



**SOELS Governance Council**

**January 17, 2023**

2:30-4:30 p.m.

In Person @ 918 Chevy Way, Medford

or

Zoom Meeting ID 910 426 67714

**Attendees:** Adrienne Auxier, Scott Beveridge, Jessica Durrant, Mary Hough, Bridey Mendoza-Moore, Laura McKeane, Brittain Zimmerman. **Absent:** Cynthia Anderson, Katherine Clayton, Geoffrey Lowry, Stacy Inman, Crystal Rowbotham, Sam Watson, Kimberlee Whitney  
**Hub Staff:** René Brandon, Sydney Wing, Teresa Slater, Vicki Risner

**Call to Order 2:34 pm**

Jessica Durrant stepped up to lead the meeting due to cochairs Katherine Clayton and Geoffrey Lowry not in attendance.

**Welcome and Greetings**

**Additions or changes to the Agenda**

None

**Approval of minutes from 11-15-22**

Quorum was not present. Moved to next meeting.

**Hub Staffing Update**

We received additional funding for our Preschool Promise Coordinated Enrollment. We finally have a few applicants who have started the interview process. We are cautiously optimistic that we may have someone to join our coordinated enrollment team very soon.

**Regional System Assessment – Child Care Data Review & Discussion**

René: We are in the middle of a regional system assessment; we have given you the breakdown of the plan previously. It culminates in June. It will be the driver of our new strategic plan for the new biennium. Last time we were asked to forecast 5 years into the future so we are expecting a similar plan, we just don't have that template yet.

Shared a slide presentation, slides reviewed: Access for Any Early Learning Slots, Access for Families at or below 200% FPL, The Challenges Related to Supply & Demand, 2019 Survey of Child Care Center Directors Regarding Teach Pay Range, 2019 Survey of Child Care Center Directors Regarding Teacher Benefits, Families, Teachers and Administrators Have Similar Experiences.

Jessica: I knew the numbers were low, but seeing the data is astounding. We've lost staff who couldn't find child care and have had applicants decline for the same reason. The piece about work-related stress due to increase in dysregulated children is important. We are seeing a number of staff reporting

that the first time their child has an outburst, they are gone with one outburst. René: While the expulsion prevention legislation is right around the corner for publicly funded programs, our infrastructure doesn't yet have the support in place to adequately support early learning programs at the levels they need in order to support the children who might have a higher need.

Britt: The issue of adequate pay is also now an issue in programs with Federal Funding. The rates did not go up to match the rise in cost of living. This piece has become the hardest piece in managing staff. Discrepancy in wages, compared to what other programs pay, staff saying that they can't afford to live even though they want to work for you. It's a heartbreaking situation. This year we surveyed our staff asking if anyone had personal food insecurities and over 50% of our staff answered yes. These are their careers, not people working a temporary job. People who have gone to school for this. So, we created our own food pantry for staff. And even though we pay good wages in our field, people are still leaving because it isn't enough. Staff are leaving to take jobs they don't want to do because they can't afford to live on the wages from this job. We are even stocking all hygiene products, mints and deodorants in every bathroom for staff to help our staff feel valued.

Discussion: What are some of the root causes for this crisis?

Compensation

Lack of value for early childhood educators

Lack of Support for children who are struggling in the classroom/child care

Lack of union for the workforce

Unrealistic ratios in the classroom

Limited access to EI/ECSE

No connection between private businesses and child care

EC educators want to be "seen" according to staff survey (#1 answer on survey/85%)

Inclusion is being prioritized but not supported.

Society doesn't value families.

Society doesn't value education.

René: Peter Buckley and I met just three weeks ago with a group of local legislators and I went through this slide show with them. After reviewing that half of the children in our region are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and that the reach rate was shockingly low, that our families can't climb out of this situation without affordable child care, one of the legislators still stated "You know, I just don't see the importance of child care. A parent staying home with their child is a good thing." They were not hearing poverty; a single parent on TANF who cannot get off of public assistance without child care. A two-parent family, low wage earners where one has to stay home so they end up going to every food bank and access every resource just to survive. There are well meaning people, who because of their own place of privilege, cannot put themselves in the place of that family. And some of these people are making decisions on our public investments. We have a lot of work to do.

Mary brought up the Opportunity Atlas, that shows data by zip code. A triangle in downtown Medford is in the bottom 9% of every hoping to improve their situation.

René: There are specific types of child care: private pay, free income-eligible programs such as Preschool Promise, Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start, Early Head Start. Families can also receive Employment Related Child Care subsidy, ERDC, through ODHS and select an approved provider of their choice.

Mary: Even people in our society who are high earners can't always find child care. People in poverty are trapped.

Britt: Helping businesses understand the true cost of operating a child care business is an incredibly important piece. We have been approached by multiple businesses asking us to open a child care on their property. They are shocked when we explain the cost. They often want to provide a space, thinking that is enough to make the child care sustainable, but it just isn't anymore.

Continued with the following slides: Availability: Pre-Covid vs January 2023, The Cost of Child Care, Cost to Provide 70% of Needed Slots in Southern Oregon, Limitations of Analysis, \$63.7M We can't afford it...and we can't afford NOT to figure it out, It will require a shift in our thinking about education, Getting the message out.

Mary: We should approach Asante Foundation.

Continued with the following slide: Everyone has a role in solving this crisis

Britt: Helping businesses understand the true cost of operating a child care is an incredible piece. We've been approached by multiple businesses who offered a spot to provide child care to their employees but were shocked at the actual cost to provide those services.

## **SORS Southern Oregon Early Childhood Support Network Progress (Formerly Child Success Delivery System)**

### Slides presented:

What is the Southern Oregon Early Childhood Support Network

- A coordinated system of resources and services,
- Centered on pregnant families and families with children under five,
- Committed to ensure every child in Jackson and Josephine counties has an equitable opportunity to enter Kindergarten ready to thrive.

Each family will have a Family Success Plan

Incentives for Families

Incentives for Providers

Multi-tiered System for Supports for Families

The Human Experience & System Capacity

18 Areas of Work for the Network

Early Priorities (Four Areas of Focus)

Two New Funds – Early Childhood Support Fund and Child Care Support Fund

Further Refining Goals & Guidance on Investments

## **Family Engagement Update**

Build it and they will come.

2 Family Centers are up and running, one in Jackson County and one in Josephine County.

The programming is going very well. Families are showing up. They are happy to be there. They are bringing friends. In Grants Pass we are having to divide one of our Kaleidoscope classes into two, as it is at capacity. We offer prenatal yoga, children's martial arts, children's yoga, GED classes for families, parent support groups. Programming is growing and is free to families. Families indicated that music classes, cooking classes, arts & craft classes are important so we are working to begin those as well once we find facilitators. In Medford they are offering Infant Massage, Childbirth classes, and Walking groups. In Grants Pass we need some Spanish language facilitators. Looking to create Kaleidoscope classes that are more inviting to our families with children who need less stimulating sessions. If you haven't stopped by one of the sites, please take the time to go on a tour.

## **Home Visiting Network Update**

I will be distributing a survey to ensure that we are covering the topics they want and that the date and times for meetings is the best for them to participate. The last survey indicated that social emotional health is the most important need right now. We had Beth Jaffee Stafford, the clinical director for the Family Nurturing Center, speak at our last meeting. She talked about the current social emotional state of our children; what the pandemic has done to affect that; ending with a hopeful piece of what can we do help them and how to connect the families with resources to help them. We will have a meeting with a presentation topic, and then a quarterly meeting for resources on how to meet those needs. We want them to feel heard and supported and want it to be worth their time to meet with us.

## **Kaleidoscope Play & Learn Update**

Teresa: It's definitely on the rebound. Our next cohort will be trained next week. 11-17 people are signed up: Science Works in Ashland., Kairos, Illinois Valley. Possibly the Grange in Grants Pass. How often we do the trainings is based on interest and facilitators are selected based upon experience with children and families.

We should see this expansion hit the community by mid-February, no later than the beginning of March. We will be at almost at the same place that we were at pre-pandemic after this next expansion. We want to continue to expand in our rural communities. We want to add and rebuild our Spanish speaking groups. We are looking into groups specifically for young parents. We are looking to start a group with focus on sensory supported needs and children experiencing disability. A number of our groups already have supports from EI/ECSE supports. The families and the EI/ECSE staff support will meet at a Kaleidoscope group to support and walk through the 90 minutes. Two of our facilitators from the last group have expanded to offer second classes. We do a Community of Practice (CoP) quarterly, with our facilitators to ensure that we are supporting them and their professional development, meeting their needs, and making sure that they feel part of this bigger network.

## **Motion to Adjourn: Jessica Durant**

Adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

## **Next Meeting: March 21, 2023**

2:30-4:30 p.m.