

## ***Bristol Early Childhood Alliance***

### Zoom Meeting Notes

August 5, 2020 (11:00 – 12:00 p.m.)

**In attendance:** Maegan Adams, Kate Kearchart, Donna Koser, Mary Alice Petrucelli-Timek, Karen Lombardi. All welcomed Maegan Adams; the new Executive Director at Bristol Preschool.

Our meeting was held one day after a tropical storm and a large amount of CT was without power. Co-Chairs were unable to attend the meeting. Donna K. opened up discussion with those present and asked the following: How is your program coping during the pandemic? What issues, if any, are you seeing for children & families?

**WIC-** The Bristol Parent & Child Center and WIC have moved their offices and working the same hours. WIC is doing well. WIC continues to waive weight, height, annual check-ups and bloodwork due to the pandemic. Currently handing out Farmers Market vouchers. Karen was surprised that they were not seeing more people who are in need of food. Either they are unaware they are opened or the community is doing a great job with food resources. WIC continues to stress the importance of physical activity and encourages clients to engage in outdoor activities, walks, etc. maintaining social distance. WIC continues to offer translation services; including hearing impaired.

**Bristol Preschool:** Currently class sizes are at 10 and plans to open up classrooms to 14 children at the end of August, when the school transitions for back-to-school. Bristol Preschool has 9 classrooms for preschool and is licensed for school age children. Plans are to open up a room for 10 to 12 school age children to serve the needs of staff and parents with younger children. This plan is contingent and the final stages of school re-openings and the guidelines set by the OEC. There are many parents who are looking for places for their K students with parents being apprehensive about public school buildings and buses. There are guidelines to follow to keep a child back in preschool. Currently, only one child meets the criteria. The superintendent is required to sign off on any children who will not be heading to Kindergarten. Transitioning to the next classroom will look different this year. Usually students will gradually move into the next classroom. This year, due to health and safety concerns, children will graduate to the next class at the end of this month as to not cross contaminate between classrooms.

**Main Street Community Foundation** Kate shared that there is a COVID 19 Rapid Response Fund. Programs must already have an existing relationship with the Foundation.

**Community Outreach** – Donna K. shared that a grant from the Bristol Rotary will provide 500 “Adopt a Reading Buddies” that will be distributed in Bristol. This is a new initiative to encourage reading 20 minutes a day. Children will be asked to name their pet, read 20 minutes a day to help their pet grow. Parents are asked to post names, pictures and updates on Making Bristol Better’s Facebook page. Donna K. asked for suggestions on how to adopt the reading buddies out to children with most of BECA’s events having been cancelled. Mary-Alice will bring 115 pets to both of the SR sites. Donna K. will reach out to the Boys and Girls Club to try and reach the children in Cambridge Park area.

**Collaborating Grants:** Donna O. shared that Bristol will be applying for an extension of the Sparkler grant; for an interactive ages and stages app. A meeting was held this past Tuesday with the Bristol Family Resource Center and the Parent & Child Center. Donna O. is still looking for someone who can

access data on children who did not have a preschool experience prior to Kindergarten. The CT Early Childhood Funders Collaborative Grant and the Office of Early Childhood grant report is due next week. Donna O. to reach out to Susan Huff to see if she is able to pull out children with no pre-k experience from Power School.

**Subcommittees:**

**Infant & Toddler** has not met and the Breastfeeding in the Park event has been cancelled.

**Health Committee** has not met.

**Transition to K.** – Mary-Alice reported that 456 students are registered for Kind and there are still 67 children who were enrolled in Jan/Feb and have not yet registered. These children’s families received a letter and six of those came back as “moved”. Each entering Kindergarten student will receive a brand new book and a K survey. Surveys will be given out with a return envelope and each school will be asked to send the completed survey to Mary-Alice.

**Community Sharing:**

United Way: Donna O. reminded everyone about the Friday Food Distribution as asked for volunteers to help hand out free boxes of food. The event will take place on Main Street, the site of the Farmers Market (across from City Hall) from 11:30-2:00.

**Next Meeting:** *Sept 2, 2020 (Zoom or in person TBD)*