

# KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Meeting Notes

September 23, 2020 | 10:00 AM – Noon

### Attendance

Alexis Millett	Jessie DuBose	Yecenia Rodriguez
Amy Quayle	Kathleen Walker-Henderson	Charlene Shaw
Athena Wikstrom	Kay Ortega	Danielle Walker
Cory Ortega	Rhonda Janecke	Dena Haudenschild
Cynthia Hurkes	Rhonda Nyseth	Cliff Jones
Gillian Wesenberg	Wendy Brown	Johanna Scholer
Heidi McGowan	Melinda Gomez	
Heather Freilinger	Renea Wood	

Please note: the Klamath Professional Advisory Committee was held virtually due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) concerns and guidance on public meetings from the Governor.

### Welcome and Introduction

Members of the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) introduced themselves.

A motion to approve minutes as submitted was made by Kathleen Walker-Henderson and seconded by Charlene Shaw. No further discussion.

### Early Learning Hub collective action as a result of fires

The Klamath County Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) agreed that fires have been less of a concern than COVID-19, which is causing extreme stress for families. Kathleen Walker-Henderson advised that Chiloquin families are suffering the most from fires, elementary school teachers in Chiloquin have been very supportive. Wendy Brown advised that DHS has an emergency food stamp programs for families, if their food was lost in a fire. Families have ten days to fill out the necessary DHS forms.

The group switched gears and discussed the impacts of COVID.

- Kathleen mentioned that it is important for factual information around COVID-19 to go out to.
- In the midst of COVID-19, the Klamath County Commissioners have set up a pop-up child care at the Fairgrounds for school-aged children.

There is an emerging theme of the need for family engagement as families are struggling through the pandemic. Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI) has potential funds that are focused on engaging families that could potentially support this need. These funds are to be used for educational support for providers, educators, families, and children.

Yecenia Rodriguez advised that finding child care is challenging, and it is increasingly difficult finding child care when children have disabilities. Some supports for families that would be beneficial include:

- Communicating with others rather than feeling isolated
- Most families want to go out, but the risk of exposure is emotionally difficult
- Some families are seeing on their social media that others are going out and not following guidelines. This is causing frustration for those that are staying home and following social distancing guidelines.
- Online support groups
- Personal Support Workers (PSWs) through Developmental Disabilities (DD) Services are aiding children with disabilities during school hours by helping them navigate online courses.
- There is a current need for PSWs, who are paid \$15 per hour, and the process to become a PSW takes about three months. Additional PSW's would be a huge support to the community.
- Dena Haudenschild advised that an elementary school family returned the three Chromebooks the school checked out to their children at the beginning of the term. The family shared that they wanted to take the year off. Some families are frustrated at being their child's teachers, and families are feeling desperate, choosing to isolate themselves.
- Klamath Christian Center and some other churches in Klamath County are offering support for K-6 students during comprehensive distance learning by having volunteers assisting children with their school work

## **Klamath County Child Care**

Heather Freilinger applauded schools, who are working hard to provide for children in the community, and added that there is no perfect solution for COVID-19 and state guidelines.

Melinda Collier, a long-time Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) employee, has resigned and there have been two new hires for the Klamath County office.

The Klamath County Provider Consultant with the CCRR is calling to check in with providers and sending PPE and classroom materials out to providers. There have been drops in the number of providers but an increase in child care numbers.

Care Connections and Education, the regional CCRR, is working with 12 Spanish-speaking providers in their Focused Childcare Networks (FCN). Providers are being supplied with tablets to be able to access online college courses. One Spanish-speaking provider in the cohort is now licensed. Additional training such as First Aid and CPR is hard to get right now due to COVID-19 in-person Restrictions.

The state Early Learning Division released new Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) opportunities that includes the opportunity for child care providers who were awarded grants in Phase 1 and Phase 2 to have the opportunity to accept supplemental funds. Providers do not need to re-apply to receive this funding. Recipients of Phase 1 and 2 have been notified of this funding opportunity.

Dena Haudenschild advised that Co-Op Childcare at the Klamath County Fairgrounds is slated to start October 5th. Website: <https://www.kceventcenter.org/project-child-care-co-op>, Direct Registration Link: <https://www.myprocare.com/Default/EnterEmail> - Over 120 parents responded to a childcare survey that was sent out by the County Commissioners. There are only 80 slots available. Childcare at the fairgrounds will be under the supervision of the Director of Klamath Kid Center. There is a cost to this program. Kathleen Walker-Henderson is going to start training Co-Op employees at the end of September.

## **Supporting children and families with an equity lens during COVID-19**

Cliff Jones of Capacity Building Partnerships opened the Equity Lens conversation and reviewed the goals of our Hub's Equity Lens, which was emailed to the group prior to the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. The goals include:

- Developing a tool for the South-Central Early Learning Hub (SCELH) region to use
- Utilizing the Equity Lens in decision-making and generating meeting agendas
- Using the Equity Lens for all program, not just the Early Learning Hub
- Using the Equity Lens to add value to our conversations
- Identifying our biases and expose inequities by using the Equity Lens
- Growing in our equity work by using the Equity Lens as a living document that is flexible and changeable

The PAC split into groups to discuss:

1. What are your questions and or reflections about the lens?
2. Where might you use this lens to promote equity in a decision or program in your organization?
3. Is someone interested in using this lens before our Oct meeting and willing to report back about what you learn?

The group came back together and recapped their small-group conversations. Partners who agreed to take the Equity Lens back to their programs include

- Amy Quayle and Rhonda Janecke – Nutrition Hub
- Renea Wood – Policy Council for Klamath County

## **Preschool Promise**

Preschool Promise applications are available at [Southcentralhubenrollment.com](https://southcentralhubenrollment.com). Preschool Promise sites in Klamath County include The Klamath Tribes, YMCA of Klamath Falls, Klamath County School District – Gilchrist Elementary, Klamath Falls City Schools, Lil Hands, and Nic Nacs Quality Child Care. The South-Central Early Learning Hub (SCELH) is qualifying children for all sites, except for the Klamath Tribes who will be completing their own enrollment based on a contract with the Early Learning Division.

## **Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI)**

**KPI** is working on a regional online approach for the Ready! For Kindergarten Program, with Take Root offering private Facebook groups for the program. Nine virtual sessions and two virtual regional gatherings for Growing Early Mindsets (GEM) Institutes will be hosted this year.

## **Community UPLIFT and Take Root Parenting Updates**

**Community UPLIFT** is currently hosting a webinar on Unmasking Stress During the Pandemic by comedian Leigh Anne Jasheway, M.P.H. The webinar recording will be shared as soon as it is available.

**Take Root** will be hosting 12 regional parenting education opportunities, all virtually until at least January 2021. A calendar of events will be sent out by September 25.

## **Partner Updates**

**Community Baby Shower** – The drive-through event will be hosted on October 24 from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm at the Sky Lakes Washburn Annex, 2421 Washburn Way, Klamath Falls. The committee is trying to make the event as safe as possible for parents and vendors. Advertising will be taking place on social media and by word of mouth to decrease costs. To be entered into drawings for giveaways, families will need to complete an online survey which will be open for five days after the event. This will give parents who may not have immediate access to the internet time to access internet for its completion.

**YMCA of Klamath Falls** – Waiting to open Preschool Promise and is hoping that classes will begin by October 19.

**Klamath Chapter of the ORAEYC** – Will be hosting a webinar on November 7, 2020.

**DHS** – Still has a drive-up window, and are not yet meeting face-to-face with clients.

**Family Advocacy and Support Network (FASN)** – Received a grant from Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for community engagement for wrap-around services regarding COVID. Unfortunately, FASN lost state funding, but the program will still be available for families.

**Friends of the Children** – They typically do their child selection for mentorship openings through kindergarten class observation, but with COVID, they are looking to establish relationships with other early intervention organizations for community referrals. They have several openings for four to six-year-old girls. If anyone is interested in talking with them for more information, please contact Crystal Muno, their Program Director, by leaving a message at 541.273.2022 or emailing her at [Crystal@friendsklamath.org](mailto:Crystal@friendsklamath.org)

## **Next Meeting:**

Klamath PAC: October 28, 2020 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Hosted virtually.