



**September 23, 2021
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
WebEx**

Members, Liaisons, and Guests in Attendance: Dr. Joe Bonner, Dr. Kristin Dupre, Dr. Tuba Fehr, Ms. Ila Flannigan, Mr. Dan Fogarty, Ms. Jackie Franco, Ms. Olivia Kent, Dr. Seema Nayak, Ms. Melissa Porter, Ms. Nicole Ray, Dr. Gilman Toombes, Dr. Blake Warner, Ms. Kate Winseck, Ms. Heather Rogers, Ms. Julie Margel, Ms. Christina Segura, Ms. Anne Schmitz, Ms. Debbie Washington, Dr. Sila Ataca, Ms. Tammie Edwards, Ms. Donna O'Neill, Dr. Carl Hashimoto, Dr. Mary Kearney, Mr. Ivan Locke, Mr. Rusty Mason, Ms. Mallory McCormick, Mr. Patrick Miller, Ms. Linda Owen, Dr. Pragya Prakash, Dr. Judith Walters. Special Guests: Ms. Colleen McGowan.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Chair Kristin Dupre called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and asked guests to introduce themselves in the Chat Box. Introductions of new voting members were made, including Dr. Joe Bonner (NICHD), Dr. Tuba Fehr (NICHD), Ms. Jackie Franco (NIMH), and Ms. Melissa Porter (NCI).
- II. **Special Guest – Ms. Colleen A. McGowan, MHA, FACHE, Director, Office of Research Services** – Ms. McGowan introduced herself, highlighting that she is the mother of two children, ages six and eight, and appreciates how difficult it is to be a working parent right now. She extended her thanks to the NIH childcare center directors and their staff, as well as to the DATS staff who work with the centers.

Ms. McGowan shared details the recent ORS reorganization, highlighting the new five-year ORS strategic plan. ORS provides the regulatory, public safety and security foundation for medical research at the NIH, and the amenities that foster well-being of its employees. The new strategic plan is a roadmap for the next five years, demonstrating a forward-leaning, proactive, innovative approach delivered by a team of dedicated professional committed to service excellence – that includes the NIH childcare centers and the DATS Child and Family Programs.

Ms. McGowan reported that ORS will continue to support childcare center staff by offering vaccinations, booster vaccinations (eventually), and asymptomatic testing, free of charge, and is exploring options to provide testing onsite at the childcare centers for increased convenience.

In addition, to address recommendations made in the Board's Annual Report: (1) ORS will be forming a COVID-10 after action group that will include representatives of stakeholder groups, such as the NIH Child Care Board. (2) ORS will support the Board recommendation to fund the childcare subsidy program, promote maximizing reimbursements, and advertise the program with the goal of increasing the number of participants. (3) ORS will support efforts to develop and implement an NIH-wide survey (either through an independent survey or combining efforts with existing surveys) to understand the impact of the pandemic on childcare for NIH families.

III. Updates -

1. Approval of Minutes - A motion to approve the June 3, 2021 meeting minutes was made, seconded, and approved by all.

2. 2020-2021 Annual Report – The Report was unanimously approved by voting members and routed to the Office of the NIH Director, Dr. Francis Collins, after review by Ms. Colleen McGowan, ORS Director, Dr. Alfred Johnson, Deputy Director for Management, and Dr. Lawrence Tabak, Principal Deputy Director of the NIH. A reply from Dr. Collins is anticipated by the October Board meeting.
3. Childcare Centers Update –
 - POPI (Parents of Preschoolers, Inc.) – Executive Director Christina Segura reported that the center is 87% enrolled. She commented that recruiting and hiring childcare staff is very difficult right now, for not only the NIH centers but state-wide and nationwide. Luckily, POPI has low staff turnover and has been able to retain its staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent hiring has included former staff members returning to POPI. Parents continue to drop-off and pick-up their children outside the center without actually entering the building, and these procedures will remain in place for the foreseeable future. Back to School Night for each of the classrooms was held virtually.
 - NWCCC (Rockville Day Care Association, Inc.-Northwest Child Care Center) – Site Director Julie Margel echoed comments made earlier about recruiting, hiring and retaining qualified early childhood teachers and aides; it has been a struggle. A group of children matriculated to kindergarten at the end of the summer, and those spaces have not been filled from the waitlist resulting in the closure of one of the center’s preschool classrooms. The center is offering virtual Open Houses and Tours in an effort to acquaint prospective families with the center. The NWCCC Parent Council is meeting, and activities, such as Spirit Week, are being planned.
 - ECDC (Executive Child Development Center, Inc.) – Executive Director Anne Schmitz shared that 100% of the ECDC staff is fully vaccinated. No positive cases of COVID-19 have been reported among the staff or children since December 2020. Anne expressed thanks to the NIH for support in providing vaccinations and asymptomatic testing for her staff. Her center is finding it challenging at this time to coordinate with Montgomery County Public Schools around the issue of containing COVID-19 cases; ECDC serves school-age children in a kindergarten program and a before-and-after care program.
 - Child and Family Programs – DATS Director, Ms. Tammie Edwards, expressed her thanks to the center directors and their staff for their continued efforts to provide safe and nurturing care for the children of NIHers. It was announced that the new program specialist will start on October 12.

IV. 2021-2022 Work Plan Review – Chair Kristin Dupre presented the draft 2020-2021 work plan for review. Each committee’s objectives were discussed. The committee chairs were asked to convene the committees in the next four weeks to be prepared to present a final work plan for approval at the October 28 meeting. The work plan timeline was reviewed. (The PowerPoint slides are appended for reference.)

V. 2021-2022 Committee Assignments – Vice-chair Olivia Kent shared the Board Committee assignments and encouraged new and old voting members as well as liaisons and regular guests to volunteer to serve on committees that hold an interest for them. The update Committee Assignment will be revised and circulated before the next meeting. (The PowerPoint slides are appended for reference.)

In addition, voting members with interest in assuming leadership positions on the Board are encouraged to reach out to the current Chairs and/or Linda Owen so that they might begin to shadow the current Chairs at planning meetings and in other discussions.

VI. New Business – Chair Kristin Dupre reported that NCI has asked that the Board reconsider their recommendation regarding the NIH Childcare Waitlist Policy regarding accepting OHR official offer letters and not IC signed letters of intent. The policy regarding letters of intent versus official offer

letters was discussed last Spring with the Board's Waitlist Committee and the Committee recommended that the Waitlist Administrator continue to adhere to the policy of using the official offer letter as the 'activation' date for a child on the NIH Childcare Waitlist.

A potential new NIH hire can complete the NIH Childcare Waitlist registration form for their child(ren) before receiving an OHR official offer letter. If, when the Waitlist Manager verifies eligibility, the individual is not yet found in the NED [as an Employee or Fellow], the Waitlist Manager will correspond with the potential new hire that they should provide a copy of their OHR official offer letter as soon as they receive it to activate their child's eligibility for an offer of space in an NIH childcare center.

The topic will be reconsidered by the Waitlist Committee once co-chairs for the committee are found and the committee can convene. Chair Kristin Dupre requested that Dr. Mary Kearney or an alternate representative attend the Waitlist Committee meeting to provide an understanding of the issue(s)/goal(s) at hand, and what might be the most appropriate action/strategy moving forward to address the specific concerns/goals.

VII. Announcements and Adjournment

- September 23 @ 1:00 PM – Lunch and Learn Webinar: “Your Child’s Wellbeing in a Pandemic School Year”
- October Work & Family Month events: visit the website:
<https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/WorkFamilyMonth.aspx>

Attachment: PowerPoint slide presentation

The next Board meeting will be Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 10:00 AM