

**CT Early Childhood Cabinet**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
*July 30, 2015 • 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.*  
*Legislative Office Building, Room 2B, Hartford, CT*

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Member Type</b>		<b>Member</b>	<b>Member Type</b>	
<b>Nancy Wyman</b> <i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	Co-Chair	X	<b>Grace Whitney</b> <i>Director, Head Start Collaboration Office</i>	State Director of Head Start Collaboration	X
<b>Myra Jones-Taylor</b> <i>Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Co-Chair	X	<b>Cathy Battista</b> <i>Family Resource Alliance</i>	Representative from Family Resource Centers	X
<b>Roderick Bremby</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Social Services</i>	Commissioner of Social Services		<b>Patricia Bryant -Beausoleil</b> <i>Director, Putnam Family Resource Center</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	
<b>Miriam Delphin-Rittmon</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services</i>	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services		<b>Helene Figueroa</b> <i>Director, Child Care Division CSEA/SEUI Local 2001</i>	Representative of the CT State Employees Association	X
<b>Harriet Feldlauffer</b> <i>Director, Early Care &amp; Education, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Administrator of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	X	<b>Linda Francovich</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	X	<b>Laura Post, Senior Director,</b> <i>Strategic Planning &amp; Insights, LEGO Systems</i>	Representative from the Business Community	X
<b>Joette Katz</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Children &amp; Families</i>	Commissioner of Children & Families	X	<b>Karen Rainville,</b> <i>Executive Director, 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>Jewell Mullen</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Public Health</i>	Commissioner of Public Health		<b>Magdalena Rosales-Alban</b> <i>Director, LULAC</i>	Representative from the Head Start Association	X
<b>Morna Murray</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Developmental Services</i>	Commissioner of Developmental Services	X	<b>Eileen Ward</b> <i>Director, Children's Community Development Center</i>	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	
<b>Joan Parris</b> <i>Director, ECE, Norwalk CC</i>	Designee for President of Board of Regents	X	<b>Elaine Zimmerman</b> <i>Executive Director, Commission</i>	Executive Director of the Commission on Children	

			<i>on Children</i>		
<b>Maria Synodi</b> <i>Special Education Consultant, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for administering Section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act		Vacant		Board of Education for a town designated as an Alliance District
<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	X	Vacant		
<b>Dianna Wentzell</b> <i>Commissioner, Department of Education</i>	Commissioner of Education	X			

**Attendance Note:**

**Peter Palermino**, Social Services Program Manager at the Department of Social Services, attended on behalf of Commissioner Roderick Bremby.

**Kim Nilson**, Program Manager at the Department of Children & Families, attended on behalf of Commissioner Joette Katz.

**Michael Michaud**, Chief of Staff at the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, attended on behalf of Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon.

**Steve Dilella**, Department of Housing, attended on behalf of Commissioner Evonne Klein.

**Steven Hernandez** attended on behalf of Elaine Zimmerman.

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman and Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor provided introductory remarks to the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet. Lieutenant Governor Wyman called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. The April 30, 2015 minutes were adopted.

**B. Presentation: Setting a Path to End Family Homelessness**

Lisa Tepper Bates, Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, presented on the evolving philosophy about policy on homelessness at the federal and state level. In 2009, President Obama signed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act that requires communities to work in new ways to end homelessness. The HEARTH goals are: 1) no one is homeless for longer than 30 days; 2) reduce new episodes of homelessness, and 3) reduce return entries into homelessness.

The federal plan to end homelessness to further the HEARTH Act is the Opening Doors campaign. Opening Doors is a comprehensive approach to promote connections between sectors, focusing on housing, health care, employment, criminal justice, education, behavioral health and child welfare systems. It emphasizes collaboration among nonprofits, community leaders, state government agencies, philanthropy, and business.

The goals of CT's Opening Doors is the following: 1) end homelessness among veterans by 2015; 2) finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by 2016; 3) prevent and end homelessness among families, youth and children by 2022; and 4) set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

In Connecticut, there are 1,345 families that were homeless in 2014; 25% headed by someone under the age of 25 and 44% headed by someone age 25 to 34. Of those families, 2,400 were children with 47% under the age of 5 and 40% between ages 5 and 12.

Connecticut has launched “Coordinated Access Networks” (CANS) that work on a regional basis to coordinate resources and programs that address homelessness. Core principles of the CANS are: 1) easy access for people in housing crisis to the resources they need; 2) approach and implementation is consistent and standardized; 3) comprehensive access, assessment and assignment to services; and 4) partners maximize impact of resources and meet the needs of each family with appropriate resources.

Two interventions have been found to be the most effective: subsidized housing and rapid rehousing. Rapid Rehousing is getting a person/family housed as quickly as possible. It reduces the length of shelter stays, reduces the negative impact of long-term homelessness, and stabilizes the family and sets the family on a positive path. There are ways to secure additional funds for rapid rehousing. They include: re-allocation of current HUD funding; 2) HUD Emergency Solutions Grants; 3) HOME Tenant Based Rental Assistance; and 4) re-allocation of TANF funds for rental assistance.

**C. Presentation: A Cross Systems Approach to Family Homelessness and Housing Instability**

Anne Farrell, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Applied Research, Human Development & Family Studies at the University of Connecticut, presented on family homelessness. Families are a growing segment of the homeless population. Safe, affordable housing operates as a foundation for ensuring family stability and child well-being. Homelessness and housing instability have profound effects on child development including trauma, instability, related family problems, and early neurocognitive development. Multi-determined challenges require multi-component interventions.

Professor Farrell shared a vision for families:

- CT children grow up in safe, stable homes with access to high-quality early care and education.
- Vulnerable families have access to responsive, friendly systems of support that honor their unique assets and needs
- Crisis is an opportunity to develop new family capacities to respond to future adversity.
- CT communities offer a range of ways for families to develop social and material capital in service of well-being and self-sufficiency.

A Connecticut study is underway to look at housing as a platform for child well-being. CT is one of 5 demonstration sites across the country. Study partners are the Department of Children and Families, The Connection, Inc. and the University of Connecticut.

Intervention components should include screening, prompt recognition and intervention, and a cross systems approach. Professor Farrell shared a new screening tool known as RAFT (Risks and Assets for Family Triage). A pilot is underway in DCF Region 3, where all new families are screened with Quick Risks and Assessments for Family Triage (QRAFT). The next step is to expand the use of QRAFT statewide and use both RAFT and QRAFT as a way to differentiate family needs within and across service systems.

Professor Farrell said it is realistic to provide this screening tool with early care and education providers, though they will need training and resources to implement the tool.

**D. Subcommittee on Families Without Homes**

Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee on Families with Young Children Without Homes. The subcommittee has met twice this summer. Participants identified the top five barriers and the top five agency policy changes that would address the needs of families with young children who are experiencing homelessness. A survey was subsequently sent out so participants could comment on the barrier and policy changes identified and add others. Commissioner

Jones-Taylor is reaching out to agency commissioners to review the policy changes identified for further discussion and exploration.

The subcommittee is scheduled to meet two more times prior to the full Cabinet meeting in October. The subcommittee will present policy recommendations, both legislative and administrative, at that October meeting.

Commissioner Jones-Taylor provided examples of policy changes that the Office of Early Childhood intends to implement. The first is to establish homelessness as a “protective service category” within the Care4Kids program. This would mean that a family experiencing homelessness would be categorically eligible for the child care subsidy, regardless of employment. The second is a change to early childhood licensing, which would create a 90-day grace period for a family that is homeless to produce needed documents, such as immunization records, in order to enroll their child in a licensed child care center, family child care home, or youth camp.

**E. United Way of CT 211 Website**

The United Way of Connecticut presented on its redesigned 211 website, which is anticipated to be launched in late August. Rick Porth, President and CEO of the United Way of Connecticut, provided an overview and Alana Kroeber, Director of Information Services, shared key elements of the new website.

The new search engine is more robust and user-friendly. 2-1-1 houses information about 4,100 organizations and 48,000 services, most of which are based in Connecticut. The new search engine makes it easier to search simple, common-sense words, much like Google. Five full-time staff maintain 2-1-1 and keep it updated. An e-library houses 450 white papers that are developed by United Way of CT staff. A new feature allows individuals to share information from the 2-1-1 website with another person by email or by text. The translator function is more powerful and improved.

Based on feedback from the Office of Early Childhood, a separate Children and Families category will be added to the website. It will provide a portal to the full range of services and programs available to families with children.

**F. Public Comment:**

Lt. Governor Wyman opened the meeting to public comment and questions.

**G. Adjournment / Next Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. The next meeting will be held in October, a date to be determined.