

**Office of Child Care (OCC)
Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018**



AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION OUTCOME	
Attendees	Council members:	Dorothy Adams, Barbara Andrews, Jennifer Arnaiz, Maureen Creitz, Bill Fields, Jacqueline Grant, Shay Gurry, Les Gall, Ed Haden, Sharon Holloway-Gentemann, Joann Jamison, Paula Montgomery, Jennifer Nizer, Chris Peusch, Steve Rohde, Michael Spencer, Patsy Warnick, Delania Ware for Gloria Brown-Burnett
	Guests:	Crystal Gebhart, Sheila Wiley, Lawrence Hsin, Michelle Newberry, Terry Bridger, Tracey Clay, Lacey Tsonis, Cynthia Poindexter, Flora Gee, Debbie Moore, Beth Morrow, Ellie Lichtash, Valencia Makel, Meg McFadden,
	MSDE Staff:	Agneatha Wright, Jacqueline Woodruff, Angeline Bishop-Oshoko, Lindi Budd, Rene' Williams, Manjula Paul, Tara Bartosz, Nancy Cahlink-Seidler, Louis Valenti, Nicole Johnson, Jena Smith, TJ Bennett
Welcome And Opening Remarks	Chris Peusch called the meeting to order.	
Review Guidelines/Goals of Council	<p>While this was not discussed at the last meeting, as a reminder:</p> <p>The purpose of the OCC Advisory Council is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise and counsel the Office of Child Care; 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 Office of Child Care; and Identify interdepartmental issues of importance to child care providers and users that should be addressed by the Office of Child Care and other state agencies. <p>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.</p> <p>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 TJ Bennett, tabatha.bennett@maryland.gov, or Chris Peusch, mscca1@comcast.net. The Department will share information as specified on the Agenda set for the meeting.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	

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	<p>visitors to sit in any remaining seats at the table.</p> <p>Comments and remarks that do not coincide directly with Agenda items may not be shared until the meeting is opened to "Other Business".</p>
<p>Director's Report</p>	<p>Maryland submitted an application for the PDG for the max amount of \$50 million. Jeff Cappazono helped with the application. We will also apply for the follow-up grants that are for three year periods.</p>
<p>Preschool Development Grant – Birth to Five</p>	<p>We are not sharing the information we supplied in the application because we are not certain if our application will be fully-funded. We do not want to share information and then have to pull information back.</p> <p>MSDE is reserving \$7 million of the funds to assist with modernizing the CCATS system. The current system does not capture the data we want and/or need and this is a huge issue for us. This will just be the beginning of modernizing the system.</p>
<p>Roundtables</p>	<p>MSDE is setting up the roundtables for the PDG now. The morning sessions will be information sharing, with the evening sessions being dedicated to focus groups. We are looking at starting the roundtables in March or April.</p> <p>Montgomery County is going to get its own roundtable because of its diversity and size.</p> <p>MSDE plans to hire an organization to complete the work for us to ensure the process is open and transparent. We are looking to collect generalized information that will assist us in creating a plan moving forward.</p>
<p>CCDF State Plan Update</p>	<p>Child Care Subsidy is being re-branded. Instead of receiving a child care "voucher", families will start to receive a child care "scholarship." It will be a child's first scholarship so they can get into the early childhood educational system.</p> <p>Jenn discussed the presentation she and Steven Hicks made on Morgan State Radio about high quality child care. They were able to provide more explanation to the community about early childhood, address some of the negative comments about early childhood and child care, etc. They were asked to come back and do additional segments, possibly on a monthly basis.</p> <p><u>Cost of Care Survey</u> – The new survey is going to come out very soon. Please ask all providers to complete the Market Rate Survey (MRS), whether or not they accept the child care subsidy scholarship. We need all providers to complete the MRS to ensure we have the most accurate data possible on the real costs of care.</p> <p><u>Rate Increases</u> – For this fiscal year, legislation required rates to be set at 30% of the market rate. Steven and Jenn are committed to making that rate higher.</p> <p>Jennifer Arnaiz asked if the MRS is translated into other languages and asked how MSDE is sharing the information. Jenn said no for now on the translations. She said MSDE was relying on the child care associations, Maryland Family Network, the resource and referral network, her professional Facebook page, Tuesday Tidbits, etc. There isn't going to be a mail-out.</p> <p>Chris Peusch said the associations are trying to figure out how to get more providers to participate in the MRS. Last year the associations explained in the letter why it was so important for providers to participate in the MRS and they plan on doing it again this year.</p> <p>Steve Rohde said Maryland Family Network (MFN) received 1,000 responses from MSDE, which is</p>

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	<p>less than they received from the resource and referral network. They combined the two sets of responses together.</p> <p>Steve also said Maryland Family Network would be happy to work with MSDE on alternative languages and reminded the group that MFN also has the language line available for providers who do not speak English and may need help.</p> <p>Jenn said there was never a real focus on alternate languages in the past. The new Child Care Subsidy Scholarship flyers are being translated into the top five languages spoken in MD and the licensing forms are being translated into Spanish and Farsi. We have the ability for translation services but we want to be thoughtful in how we roll these out.</p> <p>Meg McFadden said there is a high volume of providers who participate in subsidy and undoubtedly an increase in the number of providers participating. She asked if anything is being done so providers can enter attendance information online to speed up the process.</p> <p>Jenn said DEC is working with Carol Walter, our eCCATS specialist. While we are not going to use the EARS pilot project, we are looking at using some of the pieces of that system that worked. We will roll out another pilot project with a small group of providers as part of our modernization of CCATS. It's a work in progress.</p> <p>Meg said the family association was using a third party vendor to enter their data and wanted to know if MSDE would look into using something similar.</p> <p>Jenn said DEC would be looking into ways to use 'data dumps' from child care provider systems to help streamline.</p> <p>Chris P. asked how participation in child care subsidy is going.</p> <p>Rene' said there has been an increase in the number of families applying. We need to do more advertising because the majority of people probably do not know the eligibility limit has doubled. We are not seeing as much of an increase in providers participating as we would like.</p> <p>Conduent is working on an advertisement campaign. They have spoken with providers throughout different regions of the State to try and learn what they would like to encourage participation.</p> <p>Some child care providers do not want to participate in the Subsidy program and we are looking at the different ways we can reach out to them.</p> <p>Chris P. said some of the problem with parents participating is that they do not want the "stigma" of participating in the program.</p> <p>Jenn said DEC is also looking at the possibility of bill board advertisements.</p> <p>Lindi said she and Rene' had a meeting to discuss ways in which Subsidy can use the Maryland EXCELS marketing machine and work with Conduent to get messages out.</p> <p>Flora Gee stated that the child support enforcement requirement is a barrier.</p> <p>Rene' said a lot of people do not understand the policy and when they explain it to others, they create more barriers. There are several ways parents can meet that requirement. 1) Court ordered child support; 2) good cause claims (3rd party verification (individuals threatened if they pursue child</p>

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	<p>support – such as having a restraining order)); 3) voluntary child support agreement.</p> <p>Chris P. suggested creating a cheat sheet for families so they can better understand the requirement.</p> <p>Bill Fields inquired if providers give information on child support to families when they enroll.</p> <p>Flora said it is included in her parent handbook but she does not know if every provider does it.</p> <p>Bill said information should go to ALL parents, not just those participating in Subsidy. It may help reduce some of the stigma.</p> <p>Rene' said DEC is also revising its website to remove all references to "low-income."</p> <p>Sharon H. asked about providers being eligible for additional funding for children with special needs.</p> <p>Rene' said there is a place on the application for parents to respond if their child has special needs. The child care provider is the instrument for getting higher reimbursement rates. They are the people who must ask for the additional funding to help them serve a child who has special needs.</p> <p>Flora asked if a third party also had to submit paperwork for the additional funding and Rene' said yes. The additional funding is to help a provider with any costs for accommodations that go beyond "reasonable."</p> <p>Sharon H. asked if it difficult to obtain the additional funding and where she could find the form.</p> <p>Rene' said she believes, but is not 100% sure, the form is available on the website. She will look into it to be sure that particular form is available.</p> <p>Chris. P. asked Rene' to put the form "front and center" so it is more easily located. She also suggested sharing it with the resource and referral network and the associations.</p> <p>Meg asked if the eligibility process is different for children who are adopted/foster, or if the parents are undocumented.</p> <p>Rene' said children must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien to participate. We do not look at the citizenship of the parent/guardian.</p> <p>Conduent has prepared a large foundation for more detailed training for providers. If anyone has questions, please submit them to Rene' (rene.williams@maryland.gov) and she will make sure they are added to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.</p> <p><u>Fingerprinting</u> – MSDE received conditional approval on the criminal background requirements of the CCDF State Plan. This allows MSDE one more year (9/30/19) to get procedures in place – especially for how Maryland will address the National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR). DEC is making changes to CCATS to allow for a different way of tracking the fingerprinting information. Louis has gotten approval to create a new staff position for someone to coordinate all of the fingerprinting requirements. We want to eventually centralize the criminal background check process at the Central Office and take it away from the regional offices.</p> <p>DEC has no backlog on processing requests and there is no backlog in MSDE's accounting department. Providers have until 12/31/18 to submit requests for reimbursement. If a provider has not received their payment yet, and it has been quite some time, they should email TJ Bennett at tabatha.bennett@maryland.gov so we can look into the situation. There have been some provider</p>

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	<p>reimbursement requests we never received and it was only when they inquired about the status of their reimbursement that we learned about it.</p> <p>The Comptroller's Office has been sending reimbursement requests back to MSDE for additional corrections, which is holding up some of the reimbursements.</p> <p>If a child care provider owes the State any money, the Comptroller's Office will claim the reimbursement and put it toward the liability.</p> <p>Flora asked about the new SAM system at CJIS. TJ explained further information will come from Public Safety. We do not have information to share right now.</p> <p><u>Regulations</u> – DEC anticipates the licensing regulations being available for public comment in January 2019. After the 30 day public comment period, DEC will review the comments for those most prevalent and substantial to determine if we will or can make any changes.</p> <p>Providers have until January 1, 2020, to be in compliance with everything required in the regulations (except for the fingerprinting, where we have received a time-limited waiver). The Office of Child Care will issue guidance.</p> <p>We already know we have additional changes we will have to make to the licensing regulations once this set of changes make their way through the regulation review and approval process.</p> <p>Jenn said the training and subsidy regulations are the next set of regulations up for changes.</p> <p>Chris P. asked what the final determination was for the basic health and safety training.</p> <p>Jenn said staff would have three months to complete the training after hire. It is not a pre-service requirement in the upcoming regulations.</p> <p>Debbie M. asked about the status of the school-age regulations.</p> <p>Jenn said she was unaware of these.</p> <p>Debbie M. said she would discuss this further with Jenn after the meeting.</p> <p>Jenn informed the group that some providers have said they will not take the Health and Safety training until it is in regulation. She asked that everyone share the news that the training MSDE offers on Blackboard is going away when MSDE completes its switch to a new system. Training will not be free once that happens. We do not know when this will happen, only that it will happen.</p> <p>The training will have to come through the approved trainers' network once Blackboard goes away.</p> <p>Terry Bridger asked if this also included trainers at the community colleges and Jenn said yes.</p> <p>Jenn also added that DEC was looking into determining if some of the 90-clock hour course could count toward the Health and Safety training requirement. We have to look at this internally.</p> <p>Jenn reported that the October Trainers Conference received a lot of positive feedback. The trainers said they felt appreciated by DEC.</p> <p>There are two Office of Licensing all staff trainings every year now, in May and October. These trainings are for all licensing staff with regard to relationship building, customer service, resource provision, etc.</p>

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	Lacey did a tremendous job providing training to staff.
Impact Project	<p>MSDE was awarded a two-year technical assistance grant for the Impact Project. It looks at the things we are doing to determine if we are achieving the results we want to achieve and other things. Rene' and Jenn are the leads on the Project. They have just had their first meeting. The next meeting is January 23, 2019.</p> <p>They are going to look at Maryland EXCELS and Subsidy first. Stakeholders and partners will get invited to participate.</p> <p>Steve asked if the Project would impact the data issue discussed earlier.</p> <p>Jenn said it could, but she believes that will be better addressed in the modernization project.</p>
Work Force Development	<p>Jenn, along with Chris P, Sonja Hernandez, Jackie Warner, and Cathy Shirk have been serving on a workgroup with the National Governor's Association.</p> <p>The group has come up with three Strategic Goals.</p> <p>We had our first meeting with the MD Higher Education Commission (MHEC) the other day to discuss collaboration. They are looking at creative alternative pathways, compensation, and the CDA.</p> <p>Barbara Andrews said she is participating in a regional workgroup that includes D.C., parts of Maryland (Prince George's and Montgomery counties) and northern Virginia. The work is based on the National Academy's Report on Workforce in Early Childhood. The regional group is considered a "state." Their goal is to have a competency-based pathway tied to compensation by February. They are having stakeholder meetings beginning in January.</p> <p>Jenn said there is a lot of work and talk going on around the country about workforce development.</p> <p>Flora said there is a staffing shortage that is critical. We need to look at ways to not only retain providers, but at ways to attract people to the field as well.</p>
Pritzker Grant	<p>This is a new grant opportunity Maryland will apply to receive. It is prenatal through 3. Internally, Cyndi and Jenn are the assigned leads. The grant application is due in February. MSDE will work with MFN on the application.</p> <p>Steve pointed out that the lead agency for the opportunity must be a non-profit.</p>
Fire Marshall Reports	<p>Patsy Warnick, Montgomery County Fire Marshall, shared some changes with the group that are happening at the state and Montgomery County level. To prevent confusion, the minutes do not reflect information specific to Montgomery County.</p> <p>Maryland is adopting the 2018 International Building Code (IBC) and 2018 National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) guidelines on January 2, 2019. The codes have new sections addressing security concerns in schools where child care centers are present. Schools are being allowed to present extra security measures. Child care centers that do not operate in public schools do not have the ability to increase security measures beyond what is currently allowed. This will be addressed in the next round of Code revisions.</p> <p>Louis asked if Montgomery County inspects child care facilities located in schools separately from</p>

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	<p>the school. Patsy said yes.</p> <p>Louis said one of our concerns has to do with the expansion of pre-k programs. Fire codes are different for preschool aged children and school-aged children.</p> <p>For more information relevant to the Montgomery County changes, please visit http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov, or contact 240-777-0311 and ask to speak to a member of the Fire Code Compliance team.</p> <p>Ed Haden, State Fire Marshall, reminded the Council of the statewide requirement for using the 10-year smoke detector (battery-operated or hard-wired). For more information, look up the Maryland Smoke Alarm Law. Maryland residents were required to comply by January 1, 2018.</p> <p>As of October 1, 2018, any businesses that continue to sell the 9-volt battery smoke detector are in violation of the law and can face a \$1,000 fine.</p> <p>People who rent homes are required to have hard wired smoke detectors if they have any fossil-fuel provided heat (gas/oil) in the home. Older homes are grandfathered in.</p> <p>In time for the upcoming holiday season, Ed also reminded Council members that live trees are not allowed in child care centers. The Fire Marshall's Office also strongly recommends that family child care providers use artificial trees.</p>
Branch Updates	
Credentialing	<p>Credentialing has been working to promote the availability of the Child Care Quality Incentive Grant and the Family Child Care Provider Grant.</p> <p>Angeline said both grants are under-utilized and they want to see more providers participate in them. They are working hard to market the Grants to help providers improve the quality of care in their programs.</p> <p>Jenn thanked Angeline and Jacqueline for doing a great job on promoting the two grants. We are very excited about the increase in participation for both of them.</p> <p>In FY 2018, we received 33 Child Care Quality Incentive Grant applications, with 33 approved for a total of \$33,040.</p> <p>In FY 2019 during the first and second quarter we received 48 Child Care Quality Incentive Grant applications, with 44 approved. This is an increase of 147% over FY 18.</p>
Maryland EXCELS	<p>Maryland EXCELS 2.0 launched on October 26, which was a few days later than expected. The new system experienced some technology issues. We continue to work with our partners to fix the issues. Workarounds were established and approximately \$139,000 in bonuses were paid between October 1 and October 14. 128 programs published and/or republished between October 1-14.</p> <p>DEC identified a "fix" for programs that expired out of EXCELS and were not able to access their account. Those will be fixed by next week. They are tracking individual programs to ensure providers that could not publish their ratings still get their tier payments. They are also tracking anything that impacts child care subsidy payments.</p> <p>Lindi reminded the group that quality assurance specialists are available to meet with everyone to provide technical assistance and thanked Jena Smith for her assistance/oversight.</p>

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	<p>Chris asked for data on how many classrooms in EXCELS participating programs can hold 3 and 4-year old children, and how many slots are available in those classrooms.</p> <p>Louis said one problem with gathering this type of data is if children are sharing a slot. For example, if it is a part-time slot and two children share it, we cannot separate that information. Another problem are classrooms with mixed age groups.</p> <p>Jenn said DEC does not have that type of data accessible right now but we are looking to change that in our modernization efforts.</p> <p>Lindi said Charlie (DEC's new data person) and Amber (our CCATS system support person) worked to pull a report together from CCATS for the Kirwan Commission.</p> <p>Chris said she has been trying to pull the information together herself by comparing information from different data sources. She said she has come up with a minimal of 15,000 slots between family providers and child care centers. The Kirwan Commission is looking into the capacity issue. Chris said she knows child care providers have more capacity than what the Commission believes.</p>
Other Information /Updates	<p>An issue regarding payment timeliness, invoices and vouchers was brought up. Rene' explained that because some providers are submitting their invoices through multiple means (fax, mail and email) it is slowing down the payment process. Conduent must ensure they are not paying a provider multiple times for multiple submissions of the same invoice.</p> <p>If a provider does not receive their invoice, they are asked to wait for ten (10) days before requesting a replacement to ensure there are not multiple invoices getting issued. This has always been the process; it isn't new. Rene' said the modernization project will help with this, including the new portal.</p> <p>Steve suggested each Branch should supply a written report that is emailed to Council members a few weeks before each meeting to allow for time to read the report and submit any follow-up questions.</p> <p>Chris suggested sending an email to TJ, or to her, to indicate topics of interest for the agendas.</p> <p>If a Council member, or visiting guest, wishes to ask questions of DEC staff that are not discussed during the meeting, submit written questions to TJ or Chris prior to the next scheduled OCC Advisory Council meeting. This will give us time to collect responses from the appropriate Branch, which we will then send to the Council so everyone gets the same information. We may also decide to include those questions on an upcoming Agenda.</p>
2019 Meetings	<p>All meetings are between 10:00 am – 12:00 Noon @ MSDE, 8th Floor Conference Room 6/7</p> <p>February 21 May 16 August 22 November 21</p>