



## **Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County**

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING & QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Landings, Blue Awning, Room 218  
Monday, March 24, 2008

### **MINUTES**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Wendy Harris	Janet Kahn	Dianne Rose
Rodney Jones	Eva Balcar	Dr. Ginny Myers
Marjorie Fondacaro	Mary Wolf	Jill Jacoby
Erin Lawrence	Kathleen Sullivan	James Sawyer

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

- The meeting was called to order by chair Wendy Harris at 10:03 am.
- Rodney Jones and James Sawyer were introduced to the Committee.
- The minutes were reviewed. Mary mentioned that some corrections were already noted.
- Wendy called for additional corrections and there were none.

#### **2. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **QRIS update**

- Janet reported that assessments are still being completed and will be through end of April. The anxiety level of sites is increasing, especially among family child care homes. Janet said the Coalition is waiting until all assessments are completed to review overall results and create a report of the aggregate data.
- At the Quality Child Care Council meeting members discussed preliminary results and how those results might be released to the public. The Council will fully discuss the various options for releasing the results to the public at its May meeting, once all the assessments are completed and full picture of the state of quality within our community is available. Mary mentioned that there have been positive surprises as well some disappointments.
- The Coalition is finalizing how the mentor/coaching will be structured and there are plans for mentor/coaches to attend a statewide coaches training in June. Janet said the Provider Handbook is finished and all of informational meetings went well overall.
- Family child care homes are more anxious than centers. Mary said Marjorie is planning a training series on the FCCERS to allay those fears and help them understand the specific areas on the FCCERS that are problematic for most of them.
- Kathleen asked if the Coalition's had concerns about the continued funding of the QRIS. Janet responded that there is a concern about funding given the dire economy, but she remains optimistic that enough matching funds will be secured so that the next year of GCCFV funds can be drawn down to continue the program. Even if funds are temporarily lost and the full program cannot be

implemented, the QRIS is still a great way to get a baseline of how our providers current level of quality across the community and will also help the Coalition tailor trainings to specifically what is needed.

**Trainings for remainder of year:**

- Mary said the coalition is confirming having Betsy Thigpen come back May 16 and 17. On the 17<sup>th</sup> she could present a “Train the Trainers” session from 9:00 to 3:00, covering outdoor environment as part of the daily curriculum, health benefits, challenging behavior, and other topics. This training would be limited to a maximum of 12 participants. The training on Saturday, May 17, would be for teachers, from 9:00 to 11:30 am. Mary asked the Committee if the May dates would work; the Committee agreed that would be a good choice.
- Wendy mentioned that it might be helpful for licensing to “endorse” some of the outdoor activities. That way, some of the apprehension of implementing new outdoor activities would be lifted. The Coalition will specifically request that licensing staff be present.
- Janet said to mention on the flyer for the training that there will also be tips for challenging behavior as one component of Betsy Thigpen’s training is the positive impact that appropriate outdoor play can have on this issue.
- Kathleen mentioned she was working with natural playscapes; Janet said that article would be great to distribute.
- Janet said also that the DECA training is one to focus on for the remainder of this program year.
- Kathleen said that the DECA series is happening currently in Sarasota and Venice and North Port is next on the agenda. She said she would be meeting with Mary the next week to finalize everyone’s duties with the DECA training. She said it seems that the training series is resulting in teachers being more inclined to implement what they’ve learned, perhaps because they are getting more comprehensive exposure to the DECA approach.
- Janet mentioned the fact that the DECA is very cost effective to implement and the Coalition will continue its emphasis on the DECA next year too.
- Dr. Myers said that there might be value in having some of the same trainings every year. We’re assuming that we’ve already covered something when factors like turnover or slow learners may hinder the knowledge retention of the providers. Topics such as curriculum are important to teach every year; they should be presented in a way that people can hear enough to remember.
- Janet said that the idea of repeat trainings fits nicely into the core competencies model from Palm Beach that we want to use as our framework for the coming year.
- Mary asked if there is any discussion about repeating creative curriculum training.
- Kathleen said that there has been a lot of positive response to that idea. She asked how quickly the Committee would be moving on the core competencies model.
- Janet responded that with the coming new fiscal year it is the goal to implement the core competencies model, even if just use the concept as a framework. She said that the committee could focus just on that idea during the next meeting. Janet said that another component in the core competency model is the teacher has to demonstrate that they have successfully learned how to integrate the new material into their classroom in order to get credit, and this is an issue that our committee has discussed many times before as a crucial necessary element.
- Dianne discussed tie-ins from lesson planning to curriculum planning.
- The Committee also discussed the issue of lack of awareness of brain development and the importance on early care and education by some providers.
- The committee summarized that for the rest of the year, the trainings would be the outdoor environment training and the DECA/creative curriculum training, and to possibly bring in Suzanne Gellens for brain development training before the end of the fiscal year would be very helpful.
- Mary mentioned that Kathy Kourapis could expand on the infant/toddler training as well.

- Janet said that there should be a facilitated meeting focused on setting the training schedule for the next fiscal year and incorporating the core competencies model as much as possible into all the trainings.
- Janet mentioned that the family child care state conference is in June and that the Coalition has set aside funds to sponsor some sites.
- Dr. Meyers called for a clarification on funding in the event a Charlotte County child attends a Sarasota county site.

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Collaboration with Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health (SPCMH)**

- Janet mentioned that ELC and SPCMH have complementary missions and having James and Rodney attend committee meeting will promote cooperation and sharing of knowledge. For example, the Committee can use Rodney's expertise to focus effectively on issues of cultural sensitivity and diversity.
- Rodney said they are gearing up for assessments and examining the way SPCMH does business and how it impacts families.
- Janet stated that the importance of family involvement as a crucial component of quality child care well as the need for child care providers to be sensitive to cultural diversity has been emphasized.
- Janet introduced James Sawyer as the Youth Coordinator.
- James said that as Youth Coordinator he has identified that a system of care needs to become a standardized model. His intention is to make sure children's voices are heard in both mental health and general community and he working out how to best accomplish this. Two projects that are in the works and awaiting funding; one is with Character House on attachment-related group therapy and the other is a teen program to do drama with kids so that they can become mentors to younger children
- Janet mentioned that it would be helpful for James to shadow the Florida Center early intervention team funded y the ELC to get acquainted with the work they do with children and child care providers.
- Mary mentioned the huge need for a liaison with the parent, especially to work with parents to agree to a referral if that is what is decided is necessary.

#### **Training Plan and Professional Development**

- Kathleen said she is hoping that when core competency career lattice emerges, there will be an increased sense of enthusiasm and pride in the field. Janet said that result was found in the Palm Beach when the core competencies model was implemented, even though more work and accountability was required.
- Kathleen suggested the Committee plan a roadmap on how to get there.
- Wendy mentioned that early childhood education is one of the few fields where people start working before they obtain education to do their job; it's almost as if they're working backwards.
- Wendy asked if the training plan is separate from the discussion held earlier about the remaining trainings this year. Janet said the trainings for the remainder of the year will be integrated into existing plan and the new training plan for next fiscal year represents the overall planning for next year and how the Committee plans to incorporate core competencies.

### **4. OTHER DISCUSSION**

- Mary mentioned that there has been discussion in the field about what the field of early childhood education field should be called. She asked for the Committee's input.
- The Committee discussed the perception of our field, whether it should be titled as early care or early education.
- Dr. Meyers said that she has seen the term "educarer" become popular because it really is a bifold role.

- Mary mentioned polling providers in the newsletter to get their input. One common term that is emerging and one that the ELC is using is that of Early Care and Education...

## **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Kathleen mentioned that there are 3 new classes starting in both Venice and North Port. The fee structure is changing so that they are billed quarterly, with the first quarter class costing only \$140, resulting in directors making that payment to get their staff enrolled. In North Port the trainings are at Children First and in Venice at South County YMCA on Center Rd.
- Next meeting is April 28 at 10:00 am. Before that, Janet said she would send out a link to the Palm Beach materials. The Committee also set up meetings on May 19 and June 23.

*(Note: the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting was subsequently cancelled in order to plan for a facilitated work meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>, with a continuation as needed on June 23<sup>rd</sup>)*

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee meeting adjourned at 11:20am.