



King County

Children and Families Strategy Task Force – Agenda

May 13, 2020, 5:30-7:30 pm – virtual meeting

[Join Skype Meeting](#)

(206) 263-8114, Conference ID: 2701484#

1. Welcome 5:30-5:35
2. Public comment 5:35-5:40

None
3. Introductions 5:40-5:55

Staff: Jessica Cafferty, Tatsuko Go Hollo

Members: Lois Martin, Kathy Brasch, Paul Steinke, Genevieve Stokes, Theresa Lenear, Lauren Vlas, Nancy Ashley, Jaunita Salinas-Aguila, Natalie Lente, Debra Sullivan, Karen Hart, Omana Imani, Denise Pruitt, Sarah Reyneveld, Miriam Zmiewski-Angel, Wendy Harris, Laura Kneeder, Ruth Kagi

Guests: Jill Bushnell

4. Approval of April minutes 5:55-6:00

Miriam motioned to approve. Lois seconded.
None opposed.
No abstentions.
Motion passed.
5. COVID-19 and child care updates 6:00-6:15

Jessica shared updates: Deep impacts that will likely be sustained, including closures and financial tolls. More than 30% of King County providers have closed doors – due to safety concerns, lack of enrollment. NAEYC did survey and few providers feel confident they will be able to weather COVID without financial/other supports. Ratios will remain much lower, which is challenging for child care providers. Seeing some positive movement at county and state levels.

King County launched **Emergency Child Care program**. Some non-traditional hours and overnight care. About 1/3rd are center-based. Almost 100 kids placed. There is still



King County

capacity. Direct families to Child Care Resources. This program ends at the end of June. Thinking about how we support providers and families beyond June.

State level update from Genevieve: Waivers of co-pays – waived through May. All part-day are now full-day authorizations. Increased flexibility around activities for Working Connections requirements. Families are not re-assessed within a 12-month period. If they have a 1-month unemployment bump, shouldn't be impacted. Some families are not being re-authorized because of 3-month financial support. If eligibility period coincides with unemployment, in general unemployment should not exceed wages. But if have higher income at time of application and are no longer eligible, that may be a factor. Temporary put hold on fingerprint-based background checks. Temporary waived and suspended Early Achievers timelines. Created an emergency child care license and child care waiver process. In home-visiting, ECEAP and Eclipse, have moved to virtual services. These are temporary and are evaluating how long they will remain in place.

COVID grant program – dedicated money to Washington to support child care industry. Now have approval of plan. State will be giving out grants to providers who are open and providing care when they apply for the grant. 3 tiers based on license capacity. Funds can be spent on facilities, rent, etc. Application may be available as soon as Friday, May 15th. Low barrier application, all licensed providers can apply. Will accept apps until funds are depleted or June 30th, whichever comes first. Grants are for total of \$29 million. Another \$29 million is used to waive co-pays, switch from part-day to full-day, etc. No emergency licenses have been issued. Most providers were already licensed and eligible for waivers, or were able to address needs in other ways. DCYF held webinar on May 12th and will also be posting FAQs – good place to get information about usage of funds. Jessica will send links to information.

Jessica shared the County is thinking about immediate, interim and long-term needs. How can we provide support in 12-18 months interim as we work toward long-term goals? County leadership is supportive.

6. Brief subcommittee report-outs

6:15-6:30 Many

Cost of Care: Kathy reported. Many recommendations require new money which may not be available. Wondering what can be done to prevent providers from losing sites. Have also discussed how timeline of Task Force will impact ability to support recovery. Have two new recommendations: #6 Supports for child care providers impacted by COVID, including tax abatements, health and safety supports, property tax reductions,



King County

grants. #7 invest in mental health and trauma supports. Getting data around cost gaps for equitable care.

High quality, anti-racist, equitable care: Genevieve reported. Discussed budget shortfalls state will be facing. What can the task force do to have recommendations to task county with ensuring cuts don't fall on backs of child care industry and people of color. Communities of color should be at the center, and early learning. Revenue came up – with no money to fund these recommendations, is there space within the Task Force to recommend finding progressive ways to get money needed to make critical investments.

Inclusive care and supports: Nancy reported. Most recommendations will overlap with other subcommittees. Hosted learning session on Family, Friend and Neighbor Care. Sharpening strategies. Collecting data. Topics: inclusion for children of differing abilities. Children affected by race and other discriminations. Intersectionalities of children and families. Thinking about how to create a trauma-informed culture in both informal and formal settings. Issue has come up for need of oversight and accountability of recommendations – must include those who are impacted by recommendations. Focus on family choice.

HR and employer best practices: Tatsuko reported.

- The group has not been meeting regularly due to COVID response
- However, plan to move forward with existing recommendations
- Will revisit recommendations in light of COVID changes, the role of King County and other employers, and develop a plan to flesh them out at upcoming subcommittee meeting
- May need additional help from the full group – if folks are interested in joining this subcommittee or helping research background information, please let us know

7. Report-out: Workforce and Compensation

6:30-7:00

Debra reported. Have expanded original intent of subcommittee to include impacts of COVID and support for men in early learning careers. Have re-centered focus on children. Have 7 recommendations; have been re-ordered thinking about overall importance and impacts.

#1 Providing incentives and supports to providers impacted by COVID 19 – directly consult providers about supports needed, direct grants and other financial supports, supports should be long-term and on-going. Context: May lose as much as 29% of



King County

capacity. Only 11% of providers are confident they will survive without financial support. 93% of Seattle providers have experienced financial losses. Centers are less certain about financial outlook. We already had reduced capacity prior to COVID. Reduced ratios will have strain on business model of child care. Access is critical to economic recover. Turnover due to child care closures costs employers a significant amount.

#2 Ensure providers have access to living wages and benefits – benefits should include health care and retirement, king county should plan implementation and timeline for career and wage ladder, prioritize where state leaves off. Context: Technical Workgroup Report showed significant gaps in pay and high turnover in the field. Report recommended that Early care educators should receive compensation packages in line with K12 educators and have access to a substitute pool. Looking into existing King County career and wage ladder ordinance.

#3 Provide professional development to providers in training and new providers – education institutions need to prioritize accessible & flexible options. Context: gaps between K12 and early childhood pathways. What are alternative pathways and how do we highlight? What are new providers saying about how well education prepared/supported them?

#4 Maintain and increase pipeline of providers from Black and brown communities – increase pathways and ensure professionals are not disproportionately impacted by COVID. Context: Importance of access to diverse teaching force. King County Early Learning Diversity report – very low representation in the field.

#5 Maintain and increase pipeline of men in early learning careers – development of approaches for undoing gender biases, actively recruiting men, creating affinity groups and communities of practice, develop and offer opportunities for trainings for early learning profession and their families. Context: Research indicated overall workforce is almost exclusively women – 98%. If women aren't more open about biases, won't get more men in the workforce. Consider what is happening with young boys in early childhood settings – expulsions. Build a gender-balanced workforce. Male teachers can challenge gender bias.

#6 Early childhood to K12 academic and workforce alignment, especially in P3 – bridge credits, align pathways, integrate training. Develop more formal collaboration between preschool and kindergarten professionals. Context: eliminate siloes between early learning and K12.



King County

#7: Fund a Health Care Navigator for providers – develop picture of gaps and plan for adequate and affordable care for providers. Context: providers need to be able to afford plans. Can providers access King County plans. State bill for navigator did not pass. Most providers should be eligible for state plans. Need more information about role of union.

Thoughts moving forward: Level of funding prior to COVID is no longer available. How to acknowledge short-falls while recognizing providers were already underpaid. Supporting kids means supporting parents who need child care. This is a first responder profession that we must invest in.

Questions:

- As pandemic continues, how do we sustain child care when there are fears parents have about enrolling children? How do we use COVID to prepare for long-term? Important to also remember we need to preserve child care so kids have safe spaces for high quality early learning. Families may be afraid but also may not have options other than to access care for their children. Preserving the industry is also important for the economy – especially working women. This is an equity issue. People will eventually want to go back to congregate care settings – will these still exist by the time people are ready.
- Miriam: There are multiple layers of inequities – who is disproportionately impacted? We are asking people to put themselves in danger. How is pay reflecting these risks?
- Jessica: Health benefits for child care providers – the county's benefits plan is costly. May be able to build a collective of providers and have county support this structure so providers can buy into plans at lower cost. Group hasn't discussed in depth. Note that centers are represented by SEIU 925.

8. Looking forward: Task Force timeline

7:00-7:15

Unlikely that we will meet together in person again. June was intended to be a time to workshop recommendations with Sarah Tran. Full group process would not be meaningful virtually. Sarah will join 1 hour of each subcommittee meeting in June. There will be pre-work. More information to come! June will be a full business meeting.

Question: With Sarah joining subcommittees in June, do we need to extend subcommittees meetings to 2 hours? Each group likely has different needs. Jessica will



King County

send final information about workshops early next week. Open to what works best around scheduling June work.

There will be many thoughtful recommendations. May have more impact if we prioritize. This will be a process for the July meeting. A number of ways this can be approached. As we are thinking about 18-24 month recommendations, we don't have to wait for report to advocate for more urgent COVID recommendations.

I think many recommendations are also duplicated between sub committees. Can those be merged before the retreat? In June, Jessica will look at recommendations and make proposals to subcommittees about where merging may be possible. Will get sign off from subcommittees first.

Learning about focus/fatigue with online work – maxing out around 2 hours. Zoom has breakout room features that are helpful for people to stay engaged. If you have seen things that work well, please let Jessica know! Preference for zoom. Need to build in breaks. Opportunity to see people's faces would be great – helpful for facilitating ongoing relationships and concentration.

9. Good of the Order and Closing

7:15-7:30

None

10. Adjourn

7:30