

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 23, 2023 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Robert Dannenhoffer, Shawn Massingale, Colleen May, Abby Drummond, Marta Henriksen, Kyle Riege

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Heather Freiling, Athena Wikstrom, Ronda Osborn, Windy Digby, Susan Stiles-Sumstine, Cynthia Hurkes, Vanessa Pingleton, Danielle Walker, DeeJay (Diana) Juarez

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Health Update

Dr. Dannenhoffer shared COVID-19, RSV, and influenza have a low infection rate, currently. Douglas County is experiencing less than ten new COVID-19 cases per day with few individuals being hospitalized for COVID-19.

Experiencing COVID-19 symptoms after recovering from the illness is incredibly common with the most common symptoms being chest pain, vertigo, brain fog, and fatigue. Often the “long-hauler” symptoms improve six to nine months after the illness. Most individuals Dr. Bob has seen experiencing “long-haulers” are unvaccinated. Generally, those experiencing the Omicron variants are not experiencing “long-haulers.”

Douglas County is experiencing a low infection rate of Croup. Croup is typically caused by peri-influenza resulting in swelling under vocal cords. In adults, this often results in laryngitis. Steps to reduce COVID-19 have significantly decreased the amount of Croup cases. There are rarely hospitalizations from Croup with current medical practices, and the infection is generally not serious.

Early Learning Hub Update

Gillian shared South-Central Early Learning Hub updates. At this time, any bills that will be reviewed during this legislative session have been submitted and are under review. More information should be available in April.

The South-Central Early Learning Hub turned in the Regional System Assessment to the Early Learning Division in March, a month early. The Early Learning Division is reviewing Regional System Assessments now. Next, we will work with our Professional Advisory Committees and Regional Governance Council to compile the Regional Early Learning Strategic Plan.

Preschool Promise enrollment for the 2022 – 2023 school year is still taking place. The 2023 – 2024 school year Preschool Promise application should be available in April.

Ronda Osborn has been hired as the South-Central Early Learning Hub’s new Douglas County Family Resource Facilitator.

Raise Up Oregon 2.0 Focus Groups with Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) staff and families were held March 14 and 21. Douglas and Klamath/Lake ODHS District Managers were gracious in offering space at their District Offices and coordinating the onsite needs for the groups. Heidi East McGowan facilitated both focus groups that captured voices from across the region. Hub staff assisted in planning and facilitating.

The next Family Advisory Committee meeting will be held April 11.

Inclusion

Windy Digby provided an overview of what inclusion is, what it looks like, accommodations that can be provided, and the current expectation for inclusion.

Oregon has fully embraced inclusion. Inclusion is the right for every child, regardless of ability, to be included with their peers. Most children are able to join their peers in “typical” classrooms. There are some children who have special needs and environmental factors that impact their needs. When reviewing disabilities, there are factors that help children to be included and successful. Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) staff examines if there are supports which can be given so a child with a disability is able to be included in the classroom.

When reviewing the learning environment for children in the ECSE program, staff is looking for what can be done to support all children in the environment. Some passive supports that could be placed are visual cues, item size, visual size, visual timers, seating arrangement, fine motor skill objects being made available, and classroom layout. An active support could be transition activities and warnings. There may be motor challenges which can be impacted by classroom arrangement. There could be mobility devices used, hearing difficulties, or visual difficulties experienced by children in the classroom. The goal of ECSE is to get children ready for success. There are a lot of children who were impacted by COVID who did not interact with society due to reduced immune systems. This limited outside contact had impacts on their socialization abilities. Many children have not learned self-regulation skills and how to identify their emotions.

ECSE has two inclusion teams this year with inclusion coaches and behavior specialists. There are also additional staff members who are involved in inclusion such as autism specialists, occupational specialists, physical therapists, speech therapists, and more. Skills coaches will go into classrooms and implement an "I do, we do, you do" model in which they observe for the first two weeks, then they will model skills, then do the skills alongside the teacher, and, lastly, observe the teacher using the skills and provide feedback. Staff members try to not shadow kiddos who need supports as it's not the best model for children when they are singled out. As children learn new skills, new challenges pop up.

Before this school year, children were being expelled from programs. The state has a new law where children cannot be expelled. Some children need to be in a special education program and that placement opportunity can be presented to parents by ECSE staff when this need is identified. Families decide on placement for their child and can choose to follow ECSE recommendations or not. The goal is to get children in the communities. There are medically fragile children for whom the germs in the community are too dangerous for them.

ECSE is pulling together a team of partners to hold a Preschool Inclusion Summit. Invitations will be coming out soon. The summit will hopefully be held in May. During the summit, decisions will be made that will impact children and inclusion in the community. The vision is to include publicly funded and privately funded care providers as they both face the same challenges in the classroom. Heidi McGowan will facilitate the summit including problem solving meetings over the next year. ECSE is looking for what families in the community need and how they can partner with others to provide supports. When ECSE comes into a classroom, it is a partnership. ECSE staff has limited time to spend in each community classroom. ECSE is looking for how the community is able and willing to partner with them to support children.

Kyle shared Family Relief Nursery's experience working with ECSE is invaluable. Family Relief Nursery refers families to ECSE and has staff come into the classroom to provide support and training.

Early Intervention and Healthy Families have a strong connection. Healthy Families does a lot of wrap-around services with EI. Parents are their children's first teachers. Healthy Families and Early Intervention partner to teach skills and support families when their children need support or tools for developmental challenges and self-regulating.

Dr. Bob observed the supports provided to children through ECSE are important to families and in getting children ready for school and life. Aviva refers patients to ECSE regularly and their partnership has increased over the last several years.

Doctors, Healthy Families, Relief Nurseries, Preschool Promise, Early Head Start and Head Start all perform the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and refer families, as needed, to EI / ECSE based on developmental concerns. Families having the ASQ results to take the doctor appointments with them can speed up referrals and provide accurate results. Families completing the ASQ with partners provides them with additional time and support in completing the questionnaire compared to when it is completed at the doctor's office.

Child Development and Rehabilitation Center (CDRC) does most pediatric evaluations in Oregon for developmental and behavioral delays and disabilities. Dr. Amelia Roth is a Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric Fellow and can do a lot of evaluations locally. CDRC is sometimes booked out over a year for evaluations. Dr. Roth providing evaluations that have only been able to be received with CDRC previously will allow children to begin receiving supports much quicker.

Hub and Partner Updates

Athena Wikstrom – Preschool Promise – The SCELH is still accepting applications for the 2022-2023 school year. There are openings for qualifying families at Roseburg Professional Child Care in Roseburg. Eligible students turn 3 or 4 by Sept. 1, 2022, are residents of Oregon, and have a family income of up to 200% of Federal Poverty. Apply online at <http://www.southcentralhubenrollment.com/> or contact us by phone at (541) 957-4809.

Danielle Walker – Community UPLiFT – Since January, the SCELH has received 47 Community UPLiFT referrals with 23 of those being for Douglas County. The Hub is excited to have Ronda Osborn joining the team.

Kyle Riege – Family Relief Nursery – There is one toddler opening and one preschool opening in Drain. The outreach team has done a great job getting referrals to the program. Family Relief Nursery is working on funding to open a second preschool classroom in the fall. The fundraising gala will be held in Cottage Grove April 1.

Marta Henriksen – Family Relief Nursery – There will be a spring carnival April 28, with more information to come. The relief nursery is working to provide transportation for everyone interested in attending the carnival.

Heather Freilinger – Care Connections & Education – Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) – There are currently 131 providers in the region with 48 of them providing Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). CCRR is working with another 22 providers to get them qualified to provide ERDC. There are many providers waiting for background checks for final licensing. Since September, the CCRR has provided or facilitated over 92 hours of training. The Spring Fling is May 20 and will include a lot of Set 2 training. Dr. McGee is the keynote speaker and will provide Set 2 training. There will be a lot of incentives given away including a couple of centers worth over \$300 apiece.

Cynthia Hurkes – Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) – The last Early Learning Gathering of this school year is coming up. Erin Helgren will be the presenter at the Gathering.

Cynthia has been collaborating with the Regional Educator Network (REN) for the last few years. REN is financially supporting an Early Childhood Affinity group with eight participants. The participants were chosen by their educator role. The affinity group has become like a support group, which is great!

KPI and Care Connections & Education are wrapping up Conscious Discipline for Families. They are working with Sunnyslope Elementary and Sutherlin East Primary to provide Conscious Discipline. KPI and CCRR have provided incentives for families participating in the Conscious Discipline training. Days Creek Charter School is also offering Conscious Discipline training for parents.

Colleen May -- Healthy Families – Healthy Families is hiring for two positions. They are still accepting referrals for Douglas and Klamath County, while Lake County will have spots coming up soon as three families are graduating. Let Colleen know of any families that might be a good fit for the Healthy Families program.

DeeJay Juarez – Regional Educator Network (REN) – Douglas ESD's Regional Educator Network is developing events for the start of the new (2023-2024) school year to assist teachers in starting the year healthier, this will include Conscious Discipline training. A dyslexia training is coming up. REN is applying for an LGBTQ2S1+ grant.

There are many regional opportunities for educators across Oregon. Part of the RENs are funded by the Educator Advancement Council. The Educator Advancement Council (EAC) was created as a public-nonprofit partnership through state statute to significantly improve professional supports for Oregon's public educators.

The Educator Advancement Council established ten Regional Educator Networks (REN) as a way to center teacher and community voices in designing and supporting open access to regional, high-quality, culturally responsive professional learning that reflects local context and career stages. RENs, each led by a coordinating body representative of the region, have organized around improving systems to support educators. There is a strong focus on funding innovative change ideas and not programs. This approach allows educators' experiences to drive the work, creating a structure for regional innovation. More info: <https://eac.ode.state.or.us/page/regional-educator-networks>

Vanessa Pingleton – Take Root – Take Root will be providing a calendar for the Douglas ESD's Early Learning and Parenting Resource Center on Stephens. There will be different activities for children and families each month. Take Root will also be providing bus passes for families if transportation is a struggle.

Susan Stiles – Take Root – Take Root is finishing up the winter term. In the Spring, Take Root will offer Autism from the Inside Out with EI / ECSE staff providing the training. Also, Cynthia will facilitate The Help that Helps workshop in the Spring. In addition, there will be Taming the Tantrum and Childbirth Education

Windy Digby – Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) – The Preschool Inclusion Summit will be in May. Referrals have been really high recently. ECSE is working with k12 to transition existing Individualized Family Support Plans (IFSP) to Individual Education Plans (IEP) for children entering kindergarten. Children entering kindergarten, who have a referral for evaluation, will have the evaluation request sent to the school the child will attend for the full school year. ECSE is not scheduling any evaluations for the remainder of the school year.

Abby Drummond – Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) – February was the last month for emergency allotments for SNAP. March is the first month of lower services for families. ODHS staff has been surprised a lot of families have heard of the change. The loss of benefits will likely be more evident as we move towards summer.

While many counties in Oregon are introducing time limits for how long individuals can receive SNAP benefits, Douglas County will not be. ODHS is going to be at several events coming up. If there are events coming up or if your organization would like resource information shared out, send requests to Abby.

Shawn Massingale – UCAN Head Start / Early Head Start – UCAN Head Start opened applications for next school year (2023 – 2024). Families will begin being selected in two to three weeks. Head Start is currently fully enrolled. Early Head Start has about 11 openings. UCAN is hiring assistants and an inclusion support mentor.

Future Topics

Health Updates with Dr. Dannenhoffer

Next Meeting Date

Next meeting April 27, 2023 from 10:00am – 12:00pm.