



**“Working together to create a better future for children and their families”.**

Clay County Early Childhood Initiative

Thursday August 20, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Carolyn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Clay County Public Health quarterly report was provided by Liz Bjur and Michelle Scherbenske

Healthy Families America: Michelle is the program lead for Clay and Wilkin counties. Two nurses are assigned to this program and combined have a 86% case load. They are looking for referrals to the program. A new nurse will be starting in Wilkin County once all training components are completed. Training is occurring virtually due to COVID. The program is enrolling clients virtually. At times it is challenging to keep families engaged in the process due to the need to hold meetings with them through phone or virtually. One example of how they are trying to keep parents engaged is through newsletters that provide information on child development and activities they can do at home with their child. Michelle shared a story about a new mom entering the program. At the time of the initial parent interview the mom shared information on how she was struggling emotionally. The nurse was able to facilitate a call to the parent’s doctor and an appointment was set up that resulted in medication for mom. Mom is doing much better now.

Nurse Family Partnership: The agency is noticing some fatigue among the nurses due to all the changes in how they provide their services due to COVID. They have built in some stress reliever activities and extra support time. Prior to COVID the Nurse Family Partnership program was running at 50% capacity. It is now at 44% capacity. All visits are being done virtually with the exception of a short visit to weigh baby. PMAP plans are reimbursing for virtual visits. A nurse out on maternity leave has returned but has been assigned to COVID work to take the place of a nurse in that program that is going out on maternity leave. WIC is seeing clients virtually until at least early September. WIC is a good source of referrals for this program. They are also receiving referrals from OB clinics and the NicU at the hospitals. Four nurses have started training on a new assessment tool that includes observation of child and mom interaction. Once training has been completed, they will be tested and then certified to use the tool. The September symposium for Nurse Family Partnership will be held virtually. For a small registration fee, any nurse can attend.

Information on COVID: Minnesota and North Dakota have been selected by the federal government to be one of the first states to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. A plan is currently being put in place to determine how best to distribute the vaccine. The vaccine will go to select high risk groups first such as the elderly living in nursing homes, first responders and medical people.

Agency Updates:

SAFE Kids continues to hold car seat checks on Tuesday and Thursday until 6:30pm. Appointments are taken for every 45 minutes. COVID precautions are followed during the appointments. September is car seat awareness month so additional activities may be scheduled. Registration for their virtual classes are starting to pick up after a lull this summer. Information on their activities can be found at [www.sanfordhealth.org](http://www.sanfordhealth.org)

Lake Agassiz Library: The Book Mobile is out and about in the community! The truck has one regular stop in Dilworth Lunch with a Cop Program that meets at the city park. It also makes appearances at Bennet Park and Romkey Park in Moorhead, and a few child care locations. Currently, they are giving books away but will soon start checking books out and registering kids for a library card. The library is open. They are asking people to limit their time in the library to twenty minutes to lessen the threat of COVID. Extended time is available for those using the library community computers which have been spread out within the library as a COVID precaution. All programming is being done virtually. Jenna would like some of the ECI members to participate in a picture taking with the Book Mobile.

New American Child Care Program: The new provider has completed all of the necessary paperwork and training and is open for business. She is looking for children to serve and is actively marketing her business. Deane is working with another provider whose primary language is Arabic. They are in the process of completing all the necessary paperwork. Child Care Aware has hired a new Parent Aware Coach and has an opening for a recruiter. In person classes have been canceled until September 10<sup>th</sup> but that may be extended. The classes are planned and ready to go but will not be advertised until a decision is made on holding them due to COVID.

West Central Initiative is partnering with Child Care Aware/Parent Aware to provide disinfecting products and personal protection equipment for child care providers. They are offering bleach, hand sanitizer, gloves, wipes, and shields. Providers can complete an order form and supplies are delivered to them. WCI staff have been working with counties and communities on their CARES funding. There is a short time window for spending the funds. The agency will be partnering with the three Community Action Partnership organizations in the region to apply for a HUB grant which is part of the Preschool Development Grant that the state received federal funding for. Meetings were held in all of the region over a year ago to identify the need and strategies for coordinating services for young families. The HUB model will work with Help Me Connect and Bridge to Benefits. It will be a navigator-based system that helps families land in the spot they need to in order to get the help they need. There will be one coordinator overseeing the project and then each of the CAP organizations will receive funding for a navigator. The state is working on a universal application and a release of information. This is a two-year grant, with the first year spend on building the system and relationships in all of the nine counties to do the work.

Coming Up:

Kidsfest April 10, 2021 Moorhead Center Mall (planning will begin in December)

Next meeting: Friday, September 18, 2020

### **Clay County Early Childhood Initiative 2020 Work Plan**

*Goal #1: Increase awareness of the importance of quality early childhood experiences*

*Goal #2: Continue to build a strong early childhood coalition in Clay County.*

*Goal #3: Meaningful parent outreach that includes skill building in parenting, promoting reading, and support healthy social and emotional development*

*Goal #4: Support Child Care Providers to retain current providers and recruit new providers.*