



## EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SARASOTA COUNTY

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Human Services Center, 1750 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Sarasota  
February 25, 2008

#### MINUTES

##### ATTENDEES

Kerri Dieffenwierth	Dr. Kathryn Stuckey	Mary Wolf	Venise Duchesne
Wendy Harris	Kathleen Sullivan	Janet Kahn	Dianne Rose
Erin Lawrence	Marjorie Fondacaro	Eva Balcar	

#### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson Wendy Harris at 10:06 a.m.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### QRIS Update

- Janet reported that the Devereux Florida team is here doing assessments. Preliminary results have been received for the first group of sites that were assessed and aside from one surprise correspond with what was expected.
- Various members of the board posed specific questions about the system. Janet responded that initially, 96 sites and 35 family homes will be evaluated by Devereux's 8-person team and that it is required for all assessments to be completed by the end of April. There are a minimum of 2 assessments for each child care center; sites with over 100 children are given additional assessments in proportion to the number of children served. Sites that score below a certain level in specific areas will have an additional screening. Visits are unannounced.
- Mary reviewed the QRIS Center-Based chart with the Committee. It was noted that there is some flexibility in the professional development domain. Points can be awarded for specific achievements.
- Kerri asked about the issue of centers having licensing violations in teacher certification; how their rating would be affected. Mary responded that the site must rectify the situation before they can achieve a higher rating.
- Kathy Stuckey added that there is legislation in place to require teachers have an AS in childhood to teach VPK by 2010. Within the last 5 years the graduation rate has risen from 1 graduate a year in AAS to 12 a year within her program.
- Janet mentioned that bonus points are available for centers that already have teachers with that higher level of education, that elect to take in challenging children and have a commitment to assisting teachers' professional development.

- Kerri asked about the proposed timeline for improvement. Janet responded that sites are set up with a year-long plan. Sites that achieve a rating of 1 or 2 have 15 months to achieve a 3 rating; otherwise, state funds will be withdrawn. Those low-scoring centers already receive support from the Coalition and this may be an extra inducement for them to succeed.
- Wendy asked if participation among sites is voluntary. Janet said that sites that receive state funds are required to participate in the assessment, as it fulfills the Coalition's mandate to monitor and evaluate the learning environment. Sites can choose to decline the support and incentives, including the mentoring/coaching to achieve goals on the improvement plan. At the end of April, the Coalition and the QCC will consider how to release the results. There is still a debate about whether or not the Coalition should release all rates, release them provisionally, allow for some re-assessment in a timeframe less than a year for this first time. These are issues that the QCC needs to ultimately determine. Kerri suggested that if the results are not released the first year, it might be more of an incentive for sites to improve if they are aware the results will be released next year.
- Dates for QRIS meetings were presented. A handbook for providers is being finalized, will be distributed to all providers and will be put online.

### **DECA Update**

- Kathleen reported that the mentoring team she oversees is prepared to use the new tool. It is easier to use than the creative curriculum "crosswalk" and more expansive than the checklist. The SCTI mentors are continuing their monthly DECA training series, and have been requested to offer it again by several providers in South County. Kathleen noted that attendance at the DECA trainings has remained consistent, with no significant reduction in numbers.
- Mary mentioned that 23 people attended the DECA infant & toddler overview. The Coalition is committed to widespread training and support on using the DECA system.

### **Provider Conference**

- Mary presented the conference report. She noted that there was good representation in all breakouts, with the exception of the FCCH curriculum session. Highest numbers were for the 101 ideas to use with the sensory table.
- Janet noted that circle time is still a popular issue.
- Mary reported that the vast majority of attendees responded with positive feedback about all of the breakouts. Challenging behavior, art, and infant/toddler courses were most requested for the Conference next year.
- Kerri asked if there were any requests for accreditation and was informed that there were not many.
- Venise noticed the feedback from a few family providers that the licensing update was not tailored for them. It was suggested by the Committee to clarify descriptions next year to ensure the appropriate population attends each breakout.
- Kathy requested a list of attendees to the licensing course.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Janet detailed the Coalition's collaboration with Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health (SPCMH) contract. She reviewed the history of this grant, which has been discussed previously in this committee, and many members of this committee currently participate in some manner in the project. Our community received a SAMSA grant and is currently in its third year in six-year grant cycle. The focus is to create a system of care for

children ages birth through eight with mental health diagnoses. Wrap coordinators (case managers) are placed throughout different agencies in the community and are supervised by supervisors that are offsite. Children First, Coastal Behavioral, First Step, Jewish Family & Children Services, and the Florida Center are participating agencies. The concept is very family-driven.

- The Partnership is providing in-kind support to the QCC and the QRIS that includes Doreen Dziepak works with the Coalition on communications issue. Doreen Benson will not be coming to this Committee but will be working with us on communication with parents on various points.
- In addition, Rodney Jones will be joining the PDTQ Committee because he will be working with the Coalition on evaluating our cultural and linguistic competency as well as bringing that to the child care community. James Sawyer, the Youth Coordinator will also be working with us, and we are currently exploring what areas he would be involved.
- The Coalition will still continue with the challenging behaviors initiative, DECA training, and children that don't qualify for the SAMSA clinical services but clearly have difficulty functioning in our child care sites. Early intervention is key. Kathleen mentioned that there are many factors that contribute to a child's mental well-being, and all need to be considered and examined.
- Kathleen suggested in the challenging behavior training courses to provide more of a physical/physiological understanding of contributing causes, including current research on brain development.
- Janet mentioned that we will revisit the goal for next year for a centralized training and orientation plan. If it is decided as a community what a person needs before entering the classroom, the effect could be more focused and effective.

#### **OTHER DISCUSSION**

- Janet returned from statewide meeting last week where she attended a presentation by Palm Beach Community College on their professional development plan built around core competencies. Janet briefly discussed the framework of the core competencies system and passed around material describing the system from Palm Beach. This is something that we can look at implementing locally.
- The Committee discussed additional trainings to hold in the near future, for the remaining of this fiscal year. Janet proposed to bring back Betsy Thigpen for outdoor environment and to hold an infant/toddler training, based on the providers request, and the Florida Center may be contacted for a community wide challenging behavior training.
- Venise mentioned that several high schools are offering competency exams after offering the 40-hour training exams. She asked if there were any ideas as to funding for the exams. Janet said that with the idea of centralized recruitment it is foreseeable in the future to somehow allocate funds for people we know will enter the early childhood education field in our community.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next meeting will be back at the Landings.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m. The next meeting will be on Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM at The Landings, Room 218.

Erin Lawrence