



**ARPA Task Force Early Childhood Learning Committee Orientation Meeting
Meeting Minutes – June 9, 2021
10:30am Virtual Zoom Webinar**

Attendance:

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair, Charuni Patibanda, Co-Chair Lisa Diller, Co-Chair Ken Woods, Kirstin Olson, Madeleine Bayard, Rita Landgraf, Aaron Bass, Quinn Johnson, Heidi Beck

Committee Members Absent: Mari Viera Gunn, Pam Reuther

Others in Attendance: Aundrea Almond, NCC Chief of Staff

Proceedings:

- Meeting called to order at 10:31 a.m. by Co-Chair Patibanda
- Opening remarks by Patibanda and general description of ARPA Funding
- Committee member and support staff introductions
- Patibanda provided an explanation of the scope of the Committee's work and projected timeline for the work of the Committee. The intent is for the Committee to provide recommendations to County Executive Meyer by August 31, 2021.
- Staff Attorney Judi Mitchel provided a presentation of Delaware's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and how it applies to the committee and future meetings.
- Patibanda facilitated a discussion on meeting times and the Committee agreed that meetings would be held every other Wednesday at 10:30 am over zoom.
- Committee members spoke briefly about initial ideas and areas of concerns, including:
 - Childcare staffing and provider shortages;
 - Facility upgrades to respond to COVID-19;
 - Childcare staff wages;
 - How is the County interacting on child care issues with other jurisdictions;
 - Staff benefits including compensation, training, professional development;
 - Education is a key indicator when looking at inequities;
 - How are we defining early childhood?;
 - Purchase of care and the gap and how does this impact the community;

- Families have POC voucher but cannot match with a provider that can serve them because of availability, extra fees, etc.
- We should also look at how and why providers are having trouble with capacity;
- Regarding workforce, we also need to look at quality training;
- How are we defining early care and education? Is it only family childcare and center childcare or broader like in-home learning?

Public Comment:

- Thomasina Hamilton, New Castle Council Employee, the committee should consider impacts to families who have children with autism.
- Jamie Schneider, Executive Director, Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children, DAEYC put together a childcare provider task force. Workforce crisis is the worst it has been and folks are out of ideas to engage people back into provider jobs. DAEYC is willing to provide childcare provider feedback to the committee.

Adjournment:

- Co Chair Patibanda adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:22 a.m.