



**Early Care and Education Workforce Committee**

**September 2, 2021**

**10:30 am-12:00 pm**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://soesd.zoom.us/j/92650623888>

Meeting ID: 926 5062 3888

**Attendees:** Greg Thweatt, Lisa O'Connor, Renee Breznay, Devon Finley, Peter Buckley, Mary Wolf, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Ida Saito, Crystal Persi, Michelle Gallas

Hub staff: René Brandon, Teresa Slater, Vicki Risner

Agenda

**Welcome**

**Family Nurturing Center's highest and best purpose to serve of region: Lisa O'Connor**

René: I asked Lisa to join us today. We're talking about the needs of our families and our early learning providers. FNC is looking to see what the highest and best purpose they can be to serve our region. We want to do some exploratory thinking and have conversations together.

Lisa: We're trying to determine what is our biggest reach and how can we utilize what our specialty is to support what's happening right now in child care. Our relief nursery and Preschool Promise hiring requirements are so stringent that it's really difficult to grow our own teachers. We are looking to expand opportunities for training and one thought we had is what if we did child care to serve the broader community? If we treated it as if it's a workforce development program so that from our perspective, we would love the opportunity to teach incoming people become teacher qualified, so that they can meet their hours and training requirements. To get them the trauma training, the social emotional learning to get those solid foundation pieces down. Then they could take it to the next provider to expand our region's workforce. To get incoming people a good experience so that we're growing up a workforce of our own that we can deploy anywhere in the community and there'll be better serving our children. Especially with the hopes of universal preschool coming down the pipeline.

With 4000 slots coming down across the state there will be a lot of providers that are not used to serving families with the challenges that they have or kids that have these big behaviors. I'd really like to see if we can be of assistance in that regard. We are exploring how to provide some infant mental health consultation to figure out how we can provide family support services to other early learning providers who don't already have a structure or a mechanism for that which we already do. We could provide reflective supervision for other early learning providers

because that's the structure that most people do not have. It's actually very expensive and a hard one to put in place.

In our community we're all in a hiring crisis. We spent about \$10,000 in advertisements and we've had three applications. One accepted the job then declined because they didn't have childcare. FNC wants to know how we can be part of the solution. How can we help folks moving forward because child care is a huge piece of economic recovery and making sure that families' needs are being met and the kids are getting socialized?

Peter: We have to be proactive, share resources. We have the Early Learning Council money coming from the feds. This is a huge opportunity for us, plus the legislation that was passed, it's going to require suspensions and expulsions to not be used in preschools and child care in the near future. Important that we figure out how to get health care to more early learning folks.

Mary Wolf: I believe that supports are absolutely going to be needed, just a question of how you identify the ones that would be most effective. How to support them in opening more classrooms. Plus, children are coming in with more challenges than the providers are prepared to cope with. They are going to need support with that.

Renee Breznay: Just about every center director that I've talked with in this valley is having a difficult time finding staff. Plus, the behaviors that are coming in are making the staff very comfortable. The staff don't have the skill set or the amount of staff to appropriately get the care that the children need. There is a lot of concern about that.

Lisa: It would be ideal if we could be bringing in more bilingual, bicultural staff on board. We need it to be exciting enough that they want to get involved then retain them.

René: A tremendous amount of support is needed. The sooner we can pull the trigger on a good idea and see if it gains traction the better. We can figure out a way to gauge the feedback from the center directors. They might not be able to attend meetings, but we would definitely want their feedback in order to know what they need.

Peter: We're working on the ability to get health care, through the health exchange for even part time employees.

Crystal Persi: I'm the new regional manager for the office of child care here in Medford, out of Eugene. In Eugene I taught child development as part of a career technical program out of our high schools here in Eugene. We used a sustainability grant, signing bonuses, as well as other stuff.

Eileen: 2 high schools have early child care classes, both Grants Pass High School and North Medford High School.

Michelle: You should talk with the superintendent for Three Rivers School District. He's a big supporter of child care. He and I have talked about getting something like this going in his district.

#### **Activities in Support of Recruitment and Retention of ECE Workforce:**

- Quick recap of ELD Early Learning Collab – All who attended

- OHP Enrollment for providers – Peter
  - Insurance agents in our area who are trained to get providers and employees into this program. Dollars available to pay for employees to navigate this process or assist with their coverage costs.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/16SnjwD98caKsPafExwVkJq64M\\_7rZRVV/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16SnjwD98caKsPafExwVkJq64M_7rZRVV/edit)
- Explore idea of kick-off meeting with center directors in October to introduce WorkSource Rogue Valley supports for staff recruitment – René, Mary, Jim
  - Rene: Directors are so busy with staffing shortages that they haven't had time to meet as a group.

**Current status of child care programs:**

- Data on currently open child care programs and Increasing child care closings due to COVID. Mary shared a spreadsheet with current data.
- Preschool Promise Enrollment numbers – René
  - We have 22 programs returning this year. 2 chose not to return
  - We have 280 slots available.
  - 80 of those are continuing children from last year.
  - 65 are new/ or transfer students, determined eligible and have been placed.
  - 4 are currently in the eligibility process, waiting for families to submit documentation.
  - 26 slots need to be reassigned because of the two programs closing. We are waiting for the actual information to come from the Early Learning Division so that we can move forward with placing those children who want to continue with Preschool Promise funding.
  - 25 open slots that are unassigned within 9 early learning program sites.
  - We have 59 children in the waiting pool for sites that are full. These families are choosing to stay in the waiting pool for those particular sites. They have been informed that there is availability in other programs, but are deciding to stay in the waiting pool for the program they prefer.

**Discussion of Funding Opportunities:**

- ARPA grant funds for providers – Mary
  - Informational session about the Child Care Stabilization Grants \$248,908,466 to disperse  
Informational webinar: September 13, 2021, from 11:00 – 12:30pm  
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1614770100>
- Brainstorm priorities for hub funding related to ECE Workforce – René
  - Project Youth Plus, replicate that pilot program and expand into more schools.
  - Investigate how to put Lisa's ideas of training staff could expand.
  - Provide more behavioral health coaches.
  - Infant Preschool mental health consultants.

**Next Meeting: October 7, 2021**