



May 1, 2024 Council Meeting Notes

Members Present	9/6/23	10/4/23	11/1/23	12/20/23	2/7/24	3/6/24	4/3/24	4/24/24 (Special SR Vote)	5/1/24	JUNE
Allyx Schiavone	•	o	o	•	•	•	o	o	•	
Averi Pakulis	o	o	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Billy Johnson	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	
Carmelita Valencia-Daye	•	•	o	•	o	•	•	o	•	
Daniel Diaz	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	
Elisabeth Teller	o	o	o	•	•	•	•	o	o	
Eliza Halsey	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Galit Sharma	o	o	o	o	o	•	o	o	o	
Jennifer Heath	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Jerry Haruna	•	o	o	•	o	o	•	o	•	
Jess Bialecki	•	•	•	o	x	x	x	x	x	
Karen Dubois-Walton	•	•	o	•	•	•	o	•	•	
Kiomary Sotillo	•	•	o	•	•	•	•	o	•	
Leeora Netter	o	•	•	o	•	•	o	•	•	
Lynn Wiener	o	•	•	•	•	x	x	x	x	
Mary Derwin	•	•	o	•	•	•	•	o	•	
Robin Moore-Evans	•	o	•	•	•	o	•	•	o	
Sadie Witherspoon	o	o	•	•	o	•	•	o	o	
Soma Mitra	o	•	o	•	•	•	o	•	•	
Steven Cousin	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	
Susan Taddei	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	o	•	
Tamesha Robinson	•	•	•	•	•	•	o	•	•	
Vanessa Diaz-Valencia	•	•	o	•	•	•	•	o	•	
<i>Percent in attendance:</i>	57%	57%	43%	74%	67%	76%	57%	38%	67%	

PRESENT	ABSENT	NO LONGER ACTIVE
•	o	x

Staff: Claire Kaiser, Kerry Oberg

Guests: Martha, Aishah Brice, Catalina L., Charles M, Katie McGinnis, Kim Bohlen, Mikyle Byrd Vaughn, Miriam Johnson, Shannon Knudsen, Shelly Hicks, Shubhra Gupta

Welcome & Call to Order

- Called to order at 3:02pm.
- Tammy thanked the group for taking the time to be present.

Announcements

- **Claire Kaiser introduction**
 - Claire is the new administrator for the council
 - She is the Director of Early Childhood Initiatives at United Way but will also be responding to emails at earlychildhoodcouncilnewhaven@gmail.com. You can reach her there or at ckaiser@uwgnh.org. Denise will be phasing out of her role as council admin in the coming weeks.
- **Family Stroll**
 - The Family Stroll event is scheduled for May 18th in Quinnipiac River Park.
 - 63 tablers have signed up to provide resources to the community, 4 food trucks will be there.
 - Distinguished guests include the Mayor, Rosa DeLauro, and Senator Looney
 - All are encouraged to attend.

Allyx noted a need for a process to request support for community events related to early childhood. This is the 12th year for the Family Stroll and the event has not received financial support from the council.

New Haven Free Public Library Summer Reading Program

The program theme is "Read, Renew, Repeat," focusing on reading about the environment and self-improvement.

- Open to 0-12 year olds (there is also a teen program that is running similarly and Soma will share flyers for both).
- Week of kick offs begin on June 1st and end June 6.
- The entire program ends on August 18th.
- Participants are encouraged to read for at least 20 minutes a day with a goal of 1200 minutes this summer
- Prizes and incentives are available to all readers, readers who complete the challenge can enter a raffle to win a private tour of the Peabody Museum for the child and their caregiver
- Contact smitra@nhfpl.org for more information.
- Claire will follow up with flyers and additional program details

Project Updates and Calls to Action

- **Committee Check-In**
 - Claire surveyed the group via a google form to determine who are members of a committee, who may want to chair a committee, and what new committees we might like to introduce. If you haven't completed that form, please fill this out at your earliest convenience: <https://forms.gle/zcgZSFDtTx7GSshE7>
- **RAPID Survey**
 - The New Haven Early Childhood Council and the [RAPID Survey Project](#) at Stanford University are listening to **families with young children under age 6 living in the state of Connecticut**. We want to hear about the experiences, strengths, and needs of children and families.
 - Please encourage families to **take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey in English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and Urdu** <https://tinyurl.com/rapid-nhecc> and receive a \$10 gift card.
 - The survey has been shared with providers in New Haven. Please share with your networks

- Our goal is 250 surveys for this round, and we will get updates on May 6th and May 16th of our progress. Claire will share how we are doing around those dates.
- Claire challenged everyone to collect 10 surveys. This should help us reach our goal.
- See attached flyers and Instagram posts to share with your networks
- **Parent Ambassadors**
 - We're recruiting for the role of Parent Ambassador with some urgency (ideally by June), and we are still developing the roles/responsibilities for this stipended position
 - Please feel free to add your comments and thoughts on what the role and responsibilities should be: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Z7dU0lMZSSqZsABKa3omacFtTo-tck7Xktzpl4aw2M/edit?usp=sharing>

School Readiness Liaison Report

- The School Readiness Application for FY 25 will be submitted this week.
- Kerry expressed appreciation for the council members who supported programs by reading in classrooms. Some schools sent their thanks and photos from the day: [Read Aloud Report from St. Aeden's](#) & [Read Aloud at St. Andrews](#)
- **Provider Appreciation Day**
 - May 10 is Provider Appreciation Day and Kerry proposed that the council approve the purchase of cookies for all 177 child care providers (per the OEC licensing list) in the city of New Haven. This list includes centers and licensed family child care homes.
 - The cost would be approximately \$2,000.
 - Questions for Kerry were:
 - Do we have the funds to pay for this expense? The response was that we do have funding available, but she is unsure exactly what "pot" the funds would be coming from. She said she would follow up on that.
 - Is there a more impactful item we might purchase for teachers? Kerry expressed that perhaps next year we could think about more impactful ways to spend extra funds.

Further concerns were raised about the transparency of how we're using unallocated funds. Attendees discussed community events (ie. the Teacher Appreciation Dinner at the CT Children's Museum, Family Stroll) as events that have not had council support in the past.

Tammy shared that the chairs are working with Pro Bono Partnership to strengthen the processes around how support can be requested from the council. All expressed a desire to support teachers and it was agreed upon that we should be thoughtful about the ways to do that in the future. It is possible that a committee will be formed to address this topic.

Karen moved to approve the cookie purchase. Jerry seconded. The council voted on the purchase of cookies and it passed.

- **RFP for Mental Health Services**
 - Kerry shared that an RFP process was done for mental health services. A provider would spend 20 hours (including prep time) working with SR programs to support teachers, students and families around mental health.
 - The RFP states that funding is available for an average of 38 hours per week at the rate of \$100/hour. The time period for service is through June 30, 2024.
 - The Council has already set aside the funds to pay for these services.
 - We received 4 applications and interviewed 2 of the entities. The entity selected is Integrated Wellness Group.

- Highlights from this group are that the provider is bilingual in English and Spanish, they are embedded in the New Haven community and have worked for 5 years with a SR partner.

Strategic Planning Discussion

Kim Bohlen introduced herself and she shared about her background in Early Childhood in New Haven. United Way is leading a Strategic Planning process related to early care and education in New Haven and she is consulting on the project.

- This plan will build on plans from the last 25 years.
- Has a specific scope and short timeframe. Focuses on 0-5 year olds. The intent is to have a plan in place by November 2024.
- There are about \$1 million in ARPA funds that can be spent on this project; funds must be spent by September 2026.
- Recognizes that two of the biggest issues have to do with resources and compensation; addressing those issues will require public investment from state and federal sources. Right now, we are suggesting actions that we could take locally to make a difference across the city.
- You can reach Kim at kbohen@uwgnh.org or kbohen@gmail.com to share your thoughts and ideas.

Questions for Kim included:

- Are there a set of working assumptions we're working off of? What kind of data currently exist? Kim shared that she would be working with another consultant, Dave Bechtel, who would help identify that information.
- Council members expressed that the data would be important before they decided what areas of focus are most important (ie. training, access, recruitment, etc.)

Break Out Room Discussions

Room 1: Facilitated by Kim Bohlen

Present: Vanessa, Eliza, Shelly, Jerry, Mikyle, Katie, Karen, Leeora

Key Points Discussed

- **Programs and Access**
 - Discussion centered around reaching as many families as possible to provide growth and learning opportunities for children.
 - Inequities observed in classrooms due to varying funding sources (e.g., school readiness, EHS, interdistrict magnet).
 - Concerns raised about ensuring equitable access to resources for all children.
- **Data Collection and Planning**
 - Emphasis on collecting qualitative data during May and June to inform future strategies.
 - Consideration of touchpoints over time to gather feedback and refine plan.
 - Recognition of affordability as a crucial factor, especially for infant/toddler programs.
- **On the Ground Efforts**
 - Importance of considering implementation and day-to-day realities when collecting data.
 - Interest in leveraging efforts made by NHPS and examining health and safety issues.
 - Recognition of the impact of external factors like intimate partner violence and substance use on families and children.
- **Data Accessibility and Collaboration**
 - Challenges in accessing data about family challenges and immigrant experiences.

- Proposal to collaborate with groups to share data and perspectives.
- Importance of engaging parents in advocacy and supporting them through processes like PPTs.
- **Service Delivery and Collaboration:**
 - Discussion on optimizing service delivery for children, especially in the birth to three age group.
 - Proposal to integrate Birth to Three services into child care centers and facilitate collaboration among providers.
 - Consideration of resources like CPAC and strategies for sharing information effectively

Action Items:

- Collect qualitative data throughout May and June.
- Explore collaborations with groups to gather diverse perspectives and data.
- Develop strategies to address affordability, especially for infant/toddler programs.
- Continue discussions on optimizing service delivery and collaboration among providers.

Next steps:

- Kim will take back discussed points to her team for further consideration and action.
- Continued efforts to gather data and refine strategies over the summer, with a goal of having a plan ready by November.

Room 2: Facilitated by Tammy Robinson

Key Points Discussed

- **Allocation of Funds:**
 - The group discussed the availability of \$1 million and deliberated on whether to adopt a systemic approach or a targeted approach ("sliver approach") for its utilization.
 - Discussed loan forgiveness for educators who have completed college and gone into the child care field (Public Service Loan Forgiveness?)
- **Community of Practice and Shared Learning:**
 - Charlie expressed interest in focusing on family support and proposed creating a community of practice to address this aspect. The council deliberated on potential collaborative opportunities in this domain.
 - It was suggested that training and community of practice sessions should be offered free of charge for centers/programs, with provisions for parents to attend and learn alongside.
 - Emphasis was placed on the need for a continuous professional development framework rather than one-time training sessions.
- **Compensation Concerns:**
 - There was consensus that compensation is a significant issue within the sector, prompting discussions on allocating resources towards addressing long-term systemic problems.
 - Wage issues must be addressed.
 - We cannot recruit teachers into a profession where they cannot support themselves.
- **Supply and Demand Imbalance:**
 - Allyx highlighted the imbalance between supply and demand in the sector, raising questions about the effectiveness of creating pathways without sufficient resources.
- **Connection to Family Resource Centers:**
 - Carmelita mentioned building stronger relationships with family resource centers in New Haven to better support families.

- **Inclusion of Family Child Care Educators:**
 - Kio recommended the inclusion of family child care centers in all aspects of the council's work.
- **Support for Children with Special Needs:**
 - Discussions revolved around supporting children with special needs in all programs.
- **Enhancing Perception of Child Care Profession:**
 - It was proposed to embed principles that promote the well-respect and value of the child care profession into the council's plan.
- **Parent Engagement:**
 - Suggestions were made to conduct parent focus groups, organize parent roundtable discussions, and provide materials to support family child care programs catering to children with special needs.

Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 4:27pm.