



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



### Meeting Minutes Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Advisory Committee Meeting

March 5, 2014  
10:00am - 12:00 pm • Rocky Hill

*Paul Dworkin, Chair*

#### **ATTENDANCE**

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**Members present:** Paul Dworkin, Angela Crowley, Deborah Watson, Elaine Zimmerman, Grace Whitney, Heather Spada, Jessica Sager, Julie Bisi, Kareena DuPlessis, Lisa Honigfeld, Melissa Mendez, Merrill Gay, Mhora Lorentson, Nancy DiMauro, Rachel Wilf, Richard Porth, Rosa Biaggi, Susan Graham, Tanya Barrett

**Guests:** no guests present

**Recorder:** Heather Spada

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#### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Tanya Barrett introduced Heather Spada as the recently hired ECCS Project Manager.
- All members introduced themselves.

#### **ECCS Progress Report**

**Subcommittee Activity** – Tanya Barrett reported:

- Evaluation Subcommittee met in January to figure out the goals of the survey(s) and evaluation for this group; gave suggestions to Mhora Lorentson.
- Interagency Subcommittee met in December – focus is to make sure all early childhood efforts in the state are coordinated with ECCS efforts. ECCS is intersecting with Help Me Grow, MIECHV, Early Learning Standards and CDI.
- Heather Spada will coordinate the next 2 meetings for each subcommittee (April/June).

#### **Parent and Partner Recruitment**

- Looking to involve parents in at least 2 ways: to serve on this committee and on smaller subcommittees.
- Some members committed to helping recruit parents; one suggestion made to make the meeting available with a call-in option for parents. This can be arranged as needed.
- Suggestions from the committee include: involving DSS and Medicaid programs, AAP, Early Head Start screenings, Fatherhood Initiatives; think about approaches with families so they feel an equal part of the process and be intentional as to the methods of engaging families fully.

#### **Consultant Contracts**

- Finalizing details with Yale re: Health Consultants; Heather Spada will connect with Angela Crowley to offer support, as needed

## Help Me Grow Campaign Update

- Deborah Watson reviewed the scope of the HMG campaign – a statewide public awareness of universal screening. They are utilizing outreach meetings and community cafes to train professionals and parents. 34 parents have been trained so far.
- Deborah showed samples of materials that are being finalized for printing, including growth charts and brochures.
- 13 participating towns: Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, Hartford, Killingly, Putnam, Plainfield, Sterling, Middletown, New Britain, Norwalk, Stamford, New Haven
- Contact her directly with questions: 859-221-4383; [Deborah.watson@ct.gov](mailto:Deborah.watson@ct.gov)

## Project LAUNCH Updates

**New Haven – new grant application** - Nancy DiMauro discussed main points and focus of the grant; some points included: DCF is primary applicant and co-applicant is DPH, showing and integration of services targeting children ages 0-8 years old, utilizing 5 core strategies (utilizing New Haven's MOMS Partnership, embedding full-time ECCP consultant, looking to expand capacity of home visitors, creation of a young children health and wellness council, and work closely with MIECHV and ECCS). New Haven is the location to receive services outlined in the grant.

**New Britain/Wheeler Clinic (*Promising Starts*)** - Melissa Mendez reviewed progress in this the 4<sup>th</sup> year (of the 5 year grant) of Promising Starts using attached handout as talking points. She stated that the project's formation started by taking the community blueprint as a springboard and putting it in a public health framework.

## ECCS Evaluation Strategy

### Needs assessment framework overview

- Rick Porth presented an overview of the grant calling it a needs assessment with a few main emphasis: will engage parents and front-line professionals; the feedback received will shape what we do together as a systems-building effort; we won't get in other peoples way, but will scale up what is working best.
- The 3 main purposes/goals of the assessment's framework is to :
  - Increase the number of screenings in several settings, try to understand screening information on an aggregate level over time, strengthen follow-up efforts (and make as easy as possible) if a need /concern is identified.
- He emphasized that this is a big charge and will only succeed if we all pull in the same direction.

### Evaluation Strategy Team

- Rick Porth introduced Mhora Lorentson and her work with ECCS and the Evaluation Subcommittee to date. She proceeded to review her Evaluation Update that was emailed to the committee prior to this meeting.
- Mhora emphasized a collaborative evaluation approach.
- Her timeline for the evaluation portion began in January 2014, when she was brought on in this role.
- Immediate tasks are to identify the communities for the focus groups and have focus group questions solidified by the end of spring.
- Initial surveys will be disseminated in a broad way and focus groups will be more specific in nature.
- Lisa Honigfeld (CHDI) commented that this is not a typical evaluation but an ongoing needs assessment; what we learn each year should inform what we do; it is progressive in nature and each

year will add to the previous one. She asked that the full list of guiding questions for the evaluation be sent to this committee (see attached).

- A few recommendations from council members were given: keeping families in the forefront and especially as part of the questions, be sure we are putting families as the first partner in what is happening, continue to engage families after the group on the process – also emphasized this in regards to early childhood professionals – be sure a purposeful feedback loop happens so participants are given feedback.
- Paul Dworkin asked that CDI send their taxonomy list to Mhora.
- Mhora will try to align the evaluation's surveys to other survey's being used.

Paul Dworkin outlined 3 concepts from the AAP that should be reflected in the HMG campaign and ECCS grant: the process for early detection is surveillance and screening; the tools for screening are not pass/fail; early detection does no good if it does not relate to the linkage (of services) piece. He also emphasized that the Strengthening Families protective factors are used as measures of success and strategies for intervention.

### **Agency Updates**

- **Rosa Biaggi** reported that MIECHV contractors stated that all sites are at capacity within the first two quarters of the grant; enrollment in the PAT programs has been steadily increasing and is almost at capacity; Monica Jensen is now coordinating the program and is our (ECCS) primary contact; unfortunately, she has been alerted that there will be significant cuts across all MIECHV grants and there will be a decrease in funding – details are unsure at this time.
- **Rick Porth** stated the HRSA check-in meeting is scheduled on Monday (3/10/14) and we want to show HRSA that we are working hard. He thanked Mhora for working quickly in moving forward to begin the focus groups within next few months.
- **Lisa Honigfeld** announced the EPIC module to engage child health providers with early childcare providers.
- **Jessica Sager** announced the All Our Kin all-day conference is on Saturday May 3<sup>rd</sup>; there will be approximately 200 family childcare providers in attendance.

**Other Business:** next meeting: **Wednesday, May 14, 2014** from **10:00 to 12:00** at United Way of CT