



Leadership Council on Early Years Virtual Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2024
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

YouTube Link for Guest Observers:

https://youtube.com/live/KETpy_yD87k?feature=share

Members Present: Emilie Amundson (Secretary, DCF), Ashley Andre (Policy Initiatives Advisor, DATCP), Kathy Blumenfeld (Secretary, DOA), Elmer Moore (WHEDA), Rebecca Murray (Executive Director, CANPB), Amy Pechacek (DWD), Cheryl Olson-Collins (Secretary, DFI), Jill Underly (DPI)

Others Present: Priya Bhatia (DCF), Arielle Exner (Legislative Liaison, DWD), Jordan Hynes (NGA), Karen Katz (OCMH), Tracy Lubber (WEDC), Jeremy Lyon (DVA), Gina Paige (DCF), Cari Reddington (Administrator, Division of Research and Policy, DOR), Melissa Roberts (DOC), Stephanie Weix (Governor's Office)

Welcome

- Secretary Amundson started the meeting at 1:00 p.m.
 - Roll call is taken.
- Approval of minutes
 - June 2023: Secretary Olson-Collins moves; Rebecca Murray seconds.
 - October 2023: Dr. Underly Moves, Tracy Lubber seconds.
 - February 2024: Secretary Pechacek moves; Secretary Blumenfeld seconds.
 - All minutes approved.
- Secretary Amundson introduces topic of the day, Wisconsin Shares, which is Wisconsin's child care subsidy.
 - A background will be given about Wisconsin Shares, including eligibility requirements, communications campaign, and ideas for how to expand eligibility.

Wisconsin Shares 101

- Priya Bhatia, DCF Division of Early Care and Education Administrator gave presentation on Wisconsin Shares history and overview, program requirements including eligibility and authorizations, and program administration and implementation.
- Wisconsin Shares is a child care subsidy program that assists low income families with the cost of child care.
 - Primarily funded by TANF block grant and the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).
- In order to be eligible, participants must not exceed 185% of federal poverty level (FPL) and cannot exceed 85% of the state median income (SMI).
 - Can apply online, in person, or over the phone.
- Authorization is an approval for the monthly subsidy.

- Funds issues by an EBT card.

Wisconsin Shares Communications Campaign

- Gina Paige, DCF Communications Director, presented communications campaign around Wisconsin Shares.
 - Used paid media campaigns, web redesign, and tool kits for parents and providers.
 - Paid media campaigns were statewide via TV ads, billboards, streaming audio, and digital video.
- Gina shared that the Wisconsin Shares Partner Tool Kit can be shared by other agencies to help promote program.
- Secretary Amundson asked members to brain storm how they can share the Wisconsin Shares information in their own agencies.
 - Public health departments, nurses, and 211.
 - Melissa Roberts said they can post flyers in Community Corrections Offices.
 - Cari Redington wants to explore communications options at DOR, such as communications online during tax time.
 - Elmer Moore asked about categorical eligibility, which Sec. Amundson said that they are interested in exploring.
 - Secretary Blumenfeld can look into broadband eligibility.
 - Secretary Pechacek suggested posting at job fairs.

Innovative Uses for Child Care Subsidy in Other States

- Jordan Hynes from the National Governors Association (NGA) gave presentation on how other states are using their child care subsidies and categorical eligibility to meet specific workforce needs.
- Federal statute caps threshold of eligibility at 85% of SMI.
 - As of 2023, all but 16 states set below 85% of median income. Wisconsin is at 53%.
- Shared some states who are trying interesting models:
 - Louisiana: leader in implementing affordable child care subsidy through increased reimbursement rates and lowers costs. 150% FPL pay no out of pocket costs for child care.
 - Montana: recently codified program to low income families for child care.
 - Nevada: Access limited to 130% FPL, but increased to families of 4 making \$70k a year.
 - Michigan: in 2022, expanded income eligibility.
- Group discussed other strategies states have used and members asked questions around categorical eligibility, Michigan's tri-care model, and philanthropy to meet the gap between subsidies and true cost.

Adjournment

- Dr. Underly motioned to adjourn at 3:00 p.m. Secretary Blumenfeld seconds. All approved.

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