



Michigan's Early Childhood Courts

Meeting summary for State Advisory Group: 02/01/2024 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Attendees

Alan Oman, ECIC (Think Babies, MI)
Ali Cosgrove, MDHHS, BCCHPS
Amy Zaagman, MI Council for Maternal and Child Health
Andria Peek Safe Babies ZERO TO THREE
Angie Smith-Butterwick, Director, MDHHS, Sub Use, Gambling, Epidemiology
Ann Stacks, Evaluator, Wayne State University
Anne Kuhnen, MI League for Public Policy
Annie Heit MDHHS-HVU, Substance Use Peer Navigator
Anthony Queen, Parent Leader
Dr. Chris Youngman, Wayne State Pediatrics
Christie Spudowski, Community Coord. DWIHN
Courtney Isanhart, MDHHS, CSA

Danielle Atkinson, Mothering Justice
Demetrius Starling, Deputy Director, MDHHS, CSA
Elizabeth Henderson, MI Federation for Children & Families
Erin Nostrandt, SCCMHA
Erinn Havig, Safe Babies ZTT
Heidi Fogerty, SCCCMH
Jaclyn Szrom, ZTT Safe Babies
Jaimie Estep, Person in long term Recovery!!
Jodi Shinn, Community Coord, SCCCMH
Jon Carey, Legal Advocate, Kinship Care and Resource
Jordan Carter, State Manager, MDHHS CPS
Kathleen Coakley, Matrix Human Services
Kelly Hurshe - MI Part C

Kim Batsche-McKenzie, Project Director, MDHHS, BCCHPS
Maddie Elliott, Michigan's Children
Marissa Albright, MDHHS CPS & Redesign Analyst
Mary Ludtke, MDHHS, BCCHPS
Meghan Sifuentes Vanderstelt, Director, MDHHS, Medicaid Policy
Michele Hall, Statewide Coordinator, Early Childhood Courts, MDHHS, BCCHPS
Paul Elam, MPHI
Renee Gonzales, MDHHS, CSA
RON FOSTER, SCAO, FCRB Program Rep
Suzanne Greenberg, Children's Trust Fund MI
Synthia Britton, ECCS
Tim Click, Director, MDHHS, CSA, In-Home
Tamara Tucker, Parent Leader

Welcome and Introduction: Kim Batsche-McKenzie

2:05 p.m. Meeting convened.

Kim Batsche-McKenzie welcomed everyone to the kick-off for the State Advisory Group and led introductions of our State Leadership Team Members present, acknowledged Parent Leaders, and thanked our Training and Technical Assistance Specialist from ZERO TO THREE National Resource Center for joining our meeting today. Members then introduced themselves and shared strengths and passions about this work.

Michigan Early Childhood Court and HRSA Grant Discussion

- Michele Hall provided an overview of the five-year HRSA grant, funded through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, aiming to improve health and wellbeing of families, particularly those underserved. Michigan was one of 12 states awarded this grant to implement the Infant Toddler Court Program.
 - The grant's objectives include enhancing access to high-quality services, promoting health equity, and strengthening the workforce.
 - The goal is to reform child welfare practices, improve early developmental health, and ensure the wellbeing of infants, toddlers, and their families.
 - A part of this grant looks at health equity for our priority population (prenatal to three years) and share the goals of the Disparity Impact Statement. This is a living document, and we may task the group to help us look deeper into these goals as we begin moving the work.
- Michele Hall provided an overview of the Safe Babies approach that is being implemented. Michele also emphasized the importance of the Safe Babies model for ECC and the expansion of the project to Saginaw and St. Clair counties.
- The discussion underscored the significance of maintaining the relationship between infants, toddlers, their parents, and caregivers, and integrating the voices of parents in the project's decision-making process.
- Michele Hall provided an overview of the ECC, a specialized docket that supports infants, toddlers, and their families when they enter the child welfare system.
 - Babies and their families need primary relationships and attachment based, trauma informed services.
 - The Community Coordinator is a key role within this model along with a court team including the jurist, attorneys, Child Welfare, and every family is assigned an Infant Mental Health clinician.
 - Monthly Family Team Meetings, Monthly Court Hearings lead to faster reunification. Michele Hall discussed the implementation of a program in Saginaw, St. Clair, and Wayne County, which aimed to accommodate at least 20 children due to their poor child welfare outcomes and higher level of risk.
 - She emphasized the need to consider the pathway to sustainability for the Community Coordinator position and the ECC docket beyond the 5-year grant.

Data/Evaluation of ECC and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

- Ann Stacks from Wayne State University introduced herself and her team and shared their collaboration with research teams from ZERO TO THREE and James Bell and Associates.
- She discussed the multi-level evaluation process taking place for the implementation and growth of baby courts across the States, emphasizing the importance of coordinating evaluations to avoid duplication of data collection.
- The national evaluation, conducted by James Bell and associates, aims to test the effectiveness and impact of the infant toddler court program.
- State evaluation is conducting a retrospective evaluation in Wayne County and will begin the prospective study.
- Ann highlighted the goals of the State prospective study, which include documenting implementation and impact, assessing outcomes like reunification rates, and analyzing potential differences in outcomes by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or rurality.

Implementing Baby Courts Program in Wayne County

- Christie Spudowski then shared updates on the progress in Wayne County, highlighting the formation of the active community team and core leadership team, the implementation of the Safe Babies model, and the integration of parent leaders.
- Christie provided an overview of the court docket and working with Referee Katy Allen they are beginning to see growth with the number of babies being referred to the docket.
- Christie noted her Active Community Team meets quarterly with lunch and learns and this meeting is open to any Wayne County Community Members. The next meeting will have a fatherhood panel and will share the link for anyone interested in attending.
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=iBg7DZwdXU27IzmsLb1R3969tgtZAY1Ho-Cg55YGhGVUM1E2OE1GMDVNOFhTWEZBQVU0SzQwWUIXNi4u>

Parent Involvement and Minority Community Challenges

- Michele Hall discussed the importance of valuing parents and involving them in decision-making processes.
- Anthony Queen, a parent representative, shared his insights about the importance of trust in family-organization collaboration and the stigma associated with certain programs. He pointed out the disparities and challenges within minority communities, including the healthcare system's treatment of these communities, and urged the group to tackle these issues for more equitable outcomes.
- Anthony Queen also shared his personal journey of becoming a parent and his commitment to advocating for parents and their involvement in programs, particularly in underprivileged communities.
- He emphasized the importance of including parents in policy making, the impact of social programs on his own family, and the need to bridge the gap between minority communities and parents.
- Anthony Queen expressed his concerns about the lack of support for minority communities and the perception of outsiders not truly wanting to help. He stressed the importance of considering the "end user" in program development and the need to change the ways in which programs are implemented.
- Anthony Queen emphasized the importance of including male role models, especially fathers, in outreach programs.

Early Childhood Courts Advisory Group-Workgroups

- Michele Hall emphasized the importance of collaboration among the State Advisory Group in order to understand the strengths and challenges in our systems and highlighted the need for sustainable funding for ECC beyond the grant period.
- She also discussed the role of the state advisory group and the need to address any disparities at the state level.
- **Legislative Workgroup**-Michele Hall initiated a discussion about forming a legislative work group with Amy Zaagman, who expressed interest in involving advocacy partners to develop a plan around legislative advocacy.
 - The group aims to create a sustainable plan and leverage relationships and knowledge to carry out activities. (HRSA does not allow lobbying and will look towards our partners to work together)
 - Michele Hall also highlighted the group's goal to codify early childhood courts in Michigan, as successfully implemented in Florida and Tennessee.

- This workgroup is seeking partners, and it is ready to convene.
- **Data Workgroup**-Importance of data in guiding their work and the formation of Data/CQI work group.
 - The group aims to review state level assessments (ECCS) to avoid any duplication.
 - Qualitative and Quantitative Data to inform CQI.
 - Development of the right questions for interviews and focus groups.
 - Understanding of site level data to inform disparities and health equity outcomes.
- **Preventing Maltreatment Workgroup**-Importance of understanding the level of prevention programs in communities in MI.
 - Using an Equity Lens to prevention of maltreatment
 - Including Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Child Welfare, Advocacy, mental health services, substance use in Active Community Teams to explore procedures and policies in local communities to determine equitable access to services for families.

Next steps

- Convening Legislative and Data/CQI workgroups. Preventing maltreatment, will be ready to convene in the next 4-6 months. Implementation workgroup will be convened at the site level once all partners are settled in place.
- Michele will send the Notes from today's meeting, the PowerPoint, and the link for signing up for work groups.
- Kim thanked everyone for joining the kickoff of the early childhood courts advisory group and encouraged attendees to sign up for work groups. A calendar invite will be forwarded to hold the date for the next quarterly State Advisory Group meeting planned for the week of May 13th. We are hopeful workgroups will begin meeting the week of February 26, 2024.

3:30 p.m. Kim Batsche-McKenzie adjourned the meeting.

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