

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SARASOTA COUNTY  
The Landings, 1960 Landings Boulevard, Sarasota  
Blue Awning Building, Room 219  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and TRAINING COMMITTEE**  
**Joint meeting of the Staff Development and Training Committee and Quality  
Initiative Committee**  
May 21, 2007

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES**

Wendy Harris	Janet Kahn	Venise Duchesne
Kerri Deiffenwirth	Mary Wolf	Jackie Fountaine
Kathleen Sullivan	Dianne Rose	Sandy Zook
Eva Balcar		

**CALL TO ORDER.**

The meeting was call to order by the Chairperson Wendy Harris at 9:40 a.m.

**OLD BUSINESS.**

- QRS update- Janet announced that the ELC and the Quality Child Care Council is proceeding with plans to implement the rating system, hopeful that all matching funds will be secured. If the ELC does not receive all the matching funds, we will still be able to do a small pilot with the existing quality funds within ELC. The project relies on everyone in the community to work together at a systems level to support child care centers in achieving professional development and high quality early learning environments. The ultimate goal is growth through quality improvements in all areas. The tool used to determine quality is based on research, including what other communities that have a quality rating system have used; however there is room for changes if needed. A preliminary unofficial pilot has begun using sites that are currently receiving mentoring through SCTI in order to test the rating system. The official pilot is scheduled to begin this fall, and will be voluntary to participate in its initial phases.
- DECA update- On May 31 there will be a DECA retreat for everyone who attended DECA training in the last year. This will lead to a plan for the year to re-introduce DECA within the community on a widespread scale.

**NEW BUSINESS.**

- ELC Training Plan for July 2007- June 2008-  
The group reviewed a tentative schedule of trainings for the new fiscal/program year:
  - SCTI has agreed to do an ongoing DECA series for their monthly trainings next year.
  - In November, the ELC has planned for a mini-conference on Performance Standards. Since we will once again tie the mini-grants to how they reflect utilization of the Standards within the classroom, the mini-grant

application will be sent out after the conference, while standards are still fresh in the providers' minds.

- Jackie suggested adding training to offer information for VPK providers about assessment tools available. Everyone agreed that would be a good addition to that mini-conference.
- Actually, there needs to be a series of training on assessments: basic assessments, the Creative Curriculum specifically as so many are using that as their curriculum, and overview of a variety of supplemental tools, and bilingual assessment.
- Kathleen and Jackie also agreed training for teaching to children who are bilingual/ Spanish only speakers is needed. It was suggested also including information about bilingual assessments available to child care providers.
- Another issue that came up for discussion is how we can truly recognize and reward teachers and child care centers that attend trainings, participate in assessments, and complete the Coalition Agreement and Self Assessment. It was suggested that a cumulative point system could be kept where at the end of the year there could be some type of recognition, but was agreed it would be time consuming and some trainings might need to be weighted more than other trainings. The committee decided the best way to determine a method for recognition would be to ask the teachers that attend the trainings to get additional ideas.
- There was also discussion on how to have knowledge gained in trainings result in actual implementation in the classroom. Suggestions included having a series of trainings on a topic and award CEUs if the series was completed, which would allow time between trainings for teachers to put ideas into practice and then discuss what worked and what didn't at the next session (they could even bring pictures of projects in their classrooms). Also mentioned was an idea that is already in place to some extent, of having mentors attend trainings with teachers and then assist teachers to implement what they learned in the training in the classroom.
- Importance of Coordinating Trainings and Avoiding Duplication- The committee agreed that having this committee approved calendar, using pre-determined themes for trainings along with knowing what other programs are doing in the community will be helpful to be assured that there is not duplication of trainings and improving the strength of the training partnerships already in place. We want to also reinforce the knowledge from trainings that providers have taken in other trainings, mentoring, etc. We are also going to continue to examine the feasibility of clustering trainings within mini-regions in the county.
- Implementing Centralized Recruitment-
- The committee continued to address the issue of turnover in child care centers. It is a goal to move toward centralization of child care teacher recruitment. Currently the STAR (Substitute) Program centralizes recruitment for several local participating centers. As part of the process, there is orientation and training completed before the subs are placed in classrooms. As a result, they are more adequately prepared for what to expect. There has been little turnover among the

sub pool, except for anticipated ones such as graduating college, moving back to their hometowns, etc.

- The ELC could hold an Early Childhood Career Fair and notices could go to the college community as well as the young retirees in the community.
- Many centers are desperate for teachers, so orientations and introductions are often put off and teachers are thrown right into the classrooms, become overwhelmed and end up quitting days or weeks after starting the position. By centralizing recruitment, this could help prevent this from happening.
- Venise works with local high schools that offer early childhood education programs. She informed the group that the programs are very thorough and some students even graduate having completed their 40 hours. This is a group that could be recruited into local child cares, then have their CDA ~~college~~ paid for through the SCTI Apprenticeship Program or the TEACH scholarship, which will also pay for college courses. She meets again with the coordinators in August and will raise this issue with them and see how this can be coordinated more effectively with the ELC. Right now they have programs in Booker, North Port Cysis, Venice, and Lakewood Ranch.
- Boot Camp for New Teachers- Speaking of centralized recruitment and teacher turnover led the committee to revisit the idea of a core, centralized plan for training for new teachers to improve retention. Kerri was asked by the ELC to create an outline for “boot camp”, beginning with the directors and then moving to teachers. It will centralize new teacher orientation and encourage networking with other teachers in the field. The new teacher orientation, will not just be training, but include mentoring to assist teachers with retaining information and reinforcing good classroom habits.
- Children First is considering establishing an ongoing recruitment and training program just for their sites. Combining efforts and collaborating on this process will be explored further.

#### **OTHER DISCUSSION.**

- ELC staff raised the idea for consideration to have a Math and Science theme for the January Provider Conference. It was agreed that this would be a great topic and there is a lot of momentum locally as well as a push nationally for more math and science integration in child care. It will be a great opportunity to show connections between math, science and literacy as well.
- Eva suggested having a new director orientation to assist new directors and calling it Director 9-1-1! It was agreed that sometimes teachers with tenure are thrown into director situations when a director leaves a center. The teacher is often unprepared for all the paperwork and administrative duties. Eva reported that when a new director is hired she is often called to spend a half a day with the new director trying to assist her with organization. Mary asked Eva to call the Coalition when these situations occur so that Coalition staff can assist with the transition in the meantime. This idea will be added as a placeholder for further exploration by the committee.
- A reminder that the new term ECPC should be used: Early Childhood Professional Certificate

- The committee also raised the issue of “clustering” smaller sites to share resources in order to be able to participate in the STAR, sub pool project. Maybe sites with less than a certain number of children could be eligible for that. Sandy can evaluate if and how this might work.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

- The Math and Science subcommittee met during the month and decided to postpone the math and science training series until after the January conference. The training should have more momentum after the provider conference if the topic is Math and Science. The subcommittee will meet again before the next Professional Development Committee to review some materials ordered and being considered to use for the trainings.
- Eva announced that the Affidavit of Good Moral Character and the Supplement to the Child Care Application have changed and no longer requires notarization.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24am. The next meeting will be on Monday, June 18, 2007 at 9:30 am at The Landings.

Sandy Zook