



Attendees

Faiza Serang, Lenore Friedly, Krystal Robinson, Olanda Lewis, John Peirce, Katie Herron, Margaret Smith; *On the phone*: Amy Heaton, Emily Rupchock

Key Topics Discussed

A. Updates

1. ELAC Updates
 - a. Updates from the November ELAC meeting:
 - i. Appointments have been made by the Governor to fill vacant ELAC positions, including that of Chair. Appointees should be announced publicly soon.
 - ii. Multiple items from the meeting agenda were tabled until the next ELAC meeting when the new appointees will be present.
 1. Reviewing the Annual Report was tabled, so it will not be released this month.
 - iii. The Early Brain Development Presentation, created by the Child Development and Well-Being workgroup, has been shown in a couple communities (DeKalb and Elkhart Counties, Fort Wayne) and has received positive feedback.

B. 2018 Workgroup Priorities

1. Family-Friendly Blogs
 - a. Amy connected the workgroup co-chairs with Kirsten Shine at Early Learning Indiana (ELI), who will be working with the workgroup during the review and editing process.
 - b. The workgroup came to consensus that the blogs will first go through ELI's internal editing process and will then be returned to the workgroup with tracked changes. The original authors, or other workgroup members, will then make any appropriate edits.
2. Family Voices: Project with the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL)
 - a. Reviewed data and information shared by Carrie Gray
 - i. What is most relevant and interesting? What new information do we have?
 1. Funding is released on a rolling basis (as it becomes available).
 2. The information contained in the cover letter and initial application is overwhelming. Many other systems have a case worker that fills out this type of paperwork, rather than the consumer doing it themselves. This process is likely difficult for families to navigate.



3. From the data shared, the workgroup could further look at the counties with larger successful enrollment rates (Allen, LaPorte, St. Joseph and Vanderburg). What are they doing differently? A survey may be a good way to investigate this further.
- ii. What questions do we have? The workgroup brainstormed a list of follow-up questions to pose to Carrie. These questions sought further clarification in the following areas:
 - a. Procedures concerning the waitlist and funding disbursement.
 - b. Enrollment data (general and county level).
 - c. Enrollment procedures.
 - d. The process for families to find an appropriate provider.
 - e. Communication policies and procedures.
 - f. Support services (for families, i.e. language translation/interpretation services).
 - g. Staff training.
 - h. Possibilities for the workgroup's future work on this project (surveys, focus groups, recommending new strategies).
- iii. The workgroup brainstormed the following ideas for how to make the cover letters more family friendly.
 1. Address the recipient by name, rather than saying "Dear CCDF applicant".
 2. Decrease the phrases and sentences that are capitalized. Most of the letters had multiple capitalized sentences. This can make the reader feel like they are being yelled at.
 3. Make the letters more welcoming and exciting. (i.e. "Congratulations! You've been approved to receive funding for child care.").
 4. Explain more clearly what it means for providers to be eligible for CCDF reimbursement.
 5. Include a number for families to call, such as their local CCR&R, to discuss vacancies and provider options.
 6. List important information (resources, CCR&R contact information, etc.) early on, rather than at the end. The letters should prioritize this crucial and important information.
 7. Use bullet points when possible.
 8. Follow Federal Plain Language guidelines.
 9. Consider reading level and use language the average reader will understand.
 10. Remove "failure"-related language and focus. The letters currently set a very strict and authoritative tone to the enrollment process.



11. Provide an overview for parents describing what to expect during their appointment (i.e. length of appointment, if can they bring their child, etc.).
 - a. This could be a follow up to the initial letter, rather than a part of the letter/packet itself.
 12. Make the letters more supportive and welcoming. The current letters may be intimidating for families. For example, many of the intake agencies provide support, guidance and assistance in identifying and submitting eligibility documents, but that is not mentioned in their letter. Instead, families are told that if they don't show up with the required materials, they will not be seen.
 13. Explain plainly what a CCDF voucher is for families who may not be familiar with this terminology.
 14. Consider the packaging of the packet (size and design of envelopes, etc.).
 15. Require more consistency across the intake agencies' letters so families across the state receive the same message. The section of the letters that discusses appointment details can be tailored by agency.
- b. Next steps
- i. John will email Carrie with the workgroup's questions.
 - ii. TCG will start to draft recommendations for the cover letters to be shared with OECOSL.
 - iii. The workgroup's next step will be to go through the application forms to determine further recommendations and/or action.
 - iv. Ideas for future steps:
 1. Electronic surveys.
 2. Interviews and or focus groups through intake agencies.

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2. TCG will start to draft recommendations for the intake agencies' cover letters.

C. Next Meeting

January 2019, **Date TBD**