

# CT Early Childhood Cabinet Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2018 • 2 – 4 p.m.

Legislative Office Building, Room 1C, Hartford, CT

## ATTENDANCE

Member	Statutory Designation	Member	Member Type
<b>Nancy Wyman</b> <i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	Co-Chair	<b>Elizabeth Ritter</b> <i>Director, Connecticut Head Start Collaboration Office</i>	State Director of Head Start Collaboration  X
<b>David Wilkinson</b> <i>Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Co-Chair	<b>Cathy Battista</b> <i>Family Resource Alliance</i>	Representative from Family Resource Centers  X
<b>Bill Halsey</b> <i>Department of Social Services</i>	Commissioner of Social Services, or designee	<b>Patricia Bryant –Beausoleil</b> <i>Director, Putnam Family Resource Center and Early Childhood Coordinator</i>	Representative from a public elementary school with a prekindergarten program  X
<b>Ellen Cohn</b> <i>Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for administering the provisions of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Act	<b>Marisol Estrada-Soto</b> <i>Parent</i>	Parent of a child attending or attended a school in an education reform district  X
<b>Kimberly Karanda</b> <i>Director, Statewide Services Division, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services</i>	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or designee	<b>Vacant</b>	Representative of the CT State Employees Association  X
<b>Harriet Feldlaufer</b> <i>Director, Early Care &amp; Education, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Administrator of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	<b>Linda Fransicovich</b> <i>Executive Director, Grossman Family Foundation</i>	Representative from the Philanthropic Community  X
<b>Leah Grenier</b> <i>Budget Analyst, Office of Policy &amp; Management</i>	Secretary, Office of Policy & Management, or designee	<b>Vacant</b>	Representative from the Business Community  X
<b>Kimberly Nilson</b> <i>Program Manager, Department of Children &amp; Families</i>	Commissioner of Children & Families, or designee	<b>Karen Rainville,</b> <i>Executive Director, Bridge to Success Community Partnership and Member, CT Association for the Education of Young Children</i>	Representative of an association of early education and child care providers  X
<b>Evonne Klein</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Housing</i>	Commissioner of Department of Housing	<b>Edie Reichard</b> <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>	Representative of a State-funded Child Care Center  X
<b>Rosa Biaggi,</b> <i>Public Health Section Chief, Department of Public Health</i>	Commissioner of Public Health, or designee	<b>Roberto Burgos</b> <i>Director, Early Childhood Learning Center</i>	Representative from the Head Start Association  X

<b>Raul Pino</b> Commissioner, Department of Public Health	Commissioner of Developmental Services, or designee	X	<b>Eileen Ward</b> <i>Director, Children's Community Development Center</i>	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	X
<b>Joan Parris</b> <i>Director, Early Childhood Education, Norwalk CC</i>	Designee for President of Board of Regents	X	<b>Steven Hernandez</b> <i>Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children and Senior</i>	Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, or designee	X
<b>Thomas Boudreau (on behalf of Andrea Brinnel)</b> State Department of Education	Responsible for administering Section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	X	Vacant	Board of Education for a town designated as an Alliance District, appointed by the Speaker of the House	
<b>Louis Tallarita</b> <i>State Coordinator, Bureau of Health, Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for coordination of education services to children and youth who are homeless		Vacant	Parent of child attending or attended a School Readiness program, appointed by the Minority Leader of the House.	
<b>Dianna Wentzell</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Education</i>	Commissioner of Education, or designee				

### **A. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions**

David Wilkinson, OEC Commissioner, gave opening remarks. Commissioner Wilkinson made a motion to adopt the minutes of April 20, 2018. Betsy Ritter seconded the motion and the minutes were adopted.

### **B. Early Care and Education Action Plan: A Roadmap Moving Forward**

Commissioner Wilkinson provided an update on the OEC Early Care and Education Action Plan. This plan is a produce of years of feedback from providers, parents, researchers, advocates, and philanthropy. This is an evolving document that is deeply informing the three-year Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) plan. To date, the OEC has completed 25 of the 48 action steps in the plan.

The Action Plan consists of four areas: 1) licensing requirements and enforcement, 2) access and rates, 3) workforce, technical assistance, and training, and 4) communication, information and collaboration. The Commissioner provided a few examples of work underway that address components of the Action Plan.

Licensing Requirements and Enforcement: The OEC is conducting public health and child safety campaigns, one focusing on safe sleep and one on the importance of TLC – Trusted Licensed Care. The licensing division is offering a new “white-glove” technical assistance service to support newly licensed providers. The goal is to help providers develop a deeper understanding of licensing requirements and to improve outcomes for children.

Access and Rates: While Connecticut leads in the nation in the increase in preschool programs, there is a significant lack of infant-toddler care. These young children are the most vulnerable and need safe, quality child care. The OEC’s goal is to ramp up access to infant toddler care, increase Care 4 Kids rates for infant toddler spaces, and provide incentives to providers to deliver infant-toddler care.

Communication, Information and Collaboration: The OEC is conducting seven parent engagement discussions concerning ways to improve the Care 4 Kids program. This feedback will be used to inform proposed changes to the Care 4 Kids regulations and the program processes. The OEC is also committed to establishing a Parent Cabinet to advise the agency through the lens of parents’ perspectives.

### **C. Preschool Development Grant**

Cathy Lenihan, staff member in the OEC Commissioner's Office, provided an overview of the federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) grant application. The Office of Early Childhood plans to submit an application and sent a team of five to a national technical assistance session regarding this competitive early childhood grant. The goal of the grant is to support state progress toward greater system efficiency, high program quality and improved child outcomes. The grant has five mandatory components:

- Updated a statewide needs assessment of the Birth to Age 5 mixed delivery system;
- Implement a strategic plan that includes collaboration, coordination, and quality improvements;
- Maximize parental choice and knowledge of the state mixed delivery system and promote and increase involvement by parents and families in their child's development;
- Share best practices to increase collaboration and efficiency;
- Improve quality through best practices, professional development, and enhanced learning opportunities for children.

The Office of Early Childhood is well positioned to apply for this grant because the majority of birth to age 5 systems and services are housed within the agency. The grant will highlight the agency's efforts to: invest more in infant-toddler care and services; increase collaboration between early care and education, home visiting, and Birth to Three; assess and improve existing data systems to promote better integration and ultimately better outcomes; and implement feedback loops with parents.

### **D. Inter-Agency Collaboration Efforts & the Role of the Cabinet Moving Forward**

#### Family Homeless Diversion

Steve DiLella, Director of Individual and Family Support Program Unit at the Department of Housing, provided a presentation of a cross-agency collaborative family homeless diversion initiative. DOH and the OEC are partnering to expand funding for family homeless diversion efforts. The goal of family diversion is to identify alternative housing arrangements or provide immediate financial assistance that returns them to their permanent housing before an emergency shelter is considered. Research about early childhood trauma provides compelling evidence that a young child will fare better by avoiding living in a homeless shelter. The OEC is providing funds to augment the current diversion funding, using a pay for performance model. He said this cross-agency collaboration could be a model for the country.

#### Framework for Family Engagement

Judy Carson, Program Manager of School-Family-Community Partnerships at the State Department of Education, provided an overview of the Framework for Family Engagement. This is a collaborative effort between the State Department of Education and the Office of Early Childhood. The Framework was developed, in part, based on discussions with 200 people through five forums. A statewide symposium was also held. The effort was supported financially through the Early Childhood Funder Collaborative and the OEC Preschool Development Grant. Carson said that families want partnerships, consistency, close collaboration, and equity. First and foremost, families are seeking trust and respect.

Carson also highlighted a new on-line tool for parents, called Hello Kindergarten, a cross-agency effort of SDE and OEC. The tool is designed to promote a healthy transition from preschool to kindergarten.

### Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

Commissioner Raul Pino described the DPH-led Green and Healthy Homes Initiative. The goal is to train communities how to use health data to help focus on better health outcomes for families. Connecticut has abundant old housing stock, which comes with a host of environmental risk factors, such as lead paint. The Initiative is exploring leveraging resources through the Green Bank to renovate homes to make them more efficient and healthier.

### Integrated Care for Kids

Bill Halsey, Director of Integrated Care at the Department of Social Services, provided details on the Integrated Care for Kids funding opportunity through the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The federal government, which has not yet been released, will award eight grantees at a maximum of \$16 million each. Implementation would begin in the Spring of 2019. The grant has three goals:

- Prevent mental health and substance use disorders as well as adverse childhood events;
- Provide care coordination services that integrates primary care and behavioral health;
- Introduce Alternative Payment Models (APM) that promote quality clinical services and improved health outcomes.

DSS has chosen to focus on children age birth to three, incorporating wrap-around services through care coordination model.

### Head Start Collaboration

Betsy Ritter, Director of the State Head Start Collaboration Office, said that Connecticut will soon submit its five-year State Head Start Collaboration Plan to the federal Office of Head Start.

### 2Gen Work Ahead

Steven Hernandez, Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, and Interim Executive Director of the Commission on Equity and Opportunity, noted that the 2Gen work continues, with involvement of the legislative branch, state agencies, nonprofits, and philanthropy.

### **D. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.