lynne Brehm, Adam Feser, Pat Frost, Cole Johnson, Kim Texel; guests &/or presenters, Erin Ayad, DHHS Office of Epidemiology, Susan Sarver from the Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Council Meeting Convenes/November Minutes Approval

Facilitator, Eleanor Shirley, welcomed the group and pointed out the Open Meetings Act document in the back of the room. Council Chair Mary Phillips formally convened the group and started off introductions around the room, including presenters and visitors.

Minutes from the November 15, 2019 meeting had been provided via email to the Council for review. Motion to approve was made by Bunnell and seconded by Bowen; roll call vote was taken and the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 14-yes, 1-abstain, 0-no.

Yes: Bowen, Bunnell, Burns, Docter, Easter, Hascall, Hobson, Knust, Larsen, Lester, Luebbers, Phillips, Thompson, Wilson

Abstain: Vint

Today's Agenda

Following the review of the day's agenda, and the change of switching the CCDF Update with the Head Start Update (and moving the HSCO Needs Assessment Report to May), the agenda was approved by consensus.

Public Comment, Announcements, Upcoming Events

Amy Bunnell announced that registration is now open to the Nebraska Young Child Institute in Kearney on June 16-17, 2020. Council members, who are not state employees, may attend and have registration and expenses paid for. Those interested are to email Karen by February 28th. There were no other comments or announcements.

Presentation: Childhood Lead Poisoning

Guest presenter, Erin Ayad, Health Program Manager in the DHHS Office of Epidemiology, shared some general background about lead poisoning and federal guidelines. Reported numbers in Nebraska are likely very low. Children and pregnant woman are at the greatest risk, with exposure often happening from either breathing it in or ingesting it. Items such as paint, water pipes, toys, jewelry, foods or candies, as well as jobs or hobbies all pose different levels of risk. Nebraska ranks in the top ten states in the country for old paint. Blood level testing is the only definitive way to measure lead in the blood. Slides showing Nebraska Lead Testing Recommendations for Children, and a Risk Assessment questionnaire were shown. Comments were shared about the juvenile justice costs due to lead poisoning, and how lead exposure in childhood could possibly be associated with risks of crime later in life. A member mentioned the book What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crises, Resistance, and Hope in an American City, by author, Mona Hanna-Attisha, about the Flint water crisis. Final comments were discussed about in-home testing options that people can do themselves. A swab test can be purchased at various home improvement stores, and people can also call their local public health department for more resources.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Update and Approval of Strategic Plan

Susan Sarver from the Buffett Early Childhood Institute shared a powerpoint about activities surrounding the PDG grant work, which included work by a Task Force that met five times, and numerous efforts to gather input from across the state regarding early childhood care and needs in Nebraska. Some copies of the draft report were shared on the tables, as was a one-page overview. Work that was triggered by the PDG is helping create a vision of community leaders working together to provide opportunities for high-quality early childcare in Nebraska.

The Strategic Plan, which the Council was being asked to approve at the day's meeting, looks to create a more integrated, mixed delivery system in Nebraska. Susan said that, while the PDG funding stream was initially for birth to five, the next step is to go beyond kindergarten. This integrated system will seek to provide each young child and his/her family access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education, (ECCE), services, and the essential services for early childhood development. The Needs Assessment that was conducted reached over 5,100 people across the state. From this came the Goals and Objectives. The plan is to educate and engage the public, then realign Nebraska's policies to meet those needs.

Some challenges that remain include funding and policy barriers, as well as issues with a data system. Decisions are based upon accurate numbers, and Susan said that a goal is to continue discussions around data systems and data alignment. A previous challenge had been the deadlines for implementation planning that were affected by funding sources. Susan said they now have some time to more deeply examine what needs to be done, as they move into the Strategic Planning Phase 2. The ECICC will continue to be tapped to advise and assist them.

Following some final discussion, Melody Hobson made a motion on behalf of the Strategic Planning Task Force that the ECICC Chair sign off on the PDG Strategic Plan; it was seconded by Nicole Vint. Eleanor noted that, at a previous ECICC meeting, it was approved by the Council that the Chairperson would sign off on behalf of the Council. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 16-yes, 1-abstain, 1-no.

Yes: Borcher, Bowen, Bunnell, Burns, Docter, Easter, Hascall, Hobson, Knust, Larsen, Lester, Luebbers, Phillips, Thompson, Vint, Wilson

Abstain: Barry-Magsamen

No: Easter

Legislative Update

Adam Feser provided a Legislative update regarding current bills that affect Early Childhood topics. Fingerprinting, childcare subsidies, and regulations around certain types of child welfare cases are all being discussed in the Legislature, many of them that afternoon, in fact. The status of related bills can be found on FirstFive Nebraska's website on its Public Policy and Legislation page through the "Nebraska Legislation" link. Adam recommended that the group access the FFN website to keep an eye on these bills.

Biennial Report Update

Council Facilitator, Eleanor Shirley, shared that it was time for the Council to begin work on the next Biennial Report to the Governor, which covers 2018-2020. These reports must include recommendations about the needs of young children and their families in Nebraska, and are created to meet both federal and state requirements. The completed 2016-2018 report has been ready for some time to share with the Governor, however, scheduling challenges have prohibited this from happening. At a previous meeting, the Council had been asked to take and share the report with colleagues and contacts. Eleanor compiled data that was shared, and provided a one-page handout with this information to the Council. Another handout included feedback about how members feel the Council is doing. Recruitment and communication with constituents were two major points.

The next report for 2018-2020 will be due for Council approval in February of 2021, and its drafting needs to begin

immediately. Options were discussed, with consideration being given to a “reboot” from the current report following a review for any possible changes or updates. A question was also asked whether the Early Childhood Strategic Plan might be used as the next Biennial Report, saying perhaps appendices could be attached to it to meet additional requirements not covered by the scope. Discussion will continue.

CCDF Update

In August Nicole had shared that draft regulations for Child Care Subsidy were going to public hearing on Oct. 25th. Public comments were reviewed following the hearing and some changes were made and sent to the Governor’s office. They are now awaiting word from the Governor’s office for another public hearing to be scheduled. The hope is that some of the barriers to subsidies will be addressed with these updated regulations. These include child care providers being able to bill five absence days per child per month, a three-month job search window for when a parent loses their need for child care, that child will have the same level of care, and the provider won’t lose that income. Nicole echoed some of the legislative updates that Adam gave regarding fingerprinting of child care providers as relates to background checks; a bill to help the department look for possible funding to continue to help support providers with the cost of fingerprinting; entry levels of child care subsidies possible using some TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) dollars. She also mentioned a DHHS news release from the prior day stating that the Department is going to pay the \$45.25 cost that existing providers will have to pay to become compliant. Letters had been sent out regarding this requirement before new employment can begin. Letters will go out in a staggered manner, ten days before the beginning of each month and instructing where fingerprinting sites are located. This will be done for an 18-month period. Will give Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) time to do all of this. Timing and hold-ups for having fingerprinting completed was discussed. The application has been revised and is going out with all letters, and is located on the DHHS public health website.

Nicole shared some current data on fingerprinting, saying the State Patrol reported that in 2019 they were running about a five business day average to have their prints returned. This includes an application being completed and turned in to DHHS, collection of fingerprints with needed paperwork, and then fee payment. Once all three are done, the Patrol sends the results to the FBI who does a sweep of the various checks. In 2020 they’re at a six business day average on the front end. She encouraged best practice is to make a copy of the application for a second use so all information is the same and avoid any inconsistencies that could hold up results. As of February 13th DHHS had completed 1,997 background checks with results, and 19 have been ineligible. Comments were shared about timing and hold-ups for having fingerprinting completed.

Working Lunch – Election of new Vice-Chair

Because Suzanne Schnieder, Vice-Chair, had a recent job change that removed her from the Childcare Center role she was fulfilling on the Council, a new Vice-Chairperson needed to be elected. Nominations were opened and made for Paula Thompson and Karla Lester. Ballots were distributed then collected, and Karla Lester was welcomed as the new ECICC Vice-Chairperson, with thanks given to Paula Thompson for her willingness to serve.

Head Start (HS) Update

Steph Knust shared two handouts that included some recent program updates. She and Joan Luebbers recently travelled to Washington D.C. and were fortunate to receive information directly from Office of Head Start staff. Information provided included the following bulleted items:

- Duration, or the hours of service, requirement for center-based pre-school has now been lowered to 45% since there is not enough funding for 100% compliance.
- Head Start uses the CLASS Observation for federal monitoring, and Public Comment was recently sought regarding arbitrary thresholds and guidelines for program re-competition. The Office of Head Start will make a determination later this summer regarding any changes to the process.
- A handout was shared regarding Federal Appropriations for FY2020 for HS that went through the process and how things trickle down to Head Start (HS). HS did receive a federal appropriation total of \$10.8 billion dollars, which is an increase of \$550 million from last fiscal year. Of the \$550 million, \$193m is for a mandatory cost of living adjustment for HS staff (almost 2%), \$100m is for Early Head Start (EHS) expansion

and EHS-Child Care Partnership grants (will be highly competitive process), \$250 million is for Quality Improvement Funding, with an emphasis on improving trauma-informed and trauma-responsive care, and \$4 million and \$3 million is for Tribal Colleges and Universities, and research and evaluation, respectively.

- There is still some disaster recovery money available for HS programs for the two-year grant window.
- National TA center contracts are currently up, and may be changing to new providers.
- A new professional development resource is available for early care and education providers through the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, or ECLKC. The resource can be found at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/individualized-professional-development-ipd-portfolio>

Steph also mentioned state and national profiles that are updated through the National Head Start Association every year. The profiles provide percentages of eligible Head Start and Early Head Start children served at both the state and national level. Approximately 24% of income-eligible HS children and 14% of income-eligible EHS children were served in Nebraska during 2018-2019.

Joan provided a handout and update regarding 14 states that have invested state dollars in HS and/or EHS to assist in serving additional at-risk children and families, including those in foster care birth to five, those experiencing homelessness, and those affected by the opioid crisis and substance misuse. The current infrastructure in HS and EHS programs can be helpful in assisting states to serve more vulnerable children.

Part C Update

Amy Bunnell shared that the IDEA Part C Application for funding is being developed and made ready to send to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). This year's application is due May 1, 2020. Nebraska is considered a small state based upon the number of children served, and will receive approximately three million dollars beginning July 1, 2020. The application will be available for public comment from February 28 to March 29, 2020, and for public review from February 28 to April 28, 2020. Amy shared the State Assurances that Nebraska must provide, and what the funds are used for. Once in place, a web link to the online Application will be sent to the Council.

Role-Sharing by ECICC Technical Assistants

Over the next two meetings, Council Technical Assistants will share about their work and individual backgrounds.

Amanda Adams works for DHHS, the Lead Agency responsible for the administration of the Child Care Development Block Grant, which provides funding for Child Care Subsidy and various child related quality initiatives. She has worked for CCDF for 2 ½ years, and has been with DHHS for five years. Prior to that she worked with children with various disabilities as an aid in a childcare center, as well as with children in foster care. Currently, she provides policy clarification of Child Care Subsidy regulations, as well as implements processes to ensure compliance of federal and state standards for Child Care Subsidy providers. In her position she is able to request reports related to Childcare Subsidy. She shared that her office has reimbursed almost \$65,000 for CPR/first aid requirements implemented by CCDF, and this covers 2,460 staff. In the next two years, Amanda's personal goal is to get all subsidy providers compliant with Health and Safety standards, as well as implementing fingerprinting to ensure the safety of all Nebraska children in childcare programs.

Jennifer Aumen also works for DHHS, and has been the Program Manager of the Nebraska Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program in Nebraska for seven years. The program is community-based, voluntary, and free. Vulnerable families served in Nebraska most use this evidence-based, Home Visiting program model. A 2010 Needs Assessment identified 17 Nebraska counties that were most at-risk, and Jennifer shared a slide that showed where programs have been placed across the state between 2010-2019. A new funding source through the Family First Prevention Services Act is allowing expansion of MIECHV. Another Needs Assessment will occur in 2020 with the hope of expanding and adding new sites over the next several years. Jennifer has 20+ years of early childhood experience, and has served on the ECICC since 2015.

Amy Bornemeier works at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) and, specifically, with the Sixpence program, early childhood endowment, which promotes high-quality early care and learning opportunities that help parents guide the healthy development of their infants and toddlers. Sixpence funding was started in 2006 by a state statute requiring fund recipients be school districts working with in-home providers. Grants were matched at the community level at 100%, and it's been found that one funded dollar results in a \$6 savings. Amy also reviewed a business plan for Communities for Kids, a new program that includes more than a dozen communities who are receiving technical assistance to advance early childhood programming and services. She previously worked with the NDE School Readiness Project, and in the private sector of early childhood and child welfare. She will be leaving NCFE soon and helping to hire her replacement and transitioning her focus to Early Childhood systems once settled in her new home.

Lynne Brehm, an employee at NCFE since April 2013, was initially hired to help pilot the Early Childhood Mental Health initiative, now called Rooted in Relationships. She previously worked with DHHS for 10 years with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) initiative called Together for Kids and Families, preceded by work with Child Protective Services. Her education was in Marriage and Family Therapy. Lynne shared that she feels the stars are "aligning" around infant and early child mental health needs, and she encouraged members to research the term "implementation science" regarding data and research. Over the next two years, she envisions more early childhood opportunities that will include social-emotional needs, and an increasing focus on collective impact leading to stronger partnerships and positive outcomes.

Pat Frost is a NDE Title 1 consultant in the office of Federal Programs, implementing US Department of Education Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). She has been in education for 50 years, the last 20 being at NDE in same position. Pat has served on the ECICC for about 17 years. Title 1 is the largest federal aid program for public schools in the United States, serving schools with high percentages of low-income students. There are two programs: Birth to Grade 12 Targeted Assistance, and School Wide, both of which are monitored and evaluated. In Nebraska, around 239 districts get Title 1 dollars. Pat mentioned collaborating with early childhood research regarding suspensions, and the school-to-prison pipeline. In the next two years, Pat sees a coming emphasis on Transition Requirement Agreements for foster children and schools.

Council Vacancies and Recruitment

Eleanor led a brief discussion about current Council vacancies and recruitment efforts. There have been some parents recommended through the PDG process, and Eleanor has made a number of contacts on behalf of the Council. Members can be helpful to potential applicants by offering to assist them in completing the rather lengthy application. The Council relies on the Governor's office to communicate when applications come in. There are currently eight vacancies:

- Three parents
- Service Provider-Child Care Center
- Service Provider-Developmental Disabilities
- Service Provider-Public Health
- Service Provider-Public Schools-Early Childhood
- Social Service Organization (Head Start-Tribal)

May Meeting Components

The final agenda item was discussion about possible May meeting components, and Eleanor reminded the Council of its focus on activities around the five areas of quality, standards, collaboration & coordination, professional development, and data. Ideas are as follows:

-Amy Bornemeier will be attending her last meeting and will hope to introduce her replacement as a TA on the Council;

-Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Epidemiologist with Maternal Child Health, will be asked to come and share an informative data report from her office;

- The Annual Rooted In Relationships Report by Lynne Brehm;
- Biennial Report and PDG Strategic Plan, and possibly adopting that for the next Report to the Governor;
- HSCO Needs Assessment from Joan Luebbers;
- continued Technical Assistant role-sharing

Other/Adjourn

A motion was made by Bernie Hascall and seconded by Melody Hobson to adjourn the meeting at 2:25pm.

Next Meeting: May 1, 2020, at SCC Jack J. Huck Continuing Education Center, Lincoln, NE

2020 ECICC meeting dates, Jack Huck Center

- February 21
- May 1
- August 21
- November 13

2021 ECICC meeting dates, location TBD

- February 19
- May 7
- August 20
- November 19

**Council vote needed*

*** Public Comment Invited*

****Lunch is pre-ordered and limited to Council members, presenters, personnel, technical assistants, and agency support staff who have been identified prior to the meeting.*

ECICC Technical Assistants for 2019-2020:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Amanda Adams | Pat Frost |
| Jennifer Auman | Cole Johnson |
| Amy Bornemeier | Connie Shockley |
| Lynne Brehm | Kim Texel |
| Lauri Cimino | Staci Zuerlein |
| Adam Feser | |