

Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council Meeting Minutes May 13, 2021

AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION OUTCOME	
Attendees	Council members:	Patsy Warrick, Lacey Egerton, Shannon Burroughs-Campbell, Gloria Brown Burnett, Crystal Barksdale, Sharon Holloway, Rachel London, Dona Mullen, Dr. Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez, Jennifer Arnez, Rachel LBill Hudson (on behalf of Jacqueline Grant), JoAnne Jamison , Elizabeth Huffman and Christina Peusch
	Guests:	Rebecca Hancock, Roshon Casey-Lee, Joan Johnson, David O'Brien, Flora Gee, Tracy Jost, Ellie Lichtash, Susan Lawson, Erin Moxley , Bob McDermott, Nancy Anselm
	MSDE Staff:	Tara Bartosz, Steven Hicks, Rene' Williams., Lindi Budd, Danita Moore, Charlene Farley, Janet Speak ,Patricia Leffson-Nalley, Vanessa Jones, Sherry Tsigounis, Petrea Hicks, Meghan Leach-Gwynn, Jennifer Campbell, Mary Beth Johnson, Patricia Deal, Allison Van Horn, Rousana Soto, Yvonne Bell Mitzie Spahn, Becky Bozarth , Dianna C Aguirre Suzanne Ruark, Sandra Klunk , Lisa B. J. Smith , Sarah Urban Paulette Roberson, Michelle Young, Nicole Johnson, Audrey Cupe-Green, Patty Aburn
Welcome and Opening Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christina P welcomed guests and Council Board Members. • Guests were asked to sign in the chat box for attendance purposes. • Tara B indicated that meetings will no longer be recorded and minutes will be taken as they were in the past and posted. • Phones and speakers are asked to be muted <p>Chris P Asked for minutes to be accepted into the meeting and that recording was reviewed. Recorded meetings minutes were approved by Jennifer A and seconded by Shannon C.</p>	
Review Guidelines/Goals of Council	<p>While this was not discussed at the last meeting, as a reminder: The purpose of the OCC Advisory Council is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise and counsel the OCC • Review regulations proposed by state agencies regulating child care. • Review issues and problems relating to care of children and suggested priorities for consideration by the OCC; and • Identify interdepartmental issues of importance to child care providers and users that should be addressed by the OCC and other State agencies. • The Council meetings are “open” meetings but not “public” hearings. What this means is that the meeting is open to anyone who would like to attend. However, it is not a “public” meeting, in that the topics of discussion are limited to only those items on the Agenda. OCC Advisory Council meetings are not the appropriate forum to share concerns or complaints. • The Agenda for each meeting is set prior to the meeting in consultation between the Department and the Chairperson for the Council. A Council member who would like to have an item considered for the agenda should make the request no later than two weeks prior to the meeting by contacting Tara Bartosz at 	

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	<p>tara.bartosz@maryland.gov or Chris Peusch, mscca1@comcast.net. The Department will share information as specified on the Agenda set for the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After all items on the Agenda are concluded, the Council meeting will be opened to “Other Business.” This will allow for discussion of items not necessarily related to those on the Agenda. To ensure an equal amount of time for participation, each speaker will be asked to limit their thoughts and comments to no more than three minutes. Comments made during this time should be succinct, specific and of interest to the Council members. • Places at the table are reserved for Council members only. Therefore, non-member visitors attending the meetings should sit at the tables indicated for guests until the OCC Advisory Council chair invites visitors to sit in any remaining seats at the table. • Comments and remarks that do not coincide directly with Agenda items may not be shared until the meeting is opened to “Other Business”.
<p>OCC Advisory Vacancies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the Senate • Member of the House of Delegates • Pediatrician w/Interest & Expertise in Child Care Issues • Parent, user of Child Care Services <p>Chris will provide Tara with the information to fill vacancies.</p>
<p>Legislative Updates:</p>	<p>MSDE is meeting with their legislative liaison to go over the impact of the bills. Chris P has asked members to address specific House Bills. MSDE will not discuss any of these at this time. MSDE has a session with our legislative liaison scheduled to go over the impact of all the bills that passed.</p> <p>Ruby D: The Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot program is to encourage new providers into the field. There has been drastic decline in our numbers in the state. So this bill would support family childcare, and then expand family childcare by recruiting right now. This model is through a GO FCC. This is a program that's in Montgomery county that has been successful in recruiting new providers. We're hoping there's a lot of legislators that are interested in expanding this right now. It's going to be three settings; one urban, one suburban, and one rural.</p> <p>Jennifer A: We are really proud about the methodology that they have created, the model that we have. It expedites the time so that an individual can obtain their registration faster, typically on their own. It takes them up to year because it is a multi-step process. It's not a sequence, it's many things that happen at the same time. We've been able to reduce that pre-pandemic to about four months. That includes all the training, all the setup, as well as integrating a business component to it so that the small business, the entrepreneur, can really start off with strong foundations and how to operate their business with a strong direction in terms of marketing and record keeping.</p>

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	<p>It does also include what we call our ambassadors. Others may use the term mentors where we take seasoned providers to really connect them with those who are just entering the field to have someone to rely on and ask questions, but also to guide them through the process and upon registration, it doesn't really end there. It really goes to the next step, which is becoming Credentialed, participate in Maryland EXCELS and pursue accreditation, as well as a pathway to higher learning.</p> <p>Paula M: There is one bill that passed that actually lowered the action level for lead in schools and now child care. She stated they're going to have to do some amendments to their existing regulations. So once that transpires it lowered the action level to five parts per billion. She also stated that there's a voluntary cleanup for daycare providers where there's funding available for child care providers. It doesn't allow for the replacement of service line, but it does allow for the replacement of faucets and other fixtures for drinking water outlets in child care centers. She states that the commission members and guests have been advised, but we lowered the action level for lead and children from 10 to five to be in line with the CDC advisory council. So we'll be performing medical and environmental case management on all children with blood levels of five or greater. And that was effective July 1st, 2020.</p> <p>Chris P: The Blueprint for Maryland's Future bill that passed last year in 2020, it was overwritten by the governor and then overwritten again in 2021 by the state legislature. It's not something that's coming, it's upon us. This bill does impact childcare. And we'd like to talk more about that as we have at our conferences as we will in round tables.</p> <p>The only thing that changed this year, other than it was overwritten, is that they pushed out the dates for a year based on COVID 19. There is still money and it is still moving forward. It's just that they had to move the dates up a little bit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher qualification bills passed. • The ECE Screening and assistance did not pass. • Tax credit passed right away and was implemented even before the end of session, • The American Rescue Plan, which has a big tax credit, which is great for children and families. <p>Diane M: There have been two of four meetings. They have been very productive. The committee has narrowed it down to just a few items that need some creative thinking for the school-age world and everyone is working together in agreement to the modifications that we're excited.</p>

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	<p>Chris P: The childcare support grant act is next. We had a rally, and we had a lot of legislators that are interested in addressing the issues that surround childcare businesses, childcare programs, and children and families during COVID.</p> <p>We were working to get some additional state dollars, not federal dollars, but state dollars, in form of a grant in more of a long-term as opposed to short-term need. That did not pass, it was a \$24 million price tag, but it did get a lot of press. It got a lot of legislators that want to learn more about our business and what the needs are for children and families and our state. And then the childcare providers notice of allegation of child abuse/neglect that did not pass. That was to be able to provide 24-hour notice of any allegation of child abuse or neglect to all families in your program.</p>
<p>Old Business</p> <p>Pandemic Relief Fund</p> <p>Listening sessions</p>	<p>Updates on the timeline for \$60 million in CC Relief grants for child care providers/programs from federal government December 2020 relief package</p> <p>Programs and providers still waiting for relief/support?</p> <p>4,123 providers have submitted applications and have been paid. 250 applications still pending as of 05.12.2020</p> <p>Funding formulas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4,150 for 1-10 children • 11-20 children were \$8,300 • 21 or more children received \$415 per child. <p>The new grant funds will be calculated differently, but we are working on what that will look like now.</p> <p>Status of meetings: We are working on scheduling them monthly during the normal time frame. Dates will be posted on the DEC website.</p> <p>Recording for those who cannot attend while working with children: We are not able to record the meetings any longer. People are accessing recordings with information that has changed and senior leadership had asked for OCC not to record.</p> <p>Chris P: I would bring up to the council that it might be necessary to figure out with the listening</p>

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	<p>sessions, that if you're only going to do that, I can attend during that time. And then other people can't, then how do we share that information. How do we address that as an access and equity issue? That's all, bring that to the attention and put it in these minutes.</p> <p>Steven H: Are you just saying for the listening session?</p> <p>Chris P: The listening session has no value with providing information to people who cannot attend. ECAC and OCC advisory will have written minutes but not the listening session.</p> <p>Steven H: The listening session is to answer questions and it's been about answering questions about health and safety. That is the focus. So responses would be covered by updated FAQ. So we'll make sure that any questions that are answered that might change a policy that isn't already in an FAQ, that isn't addressed, then that will become an FAQ. If it's a question that has already been answered, I think there's nothing to update. If it's a question that's asked and answered that we don't have an answer for, then it is not a policy change. So the FAQ's won't be updated.</p> <p>Highlighting of the updates will be provided in the FAQs so that they are easy to find.</p> <p>Chris P: So then they can still submit questions. If they can't be a part of the online session and then there's questions, it will then be reviewed and it would be as part of an FAQ.</p> <p>Tara B One of the other things also that we have suggested for the licensing offices is that they send a representative to be able to call in and listen and take notes that way if any of the providers or centers have any questions that they can reach out to their specialist.</p>
<p>New Business</p> <p>Universal Pre-K</p>	<p>Question received:</p> <p>Will all centers qualify for the Universal Pre-K or will it still be income-based? I usually don't qualify because I have higher end clientele.</p> <p>Steven H</p> <p>The law is 300% of federal poverty level or below three and four year olds is at no cost. And that will continue to FY 24, and in FY 25 there will be a sliding scale between 300% federal poverty level and 600% poverty level. So prior to that, it's a per pupil cost is a state and local share of 50%. And it starts at \$1,094 in FY 23 and then it scales up to \$19,526 by FY 30 and</p>

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<p>Child Care Scholarships</p>	<p>it will probably continue to grow. The law only goes until FY 2030, but family childcare providers and center based providers really should take a look at this as a way to engage in our mixed delivery system with enough funding to really sustain for young children.</p> <p>Chris P</p> <p>I'd like to have a whole presentation for a future meeting on the blueprint because this will really impact all the childcare businesses and non-public nursery schools</p> <p>Issues with payments</p> <p>Rene' W</p> <p>We constantly keep an eye on statistics to make sure that we're mailing our invoices and our documents out timely to providers. And with that being stated, we also need to note that there is a major mail crisis going on across the United States, but especially on the East coast.</p> <p>We're looking at different ways in order to get documents to providers. And one of the things that we have noticed is that writers do not have their email addresses. They didn't provide them to their licensing specialist. So we need the associations to get the word out to all providers. We need to provide a business email address in order for us to be able to advance our technology forward in reference to communicating via email. Our team is working extremely hard in order to get the remaining funds out. Other than that, we do have a new vendor and they're doing well in reference to the transition. For those that attempt to call you to understand that we receive approximately 20,000 calls a month. it's impossible for us to handle that call volume and to have the expectation that we will always be there to talk to someone on the first call, but we do have an interactive voice recognition system that allows most of the questions to be answered.</p> <p>Question received:</p> <p>What is being done for providers who are having issues sending their invoices in because the email address is kicking back what providers are sending in? The person who stated the question clarified the question and stated that she was hearing that providers are sending it through the email address, and they are getting a "report" back that the email address is not functioning. Some providers were saying that they try to fax it in and then not getting a report that is being received.</p>

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<p>New American Rescue Plan includes Child Care</p>	<p>Rene' W: Because I don't have any specific information, you can go ahead and inform me exactly what you're talking about and we should look into it. So we're receiving invoices, um, via email and fax. So I don't, I'm not really clear on what the problem is, but we will definitely look at it if you send it in.</p> <p>Ruby D: Is it possible that CCS can provide an email confirmation when they receive the voucher in invoices? This might reduce the number of phone calls to the help desk.</p> <p>Rene' W: We will look into that, to see what response is being sent once, say once an email or fax is being sent to CCS central.</p> <p>In reference to the question in reference to the email address, I think Ms. Daniels asked that question, that email address is not case sensitive. We tested it a thousand different ways, and that the email address is working and reference to the fax question. The fax machine is receiving faxes. And normally what happens with your fax machine is your, you will receive a message saying whether or not the message was sent or not. We tested that as well. We just want to make sure that everyone knows that the fax line that was previously used, that information has changed. So we don't know if that's the reason you're getting a bounce back and reference to the fax. And the third question, I need to look back at it because I can't remember. So email is not case sensitive. The fax machines are working and in reference to the person that had the comment about sending their invoice in over the weekend, but the customer service representative could not make a comment on it. We have to remember that CCS central is closed over the weekend. So when we fax something in, we need at least 48 hours because we have a high volume of emails that are coming in. But other than that, it seems like everything is working as well. And we'll keep an eye on it.</p> <p>Maryland receives over 500 million for child care</p> <p>Share with OCC Advisory Council submission of state plans related to funding and engagement of stakeholders. We cannot share anything at this time. We have to have approval and we will engage the stakeholder shortly</p> <p>Steven H We were very thankful for the Biden administration and for Congress. There are two buckets. They generally must be obligated within two years. The money has to get out very quickly. The first bucket of funds, and I think the most critical early childhood system is the childcare stabilization, which is about \$390 million or so, those funds will be distributed in much the</p>

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<p data-bbox="133 999 316 1108">Maryland Department of Health</p> <p data-bbox="133 1318 266 1390">Workforce Shortages</p>	<p data-bbox="386 302 1468 877">same way we were able to get the relief funds out. We hired a bunch of temporary staff because all of this has to be done manually. We know that these funds are critical to your businesses thriving, and we are working very hard to get the staff in, to develop a whole new system, to get funds out. And we are working very hard to get these funds to you as quickly as possible. There have been a couple of questions because some people are getting multiple payments. And the reason is the check writing process that we use to deploy has a limit of \$50,000 each. So if you're a large center or even an immediate site center, you're receiving more than \$50,000 because of your operating costs. And because of that, you'll get multiple. It's not typical, we did make a few errors. I hate to take money. You are about to get money again, but in order to make sure that we don't have issues with them and have our fiduciary responsibility to adhere to with the federal government, and we'll be needing to let them know we made a mistake, a human error, we accidentally sent you an additional payment. And we will recover this. We will need to recover those funds, but we will be giving out a lot more money in the next half of this year. \$300 million or so needs to get out before December.</p> <p data-bbox="386 907 1325 940">Updates are needed for child care - Updates are being worked on as we speak</p> <p data-bbox="386 970 1432 1079">Summer camps functioning - Guidance will be updated for both summer camp and child care and field trips will be extremely limited with restrictions. This needs to be approved by MDH and MSDE leadership.</p> <p data-bbox="386 1108 1432 1180">School age updates for outdoor play and outdoor field trips- This is the same thing as stated above</p> <p data-bbox="386 1209 539 1243">Angeline B:</p> <p data-bbox="386 1251 1468 1360">MSDE is working on a way to develop a comprehensive and seamless early childhood career pathway, to support the early childhood workforce. Because when they enter the field, if they're working on this CDA, we want to be able to provide a path for them.</p> <p data-bbox="386 1428 1448 1730">Another thing that I know that they have been asking for is an online degree and we are working with partnering with Coppin college. And though it is not a degree, we want to get certification, it would still would be the first college in the state of Maryland to offer an online degree that would meet the needs of our workforce. We are looking to support them with Critical Competencies. So that training is also available to the infant and toddler teachers. It was just discussed that we may provide funding to pay for all of the infant and toddler teachers to get that training because we know how difficult it is to take a training that costs \$400 to \$500. We've already paid the TOT for trainers.</p>

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	<p>Rebecca H: Would you pay for family providers to take critical competency training?</p> <p>Angeline B: Yes.</p>
OCC Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSDE posted our public hearing announcement on the website April 22, 2021 and the hearing is scheduled for 5/14/2021 at 1PM. https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/public-hearing-child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf-plan The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) 2022-2024 preprint plan (Draft) was posted on the website for public comment on 5/7/2021. https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/2022CCDF MSDE hosted the second School Age Workgroup meeting on 5/11/2021.
Licensing updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been collaborating with the MDH to have the COVID-19 guidelines updated to be more in alignment with the new guidelines released for schools. OCC is evaluating the regional offices to implement additional measures to prevent the spread of COVID 19 as we prepare for returning to the office.
Maryland EXCELS Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn your radio on 92Q, Q105, 105.3 (Big Froggy), or 107.9 FM throughout the day in May and listen up for the latest Maryland EXCELS advertisement promoting high-quality programs and a giveaway for families. As of April 2021, there are 4,323 Maryland EXCELS quality rated programs and a total of 4,840 programs participating. 63% of all licensed child care programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS. Due to COVID-19, protections continue to be in place for Maryland EXCELS participating and quality rated programs and for programs accredited by and working toward Maryland Accreditation. There are currently 502 child care centers and public prekindergarten programs participating in Maryland Accreditation and 359 accredited programs. Optional, remote technical assistance has replaced Program Improvement Visits. A program may request individualized technical assistance, which is provided by Quality Assurance Specialists.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Accreditation Support Fund provides assistance with the cost of National Accreditation fees or Maryland Accreditation materials. Visit MarylandEXCELS.org/maryland-accrediation. <p>Lindi B: I just wanted to really thank you, the stakeholders, for participating in the three days of feedback sessions that we recently conducted for revising the Maryland EXCELS and the Maryland accreditation standards- I just wanted to say a big heartfelt thank you for your engagement and your participation in our three-day sessions</p>
<p>Credentialing Updates</p>	<p>New! The new Credential Program telephone number effective May 1, 2021 is 877-355-1229.</p> <p>Training Voucher and Reimbursement Program Beginning July 1, 2021, Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be required to verify attendance at virtual and in-person national conferences. Verification will be required for credentialing purposes as well as for training reimbursement.</p> <p>Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund During FY21, a total of 343 Electronic Learning Devices were approved for students. A total of \$334,461 was approved for the learning devices.</p> <p>Training Approval Program The draft of the training regulations has been completed and ready to go out for public comment and the public hearing in early June 2021.</p> <p>Elle L: Will reimbursement and professional training towards a degree apply to a master's degree? And can we apply that or a Montessori teacher certificate?</p> <p>Angeline B: Because of funding, priority has always been given to those who actually do not have a degree. So we first look at those who are applying for an associate degree. We award them based on that because they don't have a degree. And then if they're in the program for those who would transition to a four-year college, if we do have additional funding this fiscal year, we will look at those who want to pursue.</p> <p>Ruth: Interested in knowing if you have an idea, if other community colleges in the state can follow Montgomery college is initiative to provide college credits for the CDA. Also like to know if the Maryland credential can assist teachers with English as a second language courses, payments, etc.</p>

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	<p>Angeline B: Other colleges that are offering the 6 credit courses. I believe Frederick and Anne Arundel Community Colleges are doing this. And I believe Harford is offering six credits for the CDA, but we're also working with CTE.</p> <p>Sonia P: More colleges are actually stepping up and giving credit for the CDA. Every college is a little different. Montgomery college accepts any CDA regardless of where you completed it. However, you must be majoring in early childhood. That's the whole focus is we don't want you going into something else. It's a must have major. Some of the colleges only accepted if they completed the courses on the non-credit side for students. We are also accepting the high school kids moving to the CDA and then Montgomery college. I think I'm missing one there's one more. They are currently all accepted. You must see an advisor. So students might see an advisor from the college to meet, to go through the process because there is a process, and this actually shows so that it is on track. But I think that is really important too, because there's misinformation that goes out to our students is they cannot double dip. Students already received credit for credentialing on the transcripts.</p> <p>Regarding the alternative certification, we are in the process. We partnered with all the state organizations. This is for the pre-K expansion and really targeting people with degrees that work in childcare. And I will come and present at the next meeting.</p> <p>Flora G: Will training reimbursement pay for the costs of CEUs?</p> <p>Angeline: Yes. Up to \$400</p>
Scholarship Updates	Successfully distributed \$59 million from the Pandemic Relief Grants to approved child care providers and centers
Next Meeting	<p style="text-align: center;">August 19, 2021 Held Virtually</p> <p style="text-align: center;">November 18, 2021 10 – 12p 8th floor – conference room 6-7 200 W. Baltimore St</p>
Future 2022 Meetings	<p style="text-align: center;">February 17, 2022 May 19, 2022 August 18, 2022 November 17, 2022</p>