

Lane Early Learning Alliance

3171 Gateway Loop
Springfield, OR 97477
tel 541.741.6000
fax 541.726.4150

earlylearningalliance.org

Mission: Working together to prepare children for success in school and life.

Vision: A community in which all Lane County families, organizations, and neighborhoods are unified in an effort to ensure that all children are safe, healthy, cherished and are ready to succeed in school.



Lane Early Learning Alliance Governance Consortium

May 14, 2021
3:00-5:00pm
Virtual Meeting

NOTES

Present:

Noreen Dunnells, United Way of Lane County
Adrian Pollut, Parent Representative
Jeanine Taylor, Early Childhood CARES
Theya Joslin, Quality Care Connections
Jacob Fox, Homes For Good
Marian Blankenship, Pacific Source Health Plans
John Stapleton, PIVOT Architecture
Annie Soto, Head Start of Lane County
Todd Hamilton, Springfield Public Schools
Leslie Finlay, Relief Nursery
Cheryl Henderson, Lane Community College
Chris Parra, Bethel School District
Reta Doland, Oakridge School District
Judy Newman, Early Childhood CARES
George Russell, Community Leader

Absent:

Sheila Wegener, Department of Human Services
Debi Farr, Trillium Community Health Plan

Tony Scurto, Lane Education Service District
Nina Watkins, Parent Representative
Tina Gutierrez-Schmich, Bethel School District
John Lively, Oregon State Representative
Karen Gaffney, Lane County
Jocelyn Warren, Lane County Health & Human Services

Guests:

Nicole Desch, Onward Eugene
Sarah Moehrke, City of Florence
Ashley Espinoza, Lane Workforce Partnership

UWLC/ELA Staff:

Ayanna Moriguchi, Early Learning Specialist
Bess Jayme, Director of Education, **meeting facilitator**
Kori Rodley, Director Equity and Engagement
Michelle Sheng-Palmisano, Ed Program Mgr.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM.

II. Welcome and Introductions

III. Public Comment

No comments were made.

IV. Consent Agenda

Approval of the April 9, 2021 meeting notes. Acknowledge receipt of written reports from Advisory Groups and Innovation Teams, Preschool Promise, KITS, LaneKids, and Imagination Library.

Action requested: Motion to approve, accept or ratify items listed on consent agenda as submitted.

Motion: Noreen Dunnells motioned to approve the consent agenda.

Support: Leslie Finlay seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda.

Ayes: Adrian Pollut, Jeanine Taylor, Theya Joslin, Jacob Fox, Marian Blankenship, John Stapleton, Annie Soto, Todd Hamilton, Cheryl Henderson, Chris Parra, and Reta Doland.

Nays: None; **Abstentions:** None

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V. Parent Advisory Council update

Adrian Pollut, Parent Representative from the Parent Advisory Council, shared updates from the April meeting.

- Claire Hambly, from the Early Learning Alliance/United Way, brought questions to the group about accessing parenting education. Why are parents interested in parenting education? Why not? Barriers?
 - i. Scheduling can be difficult to get two parents in same place at the same time.
 - ii. Stigmatization of taking parenting education by choice, even though it seems like it shouldn't be stigmatized
 - iii. Try hybrid model of doing things in person and virtual.
 - iv. In some parenting classes parents were split up for language interpretation and that felt uncomfortable, would have preferred to be together.

VI. Early Learning Stakeholders report

Jeanine Taylor & Leslie Finlay, Stakeholders Representatives, reported on discussion at the April meeting:

- Stakeholder Reps shared synopsis of March Governance Consortium meeting.
- Discussed early childhood work force and availability of care. Debra Dreiling, Quality Improvement Specialist with Quality Care Connection (QCC), gave facts and figures about Oregon's child care deserts, which are all 36 counties.
 - Challenging to recruit and retain educators. Partly due to COVID. Disrupted child care rates are much higher for Black and Asian families.
 - Child care is vital to restarting the economy.
 - Asked the Stakeholders groups if we have enough staff to fill our positions, how are we advertising, and recruitment procedures of staff.
 - General consensus was that it is hard to find qualified staff at rate of pay we are offering.
 - LCC's Career Pathways department is instrumental in helping students access education courses. This is a bright spot.
- For Relief Nursery, struggle with prioritizing caregivers/educators who reflect the families we serve and want to have bilingual and bicultural staff. There are barriers in the systems that keep people from becoming qualified, and having lived experience is important. The pathway to becoming qualified is not the path people take.
- Subcommittee of this group will meet to determine how the stakeholders as a group can work together to support the child care system.

VII. Increasing the Child Care Supply in Lane County

The challenge of increasing the child care supply in our County was prevalent long before COVID, but has been exacerbated it. Guests Nicole Desch, Onward Eugene; Sarah Moehrke, City of Florence; and Ashley Espinoza, Lane Workforce Partnership joined the meeting to provide an economic and employer perspective.

Last fall when it became clear that school age care was going to be an issue, the Early Learning Alliance (ELA) started thinking through how we could support local providers to expand services to this age group. United Way (UW) received funding through the Tykeson Family Foundation, and partnered with City of Florence and City of Eugene to get funding to providers. This began conversations with City of Florence and Sarah to further understand the landscape in Florence and the workforce and economic development issues for that community.

There is a groundswell of conversations happening around this issue involving business, private sector, cities and the county. School districts, housing, chamber are all working on this as well. State will be receiving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, which can be allocated to childcare providers and after school care. Would like to start to think with this group about how we can coordinate these efforts in a more holistic way.

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How do we collect information that is informed about what families need in a provider? And, what providers want to offer? Do we already have this?

- Theya – There are available slots in the county, but the issue when we talk about availability is that we need to look at the needs of families. Odd hour/evening care, infant/toddler, ERDC, children furthest from opportunity, children with special needs, and educators representing diverse race/ethnicity/cultures. The type of care families need and when they need it is most important.
- Ashley – when saying that Black and Asian families are more impacted by child care needs, need to zoom back and understand the reasons this is happening before we start providing solutions.
- Ashley - For child care providers, need to match motivation and skills with what families are needing. A child care provider may not want to provide overnight care so they can have flexibility in their life.
- Theya – heard that the City of Florence has a code that a child care provider needs to follow which makes it difficult for providers to run an in-home child care.
 - i. Sarah – familiar with this but housing codes were not updated since the 90's.
- Theya - would like to do a case study to develop a model of an employer sponsored child care center that captures the costs and challenges of the program. Talk with employers about real numbers of employees and ages of children. Need to take this step to get concrete information.
 - i. Judy – there was a toolkit available for businesses on how to start a child care program that came from the state.
 - ii. Noreen - There are examples of onsite childcare in various states around the country. Those examples from other locations would help us think about the steps and process for consideration.
- Sarah Moehrke – Important to look at what type of care people need. In Florence you have people working in tourism and need care on the weekends and evenings. Helpful to go to businesses so they can tell us what their staff need. Perhaps Lane Workforce Partnership could survey businesses.
- Leslie –our staff can't afford childcare. We tried to provide care during the pandemic so our staff could work, but the age range of the kids is broad. It never penciled out, even though we have the facility, staff, are licensed and have the knowledge.

Recruitment efforts

- Quality Care Connections
 - i. outreach through Bethel and 4J schools to parents about becoming a licensed exempt in-home child care provider. Asked if anyone would like to work from home and earn extra income. The way people enter the system there isn't a clear cut way to track how many parents were recruited this way. See parents as a pool to recruit from.
 - ii. Attend job fairs, resource fairs and do general outreach about being a childcare provider
 - iii. Want to build better relationships with culturally specific organizations.
 - iv. In a dream world would have a company that has an on-site child care center. Thinking of a hospital and what that could mean to staff retention to offer this service, plus hire providers who are paid well and receive benefits.
 - v. Doing more virtual events. Would like to host a job fair with providers attend and could invite all the Early Childhood Education (ECE) students at LCC.

How are you approaching going back to work and addressing child care for staff?

- Jacob– Shifting to telework model. Have talked with staff about creating a day care space in the building.
- John Stapleton - Would like to understand the mechanics of providing care since employees have children of all ages. Could we make a collaborative effort of working with other businesses? If we could have something financially viable would like to pilot it.
- Marianne – looking to make telecommuting policy more flexible. One question is around what it would take to go through licensing for a PeaceHealth child care center. Have over 700 staff in Springfield.

Funding child care

- Bess – there is the potential of partnering with cities to help with employer sponsored childcare.

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- Kori –Springfield City Council has discussed dream of building a new library and embed early childhood and daycare in the building to make it a hub.

Oakridge Westridge School Model

- In Oakridge have 5 different preschool classrooms from three providers at Westridge building. Plan before covid was to start a childcare incubator program working with Head Start to train providers and then expand, since we have zero licensed providers in our community. Then second year providers stay rent free to start their business. Third year move in to the community to start their business. Hoping this can start over the summer or the fall.
- Early Head Start on site.
- CTE piece is important to motivate and train people to be quality childcare providers. High school teacher is running this program.
- Early Childhood CARES is able to provide services to children in Oakridge with developmental delays or disabilities so they can be served close to where they live.
- John Stapleton – Reta and partners embraced the idea of having this childcare facility and implementation happened. It was an idea and a need, and it was met quickly. Have a foundation document that captured the process which can be shared.

Low Wages

- Cheryl – don't want to forget people who are employers of child care workers. There is no one to hire. Would love ideas on a countywide campaign so the community knows this is an issue and that there are jobs to be had. Shortages of staff likely due to low hourly pay, exposure to covid, needing childcare of their own children.
- Ashley – wage seems to be the issue. Oregon Community Foundation provides scholarships to get people into early childhood but when students find out how much they make they don't want go to school that long. Need public and private support.
- Judy – Preschool Promise (PSP) requires a certain wage that matches kindergarten teachers. Relief Nursery has a bill. EI/ECSE has accomplished this since we are a part of the K-12 system.
 - i. Chris –big challenge with PSP was pay, but also required higher education. There was a requirement to have people with higher education, but no plan to offer the education and some community colleges have dropped these programs. Paying a preschool person with a BA degree the same amount as a K-12 teacher was difficult because K-12 teachers need to have an additional year of training.
 - ii. Cheryl – PSP teachers no longer need to have a BA degree, which means you no longer have to pay at that rate.
- Annie - The Early Learning Division (ELD) funded and required a material increase in Oregon PreK/Head Start teacher wages beginning in the 2020 school year. It decreased teacher turnover.
- Adrian –supporting a universal basic income could be the push it takes to make these systems work.
- Sarah – If you raise wages, the cost would go to the business. We got involved with the Boys and Girls Club because they are not making a profit. So they are turning the cost over to the parent, who can't afford it. Who is going to pay that additional cost?
- Ashley – How do providers come up with how much to charge? Want to understand where the cost is coming from.
 - i. Theya – correlation between ODHS Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). Every three years Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&R's) conduct a market price survey and contact every provider in the county to get their rates. This information is then reported back to providers.
 - ii. Costs are personnel, classroom materials, space. Similar to operating other businesses.
- Judy – Early Childhood CARES started the Olum Center at UO. People who work there make good wages and get benefits, but it is not possible to sustain without UO HR subsidizing it. We are one of the few countries that does not pay for family leave or subsidize childcare.

Education

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- Cheryl – ECE faculty are starting to allow students who are working on their ECE degree to get observed at the locations where they are working. So, you can educate the current work force. Will be meeting with a donor on how to meet needs and decrease the childcare desert.
- Jeanine – one hurdle of ECE program at LCC is that career technical program such as ECE don't qualify for transfer degrees. So those students that have a 2-year degree can't transfer to UO or another university. Some students only want to do child care and don't want a bachelor's degree.
 - i. Next year the LCC ECE degree will be transferable to a 4-year college.
- Theya – retention is an issue. Our LCC ECE Advisory Committee has talked about marketing and getting the word out about what you can do with an ECE degree. Could tell them about the next steps and opportunities.
 - i. Adrian – good idea to let people know about the pipeline to other opportunities, but most people will not make their way to the top.
- Judy – CTE ECE is a pathway, but we need to solve the livable wage issue before we push young people into that field.
- Annie - Head Start (HS) has a teacher training program for current and past HS parents where they receive a year of high quality training and 100 hours of classroom experience. Have trained 60 parents, many bilingual/bicultural. HS has hired 50 of those individuals. 12 have finished ECE degrees at LCC. We are very happy with the results of the SEEKERS program.

Other important considerations

- Leslie – Childcare is also a child abuse issue. The families we work with don't have capacity to pay for care in most cases. So they leave their child with whoever they can when at work or to run errands. They know they are leaving their child with someone unsafe. These families may not need full time child care, but they may not have resources to access it. That is why we offer respite care.
- Sarah – employers need to know about resources to help families with accessing child care. She, and others working in economic development, can be a bridge between employees and child care providers.
- Theya – in September the child care landscape could look really different. Have lost a lot of providers over the last year and there could be a whole new set of issues to address when the school year starts.

Next Steps

Bess and Sarah will be talking with local stakeholders and have a listening session to talk about this issue, and work to coordinate this effort across sectors. If you are in conversations around this, let Bess know so we can start to have some alignment.

Theya will work with John S., Marianne, Bess and any others interested in developing a model of employer sponsored child care.

VIII. Updates & Announcements

- Legislative session updates: ELA staff participated in Early Childhood Advocacy days in collaboration with the Early Childhood Coalition. We spoke with several members of the Lane County congressional delegation and heard broad support for the EC Coalition's agenda.
- KPI/KITS Summer Funding: The ELA has received an additional \$273,000 from the Early Learning Division to support kindergarten transition programming (i.e., KITS) this summer. 10 of the 16 Lane County school districts will be offering in-person school readiness groups for the kids and in-person and/or virtual parent groups.
- Family Engagement Coordinator update: Adriana Medina will be joining us as our new bilingual Family Engagement Coordinator, starting on June 7, 2021.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 pm.