

**Illinois Early Learning Council
Capital/Infrastructure Subcommittee
Illinois Action for Children – Damen Location
1340 S. Damen Avenue
Chicago, IL 60608**

Notes

Thursday, March 28, 2013

Attendees: Martin Torres, Angela Farwig, Kim Collins, Bernard Cesarone, Joe Dutra, George Davis, Natalie Tucker, Granada Williams

Transportation Survey with Illinois Head Start Grantees

In February, Martin and Natalie worked with Granada Williams from the Illinois Head Start Association to develop and distribute a survey to all Head Start grantees outside of Cook Co about the transportation services they provide to children in their care (Cook Co. grantees were not surveyed because programs are less likely to provide services because they generally have more public transportation options than other areas of the state). The survey asked respondents questions about the services they provide, the proportion of children they cover, and the costs associated with the services. The results will be used to help develop a needs assessment to target providers.

We received a survey response from all, but 9 Head Start providers. Granada joined us for the meeting to discuss her reactions to the survey results. In general, she mentioned that they knew that the Head Start programs were providing transportation services and that these were an important part of the program because of the families they serve. Programs are able to include transportation services in their base funding that meet Head Start's transportation guidelines on driver qualifications, bus monitors, safety features, etc. One finding in the survey was that these costs varied greatly from program to program. George noted that some programs, like Rockford's, are able to partner with the city to reduce some of the costs. For rural areas, programs also need to carefully consider how they map out systems and routes for the most cost effective routes (as well as meet the time limits for transportation within the Head Start Transportation Guidelines). Some respondents noted that they were not able to serve some children who resided outside of these boundaries.

We also discussed questions we would like to follow up about in the needs assessment. One in particular was *'are programs providing transportation for full day and/or half day programs?'*. Similarly, *'for programs providing transportation for half day programs, are children transported home, child care facility, or other arrangement?'*. George provided an example with Rockford in which they provided transportation for children in the half day program while parents were responsible for transportation for the full day program. They found that children in the full day program had greater attendance than children in the program overall, 94% vs 85%, when parents were responsible for transportation. They hypothesize that this may be because the full day schedule provides parents with more options for work or other needs during the day.

Another question suggested, as discussed above, was *'how are decisions made for transportation routes and boundaries?'*

Draft transportation survey for Preschool for All (PFA)

Martin and Natalie shared a draft transportation survey for PFA providers. Martin spoke with Cindy Zumwalt with the Illinois State Board of Education and we would like to provide the survey to district liaisons. At this point we are waiting for approval for distributing the survey. Cindy noted that this may be challenging because they do not have an email list for these contacts; we will need to email the superintendents and request their assistance with forwarding this to the PFA administrator. We are concerned about what this may mean for our response rate.

We discussed some questions we would like to ask based on the results of the Head Start survey. We may also incorporate some of the follow up questions noted in the section above within the survey. Additional information and questions we would like to include are:

- Provision to children with special needs
- Characteristics of the children
- Are there children being turned away from the program because they do not have transportation?
- Are children outside of transportation boundaries still able to access the program?

Early Childhood Construction Grants update

The subcommittee has requested data from the ECCG program and will do some analyses when this data becomes available.

For now we do not have a good sense of the timeline for the city RFP. In general, this timeline will be available after Ready to Learn, which should happen soon.

Next meeting: TBD