



**Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County**  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING & QUALITY**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Landings, Blue Awning  
Monday, September 8, 2008

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES**

Janet Kahn	Elma McKay	Dr. Virginia Myers
Candy Exline	Jackie Fountaine	Venise Duchesne
Kathleen Sullivan	Mary Wolf	Jill Jacoby
Debbi Bowler	Marjorie Fondacaro	Lynne Weinick
Dr. Kathy Stuckey	Dr. Goldstein	Cindy Wentzel
Dianne Rose Lawrence		

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting commenced at 10:00 am, called to order by Janet Kahn. Janet thanked and acknowledged Wendy Harris for her work as Chair of the Committee this past year and introduced Kathleen Sullivan as the Chair for the upcoming year. Kathleen will assume facilitation of Committee meetings at the next session. The committee did introductions and Janet introduced Lynne Weinick for those who had not met her at the last meeting. Lynne is working for the Coalition part time as an early childhood specialist focusing on assisting family child care providers as part of the Look for the Stars QIS.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**Look for the Stars Update**

- Mary gave an update on the Look for the Stars QIS, mentioning that the QIS insert included in the last newsletter was posted on the Coalition website. The Coalition is very pleased that only 4 providers have chosen to opt out. At the next Directors Connection meeting in September providers will be given a toolkit developed by KSC, a marketing and PR firm that is working on the Look for the Star initiative, that will include resources to help providers explain the program to parents, with an emphasis on the commitment to children, families and quality care that participation represents. Decals for providers to display will also be given out at the Directors Connection meeting. Mary introduced Candy Exline, Cindy Wentzel and Marjorie Fondacaro as the mentor coaches who will be working with center directors to assist them in making quality improvements identified through the Look for the Stars assessments. As mentioned above, Lynn Weinick will focus on the family homes.
- Janet announced that the Quality Childcare Council (QCC) will be hosting a breakfast celebration on October 28<sup>th</sup> to honor Look for the Stars participating sites, recognize the funders and our community's commitment to quality, as well as kick off the media roll out. QCC members will each be asked to bring 2 or 3 of their board members to the breakfast. Directors will be invited to attend and will also be encouraged to submit children's "star" artwork to display at the event. Janet said that the Look for the Stars website was being reviewed and will be up and running soon. Janet also reported that the Star

levels were distributed in a typical bell curve, but that the highest scoring ERS areas were interaction and language and reasoning, which should be gratifying considering how much training had been offered on these topics. Mary reminded the group that Star levels this first time were provisional. Results from the next assessment will be the first official results. Kathleen asked if providers' strengths and areas of concern and specific data will be on the website, and was told that has not been determined and may not be available this first year when results are provisional.

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Core Competency training implementation**

- The goal of the new training model to be implemented this year is for all trainings to be linked to the specific core competencies selected by the Committee for our community:
  - ❑ Child Development and Learning
  - ❑ Building Family and Community Relationships
  - ❑ Health, Safety and Nutrition
  - ❑ Program Management and Administration
- All trainings will include a homework or "follow up" component with the purpose of linking knowledge gained in the training to actual implementation in the classroom. This will require that participants either email, fax, or mail work back to the instructor or bring their work to the next class in the training series.
- In support of the goal to provide trainings that are meaningful and substantive the Committee recommends that trainings be presented as a series when possible so that topics can be covered in more depth and allow time for participants to implement and absorb what they have learned.
- Participants will be asked to do a post/pre evaluation to reflect on what they have learned.
- Sample forms were handed out for members to review. These will be emailed to members to be used in trainings.
- Marjorie shared her experience requiring follow up activities in several trainings she has conducted in the past months. While there was some initial questioning of the process, participants took the requirement seriously and have returned the follow up activities. Marjorie reported that keeping track of students work was not as burdensome as she had expected, and that she felt participants were getting more out of the training with this additional requirement.
- Mary said that this new training model will be discussed in the next newsletter and process and rationale will be explained.
- Janet said that while we could not match the sophistication of the Palm Beach approach where they have a full registry of trainers and of practitioners and trainings are divided into levels of competency from entry level to advanced and all of this is tracked very systematically, our model for this year is a good starting point for our community to utilize the concepts.
- Ginny mentioned that requiring transcripts from trainers might be a way to ensure a level of quality in the trainers.
- Mary suggested that Committee members might want to look at the Palm Beach website, which has a comprehensive overview of their core competency model, including goals, objectives and skills for practitioners at each level, which would be helpful to trainers as they prepare objectives

#### **Trainings this year**

- Janet said all trainings this year will be linked to the Coalition Training Plan and the Look for the Stars QIS (a draft handout based on prior committee discussions was provided). The "Boot Camp" for New Teachers that was discussed last year is still a possibility, along with the idea of a centralized recruitment process for new teachers.
- The Directors Connection series begins again this month, and there will be an added component of a series for directors of sites working on specific Quality Improvement Plans.
- SCTI will be offering a series of trainings, details to be determined in the next few weeks.
- The Coalition will continue to collaborate with the Partnership for Children's Mental Health.

- Elma announced a series of 3 trainings, one each on math, science, and literacy to be held September 24, October 8 and October 22

### **ELC Annual Provider Conference**

Janet reminded the group that it is time again to plan for the Annual Conference, so from now until January the Committee focus will be the 8<sup>th</sup> annual ELC Provider Conference, which will be tied to the Look for the Stars this year. The date is tentatively set for January 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. We need ideas for keynotes, breakouts, etc. Jill, seconded by Ginny, recommended Sean Brown. Mary said that the Look for the Stars theme will cover almost any topic, so there is a lot flexibility in breakout topics. The conference will also be a chance to celebrate the achievements of the providers in working toward quality improvements with the QIS.

### **4. OTHER DISCUSSION**

Elma mentioned the Florida Ready to Work Certificate, which is a 7 level assessment based on a uniform set of standardized skills for those entering the work force. Kathleen said this is going to be required at SCTI and she will report to the Committee as she learns more about it. There was a general discussion of this topic, with some members feeling that the need for a certificate of this type was a sad reflection on the state of education. Kathy Stuckey said that her experiences at MCC did reflect a lack of basic skills in many students. Dr. Goldstein brought the focus back to early childhood, observing that language problems often start when children are very young and the problem is not addressed.

### **3. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am. The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, at The Landings, as the regular meeting schedule is resumed.

Submitted by Mary Wolf