



Present:

Tonia Carriger, Betsy Delgado, Mary Gardner, Dr. Nancy Holsapple, Nicole Norvell, Kerri Wortinger

1. Call to Order

- Betsy called the meeting to order at 1:32pm.

2. Approve August Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve: Nancy moved, Nicole seconded, all ayes

3. Approve ELAC Annual Report – COVID Impact

Kim Hodge, Data Workgroup Chair

- The report is a little different this year. Firstly, “annual report” is not in the report title.
 - Looking at how COVID-19 has impacted Indiana’s child care system
- There is some different data this year too. We had to think about how to approach it and make up for the pieces that are missing that people are accustomed to seeing in an ELAC annual report.
- The draft report was sent to the Committee a few years ago. Today we are hoping to have a great discussion and get the report approved.
- One of our key audiences is our advocates. Think about advocacy as the lens as you’re reviewing this report.
- Findings
 - Child care is an essential service. Hoosiers still needed child care during this time.
 - About 50% of our programs remained open through the initial COVID-19 shutdown, and 38% temporarily closed but have since reopened since June 30th.
 - Impact on the Child Care Supply: We compared the number of programs open in April 2019 versus the number open on June 30, 2020. Four counties had no programs open during the COVID-19 shutdown.
 - Impact on the Supply of High-Quality Programs: Just over half of high-quality programs closed during the COVID-19 shutdown.
 - Temporary Funding Support: Many partners stood up funding programs that were able to provide programs support during the COVID-19 shutdown.
- Recommendations
 - COVID-19 exposed some gaps in the system, but Indiana is also well positioned to face some of these challenges that are being seen.
 - Assist in program stabilization after temporary funding streams expire



- Enhance business management supports to early care and education programs
- Provide tax credits to employers who support child care
- Strengthen early care and education data reporting and sharing
- Dashboard
 - There are some changes to this dashboard from previous years since it matches the structure of the report.
 - There are a few things that are normally included that are missing from the 2021 report, so they're not included in the dashboard.
 - Visitors can still filter by county (when available) to drill down. You can also filter or drill down into service delivery areas (SDAs).
 - The tabs align with the sections of the report for consistency. It will allow visitors to drill down to see their county or community.
 - New this year is the data on COVID-19 support.

Comment from Betsy: When we set you guys on this task, we had just closed down the state. Now we're continuing to focus on serving essential works and meeting the needs of children and families. I also want to express my appreciation for the immediacy that partners went to work to help providers. And finally, I appreciate the work of the workgroup being able to dive into this new topic.

- In southern Indiana, I don't think we could have continued to serve families if not for these assistance programs.

Comment from Nicole: I want to echo the appreciation to you Kim and the Data Workgroup knowing that the data wasn't easy.

Question from Nicole: Question on the accessibility tab of the dashboard – We are pulling that map from data as of June 30. I don't want someone in the community to go there and think that's the number of open or closed programs today. As of this morning, we only have 52 temporarily closed. We could give updated data, but the question is what do we want folks to do with that. What is the message we want to give to the community?

Response from Tonia: During this time period when you go to a dashboard, there is an assumption that the data is current. Is there some way to make it not look new and up to date or have a disclaimer to help communicate that it's not current?

Response from Kim: One of the use cases is to be able to see data at the county level. Now after these comments, I do agree Tonia that people assume dashboards are real time. So we could consider including disclaimers or consider removing it, especially if it's going to do more damage than help.

Response from Amanda: We could potentially change it to a static county profile that may be clearer that it's a period of time.



Response from Nicole: We know that capacity at the end of June is different from the capacity now and will probably be different from 6 months from now. I think it's a great story if we use this as a way to show resiliency in the height of COVID-19. But I think ultimately, we need to consider what is it that the community is looking to learn from this?

Response from Kim: Another conversation with the Committee is what do we do to follow up from this? That is something we could explore as well on how to continue telling the story as it continues to unfold.

Question from general public: It would be helpful to have a static county profile through June 30th and then interactive starting from when K-12 reopened statewide. Is that possible?

Response from Nicole: We do have that data, but the challenge is that it's also a moving target. There will be inconsistencies such as a program saying they have permanently closed then chose to reopen. We might consider a different date than when K-12 resumed such as August 1st, but we can look at what is a good point in time to estimate when all schools had moved forward to hybrid or in-person programming.

Response from Kim: It sounds like you're willing to provide us ongoing data. I'd like to take it back to the TCG team to discuss. We have a lot of opportunities here.

Response from Nicole: Yes, we would be willing to do that. It's not pretty, but we have it.

Response from Betsy: Sounds like individuals are interested in having that June 30 perspective and then showing how the sector has been changing since. It sounds like there is interest in having continually updated data. It also sounds like if we're going to keep the June 30, we want more language to stress the use of the data.

Response from Kim: I'd like to go back to TCG to determine a counterproposal to bring forth on how to make these changes.

Comment from Tonia: When I looked at the recommendations, they felt like an annual report to me. And I thought it might be a little bit different – this is what we've learned. For example, the recommendation on tax credits doesn't seem really specific to this time period, reflective of the needs communicated in the report. We learned in the report that employers understand better now the importance of child care. The teams on this call pulled data and brought together quick supports. I feel like the recommendations reflected the old concept behind the annual report. I guess I was looking for a more uplifting, positive spin on things.

Response from Kim: I think we could reframe some of those recommendations and hit on that. That is helpful.

Response from Betsy: I think we want to be careful. This is a factual report. I think there's a place in the executive summary to reflect some of that, but I don't think we should abandon the things we've been working on. These are the lessons that we learned and can further inform the things we've been working on. Our job is to reflect back and put into the hands of folks, the facts we've gathered. I think both can be true though.



Response from Nicole: I don't disagree that it's a factual report, but there are ways to frame data. For example, the chart on funding, it rarely occurs that federal, state, local, and philanthropic money comes together so quickly. I think a recommendation is how could we make that happen more because we figured it out in this case. I worry that instead of saying what took place, how do we build upon that. I don't see the recommendations building upon the great work we've done in the last 7 months and the resiliency of the programs during this time. We can see from the data that this group of people can fight through a lot of things.

Question from Nicole: Are we talking about tax credits or tax incentives? I don't think ELAC has studied this much in the past. So I'm not sure if this group knows enough to make that recommendation yet.

Response from Kim: I think that's good reflections. I think where it's coming from is to build on the awareness employers have now.

Response from Nicole: I think the states that have done that have had great success, but I think it's something that took a lot of planning. I'm okay with ELAC taking on that work, but I'm not sure we've done enough yet.

Comment from Betsy: We have four recommendations. Let's go through each of them. We've spoken about the tax credits. What about the first recommendation on stabilization of funding?

Comment from general public: I think the success we experienced was the flexibility through the agencies. I don't think the report captures that. I think these are things we should evaluate whether we keep, whether it's the attendance, support, etc. I think we should capture that flexibility under the first recommendation. As opposed to increased funding, look at those items that have sustained the system.

Response from Nicole: Going into a legislative session where money is going to be tight, including those flexibilities could be good.

Response from Betsy: We want to give concrete recommendations but also reflect on lessons learned. Dianna talks about blending of funding streams that have allowed child cares to exist and continue to the place we are right now.

Question from Betsy: The recommendation on business and financial management had come into our lives in a way it never has before. I think this definitely reflects lessons learned. How do we ensure that the financial expertise or advice is available to all programs? Any more thoughts on recommendation number two?

Response from Tonia: Maybe the business supports haven't been enough available, but they are available. I think programs realized they should have been seeking the supports that we've made available. I think they need to be bolstered, but I think it was a moment of heightened awareness.



Response from Nicole: The other thing around that is there needs to be more utilization, but I think we need to understand more fully what programs need and how to support it more fully. I think there could be some sound direction on how to partner with entities that have that.

Response from general public: There's a lot of programs that didn't realize they needed to do these things because they didn't have time to think about them. I think we need to have some training materials that deal with the financial side of running a business. I think we could take responsibility to provide some training available on their time to learn these things and be prepared in the future.

Question from Betsy: Is part of the Paths to QUALITY certification based on financial management or status such as cash on hand?

Response from general public (from INAEYC): In particular to Level 4 and national accreditation, each national group includes that as a factor, but it doesn't necessarily translate into every Level 4 program has a strong business plan.

Response from general public: We're talking about more training and technical assistance for programs. At the time they were struggling with getting PPE and dealing with the sanitation requirements and such, they didn't have the time for additional training or assistance. It supports the idea of promoting a shared services model of taking those management responsibilities away so they can focus on caring for children. Is there a way to incentivize such adoption?

Response from Nicole: I think that is totally responsible from my perspective to put in that recommendation.

Question from Betsy: Let's talk about the tax credit recommendation. Kim, why did your team decide to include this?

Response from Kim: I think it was as simple as this has been done elsewhere, and that there could be traction with employers as they have become more aware.

Response from Betsy: One thing that struck me is maybe a reframing, we were talking about this before COVID-19. We had that huge conference a year ago with many employers. Maybe reframe as a path to benefit capacity in early learning, and the recommendation is a deep dive into this so we can come up with a recommendation for this. I wonder if it's more to Tonia's point, that we were going down this path of engaging the workforce and now how do we connect with employers to come up with a recommendation to serve families.

Response from general public: I think we should consider advocating for child care to be considered a Next Level Job. Also, COVID-19 has highlighted that the child care workforce is an essential workforce. Maybe instead of tax credits for employers, we further emphasize that child care is essential for the economy to function.

Response from Betsy: I understand why the team put it in here because this is engaging to employers.



Response from Nicole: There have been states that have done tax credits or tax incentives to encourage workers to stay in the field. I think the grants from INAEYC showed just how important this was. I think there's a way to tie back into the report that the need is there (to improve the child care workforce), and the recommendation could be to further explore what is the best approach for Indiana.

Response from general public: We struggle regularly with filling the open child care positions.

Response from Betsy: My understanding of Next Level Jobs is that the definition has been set for some time. Perhaps we phrase it as is there room for child care to be considered in there? It would take a change in the definition of next level jobs.

Question from Betsy: The last recommendation is around data, strengthening data reporting and sharing. Yes, it's in every report. There's a reason for that. How do we want to express it in this report?

Response from Nicole: We were able to accomplish a few things during COVID-19 that we weren't able to accomplish before. If the data workgroup could come up with one data point that would have made us way better off during COVID-19, then let's work on that. I think we were able to stand up some things, work across teams, and help families across the state.

Response from Kim: I think selecting one is a great idea rather than keeping our lofty recommendation.

Response from general public: COVID-19 showed us that we need real time open seat data.

Response from general public: There's also the system building part of data. The first thing that other states did was set up a governance committee to discuss what an early childhood integrated data source would look like and start to map that. In the hopes that one day we'll have the funds to create that.

Comment from Betsy: A few thoughts that I had, and I had a friend look at this for me as well. One thing that she would recommend, while reflecting the facts and data in an objective way, I wonder if there's a way to reflect a narrative that this is a different time. I think it could be included in the executive summary and in the section of child care being an essential service. As I've heard that constructive criticism, do we think that would help us to reflect that we are proud of the work that we've done but reflect on the work we need to do and work we were doing before COVID-19?

Response from Kim: Yes, I think this conversation has helped some reframing in the report.

Question from Betsy: Can we approve this through email?

Response from Amanda: I believe we have done that in the past. We would vote to approve, pending any changes that need to be made.

Response from Betsy: How do you feel about this (Kim)?



Response from Kim: I think one thing we may need is some revision and review to tell the story of the flexibility of agencies, and that may require additional insights. I think we can come back with a timeline on how to address these comments.

Comment from Tonia: I just want to echo again to Kim, data workgroup, and TCG Team that you asked for a lot of data and feedback including positive stories which came few and far between. I appreciate your work on this.

4. Status of Child Care Centers Open and Closed

Nicole Norvell, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL)

- As of today, we're only showing 52 programs temporarily closed.
- We did put a survey out to programs to learn where they are at this point in time. The deadline to that survey has been extended to next Friday. As of today, I think we have about 690 responses and are hoping to get at least 1,000. I think this will help inform the next six months, especially with supply issues.
- Betsy: I wanted it on the agenda since it's front of mind. Knowing what seats are open, what child cares are open, where everyone is, are questions that people are asking.

5. Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Update

Nicole Norvell, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL)

- We will move forward with trying to administer the kindergarten readiness assessment this year.
- The training for teachers to administer the assessment will be completely online. Whether we will have enough teachers participating to have an appropriate sample size is unknown at this time, but we do not expect another executive order that would suspend assessments again. I would recommend the group (meeting attendees) to look at the results with a grain of salt given the state of education of children being interrupted. We should look at this more as an opportunity for us and teachers to get used to the assessment. There will not be any student level data with this assessment.
- The assessment is very short. It only covers a couple of domains so it doesn't require a lot of training for teachers who will be administering it. We will have more discussions about trainings and things after the first of the year.

6. Help Me Grow Update

Shannon Garrity, Indiana State Department of Health

- Help Me Grow National provided a one pager which was shared, a version for providers and a version for families.



- We have pivoted a lot at the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH). When COVID-19 hit, we had some leadership changes. Now we are forming a new section within the Maternal and Child Health Division called the Community Engagement and Systems Building Division which will house “My Healthy Baby” (formerly OB Navigation). Mom’s Helpline and Help Me Grow will also be in this new division. We will be able to better serve families with a more robust, coordinated data system.
- Help Me Grow is expanding. We got approval to expand in December to Allen County as well as Ripley, Decatur, Jennings, and Jefferson counties. Some of those counties participated in Project Launch and Safety Pin, and we wanted to make sure we had partnerships in rural counties to assist with this expansion.
 - My Healthy Baby (OB Navigator) has been in Allen County for a year, so we already have a presence there. We also have a Help Me Grow care coordinator who lives in Allen County.
- The 2021 Help Me Grow National Forum will be virtual, but Indiana is still the host. It will probably be in September 2021.
- We will continue to expand Help Me Grow through our Title V funds. The Help Me Grow national team has been great at providing support to its affiliates. They’ve been providing support on how to help families knowing that the families are calling for help with basic needs due to COVID-19 (such as housing, rental assistance, utilities support, diapers, etc.). We continue to use our resources and database to help those families get the services that they need.
- Indiana 2-1-1 has gone under the umbrella of FSSA. We are still very much partnered with 2-1-1.
- Pre-COVID we were getting a lot of referrals from WIC offices. Currently not all of the WIC offices are open. So we’re trying to adapt, modify, and work with partners as they deal with changes.
- We saw a dip in numbers related to Help Me Grow. Before March we were getting 70-80 clients a month and about 40 of those 70, we’d make contact and do developmental screenings. We are working on expanding our use and modifying the access to the screenings, so we can continue to serve families.

Question from Nancy: Are you starting to see families now go back to get their little ones inoculations?

Response from Shannon: Anecdotally, I’m hearing it’s still a struggle. We’re also still encouraging pregnant women to go in and get a checkup. We are trying to stress to families that going in for healthcare is still very important, and it’s still a struggle. We’re also getting a lot of questions about after care (after school care) since many are struggling to find that as well.



Response from Nicole: I've been in some meetings with partners that are working on sending out messages to encourage families to visit their providers. We're also working with our text messaging platform to encourage families to keep up with their vaccinations. The Office of Medicare is working with children and families to encourage them to go back and get all of those now.

Response from Nancy: I know since school has opened, we've seen a decline in our developmental preschool enrollment as parents are still cautious about sending their children back. And every day we're hearing this district is going virtual for the next two weeks – and that's difficult for families with young children to quickly get child care. The report has brought many of these COVID issues to the top, and these are the very same things I'm hearing from my PK-12 families. Any information that we could get out, please let me know.

Response from Tonia: We've partnered with the Indiana chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics with a webinar series with providers. It has encouraged a partnership between pediatricians and providers.

Comment from Betsy: Shannon, is there a way to utilize this ELAC network to help you get any messages out? Let us know.

Response from Shannon: I definitely will, thank you. If we're not live in a county, we are not going to deny a family that calls in. We are still going to connect them to resources. We don't want to discourage anyone from utilizing us. When I get that official letter indicating we are officially ready to expand, I will ask this group to send it out to partners in the counties that we're expanding to.

Response from general public: Great to hear from you Shannon, and it's great to hear that you're looking to expand, especially during this time. I know you were on an aggressive timeline. How do you feel about the progress you've made?

Response from Shannon: I think before COVID-19 we felt pretty good about where we were. We still work with the national team on how to measure our progress, and we plan to get out some data reports soon. It helps to be part of that affiliate network to learn from others and know we're not alone if we get discouraged. I know we're doing the best we can for where we are right now.

Comment from Betsy: I think that's the quote of the year.

7. 2021 Meeting Schedule and Priorities

- Amanda and Betsy are going to meet offline to discuss some dates and ideas.
- 2021 Priorities: The recommendations in this report include some work for ELAC, a shared responsibility to address them. Once the recommendations are finalized, they can be considered when discussing 2021 priorities.



8. Public Comment

- A new resource for child care programs was shared in the virtual meeting chat – Indiana Early Learning Hub (<https://www.inearlylearninghub.com/>).
- Kerri: There have been some great stories that have happened during this pandemic. I have seen a provider in Grant County that has been able to open a second location since they stayed open during the shutdown. I've also seen providers work together to find what best works for families, and they're also working together to provide wrap around care. I think this shows the resilience and how strong early childhood providers are.

9. Betsy adjourned the meeting at 3:24pm.

10. Next Meeting: TBD