



**Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2023
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**

Members, Liaisons and Guests in Attendance: Dr. Joe Bonner, Ms. Molly Cluster, Dr. Kristin Dupre, Dr. Tuba Fehr, Ms. Ila Flannigan, Mr. Dan Fogarty, Ms. Jackie Franco, Dr. Helena Gabor, Ms. Jessica Meade, Dr. Seema Nayak, Ms. Nicole Ray, Dr. Mary Rooney, Ms. Heather Rogers, Ms. Julie Margel, Ms. Althea Treacy, Ms. Marie Rienzo, Ms. Anne Schmitz, Dr. Carl Hashimoto, Ms. Ruth Fraley, Ms. Jennifer Lee, Dr. Tish Murphy, Dr. Judith Walters, Ms. Tammie Edwards, Ms. Susan Borst, Mr. Rusty Mason, Ms. Linda Owens, Ms. Chikeia Boykin, Ms. Rebecca Hommer, Ms. Soncheray Hall, and Ms. Debra Harding.

I. **Welcome:** Chair Dr. Kristin Dupre called the meeting to order and welcomed voting members, liaisons, and guests. Dr. Dupre extended a warm welcome to all in attendance and wished everyone the best in the new year. She thanked everyone for their patience with technical issues at the start of the meeting. Dr. Dupre welcomed Linda Owens who has rejoined Child & Family Programs Team, and introduced new guests, Ms. Soncheray Hall, and Ms. Debra Harding. Following introductions, a Word Cloud Activity was led by Ms. Jackie Franco.

II. **Updates:**

A. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the November 3, 2023, meeting minutes was made by Ms. Nicole Ray, seconded by Dr. Joe Bonner, and meeting minutes were approved.

B. **Child & Family Programs Update – Ms. Susan Borst**

Ms. Susan Borst thanked the NIH-sponsored Child Care Center administrative teams and their staff for the wonderful ways they continue to serve the children and families at NIH. Ms. Borst shared that she, along with ORS Leadership, including Ms. Colleen McGowen, Mr. Tim Tosten, Ms. Lisa Hoffman, Ms. Tammie Edwards, Mr. Rusty Mason, had the pleasure to witness the centers “in action” during a recent tour of the Northwest Child Care Center (NWCCC) and the East Child Care Center (POPI) at Buildings 23 and 64. The centers were alive with busy young children who were engaged in work and play. The staff were busy helping and supporting young children individually, in small groups, during floor play, and through circle time. The children were so busy in their work and play that they didn’t stop to notice the visitors. The sights and sounds of happy children were quite a joy!

Ms. Borst acknowledged Ms. Jen Rooms and Ms. Candice Alston who have been acting co-directors at POPI since the previous director’s departure in October 2022. They have worked very hard to oversee operations and to support the staff and families at the center. Thank you for such generous service to the children, their staff, and parent communities. The new POPI Director, Ms. Alicia Cross will begin her tour on January 23, 2023. Ms. Cross is the former Assistant Director from National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Child Care Center. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education and most of her master’s work has been in Early Childhood Studies. She is an active member of NAEYC, is detail-oriented, knowledgeable and an active listener. She is also a former Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Fellow, who created a change project focused on equity and early childhood education. The project required educators use self-reflection to change how they interacted with children and families from various socio-economic, ethnic, gender, and cultural backgrounds.

Ms. Borst highlighted news from each of the three child care centers and reminded center directors of the upcoming Quarterly Enrollment Reports due in January.

III. Committee Reports / Work Plan Review: Dr. Kristin Dupre reminded all committee chairs to schedule time to meet with committee members to review work plans for updates at the March meeting. She asked all voting members to consider a Membership co-chair opportunity with Ms. Ila Flannigan. The Membership Campaign is fast approaching, and this committee could use your leadership talents.

Child Care Subsidy- Dr. Tuba Fehr and Ms. Molly Cluster reviewed the new subsidy threshold changes effective January 2023 and are hopeful that the increased Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) to \$100K will maximize utility in the program. Dr. Fehr thanked Ms. Jessica Meade for designing the new flyer reflecting a new colored blue background to delineate it from previously printed materials. Dr. Kristin Dupre added that this subsidy increase was a direct result of the Child Care Board Recommendation forwarded to NIH Leadership last summer.

Innovative Programs, Subsidy, and Back-up Care Committees – Dr. Kristin Dupre spoke about the commitment of addressing Child Care Cost Subsidy support for Intramural Fellows. This is a broad issue that is gaining attention across the NIH and is part of the 2022 – 2023 Work Plan for the Back-up Care, Subsidy, and Innovative Programs Committees. Dr. Dupre provided background information dating back to 2006 NIH FelCom Survey results which showed 90% of respondents felt that improving access to child care would positively affect recruitment/ retention of postdocs and 72% felt that childcare issues reduced their scientific productivity. The COVID-19 pandemic and higher center-based childcare costs (~41% increase) and inflation have further challenged NIH working parents and caregivers. Dr. Dupre provided background on the Tribble Amendment, NIH Child Care Subsidy Guidelines and summarized that NIH fellows are not eligible to receive subsidy support from appropriated government funds. By highlighting the recent administrative supplements to support childcare costs for extramural fellows, child and family care challenges discussed at the 2022 NIH Virtual Town Hall, and with the new Re-envisioning NIH-Supported Postdoctoral Training Working Group to the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director, the timing is right to continue strong voices and request action to financially assist Intramural Fellows. The NIH Child Care Board will continue to be a strong supporter and voice for action.

Northwest Child Care Center & the Role of the NIH Child Care Board – Dr. Dupre shared several orientation slides reminding our NIH Child Care Board of:

- the mission and roles of voting members, board liaisons, and other individuals
- responsibilities of advisement, support, and action plans
- conflict of interest – ethics waiver required if a voting member applies for NIH Child Care Subsidy and relationship with NIH-sponsored Child Care Centers

Mr. Rusty Mason continued conversation that the Termination of Use Agreement was initiated on Nov. 14, 2022, with RDCA, Exec. Director, Jamie Brown. RDCA will continue to operate at the NWCCC through May 12, 2023. RDCA staff and families were notified of the termination on Nov. 28, 2022. After parents were notified of the termination, outreach to the other NIH-sponsored child care programs and their Board of Directors was initiated by NIH, and both POPI and ECDC expressed interest in expanding their child care operations. Ultimately, POPI withdrew their application so NIH could continue discussions with ECDC.

ECDC, under the direction of Director, Anne Schmitz, will expand operations to occupy ECDC@NWCCC. Ms. Schmitz met with NWCCC parents on January 11, 2023 to introduce herself, share ECDC philosophy, programming, and operations information, and noted that ECDC will be sharing a Preliminary Interest Form with parents. The priority is to offer current NWCCC families placement, if desired, then Ms. Schmitz will be using the NIH Waitlist to fill remaining spaces in classrooms. Ms. Schmitz is committed to a long-term effort to grow enrollment at ECDC@NWCCC. This is great news for all NIH employees who are seeking child care!

Dr. Dupre shared that the ORS Team is making great progress and are working cooperatively with RDCA Leadership for a smooth transition to the new operator with a minimal disruption in care. There are many moving parts underway as the team is working with licensing, facilities, amending Use Agreements, scheduling building maintenance, and working on procurement of furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

Mr. Mason spoke more about Use Agreements and how / when these agreements can be terminated by either the grantee or the grantor. These Use Agreements hold both NIH and the independent operator responsible for specific expectations for operations. The Use Agreements are signed between the independent operators Board of Directors and ORF/ORS Representatives.

NIH made the difficult decision to terminate RDCA at NWCCC's Use Agreement without cause after numerous meetings regarding incompliances in their Use Agreements and on-going attempts to provide action plans to address changes needed for compliance. NIH's hope and commitment to accessible, affordable, and quality childcare at the NIH was paramount in this decision to terminate. This decision was supported by the voting members of the NIH Child Care Board, elevated before NIH Leadership, and with consultation of the Office of General Council.

Ms. Tammie Edwards thanked the NIH Child Care Board, ORS Leadership Team, RDCA Executive Director, Jamie Brown, and the new operator, Ms. Anne Schmitz for their commitment to cooperation and professionalism as this transition occurs. She spoke of the importance of supporting current NWCCC families and that she and her team are providing support through weekly communications, scheduled parent forums to listen to concerns, and answering questions to share information. Ms. Edwards also spoke of what is within and outside NIH's control for the operator transition, the biggest task being licensure. NIH and ECDC are being proactive about submitting information in advance and as they learn more information regarding timelines, they will communicate this information to parents.

A question was asked, can we illuminate specific reasons for termination? Ms. Edwards responded that the NWCCC is licensed for 170 students and was 43% enrolled at the time of the termination decision. NIH desires to increase center enrollment capacity and offer accessible, affordable, and quality childcare to families on the NIH Waitlist. She also shared concern over the difficulty with staffing recruitment and retention efforts, and concern over the long-term stability of the center. Ms. Edwards noted that out of respect to RDCA, some of the internal discussions will remain private, and NIH has agreed not to solicit RDCA contracted staff for future employment, however they are aware of how to contact the new operator if they wish to interview for employment.

Another question was asked about the announcement of the new vendor (ECDC@NWCCC) and notifying parents on the NIH Waitlist. NIH child care website pages are in the process of being updated, and the NIH Waitlist partner is building-out the internal structures needed before NIH can announce the new vendor to those families on the NIH waitlist.

IV. Announcements and Adjournment

- a. Federal Holidays
 - i. Jan. 19 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - ii. Feb. 20 – Presidents Day
- b. Upcoming Lunch & Learn Webinars
 - i. Parenting in 2023: A Look at Best Practices on Jan. 19th (1-2 PM)
 - ii. Harnessing the Magic of Play for Children on Feb. 16th (1-2 PM)
- c. Continue to follow and participate in calendar events listed on the Employee Intranet.
- d. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.
- e. [Next meeting of the NIH Child Care Board - Thursday, March 2, 2023 - 10 AM to 12 Noon.](#)
(Building 31/C-6th Floor, Suites F & G, and via ZOOM Link)

V. Closed Session for Voting Members - Discussion and Adjournment at 12:05 PM