

Child Care Advisory Council Meeting
4/25/2024

Call to OrderAndrea Day

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

In Attendance

Lynn Baker/GOEC, Bill Buchanan/KDE, Chuck Bradley, Andrea Day, Eamonn FitzGerald, Charlotta Heersche, Amy Hood, Kathryn Mullen, Tom Poland, Laura Tipton, Jennifer Washburn, Sandy Woodall, Amber Zambrano

GOEC Updates Lynn Baker

Lynn Baker has been appointed the Executive Director of GOEC. She provided an update for the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Education.

GOEC is proceeding with the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). In partnership with KDE, they will ensure the pyramid model is implemented in Early Head Start and Head Start.

GOEC had their Apprenticeship Mentor Summit on March 20th and 21st. GOEC has 86 new apprentices.

GOEC is working with Partners for Rural Impact as part of the PDG. They are working with GOEC’s regional collaboratives and providing technical assistance.

Mark your calendars for the Early Childhood Institute for November 6th and 7th. The location will be announced soon.

GOEC has a new staff member, Michel Hines.

GOEC is looking to fill their Head Start Collaborative Director position, which was Lynn Baker’s formal role.

KDE Updates Bill Buchanan

Bill Buchanan provided an update for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). KDE has a new commissioner, Dr. Robbie Fletcher, who will start on July 1, 2024.

KDE is relaunching All STARS for state-funded preschool programs. It will use a new environmental rating tool called the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT).

A state leadership team has been formed for the Pyramid Model. Their next meeting is May 23rd.

Bill Buchanan shared the applicants and co-applicants who were awarded the [preschool quality grant](#). KDE received fifty-five (55) applications, and fifteen (15) programs were awarded the grant.

Tom Poland inquired if any awardees were in any of the natural disaster areas (flooding areas). Bill Buchanan stated this was not a criterion for awarding the grants; however, there is a diverse population of awardees throughout Kentucky.

KYOSA Update Stephanie Barker

Stephanie Barker provided an update for the Kentucky Out of School Alliance (KYOSA). Tom Haggard has left his position with KYOSA, so Stephanie Barker is serving as interim director.

Over five hundred individuals registered for KYOSA's virtual conference on March 5th and 6th. ECE-TRIS credit was awarded for this conference.

In February, KYOSA released a [fact sheet](#) on school-age care in Kentucky. This included an analysis of the gaps in this area.

[KYOSA's website](#).

FCCN Update Amy Hood

Amy Hood provided an update for the Family Child Care Network (FCCN).

FCCN is moving forward with assisting family child care providers with the Ky ALL STARS program. FCCN hosted its second family child care conference on February 23rd and 24th. Its next conference will be held in Bowling Green in March 2025.

Tom Poland asked how many certified provider family homes are in operation. Andrea Day stated that it is currently two hundred and thirteen (213). Andrea Day also shared that DCC has issued eighty-two (82) start-up grants. The start-up grants and the creation of the FCCN have been largely responsible for the increase in certified family child care homes.

Andrea Day also shared how critical and helpful it was for the FCCN to collect data on the zoning laws and fees in different counties. This critical information was shared with the legislature.

DCC Updates Andrea Day

Andrea Day provided an update for the Division of Child Care (DCC).

The 2024 legislative session has ended. DCC appreciated Senator Carroll introducing Senate Bill 203, the Horizons Act. The bill would have continued all the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects DCC introduced. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass. However, the budget bill, House Bill 6, did appropriate funds to support many initiatives implemented with ARPA funds. This includes provider reimbursement rates set at the 80th percentile of the market rate, the child care income exclusion, transitional child care, covering the cost of background checks, start-up grants, and early childhood education scholarships.

House Bill 561 was also passed that removed the term "pilot" from the Employee Child Care Assistance Program (ECCAP) and included directives for the Cabinet for Economic Development to be more involved in promoting the program and to create a Child Care Ready Community Designation Program.

DCC has worked with our technology team and is pleased to announce that ECCAP, including the application, is primarily electronic.

Andrea Day stated she appreciates all our partners. DCC is only as successful with all the organizations, advocates, and individuals that support early childhood education. During this legislative session, it was apparent that Ky's ECE advocates had done a great job educating legislators on the importance of the first five years of a child's life. Legislators acknowledged that 90% of brain development happens in the first five years of a child's life. Andrea Day stated this is a testament to all the hard work of all the sectors that partner with DCC and advocate for Ky's early childhood education field. What we do matters and is being acknowledged on a federal level.

Andrea Day opened the meeting to discussion, feedback, and questions.

Sandy Woodall inquired if the ECE scholarships will continue to model the current tier system and if individuals can earn up to a master's degree. Andrea Day stated that more discussion would be forthcoming; however, her preference is to continue with the current model.

Sandy Woodall inquired about the child care assistance program's income eligibility since ARPA funding is ending. Andrea Day stated it would be kept at 85% of the state's median income (SMI). All CCAP initiatives initiated using ARPA funding will be maintained.

Stephanie Barker inquired if DCC has an update on gathering enrollment data. DCC has launched brightwheel for free for child care providers. Five hundred and fifty-three (553) providers have signed up. DCC is working with brightwheel to launch the functionality to collect enrollment data. DCC is also working to automate and electronically collect attendance records.

Mike Hammons inquired about the timeline for the market rate study. Andrea Day stated that Child Care Aware (CCA) had just completed the study. DCC will be analyzing the results. Joanne Rojas noted that they are gathering data to complete a survey of the actual cost of care for the subsequent market rate study. A pilot will be forthcoming. Based on this new data, Mike Hammons inquired about the timeline for increasing provider reimbursement rates. Andrea Day stated DCC would need to analyze the latest data and be thoughtful about any increase. An increase could hurt privately paying families since providers would likely increase their tuition.

Andrea Day informed members that the CCDF Final Rule has been updated. DCC is working to implement these changes, and all states have two years to meet expectations. One change is capping CCAP family co-pays at seven percent (7%) of a family's total household income.

DCC is still covering co-pays. Once this ends, DCC will give families at least a 30-day notice. DCC will also continue paying based on enrollment rather than attendance.

A new change within CCDF is presumptive eligibility. This allows a family three months of CCAP; the only documentation they need to present is an ID. The family would have three months to gather all the other eligibility documentation.

Lastly, states must now pay providers prospectively. This means paying providers at the beginning of the month rather than the beginning of the following month. DCC has requested federal technical assistance to implement this new procedure.

DCC is working on the next state plan. A public hearing will be scheduled soon.

Since DCC's monitoring visit in 2019, DCC has been working to address all our non-compliances. Federal technical assistance has helped us come into compliance and strengthen all DCC's policies, procedures, and regulations.

Andrea Day encouraged the CCAC parent representatives to use their voices during meetings. Eammon FitzGerald stated he could assist with making sure the communication from DCC is easily understood from a parent's perspective.

Lastly, the fire marshal representative, Chuck Bradley, gave an update concerning inspections. He stated that they are close to being fully staffed, and his staff is working diligently on any backlogs.

Adjourn

Andrea Day made a call to adjourn the Child Care Advisory Council meeting.