

# ***Bristol Early Childhood Alliance***

## Zoom Meeting Notes

May 4, 2022 (11:00 – 12:00 p.m.)

**In attendance:** Meagan Adams, Sarah Castle, Maureen Eaton, Sandra Godin, Mary Beth Hicking, Lauren Kittle, Kate Kerchaert, Donna Koser, Dawn Leger, Donna Osuch, Mary Alice Petrucelli-Timek, Catherine Plourde, Kara Singleton and Jenn St. John

**Community Outreach** – BECA fliers will be placed in 200 Polar Express bags (distributed at the Bristol Library) and over 100 hat/mitten bags (distributed through Park and ***Rec N Read*** and ***Appetite for Reading*** shelves).

### **Collaborating Grants:**

Donna O. and Mary-Alice shared a few updates:

Mary Alice had a successful interview with the committee for the Main St. Community Foundation grant and anticipates hearing soon if the grant for amplifiers has been awarded.

CT Early Childhood Funder Collaborative/OEC grant has been awarded to the United Way to support staff for BECA. It is a smaller grant this year.

Parent Trust Fund – is anticipated to be announced soon with an application due in June. Bristol FRC anticipates applying for UCONN PEP again next year.

**May is Mental Health Awareness Discussion:** Lauren shared that this week is Maternal Mental Health Week. Discussion was held around the following:

- Data show a rise in maternal deaths – most that are preventable deaths (lack of care for the mother and racial discrepancies; where people of color are not amplified or listened to during pregnancy, delivery, post-partum and beyond).
- It is not one racial group but all people who are “not white” who are dying during birth.
- Post-Partum Mood Disorder – approximately 1 in 5 women who give birth
- It is understood that Doctors may not be asking the right questions to diagnose mothers. Using one check box to determine diagnosis.
  - o Did you leave this house this week?
  - o Did you shower this week?
  - o What does your support system look like? etc.

Most moms feel like they should appear “happy” and grateful and often wonder in silence “Do all moms feel overwhelmed?”, etc.

Lauren posed the question – “How can our community be more supportive?”

At one time Bristol had a great collaboration with Bristol Hospital and the Parent & Child Center where data was shared and Parent & Child staff had access to new mothers at the birthing center. An assessment tool was developed and used to help understand if a mother needed mental health supports. This tool was recognized by the Bristol Hospital WIC and became a statewide tool to help new moms. A grant held by the Parent & Child Center and the partnership with the Hospital saw great improvements in the community. However, in the past few years, this grant was awarded to an outside hospital and no one has been “designated” to our community. Although the hospital still partners with the Parent & Child center on severe cases that require intervention, many mothers are left to “figure things out on their own”.

This discussion will be brought to the Infant & Toddler committee for more in-depth conversation. A few ideas were shared:

- FRC has plans to provide bags for new parents at each of Bristol's pediatrician offices and can include information on Maternal Depression and where to turn to.
- WIC/OBGYN & Pediatricians/Library/Bristol Hospital Rep (possibly nurse) and others should be invited to help with this work
- Perhaps have someone from the community trained to facilitate a support group for Bristol
- Look into supports from CHDI
- Revisit the "Welcome packet" through the City's Clerk Office and possibly add something on Maternal Mental Health
- Open discussion with Marco from the Health Department/re-engage Angie

**Committee Reports: Re-invent, re-imagine, Re-invigorate BECA:**

- Outreach – recently met and has plans to be at several public events throughout the summer.
- Transition to K – registration is ongoing. There are approximately 43 children without a pre-k experience. United Way received funding for 60 bags to help families prepare for K. In recent Pre-K surveys, it was shown that 19 children are anticipated to have difficulty transitioning into K. The committee would like to remind our programs that the Case Consultation meeting is an appropriate platform to discuss these children and get supports sooner than later. The Fire Chief is on board with the first day of school K ride and the ice cream truck is hoped to be planned for August.
- I/T has lots to discuss at the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and is thankful for the input gathered in today's meeting.
- Health – Cathy chaired her last meeting before her retirement yesterday. The committee did not accomplish the "seed project" but is happy with all that has been accomplished to date. The successful "hat & mitten" project, Tasty Tuesdays, etc.

**Community Sharing:** Donna K asked everyone to send information to share on Making Bristol Better or sent via email to members.

**Next meeting: June 1, 2022 (Bristol Fire Chief will be presenting)**