

**CT Early Childhood Cabinet
Subcommittee on Families with Young Children Without Homes**

September 10, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor, OEC; Commissioner Rod Bremby, DSS; Peter Palermino, DSS; Alice Minervino, DHMAS; Laura Dunleavy, OEC; Louis Tallarita, SDE; Bill Halsey, DSS; Margie Hudson, DPH; Kim Sumaroo-Rodriguez, DCF; Kim Nilson, DCF; Steven Hernandez, CT Commission on Children; Ann Giordano, Education Connection; Kelly Anelli, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Kellyann Day, New Reach; Lisa Tepper Bates, CT Coalition to End Homelessness; Betsy Cronin, The Connection; Tanya Barrett, United Way of Connecticut

OEC Staff: Maggie Adair, Mary Farnsworth, Loree Armstrong

Introductions

Commissioner Jones-Taylor welcomed the group and outlined the order of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to review the policy changes identified by the subcommittee at the June meeting, rank them in importance, and discuss those policy changes that were ranked in the top five or six.

Top Five Agency Policy Changes

Mary Farnsworth instructed the subcommittee to review the policy changes that were ranked through an on-line survey. However, because only six individuals responded to the on-line survey, Mary asked the subcommittee to review all of the 42 policy changes identified and rank them by importance.

The following policy changes were ranked of the most importance by subcommittee members:

- Prioritize access for homeless families across state-funded early care and education programs (OEC)
- Make homeless families eligible for Care4Kids subsidies without requiring them to be working, in an approved training or education program, or enrolled in TANF (OEC)
- Provide child care vouchers in shelters (DOH)
- Provide additional funds for subsidized housing vouchers (DOH)
- Introduce evidence-based community/home models with community health workers, intensive case management, care coordination, and infant mental health (DSS)
- Increase the Care4Kids reimbursement rate for homeless children adequate to access a high-quality early care and education program (OEC)
- Review/change regulations for the eviction prevention program (prioritize families, higher rent bank amount, terminate 60% of income requirement, work closer with legal services for mediation) (DOH)

The Office of Early Childhood will write up a report, including the top ranked priorities, which will be reviewed at the next subcommittee meeting on September 24. The report will then be presented to Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, which will be discussed at the full Cabinet meeting on October 27.

Subcommittee members offered their comments generally. Below are highlights of the discussion.

- Wait lists for housing services should be avoided when there are no services available.

- The Coordinated Access Networks have limited resources. They are not agencies and they are not funded.
- While some federal programs do not allow prioritization of specific populations, the Office of Early Childhood has the ability to prioritize under the Care4Kids program and state-funded early care and education programs.
- There should be an expedited path to enroll children experiencing homelessness in early childhood programs.
- Emphasizing school stability for the child is fundamental.
- Early childhood providers will need professional development about the needs of children experiencing homelessness and specific training in the use of the RAFT and Q-RAFT.
- The Office of Early Childhood is looking into setting aside early care and education slots in centers for children experiencing homelessness. It is not clear how to operationalize this concept. There is concern about leaving center slots empty.
- What happens when children experiencing homelessness who receive early childhood services are eventually no longer homeless? How do you promote long-term stability through ongoing services? The new 12-month redetermination in the Care4Kids program will help promote that stability of care.

Adjourn

The subcommittee meeting adjourned at 12 noon.