

**South-Central Early Learning Hub
Lake County Community Governance Council
Minutes – November 28, 2023**

Attendees: Michael Benson (v), Lane Stratton (s), Gail Buermann, Jake Greer, Shalom Rorabaugh, Machel Ramirez, Gail Buermann, Bailey Guido, Heather Freilinger, Athena Wikstrom, Danielle Walker

Lake County Education Service District – Lane Stratton – One of the main focuses for Education Service Districts (ESD) in the Oregon Short Legislative Session is to add \$22 million to the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) budget. The EI/ECSE contract has not been received from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). ESDs are also advocating for funding for summer learning programs.

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – Michael Benson – EI/ECSE is still running as normal, even without a contract. EI/ECSE has funding reserves from billing services to Oregon Health Plan (OHP). The reserve funding is not enough to cover expenses for the entire biennium but is helping to maintain service levels for now.

There are nine children currently receiving EI/ECSE services. There are four evaluations in progress, with two of the pending evaluations to be completed before the holiday break.

Klamath Family Head Start, Lakeview Site – Shalom Rorabaugh – The Lakeview Head Start site completed 45-day health evaluation requirements for students. Both the Head Start Duration program and Preschool Promise program are fully enrolled. Early Head is fully enrolled with eight slots and has children on the waitlist.

Parent involvement in engagement activities has been challenging. Engagement activities offer child care, gift bags, giveaways, crafts, and food, but families are not attending. Head Start is doing a family survey to determine what activities families are interested in, and barriers to attendance.

Head Start is looking into high-speed internet services through Starlink in the event of communication outages. On typical service days when children are unable to attend the program, Head Start sends home enrichment activities and sack lunches, or other food resources, to ensure family needs are still being met.

Take Root Parenting Connection – Bailey Guido – Take Root has been surveying the community to find out types of parenting and engagement activities families are interested in. Bailey attended the Paisley Holiday Bazar and distributed the survey to families. Families who completed the survey received a \$10 Safeway gift card for their time.

Take Root is holding a “Your Voice Matters” event tonight, November 28, at the Senior Center and will be asking families about barriers and what they would like to see in Lake County. Each family will receive a \$50 gift card for attending. There are currently 42 families registered to participate. Take Root is willing to share survey and event results with the community.

Take Root is on week five of a seven-week online series, Active Parenting for Families. During Winter Term, Take Root, in partnership with Lake ESD, will offer a subscription box for families Adel and Plush. Parenting series will include Active Parenting of Tweens and Teens, Active

Parenting for Blended Families, Make Your Own Snacks, Parenting by Yourself, and Parenting Through Divorce. Various Story Times will be offered throughout Lake County.

North Lake School District -- Gail Buermann – Gail is working on an early literacy grant for the North Lake School District, which covers both preschool and kindergarten ages. The hope is to better align preschool and kindergarten in North Lake.

Healthy Families -- Machel Ramirez –Healthy Families completed interviews for a job opening and has sent an offer of employment to one candidate. Laura Barajas with Take Root provided Healthy Families with toddler activity kits for families.

Healthy Families is also struggling with parent engagement. The biggest barrier parents have shared with Healthy Families, is concerns about illness in new babies, particularly RSV.

Lake Community Corrections -- Jake Greer – On December 20, the Sheriff's office will be partnering with Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Child Welfare, to host the Shop with a Cop event at the Lakeview bowling alley. Shop with a Cop will offer age-appropriate toys/clothes to children who attend, and the hardware store donates a sled to every child. There will be all-you-can-eat pizza and kids get to bowl for free. Staff from the Sherriff's Office, Parole and Probation, the Oregon State Police, Warner Creek, the Fire Department, and Santa will all be at the event. If you know any children or families who might benefit from this event, refer them to ODHS Child Welfare. The Sheriff's Office is accepting donations for the event.

Care Connections & Education / Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) - Heather Freiling – CCRR will be implementing two new strategies for helping child care providers get licensed with ODHS. The first implementation called Strong Start, begins on January 1, 2024. Strong Start allows child care providers to meet twice a month for one-hour training opportunities. Participating child care providers also receive a site visit, get connected with other child care providers, and receive books and training materials for free.

The second strategy is a series of self-paced, online training courses, intended to help child care providers reach Step 7 of the Oregon Registry Online (ORO). Child care providers receive an award once they reach Step 3 and Step 7. CCRR has added a reward for child care providers once they reach Step 5. There are some costs associated with the training opportunities.

South-Central Early Learning Hub – Athena Wikstrom –

Community UPLiFT - The Hub is always accepting referrals for Community UPLiFT, which helps connect families with children birth to five, and up to 21 with special needs, to resources in their community.

Preschool Promise - Honker Preschool is currently full. The Hub is hoping to begin accepting Preschool Promise applications for the 2024-2025 school year in the Spring of 2024. Accepting applications in the spring will help align Preschool Promise enrollment with Head Start and other state and federally funded programs. The two-year Preschool Promise grant allows Hubs to begin enrollment earlier, and will reduce child care uncertainty for families.

Strategic Planning – The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) is putting the formal strategic plan for Early Learning Hubs on hold. The Hub is working on internal strategic planning to ensure governance and local committees have a say in the work of the Hub.

Lane - Sheriff Daniel Tag provided a training at Lake ESD about Fentanyl, Narcan, and Human Trafficking. The training was very successful and appreciated.

Next Meeting: January 23, 2024, at 1:00 pm.