



## Early Childhood Working Group Jan. 17, 2017

### Early Childhood Working Group, 2:00 pm, Don Chisholm First Floor Conference Room

**Attendees:** Carol Ayres, Amy Cochran, Emily Meissen-Sebelius, Nancy Sanchez, Rhonda Erpelding, Marc Van Blaricum, Christi Smith, Nola Martz, Barbara Spaw, Katrina Minter, Jessica Rose, Star Robinson, Barbara Sansberry, Connie Farakhan, Jessica Haremza Diop, Lori Wuellner

### Partner Spotlights

#### Jessica Haremza Diop, Site Director, Project Eagle-Educare Kansas City

Project Eagle- Educare created a wellness committee of staff about 3 years ago. The focus has been on wellness policy changes, which started when they worked with a ChildCare Aware grant. One wellness policy change they have been excited about was a move to reusable water bottles in each classroom. They have seen an increase in children drinking water and asking for it. It was a policy change that teachers had to take on and they decided how to clean the water bottles. (Some classrooms have dishwashers; others have made it part of the closing duty for the classroom). They were also able to send water bottles home with families. Some teachers were hesitant at first, but it has been relatively simple and not a huge expense.

The other wellness policy change was revising the morning snack offering. In between the CACFP breakfast and lunch, the standard practice had been that every classroom served a snack of goldfish crackers. They did some education and thinking about the timing of the snack and what it contains, and decided to offer fruit, usually apples and oranges instead. (They were able to add this to their order from their food service company). Each classroom gets a fruit basket and teachers how to offer and when from fruit basket; some offer when kids ask or are hungry; some still have a set snack time.

Overall the costs haven't been significant. There was some work to change staff mindset around best practice and what's best for kids. The wellness committee is made up of teachers and family support staff, and the changes really came from that group. They tried to listen to what could work for teachers and did peer sharing when they met for professional development. For example, teachers were provided apple peelers; they talked about kids working on the skill of peeling oranges. Some of the keys have been to start small and identify an area for change, then take small steps. It was helpful working with Healthy Way to Grow as well, to see the model sample policies and to get support from the program staff.

#### Lori Wuellner, KSU Research and Extension Wyandotte County

Lori Wuellner, through KSU Research and Extension, has been working with childcare providers since 1986. Para professionals from Research and Extension can go to childcare centers to work with parents, who have limited resources, on health and nutrition topics. Lori can provide professional development/training for staff, such as serve-safe training, which is approved for clock hours. Lori has provided training on physical activity with The Family Conservancy; training on wellness policy tips for childcare programs through USDA; and has presented a program "Grow it, Try it, Like it" through USDA. There are other trainings that are pending approval, such "Allergy Attack" and "Fun with Fruits and Vegetables".

Through the SNAP- Ed program, Research and Extension staff can work with childcare providers on a regular basis on health and wellness education for families. They can come onsite and can do activities with parents and can do activities with children.

In addition, the Walk Kansas program starts again on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Registration will be available online soon or through Lori. This walk and healthy eating challenge is a great boost for staff wellness and provides lots of great information and team approach to health and wellness. For more information, contact Lori at [lwuellne@ksu.edu](mailto:lwuellne@ksu.edu).



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### Networking/Resource Sharing

Participants were asked to reflect on their “Big Hairy Audacious Goals” for the coming year and share how this group can support.

- Carol Ayres, The Family Conservancy/Taking Steps to Healthy Success program- Carol and other staff have started a working group at The Family Conservancy called "Healthy TFC". The goal was to implement more staff wellness and role modeling of the healthy behaviors and lifestyle. There are now 30 involved, and the organization participated in a workplace wellness initiative and developed a policy for attaching dollars for food to healthy foods. They have instituted physical activity breaks, a walk challenge, and have moved to healthy snacks options for meetings.
- Amy Cochran, The Family Conservancy- Building Bridges is a new mini-grant program that we are currently seeking to recruit Wyandotte family or center based. It is short-term (4-6 months) and a focus on physical activity. Programs will receive 2 hours professional development and will work with Amy to plan a family event. They will receive a \$75 stipend for the event.
- Nancy Sanchez, Wyandotte County WIC – WIC has been working with the KU School of Architecture to establish a new mobile market that would be WIC-authorized. The caseload in WIC has been declining, so looking for ways to boost and connect to WIC.
- Christi Smith, ChildCare Aware of Kansas- The research group out of North Carolina that developed the NAP-SACC assessment have recently been focusing their research and training on 3 key elements: 1) healthy family childcare business; 2) childcare provider focused on self and own healthy lifestyles; 3) health and wellness in the family childcare program. Christi is interested, especially, in the healthy business aspect and how that aspect might impact family childcare providers.
- Marc Van Blaricum, [Pita for Good Food Truck](#)- introduces people to new and healthy food. Marc has been able to talk with groups, like a Girl Scout meeting recently, about the business aspect and about eating healthy. They can provide food for lunches, special events, employee lunches, etc.
- Barbara Spaw, Mo. Dept. of Health and Senior Services- Barb’s new focus is school health, under community health and wellness and the obesity program. They are focused on health where we learn, where we work, and where we play, and her goal is keeping connected to resources in Missouri for school-aged population.
- Nola Martz, Mo. Dept. of Health and Senior Services- Nola is the Maternal Child Health contractor for Local Public Health Departments in Mo. They are focusing on work on a local level taking more of a systems focus. One way of doing that is aligning and implementing 12345 Fit-Tastic/ Healthy Lifestyles Initiative framework.
- Connie Farakhan, KC Mo Health Dept- Looking resources and connections to people to support the work she is doing with childcare providers on physical activity, health and childhood injury prevention.



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- Rhonda Erpelding, American Heart Association, Healthy Way to Grow- Looking to focus on the KC area and strengthen partnerships, including with those who may be “outside of the box”. Her goal is setting up different systems to support childcare providers, when grants aren't there any longer for current programs.
- Emily Meissen-Sebelius, Children’s Mercy Weighing In- The goals of Weighing In are to connect partners and resources to support children’s health and wellness. She is focused on how to best connect and identify/fill niches in relation to early childhood health and wellness.

### Early Care and Education Survey

Through a grant from the McGowan Foundation, Weighing In has been working on a project that would create an early childhood specific training curriculum for the Healthy Lifestyles Initiative that can be used by trainers or others working in early childhood. We began the project with a survey of early care and education program who had participated in a training or technical assistance program for health and wellness through The Family Conservancy, ChildCare Aware or Healthy Way to Grow. Emily reviewed results very quickly and will post the powerpoint summary online at the [Early Childhood Working Group page](#).

In general, the early care and education program identified that they would use educational handouts on health and wellness, as well as posters and newsletters. They also indicated that they would utilize sample family letters about wellness policies, and sample model wellness policies that align with the 12345 Fit-Tastic! message.

**Next Steps: We would like to hold a sub-group meeting of anyone interested in helping to prioritize model wellness policies that Weighing In can create some family-oriented resources for (i.e. family letters about the policies, connect to 12345 Fit-Tastic!. This will build on the past survey from the Early Childhood Working group and this survey). If interested, please contact Emily at [esebelius@cmh.edu](mailto:esebelius@cmh.edu) .**

### 12345 Fit-Tastic/HLI spotlight

Emily highlighted the 12345 Fit-Tastic! newsletter as a resource for members to share with early care and education providers and families that they serve. The newsletter is published quarterly and available on [www.FitTastic.org](http://www.FitTastic.org) at <http://fittastic.org/fit-tastic-newsletters>.

### Wrap Up

**Next meetings: Early Childhood Working Group, moving from 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays to 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays; once/quarter **April 25<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Location TBD. Will notify via email.****

We may have sub-groups meet in between. Contact Emily if you are interested in participating in a sub-group to identify/prioritize model wellness policies for early care and education providers (see notes above).

Next Weighing In Quarterly Meeting –March 9<sup>th</sup>, 9-11 a.m., Kauffman Conference Center