



STATE OF GEORGIA
Children's Cabinet

Children's Cabinet

November 13, 2020

Zoom Meeting

8 a.m.-10 a.m.

Summary

WELCOME

Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs with the Department of Early Care and Learning and Executive Director Joy Hawkins with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement convened the meeting and welcomed the full Children's Cabinet back for 2020-2021.

CABINET UPDATES

Member updates

Commissioner Jacobs opened the floor for Cabinet updates.

Executive Director Gaye Smith Georgia Family Connection Partnership stated that they will be releasing a pandemic snapshot featuring census-data from households; partnering with Casey Foundation. This will be released in December/January 2020. The Get Georgia Reading Campaign is continuing their work throughout the pandemic to support families at home.

Dr. Kathleen Toomey with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and Commissioner Frank Berry with the Georgia Department of Community Health, in partnership with other agencies are working on a public awareness campaign for immunizations and vaccinations. An unintended consequence of COVID-19 is the drop in well-visits and immunizations/vaccinations because families are avoiding perceived exposure to COVID-19.

Executive Director Mindy Binderman with GEEARS stated that GEEARS and Head Start have been working on focus groups to learn more about food insecurity, jobs, housing security, and unexpected termination of public benefits. Head Start has provided resources to the community during the pandemic. Presented to pediatricians to help families get what they need during this time.

Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five work and planning

Commissioner Jacobs provided an update on the Preschool Development Grant B-5. This is not just a DECAL grant and includes many of Children's Cabinet agencies' deputy level employees. The hope is that the PDG will complement the work of the cabinet and do some of the work on the cabinet. Focus on birth to five systems - not just education, but services – child care, home visits, early intervention. Working to make it an accessible system for families. Four areas: maximizing parental choice and knowledge, sharing best practices and professional development for B-5, not just educators, improving overall quality and service integration, and expanding access and monitoring the current system. Completed a needs assessment and are currently guiding Cross Agency Child Council through the strategic planning process, which is almost complete. Both are due in December 2020. The next step is to submit for federal approval, then the work begins on projects. Will keep updated as the work begins and will bring back updates on the work and projects related to the strategic areas of the Cabinet.

Literacy Resource List

Executive Director Hawkins provided an update on the Literacy Coordinating Council, which is doing a lot of work on reading literacy goal. The first initiative is about the pandemic - to get resources to caregivers through Food Banks and other organizations. Also, finding the best examples on birth through adult years to provide an easy link to the information that is needed. Get Georgia Reading has a new home booklet that is a link that that should be great for birth through five. We've heard that adults are struggling, especially displaced low-wage workers, and we've got links to brush up on skills to assist them.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING TRAINING

Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities introduced a presentation on social-emotional health and well-being for Cabinet members.

Wellbeing of Leaders and Professionals (Monica Johnson, Director of Behavioral Health at DBHDD) Monica Johnson, Director of Behavioral Health at DBHDD presented and facilitated a conversation with the Cabinet on the well-being of leaders and professionals. Monica asked the Cabinet to participate in an introductory activity that included a series of questions and asked the members to tally their affirmative answers. Monica recommended paying attention to your sleep patterns (too little, too much), ability to concentrate (focus, attention), feeling anxious and feeling scared, and paying attention to co-existing conditions. She also advised cabinet members to monitor the use of alcohol and other substances; increases in use are being seen during COVID-19. Finally, Monica encouraged cabinet members to develop a strategy on how you will manage your health, including some tips:

1. Know your triggers (what pushes you into a place of feeling more anxious, depressed, lonely, stressful situations)
2. Establish boundaries (ex. Teleworking can lead to fewer breaks and more meetings) to establish a work/life balance; family members that are toxic; say no to the things you don't want to do; learn to give grace to yourself first
3. Give yourself breaks or a time-out
4. Remember to care and love yourself first and other people
5. Adapt to your changed circumstances
6. Find your next adventure (e.g. gardening, walks, etc.)

DBHDD hosts a 30 min webinar each week that are designed to provide self-care tips and support for managing life during these unprecedented times. The 2x2 series is held live twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and each session provides attendees with mental health tips about managing stress, grief, work/life balance, and wellness. You can access past presentations at <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/bh-prevention/2x2-series>.

Free Your Feels campaign (Executive Director Erica Fener-Sitkoff with Voices for Georgia's Children and Layla Fitzgerald, Program Manager of the Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families with DBHDD)

Layla Fitzgerald with DBHDD and Erica Fener-Sitkoff with Voices for Georgia's Children presented on the Free Your Feels Campaign for children from birth to young adult. There are also resources for caregivers, professionals, and other groups that work with children and teenagers. Mental health needs of children have been growing for a while, and when COVID-19 happened the need for a coordinated messaging and resource connection was needed which led to the development of the Free Your Feels campaign. There is an online social press kit to download and share on social media or in schools, doctor offices, and in other places. There is a Free Your Feels website that provides a one stop shop to easily connect youth and adults to existing resources.

The collaborative website from DBHDD and Voices for Georgia's Children to help children and their parents with mental health resources is located at <https://www.freeyourfeels.org/>.

A link for the "Helping the Helping Professionals Webinar Series" that just launched was also shared. Cabinet members were encouraged to share the following link <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/training/mental-health-training-announcements>.

Group discussion facilitated by David Tanner with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government:

How can we raise awareness about the campaign and discuss tangible ways to make resources available throughout the state?

Ideas from the cabinet included:

- Social Media
- School counselors
- Student portals and parent portal and school websites
- Childcare providers across the state can email parents for the resources and to our staff members.
- United Way networks
- Share it with DFCS' Independent Living staff to promote amongst youth in foster care? Candis Jones, ILP Director - candis.jones@dhs.ga.gov
- Many parents seem to be relying on neighborhood listservs and Facebook groups to manage virtual learning. Seems like a captive audience.
- Georgia High School Athletic Association
- School Board Association
- Georgia Principals Association
- The Head Start Collaboration Office at DECAL will work with our grantee Mental Health Managers to review the Launch toolkit and help them focus in on the strategies for young

children and parents. We can also reinforce social media sharing with emphasis on Free your Feels FRIDAYS...that would be fun for early childhood teachers to incorporate throughout their curriculum. We can make sure that the Head Start Health Advisory Committees share the info with the parents and community members within their agency.

- Georgia Family Connections Partnerships
- Need to develop some peer to peer ways to share this – youth created PSA video has been created
- Sororities and Fraternities
- Empowerment; Amerigroup's youth advisory council; DFCS youth advisory board
- DECAL Community Coordinators located throughout the state. DECAL Parent Ambassadors are already sharing this with their parent networks.
- Afterschool networks, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Clubhouses
- Create a YouTube video; youth love these viral options
- Icons like Malcolm Mitchell and football coaches could include in their discussions on televisions/social media
- GCCAP
- Legislative awareness and committee meetings – can we share something during the biennial
- PTA
- Medicaid CMOs
- Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
- GAEL – January Meeting
- Student counselors, nurses, and teachers would be large sources of this information for students.

COORDINATED CABINET MESSAGING

Commissioner Jacobs announced the new Children's Cabinet website and introduced Jim Keith, Director of Software Engineering with DECAL to preview the website.

Website

Jim Keith previewed the new Children's Cabinet website which will be released on November 14, 2020. The site is content-based to disseminate and collaborate on information easily. Google analytics will track activity on the website. There will be a section for Cabinet members to login and share documents with the Cabinet.

<http://www.gachildrencabinet.org>

Cabinet communication leads

Executive Director Joy Hawkins discussed coordinated Children's Cabinet messaging through communication leads. Communication officers in each agency work together for coordinated messages. Malenka Warner, Director of Communications with GOSA, will reach out for common messages to share through our social media platforms. Requested the appropriate contact from Cabinet agencies and organizations to help coordinate the messaging. This will coordinate social media and assist with key messages on mental health and well-being, developmental milestones, literacy, and other strategic goal areas of the Cabinet.

Commissioner Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 10am.