



## Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2024

31C – 6th Floor (A & B Suites) and Zoom  
10:00 a.m.

**Members, Liaisons and Guests in Attendance:** Dr. Katie Baker, Dr. Joe Bonner, Ms. Molly Cluster, Dr. Tuba Fehr, Ms. Ila Flannigan, Ms. Jackie Franco, Dr. Helena Gabor, Ms. Jessica Meade, Dr. Seema Nayak, Ms. Melissa Porter, Dr. Mary Rooney, Dr. Kristin Dupre, Ms. Venus Thomas, Dr. Kaitlin Quinn, Ms. Alicia Cross, Ms. Briana Barnes, Ms. Anne Schmitz, Ms. Barbara Acquaviva, Ms. Debbie Washington, Ms. Ruth Fraley, Dr. Jennifer Lee, Mr. Ivan Locke, Mr. James Blue, Ms. Chikeia Boykin, Dr. Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz, Ms. Tiffany Fields, Ms. Rebecca Hommer, Ms. Karen Nimerick, Dr. Leslie Ramsey, Ms. Armelle Tchayep, Ms. Shaniqua Thomas, Dr. Judith Walters, Ms. DeAnna Knox, Ms. Linda Owen

**I. Welcome:** Chair Jackie Franco called the meeting to order and welcomed voting members, liaisons, and guests. Ms. Franco reviewed the meeting agenda and asked attendees to participate in an ice-breaker Word Cloud.

**II. Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the January 18, 2024 meeting minutes was made, seconded, and approved by a quorum of voting members.

**III. Special Guest Presentation: NIH Paid Parental Leave - Ms. Ruth Fraley, Workforce Relations Division, Office of Human Resources**

Ms. Fraley reported on the NIH Paid Parental Leave program (PPL), introduced as part of the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA), effective October 1, 2020. PPL is granted in connection with the birth of a federal employee's child or the placement of a child with an employee, adoption, or foster care, and allows the substitution of up to 12 weeks of paid leave for FMLA unpaid leave. Employees who meet eligibility requirements for Title 5 FMLA are eligible for PPL, including full- or part-time Title 5, Title 38, Title 42 (FTEs only) employees. Individuals must be on a current appointment of more than 1 year in duration; consequently some 13-month stint Clinical Fellows are eligible. (Post-docs do not qualify.)

Eligible employees do not have to exhaust their leave balances before using PPL. Since the launch in 2021, 5.7% of the NIH FTE population (approximately 20,000) have used PPL. In 2023, there were 446 unique users – an increase of 73% from 2021. If both parents are eligible federal employees, they are eligible for 12 weeks of PPL each, which can be used non-consecutively within the first year. Board members inquired about a breakdown of which parent maximizes their PPL, the birthing or the non-birthing parent. Ms. Fraley concluded the presentation with a demonstration of the PPL Eligibility Tool found on the NIH OHR website, parental leave resources and contact information [WorkFlex@mail.nih.gov].

**IV. Committee Reports:**

**A. NIH Childcare Waitlist Committee:** Co-chair Ms. Jackie Franco reported on the committee's progress and future efforts to complete its work plan, including (1) reviewing waitlist data and report on trends; (2) examining the effect on the waitlist from long-term changes to the workforce as well as universal preschool initiatives; (3) developing creative strategies for maximizing the utility and sustainability of the waitlist; (4) refreshing the FAQs on the Child and

Family Programs webpages; and (5) collaborating with the Communications and Outreach Committee to improve awareness and understanding of the waitlist.

**Peak Enrollment Timeline:** Following review and discussion of waitlist peak enrollment policies, the Committee recommended to the Board a policy change allowing the NIH childcare centers to commence peak enrollment in January of each year (instead of the current policy start date of May) for children ages 25 to 59 months. (No change was recommended regarding the enrollment of infants and toddlers [ages 6 weeks to 24 months].) Voting Board members unanimously approved the recommendation, which was moved forward to the Division of Amenities and Transportation Services Director who approved the policy change. A period of sixty days was requested by the Childcare Waitlist Administrator to implement the policy this year. Accordingly, peak enrollment for 25–59-month-old children will commence on April 15, 2024. In the future, peak enrollment for 25–59-month-old children will commence on January 1 of each year.

Ms. Franco presented recent waitlist data including an explanation of children with immediate need, the decline rate, and its impact on enrolling children in the centers, and the limited number of preschool children currently registered on the waitlist.

The Committee will collaborate with the Communications and Outreach Committee to enhance awareness of the childcare centers, the waitlist guidelines, the new peak enrollment period, and waitlist registration updates. The Committee plans to review other waitlist policies (e.g., the decline policy) and to develop a survey to assess childcare needs across the NIH community.

- B. Membership Committee:** Co-chair Ms. Ila Flannigan announced the 2024-2027 Membership Campaign. The Committee will be recommending the selection of one or two voting members, who will commence their terms in September 2024. Upcoming Q&A Sessions are scheduled for March 19 and 21, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. and 10:30 a.m., respectively. These sessions provide an opportunity to better inform applicants of the workings of the Child Care Board. Announcements of the Membership Campaign were posted in this month's ORS Snapshot, the NIH Calendar of Events, the Parenting Listserv, and by NIH-wide global (on March 7, 2024). The deadline for submitting applications is close of business on March 22, 2024. Interviews will be held from April 8-11; the Committee's recommendation will be made to voting Board members at the May Board Meeting; new voting members will be invited to the final Board meeting in June.

## **V. Child & Family Programs Updates and Centers' News:**

- A. Blueprint for Maryland's Future Town Hall – Update:** Ms. Linda Owen reported that informational sessions to explain efforts to operationalize the legislation to expand publicly-funded full-day pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) in Maryland public schools for low-income 3- and 4-year-old children (named the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and passed in 2021) are being held throughout the state. The Montgomery County Town Hall was held on February 22 and attended by Ms. Owen and Ms. Anne Schmitz.

The goal of the legislation is to ensure pre-K expansion through a mixed delivery system, including programs in public schools and programs in private community programs (preschools, nursery school, home childcares) through a grant program. The first effort is to increase the number of high-quality private pre-K providers and teachers/aides. The current number of private providers participating is one-tenth or less of the number projected in the state's roll-out plan.

Private providers that participate are reimbursed \$13,000 per student for a 10-month academic year for a 6 ½ hour school day. The pre-K classroom(s) of up to 20 children in a private

provider's program must be staffed by a MCPS-certified teacher and aide. The private provider's program must participate in Maryland's quality rating and improvement system, MD EXCELS. The Blueprint calls for publicly funded pre-K for families of 3- and 4-year-old children **regardless of income** through a mixed delivery system **by 2032**.

**Impact on NIH programs:** In the next 10 years, many preschoolers in the State will be enrolled in public pre-K. Some families will opt for private preschool (at a cost). Center-based programs will most likely experience a significant decrease in the number of preschool children they serve and will need to shift their care model to primarily serve infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds. Classrooms in the facilities may need to be retrofitted to accommodate greater numbers of the youngest children. There will be a financial consequence resulting from serving the youngest children – the adult:child ratio required for infants, toddlers, and two's is 1:3 to 1:6, compared to 1:10 for preschool age children. More staff for fewer children often results in higher tuition rates.

**B. Nursing Mothers Program – Update:** Ms. DeAnna Knox reported on the newest program in the Child and Family portfolio, the Nursing Mothers Program that transferred from DOHS to DATS. The Nursing Mothers Program provides: (1) Services for future and current nursing mothers that have concerns about breastfeeding; (2) Emotional support and worksite assistance to make the return to work less stressful; (3) Prenatal breastfeeding education classes, (4) Telephone support from lactation consultants; and (5) Onsite lactation rooms complete with equipment. Nursing mothers must be enrolled in the program – at no charge – to access the services.

**C. Center' News reported by center directors:**

*ECDC@6006* – Ms. Anne Schmitz and Ms. Barbara Acquaviva

- MSDE Office of Child Care Licensing annual inspection occurred, resulting in zero non-compliances once again this year.
- Activities will be held to celebrate the Week of the Young Child from April 8-12.

*ECDC @NWCCC* – Ms. Venus Thomas and Ms. Anne Schmitz

- A new infant classroom was recently opened.
- Activities will be held to celebrate the Week of the Young Child from April 8-12.

*POPI* – Ms. Alicia Cross

- Preparing for and anticipating with excitement their NAEYC accreditation visit in the next two weeks.
- Grassy area at the front of the building is being fenced in to create a children's play area to be used during the playground renovation (April – October 2024).
- Activities will be held to celebrate the Week of the Young Child from April 8-12.

**VI. Announcements and Adjournment:**

1. Monday, March 18, 2024, 12:00 pm – Nursing Mothers Program Webinar, “Breastfeeding and Return to Work”
2. Tuesday, March 19, 3:30 pm – CCB Membership Campaign Q&A Session
3. Thursday, March 21, 10:30 am – CCB Membership Campaign Q&A Session
4. Thursday, March 21, 1:00 pm – Lunch & Learn Webinar, “Worry and Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: Using Evidence Based Strategies to Help Kids and Caregivers Cope During Tough Times”
5. Monday, March 25, 2024, 12:00 pm – Nursing Mothers Program Webinar, “How to Get Started with Breastfeeding”
6. Thursday, April 11, 11:00 am – NIMHD 5K Walk, Run, Roll

7. Wednesday and Thursday, April 17-18 – Research Festival
8. Thursday, April 18, 1:00 pm – Lunch & Learn Webinar, “Transitioning from School to Adult life for students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities”
9. Thursday, April 18, 7:00 pm – Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Town Hall #2
10. Thursday, April 25 - Take Your Child to Work Day

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

**The next Board meeting will be held on May 2, 2024, 10:00 am, in-person and on Zoom.**