

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties Early Childhood Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	9:00 am, April 20, 2022 Online via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY	Kristi Collins
WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT	Katy Allaback, Deanna Barclay, Autumn Belloni, Barbara Dougherty, Nicole Kalita, Stephany Koehne, Misha Mayers, Kimberly McCutcheon Gross, Debbie McPheeters, Paul Smith, Lynnette Wynkoop
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Connie Adams, Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Antonia Huerta, Jinguang Lin, Sam Rounsavell, Carmen Santacruz, Kelly Schell, LeAnne Trask
RECORDED	Yes

Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	Welcome and Introductions
Work Group Members introduced themselves.	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Agenda Review
<p>Kristi received guidance from the Early Learning Division that the Early Learning Hub needed to reconvene our Regional Stewardship Committee to discuss preschool promise and enrollment prioritization and submit our plan by May 6th. The Regional Stewardship Committee was an expansion of this workgroup previously, so given the short timeline, it was decided to include this conversation about the enrollment prioritization in the meeting today.</p> <p>Kristi reviewed the agenda with the workgroup.</p>	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Regional Stewardship Committee – PSP Enrollment Prioritization
<p>Matt gave an overview of the current enrollment prioritization process. The first priority goes to currently enrolled students. The next priority goes to children in foster care. After that, priority is determined by points based on Hub indicated priority populations. Eligibility is also income weighted to incentivize Head Start for those who are eligible. A random lottery determines the final priority. The</p>	

prioritized enrollment process has been used less than six times this year. However, the 2022/23 year will be different as we expect more 3-year-olds moving up and more applications being accepted. It is important to finalize the enrollment prioritization process to make sure it is ready before we begin accepting applications.

Workgroup members asked if there is prioritization for siblings. Matt shared that yes, there is. However, the provider must notify the Early Learning Hub that the application is for a sibling for this to occur, as our enrollment specialists are not always aware of the student's sibling status.

The workgroup asked if there is any consideration for age balance in our current prioritization process. The response was yes. We have started prioritizing four-year-olds over three-year-olds, especially as we are moving closer to the end of the year. This is the last opportunity for those four-year-olds to get into a preschool program before starting kindergarten.

Kristi shared that Early Learning Hubs were given a list and guidance of Early Learning Division priority populations and then told to work with our regional stewardship committees to determine our prioritization based on our priority populations. What we know about our region, all things that are happening in our Hub, and remembering it is our responsibility to seek our own legal counsel if we are doing any prioritization around our priority populations from our sector plan that includes race and ethnicity.

What we are hearing from other early learning hubs who have already sought legal counsel is that because we receive federal funds for coordinated enrollment, it is part of the preschool development grant funds that the state receives that we cannot prioritize based on race, race, and ethnicity specifically.

But we can give a priority point if a child meets one of our Hub priority population categories. Points could not be awarded based on each race/ethnicity category. However, a point could be awarded if a child was a member of any of our Hub identified priority populations.

Kristi reviewed the priorities we already have based on the Early Learning Division requirements and the priorities we are exploring.

The first priority goes to students currently enrolled with Preschool Promise and who are still age-eligible the next year, whether they want to stay at that site or transfer to another site. Next would be children who have already been found eligible and are on the waitlist for a program. Then foster children, any children where the parents identify that it's a foster child. After that, siblings of enrolled students. The question about being a sibling is not asked on any of the Early Learning Division application materials, so parents or providers need to notify the Hub that the child is a sibling of an enrolled student. The next priority goes to

children who are currently enrolled with a provider and are now age-eligible for Preschool Promise. The final priority would be for priority would be four-year-olds over three-year-olds to offer a chance to get into a preschool program before starting kindergarten.

After this priority criteria, a child would move into the priority points system, where they get a priority points number, and the highest point numbers would be placed first.

- Points 1-3 for income level in that location. Eligibility is income weighted to incentivize Head Start for those who are eligible and have a Head Start program in their community.
- Point for being a member of a Hub Identified population. The six priority populations identified by our Early Learning Hub are:
 - Age Birth – 3 years
 - Children with disabilities
 - Emergent bilinguals
 - Living in rural communities
 - Native America or living in a tribal community
 - Latinx
- Point for English language learners or emergent bilinguals
- Point for families experiencing homelessness

A total of 6 points are possible. Applications left after this process will move to a randomized lottery selection. It will never be a first come, first serve.

The workgroup discussed the 2022-23 enrollment prioritization process and gave feedback.

- The workgroup discussed the income point system. This system seems to address the concerns about competition between Preschool Promise and Head Start well. This also helps focus on the accessibility and opportunity of programs. It prioritizes families with fewer options and access to programs. The goal is to serve as many children as possible with the preschool slots available. On the surface, this is a more equitable system. It is an improvement over what we have had in the past.
- Workgroup discussed the difficulties of addressing historical disparities and how enrollment prioritization can include those considerations without directly considering race and ethnicity. It was noted that This prioritization process is just for one year, giving us time to explore options for the future. Points cannot be given for race/ethnicity, but points can be given for being a member of a Hub identified priority population which can include race.

- The workgroup discussed that as children with disabilities and other needs are being prioritized, program and classroom supports for their inclusion and learning also need to be included. Supports can be built after students are in the classroom. The Community Inclusion Team is being expanded to Linn and Benton communities and is meant to help increase this capacity. Increased EI/ECSE capacity is also needed. This capacity building will need to be accelerated if this prioritization system is used.
- The workgroup discussed the staffing of classrooms where children with higher needs are being served. How do we support the workforce while meeting the state requirements? That is an important consideration for this workgroup. What else should the Hub be focusing on to support this workforce?
- The workgroup discussed considering a child's Adverse Childhood Experience score as part of the enrollment prioritization process. It was shared that Kidco Head Start does include ACEs screening as part of their application process. A child's ACE score is factored into their point system prioritization. Classroom makeup also considers ACE scores. There is an attempt not to put all the students with high ACE scores in the same classroom whenever possible. For almost 500 children, Head Start has 6-8 staff focused on applications. It is in the in-person application process. One full-time staff is focused just on eligibility. It was noted that this is an interesting goal, but this may not be possible at current funding levels and the scale of our population.
- The workgroup discussed equitable access for families on the waitlist. A lottery will be needed if the waitlist is longer than the slots available for specific programs. Younger siblings should apply as soon as possible to get on the waitlist. A family may need to accept a placement at another program in the community and be able to transfer should a slot become available. This will become more of an issue as demand for Preschool increases faster than our capacity.
- The workgroup discussed family choice under this enrollment prioritization process. Families prioritized for Head Start will still have the option to choose another program. Family choice will be honored.

Kristi will summarize this draft enrollment prioritization process and post it to Basecamp.

It was shared that families can be directed to the current year's Preschool Promise application for now. If families mark that the child is not yet age-eligible, a form appears for them to sign up for notifications when the next year's application is available. This is the most direct way for younger students to get on the waitlist.

DISCUSSION ITEM	Early Learning Hub Work Plan
<p>Kristi shared the Early Learning Hub work plan and recognition and acknowledgment of the work that's already happened in this group. She outlined the work plan strategies and key activities that this workgroup will focus on.</p>	
<p>Strategy 2.1: Expand access to, and build the supply of high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) affordable infant-toddler early care and education that meets the needs of families.</p> <p>The expansion of the Community Inclusion Team to Linn and Benton County will be part of this work. The link to the Governing Board presentation about the Community Inclusion Team was shared. The workgroup discussed the funding structure and challenges of the CIT.</p> <p>There is a workgroup working around child care needs in the region with the goal of developing a regional strategic plan with a focus on increasing the supply of infant and toddler care, both publicly funded and private home care. We want to be ready should baby promise ever become a real opportunity in our region.</p>	
<p>Strategy 2.2: Expand access to, and build the supply of high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) affordable preschool that meets the needs of families.</p> <p>This strategy focuses on Preschool Promised expansion and getting additional providers ready to apply when that RFA comes out. The Early Learning Hub will be looking at who those providers are, and what that families are asking for, and considering the Hub identified priority populations and the providers that are best suited to serve those priority populations.</p>	
<p>Strategy 3.1: Improve professional learning opportunities for the full diversity of the early care and education workforce.</p> <p>The ED 222 course will be offered in Spanish by fall 2022. This supports the diversification of the early learning workforce. By providing this training, more early learning providers will have the social-emotional PBIS foundation to work from, which is essential for our other goals as well.</p>	
<p>Strategy 6.1: Establish shared professional culture and practice between early care and education and K-3 that supports all domains, including social-emotional learning</p> <p>This is shared work with the P-3 Alignment workgroup. We are having a Dare to Lead training based on Brene Brown's research. Kristi gave an overview of the online Dare to Lead training being developed for the Early Learning Hub.</p>	
<p>Strategy 10.1 Ensure family voice in system design and implementation.</p>	

Under our contract with the Early Learning Division, we are required to develop a Parent Leadership Council as part of our governance structure. Kristi shared the history of the Early Learning Hub and its efforts to include the parent voice. A toolkit will soon be coming from the Early Learning Division concerning setting up a Parent Leadership Council. Our current idea for this is to have one parent council for each county. The Parent Council Chair would also hold the Governing Board seat for Parent Voice. This arrangement allows for bi-directional information flow and input between Governing Board and Parent Council. We are waiting on the toolkit but believe this will meet the state requirements.

Antonia and Carmen will be leading that work. The new Preschool Promise application now asks if a parent would be interested in learning more about the Parent Leadership Council.

The workgroup commented that we could encourage TANF parents to participate and make it part of their plan (for those families who might be a good fit).

Strategy 12.1: Support consistent, high quality practice among all professionals in the family and child serving early learning workforce.

The key activity for this strategy is to reconvene this workgroup and identify opportunities for alignment.

The workgroup expressed thoughts and feedback on the work plan.

- There was appreciation that inclusion is so thorough woven into the workplan of the Hub.
- Excited to be back in this workgroup and have the opportunity to network again after Covid and shifting State priorities.
- Glad that we're able to be back and bring our partners back together and continue some of the conversations that we've had in the past and come up with entirely new discussions moving forward as well.
- The state is considering Raise Up Oregon as the statewide strategic plan. A revision RUO 2.0, not a whole new strategic plan. There may be questions coming to this workgroup to help the Hub provide feedback to the state on this work.
- Recognition and appreciation of the collaboration of partners to move this work forward. That speaks to the collaborations that happen in this region also speaks to the outcomes that we've seen so far and, the direction that we've been able to go, and the work that we've been able to accomplish.
- There is close communication between CCR&R and the Early Learning Hub

DISCUSSION ITEM	P-3 Alignment shared meeting & future meeting schedule
<p>The P-3 Alignment meeting was held earlier this month. The schedule that had been set did not work for Early Intervention or LBCC staff. There is a lot of overlap in attendance from P-3 and ECCC workgroups, so a suggestion was made to combine the time and agendas of the workgroups. These combined meetings will be held monthly on the third Wednesday from 9-12. From 9-10 am will be P-3 Alignment specific agenda items. Between 10-11 am will be shared content for both P-3 and ECCC workgroups. The time from 11 am-12 pm will be specific to ECCC work. This format allows maximin efficiency for everyone's time. The Regional Stewardship will be embedded into the ECCC agenda every quarter (Jan, April, July, Oct) or as needed based on requirements and requests from the State. This timeline also aligns well with the sector planning review and revisions.</p>	
<p>Workgroup chair volunteers are needed. Chair duties include helping to set meeting agendas and facilitating meetings. Please contact Kristi if interested.</p>	
<p>It was noted that there is a conflict for the next meeting on May 18th. So, the May meeting will be from 9-11 am with a shortened agenda, and the new 9-12 meeting time will begin in June.</p>	

NEXT MEETING	Time, May 18th Online via Zoom
MEETING ADJOURNED	10:45 am