

Child Care Advisory Council Meeting
4/22/2022

Call to Order..... Sarah Vanover

The Child Care Advisory Council meeting was duly called by Division of Child Care Director Sarah Vanover and held virtually via Zoom.

In Attendance

Laura Begin, Bill Buchanan, Chuck Bradley, Eamonn FitzGerald, Charla Heersche, Amy Hood, Kathy Mullen, For Amy Neal: Lynn Baker, Tom Poland, Patricia Porter, Laura Tipton, Sarah Vanover, Jennifer Washburn, Sandy Woodall, Amber Zambrano

Review of Minutes..... Open Discussion

Meeting minutes from January were approved.

DCC Update..... Sarah Vanover

Sarah provided the update for DCC.

The deadline has passed for providers to apply for the Infant and Toddler Contracted Slots pilot and the Preschool Partnership grants funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds. However, many grants are still available including the Facility Repair grant. This grant can be up to \$10,000.00 for licensed and certified providers. Providers do not have to apply for the whole amount. The application is easy to fill out and only one page. The Business Partnership grants, Child Care Desert grants and Family Child Care Start-up grants are also still open. All grant applications can be found at <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/os/oas/Pages/grants.aspx>.

The next ARP stabilization payment will be distributed soon. Sarah Vanover stressed that if providers do not complete and return their monthly data sheets to Public Consulting Group (PCG), they will miss a payment. This data sheet is now on the DCC home page. Data sheets are due by the 5th of each month.

The number of families enrolled in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is lower than pre-pandemic numbers. The low workforce participation is a contributing factor. DCC has increased the CCAP income guidelines for families which makes more families eligible. DCC continues to create promotional material and encourages advocacy groups, partners, and other organizations that work with families to share the information.

Charla Heersche asked if there are any recommendations for making the CCAP application process easier for families. Sarah Vanover stated the application process is federally mandated, so there is not much room to change the application. However, since the application moved to

Kynect, it is more digital-friendly, and families can start the process online and submit paperwork online.

The open comment period on the background check regulation has concluded. There were a lot of comments concerning centers will no longer being allowed to hire staff until the fingerprint results are received. This is a federal requirement, and we had a waiver in place, but this has expired. This regulation is set to go into effect in June or possibly July.

Amy Hood asked for an update on the start-up grants for certified family child care homes. Andrea stated we had awarded seven grants, and three are in the process of approval.

If anyone has a question concerning the ARP grants, they can email Jessica Cain, the ARP coordinator, Jessica.cain@ky.gov.

Lastly, Sarah Vanover shared that DCC and our partners are hosting monthly virtual townhalls. They occur on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM EST. The Zoom link is sent out via the DCC ListServ.

KDE Update Bill Buchanan

Bill Buchanan provided a Kentucky Department of Education update. SB 60 passed will require amendments to the preschool statute. When there is a disagreement between school districts and Head Start around full utilization, a Head Start director can notify the Commissioner. Then thirty days from that notification, a determination will be made on full utilization. KDE is in the process of reviewing the bill and will be releasing guidance for Head Start Directors.

KDE has a new data system that will be adopted this fall. They will be moving to the Child Outcome Summary (COS) system.

Bill Buchanan shared a link to an indicator eight, parent survey. This survey is for parents with children who have special needs including preschool parents. Data will be collected about ways to improve parent engagement.

The Preschool Advisory Committee met. Their meeting focused on recruitment efforts, the parent survey, new Early Childhood Standards, and committee work. Their next meeting is on July 28.

GOEC Update Lynn Baker

Lynn Baker provided a GOEC update. The Regional collaboratives are working on their RFAs.

At the last Early Childhood Institute (ECI), GOEC launched the Director's Apprenticeship Program. Approximately 55 apprentices have enrolled. They were able to complete the required training during the ECI.

The June ECI is open for registration. This will be held at the Galt House on June 21st and 22nd. During the ECI, GOEC will be releasing the new Early Childhood Standards.

GOEC has revamped its parent guides and changed them to Family Guides. The Family Guides are in plain language format and will be more user-friendly.

Legislative Update..... Laura Begin

Laura Begin shared a legislative presentation with members. The 2022 regular legislative session concluded on 4/14/2022. During the long session, the legislators completed census redistricting, ended the COVID-19 state of emergency, and finalized a two-year budget. The census redistricting is conducted every ten years and is based on an area's population.

Laura Begin stated bill reviews and amendments had been the priority for the past four months. Over 350 Senate bills and over 750 House bills were filed this session, not including amendments. In addition, the Department for Community Based Services reviewed over 60 bills that would have had a direct impact on DCBS services. In the final two days of the session, the General Assembly overrode most of the Governor vetoes.

During the session, some bills were passed that impacted Early Childhood. House Bill 1 (the budget bill) allocated funds for full-day kindergarten, tobacco settlement funds, increased funds for CCAP, and set aside monies for the new employee assistance partnership program. The employee assistance partnership bill that passed was House Bill 499. Partners and other business entities strongly advocated for this bill. This bill will create a new section in DCC. The program will allow employers to partner with the state to pay part of the child care costs for an employee. House Bill 499 does have a phased-in implementation; this year, the department will promulgate a regulation and create the contracts that must be signed. The regulation will create the framework for the new program. In 2023, DCC will begin accepting employer/employee contracts and in the middle of 2023, will start to release the funds to providers.

Other bills passed during the session that did not impact early childhood education, but did impact children which included Senate Bill 8, Senate Bill 40, and House Bill 7. Senate Bill 8 allows the cabinet to provide more child welfare oversight.

Unless a bill has an emergency clause, all bills go into effect in mid-July.

This year, the primary election is on May 17, 2022, with the general election being on November 2, 2022. There are many incumbents not running. A list of running incumbents can be found at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/findyourlegislator/findyourlegislator.html>.

After the legislative interim begins on June 1. During the interim, committee meetings and presentations will be held. Legislators can also begin pre-filing bills for the next session.

Presentation on the Market Rate Alternative Billing Joanne Rojas

Sarah Vanover provided a brief introduction on what a market rate study is and the method Kentucky is currently using through Child Care Aware (CCA). CCA presently collects data from providers on their rates. However, a new approach we can consider is collecting the data from providers on how much it would cost to provide quality care. New Mexico has currently completed the market rate based upon this new method.

Joanne Rojas shared a presentation with members. Currently, CCA collects data for a market rate study and a workforce study. They can be found on CCA's website. Based on the data collection of provider rates, the federal government recommends setting CCAP subsidy rates up to the 75th percentile. Currently, the subsidy rate is set at the 85th percentile with federal and state funds.

CCA is working on researching an alternative to the market rate study because the reported price families pay is not the actual cost of quality care. Quality care has many factors such as settings (ratios, group sizes, ages), cost drivers (personnel/non-personnel prices), and revenue drivers (tuition, subsidy, food program, enrollment).

The provider cost of quality calculator is currently being studied by CCA. It's a tool that can measure different quality factors based on the unique characteristics of the provider's program. Joanne Rojas stated they would like to get a representative sample of 24 child care providers across the state. This will allow an estimate of the actual cost of quality and providers to report feedback on the tool.

Joanne Rojas invited CCAC members to share guidance and feedback on region-specific cost drivers that need to be considered and assist in the recruitment of providers.

Jennifer Washburn asked if the provider is part of a larger organization, such as Bright Horizons or employer-sponsored programs, and if the center provides health insurance. She also stated to compare the cost of staff wages to those within the school system.

Kathy Mullen suggested including the "extras" that are offered to teachers, such as an expense budget, training funds, conference costs, memberships, and continuing education.

Joanne Rojas stated New Mexico did compare child care wages to public school wages. They referred to these wages as "aspirational wages." Sarah Vanover said they also had in-home providers report what it would look like to pay themselves first before paying their bills.

Sarah Vanover stated during this state plan period, we are still in the research phase. She said something to consider is once New Mexico completed its study, the cost per child did increase. In Kentucky, we would have to weigh the cost with any federal and state funds provided at that timeframe so that children can remain in the subsidy program.

Tom Poland suggested communicating with the KY Bankers Association to get indicators.

Joanne Rojas invited members to reach out to her via email with any follow-up or suggestions.

Discussion on Enrollment and Billing Systems Sarah Vanover

The Division of Child Care plans to use federal funding to improve technology systems and data gathering. This new system would be like Bright Wheel but a free resource for centers. The system will be able to collect data on enrollment versus just capacity. Currently, in KYNECT, the provider list will only show the center's capacity. This number is not an accurate representation of the number of childcare slots a center has available. The system could also identify the reasoning behind the counties in KY that are child care deserts. Families would also be able to connect banking information, so their tuition can be billed automatically. DCC has been working with KYSTATS to implement this new system. Sarah Vanover stated since we are creating our own system, we want to ensure providers want to use it and be appealing as a free resource. Sarah Vanover invited CCAC members to give feedback on what system characteristics would be beneficial.

The system could also be available for families to use. For example, families could be able to see if a center has any open slots. DCC could advertise this, but Sarah Vanover inquired of members if they would benefit from this feature.

Jennifer Washburn stated she could use it for reporting and record-keeping. She also said it would be beneficial if CCAP billing could be utilized, and families could sign in and out using the system instead of the paper DCC-94E. Kathy Mullen and Patricia Porter agreed.

Recruitment Sarah Vanover

Sarah Vanover informed members she is getting several emails from the childcare community on needing assistance in recruiting staff. This is currently a national issue, and DCC does not have the resources to solve the problem. DCC did encourage providers to increase their wages using the ARP stabilization funds because, ultimately, higher wages are what will recruit new and qualified staff.

Sarah Vanover invited members to give suggestions on what could attract new staff to the field and long-term projects. There has been a trend of younger adults entering the field. Sarah Vanover noted millennials look for perks, such as discounted child care and tuition assistance.

Charla Heersche suggested it is helpful for other directors to communicate with one another on what is working and not working. She also shared college employees discussed it would be beneficial if there were tuition reimbursement.

Jennifer Washburn said creating promotional material, such as using CANVA to list all "fringe" benefits like scholarships, access to the apprenticeship program, and discounted child care.

Sandy Woodall stated she is learning new methods at a conference she is attending. She also said to consider reaching out to middle schools to discuss a career in ECE.

Sarah Vanover discussed the benefit of offering tuition assistance to employees with the expectation they may leave after four or five years. This time is significant regarding retaining employees in the field since most don't stay past one year.

Jennifer Washburn suggested utilizing Child Care Aware booths to market the field at high school employment events. Sarah Vanover also advised contacting high schools to partner in workforce internships. Kathy Mullen stated she was able to hire a high school student from an internship program through high school.

Kathy Mullen was able to recruit retired public-school teachers to work part-time.

Sarah Vanover stated she would investigate meeting dates to further discuss recruitment strategies.

Adjourn

Sarah Vanover made a call to adjourn the Child Care Advisory Council meeting. Sandy Woodall made the motion, and Kathy Mullen seconded.