



## Iowa Council for Early ACCESS

Date: May 21, 2021

[Roll call/voting](#)

### Call to Order

Emma Bouza, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The meeting was held via Zoom due to COVID-19.

### Council Members Present

Julie Allison (joined for part of the meeting), Michael Bergan, Emma Bouza, Jerrica Brink, Aaron Cronk, McKaylee Heuton, Ryan Hubbert, Marcus Johnson-Miller, Julie Jones, Megan Lancaster, Eric Locke, Stephen Mandler, Lee Pool, Brook Rosenberg, Kymberly Stein, Ryan Tomlinson, and Donal Welch

### Council Members Absent

John Fuller, Annette Hyde, Jessie Marks, Karen Thompson, Kimberly Villotti, and Tonya Weber

### Early ACCESS Staff Present

Dee Gethmann, Tonya Krueger, Teri Mash, Meghan Miller, Melissa Schnurr, and Kate Small

### Guests Present

Jacqueline Penning, Heidi Sottos, and Rachell Swanson-Holm

### Approval of Minutes

Marcus Johnson-Miller motioned to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2021, meeting. Michael Bergan seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

### Committee Reports

- Public Policy – No updates reported
- Membership – Kymberly Stein is changing positions so will no longer be on the Council. Meghan Miller contacted Annette Hyde to ask for a new liaison representative.
- By-laws – No updates reported
- Family Engagement – Kymberly was co-chair so looking for a new co-chair. Teri Mash will be sending an email of updates to the team.

### Vote on Chair for 2021–2022

Emma Bouza volunteered to serve as Chair for 2021–2022. The Council members unanimously approved Emma Bouza as Chair.

## **OSEP SPP/APR Target Setting FFY 2020–2025**

The Council is one of the stakeholder groups that provides input on the targets for the Part C indicators for Iowa's State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Progress Report (APR). The Council will participate in facilitated discussions to establish targets during the September 2021 meeting. The processes for stakeholder input and establishing targets are coordinated and aligned with IDEA Part B.

### **Family Story**

Heidi Sottos shared her family's story of Early ACCESS services. Her five-year-old daughter, Haven, experienced a brain injury during birth. Early ACCESS was essential in providing services, resources, and support to her family. The Early ACCESS team contacted her family within a few days of coming home from the neonatal intensive care unit. The Early ACCESS team helped her family understand Haven's needs provide support. The coordination was seamless, and her family greatly appreciated the support from the Early ACCESS team, who she referred to as "Haven's Angels."

Heidi Sottos shared that the coordination of therapies through Early ACCESS and outpatient care through private providers was vital to Haven's success. Reflecting on her experience with Early ACCESS services, Heidi Sottos suggested that one area of improvement would be using and understanding devices that support communication. The speech and language services as well as the coordination of communication strategies suggested by Haven's therapists were a challenge. The coordination and support for feeding therapy and nutrition resources were somewhat limited in the range of services Early ACCESS was able to provide to her family. However, the Early ACCESS team always provided resources for outpatient feeding therapy so they always had the support they needed.

### **DHS Agency Update**

Julie Allison, Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) ACFS/Child Care Bureau Chief, presented on the supports and resources provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. She shared the current strategies and allocation of federal funding to support families, child care providers, and child care resource and referral agencies across the state. She shared a [2020–2021 Federal Stimulus Update](#) and provided the Council with information on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, the Coronavirus Relief and Response Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

The Council members shared insights and asked follow-up questions about the use of these funds and ongoing strategies to support the short-term and long-term impact. The DHS staff are currently working with child care providers and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) to plan for the sustainability of efforts when these funds are no longer available.

### **PR/Marketing Update**

The PR/Marketing committee shared that the new Early ACCESS logo has been created. They shared a flyer from Kari Ebert, PD provider, geared toward pediatricians that could be personalized to include specific information with points of contact in Iowa. Kari Ebert gave permission for the state of Iowa to edit her flyer in order to make it more applicable for use by Early ACCESS.

The Council members shared that they would like to coordinate efforts with 1<sup>st</sup> Five and Early Childhood Iowa (ECI). The Council members expressed concern that the flyer had too many words and should include more bullet points. The Council members also expressed that more information is needed on the flyer about Early ACCESS and how to connect families with Early ACCESS services. The Council members commented that the pictures on the flyer should represent children with disabilities.

### **Iowa Family Support Network New Design**

Meghan Miller and Tonya Krueger provided an update on the recently revised Early ACCESS web pages on the [Iowa Family Support Network website](#). The revisions include additions of specific sections for families and professionals. The information has been updated with links to make a referral to Early ACCESS, help links, content about research in the field, and specific information about children's development and support for families. The website also includes an [Iowa Council for Early ACCESS web page](#), which includes members, minutes, by-laws, and reports. They have also collaborated with other organizations, such as ECI and other State Departments, to provide a link to the Iowa Family Support Network on their websites.

Meghan Miller and Tonya Krueger also shared information about the launch of the ACHIEVE system, which will include a direct link to refer children and families to Early ACCESS. Council members can view the [ACHIEVE Google Site](#) to stay up-to-date on the progress of ACHIEVE as well as view a video outlining the [Early ACCESS Public Referral Process](#) in ACHIEVE.

### **Service Coordinator Position Statement**

Melissa Schnurr provided information about a national effort that the state of Iowa has been actively involved in to promote Service Coordination in Early Intervention. The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) collaborated on a joint position statement to acknowledge the importance of early intervention service coordination and to recognize the expertise and needs of the professionals who provide this service. The December 2020 [Service Coordination in Early Intervention Joint Position Statement](#) can be found on the DEC website

Iowa providers information to support Service Coordinators and define roles and responsibilities on the [Service Coordination and Service Coordinators web page](#) of the Iowa IDEA Information (i3) website. Council members provided input on what Iowa can do to support service coordinators as part of the IFSP team, including comprehensive support and training, strategies to emphasize the value of the team, and communicate the roles and responsibilities of service coordinators and community of practice.

### **Early Childhood Cross-Disciplinary Competencies**

Melissa Schnurr provided information about a national effort that Iowa has been actively involved in to promote [Early Childhood Cross-Disciplinary Competencies](#) addressing common areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes across all personnel serving young children with disabilities and their families. An [overview of the competencies](#) is outlined across four core areas. During the 2020–2021 school year, state staff from Early ACCESS and Early Childhood Special Education provided five webinars with Iowa's faculty across disciplines in order to support the integration of the competencies as part of pre-service preparation.

## **Child Health Specialty Clinics**

Rachell Swanson-Holm presented on the grant activities related to [Learn the Signs Act Early](#) in the state of Iowa. She stated that Iowa participated in a pilot study in 2019–2020 and implemented the grant in September 2020. A stakeholder team was convened to do a rapid needs assessment. She presented on the barriers and challenges as well as the successes and achievements.

The anticipated outcomes of the project are intended to support the referral to early intervention and the provision of services to families and young children.

## **Adjournment**

Ryan Hubbert motioned to adjourn the meeting. Michael Bergan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.