



## Clay County Early Childhood Initiative March 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

This meeting was held using Google Hangouts

### Program Update:

Kidsfest has been cancelled. After discussion, it was the consensus of those attending today's meeting that the event should not be rescheduled. It will be held next year as part of the Week of the Young Child. Funds that were to be used for this year's event will be held over for use, next year.

Longest Table event is scheduled for June 11<sup>th</sup>. It will be hosted by the city of Moorhead and will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead. The planning team will meet on Monday to discuss if there is a need to postpone the event.

Census mailing to child care providers went out a week ago. Providers received a letter asking them to share information on Census 2020 with the families they serve and encourage them to complete the census application. The packet included a poster for display, Frequently Asked Questions, and two different children activities.

### Member sharing:

MSUM Early Learning Center is closing. The college did announce that employees were not to be in the building unless they physically need to be there. Families were contacted about the need for child care and found that most were working from home and that it would not be a hardship if the Center should close. Staff are looking at ways to keep in touch with children and families.

Churches United for the Homeless has closed its' doors to the public for meals and other services. A sack meal is being provided to those needing meals but not staying at the shelter. Only essential volunteers for the kitchen are allowed in to the building. They are working to set up online learning for students staying at the shelter. All family rooms are full with an additional four families in their overflow program.

Head Start closed on Tuesday and CAPLP closed on Wednesday. Head Start staff is working hard to connect with children and families to check in on how they and the children are doing. One teacher is using Facebook as a way to hold circle time, reading and activities.

Parent Aware offices are closed and staff are working from home. They are using video chat and phone to connect with staff and phoning providers to check in with them. Right now, the main concerns of providers are securing enough food and toilet paper due to the recent run on supplies our communities have experienced. All upcoming trainings have been cancelled or postponed until a further date. Marie encouraged us to reach out to our legislators to support a push for emergency funding to keep childcare

open and available due to the pandemic. Providers have been asked to stay open to provide care for the children of emergency responders and health care workers. Marie and Marianne provided information on “essential workers” during this time of emergency. Julie and Karen know of only one home-based provider that closed. It was a temporary closure to address a health issue.

Public Health is allowing some supervisors and staff to work from home. Homevisiting and other health services are utilizing telehealth. Families enrolled in WIC are able to continue to receive their benefits by telephone contact with public health staff. The benefits are loaded onto a card that is now being used in place of vouchers. The MN Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control are the best places on the internet to get accurate information on COVID-19.

Marsha shared information on the recently passed Family First Act which ensures continued funding for WIC and SNAP; provides funding for emergency sick leave or paid family leave for those who are caring for a sick family member or caring for children during the school closing. It also provides funds for COVID-19 testing by Indian Health. Check the West Central Initiative website for COVID-19 resources.

Moorhead Public Schools will begin online learning on March 30<sup>th</sup>. They are preparing student work under three categories – No tech/Low Tech/Tech. Staff have been gathering resources and developing courses for online use. They are keeping in touch with families via phone calls and emails. School staff have been checking with families on what supplies they need to do the lessons and activities at home.

Stay safe everyone! Wash your hands! Take advantage of the warmer weather coming this way and go outside!!