

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

August 20, 2020 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Shawn Lybarger, Kendra Bickham, Cliff Jones, Heidi McGowan, Steve Schenewerk, Judi Mahoney, Jacqueline McCall, Lee Ann Grogan, Theresa Songer-Tuckey, Bill Shobe

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Susan Stiles-Sumstine, Cynthia Hurkes, Cory Ortega, Danielle Walker, Athena Wikstrom, Alison Hinson, Sondra Williams, Vanessa Pingleton

Early Learning Hub Director's Update

Gillian reviewed Coordinated Enrollment, and shared that Preschool Promise Tier 2 funding was approved by the Early Learning Council. Yoncalla Early Works Preschool Promise received additional slots through the Tier 2 approval. Preschool Promise sites are starting to receive contracts from the Early Learning Division (ELD) through DocuSign. Cory is the Coordinated Enrollment Specialist for the South-Central Early Learning Hub region. The ELD set guidelines for enrollment, which mandates that children will be enrolled into Preschool Promise based on a lottery system. Children who qualify will be assigned a random number, and children with the lowest randomly assigned numbers will be enrolled.

Early Learning Hub Collective Action During COVID-19

Athena provided an update on the K-12 school opening plans for the county. Per district plans, most of the schools, with the exception of Roseburg Public Schools, will start the year with in-person learning for kindergarten through third grade. Fourth through Twelfth grads will begin the school year with comprehensive distance learning.

Theresa from Care Connections and Education, the regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), advised that the CCRR is reaching out to parents to determine child care needs. The CCRR is connecting with providers weekly to find out their availability and willingness / ability to assist students with distance learning. There are multiple sites that are opening to school aged children, though most of them are in Roseburg. The CCRR is working with child care sites to determine if they are able and willing to increase the number of children in their care to their licensed maximum in hopes of increasing the number of children served. There is currently a push to move providers to full licensed capacity before exploring other options such as pop up care or opening new sites.

Alison is seeing parents forming "pods" to assist each other with homeschooling and work together through the pandemic. It may be beneficial for families to have professional supports for these cohorts that are forming. Alison shared that there are two grants in the works, one local, and one through the state, to assist with isolation supports.

Steve, Gillian and Heather set up a Zoom meeting between the Early Learning Division's (ELD) Child Care Division licensor, Henry Oliva, and Douglas County pastors to discuss how churches can legally fill child care gaps and assist families.

Shawn shared that some Early Head Start and Head Start summer programming teachers are reporting children are excited to see their friends and teachers. Other Head Start teachers are reporting increased separation anxiety. Head Start anticipates that new children entering their program in the fall will experience this anxiety more than the returning children who served through summer programming. When Head Start is confirming registration, many families are choosing to opt out of receiving Head Start Services or sharing that they would like to opt out but need to work and have to maintain enrollment. There are a lot of rules around children wearing masks that can make it difficult for teachers regulate, so children will be encouraged to not wear masks. If parents insist on children having to wear masks, a written agreement will be required.

New Health and Safety Guidelines were released by the ELD. Currently, group size for licensed centers allows for 20 preschoolers per class. Children have to be three feet apart in buses, and the mats where children rest for full days have to be three feet apart. Head Start will have A/B days this year. Children in the "A" group will attend Monday/Tuesday and the first Friday of each month. Children in the "B" group will attend

Wednesday/Thursday, and the second Friday of each month. At home learning is being offered with ReadyRosie curriculum. Head Start and Early Head Start classes begin August 31.

Mental Health Discussion

Heidi recapped observations from previous PAC meetings where our partners have identified mental health concerns which are increasing both for families and professionals throughout the pandemic. Alison Hinson from Douglas Education Service District (ESD) and Bill Shobe from Compass Behavioral Health joined the meeting to discuss current needs and resources available in Douglas County.

Compass has therapists in 22 schools throughout the county. The Oregon Health Plan (OHP) has approved Compass to provide telehealth therapy services during COVID-19. These services were not previously available. Compass can provide technology to attend these sessions if families need it. There are walk in services available at the Madrone Location. Compass receives referrals through pediatricians, Community UPLiFT, and self-referrals. For more information or to refer a family, call their office at 541-440-3532. Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) services were suspended at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but have been resumed. Compass is forming parent groups for families who have children with developmental and behavioral concerns, these groups will likely have to meet virtually in the beginning due to current in-person meeting restrictions. Compass is also working on creating social skills groups for children, but telehealth is not the ideal format for these groups, so they are trying to find an in-person solution.

Alison shared that the trauma from COVID-19 is affecting executive function of children more than aggressive behavior. This is causing a difficulty for children and families to self-regulate, schedule, plan a ritual / routine, decreased memory, increased irritation, etc. Even homes that are typically very well regulated are not well regulated right now. While providers will want to provide structure and classroom routines when school starts, it will need to be looser and more gracious right now as children will be experiencing regression in a lot of areas. Child Care providers and teachers will have to work on relationship building with the children first as parent / child relationships have been strained throughout this pandemic and isolation. There could be a lot of sensory overwhelm for children who have been distancing, and they will likely need sensory breaks. Administrators are aware of potentially increased tensions during this time and have been working on messaging for teachers and staff.

Steve observed that due to social distancing, many people are not grieving losses as they have in the past. People need to find a way to grieve the loss of social constructs as well as the loss of life. Many relationships of all kinds are ending due to distancing and social injustice concerns right now, causing additional mental health concerns.

Bill shared his observation that it's difficult to understand social queues without being able to see the mouth. The lack of visible social queues can cause increased social anxiety, increased feelings of isolation, and decreased socialization for children.

Alison's Behavioral Health Consultation grant is beginning the second year. The ability to be in classrooms will be determined based on site rules. There will be additional tools and ways to provide resources if Alison's team is not able to be in classrooms physically.

Steve shared that The Ford Family Foundation (TFFF) free book program may still have copies of Building Resilience in Children and Teens by Ginsburg and Jablow. Information regarding the free book program is on TFFF's website (www.tfff.org).

Supporting Children and Families with an Equity Lens during COVID-19

Cliff Jones from Capacity Building Partnerships reviewed the Equity Lens process, and notes from the July regional Equity Lens small group meeting, and next steps to be taken in the equity lens creation process. The South-Central Early Learning Hub Region's Equity Lens is anticipated to be finished at the next small group meeting on August 25th. It will then be reviewed with the Regional Governance Council and the Professional Advisory Committees (PAC) at their September meetings. Cliff reviewed the definition of equity as everyone being able to reach the same goal regardless of barriers that they may face due to systems in place. Equitable processes allow individuals to overcome the barriers or remove the barriers that were previously there.

It was observed that it's difficult to reach individuals who do not want to be reached. Cliff reflected that this is the time to figure out how we can overcome barriers, and determine why they are in place not to focus on the challenges of overcoming them. There are six steps to overcoming barriers: get on the same page, gather missing information, involve stakeholders / engage multiple perspectives, assess equity impact, surface and check assumptions, and take action.

Partner Updates

UPLIFT - 483 total referrals have been received since September 2017. In the last quarter, Douglas County received 28 referrals. Nineteen referrals were received in July and 14 in August for Douglas County. Cory shared a story of a mom who was previously referred to Community UPLIFT and received services through Healthy Families, Take Root Parenting Connection and Safe Haven Maternity Home after leaving an abusive relationship and getting clean when she found out she was pregnant. The mother was recently referred back to Community UPLIFT for another referral to Take Root Parenting Connection and shared that when the baby is a little older, she would like to attend college courses.

Lee Ann – Health Care Coalition of Southern Oregon (HCCSO) –There will be a self-paced training around the trans birthing process. There is also an online training for LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency 101 on September 25th.

Judi - Healthy Families – United Community Action Network (UCAN) does not have funding for office supplies in Klamath County as the initial budgeting did not account for them overseeing the program. If anyone knows of free or inexpensive office furniture and supplies, please let Judi know.

Susan – Take Root - Incredible Infants is running now, and parents can still join. Incredible Infants is a private Facebook Group for families of children born July through October of this year. Take Root is preparing for parenting classes that will be virtual in the fall. Make Parenting a Pleasure and Nurturing Parenting for Teens is coming up. Currently, Take Root is receiving trauma informed training and will be incorporating this information into their upcoming classes.

Future Topics

Present Equity Lens

Next Meeting Date

September 24 – 10:00 am to 12:00 pm