

# ***Bristol Early Childhood Alliance***

## Zoom Meeting Notes

January 6, 2021 (11:00 – 12:00 p.m.)

**In attendance:** Meagan Adams, Sherri Bartles, Tad Bartles, Maureen Eaton, Cecelia Garay, Kate Kerchaert, Lauren Kittle, Donna Koser, Mary Alice Petrucelli-Timek, Karen Lombardi, Shannon Michelson (UW Intern), Donna Osuch, Catherine Plourd, and Val Toner

Members were invited to introduce themselves.

**Community Outreach** –Donna K. announced that the United Way has recruited 22 parents to participate in the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) beginning on January 9, 2021. This year, the training will be offered virtually. The BECA & SR Virtual Express event went well. It was a great collaboration amongst many partners. The Appetite for Reading program continues to be offered at a few sites. Many have shut down completely during COVID and those sites will be revisited in the Spring. This month, Facebook is focusing on the Health Committee Wellness Wednesdays, benefits of whole wheat bread, Self-Love Month, Eye Health Month, Tasty Tuesdays and as always, the importance of reading to your child.

**Collaborating Grants:** The Alliance has provided a letter of support to the Parent & Child Program for the OEC grant that is due this month, awards will be announced in April and if awarded funds will be provided in July. Bristol has a very good chance.

The OEC received 1.2 million dollars for children who are no longer in preschool. Bristol partners worked really hard to reach out to families who dropped off programs. For every 10 families engaged, programs receive \$2,000.00. If programs did not work together, this would not have been successful with the timeframe given. Bristol did an amazing job reaching families.

### **Subcommittees:**

**Infant & Toddler** The committee met on Monday this week. The focus was discussion on the “Polar Express” event the committee moved to Facebook this year. Also discussed, ways to offer supports to families on a waitlist with Child First and others and Sparkler and the impact it is having on families. Families are appreciating the Sparkler app and tools during the pandemic. Lauren asked for suggestions on what the community need is, as the Parent & Child Center begins to design programs.

**Health Committee** the committee met yesterday and is excited to begin a new initiative on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Look for more information on the Making Bristol Better Facebook page. Families are encouraged to sign up with ShopRite in Bristol to receive a monthly food to taste. This month the Tasty Tuesday food will be lentils. The Bristol-Burlington Health Department will provide materials on behalf of BECA/SR (including Sparkler), measuring cups, placemats, etc. The committee is looking into virtual events, such as a modified “Rethink Your Drink”, to engage families. In addition, the Health Committee will be asking the SR Council to allocate funds to support the Tasty Tuesday monthly events.

**Transition to K.** – the next committee meeting is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup>, however; may change due to the scheduled Holiday. The committee will discuss Case Consultation and how to improve the impact of this committee.

The committee is working on a new initiative – “Ready for K”. This will replace this year’s Kindergarten Folders since many families did not pick them up once the pandemic hit CT. Similar to Sparkler, there will be a downloadable app that sends families on average three texts a week about getting ready for school. The committee is looking into the Trauma Informed option to help families. The cost will be approximately \$6.99 per child.

Last year's Dine & Discuss was cancelled. The committee is looking into holding something virtually this year. Providers enjoy attending this learning opportunity.

### **Community Sharing:**

**WIC:** Is excited that Foodshare will continue with food boxes. The office is still working virtually with families. At this time, there is no scheduled date to return to the office.

**MSCF** – Kate invited everyone to visiting the website, [www.mainstreetfoundation.org](http://www.mainstreetfoundation.org), for upcoming grants and to call the office with any questions. COVID 19 response funds are still available to those who are eligible. The Foundation anticipates a new grant cycle to open on February 1<sup>st</sup> with a due date of February 24th. This grant cycle is specific to helping nonprofits with Capacity Building. Please email or call Kate before applying. The General Grant Cycle has been pushed out to April/May/June. Kate will share updates. The foundation was also instrumental in facilitating a grant to the Parent & Child Center in the amount of \$50,000 for unrestricted funding.

**School Readiness:** Mary-Alice shared her excitement about a recent interview and her quote that was published in the local newspaper. The article highlighted early care and education.

**United Way:** Donna O. asked everyone to be on a look out for the next Farmers to Families event. United Way hopes to offer events in February, March & April.

The United Way VITA program, in partnership with HRA, will be held virtually this year. There is an option to meet in person at the HRA site for those who absolutely need to meet in person. Look for information on the United Way Facebook page and website.

Members were reminded that the United Way Resource Guides are living documents. The last update made to the COVID 19 guide was on Dec. 20, 2020. The Resource Guide can be found on the UW website: <https://www.uwestcentralct.org/>

**Parent & Child Program:** Lauren shared that the Parent & Child Center is currently working on “what programs will be offered this year?”. Lauren asked members if there were any thoughts on what they felt families needed at this time. Programs may include a virtual Postpartum group, Support Group for parents who are struggling with at home learning, etc. Lauren shared her excitement about the recent award of \$50,000.00 to the program.

**Imagination:** Coral announced that this year's wine event is being planned for April 30, 2021. At this time, the event will be held virtually.

**Next Meeting: *February 3, 2021 (Zoom)***



## TASTY TUESDAYS TASTE TEST GUIDE

### WHAT IS A TASTE TEST?.....

A taste test is an activity that introduces children to foods and beverages they may not have tried before. Taste tests encourage children to eat healthy food options offered at home. Children who try healthier food options are more likely to continue these choices for a lifetime of healthy eating. A taste test provides an opportunity to reinforce healthy eating messages in a fun, interactive way. Taste testing can be used to explore the senses and help teach children that eating smart isn't just healthy, but also tasty.

There are several ways to conduct a taste test. Ideally, children are given several chances to try many different foods during the year to help develop healthy eating habits and make better food choices. A taste test can be conducted during snack time, mealtime, or as a stand-alone activity at home.

The tasting can be done using a single food or can include multiple foods or food groups. Incorporating different themes can make the overall taste test experience more fun for the children.

The following are some taste test theme ideas:

#### Taste the Alphabet

Helps preschoolers learn about all the varieties of foods and snacks from A to Z.

#### Taste the Rainbow

Helps preschoolers learn about the colors of foods.

#### Pizza Party

Healthy pizza can be made with whole grain crust, sauce, a variety of vegetables, and part-skim mozzarella cheese.

#### Fruit or Garden Salad

Can include many different fruits or vegetables for sampling.

After participating in the monthly Tasty Tuesday event, please complete the "Eat Smart...It's a Matter of Taste I Tried It Card" provided in the item bag at the time of pick up. Send this card to the Tasting Host at: [Jessica.Damer@wakafem.com](mailto:Jessica.Damer@wakafem.com)



**Tasty Tuesdays**

Try a new food every month!

Brought to you by The Bristol School Wellness Council and the Bristol Early Childhood Alliance Plus the Committee, working together "Making Bristol Better" in partnership with Bristol ShopRite

www.MakingBristolBetter.com  
www.shoprite.com and https://Bristolarea.shoprite.com

**January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021: Lentils**

Did you know?

- Lentils are part of the *legume* family  
(other legumes: chickpeas, soybeans, peanuts, peas, beans)
- Lentils are high in **protein, fiber, iron**
- Lentils are a plant protein
- Enjoy lentils in soups/stews
- Mix lentils with ground meat



