

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties

P-3 Alignment & Early Childhood Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	9:30 am, January 15, 2025 Online via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY	Kristi Collins
PRESENTERS	Heidi E McGowan
WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT	Susan Halliday, Autumn Belloni, Nicole Kalita, Stephany Koehne, Misha Mayers, Paul Smith, Diane Wilkinson, Lynnette Wynkoop
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Antonia Huerta, Jinguang Lin, Ana Reyes, Sam Rounsavell, Carmen Santacruz
RECORDED	Yes

P-3 Alignment & Early Childhood Coordinating Council Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	Welcome and Introductions
Work Group Members introduced themselves.	

DISCUSSION ITEM	OASCD Early Learning Conference Scholarship Committee
Oregon Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development Early Learning Conference will be held April 16-18, 2025, at the Sheraton Portland Airport Conference Center. Registration is now open!	
Our board set aside \$10,000 for scholarships for early learning professionals in K-12 to attend the conference. We need a small group to come together outside of this meeting space to decide what the process will be for getting those funds out. If you're interested in being more involved with this committee, please contact Kristi.	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Focus Group Discussion: Every Child Belongs program
Lynnette introduced the listening session regarding the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation grant received by Family Connections. This planning grant aims to develop a model for Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Heidi East McGowan was invited to lead the discussion, gathering input to shape the implementation plan. While the State has provided some guidance, it remains flexible, and the team is working towards submitting their plan by early March. Following submission, they will hire an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant for the newly renamed "Every Child Belongs" program, formerly known as the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program.	
Workgroup members introduced themselves to Heidi.	

Heidi asked the group to consider:

- In your dream world, what would it look like for all children to be successful in child care programs
- What supports have been successful in the past or currently?
- Do you have any personal experience with a child who has been suspended/expelled?
- What does the system need to look like? What do you need to support children (and families) to be successful in your program?
- It seems like providers wait until they are at their limit before reaching out for help. Why do you observe or hear about the typical reasons they wait?

In your dream world, what would it look like for all children to be successful in child care programs?

- Support for staff in the classroom so they have what they need to create a supportive environment for all children
- One-on-one support available for students when needed
- Family support so the parents are welcomed into the learning community. Parents can be involved and participate in planning for their child in the classroom
- Warm, inviting, accepting classrooms and early learning spaces for families, children, and staff
- Flexibility in hours. For example, when care is available, drop-in and drop-off times, etc.
- Realistic expectations for families in classrooms. Opportunities to reorient and welcome parents and children who have not had positive classroom experiences in the past. Understanding the shared responsibilities between the family and the school/care provider.
- Addressing upstream issues that impact family economic success.
- Addressing what it means for families and students to feel safe at school
 - Families are concerned about child safety while at school or in care.
 - Families don't feel safe at home or in the world
 - How can schools feel like a safe place for students
- Helping all children feel a sense of belonging at school

What supports are enabling the realization of this vision?

- Classroom staff are the driving force

What supports are available and successful for staff to create these spaces of belonging?

- Being provided with time, training, and supportive feedback
- Access to high-quality coaching
- EI/ECSE
- CCR&R

What does the system need to look like? What do you need to support children (and families) to be successful in your program?

- Foundational issues include pay rates, student/teacher ratios, positive institutional culture

- Staff and parents should be educated better to understand typical, healthy, child behavior and development. There is a trend of not drawing a clear line between normal healthy child behavior and what is pathological and diagnosable. More conversation and education around mental health has also created a wave of self-pathologizing and diagnosis.
- Programs like EI/ECSE and CCR&Rs need to be funded so they can be fully supportive of all programs
- Creating more capacity for directors and managers to support their staff when coaches and EI/ECSE are not immediately available.
- Keeping track of all the resources can be overwhelming. Finding a way to make communication around resources clearer and more centralized.
- Behavior alone is not a criteria for Special Education services
- More behavior support and mental health resources available in classrooms and to children and families.
- Without adequate supports, teachers and other students are be injured and negatively impacted. Teachers are not able to give full attention to all students.
- Low student/teacher ratios create more success
- One-on-one support available for students when needed
- A focus on expanding without consideration of capacity is negatively impacting programs
- Cost and availability of insurance is becoming a barrier

It seems like providers wait until they are at their limit before reaching out for help.

Why do you observe or hear about the typical reasons they wait?

- Regular and ongoing mental health support for teachers
- Classroom support that offers teachers the opportunity to take a break when needed
- Teachers are expected to be able to provide intensive special education and behavior/mental health support to students without proper training, resources, support, or time
- The process of reaching out for help requires a lot of energy, and often, the answer is – there is no help available.
- When providers contact parents about services and supports for children, parents are hesitant to admit their child has an issue or needs services.
- There are very few resources for student behavior issues available.
- Lack of alignment of requirements between programs across the early learning system

NEXT MEETING	9:30 am, February 19, 2025 Online via Zoom
MEETING ADJOURNED	10:51 am