



Southeast Vermont Building Bright Futures

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Southeast Vermont Building Bright Futures Regional Council Discussion & Meeting Notes April 13, 2016, 4-6pm Holton Hall (4th Floor), Austine Campus

Attendance: Carrie Storm, Jessica Perkins, Iishana Artra, Chloe Leary, Janice Stockman, Lindsey Dix, Emilie Kornheiser, Rod Francis, Margaret Atkinson, Sandy Stark, Cindy Twombly, Sue Graff, Sharron Harrington

Welcome & Introductions

Chad briefly described BBF, council norms, materials and today's agenda.

How Families access supports & Services

Panel discussion on how families access supports and services in our community. The panel was framed around the Strengthening Families five protective factors.

- Parent resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support when needed
- Social and emotional competence of children

Introduced panel discussion on family access to supports and services. Panelists include: Carrie Storm, Lindsey Dix, Iishana Artra.

Questions were adapted from the Strengthening Families Framework and included:
(list of questions)

- Where did you seek supports?
- Who did you turn to for support?
- How did you stay in touch with them?
- Tell us about a challenge you faced and how did you handle it
- What supports do you wish existed that did not when you needed them?
- How and where do your children play with other children?
- Where do you get information and how do you find it?
- Where and how did you access concrete supports?

“When you're isolated, it's difficult to be an efficient parent”

Perception of the state: “Why should they care?”



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Strengths & Assets

- Early Essential Education (EEE)
- A caring child care provider (Sue Clark) and kindergarten teacher who intervened
- Child's school counselor who did not name "step family" but did give appropriate advice
- Brattleboro Parks and Recreation Department for summer "child care"
- Counselor at Twin Valley Elementary School
- Staff at pediatrician's office (Brian Patno) connecting to resources and really reaching out
 - Upstreaming...acclimating parents to the system
- KidsPLAYce

Challenges & Barriers

- Finding child care and available subsidy
- Difficulty finding summer child care. Looked to Family Services, but was not a resource
- Providers not trained or supportive of gender transition while parenting
- No step parent groups/resources available. No one able to share resources
- Professionals who won't name "step family"
- Professionals who don't ask what is wrong or why is stress so high
- No support network for step parents (peer group or hotline)
- Lack of support groups/peer groups. Feeling isolated not fitting in as a parent
- Assumptions about parents are hurtful. You can't assume who is a good parent
- Not know about what's out there (playgroups etc.). Rethink ways to get the word out
- Some moms not feeling comfortable in their community
- Step moms are afraid of attending supports groups
- Not feeling welcome at playgroups. Parents not necessarily kind to each other.
- Outreach to playgroups are inclusive
- State law once child is six no longer able to be in preschool, regardless of where the child is at developmentally. This does not make sense for some children
- Resources for foster children not being met
- Feels like foster child is seen as a number
- Transportation
- Lack of support for personal health while parenting

Council members and providers encouraged to use this insight and these stories to inform their practices and policies and improve supports for children and families



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Regional Council Business (30 min)

VT Birth to Five (VB5) update and seeking feedback from council

- Sharron Harrington of VB5 reviewed history and offerings of organization (attached handout)
- Developed 10 projects to meet provider needs
- www.sharedservicesvt.org. Four pilot regions, including Windham Cty
- Seeking input from regions by 4/22. Including Survey Monkey. Chad will send out to council
- VB5 has 8.5 years left to complete work
- Plan being developed with input from various stakeholders across the state
- Two projects likely to go away: Professional Development and Family, Friend and Neighbor Care
- Other things likely to be added: Business Supported Child Care
- Provider Wellness

Review proposed letter to BBF State Advisory Council re: Professional Development

- Members read, reviewed and approved proposed letter
- Chad will keep council updated in newsletter and council meetings.
- Let Chad know if you want more detailed, email updates in between those times

Brief Action Plan Committee & community partner updates

- Promise Communities update
 - Rod Francis, Emilie Kornheiser and Chad gave update on last weekends Green Street Promise Community retreat
 - Emilie shared Carrie Storm's youngest daughter's positive perception of the process
 - Rod shared there is not a lot of external pressure re: timeline and artificial goals. Driven by community
 - Interests and aspirations are captured
 - Recognize isolation and alienation
 - Innovative ways of engaging community
 - Retreat dealt with analyzing data, across multiple perspectives and focused on the stories behind the data
 - Addressed people's personal needs re: involvement and commitment to process

Wrap up & Next Meeting (5 min)

Everyone agreed it was a bit to noisy to have children in same room as meeting. Something to consider for futures meetings/forums

Wednesday, May 11. 4-6pm @ Location TBA