



NORTHEAST EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
Monday, January 28, 2019
5:30-7:00 p.m.
Killingly Central Office

In Attendance: Myra Ambrogi, Noveline Beltram, Cara Blackington, Patty Bryant, Patricia Buell, Rena Cadro, Bob Chenail, Kristine Cicchetti, Christine Gosselin, William Hull, Shannon Haney, MaryEllen Jones, Nancy Kenyon, Gail Lanza, Emily Ross, David Sizemore, Miranda Skaradowski, Sally Sherman, Melanie Smith-Cervera, Barbara Teetreat, Mark Weaver,

Guests: Paul Brenton, Lisa Girad, Chris Ryan

Agenda:

- 1.) Welcome & Introductions
- 2.) Guest Speaker: PEP Alumni Presentation
- 3.) Approval of last meeting minutes
- 4.) School Readiness Updates
- 5.) Regional Director Update
- 6.) Regional Programing / Community Updates

Meeting called to order at 5:40 followed by welcome and introductions (several new guests).

Guest Speakers- PEP Alumni: Chris Ryan and Lisa Girard & her son Gabe talk about the PEP Alumni Projects.

Precious Packs: Chris describes her experiences with being a foster mom and having a child who came with their stuff thrown in a garbage bag and why that inspired her to come up with this project during her 2015 PEP class. Back then she raised over \$3,000 to make backpacks for Putnam children. She was excited with the alumni grant to be able to do this project again and bring it to other towns. Through community donations and grant money, they assembled over 80 "Precious Packs" – backpacks full of supplies like toiletries, stuffed animal, small blanket, book, undergarments, etc. They were given to school social workers and family resource centers to hand out to the foster families to give to children.

Autism & EMS – Sensory Boxes: Lisa and her son Gabe talked about the project to help educate and foster positive outcomes between EMS and those on the spectrum as well as their families when emergencies arise. She created boxes full of sensory items and she has presented to fire, rescue, ambulance departments as well to students taking classes to become EMT's. She has more presentations lined up as well. Boxes included sensory items like rubber fidget items, stress balls, self-soothing items like sensory brushes and corn brushes. The alumni group made 12 more of these sensory boxes. In addition, funds purchased extra supplies of these items so boxes can be restocked when needed. She recently was asked to present at local libraries as well.

She is also expanding her presentation to educate people around a phone app that can be used called "Let me talk". This is a free Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) talker app which supports communication in all areas of life and can provide a voice by using images to communicate. Lisa handed out article and letters from EMS workers re: the sensory boxes (see attached)

Please contact Lisa Girard if you would like her to present or if you have a contact for her to reach out to (local fire or police contacts). Lisa can be reached at lgirard450@gmail.com, or 860-315-0677

Approval of last meeting minutes

Reviewed minutes, amend notes to remove Patty, she did not stay for the meeting. Myra Ambrogi makes motion, seconded by Sally Sherman, no opposed, approved with amendment.

School Readiness Updates:

Melanie Smith-Cervera talks about the recent monitoring visits she made. These were the second visits to Goodyear, Brooklyn and Plainfield. Classroom observations all went great, working on LEP's, more assistance on that moving forward. Reviewed professional development for staff (required topics and hours), programs making progress and moving along. Plainfield trying to streamline (Shepard Hill), they don't charge fees but they need to get income on file to report out – working on process to submit W-2's. Putnam visit is Wednesday.

School Readiness Sub-Committee meeting was held tonight prior to Council meeting. They are working on a pilot survey for fall 2019 on K transition. The group developed some initial questions to target families who have entered K, they will survey parents on how preschool experience prepared for then for K, and this will guide them to make any changes necessary. Annual family survey – does not have to use NAYEC survey anymore, so they can tailor family survey. The goal is to get them sent home to families in April or May. School readiness grant (competitive) should be out in February. April 29th meeting will be agenda for recommendations on grant. Quality Enhancement grant was reviewed during sub-committee meeting, reviewed what is in the process of being spent – looks like everything is good and has plans for remaining money.

Mary Ellen reviewed Thompson's: Thompson's monitoring visits went well, LEP's are an item to be worked on. St. Joe's is working towards re-accreditations (having technical difficulties with system). They have been given extension until November 2019 because of issues. Recommendations: PD is well documented and ASQ and nutrition surveys were included.

Program Updates Reviewed: Patty mentions that on Putnam's second page of report are upcoming PD dates, these are open to all districts if they want to participate.

Regional Director's Update:

Grant Updates:

Racial Equity Training and Support Grant: We applied for two grants for a little of \$10,000 and were awarded both.

The first grant for will provide 2 day interactive workshop for up to 30 of our school leaders, take place on April 24th & 25th. It's facilitated by the National Conference for Community and Justice and will:

- Explain how race, class, abilities/disabilities and other social identities affect all of our lives, communities and workplaces
- Examine how we are individually and collectively impacted by bias, discrimination, privilege and economic diversity.
- Identify ways to move towards action and change.

The second will provide two ½ day advanced trainings for those who took part in the 2 day training.
Dates/Times TBD.

Task Force Updates: Mental Health – see attached flyer, next meeting February 13th

Regional Programs Updates:

Diane Gozemba from EASTCONN: Just emailed to the ECE list serve information around NEAYC accreditation trainings. There are several flyers on resource table for people to take. Infant Toddler Conference – March 8th

David Siezmore from St. Joes, thanks the whole group for their support, being a first year as Principal in early childhood (background was high school), he appreciates the connections he has made with the Council members.

Meeting adjourned: Motion made by Patty, Rena second – all in favor, no opposed, meeting adjourned at 6:35.

Next Council Meeting: Monday, March 18th, 2019 in Thompson: Mary R. Fisher Elementary School

The NECC Mental Health Task Force Invites You!

Working Together For Kids Mental Health

Purpose: Connect school personnel to community providers to better serve families and children in Pre-k through Elementary.

- Presentations from community providers to enrich professional knowledge of school personnel
- Connections to local resources
- Offer tools to help schools inform community providers
- Collaboration for transfer of information from providers to schools to help better serve children

Who From Your School Should Attend?

- Social Workers
- Counselors
- Special Education Teachers
- Parent Educators



When: Wednesday February 13th

Where: United Services, 1007 N. Main St., Dayville, CT

Time: 4:15-5:30 p.m. *Light Dinner Served starting at 4:00 p.m.*

RSVP: By February 11th to Kris Cicchetti, NECC
401-323-4317 or mrscicch95@sbcglobal.net

Guest Speaker on February 13th: Emily Ross:, Killingly's McKinney-Vento Homeless liaison. A liaison is responsible for working with homeless education issues in a school district.



HOPE Learning and Leadership Academy

FAVOR's HOPE Learning and Leadership Academy is getting ready to relaunch this fall. Stay tuned for more information about upcoming trainings offered through the academy! To stay connected with us, we invite you to join us on our *Family Champions Connection* call!

Monday Night **IMPACT** calls are at 8-9p

Thursday Afternoon **POWER HOUR** calls are 12-1p

To call in either times, dial (515) 604 - 9860; access code 109669

We'd love to talk with you!



People Empowered This Person

Written by Lisa Girard, a Parent Champion from Region 3

In 2017, I took a class called People Empowering People. As part of our class, we needed to do a community project. I was able to see a community need regarding autism and emergency medical services (EMS). I created a presentation for EMS regarding autism. I was able to help educate EMS about having more successful interactions with those on the autism spectrum. Along with the presentation, I created sensory boxes that contain items that a person on the spectrum may find helpful when in a situation with EMS. These boxes contain stress balls, silly putty, sensor brushes, and other items. There has been good feedback from EMS and from the community.

Through a People Empowering People alumni class and grant, I am creating more boxes to distribute to local fire and emergency medical services. I will also be presenting to more fire, rescue and ambulance departments as well as to students taking classes to become EMT'S. Through this presentation, my hopes are to educate and foster positive outcomes between EMS and those on the spectrum, as well as their families when emergencies arise. At the end of the presentation, I ask the EMS providers to answer questions regarding how autism families can assist and improve interactions in the event of an emergency. EMS has been a tremendous support in providing feedback at the end of the presentation. With this information, I am creating pamphlets to distribute to families with loved ones who have autism. My hope is that by providing this to families, we can foster an even stronger awareness and safer outcomes for both EMS and the community.

CHAMPION of the Season *NEW*

Written by FAVOR Staff

It is our honor to introduce FAVOR's Star of the Season: Ms. Carol Roberts



Ms. Roberts, of Waterbury is vocal, articulate, passionate in what she believed and speaks with conviction. She felt a sense of duty to do and be more of a support and resource to the youth and families within her community. Carol began to expand her knowledge base of children's behavioral health by participating in the DCF Regional Advisory Council (RAC), Children's Behavioral Health Advisory (CBHA), Dual-capacity Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) pilot through FAVOR, and help support the foundation of the Family Champion Brunch, amongst a laundry list of other volunteer activities. Ms. Roberts is an active foster parent and prefers to foster siblings because she believes that it preserves the family bond and is an added layer of security for the children in care. Thank you Ms. Carol Roberts for your dedication to the positive outcomes for

children and families in the Western Region!

If you would like to nominate a CHAMPION of the Season, contact your regional Family System Manager or Family Peer Support Specialist.

In EMS, our job is to help people on their worst day. Most often we are properly prepared for whatever may happen but sometimes we are not quite there. When Lisa came in and did a presentation for sensory toys in regards to people with autism, it was something I had not given any thought. I realized rather quickly how important it was. By the end of the presentation , I was waiting for the day I got to use the sensory box. The day came where we got the call for a car accident in town and we were told there was an autistic person involved. When the person found out they were being transported , they became anxious and confused. I was able to hand him the sensory box once I got him to sit down. With the box, he was a completely different person. He was perfectly content the whole ride while fiddling with the items in the box. This simple box full of what I saw as regular childrens toys made a huge difference. I did no longer had to worry about keeping him settled. It was extraordinarily helpful and I am happy Lisa was able to supply our station with that.

Allyson Colburn, EMT-B

EMS can be an amazing, joyful, stressful, agonizing profession. We have many tools at our disposal. We have protocols that we follow, steps and directions on how to do things. When it comes to things that are out of the ordinary or you have to be creative with, some people just can't adjust to it. When a patient is becoming agitated, not responding because of trust issues or the inability to, being completely overloaded with the situation or even because of autism, EMS providers can struggle in the routine tasks in patient care. When Lisa had asked to come to our department with the sensory boxes, we were thrilled to have her. Her presentation had a wealth of knowledge involved in it but she was able to apply it to layman terms. Her personal experiences were able to help with examples. Her patience and warm vibe was able to keep us engaged into the presentation. We were excited that we finally have more information and tools for people with disabilities, ex: autism. Her sensory box contained multiple different sensory objects an individual with autism, a delay or even a child with no neurological

issues can play with. Between the squishy dinosaurs, fidgets, twisty knots and etc., it gave a range of things for those individuals to focus their attention on.

I had utilized the box for my son. He has no neurological disorders, not delayed or autistic. He has trust issues with new people. I wanted to see how he would interact with the sensory box "tools" while a co worker assessed him. He was calm, focused on the objects, shook his head to answer the questions and seemed to feel at ease with them.

I had also utilized the sensory box with a patient. We will call the patient "X". Patient x has multiple disabilities including autism. Having such a huge medical history and the autism I figured this was the perfect time to really give it a shot. At first, patient x was not thrilled myself and other individuals were around patient X. We then took the unnecessary people out of the area and gave patient X a squishy dinosaur. Patient x had grabbed on to the dinosaur with all their might and it seemed to have patient X's anxiety on to the dinosaur. Patient X

then grabbed another "tool" from the sensory box and was twisting it around. Myself and another individual were able to assess patient x quickly enough and start treatment. Now, we only did things that were necessary for patient X. Nothing more, nothing less. Having to gain patient x's trust was necessary. The focus that patient x had on the "tools" was remarkable. Patient X switched some of the "tools" in and out of the sensory box until they found the perfect one for themselves.

I personally have experience working with individuals with disabilities but my partner had not. They had found that the sensory box a fantastic idea with "tools" helpful in decreasing stressful situations, even with adults as well. Shhh!! don't tell anyone that. I personally find it helpful. It not only makes my job easier, the patient calmer but the family a little bit less stressed as well. Taking an emergent situation and deescalating it with a little box of sensory toys is just what every ambulance needs.....Think about it, why do doctors office's have "toys, books and etc" to keep the focus off and the children as less anxious as

possible. This box allows us to take it into the field more, providing us with more tools to make our job easier. This box is needed and it is needed now.

I would like to personally thank Lisa for bringing this to us, our department and the people we serve. It's not just another tool as I mentioned, its a legit life saver!!

Thank you again and best wishes,

Katie Webster

Captain Putnam EMS

860-230-3373