



## **Weighing In Early Childhood Working Group Highlights**

**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 -3:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Rhonda Erpelding, Kelly Meigs, Nola Martz, Megan McClure, Lori Lanter, Carol Cartmill, Roberta Lyle, Katrina Minter, Connie Askew, Kimelin Johnson, Christi Smith, Nancy Sanchez, Crystal Henry, Megan Justice, Tracy Russell, Kyle Matchell, Laura Naeger, Emily Meissen-Sebelius

### **Partner Spotlight and Discussion – Panel Discussion with local Quality Initiative Project Leaders**

We were joined by a terrific panel of presenters representing four different quality initiative projects for early care and education (ECE) providers in Kansas City.

**Early Learning Program Profile**- Kyle Matchell shared about the **Early Learning Program Profile** (ELPP) pilot through the Mid America Regional Council and the quality improvement framework that has been an instrumental in guiding the project and its focus on teacher-child interactions, among other early learning best practices. Developed by the Partners In Quality group's, Quality Enhancement Technical Workgroup, the ELPP had 30 program participate in 2018. The ELPP uses self-reprot measures as well as observation using the Classroom Assessment Scoring Systems (CLASS) observation as their main assessment tool. The CLASS was chosen because of the major impact of the interactions of teacher and the child on child development and learning in early childhood. This also aligned with other quality improvement initiatives in the region and through HeadStart. While the ELPP doesn't include health and wellness indicators currently, there has been some discussion around this as a gap area and ways of addressing it, particularly if the mayor's pre-K plan had been approved (including health and wellness in that program).

**Kansas Links to Quality Pilot**-Kelly Meigs from the Kansas Dept of Children and Families provided an overview of the **Kansas Links to Quality Pilot**, a quality recognition pilot that will inform a statewide system for ECE providers to improve on a variety of quality indicators, one being implementation of the NAP SACC assessment. This 2 year pilot was developed to begin towards a state system to measure quality in early care and

education. The pilot includes 40 providers in various regions of Kansas. All programs have a community consultant who helps them achieve quality indicators, submit documentation, link to other programs and community resources. The “links” or areas of quality improvement include program leadership, family partnerships, and learning and development (where health and wellness/NAP SACC assessment is included). Each program has a dashboard with manuals, their quality improvement plans, licensing manuals, forms, etc.

The [Start Young program](#)- Crystal Young from The Family Conservancy shared about the program targeting Wyandotte County ECE providers and families. Start Young combines incentives for teachers to improve in their qualifications, as well as supports for families to connect with the state’s childcare subsidy program. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet provided grant funding, with a local match required, for the program. Participating early care and education providers must accept state subsidy and commit to assessing children (using ASQ) and participating in quality improvement training. The teachers can also receive salary enhancement with credentialing and further education. The program provides subsidy consultants who help families apply and navigate the childcare subsidy system, but also have provided family engagement nights and help with other community resources. There is not a specific health and wellness component, outside of a mental health focus with conscious discipline training for parents and teachers. Potential opportunities to connect with healthy eating and active living through family engagement.

[Healthy Kids, Bright Futures](#)- Rhonda Erpelding from KC Healthy Kids shared about the Healthy Kids, Bright Futures (HKBF) program, serving the KC metro area. HKBF combines supports for families to connect to broad community resources through community navigators, while simultaneously supporting ECE providers to improve their practices around child development, early learning and health and wellness. The 5 year project is looking to mirror some components of early head start, with in the ECE setting, targeting ECE programs that serve low income families and have at least 10 children under the age of 3. They have been supporting programs to develop regular practices for assessing children, using the ASQ. Through a partnership with The Family Conservancy, programs receive training and coaching on screening and other quality improvement areas, including health and wellness. Programs all complete the NAP-SACC assessment as well.

Overall, key differences exist between the focus or target population of these initiatives, as well as the framework utilized. We also heard about ways in which programs align

and have collaborated on things like assessments and training. As both Kansas and Missouri continue to explore quality indicators and recognition programs, the Early Childhood Working Group is looking for how we may support and also align health and wellness indicators with these and other emerging initiatives.

**Next Meetings:** The next Weighing In quarterly meeting is **June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Kauffman Conf. Center**. Our next meeting Early Childhood Working Group meeting is **September 13<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-3:00 p.m.**

**Summer communication-** over the summer months, our group will not meet but would like to keep networking and communication open. If you have announcements or opportunities or resources, you'd like to ask the group for, please send that information to our chairs Christi Smith, [christi@ks.childcareaware.org](mailto:christi@ks.childcareaware.org), or Lori Lanter, [llanter@wycokck.org](mailto:llanter@wycokck.org). They will pass information along to the group over the summer! Don't hesitate to reach out!