

Parenting Education Program Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2024- 2:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Joe DiTunno; Jill Davies; Kari Adamsons; Douglas Edwards; Maureen Donegan; William Brown (virtual); Michael Werner; Wanda Huertas (staff member). One member of the public observed the meeting.

Member Regrets: Judge Diana

Meeting called to order at 2:12 p.m.

Agenda, Parenting Education Program statistics were distributed to committee members.

I. Parenting Education Program (PEP) Videos

Joe presented two PEP videos for the judicial website to the committee members. The Committee felt the videos were great. They felt that the longer video would be best for training court personnel and the shorter video would be best for the public viewing. Wanda will send out the PEP videos to the Committee via email for their further review and will provide suggestions to Wanda and Joe.

II. Annual Training

The PEP Providers Annual Training was held on September 20th. The first half of the training was on “Pandemic Aftershock: A crisis in children’s mental health,” and the second half was a panel discussion on the Parenting Education Program with a few PEP Advisory Committee members. Overall, the PEP providers were pleased with the training and reported they were able to gain more knowledge on the training topic and panel discussion.

III. Parenting Education Program Advisory Committee Membership

CCFSA is requested to be on the PEP Advisory Committee. Since it is in the middle of the term, the committee tabled the request until the end of the membership term in August 2025.

IV. PEP Focus Groups

Discussion regarding focus groups. Wanda reported that she held two focus groups this summer with PEP facilitators (new and seasoned) and PEP administrators to discuss the future of PEP. The following were the focus group’s main themes:

- Parents prefer virtual classes vs. in-person classes
- low enrollment
- strategies they use to boost enrollment for their classes
- Benefits to in-person classes: more valuable, participants learn from one another, greater level of participation, more spontaneous for participants, virtual format has a lag time for participation

- Benefits to virtual classes: convenience for participants, childcare, more comfortable in virtual class (anxiety in group setting),
- Suggestions on improving both in-person and virtual format: Train facilitators on adult learning theory, create break out rooms in virtual format

V. PEP Stats

The stats were presented to the committee showing the comparison of January-September 2023 and January-September 2024. In January-September 2023 there were 3250 PEP completers. In January-September 2024 there were 3307 PEP completers. There were 610 fee waivers in 2023 and 632 fee waivers in 2024. Joe reported that he presented the Parenting Education Program and the statistics to the judges in the Fall. He reported that PEP may not get 8,000 completers as in the past, possibly due to parents going to final judgement without completing PEP and/or collaborative divorce. There was discussion on mediators filing in family court on behalf of their clients. Joe agreed to talk to Court Operations of this possibility.

VI. PEP Research-UCONN

Joe reported that Kari Adamsons with the assistance of a UCONN graduate will possibly conduct research on the Parenting Education Program in the Northeast States.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.