

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Meeting
October 15, 2019
10:00am
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Deborah (Debbie) Mayes, Ryan Clayborn, Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price (proxy: Tyra Greenwood), Kim Whitman (Substitute Chair)

Members Absent: Jody Veit-Edrington, Sarah Langley, Lindsey Jones, Senator Will Bond

I. Call to Order

Kim Whitman called the AECC Commissioners' Meeting to order on October 15, 2019 at 10:04 a.m. Kathy read the AECC's mission statement. All guests attending the meeting introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

Kim Whitman asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Deborah (Debbie) Mayes and seconded by Tyra Greenwood. The motion carried.

III. Old Business

1. DCCECE Commissioner Report:

Tonya Williams provided a written report of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (AECC) goals. Tonya stated the division would continue to update the commission on the goals with a written report at each meeting.

Tonya recommended scheduling a strategic plan meeting to review the Arkansas Early Childhood Education (AECC) goals and strategic plan.

Action Item: Sara Norwood to schedule a meeting for the commissioners and early childhood colleagues to review/update the AECC goals and strategic plan.

Tonya shared that the division is working on the Preschool Development Grant Birth-5 renewal application that is due on November 6, 2019. The focus is on training, early care and education professionals, and providing support for family engagement around trauma informed care.

Tonya shared an update on the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program relocation to the Department of Education. At this time, DCCECE has not been given an exact date on when the ABC staff members will relocate, but the anticipation is within the next several weeks. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DCCECE and the Department of Education expires on October 31, 2019.

2. Better Beginnings Update:

Dawn Jeffrey presented the updates on Better Beginnings levels 4, 5, and 6. The pilot project started October 15, 2019. The documentation (rough draft) was sent to the providers who were selected to be a part of the pilot. Dawn Jeffrey and Tonya Williams answered questions from the commissioners and early education colleagues about the development process.

Tonya Williams stated that DCCECE has reinstated the annual Better Beginnings grants. Tonya said the dollar amount has been set for levels 1, 2, and 3 but has not been determined for levels 4, 5, and 6. July and August has already been paid to programs.

Action Item: Dawn Jeffrey to send the commissioners the rough draft of Better Beginnings levels 4, 5, and 6.

Action Item: DCCECE to post the rough draft Better Beginning levels 4, 5, and 6.

Providers will have to achieve a Better Beginnings level 2 by July 1, 2021 to accept Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDF) vouchers in order to comply with CCDF quality.

Vicki Matthews presented documents pertaining to Goal #4, which included maps of Arkansas showing the number of Better Beginnings facilities by level and by county.

3. Head Start State Collaboration Office/Arkansas Head Start Association Updates:

Jackie Govan provided documentation and shared information about the National Head Start Association Conference. The packet included some of the following documentation:

- Letter from Tonya Williams (DCCECE) supporting the establishment of a consistent process for all EHS/Head Start programs, focusing on not allowing service disruption for children and families during a change.
- AHSSCO Fact Sheet
- Data snapshot of young children in Arkansas
- Arkansas Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience Summit
- America's Opioid Crisis: The unseen impact on Arkansas children
- The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds
- 2020 Arkansas Head Start Head Start Institute, April 7-10, 2019
- Powerful Interactions with Dads Events, Featuring Dragons Love Tacos

IV. New Business

1. DCCECE Contact Updates:

Paige Cox provided documentation with information on the DCCECE professional development contracts. The contacts are on a seven-year contact cycle. The procurement process was completed July 1, 2019. Paige shared the new contracts and grants.

2. Market Rate Survey:

Ivory Daniels presented documentation and information about the 2019 Arkansas Child Care

Market Rate Survey and the Making Quality Ends Meet: 2019-2021 Cost Projections for AR Early Childhood Care and Education. The Office of Child Care mandates Arkansas to ensure families receiving Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) funding have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings and must provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families.

The 2019-2021 CCDF State Plan gives the option to conduct a reliable Market Rate Survey that reflects variations in the prices to parents of child care services by geographic area, type of provider and age of child or an alternative methodology. Arkansas chose to conduct the Market Rate Survey and Cost Model to reflect equal access to families across Arkansas.

The cost model estimates the cost of care by incorporating both data and assumptions to model what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different cost scenarios.

The Market Rate Survey (Lorraine McKelvey, PhD, Danya Johnson, BS and Andrew Forsman M.P.S.) and Cost Model, Making Quality Ends Meet: 2019-2021 Cost Projections for AR Early Childhood Care and Education (Lorraine McKelvey, PhD and Andrew Forsman, M.P.S.) assists in promoting parental choice, ensuring equal access and increasing the supply to child care. This Market Rate Survey study identifies the prices charged for different types of care and age groups across Arkansas to inform the rates reimbursed for child care through the Child Care Assistance Program, CCDF. It then examines the extent to which the current subsidy rates meet the federal definition of equal access. Pages 4-7 on the Market Rate Survey addresses the Executive Summary, Introduction, Methodology and Findings.

3. Home Visiting/Arkansas Home Visiting Network Updates:

Tyra Greenwood provided the Arkansas Home Visiting Network FY19 Progress Report and reviewed the stats with the commissioners. The FY20 Updates include:

- AHVN supports over 6,900 families, with children prenatal to age 5, at a time with more than \$10.8 million in state and federal funding.
- MIECHV funding was reauthorized through 2023
- The Arkansas Department of Health received an award notice from HRSA for \$7,552,262 in MIECHV funds through September 2021.
- SafeCare (requires active DCFS referral and case for child abuse or neglect) will be available statewide in December 2019
- Family Connect is “Live” in Union County and currently serving 23 families
- AHVN made over 100 training and technical assistance visits last year.
- Arhomevisiting.org provides access to free online trainings for professionals and parents.

V. Announcements/Action Items

Action Item: Sara Norwood to schedule a meeting for the commissioners and early childhood colleagues to review/update the AECC goals and strategic plan.

Action Item: Dawn Jeffrey to send the commissioners the rough draft of Better Beginnings levels 4, 5, and 6.

Action Item: DCCECE to post the rough draft Better Beginning levels 4, 5, and 6 to the website.

Announcement: The Department of Education received a Striving Readers Federal Grant.

Action Item: Tonya Williams to request Imagination Library or ADE to present on the Striving Readers Federal Grant at an AECC meeting in April 2020.

Announcement: Licensing Regulations open for public comment on October 16, 2019 from 1pm-3pm at the Public Library.

Action Item: Schedule DCCECE to present on the background check Live Scan system and updates in April 2020.

Announcement: 58th Annual AECA Conference- October 24-26, 2019, Little Rock

VI. Adjournment

Kim Whitman asked for a motion to adjourn. Deborah (Debbie) Mayes made a motion to adjourn. Tyra Greenwood seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 11:37a.m.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 21, 2020. The location is 700 Main Street, DCCECE Resource Center.