

# Early Learning Council Best Beginnings Committee Report

**Committee Charge:** Advise the Early Learning Council on the issues, challenges, successes and priorities related to serving at risk families who are pregnant and/or have children age of 3 years old or under. Areas of responsibility include, but not limited to:

- Increasing access to home-based services
- Identifying state level policy changes that support family well-being and stability
- Increasing focus on critical aspects of development and attachment for children aged 0-3 and their families
- Finalizing and implementing a statewide screening tool and assessment protocol for family risk factors
- Developing best practice referral pathway for 0-3 services statewide

**Committee Membership:** Chair Martha Brooks, Vice Chair Elena Rivera, James Barta, Cindy Bond, Jessica Britt, Christy Cox, Donalda Dodson, Beth Green, Marguerite Kenagy, Lindsey Manfrin, Janet Dougherty-Smith

## Report:

### Chairs report:

- Update of Relief Nurseries Rules – On hold through the legislative session.
- Congratulations to Donalda Dodson for being recognized as Children’s Institute’s Dick Alexander Award winner for 2017. The group presented Donald with flowers and a card. Congratulations Donalda.

During the May meeting, the Best Beginnings Committee was updated on current work and progress on the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting grant. Highlights include the continuation of funding for the current enrollment level of 805 through September 30, 2019: Early Head Start: 185; Healthy Families Oregon: 263; Nurse Family Partnership: 357.

Chair and staff walked BB through the draft committee work plan. Valuable input was provided and incorporated into the plan. Staff described the format of the work plan and its connection to the broader ELC Strategic Plan. Some of the areas the BB Committee would like to focus on over the next year include Home Visiting Metrics, how to refine data points to be collected through HV questionnaires and intake information, professional development advancements and recommendations for Prenatal to age 3 work force, establishment of the MIECHV Steering Committee under BB, trauma informed practices for zero to 3, and family health and wellbeing for this same age group. Work is on-going and changing. Some plan additions and cross over work may be possible from the work being done by The Infant Toddler Assessment work group.

BB discussed the HV metrics originally developed in response to the budget note included in SB 5507 (2015). The next steps include further discussion about how and which components to transfer to the Measuring Success Committee and the plan for implementation. Chair will bring BB questions and concerns to ELC exec. for discussion and next steps. This discussion will continue at the next BB meeting.



## **Key Issues Discussed & Uncovered:**

BB discussed and voted to create a work group charged with leading the infant toddler assessment and evaluation efforts currently underway. Staff will provide an overview of the data collected during the July meeting. Work has been happening through the ELD with representatives from other state agencies and outside partners. This work group has worked on an assessment of infant and toddler data and information in Oregon designed to guide and inform possible policy and system deliverables. It is the desire of this work group to become a temporary sub committee of BB in order for their work to be considered for implementation. Establishment of this work group shall be referred to the ELC.

Chair updated BB on impending rule changes to remove the 25% match requirement from HFO rules. The rule has been referred over to the CCEC to go through the ELC's rules process. It is estimated that this rule change update should be done in time for the new HFO Contracts that will start Oct 1, 2017. Members expressed some concern about opening the rules and requested an outline of the process, including when public testimony will be solicited. Concern was also expressed and questions asked as to why CCEC was dealing with HFO rules.

BB received an update on the reaccreditation process of HFO and each of the contract programs of HFO. The Central Administration process went extremely well with minimal requirements for updating. HFA has a requirement for a database system. At present, Oregon lacks that database. The Central Admin was found to be very strong despite the very lean state staff supporting a statewide program. BB was presented with a recommendation to move to a point system for case load and away from family support units due to changes and requirements required by HFA. BB approved this change.

Staff provided an update on the Family Support Questionnaire pilot. Pilot results highlighted concerns for some BB committee members, including the need for a centralized data base depository. Given the contrast in opinions on how and if to proceed, BB will discuss and develop next steps during the July meeting, however, BB determined to continue with the questionnaire focusing more on data points to be collected and to continue work so as to be ready when the data systems are available.

## **Upcoming Key Decisions:**

- Determination of scope of work for infant toddler work group.
- Outline next steps for Family Support Questionnaire (HV data set) implementation.
- Determination of next steps for the HV metrics developed in response to the Budget Note.
- Continuing HFO Advisory work and approvals being brought forward due to the re-accreditation process. One of these areas will be updates to the Policy and Procedures manual for HFO programs that align with HFA standards.

**Staffed by:** ELD-Nakeshia Knight-Coyle, Erin Deahn, Elisabeth Underwood  
OHA – Cate Wilcox, Benjamin Hazelton

