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| **Communities build what they dream. Families get what they need. Children thrive.** |

April AOK Network Meeting Notes:

* Introduction and Check Ins: Share one childhood experience that has an impact on how you live or work today
* Upcoming Events:
  + Week of the Young Child ([NAEYC](https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc))
    - April 1st through the 7th
    - Check out the AOK facebook page for ideas of each themed day
  + EveryChild Pinwheel Gardens ([EveryChild](https://www.foreverychild.org/))
    - Check out EveryChild’s website or facebook page for all the community pinwheel garden events happening in the QC this month
  + Celebrate EveryChild Gala
    - April 27th 530-9pm
    - Waterfront Convention Center
    - Join us in supporting the mission of EveryChild with our annual fundraising event
  + Ready to Learn Conference
    - April 29th
    - WIU Campus
    - 8am-4pm
    - This important regional conference provides current and relevant information on a variety of topics related to early childhood education
  + Poverty Simulation
    - May 11th
    - 8am-12pm
    - Heritage Church, Rock Island, IL
    - People who live in poverty make decisions based on their culture – what they value and rules they live by. Learn to better understand their reality vs yours.
* Network Assessment Survey (Wilder Survey)
  + Network Capacity Initiative
    - Helps inventory how well inter-agency collaboration is doing in key, important areas of success:
      * Environment
      * Member characteristics
      * Process and structure
      * Purpose
      * Resources
      * Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2023_Wilder_Survey>
* Community Resource Guides
  + Initiative
    - Provide a current inventory of available community resources, supports, services, and programs with up-to-date contact information
  + Family Yellow Pages
    - This resource guide provides families and providers with a quick and portable reference of multiple sectors of services in our Rock Island County community.
  + Food Resource Guide
    - The Quad Cities Food Resource Guide is an easy-to-print, comprehensive guide of food resources and their locations; including grocery stores, convenience stores, food pantries, and more.
* Current Legislative Efforts
  + Fiscal Year 23 Budget
    - 10% increase in the Early Childhood Block Grant
    - 6.4% increase in Early Intervention
    - 6% increase in IDHS (Illinois Department of Human Services) home visiting programs
    - $2 million for new off-hours Child Care program fund
  + Senate Bill 157
    - Now Public Act 102-700, a bill that, among other things, expands the Earned Income Tax Credit benefit for all filers; extends eligibility to the Earned Income Tax Credit for those aged 18-25, those above 65, and ITIN filers; and provides a one-time child tax credit
  + House Bill 4242
    - Created to better connect families involved in the child welfare system to early care and education programs
    - Extends automatic eligibility to early intervention for infants and toddlers in the child welfare system
    - Extends automatic eligibility to the CCAP program for parenting youth in care and families on the DCFS Extend Family Support Program
    - Requires DCFS to pay child care providers the same reimbursement rates IDHS pays its providers
  + House Bill 1102
    - Proposed Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) insurance, up to 12 weeks in a two-year timeline
  + House Bill 4999
    - Codifies into state law the timeline (30 days) by which services for families in the EI (Early Intervention) program must be initiated after a service plan has been approved
  + House Bill 1571
    - Creates the off-hours Child Care Program at Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to identify and access off-hours child care for workers who need child care outside of the hours when licensed facilities typically operate
  + Senate Bill 208
    - Provides workers with up to 40 hours of paid leave during a 12-month period without having to provide reason or find coverage
* Network Partner Updates:
  + AOK
    - We need partner volunteers for presentations at the Network meetings and during Lunch and Learns
    - Workgroup meeting emails will be sent out for the steering committee and the food resource and access workgroup so be on the lookout for those
    - Parent Ambassadors – we now have both of our parent ambassadors before the end of the fiscal year, however we are still always in the process of recruiting so make sure you are telling families and parents that seem interested about this opportunity to provide their expertise and experience in accessing community resources
    - Resource Fair – our 2nd Annual resource fair was this past weekend (Saturday April 1st) and we had about 14 partners represented and have a table, which was great turnout for our partners, however we only had about 10 families show up – which we feel was mainly due to the colder weather overall it was a good start for both Jess and I (Autumn)’s first time coordinating
    - Look out for community garden updates – volunteer days will be coming up with the warmer weather for upkeep on the garden so be on the lookout for a sign-up sheet related to that
  + Project NOW Head Start
    - April 27th
    - Rooting Out Poverty Conference
    - $35 to attend – breakfast and lunch will be provided
  + SAL Community Services
    - Early Head Start will have an event June 10th
    - Summer Festival – there will be food trucks, tables (for partners), etc.
    - Will take place outside – rain or shine
  + CHC
    - Events – flyers were handed out at the meeting
    - April 12th
      * Library in Davenport
      * Spring into Wellness
      * Brand new food pantry open across the street – help advertise that and have library access
    - April 16th
      * Vaccine clinic in Floreciente Neighborhood (flyers in both English and Spanish)
    - April 22nd
      * Free screening event
      * Take place at CHC in Rock Island, IL
      * Free transportation if ride riverbend transit
  + Trauma Consortium
    - St. Ambrose has new trauma-informed credential
    - Brochures handed out at meeting
    - Takes place August through May
    - Scholarships available in select counties
    - $1300 for credential – payment methods available or agency budget options depending on where you work
  + Healthy Families – EveryChild
    - Family Art Workshop
    - 1-5pm
    - A workshop on what love is and what healthy relationships with children look like
    - Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Rock Island, IL
* Group Discussion: Barriers in RI County
  + What barriers are parents, caregivers, and/or children experiencing in our county when it comes to accessing early childhood services?
    - Transportation
    - Language – translation services
      * SAL and Healthy Families use Itech – Hector – local – charge for services (only charge when used – not like a subscription)
      * May be a waste of time to translate flyers into different languages as some families are not proficient in their home language so may have difficulty reading flyer
      * Where/how can we reach families?
        + Verbal
        + Word-of-mouth
        + Radio??
        + Having someone they trust in their community (just the mention of an organization may be a turn off to families)
    - Cost of child care
      * Think about the middle class/group of families who don’t make the cut off to receive state funding or help with child care but don’t make enough to take their children to daycare without some sort of financial help
    - Hours of services available for children and parents
      * Head Start has busing – but not in Milan
      * PFA has no busing due to funding and is only operation 2 hours of the day
    - Frequency of access to food pantries
      * Based largely on food supply
      * Some food pantries are specific on where you have to live in order to have access to their supply
    - Overwhelming resources for families that aren’t educated in what to choose or where to go
      * Multiple home visiting programs – which is best? Which one offers which thing?, etc.