



Leadership Council on Early Years (LCEY) Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2022

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/t62WKeNJ0IA>

Members Present: Governor Tony Evers, First Lady Kathy Evers, Emilie Amundson (Secretary, DCF), Peter Barca (Secretary, DOR), Kevin Carr (Secretary, DOC), Linda Hall (Executive Director, OCMH), Mary Kolar (Secretary, DVA), Rebecca Murray (Executive Director, CANPB)

Others Present: Jenny Bibler (DPI), Kathey Bilek (DOT), Jessica Boling (WHEDA), Catherine Haberland (DFI), Olivia Hwang (DOA), Danielle Jones (WEDC), Curtis Lemke (DVA), Tracy Luber (WEDC), Trisha Murphy (PCEAC), Nicole Pegram (DOR), Deb Rathermel (DHS), Melissa Roberts (DOC), Stephanie Weix (Office of First Lady), Danielle Williams (DWD), Scott Williams (DVA), Kate Constalie (WEDC), Erin Arango-Escalante (DCF), Andrea Cammilleri (DCF), Margaret McMahon (DCF), Jane Penner-Hoppe (DCF), Elizabeth Valitchka (DCF)

Welcome/Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Secretary Emilie Amundson welcomed the council, who shared memories of the delicacies provided by Wisconsin's fall harvests.
- Secretary Amundson called for approval of the April 28 minutes. Peter Barca motioned to approve the minutes. Rebecca Murray seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion to approve the minutes carried.

Recognized Programs/Support, Activities to be Celebrated

Following up to January's meeting in which innovative community partnerships was discussed, Danielle Williams, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of Workforce Development (DWD), shared the announcement of three new Work Innovation Grants (WIG) specific to early child care.

- The first award was granted to the Community Relations - Social Development Commission for the recruitment and training of 105 early care and education (ECE) staff. Students will be partnered with ECE sites, primarily located in the black and brown ZIP codes of the Milwaukee district where gaps in access to child care have been identified.
- The second award was granted to MobilISE for the expansion of the FlexRide Milwaukee program, which will connect City of Milwaukee workers with jobs outside of their communities by offering long-distance shuttles. The grant also allows transportation and assistance to high-quality child care centers along the route.
- The third grant, awarded to the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), is an affordable housing plan and will offer ECE teachers in Milwaukee an opportunity to purchase 1 of 50 homes during the pilot program.

- For more information, please visit <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/workforce-innovation-grant/>.

In addition, Secretary Amundson shared information regarding the newly released Madison Forward Fund, an experimental program in which the City of Madison, in partnership with the Institute for Research on Poverty, will provide a guaranteed income payment of \$500 per month to 155 households for the next year.

Today's Topic – Helping Families who have Young Children with Disabilities

Secretary Amundson acknowledged that the challenges in raising young children can be even more difficult for families who have children with disabilities. She stressed the importance of early intervention and the need to provide programs and services in early childhood. This meeting will focus on the programs currently in place to serve and improve the future of these families and the efforts being made to market these services, simplify access to these services, and reach those who may benefit from them.

Serving Children with Disabilities in the Birth to Five System

- Erin Arango-Escalante, Administrator, Division of Early Care and Education, Department of Children and Families (DCF), presented an overview of the Wisconsin Birth to 5 Early Childhood State System, emphasizing the programs specific to children with disabilities. She compartmentalized the core programs offered to children with disabilities by age, designated department and the federal legislation that guides this work [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)].
- Administrator Arango-Escalante introduced the Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Program. DCF is collaborating with the Department of Health Services (DHS) to offer child care tuition for up to 1,400 children enrolled in the Birth to 3 Program. An August 1 rollout of the pilot began in the Southern Consortium of the State. The program will be offered statewide on October 1.
- The administrator highlighted the Parent/Caregiver Equity Advisory Cabinet (PCEAC), developed to ensure the state's early childhood programs address the daily challenges facing families with small children and their caregivers. Cabinet members, primarily from the communities of Lac Courte Oreilles, Adams County and Beloit, provide a parent voice by posing questions and sharing information through feedback sessions.

The Birth to 3 Program for Families

- Deb Rathermel, Bureau Director, Bureau of Children's Services, Division of Medicaid Services, Department of Health Services, enlightened the council with an explanation of DHS' Birth to 3 Program. The Birth to 3 Program is a special education program that supports the development, growth, and learning of children under age 3 years with delays/disabilities. To qualify, children must have a developmental delay of at least 25 percent in one or more areas. DHS subcontracts with local human service and public health agencies to operate the program at the county level.
- Federal legislation (IDEA) requires a comprehensive "child find" system, designed to ensure all infants and toddlers with disabilities in the state who are eligible for these services are identified, located, and evaluated.

- A drop in the Birth to 3 Program enrollment motivated the department to launch a public service announcement (PSA) campaign to boost awareness of the early signs of delays/disabilities and to encourage families to act early; to help Wisconsin understand the Birth to 3 Program; and to encourage doctors, child care professionals, and others who work with children to talk with families about the Birth to 3 Program.
- In Phase I of the PSA campaign, DHS held family input sessions, developed a social media toolkit, created materials for both families and for professionals, and performed website updates.
- Ongoing reminders will continue, as will the distribution of links to materials. The department will monitor the use of materials and track referrals and enrollment in the Birth to 3 Program. Continued outreach efforts will be made, especially for minority families and those populations identified as missing in the data.

Early Childhood Special Education

- Jenny Bibler, Early Childhood Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), reminded us that the “child find” component of IDEA applies to all children, not just those from birth to 3 years. Just as DHS administers special education programs for children from birth to 3 years, DPI administers the special education programs for children beyond 3, up to 21 years. DPI also uses public awareness as the tool by which to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who are in need of early intervention or special education services.
- Ms. Bibler recognized different types of screening as an effective public awareness activity for her team. Screenings are designed to educate families about typical child development, to develop/expand an awareness of community resources for our families, and to question and/or decide if a child may need further evaluation for special education.
- Ms. Bibler credits program success to the multiple child-find partners found in our communities. She stresses the need for connections for the purpose of information sharing and referrals.
- The seamless transition from the Birth to 3 Program to the school district was explained; steps to follow if one suspects a disability are reviewed; types of special education services are noted; and the location of where services are provided in the community was shared.

A Parent’s Journey, Trisha Murphy, PCEAC Member

Trisha Murphy, mother of three and child care provider from the city of Adams, Adams County, introduced herself and shared her journey in obtaining special education services for her children. She discussed the struggles of living in a less advantaged community and celebrated the new Project LifeSaver program. Ms. Murphy’s perspective is invaluable as we consider the programs we have available and what we can do to improve services, supports and access to our programs. Thank you, Trisha.

Questions/Comments

Catherine Haberland, Department of Financial Institutions (DFI), discussed DFI’s ABLE (ABLEnow) program, a savings program for individuals with disabilities, and encouraged LCEY participants to share this option and/or help distribute information about this program as appropriate.

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Upcoming Meeting

The next LCEY meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 27, from 9 am until 11 am. We will return to the topics of workforce and business, focusing on communication, collaboration, and coordination across agencies and communities.

This meeting adjourned at 10:56 am.