



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

**Clay County Early Childhood Initiative**

**Friday, February 19th, 2021**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Jenna Kahly, Clay County Board of Commissioners/Lake Agassiz Library; Alicia Bauman, Child Care Aware; Joelle Hofer, Moorhead Public Schools; Marianne Smith, Child Care Aware; Eben Danielson, the Village Family Service Center; Kay Heinrich, Trinity Preschool; Teresa Haider, Sanford Safe Kids; Carolyn Strnad, Coordinator; Marsha Erickson, West Central Initiative;

Carolyn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Presentation: Early Childhood Screening: Joelle Hofer, Moorhead Public Schools: Joelle shared that the state requires early childhood screening for children from three to kindergarten entrance. The school emphasizes that this is screening for young children rather than the perceived kindergarten screening. If concerns are found during the screening process, it is crucial to address them before kindergarten entrance. Much can be done between the ages of three and kindergarten to help the child learn upon kindergarten entrance. Screening is a comprehensive assessment of development, vision, and hearing. The screenings were on hold for a few months due to COVID. There is an online option for parents to schedule an appointment for the screening. The link can be found on the Community Education page of the Moorhead website. The school has collaborated with Head Start, Bethesda All Stars Preschool, and the ABC123 child care center to offer the screenings onsite. The screening schedule is full for February and March and almost complete for April. They do hold screenings in May but will have three dates in June and in July. Joelle will share a Facebook post that we can post on our agency’s Facebook pages to help get the word out about screening. The group encourages Joelle to have a booth at the upcoming Kidsfest event to help get the screening info.

2021 work plan: After discussion, the following items were added to the 2021 work plan:

- Kidsfest – scheduled for May 7th
- A meeting with our legislators, hopefully in April
- Child Care Appreciation Day – May 7<sup>th</sup> Suggestions on appreciation gift included Twenty Below tokens (Jenna will check on this) and the coffee shop in Hawley for our rural providers.
- A family fun activity in the fall – Moorhead Schools have parent educators that can help with this event.
- Opportunities for presenters at ECI meetings

Kidsfest: The planning team is looking for a venue for the May 7th event. We need a large parking lot where a movie screen can be set up. There will also be bingo and a small group of resource tables. The movie to be shown will be Inside Out in keeping with the mental health awareness/social-emotional development theme.

The regional Early Childhood Mental Health Network is offering three mental health webinars in March and April. Over 150 people have already registered for the events.

#### Agency Updates:

County Board report from Jenna. The Board has contacted the state legislators asking for help regarding the Personal Payroll Protection program. The loan is subject to state taxes which puts an additional burden on small businesses. During the county's legislative day, Senator Eken spoke about the need to make early childhood a priority and see it as a public service that should be funded accordingly. Representative Pinto is proposing an Office of Early Childhood. There is discussion at the federal level about capping child care expenses to 7% of a parent's income.

Lake Agassiz Library is open. There will be a limited summer program online starting in June. Jenna shared that the state primary system care for libraries is going mostly to the metro area while rural libraries struggle. It is the library's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

Child Care Aware received another load of supplies, including wipes! Thermometers!, and foaming hand sanitizer. There is some discussion on opening up access to the supplies to preschool programs in the region. To request supplies, providers should complete a form located at:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ZzJqlePxBO-BihBktd6L8E7qZt8q0z1CpoZz578BCU1UMIJXSE9KVDVMMUpROUo2NTAzNU4yQVIQVy4u>

Alicia continues to work with programs. The Parent Aware cohort is up and running.

The Village Family Service Center did pretty well on Giving Hearts Day. No total is available at this time. The agency just finished a Love and Logic class and is looking to start another one soon.

Safe Kids now have their second site at Sanford Southwest Pediatrics, open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Car Seat checks are happening through appointments on Tuesday and Thursday at the north center. Beginning in March, Safe Kids will be offering safety and parenting classes virtual and in-person. Go online to [www.sanfordhealth.org](http://www.sanfordhealth.org) to register

Moorhead Public Schools will hold kindergarten registration on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Trinity Preschool met its goal for its first Giving Hearts Day. Dakota Medical will match their goal of \$5,000 with \$3,000 along with a private donation of \$10,000. Funds raised will be used to offer a multi-family discount and scholarships. Staff will be attending the upcoming mental health webinars.

Marsha shared information on the Barnesville Childcare task force working to recruit new childcare options for the growing community while supporting those already providing care to children. The Economic Development Council will be offering space for the mental health webinar screenings and provide dinner to attendees. Marsha reminded everyone that there is plenty of PPE available.

Next meeting: March 19th, 2021

### **Clay County Early Childhood Initiative 2021 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.