

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

November 16, 2023 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: CeCe Lynn, Colleen May, Hannah Hovarth, Kyle Riege, Maddie Bright, Shawn Massingale, Tamela Nichols

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Athena Wikstrom, Danielle Walker, Debbie Price, Michelle Bassett, Robin VanWinkle, Ronda Osborn, Susan Stiles, Vanessa Pingleton, Windy Digby

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Early Learning Hub Update

Gillian introduced Debbie Price as the South-Central Early Learning Hub's new Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) facilitator. Debbie has extensive experience as a teacher, professor of early childhood at Umpqua Community College (UCC), teaching coach, and elementary principal. She will bring great insight and perspective to the role.

Since its inception on July 1, 2023, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELDC) has undergone several transitions. The Early Learning Council (ELC) governs DELDC and serves as its board. The ELC is currently familiarizing themselves with the functions of Hubs and the overall early childhood system. They will be examining the current structures that are in place and the role of the Hubs.

Employment Related Daycare (ERDC) transitioned to be governed through DELDC has expanded its services under DELDC. Families still apply through the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). Applications can be submitted either at the local office or through the ONE System (ONE.Oregon.gov). Currently, there is a waitlist, and families are encouraged to apply so they have an opportunity to receive ERDC when the waitlist opens.

All Preschool Promise classes in Klamath and Lake Counties are full, there are four openings in Douglas County. Hubs are responsible for qualifying and enrolling families into Preschool Promise programs. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), Care Connections & Education provides technical assistance to Preschool Promise providers. With the introduction of two-year contracts, the Preschool Promise application for the 2024-2025 school year will open in the spring instead of the fall. Hub staff will be promoting Preschool Promise at Kindergarten Round-Ups and enrollment events.

Gillian serves on the System of Care in all three counties. The System of Care is a program through Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO) which aims to identify and overcome barriers for families receiving Oregon Health Plan (OHP).

Home Visiting Leadership Gathering

The Home Visiting Systems Coordination project held a Home Visiting Leadership Gathering at The Ford Family Foundation with all Home Visiting Systems Coordination groups from Oregon and Northern California in attendance. The gathering received updates from Department of Early Learning and Care (DELDC) staff and Early Learning Council representatives regarding the Oregon Home Visiting Committee. The Committee was formed to focus on Home Visiting financing, workforce, and coordination structures. Portland State University (PSU) will house the Oregon Home Visiting Systems Coordination Center in the children's department. PSU is looking to hire two facilitators - one at the state level and one at the regional level.

During a panel discussion with parents, ODHS, and the South Coast Early Learning Hub, it was noted that it can be intimidating for parents to voice their opinion when titles of professionals are utilized.

The region has been focusing on incorporating parent voice and leadership into the four buckets of work in home visiting leadership meetings. The four buckets of work include internal and external communication, professional development, and coordinated intake and referral. Parent voice and leadership has been added as a fifth bucket of work in the region. Cynthia Hurkes is leading the parent voice and leadership workgroup during meetings and that bucket of work. To

receive additional feedback, Cynthia has attended the First Thursday events hosted by ODHS and has been conducting parent surveys at the event. Parents who complete the survey receive a \$10 gift card. Cynthia and Susan Stiles hosted a parent input group in which 25 individuals registered and 13 attended. During the input group, parents requested parent support groups and a group for dads.

Vanessa is presenting an "On Demand" at the Start Early conference with a panel in Washington DC.

Inclusion Summit

The Inclusion Summit began meeting in May, and is hosted by Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) and the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), and facilitated by Heidi East McGowan. The Summit is focusing on problem statements, root causes, and potential solutions to children with disabilities being included in early childhood settings. Yesterday, the group convened to discuss strategies for addressing some of the identified root causes preventing inclusion and proposed solutions. One of the suggested solutions is to establish community-wide agreements, similar to Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), that will define the concept of inclusion. Sarah, an Early Childhood Education (ECE) instructor at Umpqua Community College (UCC), joined the group as a Tribal representative, and provided a parent's perspective. Sarah will be teaching an early childhood mental health class at UCC. The group reviewed a documentary titled "Forget Me Not" and is planning to make it available for viewing throughout the entire community.

Inclusion refers to providing equal educational opportunities to every child, regardless of barriers, medical needs, or additional requirements. Currently, only 27% of children with special needs are included in a "typical" classroom. Inclusion entails having all children in one cohesive group, rather than segregating those with special needs or providing separate education for them.

Hub and Partner Updates

Tamela Nichols – Family Development Center - Cooking with Chef Charley is held once a month in the evening. Last night he taught the group how to cook dips, next month he will be teaching cookie decorating. Cooking classes are open to the community and the class was full this month.

Parent training is hosted every week and includes dinner.

Robin VanWinkle – Douglas County Child Care Coalition – The Douglas County Child Care Coalition is a group looking to improve quality, access, and cost of child care. The Coalition held listening sessions and a needs assessment with Christy Cox for different child care types across the county. Twenty-five 25 providers attended and represented each type of child care facility. Information collected will be used by the coalition during a planning phase.

There are almost 25 employers in Douglas County who have received "Best Place to Work for Families." Fifteen employers have received Biz for Kids Supporters awards.

There are a lot of employers in Douglas County who are interested in providing child care for employees or partnering with providers so families can access child care.

Kyle Riege - Family Relief Nursery – The North Douglas site in Drain is still under renovation. The facility has not been able to have classes held in it. Family Relief Nursery is trying to provide respite service, going on field trips, and trying to accommodate as the renovation is going longer than expected.

Maddie Bright – Family Relief Nursery - Drain Church of Christ provided space for the Relief Nursery to hold the Fall Feast this year. The Fall Feast will be similar to a Thanksgiving meal and will be held on Tuesday. Sutherlin Crystal Creek donated a huge ham for the feast.

The Relief Nursery is planning a Christmas Light Parade and Christmas party.

Michelle Bassett - Care Connections & Education – In October, the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) provided 17 hours of virtual trainings, and 19 hours in person, with eight of those being the Southern Oregon University (SOU) workshop where participants could receive college credit. There were 30 participants online and 200 in person. UCC hosted a two-day Early Care and Education Conference at the end of October with a focus on Parent Engagement.

Umpqua Community College hosts a college cohort, partnering with SOU in which students are able to apply for grants for early learning courses. Grants cover tuition, fees, and everything needed to complete Early Care and Education training except transportation to the college. There are 50 students enrolled in the cohort. Forty of the cohort students are working in the field with children. Michelle is part of the program and works indirectly with children. The remainder of the cohort is not working with children right now.

The CCRR just hired a second Preschool Promise Facilitator in Douglas in September. Preschool Promise Facilitators work with teachers and directors to provide technical assistance.

Colleen May – United Community Action Network – Health and Wellness - Feeding Umpqua just had a fantastic food drive at BiMart with KVAL.

Colleen reminded the group that children can qualify for Women Infants and Children (WIC) until they are five-years-old.

Susan Stiles – Take Root Parenting Connection – Fall programming is wrapping up.

Fifty surveys were received from parents at this month's First Thursday event with ODHS.

Shawn Massingale – United Community Action Network (UCAN) – Families can continue to apply for Head Start and Early Head Start. There are a number of openings in Southern Douglas County for the Early Head Start Home Based program. Early Head Start serves pregnant moms through the child being age three.

Future Topics

Health Updates with Dr. Dannenhoffer

Next Meeting Date

Next meeting January 25, 2024 from 10:00am – 12:00pm.