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**NORTHEAST EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL**

**Monday, September 18, 2023**

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

**ZOOM Meeting**

**In Attendance:** Patty Buell, Christine Rosati Randall, Melissa Kennedy, Paula Graef, Ellen Jones, Kelly Robbins, Samantha Soper, Lisa Andrews, Emily Ross, Austin Tanner, Allison Whitson, Shannon Haney, Courtney Langlois, Patty Bryant, Kayla Burgess, Melinda Smith, Sally Sherman, Stephanie Hynes, Melanie Smith Cerva, Kerri Medvin, Ali Lacey, Veronica, Selena Musumeci, Kim Mansfield, Diane Gozemba, Mark Weaver, Laurence Prentiss,

Guest Speakers: Family Resource Centers

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Guest Speakers
3. Spotlighted Community – Brooklyn
4. NECC Updates- Regional Director
5. Regional Programming / Community Updates
6. School Readiness Meeting

**See the attached presentation slide deck.**

**Spotlighted Community – Brooklyn**

Austin Tanner, First Selectman in Brooklyn, presents on Brooklyn's School Readiness program. Brooklyn has a tuition-free preschool and provides transportation. Brooklyn communities value early childhood and programs that support safe programs for both social and intellectual environments to prepare kids for school—strong commitment from parents, BOE, and community members in our meetings. We are proud of our work to build relationships with families and communities as they transition into school. Brooklyn Cares Community Center's grand opening is this weekend; there will be a food pantry, clothing closet, and after-school programs.

**Guest Speaker**

Putnam FRC: Patty Bryant overviews Family Resource centers and the 7 Core components. She reviewed programs the Putnam FRC and Preschool program are offering. Fully enrolled with 107 kids with different programs. We are getting ready for NAEYC accreditation. Busy summer with lots of field trips. Shannon Haney, parent educator, reviewed the home visiting program and the upcoming groups and flyers that are coming up for families. In the past year, we offered 200 personal home visits for families, 210 playgroups and family connections, ten caregiver trainings, and 28 new kids for screenings through ASQs. What's coming up – we are offering an Infant/Toddler program on Tuesdays. Caregiver workshops coming up – safe screen time. Shannon will be speaking at the parents-as-teacher conference coming up.

Killingly FRC: Sally Sherman presents each community core component on Killingly, which may look slightly different. Killingly just hired a new parent educator – Samantha Soper. The FRCs work together – Samantha has been observing Putnam's playgrounds to get ideas. More outreach and more visibility is a goal of Killingly this year. Emily Ross does a needs assessment for Killingly and presents the work done around the results from the district assessment (341 returned, 106 needed something). Expecting parents, residing with family, employment, and adult education. The top 3 were food/pantry, heating, and clothing assistance. Killingly distributed 165 backpacks (71 families).

Plainfield FRC: Kerry Medvin presents; she discussed that the weekly family program is starting this week. Music, play and roll, and reading programs. CARS – Children arriving ready for school program, pre-preschool offered ten children to come to do a "mini" preschool program. We do family connections and special events throughout the year, give away free books, and do a craft. Discovery Bus visits different locations throughout the summer for kids to get books and have other events at the site. Lions Club/Pancake breakfast event. Community connections with diaper bank, satellite for DyaKimball wic program, and EASTCONN adult ed program. They were now hosting a Circle of Security class and the SEL Workshop with NECC.

**Staff Updates from Kris & Chris:**

SEL Project/Workshops: The Needs survey we conducted last year showed that SEL needs were #1, the MHTF. We had our pilot program in Thompson – well received, had 12 families attend. We are hosting our next one on October 17, 2023, in Plainfield; we coordinated with the Sparkler Learning Team to integrate a Sparkler mobile app tutorial during the workshop where Merissa Wright will present. This tutorial will walk participants through the sign-up process, highlighting play activities supporting social-emotional learning and the ASQ-SE. Currently, we have 17 parents signed up and 16 kids in Childcare. Our goal is to plan another one in January.

Sparkler CT Engagement Support Grant – We received a $25,000 grant to expand our outreach to promote the Sparkler mobile app for developmental screenings. We have started outreach with Sparkler during community/school events. We attended the following events in September: Killingly Celebrate Day, Sterling Community Day, Brooklyn Cares Community Center Open House, Goodyear Open House, Moosup Open House, Putnam Open House, Canterbury Open House, and Sterling Community Open House.

We have met with Chase on some minor edits to the regional guide, including updating the Sparkler information to make it more transparent to families how to sign up and the purpose of the mobile app. We are looking to get more printed soon to use with outreach to medical groups. We are attending the all-day Sparkler Early Learning convening at the CT Science Museum in Hartford. It's a requirement for all the grantees. The DayKimball Medical group has contacted us to get regional guides for patients.

Gathering Family Input on Childcare Funding: We received a $5,000 grant to conduct a need survey around Childcare to inform recommendations to the Blue Ribbon Panel on Childcare. BR was charged with creating a strategic plan around childcare needs. We wanted to make sure that the needs in NE CT were captured. We had 80 families complete the survey. We attended two convenings to discuss recommendations to the Blue Ribbon Panel.

Annual report – we created an annual report for the NECC to highlight our work over the last two years. It can be found on our homepage, [www.neccouncil.org](http://www.neccouncil.org). We hope to update yearly.

Parent Leadership Training: We received a grant last winter, had a 10 week UCONN People Empowering People training, and graduated seven families. We applied for another grant to hold another round next Spring.

Parent Ambassador Highlights: Kelly reviews the PA's roles and what they have participated in. They were vital parts of the Regional guide committee. Working on the Sparkler outreach during outreach events, the panel on childcare survey – doing 1:1 interviews with families. We participated in the Community Café training.

**Community Programs Sharing:**

Headstart EASTCONN: Kim Mansfield presents: We have an adult and family Literacy event at Killingly Public Library this Thursday. The event starts at 5:15 p.m. The program is open on home-based HEASTSTRT services prenatal through age 3 in NE CT – a significant component to add to current programs.

UCFS: Ali Lacey – ECCP Program – shared that we have current openings in all services. I just hired a second consultant. Referrals can come directly to Ali, who works with children 0-5 in out-of-home placement (Childcare, preschool, daycare, headstart, etc.) alacey@ucfs.org

DayKimball NFN – Home Visiting Program – Sandra A: Support Squad – walk and stroll for families. Moving around the region (Putnam trail, Owen Bell, etc). John is doing Circle of Security, Playgroups doing bi-lingual, and other playgroups.

EASTCONN Adult Ed: Excited about the literacy event on Thursday. Fall classes have kicked off with adult education, EL learning, high school completion options, and citizenship—in-person options, online platforms, mentoring, and coaching.

**School Readiness:**

Melanie Smith-Cerva, Emily Ross, Christine Rostai-Randall, and Ellen Jones are introduced as Liaisons. Melanie gives an overview of School readiness programs. View the presentation to see a link to an overview of the state. Meeting specifies items at each meeting as the order of business.

Co-Chair Nomination: Today, we have a conversation about a new co-chair. Our two co-chairs are Melinda and Patty. Patty is stepping down. Melinda nominated Steve Rioux, and a request for other nominations was emailed. We did not receive any other nominations come in. Motion made by Sally to elect Steve Rioux as the new co-chair; Paty Buell seconded the motion. There is no discussion, all voting members in favor, no opposed – the motion passes effective immediately.

Current Slots – Melanie reviewed the spreadsheet in Google Drive for all to access; each program listed has completed its tab to check the number of spaces, how many they have filled, or if there is a waiting list.

Spotlighted Community – Brooklyn School Readiness:

Paula Grael and Mark Weaver are present; we have a very busy group of students in the EC program, and the staff provides various learning activities. Handon, sensory experiences, and the gross motor room for students multiple times a day. We are working on fine and gross motor skills, we have an apple theme, and the class will be baking pies.

Report out on quality components – the programs need to meet 11 QE components. Our group has a subcommittee that meets monthly. We are highlighting parent involvement this month. Courtney presents the ways that districts welcome families back to school. Brooklyn had a Kindercamp open house. Canterbury had an open house and bus ride, ice cream socials. Killingly did 33 home visits over the summer, a preschool open house, and will host a family play day in October. Plainfield PTO back to school chalk the walk, open house, planning family even in October. Putnam had an open house, October workshops, Sterling open house, and Sterling family day. Tomposn popsicles in the playground and prek & k orientation and open house.

Fiscal Reports – We will have a report in November & March. Brooklyn has a change in funding, and it has to be approved by the Council. Brooklyn has $3,750 from the staff benefits line to the staff salary line. Motion to approve the Brooklyn budget revision by Sally, Seconded by Melinda, no discussion, all voting members in favor – Patty abstains.

Liaison Updates: Note: New general policies and statutes are out. The liaisons will review our NECC policies, see if changes need to be aligned, and bring them to Leadership to check and then to a council vote. That will happen at an upcoming meeting.

Mentoring Visits will begin soon, updates will be uploaded into Google folders, and liaisons will be shared at future meetings.

Family Input Question: This question was sent out beforehand; parents can provide feedback via email, change, or council meeting. This month's question: Transition to school, how do parents feel supported by communities, and what events were helpful?

Discussion: No email feedback came in; at the meeting, the parent discussed that the part-time option was a great way to transition. Stephanie discusses an excellent transition for her child in Brooklyn. Chris suggested that we create a survey to send to all families to collect more data to share with programs. Staff will work on putting this together.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.