

## Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services

### **Meeting Minutes**

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021

**TIME:** 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** VIRTUAL - Zoom meeting

**PRESENT:** Sharon Oberkrieser, Angela Wade, Stefanie Doszak, Sharon Oberkrieser, Alana Erickson, Tracy Gehrke, Pam DeLap, Staci Thorkildsen, Linda Pierron, Tara Brzezinski, Wendy Hein, Barb Tengesdal, Amy Stack, Kathy Schumacher, Marci Thiry, Tim Gantz

**STAFF PRESENT:** Elizabeth Wagner, Mary Salzer, Cristie Siebenaller, Elizabeth Riley, Jennifer Long

Sharon Oberkrieser called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 pm.

**1. Approval of Minutes for the February 9, 2021 Meeting:**

Cristie Siebenaller moved for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, seconded by Linda Pierron and carried.

**2. Presentation - Wendy Hein and Barb Tengesdal of First 5 Fox Valley:**

- Wendy Hein/Early Intervention started the presentation by noting that the work of the State of the Child that Tracy Gehrke/Public Health had previously shared has become integrated with the work of First 5. Wendy introduced Barb Tengesdal, sharing that she began with First 5 in October. Since October, when she began in her new role at First 5, Barb has taught at UW-Oshkosh in the Early Childhood Special Education Department, is currently on the Act Early Team of the Wisconsin Headstart Association, and is the affiliate for Help Me Grow through the State of Wisconsin. Barb shared that the former Fox Valley Early Childhood Coalition rebranded and is now called First 5. Goals are to ensure that children are safe, healthy, and able to reach their goal potential. She shared that the mission of First 5 Fox Valley is to cultivate a community that empowers and supports every family to build a solid foundation for children in their first five years. First 5 is deemed as a "collective impact backbone organization" in that their work supports service providers by bringing together cross sector organizations within communities. First 5 is also in the Tri-County area of Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties and works to strengthen the early childhood efforts in the region, state, and local communities with policy, advocacy, and more.

- Website – <https://firstfivefoxvalley.org/> - Barb shared their website went live in January which has the ability to take call-ins and referrals via text, email, phone or chat with parents looking for resources. Links to reliable scientific research and information on what is available locally, such as car seat safety, can be found on the family tab of the website. Under the "For Parents" tab are links regarding cognitive, social, and emotional development such as information about developmental milestones. Because of grant funding, First 5 now has the ability to offer free ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire for child development) screenings that parents can take which are entered straight into the Help Me Grow Enterprise System and then First 5 is able to provide parents feedback on potential next steps based on the results. Under the website tab entitled "Our Work" is a "Developmental Screening Expansion" and this initiative is funded in the Winnebago County area by Community Foundation in which free screenings are offered through pilot locations. Additionally, assessment findings are shared with schools, childcare, health provider, Birth to Three, or Birth to Five Programs if the parents wish and grant their permission. In the "Community Resources" tab under "Data and Reports" current community needs assessments are provided which are required for grants. First 5 is currently in the process of putting together data from the State of the Child Report digitally online as a resource and will be available county-specific for Calumet, Winnebago, and Outagamie Counties.
- Preschool Development Grant – First 5 is utilizing this grant funding to implement the "Help Me Grow" model in the Fox Valley Region across Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago Counties. Activities include strengthening access to early identification of advocacy and intervention, screening and developmental promotion, availability of the ASQ, implementing "Help Me Grow", a centralized access point with navigators available to share resources, starting up the "Help Me Grow" Advisory Council including more parents and families, and finally looking at state and county assistance programs and how that comes together to support the work of cross-sector screening and surveillance.
- "Help Me Grow" is a national evidence-based program which looks at helping optimal growth and development of children. There are 39 affiliates in 30 different states. First 5 is the Wisconsin state affiliate and with that are components to the fidelity of the evidence-based model. All 39 affiliates utilize the same systems including family and outreach through the use of navigators as well as a centralized access point, which is the "Help Me Grow" database. The "Help Me Grow" database contains information which supports family referrals and tracks what kind of referrals are given to families, providing screening information as well developing the resource directory and collecting data. Navigators help families find the resources they need. Barb provided an example in which a pediatrician contacted First 5 regarding a family who was having difficulties finding childcare for a child with special needs. First 5's Birth to Three navigator took down the information from the healthcare provider, contacted the family, and found that in addition to finding childcare that the family also needed assistance with locating stable housing. First 5 was then able to

support that family with resources in providing childcare referrals, worked with some basic need support, as well as tracking in order to follow-up in the future with the family to ensure those resources provided were successful.

- A unique part of what First 5 is able to do with their database is the ability to have track ASQ screenings which are uploaded to the "Help Me Grow" database. This screening project started in Winnebago County funded by the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation to increase the number of screenings taking place and really trying to encourage that number to grow in hopes of supporting more children and families in accessing developmental tools and supports. In one year, First 5 is up to 10 providers who utilize the free screenings. Just in Winnebago County 11,048 ASQ screenings were entered from those 10 providers.
- Early Childhood Resource Directory – The Early Childhood Resource section is new and is under development. This will be piloted June through August. The difference between 2-1-1 and this directory is that 2-1-1 provides basic needs whereas the First 5's resource directory is focused on early childhood services in our Tri-County area.
- Tara Brzezinski indicated that Family Voices of Wisconsin wants to create a structure similar to the ADRC to make one centralized location that families can call to obtain all information needed. There is a small amount of funding that they would need from the State and so that is why legislators need to be in favor of the initiative. Family Voices of Wisconsin is also looking to streamline the waitlist time for CLTS waiver services. Tara will provide Barb with contact information for Family Voices to potentially partner on this effort. Tara stated that they have been working with Well Badger, 2-1-1, Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs, and Childcare Resource and Referral in order to connect with all the referral centers to make the process as seamless as possible for families. It was also suggested that Barb consider ADRC online resource directories for possible resource options.

### **3. Introduce new Family Support Team Member: Elizabeth (Brown) Riley**

- Elizabeth Riley started February 10 following the retirement of Jody Brown. Elizabeth shared that she recently got married. She has an 18-year-old brother who has autism. She was previously employed with Fox Valley Autism Treatment Program for approximately six years. Elizabeth also worked for Acceptional Minds for three years as well as with Individualized Youth Services (IYS) in a crisis response role for children and families.

### **4. Member Sharing:**

- Elizabeth Wagner began by sharing resources onscreen that were also sent to the committee after the meeting:
  - The Big Red Safety Box is a free resource from the National Autism Association for families with children diagnosed with autism. The box contains free window/door alarms, bracelet shoe ID tags, visual stop signs for

children in risk of elopement, window clings, a child ID kit, and a booklet.

<https://nationalautismassociation.org/big-red-safety-boxes-now-available/>

- Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs is a great resource tool that offers training opportunities that are usually free of charge to families, such as education on insurance and medical care planning.
  - Leaven serves Outagamie, Calumet, and Northeastern Winnebago counties. Advocap is another resource that can provide similar assistance to families in Oshkosh. These are options for supporting families who need financial assistance.
  - There is a Bus Buddy Program that Valley Transit offers free for individuals wanting to learn how to ride the bus. Go Transit does not specifically have a bus buddy program. For the Southern area of Winnebago County, there is a program called "Make the Ride Happen" which offers something similar to this.
  - As of May 12, some financial support is being offered for families needing internet access who meet eligibility criteria. Typically, those who are eligible for Food Share benefits, Medicaid programs, or free/reduced lunch are eligible for this: <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>.
- Angela Wade of TRIO is the director of TRIO Academy. TRIO provides one-on-one services for children on the autism spectrum. She reported that they have opened a second location in the old Educare building in Oshkosh for children ages 2 to 4. Their old location is geared for children ages 5 and up. TRIO hired a part-time psychologist for families looking for an autism evaluation and/or a diagnosis. They are currently seeking an 18-year-old for employment in their summer program.
  - Stefanie Doszak with Fox Valley Autism Treatment Program shared that they provide in-home therapy for children on the autism spectrum. At the last meeting, she had shared information about their transitions program that started for clients age 16 and older working on vocational skills and independent living. She is working on a proposal to contract with DVR to support people on the autism spectrum in the workplace on a consult and social skills basis.
  - Sharon Oberkrieser stated she is a parent of a 16-year-old son with Down Syndrome. She shared it has been a tough year as her son has struggled with the pandemic, effecting his health. They have tried to keep him active and provide assurance that the pandemic will pass. He was happy to receive his first vaccine dose last week.
  - Alana Erickson with Public Health shared Outagamie and Winnebago Public Health are in the process of consolidating their WIC Programs. Much of the services in the field should not change. In-person visits are expected to resume in October and extensions have continued through then. Families are able to pick up Farmer's Market information.
  - Tracy Gehrke reported that the Diaper Bank is still occurring and families can come to pick up diapers. August 11 through 13 is the Oshkosh-Winneconne Back-to-School

Fair that will be happening in-person at Oshkosh North. The decision was made to extend this to a three-day event in order limit group sizes. There will be approximately 300 children split up throughout each day scheduled at half-hour increments. Clothing donations from local churches will be disbursed at the event, as well. Unfortunately, the resource fair and haircuts are not being offered this year. The hope is to have coupons for families to obtain a haircut. Omro School District conducts their own fair at one of the local churches. Neenah/Menasha also conducts their own fair. Referrals are based on school district of attendance rather than residence location. A car seat event is being held on June 2. There is a large waitlist so this event will likely be full. Upcoming car seat events will be held in September and December at the Sheriff's office in Oshkosh. Dependent on the pandemic, the hope is to eventually open the event up to the Northern end of the county, as well.

- Pam DeLap provided the update that she recently learned that two of her children have the diagnosis of autism. This has helped provide clarity for her daughter in the sense of having a reference point that her neurology is different than the typical person. Pam also shared that her grandson is living with her who has a mental health disability that has not been easy to navigate. She shared that coming to these meetings is so valuable for her personally to hear the village around her and the resources that are being built for all these different kinds of scenarios. She is someone who really believes it takes a village to raise a child and appreciates her village. She expressed frustration that her young grandson needed services and could not get them during the pandemic. Every week she sent his long-term care worker messages regarding the need for mental health help who worked hard to connect Pam with the village that could help. They were able to utilize a service called "Power for Change" for in-home individual and family counseling. Her youngest son has utilized Stephanie at Fox Valley Autism for assistance in navigating DVR services who created a new team around him and he starts a new job on May 25. Due to having three children under her roof having special needs, Pam has pulled back on some of her advocacy work in Madison; however, she is still on the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD).
- Staci Thorkildsen is a family resource specialist with Headstart. She stated there are no new updates; however, they are currently planning for upcoming school year in fall. In addition, they are still taking applications for Headstart. They anticipate running at full capacity next year.
- Tara Brzezinski is the parent of a 12-year-old son with autism, anxiety disorders, and seizure disorders. She shared she is excited that she is going to be a graduate of Partners in Policymaking. She has provided testimony to the state legislators and joint finance committee advocating youth services and supports. She stated that many individuals are unaware that they can contact their primary insurance carrier and request a free nurse case manager who will assess needs. Some insurance carriers navigate in different ways in which mental health and medical health needs are separated by being assigned to two nurse case managers. Nurse case managers can aid with navigating medication issues. Tara's insurance sent them a free book entitled *The*

*Autism Acceptance Book.* This book has helped her family understand her son. Tara provided the insight that she sees a gap in receiving ABA. She expressed frustration with MA as they have a strict "four years and done" for ABA services despite different children progressing at different timeframes. As transition plans do not typically start until the age of 16, there is a gap in skill development relating to life skills and independence. Once these children reach the age of 16 and start with DVR, they have to catch up on skills that should have been learned during the gap.

- Linda Pierron is Director of Special Education for the Oshkosh Area School District. She stated after hiring four speech pathologists they are now fully staffed.
- Kathy Schumacher of Tuneful Teaching shared via email following the meeting: I recently finished an upgrade to my website at [www.TunefulTeaching.com](http://www.TunefulTeaching.com). The bulk of my work is providing clinical music therapy, but I also offer early childhood music classes. This summer, we will be meeting outdoors in Oshkosh. More details online by [clicking here](#).

## **5. Children's COP and CLTS Program Updates:**

- Service and Program Updates
  - Due to an ongoing increase in referrals and changes to program timelines, we will be posting for a 4<sup>th</sup> position through our contracted agency, Lutheran Social Services, to continue to support families in our community in need of CLTS services and supports.
  - The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and the State of Wisconsin will be finalizing the CLTS program renewal that will be approved to begin January 2022. The following link provides an overview of the proposed changes:  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/clts/waiver/waiver-summary.pdf>. The public comment period for feedback is occurring now and anyone can provide input at the email address listed in the link. Some virtual services are likely to remain in permanent policy to offer families more flexibility.
- Operations during COVID
  - The pandemic allowances approved at the state level for CLTS operations are expected to continue through the end of 2021. For example, CLTS will not close a family due to no contact, providing monthly contacts to families, and we are asked not to complete annual screening that is typically completed for any child on CLTS to avoid children being inadvertently closed on the program when the screener is able to access limited information on that child's current functioning and needs.
  - Home visits continue to be offered to families who are interested but virtual connections can continue under the current pandemic allowances. Guidance continues to be for staff and family to wear masks and social distance whenever possible. All staff have been offered the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Many CLTS providers are offering in person and even some small groups. More summer camps are available for 2021.

- Waitlist Updates
  - CLTS referrals for February 2021 totaled 14, March 2021 totaled 21 and April totaled 16. CLTS enrollments onto the program for February totaled 9, March totaled 12 and April totaled 10. Children closing on the program in February totaled 6, March totaled 7, and April totaled 6 with the majority of those enrolling into adult services as their reason for closing with CLTS.
  - The Winnebago County CLTS waitlist currently has 17 youth waiting to be enrolled. All youth are expected to be deemed enrollable by the state, who now oversees the CLTS waitlist, next month.

## 6. Birth-to-Three:

- Wendy Hein from Birth to Three reported that so far in 2021, three of the four months have been record breaking months for referrals with over 100 referrals in the month. There was a jump from 237 enrolled in January to 271 current enrollments. They are hearing that a lot of families have a parent working full-time from home plus caring full-time for their young children which can make it difficult to provide proper stimulation to those children. This likely has attributed in the drastic increase in referrals. Due to the previous lower numbers in referrals state-wide in 2020, the State Department of Health Services just rolled out a "First 1,000 Days" outreach campaign helping to spread awareness about the importance of the first 1,000 days of a child's development. This will also likely increase referrals. Birth to Three enrollment levels are still not back to pre-COVID levels, which were around 300. After several months of being short staffed, a new speech therapist has been hired who will be starting in June.

## 7. CCS/CST Youth Services:

- Jennifer Long and Cristie Siebenaller of Behavioral Health: They are hiring for a therapist and case manager on the Intensive In-Home Services Team. Additionally, they've applied for a \$25,000 CST (Coordinated Services Team) supplemental grant from the State and are awaiting the approval. The hope is to use the funds to serve consumers who are currently not served under existing behavioral health programs. Funds would support the development of the CST Program, continuing education on CST principals, advanced training of staff, and fund services provided by the CST program. This program will be included in the continuum of care provided by Winnebago County and may result in diversion of cases from the Child Welfare Division. These cases will be consumer referred, voluntary cases. The goal of this program would be to help families identify natural supports and community supports to assist them in improved functioning.

## 8. **2021 Focus Areas and Committee Role**

- State of the Child Report updates were provided during the First 5 presentation.

- 9. Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services has been scheduled for **Tuesday, September 14, 2021** from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. via Zoom. In addition, the committee will be meeting on **December 14, 2021**.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Elizabeth Wagner, Winnebago County DHS