



Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council Meeting Minutes May 28, 2015



AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION OUTCOME
Attendees	<p>Council Members: Barbara Andrews, Jennifer Arnaiz, Debbie Badawi, Crystal Barksdale, Jody Burghardt, Cheryl DePinto, Cathy Dougherty, Les Hall, Edward Hayden, Elizabeth Huffman, Lee Ann Kingham, Rachel London, Faith Miller, Chris Peusch, Angie Robinson, Steve Rohde</p> <p>MSDE Staff: Liz Kelley, Debra Godsey, Deborah Royster, Tracy Jost, Leon Langley, Lindi Budd, Betsy Blair, Andrea Zabel, Roann Tsakalas, Kelley Martin, Angeline Bishop-Oshoko</p> <p>Guests: Debbie Moore, Barbara Garrett, Rachel London, Kathy Koehler, Mark Warner, Flora Gee, Dona Ponn, Becky Yackley, Madie Green</p>
Welcome And Opening Remarks	Chris Peusch, Interium Chair, called the meeting to order.
Assistant Superintendent/ Director's Report Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant Updates	<p><i>Liz Kelley, Director, Office of Child Care, led the discussion.</i></p> <p>Race to the Top is in its last year. A plan for sustainability is currently beng developed for projects that will continue after 2016. Most projects, including Developmental Screening, will be continuing into next year.</p> <p>Developmental Screening</p> <p><i>Tracy Jost, Education Program Specialist, provided updates:</i></p> <p>Developmental screening will be in Regulations by July 2016 for all licensed child care providers, for children from birth to 5 years (before they enter kindergarten).</p> <p>Online training is developed and available through the Maryland Public Television ThinkPort Website. This training is highlighted in Partners' Newsletter and is being offered in face-to-face sessions through the network of Maryland approved trainers. The link for the on-line training can also be accessed through MSDE's website.</p> <p>All child care providers will have the ability to apply for the developmental screening tool of their choice at no cost. To request one of the approved screening tools, providers will need to make an electronic application that will be available starting June 1 - December 2015. The link for this tool is also noted in the Partners' Newsletter.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> If the Provider has already taken this course face-to-face, how do they submit?</p> <p><i>Tracy:</i> They will have to watch the videos online through the same link, they just need to go in, click on the application, state they have taken the training face-to-face and input the date they took the training and then they can access the application.</p> <p><i>Liz led the following discussion</i></p> <p>CCATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work continues on improving the functions of CCATS, specifically credentialing and implementing the payment of vouchers for training reimbursements. ✓ The Enrollment and Attendance Reporting System (EARS) is in user acceptance testing and child care providers will be recruited to assist with testing before it is sent out for broader use. EARS will allow providers to upload their enrollment information on children currently in their care. Children will also receive a unique identification number that will allow the State to track that child.



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	<p>It will also provide information on the quality of the facility and the quality of the teacher/provider in the classroom. This system will also allow MSDE to link data with the kindergarten readiness information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The system will provide information to the child care program based on aggregate information that will detail where a specific child is or where they are coming from. Through this system, we will be able to make targeted impacts on children's school readiness. ✓ Once EARS is operational, all child care subsidy payments will be reported through the system. This means there will no longer be any paper invoices or vouchers sent to Child Care Subsidy providers. There will also no longer be any paper processing, everything will be done electronically. This will increase efficiencies, reduce fraud, and improve payment times. There will also be an IVR option should providers not have access to the internet. ✓ MSDE is working with Maryland Public Television to redesign the DECD website. We have contracted with a company that has already provided two (2) different options for the website. The website will also incorporate a 'contact us' area. Each Branch will be responsible for the content of their site. The website will contain videos and voice over applications where users can obtain online orientations and other information of interest. ✓ DECD has released several publications and posted them to the website. These include the <i>Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland's Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy, Birth to Age 8</i>, Maryland Knowledge and Competency Framework for Child and Youth Care Professionals, and Children <i>Entering School Ready to Learn - School Readiness Report</i>.
Legislation	<p><i>Liz led the following discussions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MSDE was contacted about legislation regarding investigating illegal child care and questions have been asked as to how it occurs and possible ways the State Police or local police can be more involved. We have looked at the practices and fines in other states. It was mentioned that sometimes persons do not realize they need to be licensed once they are watching unrelated children because each State has their own laws. Therefore, where they are coming from may not have this as a requirement. Currently it is not clear who would introduce legislation on illegal child care. ✓ It was also mentioned that there was a problem with getting parents to acknowledge that they pay someone to watch their children for a certain number of hours. The process for investigating illegal child care is that a cease and desist letter is prepared and sent to the alleged illegal provider. It takes numerous man-hours to put a case together and file charges and when we are able to take the case to Court, it is not always successful. ✓ It was suggested that stricter measures be put in place, such as informing illegally operating providers that they will be reported to the IRS. ✓ Providers were advised that if the person watching the child is a relative they are not required to be registered or licensed. However, if they are a friend, and not being paid, it would depend on how often they baby-sit that child. ✓ It was mentioned that some parents could not afford licensed child care. This is a problem that is not easily fixed because child care is expensive and parents have to make some hard decisions about the care of their child. As far as the Office of Child Care is concerned, there is a



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	<p>responsibility to ensure the settings parents are using are safe and the people who are providing child care are knowledgeable and have the requisite skills that fit the requirements. It is critical that people know the value of being licensed and its importance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Steve said there is confusion surrounding what is legal from what is illegal, even for the members of this meeting. Clarity needs to be provided. He also added that long-term consumer education was needed, resources identified to conduct it, and the best methods to offer it need to be developed. <p><i>Capacity in Family Child Care Homes for Children Under the Age of Two</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This legislation has been up for increasing the number of children under the age of two. MSDE Regulations are based on the Life Safety Code Regulations, which are very specific regarding the number of children and child staff ratios. Discussions for this legislation may reemerge in the next Legislative session. <p><i>Immunization Requirements</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Immunization requirements do not require legislation and can be done in regulations. There were numerous inquiries during the measles outbreak in relation to the immunization status and requirements for child care providers. There are stipulated requirements for children, in the regulations, but there are no requirements for adults. Discussions are being held in relation to changing our requirements for how often a child care provider would need a health exam. Meetings have been held with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to seek guidance on the types of inoculations or the type of information we would want to gain for the typical childhood diseases, such as measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox. This information will possibly be included in the Regulations by early next year. It was also mentioned that family child care providers are required to get updated medicals. <p><i>Budget</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Budgets for all Agencies have been cut. Eleven child care licensing employees applied for the Voluntary Separation Program offered to State employees. However, some positions submitted were not approved, including those for licensing specialists. The Division lost three positions at headquarters (Phil Koshkin – Data Entry, Michele Goady - Breakthrough Centers and other projects, and Cori Ford - Collaboration and Program Improvement Branch). Phil and Cori’s work has been disseminated to others. Three other vacant positions have been eliminated (one secretarial and two licensing positions). <p>CCDF State Plan</p> <p><i>Liz led the Discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DECD held a planning group meeting in April and all States received an extension to March 1, 2016 to submit the CCDF State Plans. States were informed they would not be receiving any further clarification on the new law and were advised to use “reasonable judgment” when making



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<p>OCC Branch Updates</p> <p>Child Care Subsidy Branch Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Subsidy Branch • Case Management/Invoice Processing TORFP - Status 	<p>decisions concerning the interpretation of the new law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Members stated there are many concerns surrounding this new law and the numerous implications it holds for the DECD budget. One of the many changes is that once a family is found eligible for child care subsidy they continue to be eligible for a span of twelve (12) months unless they exceed the 185% state income. ✓ If parental income goes over a certain level, or they lose their activity on a non-temporary basis, they would lose their eligibility. These are the only two reasons why a family would not be eligible for subsidy. However, there will be no way to know if a family loses their activity. Liz stated there are still many unanswered questions regarding this law but reiterated that no further clarification would be given about it at this time. ✓ The Office is compiling a draft document to include comments from the work groups. Hearings will be scheduled next year since the Plan is not due for submission until March 2016. We are hoping to receive further clarification as we proceed in developing the Plan. ✓ Liz said we would await the final pre-print to ensure there were no major adjustments or changes. She said we are required to host at least one (1) public hearing, which will be done, and the Plan disseminated to the public. ✓ She informed everyone they do not need to attend the public hearings to make comment on the proposed State Plan because the Agency will accept written comments as well. <p><i>Betsy Blair, Branch Chief- Child Care Subsidy, led the discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DECD obtained a signed contract for the vendor to provide case management and payment processing services for the Child Care Subsidy program. The vendor selected is the same one that has been handling payment processing for the past 5 years. Betsy noted the system will be in operation late summer but it will not be perfect. Hence, the we are asking that customers give them time as they did in the past. ✓ Betsy introduced the Outreach team for Child Care Subsidy Central, Cathy Fuller and Mark Warner. <p><i>Cathy Fuller led the discussion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Case Management will be centralized with payment processing. Families will be able to call a local number, instead of going to the local DSS office, to update their information. ✓ A toll free number will be available during business hours and a voice menu with additional options will be available 24 hours per day. ✓ Customers will be able to access applications and submit documents via fax or email. There will be no need to drop off documents at a physical location. ✓ Customers will be able to receive assistance from any staff who answers the phone. The team managing the payment process will be co-located with the team doing case management so if there is a case issue as it relates to payment processing, it can be resolved immediately. ✓ There will be a quick transition period so during the rollout phase (net three months), there will be a lot of communication going out to families and providers. ✓ One of the objectives is to send out consistent messages to customers to promote accuracy. Flyers, postcards, and posters will be strategically mounted in the DSS offices, and disseminated



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	<p>to inform customers of the changes and the services available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Postcards will also be available that will describe the changes as well as contact information. Educational information will also be available to other stakeholder groups. ✓ Once the communication website is operational, the team will be collaborating with the providers on other projects. ✓ The team is also developing service referral strategy for Case Managers so that when they are speaking to clients on the phone they can give them additional supportive services such as information on early child care. After the system has been implemented, there will be constant contact with stakeholders to ensure it is working smoothly and to receive feedback for further improvements. <p><i>Question:</i> Since the application will be online can families fill out an application at a child care center?</p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> That will come with the Public Portal, which will not be operational until about nine months time and is currently being tested. Until then, processing will be done the old way (fax or mail). If clients call the toll free number there is an automated system that will mail them the application immediately. There will also be updated provider inserts to ensure current information is consistently provided to families. A standard PowerPoint will be used for presentations to ensure everyone communicates the same information.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> Can we receive copies of paper applications in our office, have persons fill them out and fax them over for them?</p> <p><i>Response:</i> Yes that can be done.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> When an application is sent, does all the documentation have to come in at the same time with it?</p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> Regulations say a customer has 30 days to send in the application therefore a client can send in the application one day and send the additional documentation afterwards. The Contractor has 15 days within which to process the case.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> How will customers be notified when they are approved, will they get an email or letter?</p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> They will still get a CCATS letter however; the customers' email will be used to advise them that that their application has been received or they are eligible. There is also the 24-hour IVR and they can call in and use their party ID number to find out that information.</p> <p>One point to note about the efficiency of the system is that nothing is lost from the time the document is delivered to the office and scanned into the work management system. The mail handling machine opens the envelope and scans all the documentation it contains so nothing is lost.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> Will the hotline number remain the same or will there be a new number for the IVR system?</p> <p><i>Betsy's Response:</i> The hotline number will remain the same.</p>



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<p>Credentialing Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulations 	<p><i>Angeline Bishop-Oshoko, Branch Chief- Credentialing, led the discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A Task Order Request for Proposal (TORFP) has been released and the submitted proposals currently under review. ✓ The current data entry personnel contract ends this week, which means there will be limited staff processing applications until the new vendor takes over. This period will last approximately two to three months. However, when the new vendor is identified there will be a centralized location to submit applications. All historical records will be scanned and indexed. There will be a customer service line to assist persons in tracking the progress of their application. ✓ Persons whose credentials will be expiring and have already submitted their application will be allowed to maintain their level until applications can be processed. Their approval will be backdated and they will not be penalized. ✓ Notifications will be sent out informing providers to maintain their level during the time applications are not being processed. Applications are still to be submitted during this time. Providers' credential levels will still be honoured.
<p>Licensing Branch Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations 	<p><i>Liz led the discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Licensing Branch equipment has been upgraded and all staff have received new tablets for conducting inspections. ✓ Deborah Royster is the Compliance Officer who deals with illegal child care providers and works very closely with OAG making sure that all licensing offices are applying the regulations appropriately and adhering to the law and making sure all our enforcement actions are the same in all regions. ✓ There have been major changes to the licensing regulations; all four chapters were published recently. Three chapters have moved forward. However, Child Care Center Regulations were put on hold because of a concern from the Maryland Association of Counties. ✓ We eliminated in the definition section the sentence that said 'childcare programs that were operated by local parks and recs and police departments were not required to be licensed unless they were providing ancillary services'. Maryland Association of County Governments (MACo) took exception to this and thought we were removing an exemption out of the regulations for them. This was not the case. We have agreed to leave that statement for the moment because it does not change anything as far as the regulations are concerned. A meeting will be scheduled with MACo and other interested parties to develop a more clarified language for those types of programs. ✓ Center regulations should be released soon. Corrections will need to be made as the two training requirements relating to support of breastfeeding mothers and the ADA requirement were left out for existing providers when the regulations were first submitted. All providers have been advised of the error and have been informed that this requirement is for all providers (new and existing).



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There seems to be confusion regarding serving juice and milk to children. There still needs to be clarity on this issue as providers are receiving conflicting information. Liz responded that the regulations stated that providers have to serve milk with meals. She said a child care facility, whether it was a family child care home or child care center, is responsible for providing beverages. If the child has a medical condition that prevents them from having what is served or the parent wants the child to have something different, it needs to be stated on a modified meal plan. If the parent decides they absolutely have to send beverages with their child, the beverage has to comply with the regulatory requirements. The legislation that the regulation is based on is very clear and states that beverages that contain added sugar may not to be served to a child (except for infant formula or if the child has a medical condition and needs additional sugar). These exceptions would be covered by a modified meal plan. If parents send beverages, they will only be served if they meet the requirements. ✓ The regulations can be given to parents so they can read it for themselves. Parents can also be referred to the Sugar Free Kids Maryland website. Parents can type in the name of the juice or beverage drink to find out if they are listed as acceptable or not acceptable. Providers were advised that they do not need to serve juice; they can just serve milk and water. ✓ The requirement for lead testing will be updated based on new requirements from DHMH that all children are to be tested, not just screened.
Maryland EXCELS Branch Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Outreach 	<p><i>Lindi Budd, Branch Chief- Maryland EXCELS, led the discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Level 5 programs will received bonuses annually as long as funding is available. Bonuses for providers will be paid through CCATS. ✓ EXCELS staff are working to identify providers who have active vouchers for child care subsidy. We are up to 80% of those providers that are currently accepting subsidy participating in Maryland EXCELS. Focus is now on those providers who have active vouchers but have not yet been paid because they have not submitted an invoice with a child associated. Those families have been advised with a termination date of June 29, 2015. That list has been reviewed and currently there are 440 providers (centers and mostly family) that are not participating. Staff are contacting these providers to ensure they understand and to assist them in registering online. There should be a decrease in this number by June 29. <p><i>Question:</i> Some persons are confused with the wording of application and participating, what is the difference?</p> <p><i>Lindi's Response:</i> Once they have submitted an application, they are participating.</p>
	Members and Guests shared updates and announcements.
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 noon
Next Meeting	August 13, 2015 - 10:00 am – 12:00 Noon @ MSDE, 8 th Floor Conference Room 6/7