

Minutes

In Attendance: B. Gauthier, S. Bailey, A. McDonald, J. Bachynski, K. Gardiman, M. Gaudet, T. Oberg, S. Parker, S. Penner, T. Zurkan		
Regrets: M. Duncalfe, L. Carlson, C. Maltais		
Agenda Item	Discussion	Follow-Up
1. Welcome	B. Gauthier welcomed the members to the meeting	
2. Land Acknowledgement	Ann McDonald delivered the land acknowledgement	
3. Roll Call		
4. Approval of Agenda	THAT the agenda of October 28, 2020 be approved.	
5. Approval of Minutes	THAT the minutes of May 27, 2020 be approved.	
6. Early Years KPDSB/KDSB Update	<p>A. McDonald - We have a great working relationship with all of our partners. Thanks to Tammy and KDSB for the excellent partnership and support. Noting that KDSB was one of the first in Ontario to provide emergency childcare during the school closure.</p> <p>T. Zurkan - KDSB was providing emergency childcare from April 12 until June 26, 2020 with six operators providing in seven locations for families of essential workers. During this time they served 105 children. They were commended provincially as they were third in the province to establish the emergency service. She noted that they are grateful for the support of the NWHU. They are now focussed on childcare reopening and operating at full capacity including most after care Programs. Vanessa and Tammy continue to work with the operators with regards to cleaning procedures and practices, to ensure a safe environment.</p>	
7. EarlyON Programming	<p>The Early ON Centers have moved from virtual programming and are slowly starting to open up for in person opportunities.</p> <p>New projects include Ear Falls, where they will look at operating childcare in a family age grouping as well as afterschool programming. In Red Lake, they are looking at delivering services from the Municipality of Red Lake to KDSB beginning in January 2021.</p> <p>Fall Institute – how does learning happen Sessions with Dr. Jean Clinton occurred in a virtual manner focussing on "Coping With COVID and Beyond" and "COVID and Beyond, Relationships Matter."</p> <p>Ann - Best Start Network will be providing learning in the spring with Dr. Jean Clinton. It was booked to be a face-to-face session but will likely occur virtually. KPDSB worked closely with childcare sites to support our educators with reopening. The document for re-opening child care was shared with schools, particularly kindergarten classrooms to support our school reopening.</p> <p>To begin the school year child care managers met with administrators in the schools to develop a plan for a safe return.</p> <p>In our KPDSB virtual school, we have four kindergarten classes and once a re-organization takes place on November 2 we will have three virtual kindergarten classes, however adding a new kindergarten classroom at Evergreen PS and Red Lake Madsen PS to accommodate students moving</p>	

	<p>learning modes. The teachers of both virtual and in school are extremely dedicated in providing support to students with the new school year. Students are happy to be back learning in both environments. It has been a good start up overall and we have had safety remaining as our number one priority.</p> <p>Ann - We have had three dedicated spaces for Early ON programming at GLC, LBPS & SMPS. We also would have had mobile early on programming happening in other schools, but at this time, due to COVID-19, we are unable to host programs in our school but are looking for creative ways to offer programming opportunities, including providing outdoor spaces to be used once or twice per week. We are working with colleagues to rethink programming and look for ways that we can create more opportunities in our schools. SMPS is now able to offer two sessions per week with Firefly Early ON, as they have their own exclusive entrance/exit as well as kitchen and bathroom. We will look for safe ways to expand programming.</p> <p>Kim commented that she is glad to hear that there is creativity being used to look at ways to restore programming as families are experiencing a high level of anxiety, depression and disconnect. She appreciates that we are looking for alternatives.</p>	
<p>8. Child Care Retrofit Update</p>	<p>Steve Parker - At Evergreen PS we are in the process of a project building a two room child care retrofit. It has been underway for sometime now and things are going well and there is good communication with the contractor. There have been some concerns with supply and demand due to Covid. He will be sure to keep in contact with Fire Fly to communicate timelines and updates.</p> <p>Keewatin PS - The tender has now closed and the design is complete for a family age grouping retrofit daycare space at KPS. A contractor will be determined by the end of this week. In all likelihood, construction will begin in 2 to 3 weeks and the project will last 3 to 4 months.</p> <p>Open Roads PS and Sioux Mountain PS will have exterior and playground updates in the spring. New Prospect PS is now complete. We will be looking to apply for Lillian Berg PS family age grouping daycare space as well as upgrades to the kindergarten classroom as a part of the retrofit project.</p>	
<p>9. The Virtual School</p>	<p>ShelleyPenner: Shelley has been a virtual school kindergarten teacher since the beginning of September. She has really appreciated the opportunity to share the learning with parents and families through the virtual classroom and there are relationships created like never before. Families welcome the teachers into their home and have built strong relationships. Shelley showed her website that guides their classroom work where there are many digital books housed, math manipulatives and supports for students and families to use together. They have recently been able to begin exploring with the inquiry once again and have provided resources for students to find topics that excite them and that they can learn more about. The virtual resources provide equity and access for all. Shannon expressed pride for the work of the virtual school teachers and Kim commented that the learning environments look so engaging and fun.</p>	
<p>10. Community Partnership Sharing</p>	<p>Kim Gardiman, NWHU - We continue to support Student Nutrition Programs (in all) and Nutrition on Weekends Programs (in most) KPDSB schools.</p> <p>See COVID-19 webpage with information and resources for all things related to return to school. Check it out at: https://www.nwhu.on.ca/covid19/Pages/covid-19-and-safe-return-to-</p>	

	<p>school.aspx.</p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Masks ● A link to the Ontario School Screening tool ● FAQ for parents ● FAQ video with Dr. Kit Young-Hoon ● Instructions for what to do when your child is ill ● And more! <p>COVID-19 Hotline is here to help answer your COVID questions! The lines are open Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Call 1-866-468-2240.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, we are unsure at this time whether NWHU will be able to provide dental services within schools this year. We will however be offering dental services in some of our offices. If parents have dental concerns we may be able to help them receive dental treatment free of charge, if they qualify. Contact your local health unit office for more information.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, NWHU may not be able to provide immunization services in the school setting, at least in the short term. We are working to ensure immunizations continue to be accessible either in health unit offices and/or community settings. The NWHU will continue to make sure that all children attending school have up-to-date immunizations according to the current publicly funded immunization schedule for Ontario and in accordance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act.</p> <p>The Northwestern Health Unit received notification from the Ministry of Health that five additional public health nurses will be funded to support schools in the catchment area. Recruitment is underway. In the meantime each school is already connected to one of our public health nurses, who touches base with the principal at least once per week.</p> <p>Flu shots are now available. You can get a shot at the pharmacy (for those 5 years of age and older), from your healthcare provider, or from a NWHU clinic. All NWHU clinics will be by appointment only. Check our flu website for more information. https://www.nwhu.on.ca/ourservices/Flu/Pages/Flu.aspx</p> <p>Sexual Health and Harm Reduction Services continue to be provided. Contact your local office for information.</p> <p>Family Health services and supports including postpartum support services, home visiting, screening and assessment, recommendations and referrals continue to be provided. Families can be referred to their local HU office.</p> <p>Vulnerable Populations – Children and Youth network continues to meet. Children and youth are identified as a vulnerable population for many reasons. It's important to address this group in pandemic planning. The network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● captures work in addressing the needs of children and youth ● establishes needs / priorities / what more can be done ● discusses opportunities and how we can work together to support this population ● facilitates resource sharing and development to support this population <p>*see attached summary – parents preferred mode of communication.</p>	
11. Engaging New Members	Ann would like to encourage those participating in EYAC to suggest or reach out to new members to join. We would like to have representation from all	

	of our communities as well as indigenous representation from our various communities. And has encourage members to reach out to her if she can send an invite to new members.	
12. Next Meeting	January 27, 2021 4:00 Teleconference or Zoom	Will ensure everyone receives a calendar invite.
13. Adjournment	The meeting adjourned at 5:07pm	

Parents/Caregivers Preferred Method of Communication with Service Providers and Schools

Research Question: Are there any best practices for communicating with vulnerable families in public health, social service, or school context to elicit a response?

Methods: Three comprehensive literature searches were completed by the HUB Librarian based out of Thunder Bay. Literature searches included academic journals as well as grey literature. Key Limitation – Please keep in mind that literature that is applicable to a rural, remote, northern Ontario context is always difficult to find and therefore, not all findings may be relevant for our region.

Results: Overall, this research question was a lot more complex to answer than originally anticipated. We were not able to locate a definitive document of best practices specifically for parent communication methods.

Parents as a group are extremely diverse and communication preferences can vary across each subsection – knowing which parents you are trying to reach is extremely important to determine what methods to use. Simply asking parents of their preferred communication method may be the easiest method for determining what communication method will be the most successful.

Overall Findings –

- Technology-based communication methods (text messages, emails, etc.) are favoured by many families however it is important to consider equity and how gaps due to access, income, and technology limitations can be mitigated.
- Parents seem to prefer communication methods that are not scheduled (meetings) as these methods can limit participation by requiring parents to adjust schedules or travel when it may not be possible.
- It is important for service providers to consider culture and build trusting relationships with the families they are trying to communicate with as this will significantly increase the likelihood of family engagement.

The following review documents may be helpful:

- Pote, Ines. (2019) Engaging disadvantaged and vulnerable parents An evidence review. Early intervention foundation. <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/engaging-disadvantaged-and-vulnerable-parents-an-evidence-review>
- Rideout, V., and Katz, V. (2016) Opportunity for all? Technology and learning in lower-income families. The Joan Ganz Cooney Centre at Sesame Workshop. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574416.pdf>
- Florida Department of Health Guide for emergency responders provides tools for communicating with specific vulnerable groups <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/practice/guide-emergency-responders-provides-tools-communicating-specific-vulnerable-groups>

Key Relevant Finding from Academic Literature	Source
<p>Successfully engaging families means that service providers must build trusting relationships and provide honest and clear communication, information, and explanation. Formal structures such as reports or meetings can hinder family engagement.</p>	<p>Gallagher, M., et al. (2011). "Engaging with families in child protection: lessons from practitioner research in Scotland." <u>Child welfare</u> 90(4): 117-134.</p>
<p>For foster parents: foster parents who take on an active role in their child's education experienced positive relationships with their child's school. Foster parents who take a passive role in their partnerships with the schools experienced increased difficulty maintaining motivation to continue in their efforts to increase collaboration and involvement with the schools. They indicated a sense of anger, distrust, and even hostility towards the schools.</p>	<p>Mires, C. B., et al. (2018). "'Every child that is a foster child is marked from the beginning': The home-school communication experiences of foster parents of children with disabilities." <u>Child abuse & neglect</u> 75: 61-72.</p>
<p>When using text messaging: The majority of parents preferred a message containing the child's name, specific [...] information. Text messaging may be an optimal vehicle for provider-patient communication, however cultural differences should be considered when developing messages.</p>	<p>dumas-Schmidt, C. R., et al. (2011). "Content of text messaging immunization reminders: what low-income parents want to know." <u>Patient education and counseling</u> 85(1): 119-121.</p>
<p>Parents attended more sessions, remained longer in the program, and participated more actively when their group leader came from comparable SES backgrounds.</p>	<p>Dumas, J. E., et al. (2008). "Engaging parents in preventive parenting groups: do ethnic, socioeconomic, and belief match between parents and group leaders matter?" <u>Health education & behavior : the official publication of the Society for Public Health Education</u> 35(5): 619-633.</p>
<p>The vast majority of parents preferred contact methods like telemedicine that allowed them to stay at work.</p>	<p>McConnochie, K. M., et al. (2005). "Telemedicine reduces absence resulting from illness in urban child care: evaluation of an innovation." <u>Pediatrics</u> 115(5): 1273-1282.</p>
<p>The most commonly cited obstacles to attending parenting classes were time (50.6%), work schedule (40.6%), transportation (37.7%), and own health (22.4%).</p>	<p>Davis, D. W., et al. (2015). "First We Have to Engage Them: A Mixed Methods Assessment of Low-Income Parents' Preferences for and Barriers to Receiving Child Health Promotion Information." <u>Journal of pediatric health care : official publication of National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates & Practitioners</u> 29(6): 501-508.</p>

<p>Results suggest that many teachers and families are enthusiastic about using texting and view texting as a tool to further family-school engagement and communication and to enhance child outcomes.</p>	<p>Emily K. Snell, Annemarie H. Hindman & Barbara A. Wasik (2020) Exploring the use of texting to support family-school engagement in early childhood settings: teacher and family perspectives, <i>Early Child Development and Care</i>, 190:4, 447-460, DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2018.1479401.</p>
<p>The main barrier to parental confidence in these [engagement-based] roles appeared to be mothers' lack of English proficiency. This is consistent with previous research demonstrating that Hispanic parents maintain the perception of a lack of proficiency in English as a significant barrier to parental involvement in their children's education in the United States.</p>	<p>Johnson, S.B., Arevalo, J., Cates, C.B. <i>et al.</i> Perceptions About Parental Engagement Among Hispanic Immigrant Mothers of First Graders from Low-Income Backgrounds. <i>Early Childhood Educ J</i> 44, 445–452 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-015-0728-z</p>
<p>Teachers had higher expectations than parents for parent engagement, which in turn was greater when parent–teacher communication was more frequent and the school climate was more welcoming. American Indian parents more strongly endorsed a separation of family and school roles and felt less welcomed at school; ethnicity moderated correlates of reported parent engagement. These findings have practical promise given that parent–teacher communication, school climate, and role expectations are more easily altered than are structural barriers that also may hinder parents' involvement in supporting their children's early education.</p>	<p>Karen Rattenborg, David MacPhee, Aimée Kleisner Walker & Jan Miller-Heyl (2019) Pathways to Parental Engagement: Contributions of Parents, Teachers, and Schools in Cultural Context, <i>Early Education and Development</i>, 30:3, 315-336, DOI: 10.1080/10409289.2018.1526577</p>