



Meeting Minutes – September 15, 2022
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
WebEx

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. Melissa Porter, Ms. Nicole Ray, Dr. Mary Rooney, Ms. Kate Winseck, Ms. Heather Rogers, Ms. Julie Margel, Ms. Jamie Brown, Ms. Anne Schmitz, Ms. Barbara Acquaviva, Dr. Sila Ataca, Mr. Ivan Locke, Ms. Mallory McCormick, Ms. Leslie Ramsey, Ms. Rebecca Hommer, Ms. Nadia Shelby, Dr. Judith Walters, Ms. Tammie Edwards, Mr. Rusty Mason, Ms. Susan Borst

- I. **Welcome:** Co-Chair Kristin Dupre called the meeting to order and welcomed voting members, liaisons, and guests. Dr. Dupre thanked members and guests for serving on this important board and co-chair, Jackie Franco shared her enthusiasm for the upcoming year’s work plan. Dr. Dupre welcomed Mr. Tim Tosten, Acting Director of ORS and Associate Director, Program and Employee Services.

Tim Tosten thanked the Child Care Board members for sharing wisdoms, making suggestions and recommendations and for supporting childcare issues, and commended center directors for their important and challenging work. He announced recent new hire, Dr. Jessica Chertow as Associate Director of Scientific Resources, ORS. Dr. Chertow will lead the scientific side of his current workload. Mr. Tosten reflected on the past year, navigating center closures with professionalism, following changing COVID operations guidance to keep everyone safe, and appreciated the center directors for their assistance in distribution of more than 800 antigen test kits with their center communities. Mr. Tosten discussed the recent Child Care Board’s subsidy recommendations which raises the AGI thresholds in a thoughtful tiered approach to allow for greater utility of funds to federal employees. This recommendation is currently under review by Colleen McGowen at the time of this meeting. Mr. Tosten talked about the growth of virtual webinars, peer circles, and support groups. As communications continue to change and NIH-wide global announcements are restricted, information about these important outreach events will be highlighted in the daily Calendar of Events digest, and through a new calendar ORS Monthly Snapshot featuring ORS Events. He encouraged board members to share this information by postings to different listservs with the goal to reach the diverse interest groups across the NIH. Tosten voiced support of a COVID After Action Committee to discuss challenges and reflect on what we learned from the pandemic. As we learn more about a changing workforce with various telework options, we need to carefully examine challenges to increasing center enrollment, be creative about new childcare models, and carefully consider the needs of this new workforce. Mr. Tosten concluded, thanking the Child Care Board for their continued efforts and recognized the DATS team of Tammie Edwards, Rusty Mason, and Susan Borst for their efforts to support childcare centers and their leadership during such extraordinary times.

- II. **Updates:**
- A. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the June 2, 2022, meeting minutes was made, seconded by Dr. Seema Nayak, and approved by voting members.
 - B. **2021-2022 Child Care Annual Report**

- Dr. Dupre thanked committee chairs and members for their submissions and announced the CCB Annual Report has been elevated to ORS and NIH Leadership with no new updates.

C. Child Care Center Announcements:

- **Executive Child Development Center (ECDC) – Reporting - Director, Anne Schmitz**
 1. Summer programming served 92 school-aged children for camp. They made 130 offers from the waitlist and secured 57 new enrollments and can confirm 165 currently enrolled for the fall. They enrolled mostly NIH employees, 1 fed (FDA) and 3 new contractors. Several families declined offers and later regretted their decision and asked for reconsideration but were not able to enroll because spaces were offered to other families. Ms. Schmitz reported that it took approximately 2.3 offers to fill 1 space at the Center, similar to their experience in 2021.
 2. Many new program offerings have returned to ECDC. The staff and children have enjoyed a return to normalcy with exciting field trips, swimming, karate, music with Mr. Dave, mandarin language class, and more! ECDC is still trying to expand staffing and are experiencing a 6% turn-over rate.
 3. In September, parents will be welcomed to Back to School Night and Scholastic Book Fair. October brings Fire Safety, Picture Day, and the end the month will highlight a Halloween Dance. The school-aged students will assist with the Halloween celebrations and festivities. November brings chilly weather and vision screenings.
 4. Ms. Schmitz mentioned developmental concerns caused by wearing masks for such a prolonged period, including children’s difficulty reading social cues and some notable delays in pragmatic speech. She is hopeful that NIH will consider a change in current masking policies.
 - i. Tammie Edwards shared that DATS has submitted a recommendation to ORS to allow masking to be optional by staff, parents, and children. It is under review by ORS, and there should be a decision announced at the end of this month (September).
- **NWCCC/Rockville Day Care Association (RDCA) – Reporting - Director, Julie Margel**
 1. Since COVID, RDCA has experienced reduced enrollment and continues to be challenged with staff recruitment. Ms. Margel noted, 20% of closing staff have left RDCA, and Ms. Margel communicated challenges with recruitment due to NIH procedures and requirements. She is in the process of interviewing 3 new staff (2 teachers and 1 aide) and is hopeful they will accept offers.
 2. Programming has returned to RDCA, the following are planned this fall; Parent-Teacher Conferences, Parent Council Meetings, Picture Day, Fall Harvest (outdoor events), Fire Station visits, and Thanksgiving Feasts. Their first fire drill (with alarms and talking directions) will occur in October.
- **Parents of Preschools, Inc. (POPI) - Report by Susan Borst, Child & Family Programs**
 1. Classroom renovations were completed over the summer in 3 spaces. Scope of Work included reconfiguring cubbies dividers to add square footage to two rooms and open space for improved (sight & sound) supervision. Adding a sink to a bathroom allowed POPI to change the room into a swing room. Classroom 2 will now house older two year-olds and younger three year-olds.

2. New membership enrollment offers (52) resulted in 28 enrollments.
3. POPI will be holding in-person Back to School Nights throughout September.
4. The entire POPI staff will attend the NAEYC Conference on Friday, November 18th. This is the largest Early Childhood Conference in the country and has excellent professional development opportunities for staff and leadership.
5. Playground renovation is being reviewed by ORS and ORF for discussion of FY 2023 funding.

D. Child & Family Programs - Updates by Susan Borst

- LWS-Adventist Healthcare - Welcome Kathryn Rhoderick!
- ORS is encouraging independent operators to resume licensed capacity at all childcare centers.
- There is significant facilities maintenance progress at all centers. At RDCA, Blinds and Soft Surfacing Repairs are completed, “new” dryer, and preparing for SRLM Project. At POPI, Renovations in Classrooms and Playground designs underwent 100% submission to ORF/ORS. At ECDC, working on GSA Environmental, Health, Safety & Fire Branch Inspections/Requirements and completion of outstanding facilities maintenance items.

- E. Dr. Dupre thanked each center director for their reports and celebrated the progress made to keep programs exciting and enrollment thriving at centers.

III. 2022-2023 Work Plans & Reporting

Ms. Franco asked Committee Chairpersons to reach out to committee members to schedule a meeting to review plans and make recommendations for changes before the November 3rd meeting. She emphasized that all 6 committees are in need of some level of increased membership and support, and also encouraged all board members to consider which committee(s) they would like to serve on in the year ahead. She noted the Subsidy, Membership and Communications committees are in the greatest need for co-chair positions. These are great opportunities for mentorship in leadership positions. Please contact Kristin Dupre, Jackie Franco, or Susan Borst with committee requests.

- A. **Membership Report**- Jackie Franco reported the committee will continue Q & A Sessions in the future, and will review liaison positions.
- B. **Subsidy Report**- Kristin Dupre reported that a recommendation was made to ORS to improve subsidy utilization. Subsidy is only available to federal employees since funds are appropriated from Congress. However, this committee is passionate about finding/developing more financial support to assist intramural fellows and trainees.
- C. **Back-Up Care Report**- Originally a pilot program which was exclusively utilized by federal employees, the Back-Up Care Program was opened to fellows and trainees in 2020. Back-Up Care can provide up to 10 days of care for child, adult, elder and self-care per individual. The cost of care is provided by the individual, and initial feedback from fellows and trainees identify cost of care as a barrier to utilizing the program. In the year ahead, this committee will work with Innovative Programs on creative solutions for fellows/trainees and will expand visibility of adult dependent care resources.
- D. **Waitlist Report** - This past May, NIH opened spots for contactors who work at an NIH facility in Maryland and have children who qualify for placement (ages 36-59 months) at NIH-sponsored childcare centers. No sibling placement will be considered. This allowed several children to be placed in immediate care. With “new” Workforce Flexibility Options in place as employees return to work, the Committee will need to explore policies, procedures, and impact of a changing workforce on programming. Full-time 5-day-a-week programming might be one option, but additional possibilities may be considered in the future.

- E. **Innovative Programs Report-** After meeting with Montgomery Moving Forward and learning of the newly formed Child Opportunity Alliance (an Early Childhood Initiative) comprised of private businesses, educators, government agencies and corporate fundraisers, NIH will need to stay connected for greater awareness of their work to improve childcare and support workforce development in the future. NIH has overlapping interests in the great works of this group as they are working to promote better pay wages for staff, offer affordable and equity-based childcare for vulnerable populations, and promote excellence in childcare across the county and state.

IV. New Business

- A. **Subsidy Recommendation-** Dr. Dupre shared the current program subsidy chart, sharing the subsidy ceilings from other federal agencies, and reviewing the Child Care Board's Proposal to ORS.
- B. **Future Work Impacts-** Dr. Dupre asked Board members to refer to the June minutes and continue suggesting future of work impacts in this time of changed work landscapes.
- C. "New" Waitlist Policy change allows individuals with appointed legal custodial and educational rights to place children in their care on the waitlist.
- D. **ECDC Lease Options-** Rusty Mason reported that the ECDC building is a leased space and an off-campus child-care center located near many apartments which provide affordable housing costs in the North Bethesda area supporting many fellows. This center also has a sizable before and after school program and a strong relationship with MCPS area schools and transportation services. Most of the families come from a Rockville zip code which is a huge geographic area.
- Some long-term decisions need to be made regarding whether or not to continue to offer child-care in this leased space, the term of a new lease, the area around this site and its impact on future growth and development, the condition of this building, and options to explore a new site or multi-sites.
 - In the year ahead, ORS would like to discuss with the Board these lease options for ECDC with a timeline of 1-3 years to develop and implement a plan. It might be best to task to a committee, such as Innovative Programs or Wait List.
 - Jackie Franco shared the strong sense of community at this center under the leadership of ECDC. Many parents love this off-campus location. DATS will share the response sent in April 2022 with the committee appointed to explore options.

V. Announcements

- A. Sept. 15, 1-2 PM ~ Lunch and Learn Webinar: Everybody Feels a Bit Anxious: How to Recognize and Help Children with Anxiety
- B. Feds Feeds Families Campaign- through September 30
- C. October is Work & Family Month – Check out the many offerings

VI. Adjournment of General Session at 11:20 AM.

VII. Closed Executive Session for voting members until 12:40 PM.

**Next meeting of the NIH Child Care Board - Thursday, November 3, 2022, from 10 AM to 12 Noon.
Hybrid Event - Meeting in 31C/6th Floor, Suites F&G or via Zoom Link**