



District of Columbia  
State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council (SECDCC) Meeting  
February 22, 2016

**Members Present:** Rachel Joseph, Hanseul Kang, Erin Kupferberg, Denise Dunbar, Elizabeth Groginsky, Myrna Peralta, Jack McCarthy, Michela English, Stacey Collins, Dr. Lee Beers, Cecelia Alvarado, Colleen Sonosky, and Patricia Reeber

**Others Present:** Tiffany Williams, Selena Gonzales Jones, Lauren Stillwell Patterson, Soumya Bhat, Thelma Wong, Vince Lampone, Susan McPherson, and Isabella Sanchez

Call to order: 2:42 pm

## **I. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

- Hanseul provided an overview of the objectives of this meeting. This was followed by a quick round of introductions.

## **II. CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF) PLAN – PowerPoint Presentation**

- Elizabeth offered an update on January public hearings that were held to solicit verbal and written public comments on the draft CCDF plan (for October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2018).
  - The draft CCDF plan had a public comment period from December 20, 2015 to February 8, 2016.
- According to Elizabeth, there was participation at all of the meetings, including among early learning administrators, parents and advocates. Approximately 5 or 6 individuals attended each of the public meetings, which were held in all four quadrants of the city (at public libraries, child care centers, etc.). Additional feedback was provided in written format.
  - Some organizations providing comments included DC Prep, Sunshine Early Learning Center, DC Action for Children, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, Briya, the Center for Law and Social Policy, Kiddie City Day Care, and Department of Human Services.
- Some public comments encouraged DC to foster more public-private partnerships to support additional funding for facilities, and for teacher credentials and compensation. Others urged DC to think strategically about its service to vulnerable populations, including infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and children experiencing homelessness. Comments also pushed OSSE to evaluate IT solutions that would facilitate more provider-friendly systems and policies.



- For the benefit of those who were less familiar with the CCDF plan, Hanseul added that it is the big, comprehensive federal plan that DC has to submit to the US Department of Health and Human Services. It's one of the city's largest sources of child care funding, especially for subsidies. Revised federal legislation requires the city to make some changes and provide additional information.
- The CCDF plan is broken into 8 sections. Elizabeth summarized each of these sections. She prefaced her remarks by observing that DC is already ahead of many states in terms of meeting the new federal requirements.
  - *Section #1 – Leadership and Coordination.* There is a new provision in the law that mandates the creation of a State Child Care Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan. OSSE has developed an implementation strategy.
  - *Section #2 – Promoting Family Engagement through Outreach and Public Education.* OSSE seeks to make consumer information about CBOs more transparent to families (e.g., quality ratings, the results of licensing visits and complaints). A consumer friendly website that provides more granular information is required by Oct. 2016.
  - *Section #3 – Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children.* DC is doing well in this area, but greater outreach for children experiencing homelessness is required. Options under review may include a grace period for immunization and other required documentation for families experiencing homelessness. Additionally, eligibility re-determination policies that support electronic verification to reduce the need for families to take time away from work or school to make a visit to a DC government office.
  - *Section #4 – Provider Policies.* OSSE seeks to use technology to facilitate more timely payments to providers.
  - *Section #5 – Licensing and Compliance.* OSSE will offer enhanced training opportunities to its licensing specialists. New requirements around critical health and safety issues for child development staff that have been included in the Proposed Rules for Child Development Facilities. Also, new requirements around background checks for providers that must be met by Oct. 2017.
  - *Section #6 – Professional Development.* OSSE is looking to other states for best practices as it increases provider training on business practices. Also, new federal requirements will be embedded into OSSE's PD offerings for providers.
  - *Section #7 – Quality.* DC is currently in full compliance with the law in this area. That said, OSSE has been working for many years to move to an enhanced QRIS across all three sectors.
  - *Section #8 – Grantee Accountability.* Again, DC is in compliance, but OSSE wants to make its oversight systems even more robust and efficient.



- The new CCDF law is a “new frontier” for early childhood. Interagency collaboration is essential, and is reflected in every section of the plan (in terms of leadership coordination between agencies, public agencies and private partners). This work cannot be done through OSSE alone.
- OSSE needs to submit the plan by March 11. HHS will provide feedback to OSSE between March and May. Full implementation begins June 1, 2016.
- The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the CCDF law was published on December 24, 2015. OSSE will continue to update the SECDCC as needed regarding regulatory changes.
- After summarizing the plan, the following guiding questions were posed to the SECDCC:
  - How can we improve inter and intra-agency communication to support and improve access and quality of child care to all families and especially for the populations below?
    - Children in underserved areas;
    - Infants and toddlers;
    - Children with disabilities; and
    - Children who receive care during nontraditional hours.
  - What are your two priorities to successfully accomplish the aforementioned task?
- Jack asked if it was too late to address the problem of chronic absenteeism among children experiencing homelessness, related to Section #3 of the CCDF plan. Is there a way to use the plan to get expedited access to shelter and housing for homeless families with young children? His organization has found that it is hard for parents to navigate among the various systems and supports that are available to them in DC.
  - Elizabeth agreed that this is an important issue. OSSE will connect with DHS on this issue.
- LaToya mentioned that, in her role as a community parent outreach coordinator, she is concerned about children who enroll in the common lottery, but whose families are then forced to move. She is also concerned about the lack of transportation for children who currently live in shelters. Finally, she wants to learn where homeless families who are eligible for Head Start live, and how DCPS can do more effective outreach to these families.
  - In reply, Hanseul said that DC has ramped up support for homeless children in school settings, but the same focus has not been applied to child care settings. OSSE is considering a partnership with DHS to address this area, and looking at its own policies to see how it can address this need.



- Denise asked if there is a role for research and referral personnel (R&R) in identifying families and providing access to resources, since many calls come from child care settings. It may be possible to work with zip codes to identify resources.
  - LaToya added that it would be ideal to give families access to early childhood information, in addition to information on DCPS. Partners in schools should be aware of all of the opportunities available to families.
  - Elizabeth responded that the Division of Early Learning has built a strong relationship with the McKinney-Vento liaison at OSSE, and that it is very helpful to hear about this community need from SECDCC members.
- In terms of overall feedback on the CCDF plan itself:
  - Jack said that the plan is solid, but that the big challenge will be execution.
  - Another attendee mentioned that the cost of serving a child with disabilities is prohibitively expensive for some child care centers.

### **III. FINANCING CHILD CARE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: INSIGHTS FROM A COST ESTIMATION MODEL**

- Elizabeth presented a slide deck put together by Louise Stoney, a nationally recognized expert in early childhood financing. She has been working in early childhood for more than 30-years. Ms. Stoney, along with her colleague Libbie Poppick conducted the recent cost estimation study for DC. The cost estimation study is a requirement of CCDF and the results are used to inform subsidy rates in the District of Columbia.
- Early care and education (ECE) is expensive, and public dollars are very limited. Moreover, the cost of delivering ECE can vary widely based on children's needs and age, the size of the facility, enrollment levels and program quality.
- Market rate surveys measure the price of care. But price is only one data point. A cost estimation model offers more nuance for informing policy decisions.
  - Cost modeling methodology is endorsed by HHS, and is increasingly used by states to understand its child care markets.
  - Hanseul mentioned that OSSE has yet to develop definitive answers to the questions raised by this analysis. Nevertheless, the study offers useful information to help the District of Columbia get closer to the answers.
- Key lessons from the study include the following:
  1. Infants and toddlers are the most expensive to serve.
  2. Quality costs money.



3. Full enrollment is important for financial sustainability.
  4. Size matters – small centers that serve primarily infants and toddlers struggle financially.
  5. Age matters – programs that serve mixed ages of children are financially stronger.
  6. District public universal pre-K is a game-changer– and requires strategic thinking about infants and toddlers.
  7. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal funding stream that is available to all child care providers who serve low-income children.
    - A small child care center (that serves only 56 children) could receive as much as \$65,000 in additional revenue from the CACFP.
- In addition to the obvious issue of funding, Hanseul encouraged SECDCC members to think about other ways to address financial challenges. For example:
    - Can public schools connect families to licensed, high quality child care providers?
    - Can early care centers with lots of infants and toddlers expand their focus to serve Out of School Time students from a broader age group?
    - Can the city help more child care centers to become Level 2 providers (thereby reducing some barriers to enrollment)?
  - Below are a few comments made by SECDCC members and meeting attendees with regard to the cost estimation study:
    - When families come to a social services agency, are they asked if they need, or have, child care? When they say no, are they pointed towards available resources?
      - Hanseul said that she is interested in the idea of helping other DC agencies to extend eligibility for child care subsidies on-site.
    - It can be very time consuming, complex and expensive to create new facilities where the need is greatest. The city could provide incentives to developers and banks to make new child care centers a priority. In addition, the city could fund “navigators” to help people cut through the red tape to start new child care facilities in high-need areas.
      - Lee suggested that this may be a fruitful area to explore with business partners.
      - Myrna suggested that Montgomery County has a policy where any new property for lease has to have a child care facility, or the developer needs to explicitly explain why it does not.
    - Elizabeth mentioned that OSSE is launching a shared services platform for child care centers. Its goal is to enhance back office support for centers, so that professionals can focus as much as possible on delivering quality care.

#### **IV. EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION NETWORK (ECIN)**

Lee presented an overview of the ECIN, which is a collaborative of DC communities working together to



reduce the impact of toxic stress on children. The network is a partnership between Children's National and Georgetown Medical Center. It will be engaging public, private and philanthropic partners in the region.

- The mission of the ECIN is “to ensure that all children in Washington, DC, are able to thrive and reach their fullest potential by taking a science-based and cross-sector approach to strengthening families and the systems which support them, thus decreasing the impact of trauma and toxic stress.”
- The network will focus on education, action, research and advocacy – all on behalf of children 0-5. The initiative started in January. Its partners are currently in a phase of “listening and learning” from leaders across sectors.
- Myrna gave feedback that the network's name should reflect a focus on health, especially since two medical centers are leading the initiative.
  - In response, Lee mentioned that the network is not solely health related, and will be inclusive of education and other agencies that serve families. The ECIN seeks to bridge professionals across multiple sectors.

#### **V. EARLY COMPREHENSIVE CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS IMPACT (ECCS IMPACT) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

- A new, competitive grant opportunity has emerged, funded by HHS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau).
  - It is a five year grant, and DC will be applying for it.
  - OSSE will be the lead agency, in partnership with numerous agencies and organizations (including DOH, CFSA, ECIN, DBH, DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative, the Urban Alliance, and Smart from the Start).
  - The application is due on March 15.
  - According to Elizabeth, the grant could be \$426,000 per year for five years.
- The city is looking at a two-generation, place based approach, focused on the following communities:
  - Woodland Terrace and Kenilworth-Parkside (years 1-5)
  - Potentially adding Benning Terrace and/or Barry Farm (years 3-5)
- Primary Aim of the Initiative: Within 60 months, participating communities will show a 25 percent increase from baseline in age appropriate developmental skills among their communities' three (3) year olds. In addition, DC aims for improved language acquisition in young children, and a reduction in maternal depression.
- The grant requires letters of support from key members of DC's state advisory councils. OSSE will follow up with some members of the SECDCC to request these letters.

Meeting adjourned: 04:03pm