



UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR
EXCELLENCE IN
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

University of Connecticut
Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Consumer Advisory Council
October 22, 2020

Meeting Minutes

CAC Council Members in Attendance:

Anton Alerte	Karen Carney	Deb Richards
Emily Ball	Molly Cole	Lolli Ross
Julie Ball	Walter Glomb	Ann Smith
Linda Barry, Presenter	Steven Hernandez	Daria Smith
Chris Blake	Diana LaRocco	Christine Sullivan
Scott Brown	Nanfi Lubogo	Michelle Weaver
Mary Beth Bruder	Allyson Powell	

UCEDD Staff in Attendance:

Toni Bercha	Lisa Eells	Linda Rammler
Julie Coia	Darla Gundler	Bethanne Vergean
Michael Deckers	Christine Jozef	Bingbing Zhang
Erin DeMaio	Sue Killmeyer	

The meeting began via Zoom at 9:35 am.

1. Introductions and Updates

Mary Beth Bruder welcomed all those participating in the meeting and stated Dr. Linda Barry will be presenting on equity and diversity at today's meeting. She then provided an overview and asked everyone to introduce themselves and shared the Agenda.

2. UCEDD Project Updates and Highlights

ABLE Act – Chris Blake and Molly Cole

Chris Blake is a LEND graduate who is on a national fellowship with the UCEDD, and was awarded a SARTEC scholarship. Chris explained how he used this scholarship to create ABLE account directions and information, and further explained the benefits of maintaining and using this type of account for family members and self-advocates.

Thinking College Update – Linda Rammler

Linda provided an update on Thinking College – the UCEDD is continuing to provide TA to Goodwin University with an expected start date of Spring 2020 with at least 6 students. Development and presentation of new materials have been funded by the DD Council. Instruction manuals will also be developed for use at other IHE's such as, Tunxis and University of St. Joseph's.

Supported Decision Making (DD Council funded)

Collaborating with the existing coalition to develop and promote new materials.

People First (UCEDD funded)

On-going TA and continuation of skill-building services and supporting 3 People First self-advocates who will present at a national conference in December 2020. Also, developing a video "It's Ok, Your Child Can Still Have a Great Life" for parents with newly diagnosed sons and daughters. TA is provided on transition employment and other issues and on-line modules are being developed.

Partners in Policymaking and Building a Great Life– Molly Cole

Molly reported every other year a state-wide conference is held called Building a Great Life, averaging 410 people. A conference was planned for 2020 but because of COVID-19 had to tentatively reschedule for September 2021. The DD Council has requested the Building a Great Life model be branded. This concept will include a website, some newly developed materials and some existing resources to support the concept of living your best life. In addition, the DD Council is funding the CT Partners in Leadership Training Academy. We plan to diversify funding and develop a handbook.

Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) – Darla Gundler

This is the largest funding source we have in the Center. Darla reminded everyone that the ECPC has a newly revised, more user-friendly website and invited everyone to visit it. The goal of ECPC is to increase the knowledge, skills and competencies of those serving infants and young children with disabilities and their families. There are three types of TA to implement this goal: Universal (for all), Targeted (specific populations: state IDEA and Part C and Part B 619 and early childhood staff and IHE faculty, doctoral students and state professional development providers and families), and Intensive TA is for state CSPD development and implementation. All of this information is on our website as well.

Early Intervention Doctoral Consortium (ECiDC) – Mary Beth Bruder

Mary Beth explained that sustainability is a huge challenge in the early childhood disability field. We are looking at a number of different initiatives and work with medical students, have a public health certificate program in disability, coordinated by Dr. Tara Lutz. Our most recent initiative is funding for the Consortium of 10 research universities who are training doctoral students in early childhood special education and related services. We were funded for 28 students – one cohort this year and another next year. The focus is for children who have severe disabilities. One requirement is to develop a curriculum which enhances the current doctoral program at the student's own university, with a number of requirements.

LEND program is in its fifth year. We hope to be funded again for another five years. LEND students help teach the next cohort (TAs) and it's an interdisciplinary undertaking. Master's program, funded by OSEP has nine scholars, also interdisciplinary, focusing on autism and becoming proficient working with young children with autism and their families. This is a one year program.

Learn the Signs Act Early (LTSAE) – Bethanne Vergean

Bethanne is in her second year as the LTSAE Ambassador. Trained over 1,000 early childhood providers in the past year and a half, including some DCF case workers. In September we obtained a COVID-19 LTSAE grant which is all about response to COVID-19. Many children are not being identified because they are home, not going to pediatricians, not in child care, etc. This is a one year grant with four goals: develop a stakeholder group, create needs assessment to develop a plan to identify barriers around parent engaged developmental monitoring, focus on autism screening and getting referrals and measure the children who didn't qualify for birth to 3, developing a playbook and system tracking.

The Office of Early Childhood received funding for a mobile app called Sparkler for all DCF workers to have on their state phone, that helps monitor families doing the ASQ.

Community College (OSEP funded)

This grant focuses on trying to improve Associate Degree in early childhood programs. Seven syllabi's have been completed and updated. The last time master course outlines and syllabi's had been updated was in the 1990s. Four community colleges are using the new EC 101 syllabi.

This past summer AUCD and the CDC have selected Connecticut (one of 11 states) as the Children's Mental Health Champion. The focus of this grant is to partner with a state agency or collaborative for support around COVID and additional stress family's experience. We are partnering with DCF and developing a work group at the moment to explore what supports and resources we can give families during this time.

AUCD/CDC Grant is focused on supporting parents around behavior concerns and helping teachers around social-emotional development so they may help families. We partnered with the CT Pyramid team and developed trainings for teachers, family trainings, developed social stories around COVID return to school and childcare. Materials are being translated in different languages to help support families around the state.

3. Presentation by Dr. Linda Barry

Dr. Linda Barry presented on Race, Diversity, and Disability and approached it from the viewpoint of advocacy opportunities.

Next Steps: Mary Beth asked "what can we do" about implicit bias and discussion began regarding disability law, cultural, medical, social cases, advocating for patients, learning needs, and other factors, and the importance of changing what we accept as conventional wisdom,

which isn't always factual. Discussion revolved around challenging the system that perpetuates inequity. People change, but systems and old practices last. Intersectionality – the interconnections / overlapping and independent systems of discrimination need to be examined to acknowledge and explore solutions to inequity.

Next scheduled meeting will be this Spring.

Meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Coia
Executive Assistant
University of Connecticut Health Center
Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities