



Special Needs Advisory Coalition (SNAC) - Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 7, 2021 @ 9:30am
Meeting Held via Zoom

Chair(s) in Attendance:

Dr. Justin Kohlhagen (JAFCO Children's Ability Center)

SNAC Members in Attendance:

2-1-1 Broward (Billie Morgan; Gail Moore); **Advocacy Network on Disabilities** (Ire Diaz); **Advocate** (Robert Mayersohn); **Agency for Persons with Disabilities** (Milroy Senat); **Center for Independent Living** (Brian Johnson); **Arc Broward** (Mirian Perez, Shawn Preston, Jody Ellis); **Autism Speaks Florida** (Stacey Hoaglund); **Broward County Public Schools** (Cedric Maddox, Diane Eagan, Dr. Natalie Neree, Gwen Lipscomb, Teresa Hall); **Children's Diagnostic Treatment Center** (Ellen Schrot); **Equine-Assisted Therapies of South Florida** (David Plath); **Family Network on Disabilities** (Lisa Math); **GAPS Legal** (Michelle Kenney, Esq); **Memorial Hospital** (Berta Plantz, Laura Costa, Marilyn Camerota); **Project 10** (Lisa Friedman-Chavez); **YMCA South Florida** (Susan Feldman); **Ann Storck Center** (Karen Flowers); **College Living Experience** (Sandra Soriano); **Florida Health** (Rachel Baker-Blackwell); **Family Care Council** (Marty Norris); **The Journey Institute** (Dr. Harleen Hutchinson); **A Chance for Therapy** (Florencia Tischler); **Therapeutically Beautiful** (Alicia-Ann Samuel).

CSC Staff in Attendance:

Marissa Aquino – Planning & Evaluation Manager Special Needs; Piper Weber – Programs Manager; Megan Turetsky – Government Affairs Manager; Liza Khan – Sr. Programs Manager; Melissa Soza – Programs Manager; Dr. Joshua Caraballo – Research & Evaluation Manager; Dr. S. Lorenzo Benaine – Research & Evaluation Manager; Jessica Rincon – Programs Manager

I. Welcome & Introductions:

Justin Kohlhagen welcomed the committee members at 9:30am and wished the members a happy and healthy new year.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by David Plath, seconded by Billie Morgan.

III. SNAC Logos:

Marissa Aquino, CSC Planning & Evaluation Manager Special Needs, announced a few changes to the SNAC logo that were revised by Betty Dominguez (CSC Data Manager). There are two formats, jpeg and png logos. The logos will be sent, via email, after the meeting. Please use the new SNAC logos moving forward. Justin thanked Marissa for all the hard work for and with the committee to make sure it runs on schedule with everything members need.

IV. Mindfulness for Students with Disabilities:

Mirian Perez, Arc Transition Specialist, shared the mindfulness skills she uses with the students at Arc Broward 30 minutes daily. The members practiced using a mindfulness moment. Mirian shared breathing techniques she uses every day to pause and be present. Mirian encouraged the members to practice mindfulness skills daily.

Please reach out to Mirian “Bev” Perez, telephone (240) 838-9620, email: mperez@arcbroward.com

V. Legislative:

Megan Turetsky, CSC Government Affairs Manager, announced the legislative delegation of Broward County held their second public hearing yesterday. They went through their local bills, one of which included creating a Senior Services Council. Also, legislators have started with pre committee week. There are a lot of things that are very unsure about how the legislature is going to convene. The House and Senate have sent out very different proposals.

Bob Mayersohn, Advocate, questioned if [House Bill 149](#) and [Senate Bill 192](#) Students With Disabilities in Public Schools will move forward this year. He asked is any advocacy is needed to move it forward. Megan advised to hold for a little bit to see how the bills are moving in the first few weeks of pre committee week.

Please reach out to Megan at mturetsky@cscbroward.org, or cell phone at 954-551-0735.

VI. Broward County Public Schools:

Pre-K Update

Gwen Lipscomb, Broward County Public Schools, provided an overview on the status of the Pre-K Evaluations. The assessment teams are meeting with the families virtually and face-to-face. Part B (ages 3-5) August -December had 653 total children referred. Of the 653 children, 387 were tested, 74 passed screening, and 96 were no shows after several attempts. Part C (<age 3) July – December had 626 total children referred. Of those referrals, 506 children were tested, 25 passed screening, 23 children were no show after multiple attempts.

All assessment teams are testing both Part B and Part C children. Referrals are currently distributed evenly to assessment teams as they are generated. The current timeline for Part B (3-5 years old) are as follows: New referrals generated the week of January 4, 2021 will likely be scheduled for March appointments. Parents should expect to be contacted in late February to schedule the appointments. The current timeline for Part C (<3 years old) are as follows: Assessment appointments for children transitioning from Early Steps are typically scheduled to occur 6-8 weeks prior to the child’s 3rd birthday. Assessment teams are currently contacting parents of children with late February and early March birthdays to set up appointments, and eligibility staffing will be held on or before the child’s 3rd birthday.

In the 2020-2021 school year, FDLRS did establish some new procedures to make work a little bit more efficient such as all assessment teams are testing both part B and Part C children. All referrals now are being evenly distributed among the 20 assessment teams as they come in. The families who speak Spanish or Haitian Creole no longer have to come in a different date. They are scheduling them as they are referred.

Billie Morgan, 211 Broward, offered 211 team members to assist with engaging parents that are slipping through the cracks and possible follow-ups.

Gwen reported the teams have worked hard to refine the process and doing a much better job and working more efficiently. Virtual platform will continue for those families who are unable to travel.

Diane Eagan, BCPS Pre K Elementary Director, reported she will follow up and provide percentage of families in virtual vs face to face schooling.

A workgroup was formed to further the conversation and continue overseeing the data. The workgroup includes Jessica Rincon, Ire Diaz, Ellie Schrot, Stacy Hoaglund, and Dr Harleen Hutchinson. Diane Eagon reported she will send a representative from the district to attend the workgroup.

Transition Update

Dr. Nathalie Neree, BCPS, presented on behalf of Stacy Wolfe the Transition Supervisor. The school district has a transition team which consist of five (5) Transition Program Specialists who support schools all high schools. Transition Specialists provide support and services to students in High School beginning in 9th grade through the age of 22. There are also district job coaches who supports students within the schools and in workplaces.

Transition specialists organizes information sessions, two days a week and monthly transition information such as "Turning 18" and focusing on guardianship presented by Michelle Kenney and the Nova Law Clinic.

Currently in place are Canvas courses about transition services and resources within the community. The eLearning courses include pre employment training courses focusing on building pre employment skills for students, the life path, and virtual job shadowing. Some students, who are 18 to 22, previously completed a work-based learning programs that was at Hilton locations. These locations have been impacted by the pandemic. Some of those hotel locations had shut down and due concerns with safety for the students. The Memorial Hospital locations are currently closed for the students. However, activities are being offered virtually to try and keep them engaged and still learning skills.

For more information please contact Stacy Wolfe at Stacy.Wolfe@browardschools.com

VII. Community Roundtable COVID-19 Needs/Updates:

Justin Kohlhagen encouraged members to share any unmet needs in the community as this is an opportunity to collaborate and address the needs.

Marissa, CSC, announced the CSC 20/21 Funded Program Directory and the CSC 19/20 Annual Report is now available on the CSC website.

Concerns were brought up regarding parents preparing for Spring Break and Summer Camps. Parents want to pre-plan options for their kids. Members reported there is so much uncertainty and parents are missing out on information. A workgroup was formed to explore the possibility of a virtual resource fair with information on spring and summer camp services. Bob Mayersohn will reach out to the ESE Parent Advisory to ask for participation. Ellie Schrot will reach out to Renee Jaffee to ask the date for ELC Early Childhood Conference, to possibly integrate it with parent resource fair. Billie offered to gather the list of resources. Justin encouraged the committee to see if any of the special needs partners in the committee are already planning on hosting a virtual event that SNAC can be a part of. Members are to follow up in between meetings to Marissa with an update.

VIII. Next Meeting [March 4, 2021 at 9:30am](#) via Zoom.

IX. Adjourn