



Meeting Minutes

January 18, 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. Angelina Williams, Dr. Kristin Dupre, Ms. Heather Rogers, Ms. Venus Thomas, Ms. Alicia Cross, Ms. Briana Barnes, Ms. Ruth Fraley, Dr. Jennifer Lee, Mr. Ivan Locke, Dr. Anneliese Norris, Dr. Leslie Ramsey, Dr. Judith Walters, Ms. Susan Borst, Ms. Tammie Edwards, 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 thanked the committee for their hard work and extending themselves to help achieve goals set forth. She also thanked NIH families. 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 November 16, 2023 meeting minutes was made, seconded, and approved by a quorum of voting members.

III. Committee Reports:

1. **Innovative Program Committee:** Dr. Joe Bonner presented a PowerPoint presentation addressing the goals of the Committee to (1) continue to partner with the office of the Deputy Director for Intramural Research to support NIH intramural fellows with their child and family care needs and (2) stay informed on the work of the NASEM Caregivers Study and the NIH ACD Postdoc Working Group to develop and advocate for innovative ways to support working parents and families. Recommended changes of the NIH ACD Working Group include hiring postdocs as employees, not contractors, providing full benefits, including a \$70,000 starting salary and \$10,000 for dependent care, and treating international postdocs the same way as U.S. citizens. If the recommended benefit of providing \$10,000 for dependent care is enacted, will federal employees be afforded the same benefit? A possible consequence/trade-off of the proposal, if enacted, may be fewer numbers of postdocs being funded.

Dr. Bonner also discussed the Children's Opportunity Alliance (that serves as the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity in Montgomery County) and its goal to collaborate with county stakeholder groups (including the public schools) to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (the Blueprint). The goal of the Blueprint is to improve children's Kindergarten readiness through the expansion of and access to publicly funded full-day prekindergarten for four-year-olds who currently qualify based on family income. Achieving the expansion of Maryland's public PreK requires a mixed delivery system of public schools and childcare providers. The Children's Opportunity Alliance is involved in building the capacity of childcare providers to meet the Blueprint requirements and is currently holding information sessions to assist childcare providers in the grant process.

2. **Back-Up Care Program Committee:** Dr. Seema Nayak reported the back-up care data from the last contract year (October 2022-September 2023) provided by the contractor, Bright Horizons. In the last contract year, there were 439 uses by eligible federal employees and trainees/fellows.

Federal employees comprised 90% of users. Information shared included back-up care registration statistics (registered employees, registered care recipients, and registered trainees as well as registration by age group), back-up care demand (demand by employee type and monthly demand), back-up care utilization (back-up care usage, fill rate, workdays saved, use by employee type, monthly use, use by age group and use by program). All use in the last contract year was in the Mid-Atlantic region that includes NIH satellite campuses in Baltimore and Frederick, Maryland and Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. It was confirmed that back-up care can be provided in-home to assist with virtual learning. A goal of the Committee is to ensure that eligible NIH employees and trainees/fellows are aware of and enrolled in the NIH Back-up Care Program, for child, elder, and self-care.

3. Upcoming Committee Reports at March 2024 Board Meeting: (1) Membership and (2) Childcare Waitlist Committees.

IV. Child & Family Programs Updates and Centers' News:

- Ms. Susan Borst reported on information that was presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference that was held in November 2023. She shared that there are many childcare centers that are still recovering from COVID difficulties, including staffing challenges and wages. Programs now must be creative in exploring ways of recruiting and retaining employees. Ms. Borst also explained the need for parent education and engagement to help parents learn more about curriculum and standards.
- Ms. DeAnna Knox, the new Child and Family Program Specialist, was welcomed.
- Ms. Linda Owen was thanked for her support of Child and Family Programs over the past year.
- There have been several cases of COVID in the centers since January 1; however, there have been more cases of RSV. Centers are reminding parents to keep children at home if they have symptoms and to practice healthy handwashing.
- A list of NIH publications and other methods to get messages out to the NIH community (News2Use, ListServs, etc.) were shared; Board members were encouraged to write an article about our child and family programs for publication.
- The ECDC @6006 Executive Blvd. lease has been renewed for another 5 years.
- POPI playground renovation: Breaking ground is scheduled to begin on March 1, 2024, weather permitting. Monthly construction meetings will include the center director and Child and Family Programs staff; the next meeting scheduled for early February 2024.

Centers' News reported by center directors:

ECDC@NWCCC –

- Holiday events included bulletin board contests, a Holiday Sing-a-Long, and Spirit Week.
- The center is in the process of hiring teachers to open additional infant classrooms.

POPI –

- The closed infant classroom is expected to re-open soon.
- The center is in the process of hiring new staff.
- Preparing for NAEYC accreditation visit; they are purchasing new materials and replenishing classrooms.
- Music with Mr. Dave has resumed.
- They are exploring opportunities to enrich gross motor development during the playground renovation.
- Spirit Week was held in January 2024.

V. Announcements and Adjournment:

1. Lunch and Learn Webinar, “Positive Parenting” – January 18, 2024
2. Lunch and Learn Webinar, “Art of Raising Children Between Cultures” – February 15, 2024
3. NIH 5K Run- April 11, 2024
4. Research Festival - April 17-18, 2024
5. Take Your Child to Work Day- April 25, 2024
6. Bike to Work Day – May 17, 2024
7. Camp Fantastic – June 11, 2024
8. Safety, Health, and Wellness Day – June 18, 2024
9. Work and Family Month- October 2024

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

The next Board meeting will be held on March 14, 2024, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm.