



Service Delivery Area 3 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Summary May 5, 2020

View the recording of this meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lc0bJyj99v0>

1. Call to Order and Meeting Overview

- a. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, made welcoming remarks orienting participants to the virtual platform and purpose of the Regional Advisory Council meeting.
- b. Chairperson Jessie Pike called the meeting to order, provided an overview of the agenda items and meeting goals, and discussed meeting/Council systems and procedures.

2. Introductions

- a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name, professional role, and stakeholder type (program, community partner, etc.).
- b. Members who were present included: Jessie Pike, Camelia Smith, Shannon Garrity, Heather Pierce, Lisa Cordle, Tikila Welch

3. COVID-19 Update from the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning

- a. Lacey Kottkamp from the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) provided an update on the COVID-19 crisis.
- b. Friday, May 1st, Governor Holcomb announced Indiana's 5-phase approach to reopening Indiana's economy. Find more information at <https://www.backontrack.in.gov/>. Information will continue to be updated on this website if anything changes.
 - i. This website includes the Governor's address and several descriptive documents. The website outlines each stage and provides additional guidelines.
- c. Access local supports through local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies. Programs can find and contact their local office at <http://brighterfuturesindiana.org/local-help-for-finding-child-care2/> or call 1-800-299-1627.
- d. The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is introducing a new series of Mental Health Check videos to support families during this crisis. Find the videos at Bewellindiana.com/video-resources/.
- e. SPARK Learning Lab, in partnership with FSSA, is offering support and resources. Through Indiana Learning Paths, providers can find resources and trainings, including Discussion Board topics, live webinar Learning Forums, and the Be Well Series.
- f. Another new support from OECOSL and SPARK is "Ask the Nurse" sessions. Email Nancy Ward with questions (Nancy.Ward@fssa.in.gov).
- g. Temporary Assistance Grants: Funding Update
 - i. In the first two weeks of the Temporary Assistance Grant, 1,172 programs were funded at a cost of \$5,131,752.
 - ii. The second two week period had 2,243 programs funded at a cost of \$14,262,870
 - iii. Total spent to date: \$19,394,631 for a 4 week period
 - iv. OECOSL received 78 million from the federal government from the CARES funding. They expect to spend half of that by the end of this first six week period.
- h. Temporary Assistance Grants: Changes
 - i. Maximum rates will be applied and overall caps on total amounts requested.
 - ii. Maximum rates:
 1. Rates were calculated by taking all rates that currently exist in the CCDF system and taking the average by age group.
 2. If a program's weekly rate is lower than the maximum rate, that is the rate they will be provided.

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3. Programs may not raise their rate from their last grant submitted and their last application will be checked to ensure consistency.
 4. Overall grant amount caps: For programs that remain open, the overall grant amount requested cannot exceed \$20,000 for the two week period. For programs that are closed, the overall grant amount requested cannot exceed \$5,000 for the two week period.
- iii. Temporary Assistance Grant: Tips
1. Check the website for updated links, they are updated every two weeks. Applications through Submittable are the only ones that will be accepted.
 2. Please check your junk email/spam as they may be where communication is going from Submittable.
 3. Applications must be submitted by the deadlines.
 4. CCDF is not allowed to be used to pay a family's co-pay and this grant should not be submitted for that purpose.
 5. Personal days should be used for any child that is being funded through subsidy, these children should not be counted as private pay and submitted with the grant. This grant is for public pay children.
- iv. OECOSL sent a survey to providers last week, in partnership with the Indiana Afterschool Network, Early Learning Indiana, and Indiana United Ways. This survey aims to collect feedback from providers on their needs to help them plan on how to support programs and provide resources. This feedback will help inform guidance about summer camp and programming, as well as reopening. They have received over 1,000 responses so far.
- i. Questions/feedback from RAC members and public:
- i. Question: Is it correct that you cannot apply for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan and the temporary assistance grant at the same time?
 1. Answer from Lacey: Yes, that is correct. When you receive the PPP Loan, they will tell you the dates it covers. If you apply for the temporary assistance grant, we ask that you do not apply for that same time period.
 - ii. Question: Is your office looking at the possibility that COVID-19 may spike again and we may need to start over with the stay at home order process?
 1. Answer from Lacey: I can't speak to that, but I encourage you to watch the Governor's briefings for more information.
 - iii. Question: The Back on Track website gives guidance per industry. Will guidance for child care providers be on this site or should providers go to OECOSL's website?
 1. Answer from Lacey: OECOSL is going to be your best source for child care guidance.
 - iv. Question: Is someone tracking to make sure centers who do not plan to reopen are not applying for the temporary assistance grants?
 1. Answer from Lacey: I can't say that we would immediately know if a program is not planning to reopen. However, programs will be audited so we would find that out later and they would owe the money back to the state.

4. Reviewed Old Business

- a. At the beginning of each Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting, the Council reviews action items and recommendations from the previous meeting and discusses progress made.

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- i. You can view past meeting minutes and recommendations for each Service Delivery Area (SDA) on the SPARK website: <http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/>.
- b. Jessie summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in February related to the Help Desk, Town Square and PTQ enrollment incentive recommendations.

5. SPARK Project Highlights

- a. Each quarter, SPARK staff highlights SPARK features that have been implemented recently or will be launched in the upcoming quarter to gain insight, feedback, concerns, suggestions, and recommendations/agreements from the public and RAC members.
- b. Spotlight: Communication Update
 - i. At previous RAC meetings, SPARK received several recommendations from the Council regarding outreach and communication methods. Mike provided an update on SPARK's communication activities as a follow-up on these recommendations.
 - ii. Mike walked through the SPARK Learning Lab Communication Dashboard, which captures website, social media, and email traffic and activity. The data presented included SPARK's reach and activities since the beginning of the 2020 calendar year.
 - iii. Highlights from the data presented include:
 1. Website sessions for 2020 have exceeded 5,000. The average duration of sessions (or the length of time that viewers spend on the website) has increased beyond the industry standard. SPARK's website bounce rate is within the industry standard range.
 2. The number of returning visitors to the website has increased over time. The number of new visitors has fluctuated with a slight increase in March.
 3. The dashboard includes a heat map of where website users are geographically located. The top cities included Indianapolis, Chicago, Fort Wayne, Evansville, and Louisville. (Providers in Northwest Indiana may show up as being located in "Chicago" because that is the closest metropolitan area. The same may be true of providers in Southern Indiana showing up under Louisville.)
 4. SPARK sends emails to two different distribution lists. Some emails go out to as many as 29,000 users, while a smaller number of individuals who signed up for the SPARK Connect newsletter get additional emails. SPARK is tracking how many people are opening the emails, as well as how many are clicking on links within the email. The unique open percentage (number of individuals who opened the email) has ranged from 37%-56%.
 5. Facebook is the social media platform that SPARK has seen the strongest engagement (followers, number of individuals engaging with posts). SPARK is reaching an average of 8,000 people with every Facebook post they make.
 6. SPARK also utilizes Instagram and Twitter. SPARK has more followers on Instagram than Twitter, but less engagement. SPARK has comparatively few followers on Twitter, but the posts are reaching more individuals as there are opportunities for followers to retweet.
 - iv. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
 1. Question: On the heat map, there is a lot of space where you are not reaching certain regions. Do you have a plan to target rural communities or communities that are not engaged with your communication channels?
 - a. Answer from Mike: We'd like to explore the possibility of using the texting service that OECOSL has used in the past to make sure we are reaching

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- everyone. We're also interested in hearing any ideas the RAC members have.
- b. Response from RAC members: You could reach out to universities in those areas and connect with their teaching staff who may be connected to providers in the area.
2. Question: What type of calls are coming into the Help Desk right now?
 - a. Answer from Mike: Most calls are related to training certificate issues. Beyond that, we've had a few calls about COVID-19 resources and PTQ supports.
 3. Question: As providers are learning more about you and they start to call into the Help Desk, what is the plan if they ask for resources?
 - a. Answer from Mike: All of our Help Desk representatives are trained in our supports and will refer the caller to resources that meet their needs. If we do not have a resource for them, we will make a warm handoff to a SPARK coach.
 4. Could SPARK Lab help facilitate a focus group around recovery and restart?
 - a. Answer from Mike: We launched a live webinar learning forum series on this topic last week. We are attempting to provide large scale opportunities for programs to connect and learn from each other. But we could also explore establishing focus groups as well.
- v. Upcoming events
 1. All in-person non-essential training has been temporarily suspended until at least May 1st. The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) will revisit this suspension and determine the timeline for offering in-person trainings soon.
 2. During this time, SPARK is holding online trainings and virtual weekly Learning Forums for providers and partners.
- c. Spotlight: Business Management Support
 - i. SPARK's Business Management Specialist, Lisa Mettler, presented on SPARK's business management support.
 - ii. SPARK chose to create this role because they recognize that programs need business resources and supports to be successful.
 - iii. In addition to SPARK's business resources and supports, SPARK plans to build relationships with business stakeholders/coaching entities to educate them on the work of early childhood providers, so they have a better idea of how to support them.
 - iv. SPARK business management supports will fall within four focus areas:
 1. Finances
 2. Marketing and Communications
 3. Internal Systems
 4. Human Resources/Workforce
 - v. RAC members from all SDAs received a Business Needs Assessment survey at the beginning of April. Of the 60 RAC members who work directly for a program, 33 completed the survey. SPARK will use the feedback provided to inform the development of their business management supports.
 - vi. SPARK has shared several business resources in Indiana Learning Paths under the resources tab. SPARK has also created a workgroup to identify the resources programs will need to operate or restart during this COVID crisis.
 - vii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:

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1. Most early childhood educators are not trained on how to manage finances or budgets. It will be helpful to have these resources.
2. Question: What type of strategies are you thinking of using to change providers' mindset from solely focusing on education to also helping providers think about the business practices?
 - a. Answer from Lisa: We are being intentional about providing small amounts of information at one time, so as not to overwhelm programs. We are also hopeful that programs will recognize the importance of the business pieces by using the I-SAT.
3. Question: Are you hopeful that by helping programs with finances, they will be able to better sustain themselves in the future?
 - a. Answer from Lisa: Yes we hope to increase their longevity in the field, as well as decrease staff turnover rates.
- d. Spotlight: PTQ Rating Procedure Update
 - i. INAEYC is currently conducting ratings. They can be contacted at PTQ@inaeyc.org. SPARK will take over ratings after July.
 - ii. The Paths to Quality™ rating procedure SPARK will use is very similar to the current process INAEYC is using. SPARK's procedure will follow a 5 step process:
 1. SPARK sends Readiness Checklist (via email)
 - a. Programs will receive an email 4-6 months prior to their expiration. They will receive another follow-up email 3 months prior to expiration.
 - b. These two initial emails will include standards contained in a set of documents called the Readiness Checklist. There is a Readiness Checklist for each program type (Centers, Homes, Ministries, Schools) and PTQ level. The standards are then divided again by age group and administrative/documentation. Programs will receive the appropriate set of standards 4-6 months and 3 months prior to expiration.
 - c. SPARK will send the readiness checklist within these emails. There are checklists for each program type (Centers, Homes, Ministry, Schools), PTQ level, age group, documentation (training certificate, education, etc.).
 - d. The checklists include the standard, guidance for understanding, required documentation, and examples.
 2. Program assesses
 - a. Programs will use the standards included in the Readiness Checklist to assess their readiness.
 - b. If programs need help during this process, they can reach out to SPARK by email (PTQ@indianaspark.com) or phone (via the Help Desk: 1-800-299-1627)
 3. SPARK sends Confirmation Checklist:
 - a. SPARK will send a third email, with the Confirmation Checklist, 45-60 days prior to expiration.
 4. Program returns Confirmation Checklist:
 - a. Programs are asked to return the Confirmation Checklist at least 31 days prior to expiration.
 - b. In returning the Confirmation Checklist to SPARK, a program is saying that they are ready for their rating visit. A completed checklist will provide SPARK with necessary information the rater will need to complete a rating visit (program's staff roster, education, and training).
 5. SPARK requests the rating

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- a. Once SPARK receives the Confirmation Checklist, SPARK will review and make the rating request.
 - b. A rater will contact programs within two business days to schedule the rating visit.
- iii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
1. Question: Can you give an estimate of the backlog of rating visits in Marion County?
 - a. Answer from Mike: I don't have that data, but I would suggest connecting with OECOSL.
 2. Question: Are programs still able to skip levels?
 - a. Answer from Mike: Yes, you can advance your program to any level you would like at any time, if you meet all the standards.
 3. Question: Where do you access the required templates?
 - a. Answer from Mike: We are working with OECOSL to get all of these documents posted on Indiana Learning Paths under resources this month. If you want them in the meantime, you can email PTQ@indianaspark.com.
 4. Question: Will the forms be fillable?
 - a. Answer from Mike: Yes, we plan to make them fillable PDFs.
 5. Question: Is the renewal process the same or will there be more leniency?
 - a. Answer from Mike: PTQ policy hasn't changed. If there is a standard that the rater cannot verify, programs will have a period of 90 days (10 days if advancing a level) to share additional information to meet the standard. This policy will continue.
 6. Members liked the visual of the five steps and recommended that SPARK enhance the visual by numbering the steps, adding a title, and including a timeline.
 7. Members suggested changing the name for step 2 (Program Self-assessment, PTQ Program Assessment, etc.)
 8. Members suggested that SPARK put this information in a video, that could include providers who have been through the process.
 9. Members suggested that, when sharing information about this process, SPARK provide examples and images of the documents.
 10. Members said SPARK needs to consider how to reassure providers that they are able to do the assessment piece by themselves.
 11. Members suggested that SPARK also consider having programs who have gone through the process mentor newer programs.

6. Public Comment

- a. Question: Has SPARK started thinking about licensing cohorts and what that transition will look like from the CCR&Rs?
 - i. Answer from Mike: We've started to think about that transition. We have a meeting with the CCR&Rs later this week. We're interested in exploring what that warm handoff/transition will look like.

7. Agreements

- a. Based on what has been presented, RAC discussion, and public comment, the RAC brought forth the following recommendations/agreements for SPARK Learning Lab and/or partners to consider:
 - i. Communication Update



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1. SPARK should consider reaching out to universities in targeted regions that have lower engagement with SPARK's communication channels. Their early childhood faculty could likely help reach and connect with the local provider community.
 2. SPARK should consider doing an overlay of the heat map of engagement and existing child care desserts.
 - ii. Business Management Support
 1. No recommendations/agreements at this time.
 - iii. PTQ Rating Procedure Update
 1. Members recommended the following changes to the visual:
 - a. Number the steps
 - b. Add a title
 - c. Include a timeline
 2. Members suggested changing the name for step 2 (Program Self-assessment, PTQ Program Assessment, etc.).
 3. Members suggested that SPARK put this information in a video, that could include providers who have been through the process.
 4. Members suggested that, when sharing information about this process, SPARK provide examples and images of the documents.
 5. Members said SPARK needs to consider how to reassure providers that they are able to do the assessment piece by themselves.
 6. Members suggested that SPARK also consider having programs who have gone through the process mentor newer programs.
 - iv. Other agreements
 1. SPARK should consider facilitating focus groups around reopening. This would be especially helpful to facilitate discussions with larger programs (especially schools) on what reopening should look like. SPARK could partner with OECOSL and/or the Department of Education.
- 8. Future Meeting Schedule**
- a. Tuesday September 8th 6:30-8:30pm (Indianapolis)
- 9. Adjournment**