



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

Clay County Early Childhood Initiative

Friday, March 19, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Teresa Haider, Sanford Safe Kids; Ashley Nelson, Moorhead Public Schools; Marianne Smith, CAPLP Child Care Aware; Maria Steen, CAPLP Child Care Aware; Kay Heinrich, Trinity Preschool; Alicia Bauman, CAPLP Child Care Aware; Tania Zerr, YMCA; Julie Klier, Licensor Clay County Social Services; Chandra Calixte, Churches United for the Homeless; Jenna Kahly, Lake Agassiz Library/Clay County Board of Commissioners; Eben Danielson, The Village Family Service Center; Lacey Hoppe, MSUM Early Learning Center; Shanna Grefsrud, CAPLP Head Start; Carolyn Strnad, Coordinator; Guest: Lydia Boerboom, Early Childhood Organizer, ISAHA;

Carolyn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Presentation: Lydia Boerboom, Early Childhood Organizer, Kids Count on Us, Educator Policy Center Report (EPIC) The EPIC report is a two-year research project that asks the question, “What would a true aligned early childhood system look like, and how would it help children and families?” The report also includes recommendations such as

- Capping the cost of childcare to 7% of a parent’s income.
- Create a state agency, the MN Department of Early Care and Education, so that practices can be aligned and there is one place to go for information and resources.
- Create regional hubs with representatives from public schools, special education providers, child care centers, family-home child care programs, and community members.
- A career ladder for the workforce

The pandemic’s current circumstances are the perfect time to introduce this topic due to the spotlight on childcare shortages. Lydia encouraged everyone to contact their House member about childcare funding

<https://secure.everyaction.com/jFgAtRNmpEq1XWgcVbpxTg2>

and to call the Governor’s office about adding a new Department <https://p2a.co/oylvuog>

You can sign up for emails that will keep you updated on this state work

<https://forms.gle/pAVhjymfD5YHqKGC6>

For additional information or questions, contact Lydia at 651-408-2042 or lboerboom@isaiahmn.org

Agency Updates:

Kidsfest will be held on May 15 from 10:00 am to Noon at MB Johnson Park in north Moorhead. Carolyn will send out the event flyer and resource booth application.

The April meeting will focus on meeting with our legislators Representative Marquart, Representative Keeler, and Senator Eken. Please let Carolyn know if there are particular questions that you have for the representatives. Carolyn will send those on to them to help them prepare information on those questions.

Provider appreciation is May 7. Marianne is working with the Dairy Queen and coffee houses for discounts or free coupons to provide to providers as a way of appreciation.

Trinity Preschool: Kay reported that as of today, her staff is two weeks past vaccination. She was able to have an in-person meeting with her parent advisory board. The church is currently looking to build on and remodel spaces within the church building. The Preschool will be opening an infant room as part of that remodel. They are hoping to be able to serve up to twelve infants.

Head Start is actively recruiting for next year. This past year has been a challenge. Despite being fully enrolled, they only served a limited number of children on-site, while others attended virtually. The program is concerned about the social-emotional growth of those students missing out on a classroom experience. The Early Head Start program continues to do virtual visits only but is hoping that with nicer weather coming, they will schedule some outdoor meetings. The American Relief Plan includes \$1 billion for Head Start programs. No word yet, on for what programs the funds will be allocated.

Clay County Social Services Licensor report included that the number of providers in our county is stable. Seven interested persons will be attending the next orientation. Background checks are on hold. The licensors are doing virtual visits with providers.

Churches United for the Homeless Micah's Mission: Four families moved into permanent housing. Four families are being served in overflow. The agency applied for some community block grant funds to remodel half of the basement to four family rooms. Once completed, four of the main level family rooms will be converted to medical isolation beds. Despite a moratorium on evictions, the agency sees some people coming to the shelter that has been evicted. There is concern that the number will grow as the pandemic settles down.

MSUM Early Learning Center is hosting tours and accepting applications for the summer care program and fall enrollment. They are updating safety plans because of changing recommendations from the CDC. The staff received their vaccinations.

CAPLP/Child Care Aware will be starting some face-to-face training in some of the smaller towns in the region. If it goes well, they will look at increasing those opportunities across the region. The agency has received new supplies for child care providers. Those supplies include thermometers, wipes, and sanitizer pumps. Parent Aware July cohort applications are now being accepted. Deana's work with New Americans is being expanded to include the hiring of a multi-lingual for consulting. Her work will also involve working with Family, Friends, and Neighbor programs in the New American communities.

The Village Family Service Center is discussing a reopening plan. Most providers are still seeing clients virtually.

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties center staff have received their vaccines. They are currently making an online application for summer and fall programming.

Moorhead Public School has opened up registration for kindergarten and the JumpStart program. Registration is online. Statewide programs are experiencing a 15% decrease in enrollment to early education programs, with parents being cautious about sending their children to school during the pandemic. The school's preschool program has been in-person since January 5th. The 0-3 home visits that were primarily tele-service are now able to go into child care provider locations. Families in the program may access on-site appointments based on need.

Sanford Safe Kids is hosting a safety fair at the Zoo in May. Teresa will send the flyer to Carolyn for distribution to this group.

Moorhead Public Library summer program is going to be Tails and Trails, an outdoor program. The library is celebrating its 60th Anniversary.

Next meeting: April 16, 2021

Our April meeting will be a Zoom meeting with our legislators Senator Kent Eken, Representative Marquart, and Representative Keeler