



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

**The Landings, Blue Awning, Room 101, Sarasota
Monday, September 28, 2009
10:00**

MINUTES

ATTENDEES		
Kathleen Sullivan	Mary Wolf	Claudia Malecki
Dianne Lawrence	Yvette Robison	Elma McKay
Candy Exline	Eva Balcar	Valerie Walton
Wendy Harris	Missy Eckenrod	Elizabeth Crouse

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Kathleen Sullivan and she welcomed everyone. A review of the minutes from 8/24/09 was held and noted that Elma's name is listed twice in the attendees and Claudia was not listed. Mary Wolf will correct and post corrected minutes on the Coalition website.

2. OLD BUSINESS

Look for the Stars update

Mary shared a Look for the Stars summary: In year 1 there were 67 sites with a star level of 1 or 2. In year 2 this number dropped to 44. The sites with a 3 star or higher increased in year 2 to 99 total from 65 the prior year. Within the same group of sites that were assessed and participated in both years 1 and 2, 26 sites increased their star level, with 38 maintaining their 3 star level or higher. Although 17 sites dropped a star level, only 5 decreased below a 3 star level, the level considered to be providing consistently good quality.

There was a significant change in the number of 3 star sites and the number of sites that increased their star level. Attending trainings had a direct correlation to these increases. It is difficult for sites to self-assess and interpret results on their own, and if they try to make changes based on this approach without training focused on understanding the intent of the tool they may very well miss things.

The results of the wage scale survey were reported. This information was obtained on the Look for the Stars staff qualification forms, with information given by 71 sites. As was done last year, a portion of a site's sustaining payments should go directly to teachers if a site is not paying a minimum of \$10 hour to lead teachers. Data was collected for directors, lead teachers and assistants. The survey shows that a significant minority of lead teachers do not earn \$10 an hour.

A chart was handed out showing where School Readiness children are enrolled in 2009 compared to 2008, with many more SR children now in 3 star or above sites than last year., a very positive outcome.

The next wave of assessments will begin in February and should be finished by May. Sites will be given a 3 week window of when they will be assessed. The Coalition will be providing a post card for providers to return right away after their assessments have been conducted that will allow them to give any feedback. This will allow the Coalition to address and correct any issues in a timely manner with the Children's Forum. The Coalition will also have a meeting with all the assessors before the process starts for this year to address expectations. Candy Exline stated there is a need to convey to the public and providers that 3 star sites show consistent quality. Kathleen Sullivan agreed that there needs to be more education on this important fact. Mary added that providers need to realize that a parent's personal experience at a site trumps everything else, and parents need to be reminded not to go by the star rating alone – it is very important for parents to visit several sites and find a fit that is right for their child. Dianne Lawrence stated that there is a need to stress that a 3 star is not midway on the tool, that a score of 4 is needed to get to the 3 star level, but unfortunately that impression is out there. Discussion ensued regarding other areas that can easily bring a sites' score up.

PBS update:

Gary was not at the meeting, but Mary stated that the program is going very well and participants have been very positive. Missy Eckenrod stated that her staff is very excited and Candy reported that at the last Directors Connection meeting it was talked about very positively.

Training update:

The trainings schedule has been posted on the Coalition website and emailed to the Coalition's distribution list. Florida Center, ECA, and SCTI trainings are also distributed by email – there are a lot of trainings offered this year.

3. NEW BUSINESS

Conference Planning:

Kathleen reported that she is currently in discussion with Pine View School as a possible site for the conference, and also stated that if the ELC and the school board enter into an agreement for the use of the space there may not be a charge. Kathleen may know by the end of the week if this site will be available. Committee members were excited by the possibility of utilizing this location.

The title of the conference and the theme will be: "Discovering the Joys of Self Expression" which came about after Janet Kahn had a meeting at the Arts Council which caused her to reflect on the importance of the arts to the meaning of life and as a connection to learning. After all the recent focus on curriculum and "academic" topics it might be good to shift the focus a bit to the other end of the spectrum. The committee brainstormed possible ideas for speakers and sessions.

Speaker/session ideas

- Possible keynote:
 - Jean Feldman: was at the ECA conference and works with finger plays and songs
 - Pam Phelps: with the BCCT curriculum, hands-on, interactive, power of play and self-expression while supporting performance standards
 - Corey Wilson, suggested by Elizabeth Crouse
 - Suzanne Gellens, tie brain development to activities that support hands on exploration, investigation, and self-expression
- Possible presenters:

- Local high school art, drama teachers
- Local resources, i.e. Ringling, Arts Council, Van Wezel, Florida West Coast Theatre Troup
- Explore other community resources
- Panel discussions to explore value and implications of this approach
- Have directors/teachers that incorporate art into their centers already do presentations
- Possible breakout topics:
 - Study the power of play; why it is so important, and noting that this approach is supported by research
 - Workshop to explore teachers' relationship to the arts, "What do I do for self-expression?" - this can include a broad range - scrapbooking, gardening, music, etc. and how to bring that into classroom
 - Offering teachers exposure to what they may not have taken in college courses
 - How to share art with children and encourage them to create their own, look at how art can be incorporated into all components of the classroom
 - Field trip possibility
 - Using clay in the classroom
 - Drama for preschool and what social emotional skills children gain from dramatic play
 - Dance and movement as a core curriculum element, why this is important
 - Music
 - Power of blocks as an avenue of self-expression and architecture
 - Cooking
 - Story telling
 - Joy of the natural world/gardening
 - Photography
 - Have classes on specific kinds of art
 - Scientific inquiry can also be means of self-expression
 - Tie into resiliency and taking care of yourself
 - Allowing children to be creative and express themselves requires adults taking the time to understand what children are trying to accomplish – encouraging creativity may mean extending center/free play times
 - Answer the charge that "creativity and standards don't always go together": how to get the message out that arts support the standards, how to achieve a balance
 - How to address the fear that supporting self-expression will result in loss of control and chaos
 - How not to hinder children's self expression; what are the barriers to self expression
- Possible conference set up
 - Music playing as you come into the conference
 - Easels set up around rooms
 - Big mural to be created as the day goes on by participants
 - Include statements by professionals in our community about what they learned in preschool – what are the vivid memories of preschool
 - Recreate children's centers for adults
 - End each session with a discussion of perceived barriers
 - Have displays of art in various media

Reminder of areas to be covered: art, blocks, drama, music, literature, writing, cooking, photography, drawing, science, dance/movement.

At the next meeting will have the grid to fill in with possible sessions.

4. OTHER DISCUSSION

Dianne announced that the ECA has changed its name to Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAECY). Candy, Dianne and Wendy gave updates from the ECA conference and the sessions that they attended.

Announcements:

Elma announced that she recently attended a leadership conference in Washington, D.C. and received information regarding funds that will be available in competitive grants for the next seven years to enhance early childhood services. Mary added that in Florida they may apply for funding in one of e areas: QIS assessments, Child Assessments and the training registry.

Kathleen announced that she did receive enough students to start a daytime staff credential program to start sometime in October and be held at St. Wilfred Preschool.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting set for October 26th. Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Submitted by Valerie Walton