

Stamford School Readiness Council
Thursday, January 13, 2022
12:00pm

SRC Members Present:

Dena Booker	SPS Family Engagement / McKinney Vento Liaison
Terri Drew – Co Chair	Director of Youth Services City of Stamford
Karen Feder – Co Chair	Director of Youth Services, ABILIS
Janeene Freeman	Mayor’s Designee
Liz McKay	Children’s Librarian, Ferguson Library

Grant Recipients/Advisors/Guests:

Donna Arcuri	School Readiness Liaison, City of Stamford
Linda Barge	CDC Education Manager, CLC
Mary Basso	Director of Child Day Care, CLC
Kendra Brown	Director of Early Childhood, SPS
Antonia Better-Wirz	Education Manager, AOK
Lisa Cody	Assistant Direct of Early Childhood, SPS
Tamika Cope	Parent Participant, Parent Liaison C2C
Betty Davila	Instructional Coordinator, SPS
Emendya Diaz	Workforce Development Director, Building One Community (B1C)
Phyllis DiFrancia	Director of School Readiness, CLC
Liz Gebert	Director, Kinderplace
Beth Genovese	SR Education Manager, CLC
Alejandra Gomez	Marketing & Outreach Coordinator, Building One Community (B1C)
Emily Goldschmid	Family Service Manager, CLC
Garth Gordon	Parent Participant
Marsha Guthrie	Director, CLC Maple Ave. and CLC Early Head Start
Lauren Halpin	Director, Bright Horizons – Long Ridge
Yazmin Iglesias	Director - Stamford, Norwalk & Danbury, AOK
Alison Kallman	Community Services Coordinator, Kids In Crisis
Karin King	Education Consultant
Emmanuella Lauture	Owner/Director, Ma Maison Childcare
Penny Lehman	Director Program Services, CLC
Alex Morris	Education Coordinator, CLC
Kate Lynd Murphy	Assistant Director, Child First
Brooke Nilsen	Director, First United Methodist Nursery School
Enrique Pabon	Education Manager, CLC Maple and CLC Early Head Start
Yazmin Polonia	Education Coordinator, CLC
Andrea Payo	Program Manager, Parents as Teachers, Family Centers Inc.
Aliyssa Rakowski	Assistant Director, Cotton Tails
Jennifer Reberon	Project and Community Engagement Manager, Stamford C2C
Michelle Rivera	Assistant Director, Education Station at the Italian Center
Dr. Debby Schreiner	Instructional Coordinator, SPS
Tashi Shuler-Drakes	Youth Intern, Ferguson Library
Davette Stephens	Owner/Director, Elite Learning Academy
Nathalie Tocci	Care to Care Coordinator, Family Centers
Francheska Velazquez	Owner/Director, Play To Learn
Naria Velazquez	Owner/ Director, Bright Minds
Dori Walker	Instructional Coordinator, SPS
Anna Witkowski	Chief Education Officer, CLC

I.

Welcome/Quorum

Karen Feder welcomed all. A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm. Due to lack of quorum School Readiness Council minutes for the December, 2021 were unable to be approved.

II. School Readiness Provider Reports January 2022 – School Readiness Program Directors

Provider reports are attached as Addendums A, B, C and D.

III. School Readiness Liaison Update – Donna Arcuri

- December Utilization(CLC) FD-340/425, ED 53/60—PD 28/28 Received full reimbursement with the 25% supplement (BOE) SD 16/16— Full reimbursement
- During the first week of January 2022, the City of Stamford distributed an average of about 10 boxes of Covid rapid tests to licensed center-based preschool providers. Fire Department and Police Department distributed these to the centers.
- The OEC offered rapid test and N95 mask distributions. Donna and a colleague picked up and distributed to each center.
- AOK picked up and distributed to Stamford's Family childcare providers. .
- Revised Memo 43 – State funded programs will continue to receive a 25% Supplement until March 2022.
- School Readiness FY22 Expenditure Reports are due on January 31.
- FY22 2nd Quarter monitoring will be completed by the end of the January and reports will be provided.
- The OEC will continue to cover background check and fingerprinting cost until April 1 and available in Stamford at the Adult Education Building.
- Vaccination availability information is shared with providers as it is received.
- ECE Reporter deadline – CLC may not be able to meet the deadline to have all children entered in the system. The OEC has not granted access to staff responsible for entering the date.
- The Stamford Health Department gave three presentations to childcare providers. Webinars were offered one evening and one in Spanish. These webinars were specifically tailored for family childcare providers. The third was a review and update on new guidelines.
- Staffing shortages and classroom closures in the community are also causing difficulty for preschool children receiving special education services at APPLES.
- Donna reported the results of a survey taken from Stamford center-based providers. The survey polled centers regarding staffing shortages and the effects on their program. Twenty-eight sites participate in a survey. About half of Stamford's center-based programs responded. Results are included as Addendum E.
- When classrooms are closed, special education services can only be offered virtually.
- Kendra Brown discussed the challenges in providing special education services because of differing policies from the Department of Education and the Office of Early Childhood.
- Kendra also shared the challenges of differing quarantine policies of programs and children who receive the special education services at APPLES.
- Donna suggested all in attendance bookmark the City of Stamford links for Covid-19 vaccine offerings and Covid-19 testing sites.

IV. Early Childhood Center Update – Kendra Brown, SPS

- Kendra reiterated that Stamford was accepted and is on the list to build an early childhood center in.

- Facilities meetings are ongoing and Kendra will continue to provide information as she learns it.
- 20% of the cost will be reimbursed by the State of Ct and the remainder of the cost will be the responsibility of the City.

V. Covid-19 Early Childhood Updates- Nathalie Tocci, Care to Care Manager – Family Centers Nurse Consultant

- Nathalie gave a public thank you to Stamford’s Health Department and the support they have provided to childcare providers.
- Nathalie announced she will wait to hear Commissioner Beth Bye’s announcement tomorrow.
- 5 day Quarantine is meant for adults who after 5 days with no symptoms can return to work if they can remain masked and isolate.
- Children under 5 years old are unable to mask like an adult.

VI. Cradle to Career Update – Tashi Shuler Drakes, United Way

- Tashi was unable to provide an update.

VII. Announcements

- None

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Addendum A

Stamford BOE @ Rippowam School Readiness Council Report

January 2022

Theme: Winter, Snow, Hibernation

- Focus questions: What do you notice about winter? Why do animals hibernate? What happens when it snows?

Home school connection:

- Decorate a snowman with their families, Culture week presentations, Hibernation Day

Block center:

- Adding characters from The Mitten on the blocks and a big mitten for retell/ hibernation cave in block center, cotton balls for snow

Story focus:

- The Mitten, Bear Snores On, Snowmen at Night, Over and Under, Snowballs

Literacy:

- Heggerty phonemic awareness curriculum, writing names, writing letters with curved lines, onset rime and syllable games/ sorting by initial sound

Math:

- Bear counting game (roll dice and put that many bears in the cave), measuring a bear with cubes and bears, matching snowmen shapes

Art:

- Snowy painting scene, snowflakes, mitten collage, self-portraits, sleepy bear craft, free paint with "icy paint" salt in paint, snowman painting

Writing:

- I feel like a sleepy bear when_____
My new year goal is_____
Who is your favorite character from The Mitten?
Name Writing

Science:

- Ice experiment/ nature walk to observe changes in winter

Fine Motor:

- Tweezer marshmallows in a snowman water bottle/ finger gym (beads, marbles, golf tees, playdoh cutting)

February 2022

Themes:

- Healthy Habits, Friendship, Black History Month

Dramatic Play:

- Doctor's Office

Math:

- Sorting healthy foods, measuring food containers with cubes/ teddy bears, measuring height/weight in doctor's office, heart counting, sorting healthy vs. not healthy foods

Art:

- painting with toothbrushes, healthy food collages, heart stamping, tissue paper hearts, painting with celery and carrots, February self-portrait

Writing:

- Healthy food words, Valentine's Day letters, "I love _____", healthy grocery list

Science:

- tasting different healthy foods and graphing favorite, candy heart STEM activity

Sensory table:

- rice with Valentine's Day objects and letters on hearts, measuring cups

Literacy:

- dentist vocabulary syllable sort, rhyming doctor office words, black history month study- Jackie Robinson, Heggerty

Library:

- Books about healthy habits/ friendship/ Black History Month

Social emotional:

- Compliment circle, kindness chain

Fine motor:

- dental playdoh center, cutting/ snipping practice

Homeschool Connection:

- Culture Week

Blocks:

- build with healthy foods, healthy food boxes, build a grocery store

Addendum B

School Readiness Report
Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County
January 2022

CLC William Pitt/ CLC Lockwood

- **Program Utilization:** Hours of Operation 7:30am-5:30pm (M-F)
William Pitt has 1 classroom closed.

Total children enrolled SR: 322
Lockwood classrooms total: 53 children
William Pitt classrooms total: 269 children

Classrooms PARTIALLY CLOSED due to a positive case of Covid-19. ALL classrooms offer Distance Learning using Google classroom:

Clusters B & E & F from Jan 18-25

Cluster C from Jan 19-31

Lockwood 16 from Jan 28-Feb 7

Provided separate entrances and traffic patterns in the building. Children and teachers are required to wear masks. Teachers provide children mask breaks through-out the day. Family members are also required to wear a mask for drop off and pick up. Families do not enter our buildings.

- **Staffing:**

Open positions include: (1) Head Teacher, (3) Teacher (2) Assistant Teachers, (4) Teacher Aide Full time, (3) Teacher Aide Part time. All classrooms satisfy QSM requirements.

- **Curriculum Focus:**

- a. Teachers are preparing **Learning Experience Plans** based on the CTELDS and the individual needs of the children.
- b. Teachers focusing on **Preschool RULER**- Reinforcing Emotional Intelligence in the classroom. Especially during the pandemic, this area has been addressed carefully.
- c. **Monitoring of Classrooms:** Environments -Educ Coordinators
- d. **Family Support/Engagement:** Due to Covid protocols which prohibits families access to the classroom for safety precautions, teachers reach out to families to share information about their child's day through:
 1. Newsletters- monthly
 2. Emails - check in, including photos

3. Monthly Family Engagement Grid-emailed to families

- **Collaborations/Donations/Volunteers**
 - a. Columbia: Nurture Science Intervention Program
 - b. Stepping Stones
 - c. Vita Co-Educators 3.0 -Family Centers
 - d. SPS
 - e. Bruce Museum
 - f. Child Guidance

- **Specials/Family Engagement:**
 - a. Parent Advisory Council
 - b. Family volunteer Read Aloud virtual 1/10
 - c. Lunch & Learn: Simply Dental 1/19
 - d. Bookmobile
 - e. Parent/Teacher Conferences
 - f. Home/School Connections: Winter experiments, self portraits, snow activities, STEAM activity: Not a Box



- **Monthly Meetings:**

- a. Education Coordinators
- b. Instructional Coordinators
- c. Head Teacher
- d. Cluster/classroom meeting
- e. Component
- f. SRBI
- g. Apples/Itinerant services

- **Professional Development:**

- a. CPR/First Aid- American Red Cross 1/24
- b. Classroom Environments 1/12 and 1/13
- c. NAEYC Criteria 1/25
- d. Classroom Supervision 1/18

- **Next Month:**

- a. Bookmobile- limited access
- b. Professional Development
- c. Parent Advisory Council
- d. Lunch & Learn
- e. Pop up Webinars

Addendum C

**CLC
Palmers Hill, Westover, Franklin Commons, Lathon Wider
January 2022**

Program Enrollment

- State Funded Preschool Serving 172

Staff Opening

Child Development Program teacher positions openings:

- Teacher Aide (CD Floater)
- Teacher Aide (PH Room 8)
- Assistant Teacher (Franklin Commons Room 1)
- Assistant Teacher (Lathon Wider Room A)
- Teacher (Lathon Wider Room B)
- Head Teacher (Lathon Wider Room C)

Family Engagement

- Google Classroom- All Child Development Program classes use Google Classroom to communicate with their families. Teachers share pictures, classroom activities, classroom newsletters, and upcoming events. A Family Learning Plan is also shared with suggestions of activities to help extend classroom learning to the home environment.
- G Meets and phone check-ins with teachers/staff/families as necessary, particularly during room closure due to COVID
- Emails to families that share, Health updates (vaccines), Family Training Opportunities, Community Events, CLC Newsletters, etc.
- Sparkler Program App introduced to all new Infant/Toddler families
- Columbia- Family Nurturing Intervention Program (FNI)
- Co Educators Parent Program
- Lunch and Learn for Families and Parent Advisory Council (Simply Dental/CLC Gmail Account Overview) 1/19 at 12pm
- Virtual Parent -Teacher Conferences throughout the month.

Virtual Meetings/Trainings

- CLC Senior Staff Meetings (Mondays)
- Alliance Meetings (Monday, Wednesday weekly)
- Child Development Education Team Meeting (Mondays)
- CLC Combined Component Meeting; SR and CD Health, Nutrition, Family Service and Education Department, 1/6
- SR Council Meeting, 1/13
- CLC FACE Committee Meeting, 1/14
- OEC Commissioner Bye and DPH Webinar, 1/14
- CLC/Columbia FNI Program Meeting, 1/18
- RULER Agency Implementation Team Meeting, 1/19
- Lunch and Learn /PAC (Simply Dental/CLC Gmail account overview),1/19
- CD Head Teacher's Meeting, 1/19
- SC2C CAN Meeting, 1/20
- CLC/Co-Educators Program Meeting, 1/25

- OEC Webinar- Qualified Workforce Incentives (QWI), 1/26
- Assistant Teacher and Teacher Aide Meeting, 1/26
- Child Development Program Component Meeting Health, Nutrition, Family Service and Education Department, 1/27
- Standards, Assessments and Curriculum offered through the OEC, monthly, February through June

Volunteers/ Collaboration

In celebration of CLC's 120th anniversary we are launching '120 Readers'. We look forward to having our community partners read virtually to our children throughout the year!

Classroom Learning Experiences

This month's areas of focus are Winter and Hibernation

Some of the children's literature used in January's learning experience plans:

- *The Snowy Day* -Ezra Jack Keats
- *Snowball* -Lois Ehlert
- *The Biggest Snowman* -Steven Kroll
- *The Lonely Snowflake*-Patrick Stemp
- *Pete the Cat Snow Daze*- James Dean
- *Chicken Soup with Rice* – Maurice Sendak
- *The Mitten* -Jan Brett
- *Bear Snores On*- Karma Wilson

Examples of learning experiences extended from the books read:

- The children learned winter songs and rhymes
- Teacher lead discussions consisting of open ended questions about winter, changes taking place with the weather and how these changes affect animals and people
- In the block area children explored and used recycled materials, blocks, and winter animals to create winter scenes and structures; such as snow covered mountains, ice castles, caves, etc.
- Pretend play and winter dress up in the dramatic play area
- Mitten counting and sorting experiences
- Water and ice investigation in the sensory table
- Using playdough, the children made snowballs of different sizes, ordered them by size and counted them

- Working with different art materials the children made snow people and snowflakes
- Using the book, *Bear Snores On*, and a flannel board, teachers had the children put the animal characters into the cave in the order they went in as told in the story
- The children enjoyed acting out the story, *The Mitten* as the teacher assisted them with taking turns and encouraged them to choose their own characters. Props were made by the children such as, various mittens of all sizes and texture

Home/School Connection Activities:

- Links to winter stories were sent home on google classroom for the children to listen to with their families. After listening to the stories they were asked to draw a picture of their favorite characters and also share with their friends (on google classroom) which story and characters were their favorites.
- After learning about and discussing hibernation at school the teacher sent home a heart shaped piece of cardboard, cereal and a string. The families were asked to spread cream cheese or butter onto the heart shaped cardboard and then cover it with the cereal. The string was added so the bird feeder could be hung outside. The children were instructed to watch from their window and share with their teacher and classmates what type of birds they observed visiting the feeder. The families posted on google classroom pictures of the heart shaped bird feeders they had made.

Addendum D

School Readiness Report
Childcare Learning Centers, Inc.
Maple Avenue SR/HS Classrooms 2, 3, 7, 11

January 2022

- Program Utilization
 - a. Authorized Capacity: – 240– Full Day; 20- Extended Day= 60
 - b. Enrolled: 74 (just SR rooms)
 - c. Ages (on site): 3 year olds-28; 4 year olds-46; 5 year olds-0
 - d. Children with disabilities: - IEP; – 6
 - e. Average Daily Attendance: 73%
 - f. Number of children attending on site- 74
 - g. Number of children enrolled in distant learning- N/A
- Program Attendance:
 - a. 85% of slot Utilization –November

CLC Maple Avenue

- Staffing:
 - Open Positions- Room 2 Teacher Aide

- Activities/Enrichment/Specials: Teachers are finishing the Exercise unit of study, and will be starting the unit of study on clothes in January.

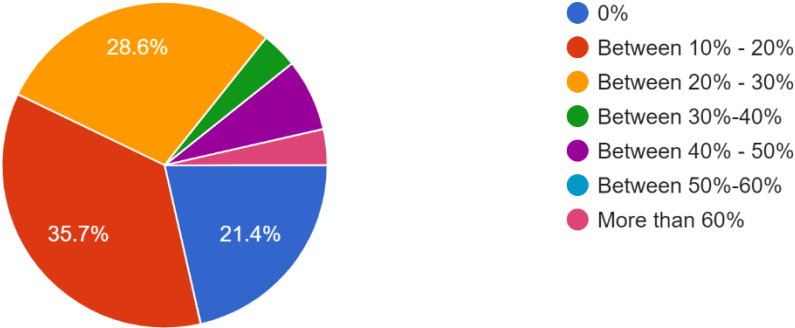
- Monthly Meetings:

Curriculum Collaboration Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief transition to remote learning 1/3-1/10.• Finished unit of study on exercise, began unit on clothes	Staff Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual Language & Literacy training from Teaching Strategies 1/14/22	<u>Community Involvement / Enrichment Program:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Filling in the blanks dry goods food distribution
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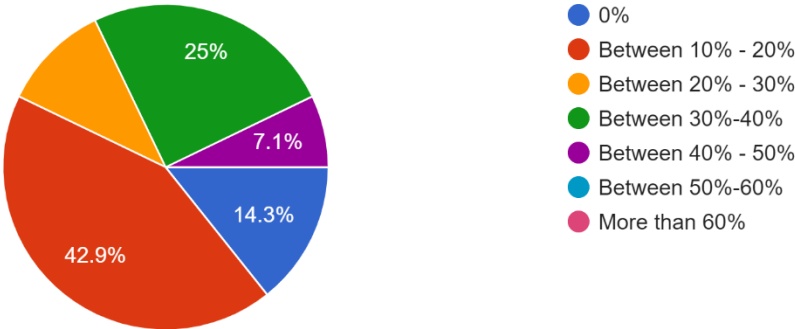
- Next Month
 - a. Policy Council February Meeting,
 - b. School Readiness Council January Meeting
 - c. February 11th CLC Early Dismissal

Addendum E

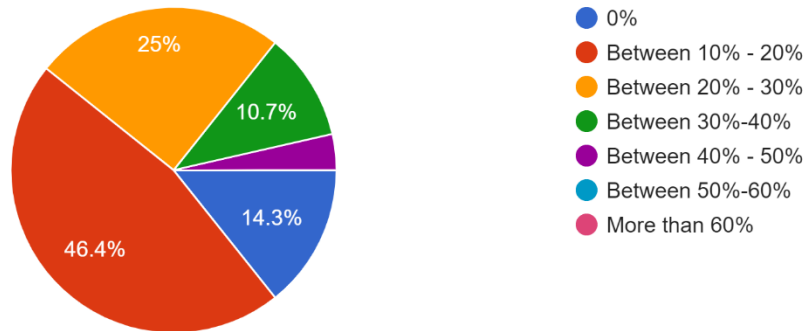
Between September 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 please provide the percentage of staff that were unable to come to work due to: Covid-19 ...ll Staff Amount. 10 absent ÷ 30 Total Staff = 33%)
28 responses



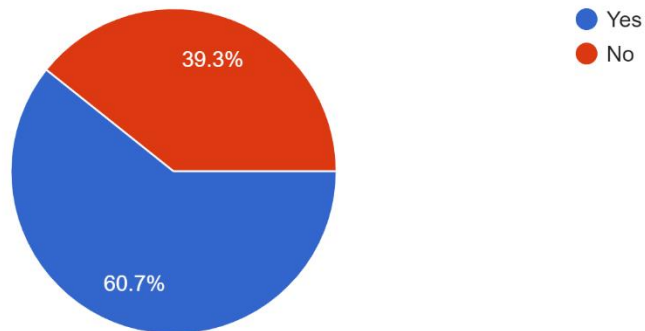
Since January 1, 2022 until your completion of this survey, please provide the percentage of staff that were unable to come to work due to: Covid-19 ...ll Staff Amount. 10 absent ÷ 30 Total Staff = 33%)
28 responses



Since September 1, 2021 until your completion of this survey, please provide the percentage of staff openings in your center unrelated to Covid-1... Amount. 10 absent ÷ 30 Total Staff Needed = 33%)
28 responses

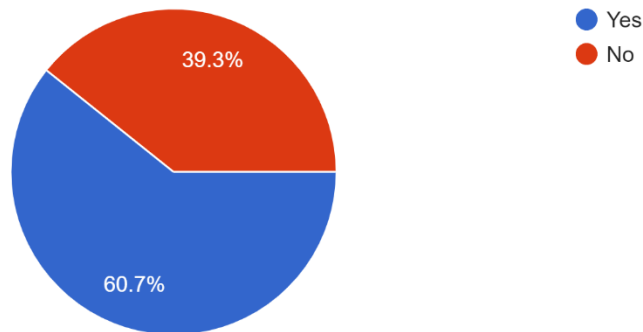


Has your program had staff shortages that impacted classroom closures?
28 responses



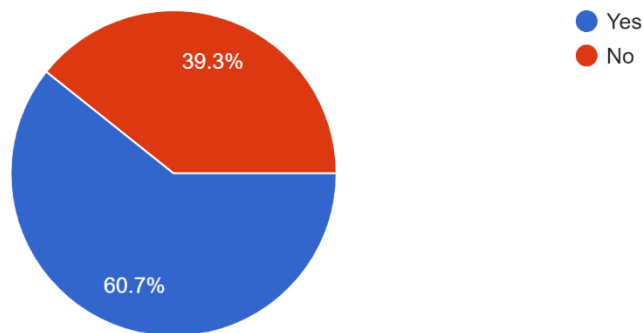
Are any classrooms in your program not enrolled at full capacity because of lack of staff?

28 responses



Have you chosen not to enroll at full capacity of of the fear of staffing shortages?

28 responses



Hello---although we have the 13 sites for staffing I look at it as 1 center many classroom---if you really need to see it split out I could go back and check the names and match them to the centercook at it

Staff got hit with COVID during Winter Break, making it impossible to open 1/3 to 1/7/22. Last year, September 2020 to August 2021, we could not find staff to hire. It was a very challenging year.

STAFFING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH COVID AND OEC REQUIREMENT OF HAVING ALL STAFF FINGERPRINTED PRIOR TO STARTING AND FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENTS ARE RARELY AVAILABLE DUE TO COVID

no

We are very small, only have 4 staff members but quarantine requirements have been impacting our operations throughout the pandemic. We also list must if our substitutes.

We had to close a classroom last week due to staff shortages that were due to covid

I have had two teachers leave in December due to better paying jobs.