

Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and TRAINING COMMITTEE Joint meeting of the Staff Development and Training Committee and Quality Initiative Committee

The Landings, 1960 Landings Boulevard, Sarasota
Blue Awning Building, Room 219
March 19, 2007

MINUTES

ATTENDEES		
Wendy Harris	Janet Kahn	Venise Duchesne
Kerri Deiffenwierth	Mary Wolf	Karen Murdock
Kathleen Sullivan	Dianne Rose	Tynisha Wynder
Jill Jacoby	Eva Balcar	Sandy Zook

CALL TO ORDER.

The meeting was call to order by the Chairperson for the Quality Initiative Committee, Wendy Harris at 9:40 a.m.

OLD BUSINESS.

(None)

NEW BUSINESS.

A. General discussion to finalize subcommittees and work of this committee-

- Committee structure: Wendy began the discussion stating that last meeting the committee had not yet set times for the subcommittees to meet, but facilitators for several of the committees had been named. Mary Wolf had agreed to head the Literacy subcommittee, Kathleen Sullivan the DECA subcommittee. Kathleen expressed a concern with overlap of participants in more than one subcommittee. Many of the committee members agreed. Mary suggested dividing the committee meetings into one or two discussion topics each month. The entire committee would participate in discussion, and then if a subcommittee needs to form to do additional work as a short-term task group, then committee members may volunteer for that. The committee members all agreed this was the best approach.
- Quality Rating System Janet reported that on a statewide basis, Coalition staff who already have Quality Rating Systems in place have been working together to combine their various systems into a model agreed to by consensus. They then took the original state model, and cross-referenced this against the consensus model to see where there are still differences. The chairs of the Coalitions will continue to advocate for a statewide QRS system to be in place. There is a QRS bill in the House and Senate and has made it through several committees. This bill would create a Pilot Quality Rating System, but the "pilot" counties are actually the counties who already have rating systems in place. We will follow it closely to see what happens. This at least would establish a QRS at the state level. Janet informed the committee that the consensus rating system appears to be more restrictive and we want to make sure that any local system we implement is inclusive, allows all sites to participate, motivates sites toward making improvements, and is realistic given the child care community.

Virginia Myers and Dick Aubrey have committed to attend the ECERS training being offered this month in Polk county so that we can have some local individuals trained to reliability. The Coalition has not determined whether it will contract out the ECERS evaluation component or develop a local community team. To use a local team, the Coalition must be careful that no one on the team has a conflict of interest with any site. If the team is contracted out, the Coalition may try a regional swap with another county who has a rating system. Janet urged anyone interested in working on this project to attend the Quality Rating System Committee meetings. The next full Quality Child Care Council Meeting is April 4th, and the Sarasota Committee will meet before then and receive copies of what the council will be discussing. Janet did affirm that in the beginning the rating system will be voluntary, but if a site receives scholarship children, they will eventually be required to participate. There is also provisions for community outreach and preparation for the rating system to take effect, because the goal is to have sites move up in quality and facilitate improvement.

Kathleen mentioned it would be nice for the mentors at SCTI to have the ECERS training so that when mentors are assisting sites, they can mentor to the tool used for the rating system. After Ginny and Dick have the training, they can train providers and mentors on the tool itself. Mary was previously trained as an ECERS assessor and she too can train within the community.

Janet shared with the committee that she recently saw Claire Burnett, the nurse who performs the annual hearing and vision screenings and Claire mentioned that she has noticed a big change in quality over the past two years in Sarasota County.

- Professional Development Issues: Janet initiated a discussion about professional development, stating that 47% of teachers in the field currently have only a high school diploma, which means we have lost ground in this area. The committee agreed the next meeting will be focused on strategizing about professional development, how to assist teachers to achieve a minimum of a CDA, and incentives that can be offered to keep qualified staff in the field. Another issue is once a teacher receives a CDA, what is next for those teachers and what kind of follow up should take place once trainings are completed to see how information from trainings are being implemented and shared in child care centers.

Kathleen reiterating that she wants to be available for professional development and other discussions as well as DECA. Wendy mentioned that she wants to begin implementing the DECA more in the Children First sites. The entire committee felt that a group with a background in the DECA training should form with discussions focusing on identifying supplemental trainings on literacy, math, science, and challenging behavior. This group should then come back to the professional development committee to report their ideas. Wendy and Kerri both felt trainings discussing the effects when responsive care giving does not take place are important. Also, trainings need to be designed to reach all types of learners. Mary added that an emphasis should be placed on not blaming the child-- instead giving assistance and support for teachers to change their behavior in the classroom. The committee again emphasized the importance having a better follow-up with trainings that are given throughout the year. Venise added that a conference she went to discussed that people change their ideas of how things are when they are allowed to discover the benefits of the change through their own "data" experience. Dianne agreed stating that she is currently working with a teacher who threw her out of her classroom a year ago. Events over the last year changed her thinking and now they are working together for improvement and change in the teacher's classroom. Kathleen suggested requiring teachers to come with their team, or at least one other person from their staff. Have a reflective checklist and allow teachers to work together to complete the homework.

Another concern raised was English language acquisition for children who do not speak English. The English language acquisition trainings are currently offered, but are not free to the community.

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- Literacy Training: Mary asked who would like to be involved with the planning for the literacy training. There will be 3 trainings with the focus on three different age groups beginning at the end of June. Tynisha volunteered and mentioned a substitute with the Florida Center has a background in literacy. Dianne also volunteered.
- Standards Trainings: There is a need to conduct Standards Trainings for Birth the Three. Currently Dianne does VPK Standards Training, but there needs to be a reemphasis on the birth to three age group, and we need to ensure that all teachers are getting the 3-5 standards training, as there are many who are not VPK teachers. The second is English language acquisition for children who do not speak English. The English language acquisition trainings are currently offered, but are not free to the community. Another training concern raised by the committee is the online classes currently offered as free, will no longer be free, additionally these classes are only offered online, not in a classroom setting. Venise shared that she knew the classes were no longer going to be free, but she did not know when exactly that change would take place. The committee discussed holding trainings around those topics in order to assist teachers with retention and understanding of the important information contained in those online classes.

Other trainings:

- Dianne is considering and thinking of ways to develop a small hands-on math training to run continuously, not this year, but definitely next year. Venise volunteered to assist.
- A question was raised by Karen regarding the disaster preparation training. Janet informed that it would encompass preparedness in the center, working with children during disaster, counseling and assisting children after disaster. This would be a one time training. The committee will not be involved in the planning of the training, but it is important for everyone to know what is coming up.
- Tynisha reported that the Florida Center has been doing a make and take series on picture schedules and using pictures in the classroom, then following up with the teachers who attend. The mentoring is really making a difference, and teachers are seeing the results from implementing these new ideas they are taking with them back to the classroom.
- Karen raised a concern with the number of challenging behavior children being referred to the Florida Center. She was unsure if the rise was because it is nearing the end of the school year, or if there was another factor involved. One three year old had been kicked out of four centers and is now looking for another placement. Janet reminded the committee when children are referred they should be cross checked and referred to the Early Childhood Mental Health Partnership grant Sarasota County has received. Karen reported there were 4 referrals last week from one center in South Sarasota County. Many of the trainings occurring are in Sarasota need to be repeated in South County as well. The committee thought that between more trainings focusing on challenging behavior and the Creative Curriculum Assessment Project, that could be the reason for the increase in warm line calls and referrals.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

- Tynisha reported the Challenging Behavior Conference she recently attended was really helpful and was a great opportunity to recharge and energize. She also stated that after speaking with people from across the United States she felt that that Sarasota County was doing pretty good and everyone should be proud of themselves. Some of the themes discussed included building relationships with the teachers you mentor, team trust and as the committee discussed earlier- training vs. follow-up vs. mentoring. One handout she received showed that the amount of information that reaches the classroom after training without follow up is 0%, from workshops is 0%, but from mentoring/consulting is 94%. The committee requested a copy of the paper from Tynisha, and she agreed to provide that for everyone via email. She went on to add that she wished there could be more collaboration between the Florida Center and SCTI mentors, and she felt this could happen within the DECA conversations.
- Karen reported that the Center for Autism Related Disabilities (CARD) has a website you can look up trainings/ open houses and workshops. Some of their information include picture scheduling, queuing with picture cards and other trainings similar to the trainings the Florida Center has been giving. There is either not a lot of cost, or no cost.
- Janet reported to the group there is currently a bill that might move all the early learning functions, including child care licensing, credentialing, everything into one office under the governor.
- Mary informed the group that the ELC has taken over the Director's Connection. Kerri will be the facilitator, but there is still not a place to hold the meetings. The group threw out some ideas regarding where to hold the Director's Connection, but nothing was decided. Pines of Sarasota, St. Wilfred, SCTI, Temple Emanuel, Ascension Lutheran, Temple Beth Shalom, the Landings, a public library, Park Colonial and Community Bible Chapel were all suggested.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Kerri announced that she has business cards and will be working from home, and contracting with the Coalition for certain services such as assisting sites still involved in accreditation with support groups and work through the director's connection. She had been involved in Club Ed in South County, which provided high end information to directors which was in line with the ECERS & ITERS. A form of Club Ed will be opened to all of Sarasota County.

Kerri also validates accreditation for 3 national accreditation agencies and is very familiar with a fourth.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36am. The next meeting will be on Monday, April 23, 2007 at 9:30 am at The Landings.

Sandy Zook