

## Advisory Committee for Children's Voluntary Services

### Meeting Minutes

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022

**TIME:** 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** VIRTUAL - Zoom meeting

**PRESENT:** Jennifer Buss, Isabelle Barrington, Emily Paschen, Lindsay Reuer, Liz Riley, Kirsten Tessen, Kathy Schumacher, Staci Thorkildsen, Sharon Oberkrieser, Linda Pierron, Tara Brzezinski, Anna Whitemarsh

**STAFF PRESENT:** Elizabeth Wagner, Mitch Cornils, Cristie Siebenaller, Tracy Gehrke, Wendy Hein

**Sharon** called the meeting to order at approximately 12:35 pm.

1. **Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2022 Meeting:** Tracy Gehrke moved for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, seconded by Cristie Siebenaller and carried.

2. **Presentation – Communications Pathways:**

- Jennifer Buss is a Wisconsin native who recently relocated back to Wisconsin after living, working, and farming in Hawaii for the last 20 years. Jennifer teaches yoga to individuals with varying abilities and certifies other teachers. Jennifer taught weekly classes at the Arc of Kona for 17 years and through Joyful Heart Foundation worked with women who had experienced trauma. She facilitated the Moms on the Move Program which helped new and expecting moms stay healthy. She recently received a certificate in community health work and in May graduated with a bachelor's in psychology.
- Jennifer screen-shared a pre-recorded presentation entitled, "Yoga for Winnebago County Children's Health & Wellness. Long Term Support Waiver Provider."
- What Yoga is AND How Yoga Helps ~
  - Physical postures called asanas.
  - Mindfulness Based Contemplative Practice (MBCP)
  - Facilitates new physical patterns and neural connections.
  - Studies show improvements in mood and self-confidence.
  - Allows the witnessing of feelings
  - Creates the awareness of mind-body connection.
  - Meet individual where they are.
- More than just physical
  - Yoga influences self-regulation
  - Increased body awareness
  - Impacts one's perception of the outer world.

- Foundation for maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- Yoga Class Format = One hour group or individual
  - All mats and props are provided.
  - Centering period, warm up, focus, cool down, and deep relaxation.
  - Sun Salutations, Series to greet the day.
- What is needed from caregivers and educators?
  - Complete interest and health information form.
  - Assessment which consists of 10 simple questions completed by student / caregiver upon commencement and completion of session.
  - Willingness to provide quiet space without interruptions.
- Elizabeth Wagner added that Jennifer offers Yoga classes to children and adults with special needs. Jennifer stated she will be teaching two community classes for Covey on September 26<sup>th</sup>: 4:00-5:00 PM for participants and 5:00-6:00 PM for caregivers. She has worked with the adult program at the CP Center of the Fox Cities and also facilitated some classes for adults at Clarity Care in Oshkosh. Jennifer's website and information on upcoming services being offered will be shared with the Committee.

### 3. Member Sharing – Updates or news to share about your agency or child:

- **Mitch Cornils** of Winnebago County Child Protective Services reported awaiting direction from the state and federal levels in regards to a "Child Welfare transformation" which focuses on prevention and family preservation as well as prioritization of implementing services prior to needing to remove children. When children do need to be removed, then prioritization for relatives or someone who the child is familiar with as the first option for placement. Additional information is available on the Department of Children and Family's website. The federal legislation is entitled "Families First."
- **Staci Thorkildsen** with Headstart stated that the school year has just started and their Oshkosh program is full, but are accepting applications on the waiting list.
- **Sharon Oberkrieser** has a son with down's syndrome and stated that they are off to a good school year unlike 2020 with the pandemic period causing a lot of regression.
- **Amy Stack** is the mother of an eighth-grade special needs daughter. She has finished bowling, attends the Y, and did ABLE over the summer and Amy was impressed with their staff.
- **Tracey Gehrke** is a Public Health Nurse with Winnebago County. She shared the following updates:
  - Tracy is the chair of the back to school fair that occurred in August to which 1000 children registered for the two-day event and an additional 150 children were served after the fair. Her hope is next year with some creative fundraising and grants that 1100 children will be serviced next year.
  - Tracy reported Parent Resource Hours are starting today in Oshkosh and handed out fliers to Committee members attending in-person. The event is walk-in. There are car seats available by appointment. The Parent Resource Hour for Neenah is held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Tracy reported the services available include developmental screenings, passenger safety, breastfeeding support, as well as a vaccine clinic in the Oshkosh location for children with Badger Care, safe sleep, nursing expertise, along with health and community resources.

- **Sharon Oberkrieser** stated that her church also hosted a back to school fair and asked if there were enough supplies for 1100 Tracy's back to school fair. Tracy responded that there were enough items for all of the children who attended. Due to a United Way grant, the \$25 Rogan's shoe voucher was increased this year to \$40. The event costs around \$55,000 in total which requires a lot of fundraising where over 200 individuals donated in some fashion in the community. Any drives that people do at their organizations are always helpful to this cause. The money raised this year goes towards next year's event.
- **Elizabeth Wagner** stated that one of her new hires, Isabelle, had an idea for the back-to-school fair that when people are shopping locally they could give \$1 at the checkouts to help support the Oshkosh back-to-school fair. Tracy stated this has been done before at some of the local grocery stores. The problem with fundraising is a lot of people work at community type facilities or organizations that nonprofits cannot do.
- **Linda Pierron** asked whether the Boys and Girls Club will still be partnering in. Tracy said they are part of the committee serving as the fiscal agent. Tracy stated they are always interested in hearing new, creative ideas for fundraising including jeans days.
- **Linda Pierron** of the Oshkosh Area School District stated school is back in session and is in-person. She has been through 11 buildings so far and shared that the word she thinks of is "optimism"; the kids are happy to be there and there is less anxiety; however, there are continual mental health struggles for students.
- **Tara Brzezinski** is the parent of three children including a 14-year-old autistic child who has seizures and anxiety disorders as well as two younger children one age five and the other is going to be four. She shared the following updates:
  - Special Olympics is a resource that children interested in sports can do including basketball, bowling, skiing, snowboarding, etc. and also team up with the Packers. Tara stated she feels this is a good way for children to meet other kids and be included in sports.
  - IEPs are becoming increasingly more prevalent with the schools and special education funding has become a huge burden for schools due to the low reimbursement rate. Tara expressed that the IEP process is overwhelming for many families and that DHS sends out an IEP in plain language which serves as a great wealth of information. Tara suggested that it would be helpful to hold workshops for families and stated that Wisconsin FACETS does a lot of really good presentations and thought there could be more. Tara reported that last week she had five families reach out to her needing help with IEPs and 30 families prior to school starting.
  - **Sharon** asked which school district Tara is working with in regards to Special Olympics. Tara stated that Neenah School District has their own advisor for Special Olympics and that some of the 3 on 3 basketball games and skills are held there. Sharon stated that all of those sports are not available through Special Olympics in Oshkosh. She will get more information to share with the group regarding how Special Olympics is trying to offer all sports available in every school district in Wisconsin since the main hub for Special Olympics is located in Madison.

- **Lindsay Reuer** is a children's librarian at the Oshkosh Public Library. She shared the following updates:
  - The summer reading program just finished at the Oshkosh Library and was the largest number of participants to date with 1200 children participating.
  - The Oshkosh Library is partnering with the Winnebago County Health Department in a new way with Allison Laverty Montag who is a Community Health Strategist attending the early literacy program every month to promote the Ages and Stages questionnaire with families.
- **Kathy Schumacher** from Music Services LLC provided the following updates:
  - This year she is in four buildings and five classrooms within the Oshkosh Area School District.
  - In regards to Tracy's back to school efforts, Kathy stated that individuals who have Thrivent life insurance policies can submit yearly for \$500 grant towards a Thrivent Action Team.
- **Emily Paschen** is the owner of Nova ABA Learning Center located in Appleton and is currently working with children ranging from 18 months to 11, but can work with older children depending on the need. Forward Health and most commercial insurances are accepted which completely cover therapy services at no cost to parents. A handful of children recently graduated from the program, so there are daytime openings available. There is a small waitlist for after school time slots and the program is open until 6 during the school year. Emily also works individually with the Appleton School District to support some of the children there.

#### 4. Children's COP and CLTS Program Updates

- Service and Program Updates: In May and June, **Isabelle Barrington**, **Anna Whitemarsh**, and **Kirsten Tessen** were hired as CLTS service coordinators through Lutheran Social Services; which is a contracted entity.
  - **Kirsten Tessen** graduated in 2021 from Stevens Point with a degree in psychology and neuroscience.
  - **Anna Whitemarsh** graduated from Stevens Point and had done ABA with Emily Paschen in Stevens Point.
  - **Isabelle Barrington** graduated in May of 2022 from Stevens Point with a bachelor's in family and consumer science child life and family studies.
- **Elizabeth Wagner**:
  - Elizabeth screenshared the ADRC newsletter with the committee which includes information on seminars, an events calendar including the farmer's market and in-person outreach opportunities, memory cafes, and grandparent days. <https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/adrc/adrc-newsletter>
  - NAMI is offering on demand classes for parents or caregivers who provide care for youth ages 22 or younger experiencing mental health symptoms. <https://www.namifoxvalley.org/namibasics/>
  - Elizabeth shared a new resource <https://beforeage18.org/> which was in the recent CLTS newsletter. This is a newer website that the state has launched geared for youth in transition. Information is broken down by age for topics

and focus areas that families might benefit from. The website additionally provides some action steps for families.

- Elizabeth shared the state's Children's Long-Term Support newsletter from September for families. The newsletter contains information on activities families can do together in the fall and looking to hear from families on their stories. There is information about supporting youth in regards to the gaps in services between youth programs and the transition to adult services. A transition action guide is offered.  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/newsletters/kids-2022-03.pdf>
  - Wisconsin Facets family engagement newsletter came out in August and includes links focusing on the IEP process.  
[https://cdn.ymaws.com/wrea.net/resource/resmgr/pdf\\_s/wi\\_facets\\_family\\_engagement.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/wrea.net/resource/resmgr/pdf_s/wi_facets_family_engagement.pdf)
  - **Wendy Hein** stated that there is also a Birth to Three version in the newsletter: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/newsletters/b3aifk2022-03.pdf>
  - Elizabeth shared an email she had received from the Wisconsin WisTech short-term iPad program. WisTech offers short-term loans up to 30 days for families to test out devices and will load different applications onto the devices for the family to try out. The website has a list of available devices.  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wistech/device-loan.htm>
  - Elizabeth shared the Family Voices website  
<https://familyvoices.org/resources/>
- **Sharon Oberkrieser** shared that she had received an email yesterday about a Special Olympics event being held October 6 regarding a run with the cops at the University.
  - **Elizabeth Wagner** shared a handout that the State recently rolled out, "Deciding Together Guide What It Is and What it Isn't" that gives insight into the process of decision making within CLTS. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02246c.pdf>
    - The process usually starts with the family helping the team identify goals, problems, and concerns they have. The team, which includes the family, suggests ways to potentially meet goals and then weigh out options. Based on the discussion, the team will implement ideas and revisit whether or not the implemented idea is working. Sometimes teams will discuss all of the options that could be done and whether it makes sense to do all of them; whether it will be overwhelming, and if the team can determine what is making the impact. The team would start with an open discussion of information and sharing of what the family is seeing. One example of, "Tell me about at typical day" can help the team picture what a day looks like and that helps the team figure out goals. The team works together to find solutions rather than only doing one possible solution and stopping there. The team weighs the options and implements the most appropriate option to meet the identified need. The team talks about how well the plan is working and reconvenes as changes need to be made.

Weigh the Options – Deciding together is "not":

- Only considering a CLTS service that is used often with other families; rather looking at what the family is needing.
- Only considering options that are paid for by the CLTS program. Outside resources that may not be supported by CLTS should be discussed and shared with the family.
- Only considering options that give a short-term break to the family; rather think about both short and long-term solutions that benefit the family.
- Only considering the least expensive option; rather the child may have a need for an item which is not as cost effective.
- Deciding together is not designing an "unchanging forever plan."

Waitlist Updates: Elizabeth reported there are currently 26 youth on the CLTS Program waitlist for Winnebago County and the number is likely to keep rising. Currently, there are 528 children enrolled with the program in this county. Over 600 cases are active with the team which consist of new referrals and those which are in the process of enrolling. The 13 current staff each have approximately 49 cases. New referrals: June=29, July=12, August=29. Referrals tend to increase as the school year begins.

Operations during COVID-19:

- One DHS CLTS staff from Neenah, Hannah Ulwelling, will be transitioning to a position in the ADRC and another, Mallory Randall, will be on maternity leave beginning in December. A retired staff person may be willing to step in during that time. A position refill posting will be going up for the Neenah DHS staff opening and the posting for the LSS position just remains indefinitely open because of the need to continue to increase staff. The waitlist exists primarily because of the inability to find enough staff. Throughout the pandemic Elizabeth reported being able to keep pace with enrollments as she was able to hire enough staff until recently.
- In May, Elizabeth was hoping to get a lead position to support some of her administrative and program related duties. The person selected has not been able to step into the role due to a lack of staff and she has been assisting with covering cases. Elizabeth reported delaying enrollments in May from 30 days has now been extended to 60 days. Letters are sent to families stating when their anticipated enroll by date is.
- Interns continue to be utilized. Elizabeth stated they are also mindful of minimizing the number of case manager switches families have to do. Interns are helping with various duties such as helping families fill out applications.
- A survey is being sent out in September to families being served with hopes of being sent out annually.
- An open house with ADRC staff was held on the same week as the back-to-school fair. There were mini presentations to anyone coming through. The open house was berry themed, there were prizes as well as a food truck in the parking lot. Brewing Futures Mobile CAFÉ (Coaching Ability For Employment) employs students with disabilities.
- As the Public Health Emergency remains in effect, all of the pandemic related allowances and guidance from the federal and state levels will continue.

**5. Birth-to-Three:**

- **Wendy Hein** reported that staffing with Birth to Three has been a struggle; however, was happy to report that she has a second interview scheduled with an SLP who was a student with their program as an undergrad. Wendy also reported having hired a student from UW-O interning in Calumet County Birth to Three as a service coordinator once she graduates in the spring. At this point, she has a full-time student teaching placement. Unfortunately, Wendy also just received notice from one of the OTs who is moving to Florida; so, that leaves an OT opening.
- Wendy reported enrollments have been steadily increasing in 2022 after taking a big dip in 2020 and 2021. She reported being surprised about the decrease in enrollments after all the work being done with Help Me Grow and developmental screenings with Theda Care implementing the ASQ right into the Epic system automating referrals directly to Birth to Three including automatic prompting for concerning screenings. Wendy believes some more targeted outreach will be occurring through the Department of Health Services who has developed new Birth to Three materials and the importance of the first 1000 days. Wendy asked that members let her know of any ideas for events, staff meetings, child care centers, or such that Birth to Three could join.
- Wendy relayed that they are moving out of the Community Early Learning Center and into VPI. Both counties (Outagamie and Winnebago) contract with what had been known as Valley Packaging (now has changed to VPI). The two Appleton locations are moving into VPI and the satellite office in Oshkosh will remain as a space for the team that working in that area.
- Wendy reported being in the middle of data verification for the year. Two times during the year, the State looks at data for compliance with all indicators. For example, that IEPs are in place 45 calendar days following the date of referral. Wendy reported just receiving notice that the first quarter of the year yielded zero findings of noncompliance for both counties as well as the current cycle of reports indicated full compliance for this period.
- Wendy reported having just received notice of awarded funding from Oshkosh United Way. This is the first time the Oshkosh United Way has provided funding and it will be utilized in 2023. Wendy noted that Fox Valley United Way already contributes funding.
- Operations during COVID-19:
  - Wendy reported having been back in business as usual for quite some time and had returned to in-person visits a few months after the PHE started. Some new procedures will likely become permanent policies such as texting reminders of health screenings to families prior to visits as this has cut down on the number of no shows and also offering virtual visits rather than canceling if someone is sick in the house.
  - Wendy reported being awarded a State ARPA grant that has to start soon and was only a fraction of what asked for so they are trying to figure out a way to make that work with the funding awarded. Wendy stated they are planning on doing some parent cafes specifically for families in Birth to Three.
  - DHS is starting a childcare pilot which Elizabeth will learn more about it on Thursday's teleconference. Wendy reported Birth to Three will be able to offer subsidies to help pay for childcare. There is only a certain amount of money

available per county Birth to Three and the State will be sending out a list of income-eligible families.

#### 6. CCS/CST Youth Services:

- **Cristie Siebenaller** reported the therapist position opening was quickly refilled and that the new therapist is starting this week. Cristie stated there are two teams which each consist of a case manager together with a therapist. In total there are six therapists, five case managers, and two contracted therapists. Case managers and therapists sometimes will team CCS cases and sometimes a therapist will work individually with a family without a service facilitator based on need and qualifications.
- Last meeting, Cristie shared graphs from the State's surveys regarding service outcomes from the previous year. Numbers were lower than in prior years which is likely related to COVID, virtual services, programs in the community not being available in the way that they were, and the difficulty this has caused for families. The survey had usually been at the end of the year; however, the State changed the timing. So, surveys are out right now and will have entered results by the end of the October. Cristie will share at the next meeting about how people perceived services last year and hopes to have higher numbers in how people were served.
- In terms of referrals, Cristie reported still working with Elizabeth, who sends referrals when appropriate. There has been a little bit of a lull as Cristie has not had as many recently; however, with school starting expects behavioral health referrals to come through again.
- There is a little bit of a referral list right now and usually they can assign those cases within a few months of receiving them. This consists of is a combination of court ordered cases that come from Child Welfare and voluntary services that come from the community.
- Operations during COVID-19: COVID-wise, Cristie reports continuing to do everything in-person unless the family prefers virtual meetings. Some families have opted to continue doing virtual, especially with team meetings. Most cases have monthly team meetings with all providers to collaborate and some families feel virtual is easier especially when teachers or community providers are joining in as it can be difficult to all be at the same place at one time. Otherwise, sessions are all in-home.
- Members discussed that the upcoming flu season could be bad based on indications from Australia. **Tracy Gehrke** reported that they want everyone to have flu shots done by the end of October. She added that some COVID clinics were offered at childcare programs and was available for all family members. There is an upcoming clinic at the YMCA location which will be available to the community where the updated boosters will be offered.

#### 7. 2022 Focus Areas and Committee Role:

- Gaps in Behavioral Services Committee in the Fox Valley:
- The committee is focusing on behavioral-type services, autism treatment, mental health services, and what those look like in the community as far as access. There is a general lack of providers offering those services. A lot of times services were offered in a virtual capacity which does not work for certain people and so some



families stopped engaging in those and were not able to access them for a while in the way they needed to.

- There have been insurance barriers for behavioral health and mental health services. Having both private insurance and Medicaid works sometimes and sometimes it is better just to have one or the other. This can depend on what is beneficial for each provider. It can be very confusing to figure out who is in contract with whom. It is difficult to get both autism treatment and mental health services as this often means providers need to work together on prior authorizations for insurance, which can be difficult to get.
- There are barriers with children needing both ABA and schooling. Every community looks different in how that is offered. Some schools have ABA services onsite whereas some may contract. Some communities have alternative placement options. Oshkosh has some services that other districts do not offer such as **Kathy Schumacher** doing music therapy classes in-school.
- There is a committee member, Angie Olson, who also works with other advocacy areas. She had developed an appeal template which consists of templates and letter documents for creating an appeal for an insurance denial. These resources and tools can be shared with parents looking to appeal an insurance decision.
- There is a lack of providers that have that transition age and future planning focus. It can be very anxiety producing for the family to think about the upcoming steps that will be needed when their child turns age 18. The sooner work can be done on some of those things, the better.
- CLTS has been expanding little by little and Elizabeth reported there are some gaps they can sometimes meet. Some providers such as Brain Balance, Learning Rx, as well as some partners that provide parent coaching support and daily living skills training in the form of virtual seminars so that parents waiting for services can still learn about routines, attachment, basic skills, and parenting tools.
- A number of ABA providers have attended committee meetings and the input from both a business and the family perspective has been very useful.
- Anyone interested in attending an upcoming committee meeting should contact Elizabeth for details.
- Next Meeting Date: October 26 at 9:00 PM

8. **2022 Meeting Date: December 13, 2022.** Elizabeth Wagner stated she was uncertain if she could get the Oshkosh meeting room for the next meeting, so the December meeting will likely be held at the Neenah office. The December agenda will contain information on where that meeting will be held.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:09 PM.  
Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Wagner