

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 21, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Shawn Massingale, CeCe Lynn, Cady Lyon, Colleen May, Kyle Riege, Liberty Dryden, Abby Drummond, Sara Wheeler, Jamie Ambrosini, Hannah Horvath, Madison Bright

Staff Present: Athena Wikstrom, Danielle Walker, Gillian Wesenberg, Susan Stiles, Ronda Osborn, Vanessa Pingleton, Robin VanWinkle

Introductions, approve February minutes.

Hub Report

Ronda Osborn shared that Community UPLiFT is a wraparound referral system that connects families with children zero to five or up to 21 with special needs, to resources in the local community. When a referral is sent through Community UPLiFT, a Family Resource Facilitator reaches out to the family and conducts a motivational interview. Based on needs that were uncovered during the interview, families are referred to partner organizations in the community. Examples of resources Community UPLiFT can connect families to are, utility assistance, Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE), transportation, housing needs, etc. Whatever the need is Community UPLiFT looks for resources to help the family succeed. There are several partners Community UPLiFT can make referrals to. Housing Authority of Douglas County (HADCO) was recently added as a partner. Occasionally families call back to let Community UPLiFT know how things are going. There are often repeat customers that find something else is needed later. Partners families are referred to provide an update in the database sharing the outcome of the referral. This update allows Family Resource Facilitators to know if further outreach to partners may be needed.

Gillian Wesenberg stated that at the latest System of Care Breakfast there was a discussion with Umpqua Health Alliance about who to refer to and who would handle caseloads for behavior problems for young children. Community UPLiFT was discussed as being a possible live data source to see how long the wait lists are for clients.

The Regional Governance Council approved the budget for the next two years.

Athena Wikstrom shared that a strategic plan is in the works for Kindergarten Readiness, Partnership, and Innovation (KPI). There will be a request for applications coming out soon which will include collected information from focus groups that will help make informed decisions as per the Regional Governance Council.

Preschool Promise (PSP) is a publicly funded preschool for children who will be three or four on or before September 1 of the school year they are applying for, and the Family earns up to 200% of the federal poverty level and live in Oregon. Families are encouraged to apply for Preschool Promise regardless of income because there are some exceptions. Families are educated on the differences between Head Start and PSP so an informed decision can be made as to which will meet the families' needs the best. PSP received a two-year contract for providers for the first time, allowing for an earlier than usual enrollment which allows PSP to align with Head Start. Applications for the 2023-2024 school year are still being taken and the Hub has started taking Preschool Promise applications for the 2024-2025 school year. The Hub is leaving slots open for returning students and students with high needs to ensure it's an equitable placement process and not first come first serve. All students are eligible for two years if children are three or four at the start of the school year. Returning student emails will be sent out in the next couple of days to ensure that families enrolled this year will have slots for next year. Head Start and PSP are fully enrolled in the region. Across the state a lot of PSP and Head Start sites are unable to reach full enrollment.

Legislative Update

Gillian Wesenberg shared Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) will receive \$99 million currently, with another \$72 million allocated in a special purpose account. Department of Early Learning and Care and other advocates are saying that this money will cover families currently receiving ERDC but there is not enough to cover those on the waiting list. The goal is to provide data to show the legislature why more money is needed. When Legislature opened ERDC up to part-time employees and students, the legislature did not consider the

impact it would have on funding. CHIPS, childcare for the manufacturing workforce, received \$5 million of the \$8 million asked for through house bill 4098. House bill 4158, Childcare Infrastructure, did not pass. This was a companion bill with the lottery funds Infrastructure bill that was needed to build infrastructure for childcare, allowing expansion funding for in-home providers. Birth to five literacy funds of \$9.4 million was passed and added to the fiscal bill. Half will go to equity projects and half will go to Hubs; this is a one-year bill. The hope is that K-12 Early Literacy plans will align with Hubs. Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education received \$22 million restored that was cut in the 2023 session. Unfortunately, more money is needed since this was based on the count a couple of years ago and the numbers have grown. Early Learning Scholarship program asked for \$2.5 million to get more childcare providers and expand the workforce, this was not funded. Stabilization for relief nurseries and nurse family partnership was included in the bill for community safety, house bill 2504-2 section 12. This allowed \$2.7 million for relief nurseries and \$3.2 million to Nurse Family Partnership for matching funds with Medicaid. Oregon Healthy Families was not funded for \$2.7 million stabilization funds.

The Department of Early Learning and Care, (DELIC) is developing a strategic plan and identity as a state agency. DELIC has hired the Build Institute to work with Early Learning Council (ELC), Hubs, and DELIC. All the early learning partners are part of the Hub, ELC is the governance over DELIC. The information gathered at all the ELH meetings is funneled up to the Regional Governance Council, (RGC) who makes all the decisions on budgeting and strategic planning for the Hub. Every Regional Hub has a backbone organization that does payroll, hiring, etc.

Shaun Massingale shared that house bill 4077 is in the Joint Ways and Means waiting on a budget allocation to award school districts funds for high-cost disability. House bill 4084 to establish and administer a pilot program to provide three public, middle, or high schools with funds to address academic disparities experienced by students involved in the foster care system is also in Joint Ways and Means last time there was an update. The bill to prohibit school district employees from striking did not advance.

Housing Authority Presentation

Jamie Ambrosini provided information about the Housing Authority of Douglas County (HADCO). The Housing Authority of Douglas County is not affiliated with the county, state, or city. HADCO is 100% federally funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and governed by the Code of Federal Regulations. The agency is a medium sized agency and administers about 900 vouchers to families and individuals in Douglas County. Anyone can apply, it's not a requirement to have children or be in a family unit to be eligible for the program. A pre-application must be completed, which consists of the client's name, social security number, and date of birth. The family or individual will be placed on a waitlist which is currently running about ten months out. It's very important for clients to keep mailing addresses updated while on the waitlist because a letter will be sent to the address on file when an applicant reaches the top of the waitlist. The client must then complete a full application to determine eligibility. Applications are pulled one or two months at a time for processing and then the applicants are invited to a briefing. If there isn't a large response to the invitation, more applicants will be pulled from the waitlist. The waitlist moves along relatively quickly. Staff are available to aid with any paperwork.

Applicants are eligible up to 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Douglas County and contingent on a background check. A person is disqualified for being a registered sex offender or having had a drug conviction within the last five years. If a drug program has been completed and certification can be provided, then that disqualification can be waived. A voucher is issued once a briefing orientation has been attended. Anyone can attend a briefing. Briefings are informative and take about 45 minutes.

The housing voucher program is based on a person's ability to pay. There is no requirement to have income, so a person who has applied for Social Security Income (SSI) but has not yet received it can still apply. The voucher program can subsidize a client's rent in the current place of residence, a rented room, trailer space rent, apartment, or a house. To qualify, the residence must have working heat, a kitchen, and a bathroom in the unit. The voucher moves with the person, so if the living quarters are only temporary and the client moves, the voucher can be used at the next place of residence. If a client is a Douglas County resident when the application is completed and placed on the waitlist the client can move to a different county or state once the voucher is received and use the voucher for rent subsidy in that county or state. If the client was not a Douglas County resident and applied for the waitlist the client must utilize the voucher in Douglas County for one year before being eligible to transfer the voucher. The vouchers are good as long as the family is

eligible and can meet the income criteria and the background check when clients recertify each year. When the voucher is initially issued it is valid for 60 days, if the client needs more time to find housing, extensions are allowed. The Housing Authority office can assist the client with housing searches. In March, \$527,000 was sent out in rental assistance, this has been the average for the last few months.

HADCO also oversees the Public Housing located in Winston, Roseburg, Riddle, Oakland, Yoncalla, and Reedsport. This program does not move as quickly as the housing voucher program, the wait can last years for the public housing units. The Housing Authority also owns several properties including, apartment complexes on Vine Street, transitional housing complex on the Veteran's Affairs (VA) grounds, apartments in Winston, Riddle and Drain; all of these are affordable housing or have some form of subsidy.

HADCO has staff that speak Spanish, German, Italian, French and Thai.

High Quality Preschool

Shaun Masingale shared that a high-quality preschool is more than meeting licensing standards. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) website, for a site to be high-quality it needs:

- Group size and ratio for preschoolers is one adult for every 10 children,
- Safe, warm, nurturing, environments, with child sized furniture,
- A minimum of 35 square feet of indoor space and 75 square feet of outdoor space per child,
- Enough material for every child to engage in an activity,
- Age-appropriate preschool curriculum,
- Regular assessments of each child's knowledge and abilities to enable teachers to provide materials and activities to improve learning.

Just meeting licensing regulations receives a two-star SPARK rating, adding more curriculum increases the number of stars achieved up to five SPARK quality stars. Many preschool curriculums are available, including Creative Curriculum, Mother Goose, High Scope, religion-based curriculums, philosophy-based and many more. Quality teachers should:

- Have experience and training,
- Be warm and caring,
- Get to know the children and families,
- Plan activities all children can participate in,
- Include families and cultures,
- Create individualized goals and learning styles for each child,
- Provide material that is interesting and challenging for children,
- Scaffold learning to get the child to the next level.
- Set clear limits for children's behavior,
- Encourage children's efforts,
- Provide screenings for development and referrals if needed,
- Discuss with families any concerns, needed referrals or resources and a child's goals.

High-quality early education is about relationships, encouraging children's efforts, setting clear limits for behavior, and explaining the reasons actions are taken. Conscious Discipline and Positive Behavior Improvement System (PBIS) are the most used discipline curriculums.

Warning signs that an early learning environment may not be high-quality include unorganized space, children wandering around instead of doing activities, teachers not interacting with children during activities, no clear behavior limits, punishment for bad behaviors instead of guidance, teachers only discussing issues with families and not asking about the family's concerns or discussing the positive progress of the child.

True family engagement involves getting the child to school on time, keeping a good attitude about school, providing a routine, setting learning goals that correspond with the goals and curriculum of the school, and showing respect to the teacher. It also helps if the parents get involved in the classroom, field trips, and special events. Participating with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), policy council or governing board is a way for parents to be involved. Parents can attend conferences and respectfully advocate for their child if needed.

Kinder Transitions

Athena Wikstrom shared that the Hub's Governance Council requested the Hub work with Pacific Research and Evaluation who will be connecting with K12 representatives across the region to find out what is happening with kindergarten transition and early literacy. The information from the Hub's Family Governance Advisory Committee, the Professional Advisory Committees, Regional Governance Council, and Pacific Research and Evaluation's focus groups will be used to determine how to put out the request for application for the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) grant. Feedback has been received from across the region, and more is needed.

Athena Wikstrom asked, "What kindergarten readiness initiatives are already happening in Douglas County?"

Shawn Masingale replied that Head Start hosts a School Readiness Committee that school districts attend. Four-year-olds enrolled in Head Start attend a kindergarten tour at the school they will attend the next school year and meet kindergarten teachers, principals, and administrators. Before children transition to kindergarten, all school records are given to parents. Preschool teachers provide information about the children who will be attending each school, including a packet for each child which includes their specific information. Teachers and developmental specialists meet with the families and school districts to transition children from an individualized family service plan (IFSP) to an individual education plan (IEP).

Hannah Horvath shared that the Family Relief Nursery focuses on the social and emotional aspects of kindergarten readiness, as well as setting goals for the children.

Vanessa Pingleton stated that Take Root also prepares children for school. Take Root has a lot of curriculums for school readiness.

Susan Stiles shared that there is a watch party coming up with FEATT Family Network and FACT Oregon. It's about transitioning children who are engaged with Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) to kindergarten. The watch party is scheduled for April 4th at Douglas ESD.

Take Root provides Ready for Kindergarten series focusing on three different ages. Take Root and Head Start also offer Conscious Discipline training for parents. Tina Little has been doing an eight-week Conscious Discipline series for Take Root provided by Take Root.

Athena Wikstrom asked, "Are the initiatives that are currently happening enough for children's and families' needs?"

Shawn Masingale answered that children often show up to kindergarten that have not been in a preschool program, an area of improvement would be with private providers.

Athena Wikstrom asked, "In an ideal world, what else might be done or offered to support children and families in Douglas County during the transition to kindergarten?"

Shawn Masingale replied that making sure vision, hearing, and health screenings are done before children start school would be good.

Athena Wikstrom asked, "Supporting successful transition into kindergarten for all children is a key piece of the KPI grant program. Are there any other suggestions for providing successful transition to kindergarten that haven't been discussed yet?"

Robin VanWinkle suggested alignment between childcare providers, early learning and K12.

Shawn Masingale shared, having more community placements for children involved with special to increase time with typically developing peers so children can be more successful in kindergarten is needed. Also, more advertisements about when kindergarten roundups are being held would be helpful.

Sutherlin School District sent out the roundup information. Sutherlin's Kindergarten Roundup will be April 15th through the 19th from 8:00 am to 1:30pm, parents can sign children up for kindergarten next year. Parents must

bring birth certificates and any out of state immunization records to sign up their child for school next year. If these documents are not available, the child should still be signed up so the school can prepare for how many students to expect. T-shirts are being given to the children who bring in birth certificates.

Gillian Wesenberg stated that all K12 School Districts are encouraged to send their early literacy plans to the Hub. New funding is available through the state legislature for K-12, to access the funds, an early literacy plan must be written.

Partner Updates

Cady Lyon – Umpqua Health- Umpqua Health is doing a push to increase access to specialty mental health to address behavioral and social emotional needs of the zero to five population.

Robin VanWinkle – Douglas County Childcare Coalition- April 4th Douglas County Childcare Coalition is hosting the first Family Friendly Summit. The focus will be on successful employer backed childcare operations already in effect locally and around the state. Several business leaders will be attending as well as a panel of childcare providers already working with employers to provide perspective on how things are going and how a partnership might be implemented. In early April, a second set of child care incentives is going to be launched, it is a continuation of the launch in 2022. There are three incentives that will be available. The first incentive is: new childcare staff members entering the field may be eligible for a sign on bonus at the start of the job, with another bonus after six and twelve months. The second part is when a childcare owner / operator opens a new facility or the licensing type changes, a one-time bonus will be available. The Third part is a one-time bonus for providers that add two or more slots of care. The focus is on programs that provide childcare as the primary purpose.

Vanessa Pingleton-Take Root Parenting-The Home Visiting Systems Coordination project is going well. Next week, Vanessa will present to the Early Learning Council about the work the region has done, highlighting Community UPLIFT and the relationships that have been built.

Susan Stiles –Take Root Parenting- The spring schedule for parenting classes will be starting soon, there are several in person and virtual classes offered. Virtual classes will be offered in Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties. There is a parent support group that will continue to meet every two weeks. Take Root and Early Intervention are working together to offer an autism parent connection group that will meet every two weeks. There will be several workshops as well.

Colleen May- Healthy Families- The new program manager will start on April 1st. Healthy Families applied for Family Connects for Douglas County. Family Connects will provide a free home visit from a nurse for every mom who has a baby. It's not income related, and it is supplemental to other services being received. The food bank needs food, the "Cheese and Thank You" event is happening at several local restaurants. For every qualifying sandwich sold at participating restaurants, \$2 goes to the food bank. This will help purchase food for the food bank which distributes to the pantries and the mobile food bank. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) just hired a new program manager. WIC also applied for a grant to become a diaper distribution center in Douglas County. Anyone can qualify to receive diapers from the distribution center, though it is preferred families be lower income. Qualifying families can receive up to 200 diapers and 150 pullups once a month. Families must complete surveys to receive diapers or pullups. Distribution started a week ago and 30,000 diapers have been distributed. The diaper depot number is 541-440-3646. The number goes to a machine, and clients leave their name, the child's name, and diaper size they are requesting. Clients can then show up on Wednesdays from 3:00-7:00pm and Thursdays, from 2:00-5:00pm to pick up the diapers. Diapers can also be received at WIC appointments. Families do not have to be on WIC to qualify. If the parents or children are on Oregon Health Plan (OHP) they automatically qualify for WIC. WIC currently has a 98% case load.

Abby Drummond-Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) – First Thursday will be moving back to the ODHS parking lot beginning in May until September. There may be a child's passport available. In July the event will be held on the 2nd Thursday because of the holiday.

Sara Wheeler-Family Development Center- There is a Heart to Art event coming up April 2nd 5:30-7:00pm at Aviva. There is a parent support group starting in April on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. April 10th Cooking with Chef Charlie is coming up, that will happen once a month. The events will be open to all community members.

Shawn Masingale- United Community Action Network (UCAN)- The Jerry Bruce Community Campus Spring Fair is May 4th from 12:00pm – 3:00pm in Aviva's parking lot, there will be lots of free activities for families, food trucks, and many other fun activities.

The golf tournament at Bar Run will be May 5th, all funds from the golf tournament and the Spring Fair will go to the Umpqua Health Initiative.

Head Start/Early Head Start takes applications all year. 2024-2025 applications are open for both Preschool Promise and Head Start. Head Start is currently hiring teachers, Head Start is moving from Green and Winchester in June, as soon as everything is finalized everyone will be notified of the new locations.

Liberty Dryden- Safe Families- On April 1st Safe Families will be opening a second office at Sunset Apartments in partnership with Neighborworks Umpqua. Saturday April 20th from 5:00 – 7:30pm at Aviva there will be the Fiesta event, food, beverages, and dessert will be provided. There will be a dip off contest.

Kyle Riege-Drain Family Relief Nursery-The renovations are finishing up, there should be occupancy next week. The Spring Carnival is June 1st.

CeCe Lynn – Evergreen Family Medicine- The next series of Beautiful Beginnings prenatal classes will be starting May 7th-June 11th, Tuesday nights from 6:00pm-7:00pm at the Harvard location, participants do not have to be affiliated with Evergreen in any way to participate.

Next Meeting Date

April 25, 2024, from 10:00am-12:00pm