

# Illinois Early Learning Council Meeting

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**June 23, 2014**

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Roosevelt University  
425 S. Wabash Avenue – Room 418  
Chicago, IL 60605

Conference Line: 888-494-4032  
Access Code: 7198518485

## **Minutes**

In-person: Beth Mascitti-Miller, Teresa Kelly, Claudia Quigg, Cass Wolf, Karen Berman, Theresa Hawley, Julie Smith, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Brenda Jones, Teri Talan, Donna Nylander, Pam Reising-Rechner, Brynn Seibert, Jana Fleming, Vanessa Rich, Elliot Regenstein, Judith Walker-Kendrick, Belinda Farr, Janet Maruna, Emily Miller, Joan Vitale, Kathy Villano, Gaylord Gieseke, Tim Carpenter, Cindy Zumwalt, Nora Gaines, Janice Moenster, Josie Yanguas, Edith Njuguna, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Ava Harston.

Call-in: Vinni Hall, Jeanna Capito, Karen Hunter Anderson

### **I. Welcome and Announcements**

#### a. Introductions

Co-chair Julie Smith welcomed all attendees to the meeting. She also thanked Children's Home and Aid for hosting the morning's speaker series and Roosevelt University for once again hosting the ELC meeting. Tom Phillion, the Interim Dean College of Education, welcomed members and guests to the university.

Smith noted that co-chair Harriet Meyer was not able to attend the meeting due to family commitments.

#### b. Minutes

Minutes from the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved without any changes.

#### c. Announcements

New council member Edith Njuguna was introduced by Julie Smith. Ms. Njuguna is the Senior Program Officer at Grand Victoria Foundation

### **II. Department of Children and Family Services Discussion**

Smith invited Mary Beth Corrigan and her team from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) to the podium to deliver their presentation on current programs relevant to early childhood.

IDCFS staff started their presentation by talking about mandated reporting. They touched on several points such as how to navigate the hotline and reporting system and the follow up process following the filing of a report.

Presentation also described statewide provider database. This database is intended to look across all IDCFS contracts and assess what services are available for families and children to (including health care providers and services). Caseworker can utilize the family's zip code and the software will identify providers in their area. Most importantly, IDCFS is currently doing geo-mapping to find gaps in the state where services are not being offered.

Council took a short break before resuming the meeting.

### III. **ExceleRate Illinois Policy Information**

Theresa Hawley and Gail Nelson from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education provided an overview on the ExceleRate Illinois program. Hawley started by showing attendees a promotional video which will be available to the public soon once the program officially launches.

Hawley and Nelson provided an update and overview of key aspects of this new program through a PowerPoint presentation (available in the packets) that covered:

a. Professional Development/Credentials

Hawley explained how an accreditation cross-walk has been combined for four major accreditation providers (NAEYC, NAC, AMS, COA). OECD has cross-walked each accreditation with the ExceleRate criteria for both gold and silver circles. Nelson stressed that for the curriculum alignment processes, programs must show that staff members have applied for credentials.

b. Public Relations Plan

Hawley went over the different outreach strategies and explained how one of the key components of the plan was to engage intermediaries such as pediatricians, case workers and obstetricians to reach families. All materials that will be distributed are in English and most of them will be created in Spanish as well as other languages.

The official website is expected to go live July 1. Parents will be directed to the website to search for providers in their area and to learn more about the quality ratings system. Additionally, Windy City Live will do an endorsement video for it. However, Hawley did stress that parents are more likely to look into ExceleRate if providers they trust recommend it. The provider website is going to be: [excelerateillinoisprovider.com](http://excelerateillinoisprovider.com) and it is expected to go live in July as well. It will be an open website with no login and it will contain information on ExceleRate and a set of resources on a variety of topics.

c. Trainings Status

A staff engagement kit will be made available and will provide guidance on how administrators can educate their staff on ExceleRate.

### IV. **Federal Opportunities Strategy Discussion**

Smith invited OECD Executive Director Theresa Hawley to provide an overview of the coming federal opportunities. Hawley made reference to both the Early Head Start – Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships and Preschool Expansion Grants. She noted that they fit well with the State's vision for a birth to third grade pipeline of services that serve the most high need kids in the highest quality programs.

She indicated that the Early Head Start Child Partnership's application came out a few weeks ago. OECD staff has been working with a number of partners to put together a menu of supports for programs interested in applying. Four regional (Rockford, Peoria, Chicago and Suburbs) meetings will be held to assist applicants.

Illinois is eligible for \$15.9M and then 2.5% TA on top of that for EHS-CC Partnerships. These are 12 month grants that can be renewed for up to five years. These partnerships will be federal to local partnerships. OECD staff is working to ensure that applicants in the highest need areas are providing guidance and support in order to facilitate the preparation of quality applications.

a. Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

Grant opportunity is focused on young children in poverty whose parents are working, and the vision is to raise the quality of the child care providers for these children. The application deadline is August 20<sup>th</sup>.

b. Preschool Expansion Grants

Regarding the expansion grants, Hawley indicated that this is a particularly competitive grant targeted towards serving 4 year olds in high-quality, full-day preschool. Illinois is eligible for \$20M. Illinois' application will need approval by the Early Learning Council and thus depending on when it is due, the ELC may need to hold a special meeting.

Hawley emphasized that in order to be competitive, the state has to include with the application memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with participating communities. She explained that the challenge with this grant is targeting areas where there is immense need but also has the capacity to expand services. OECD is starting conversations with communities now to gauge their interest in participating in this opportunity.

**V. State Government Update**

Smith provided attendees with a state government update. She focused on the end of the legislative session. She pointed out that the budget that passed the General Assembly differed from that of the Governor's recommended budget. Early Childhood Block Grant funding remained flat therefore an earlier 8% reduction and the General Assembly's budget did not include the supplemental amount for FY15. Governor's budget staff is working closely with state agencies and OECD to determine the best course of action for sustaining vital services to children and families in spite of challenging budget circumstances.

**VI. Committee Action**

Elliot Regenstein briefed the Council on a research agenda the Data, Research and Evaluation Committee put together. A draft was provided in the meeting packet. The Committee wants this draft agenda to be shared with each committee to keep collecting key research policy questions and give feedback. Regenstein explained how they will try to do some prioritization and invited anyone who has any thoughts on it to get in contact either the co-chairs or the committee staff.

**VII. Closing and Adjournments**

Smith thanked all participants for attending, as well as Roosevelt University for hosting, and IDCFS staff for presenting. She informed attendees that the next full ELC meeting will be held on October 20<sup>th</sup>.