

**Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care
May 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

5/24 - Blue Ribbon Panelists in Attendance:

Audette Bisaillon, Director of the ROSCCO After School Activity Program; Emily Byrne, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children; Chris DiPentima, President and CEO of CBIA; Dr. Monette Ferguson, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Empowerment; Diana Jepsen, Community Member and former Communications Specialist for several Fortune 500 companies, including GE, United Technologies, Cigna, and Covidien; Katherine Lantigua, Program Director for Katherine Lantigua Family Child Care; Karen Lott, Executive Director of the Women's League Child Development Center; Althea Marshall-Brooks, Executive Director of Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership; Representative Kathleen McCarty; Garrett Moran, Former Chairperson of the Governor's Workforce Council and Former President of Year Up; Kailyn Nadeau, Co-director and Teacher for the Norfolk Early Learning Center; Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents; Jessica Sager, Co-founder and CEO of All Our Kin; Melissa Turner, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Yale New Haven Health System; Carmelita Valencia-Daye, Professor in Early Childhood Education for Gateway Community College; Maria Del Pilar Vargas, Member of the Office of Early Childhood's Parent Cabinet and Educational Coach for Licensed Family Child Care Providers for United Way

Speakers/Presenters:

The Honorable Beth Bye, Commissioner, Connecticut Office of Early Childhood; Linda Smith, Director, Bipartisan Policy Center Early Childhood Development Initiative; Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy; Dr. Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, Program Manager, Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

Welcome and Meeting Objectives:

The Honorable Beth Bye, Commissioner, Connecticut Office of Early Childhood called the meeting to order and shared the objectives for the Panel:

- This is the first work session with panel members
- Tremendous overlap between today's workgroup topic and other topics
- The recommendations shared on today's meeting will be adapted based on panel member and other stakeholder feedback

Child Care and the Illusion of Parent Choice:

Commissioner Bye introduced Linda Smith, Director, Bipartisan Policy Center Early Childhood Development Initiative

Linda Smith presented *Child Care and the Illusion of Parent Choice*, covering the following topics:

- The Need for Child Care in this Country
 - Potential need and demand for child care
 - Distance-based methodology
 - Child care gap
- What We Know and Don't Know About Parents
 - Parent survey series
 - Current child care experience, covering types, hours, preferences, choice, and workforce
- Discussion
 - Support for businesses to implement practices to make child care responsibilities easier for families
 - Concerns regarding data on child care - representation, availability, etc.
 - Reaching families to make them aware of the resources available to them

Panel Member Discussion of Preliminary Draft Equity and Access Recommendations:

Facilitated by workgroup Co-leads Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy and Dr. Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, Program Manager, Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy and Dr. Lorna Thomas-Farquharson presented Preliminary Draft Equity and Access Recommendations covering the following topics:

- Unmet Need for Early Care and Education
- Affordability
- Parent Engagement and Navigation
- Community Voice
- Child and Family Outcomes

Discussion:

- Focus on need for additional Connecticut-based data
- Desire for data to be broken out (race, economic status, urban/rural, infant & toddler/preschool)
- Need to understand funding sources and eligibility; flexibility from federal level to state
- Waitlist/deserts in the child care system
- Communication with parents/families on what their options are; opportunity for a parent guide and platform

Concluding remarks:

Commissioner Bye concluded the meeting:

- Reiterated the themes that have emerged:
 - data needs (CT-specific), e.g., OEC parent survey

models for parent information systems that are more modern, all perspectives are considered in these recommendations, looking for a common platform

- Advised Panel members to send comments and feedback to Eloisa Melendez, Lead Planner and Manager of the Blue Ribbon Panel, Office of Early Childhood