

Early Childhood Stakeholder Meeting Notes

8.6.21

Hannah McGahey opened the meeting welcoming attendees and providing general updates in the early childhood system including the Sunflower Summer initiative, Kansans Can Success Tour, and the Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity CEU opportunity through the University of Oklahoma:

Sunflower Summer

- **Free and Fun Kansas Experiences!**
 - Developed by Kansas State Department of Education.
 - Sunflower Summer invites Kansas families to experience 70 attractions at **no cost** from now until mid-August.
 - Parents can get started by downloading the app at www.sunflowersummer.org.
 - Attractions include the Cosmosphere, multiple discovery centers, museums, and zoos, and many, many more

Kansans Can Success Tour

- **The 50-city event kicked off July 26.**
 - Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson is once again facilitating community conversations across the state to **gather feedback on the state's vision for K-12 education**.
 - The 2021 tour is a follow-up to the Kansas Children. Kansas' Future. community conversations tour that took place in 2015.
 - **Please help us spread the word** to your staff, students and their parents. Their input will continue to help shape Kansas education. Visit [Kansans Can Success Tour](#) to download event flyers; a complete list of tour dates and locations; a tour logo; news release and more.

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity CEU Opportunity

- **Screening to Identify Preschool Children's Strengths and Challenges Using a Cultural Wealth Framework**
 - Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D, at UNC, Chapel Hill, will cover topics to ensure all children are comprehensively assessed through a lens that affirms their assets.
 - **Thursday, August 26, 1:00pm-2:30pm**
 - Spots are limited. Register now at: <https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/webinars/screening-to-identify-preschool-childrens-strengths-and-challenges-using-a-cultural-wealth-framework/>

- **CEUs:** You can earn .2 CEUs for each webinar, \$15, through the University of Oklahoma.
Apply here: <https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/about/ceus-webinars/>

Michelle Gilbert, along with a few others from the Workforce Development Advisory Group's Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee, provided the main presentation for the meeting on the topic of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity. Linda Logan provided background regarding the start of this committee, which meets the last Friday of every month at 11:00 via Zoom. Megan Smith shared the efforts to have shared language so that everyone understands each other the same and on an even playing field. The committee felt it was important to look at resources through NAEYC and the Kansas Strategic Plan. The committee looked at NAEYC's position statement which says:

“All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity. They can do this best when they are effectively supported by the early learning settings in which they work and when they and their wider communities embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities.”

(NAEYC Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement, 2019)

Michelle noted that the committee walked through the NAEYC Recommendations and talked about where the group saw things going well, and where there were gaps. Michelle directed attendees to the first section of breakout rooms for discussion on the NAEYC Recommendation's, and asked attendees to answer the following questions:

- **“How are these recommendations already embedded within your organization?”**
- **“Where are there gaps?”**

After attendees rejoined together, Michelle presented on where the Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee started, and their desire to support early childhood professionals directly in the field in this work. Because this topic inspires a lot of passion, the committee spent a couple of meetings to think about how to get this information to everyone. As important as these conversations are, they aren't always easy to have. It can be difficult to be with people and hold space for these difficult conversations. The committee shifted the thinking to providing training for the infrastructure of the field by offering ongoing professional development opportunities.

The Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee also decided on the name change from DEI in an effort to be more than just an acronym. They wanted to lead with equity, as it opens the door for inclusive practices and celebrating and holding space for diversity.

Michelle noted the proposal from Sophic Solutions that the committee has decided to work with. The proposal includes professional development followed by small group conversations and opportunities for ongoing peer dialogue. This is not a finished product, but what has been researched thus far. Right now the committee is looking for feedback on whether this format will lead to lasting changes. Michelle asked attendees to consider the following questions in the second section of breakout rooms:

- **“What are your initial thoughts about the proposal?”**

- **“In what ways do you see supporting the infrastructure of the field leading to lasting change for Kansas early childhood professionals?”**
- **“What concerns and/or suggestions do you have for us to consider?”**

Attendees rejoined together for the remainder of the meeting, and Michelle noted that the feedback received in the breakout rooms would be reviewed and adjustments would be made moving forward with the committee’s work. The ultimate goal of this work is that it will be shared, and then share the data with the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel to create a plan for the work to move forward. Michelle thanked all attendees for their participation and feedback.

Hannah McGahey closed the meeting with final reminders of upcoming meetings including:

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel Meeting (8/20)
 - Registration and YouTube Viewing Information on the Cabinet website.
- Next Biweekly Webinar – Wednesday, August 11th
 - Let us know what topics you’re interested in, or if you have information to share in the webinars or weekly emails.
- Cabinet and Stakeholder Group Meeting (10/1)

Share feedback! - <https://kschildrenscabinet.org/share/>