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**NORTHEAST EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL**

**Monday, January 24, 2022**

**5:30-7:00 p.m.**

**ZOOM Meeting**

**In Attendance:** Myra Ambrogi, Sandra Assanowicz, Lori Bergstrom, Patty Buell, Patty Bryant, Rena Cadro, Sarah Cary, Kristine Cicchetti, Paula Graef, Abby Hale (YMCA), MaryEllen Jones, Diane Gozemba, Bill Kolodzeij (Canterbury Intern), Tammy Miner, Shalyn Moran (NFN), Heather Nickerson, Laurence Prentiss, Erin Rhault, Emily Ross, Christine Rosati Randall, Melinda Smith, Dan Sullivan, Samia (Parent Brooklyn), Melanie *Smith-*Cervera, Barbara Tetreault, Amy Vallandingham, Mark Weaver,

Parent Ambassadors: Rene Toper, Brian Snyder, Kelley Robbins
Guest Speakers: Judith Gaudet, Casey Squier - Generatoins

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Guest Speaker: Generations Family Healthcare
3. School Readiness Updates
4. NECC Updates- Regional Director
5. Regional Programing / Community Updates

**Guest Speaker:**

Welcome guest speakers.  Judith Gaudet and Casey Squier, will be presenting on Husky and Access Healthcare at Generations as well as other wrap around services for families in the area. Generations is proud about these shared services and look forward to working with NECC. Will attach all the flyers and handouts.

Generations Family Health Center, Inc. (Generations) is a private, not-for-profit, regional Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that has been serving eastern Connecticut since 1984. Generations provides a full continuum of primary healthcare, oral healthcare, behavioral healthcare, support services and health education for people of all ages.

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Generations offers systems of care at Generations to provide care coordination, outreach and support services across many areas. These ensure that individuals and families seeking healthcare have an advocate to assist with navigating the system and obtaining care by providing links to resources at Generations in the community.

Generations can help families explore options for health insurance through husky and Access healthcare and help with sign up. The open enrollment just ended for ECA.  You can still apply for insurance.  This can be done over the phone.  This can be signed electronically.

Q:  Income guidelines?

A: New guidelines are coming out in march

Q: After family completes application, how long before they know if they qualify?

A:  Single person, very quickly.  20 minutes to an hour.  If approved for Husky they would have the answer by the end of the meeting

Generations can help families who have a child or youth with special health care needs (see flyer)

Do not need to be a patient for these services.  Other pediatricians can send a referral for special needs families.

**School Readiness Updates:**

Melanie: second round of monitoring visits have started.  Each program has a minimum of 3 visits. Request for funding proposal (RFP) should be out in February. Most districts are experiencing staff shortages due to COVID.

**Program Updates:**

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Brooklyn: Mark Weaver:  94 students.  24/24 slots are filled.  All of the classes are open, many staff and students have been out since winter break.  Starting to ease up.  NAEYC visit was last week.  Staff have worked very hard and we believe it went very well.  New registration for 22-23 school year and screening begins on March 4th.

Canterbury: Sara Carey, we are full this year, all slots are filled.  Sections are closed at different times due to mask concerns.  They have closed 3-4 times this year.  Staff are responding to the needs including social opportunities.  Forming classroom communities has taken longer and they are moving along with the same types of changes.  Amy: there are a couple of children who do not tolerate masks, and had to shut down.  There are classes of 25 and 26.  Staff were hit and now the children are getting hit.  Children are having a great time.

Killingly: Emily Ross, no update.  All of the spaces are filled and they are waiting on the NAEYC visit.

Plainfield:  Barbara, we are fully enrolled.  Winter break: no staff out and have not had to close the class.  Site visit is tomorrow.  Rena:  BOE has not fared as well.  Classrooms have had to close.  Reorganizing classrooms for students and teachers who have been out.  Accredited on a different schedule and doing well.

Putnam:  We have ⅘ classrooms closed this week.  We have less students in right now.  Staff and students are out every five days.  We have 87 enrolled.  Getting a lot of students today putting into slots.  CPR classes scheduled for March 5th.  Saturday class in person.  Training is open to providers and programs:  public or daycare centers or home daycare, some agencies.  Training is full at this time.  Would be more than willing to offer this again if there is a need!

Sterling:  Heather, we are doning well with COVID.  Only had to close down one of the sessions for a couple of days.  Absences are limited.  Enrollment is done.  We have 23 in AM and PM combined  .

Thompson:  Larry:  47 students.  19/20 SR spaces are filled.  Mrs. Drobiack will be out on medical for 6 weeks and they have a qualified sub to fill the slot.  Staff are healthy, no closures.  Daycare closures over the last few years.  Country Garden is now closing and this is impacting parents.  PK staff completed all the other required courses.  Para taking courses.  Chromebooks assigned to all students in the off chance they go remote.  Virtual concert.  Online registration is being set up.  Everything is going well.

OEC has extended their 25% supplemental cost if they are not fully enrolled.  OEC has extended this through June 2022.

Chris asks if we could give a quick over of what “School Readiness” means as we have new members with us tonight.   *School Readiness:  offered by OEC (Office of Early Childhood) is a grant that offers part time, school and full day preschool spaces to families.  There are many requirements’ programs must meet to receive this funding, such as monitoring.  School Readiness programs are required to be accredited NAEYC, which sets a high standard for preschool.  It is very time consuming to get ready for this process.  It takes a lot of time to prepare.  Funding allows for free or reduced costs for Preschool, as it is not universally paid for in all towns. The NECC is the school readiness council that helps to make decisions about the programs and governs the programs to make sure they are compliant.*

A great overview of the School Readiness Grant Program:

<https://www.ctoec.org/school-readiness-preschool-grant-program/#basics>

**Regional Director& Staff updates:**

Parent Leadership Grant Award: We are moving this training virtually, this is the first time.  Flyer is out there.  Taking applications through Feb. 7th.  10-Week training starts on March 4th for 10 weeks. Working on some of the dynamics to offer this virtually. Will update members at next meeting

Mental Health Task Force: meets tomorrow!  Guest speaker is from the Sparkler app about what that app is and how it can benefit families.  There is always a time for people to network and share!

Future meetings would be March 22nd, May 24th - a total of 4 meetings this year. If you want to be included in the meeting reminders to attend, please email me.

LECC Grant: Waiting from word on continuation of future funding for children’s collective.  A statewide organization that brings programs together.  They recently asked that we create an advocacy video.  They always reach out to us because we are a collaborative and do great work.  We are always lending our voice and represent NE CT.

Early Learning Kits: Kits:  have handed out all the 133 kits.  Now we are assembling 40 more kits.  There are 23 kits remaining.  153 already dropped off.   Christine makes personal connections with these families and is able to connect with disconnected families.  From this, they developed social emotional kits!  This is another resource to give to families.  It changes the relationship with these families.  We are waiting on the next grant cycle.  Task force is meeting tomorrow morning to gain input from task members on where to start with these families.  \*\*\*Look for the task force survey.  Looking for more engagement from local businesses.

**Community Programs Sharing:**

1. Erin- TEEG:  does the hand in hand program.  Meeting with the parent and child in the home.  Parent coaching. We have room for more families.  Also runs the w, f 9:30-11:00 drop in “play”. Monthly flyers. Visit TEEG website or Facebook page for more information.
2. Renee: Current ambassador:  sharing information with each other.  Kelly Robbins is the social media queen” who gets the information out there and distribute info to where it needs to be sent.  Able to make contact with families.  There is a lot about mental health: lack of providers and trying to connect them to resources.  The parent ambassador side:  Connect with resources such as fuel, food, coats and hat drives.  People are directed to community store, 2nd and 4th Saturday 10-1.
3. Erin: TEEG has a coat rack outside of the building and they range from children to adults.  There were some winter boots are available.  Can contact Therese at TEEG. \*Still collecting:  yes.  They can still donate at TEEG 9-4 M-F
4. Sandra Assanowicz: Nurturing Families Network.  Parent support coming in the spring via zoom.  Home visiting for Putnam
5. 2/15 EASTCONN: Anti-bias film being show with a discussion
6. Kelly:  just learned there is a refugee family coming to Putnam.  Looking for donations and volunteers.
	1. Rena:  Meeting is this evening regarding the Putnam refugee.  Every Monday at 7:30.
	2. Sue Stern susandstern@gmail.com Putnam Area Refugee Resettlement

Guest Speakers Ideas: If anyone has idea on who you want for a guest speaker, please let me know.

* **If anyone has flyers or events to share, please forward to Kris.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

**UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS:**

**(Zoom until further notice)**

Monday, March 14th

Monday, May 2nd