



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

**The Landings  
Monday, February 22, 2010  
10:00**

**MINUTES**

<b>ATTENDEES</b>		
Kathleen Sullivan	Mary Wolf	Claudia Malecki
Dianne Lawrence	Candy Exline	Missy Eckenrod
Valerie Walton	Marjorie Fondacaro	Janet Kahn
Jill Jacoby	Eva Balcar	Wendy Harris
Elizabeth Crouse		

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m. Everyone reviewed the minutes from the last meeting, and no changes were noted.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

Provider Conference Report:

Mary stated that the conference comments as a whole were very positive and noted that we had thirty three family child care providers attend this year which is the highest number ever. There were also a large number of walk-ins this year. ELC staff has already met to debrief and discussed this issue, but the committee as a whole may want to revisit how we handle the walk-ins next year. Discussion ensued regarding how a high number of walk ins affects planning for binders and food. Kathleen stated she thought everything went very smoothly. Committee discussed the lunch arrangements, including the need to have more drinks prepared ahead of time, have two stations for drinks, and not have a breakout inside the Student Union.

Comments from the surveys were reviewed and included quite a few asking to add a third workshop and have a shorter lunch. Kathleen stated that many of her students also attend the Charlotte County conference which runs from 8 am to 4 pm and has 4 workshops. She added that we might be able to pull more teachers from the community to be presenters. Janet stated that when the ELC first started hosting the conference it did run from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm but was shortened due to an overwhelming request to do so. She also stated that Charlotte County does not provide as many trainings throughout the year as we do. Wendy said that since there were so many sessions to choose from it was good that they all were repeated. Kathleen mentioned possibly using local teachers and directors as presenters. Janet stated that if we want to consider that option we must make sure they are evaluated to ensure they are effective presenters and that their sessions offer high level information that would be of CEU quality. With those expectations

it may not be easy to find a large number of local teachers or directors who would be appropriate presenters for the conference. Dianne suggested we have a process in place earlier in the year to start evaluating possible presenters. Committee discussed having a selection committee, seeing the presentations before hand, and making sure the presentations are related to the Core Competencies. It was suggested that presenting at the conference could be a professional development goal directors could set for themselves and for their staff.

There was a workshop attendance glitch; one presenter had only 1 participant at the first session (she did have 12 the second session). Missy Eckenrod was the lone participant and said the presentation was very good. This may have occurred partly because the room for this workshop was in an out-of-the-way location. The conference this year, with the focus on experiential workshops, required larger rooms that could be rearranged with open space for movement and drama activities. That will not be the case next year so will most likely be using the regular classrooms and will not have this issue.

Candy mentioned that having “Infant/Toddler” in the title of only one session had many attendees flocking to that session, and in the future we might want to think about having some sort of check box for the session descriptions that say whether it covers Preschool or Infant/Toddler or both.

Members discussed having the certificate include what core competencies relate to each workshop and also list that on session description. There was discussion on other possibilities for handling evaluations – give one for each session and a certificate for each session, with the session host having the responsibility for giving them out as they leave the session. This might be difficult since the hosts may busy with other duties once the session has started.

Mary stated that the information in the opening and closing sessions was excellent. Discussion returned to shortening the sessions to possibly one hour in order to make time for a third session.

Claudia proposed having a pool of presenters by May at the Director’s Connection meeting; presenting next year’s conference theme and then having possible presenters present at the Director’s Connection meetings. Some directors have already voiced that they have staff interested in presenting but it was not appropriate for this year’s conference theme.

Mary stated that the ELC newsletter addressed the issue of the appropriateness of one of the comments in the closing skit. A couple of directors were asked about the closing and has stated that staff said the comment was odd and inappropriate. ELC has communicated with Kate Alexander about this and believes she understands the Coalition’s concerns with the skit. Kathleen said that we could use this to plan for future training, as clearly this was the wrong venue and was not a good fit with our message to the early learning community.

Discussion returned to reviewing the survey results and included a need for more lesson planning, intentional teaching and supporting centers that provide school age care. Wendy stated that ECA may possibly be able to help in the school age area since they cover ages 0-8 yrs. Jen Faber at the Children’s Forum may be a resource, Mary will send her contact information.

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

#### Information on retention bonus survey:

Retention bonuses are going out today and there are quite a lot of teachers that will be getting some sort of check. This is also recognition for the sites that are able to retain their staff. Letters will be mailed to the site with a letter to the director and separate envelopes for each teacher with a card and check. Mary stated that there were a couple of teachers that called in after the newsletter

went out asking if their site participated. Teachers at sites that chose to opt out of the Look for the Stars program are not eligible even if the site is assessed because they serve school readiness children. Jill stated that some sites didn't list all eligible staff. Janet said we may need to address this by site. Mary asked Jill to send her a list of what she noticed so the ELC can follow up. Eva stated that some directors reported more years than were correct and some reported less years. The Coalition is very appreciative for the work Jill and Eva did to check the data on the teachers.

#### Look for the Stars update:

Mary reported that the assessments are underway, and that there is a process in place that allows sites to turn in a survey after they receive their assessment. So far the results have been positive. The ITERS are lower than the ECERS but much better than last year. Debbie Conley has stated that she sees a marked improvement from the first year. Jill stated that the Family Child Care Homes have been saying that ELC is trying to make them into centers. Candy commented that this has been ongoing and we need to continue to try to build relationships with the FCCHs. Janet stated that the market rates that FCCHs are charging are getting close to what centers charge so the expectation for quality should be comparable as well. Jill stated that she sees homes advertising on Craig's List at lower rates which led to a discussion of needing to have revised rates for sites at Child Care Connection. Eva reported that she attended the Rock Soup meeting and owners are very discouraged due to their children leaving their homes and going to centers, especially Children First. This varies depending on the part of town, but New Town family providers have especially seen this trend. Janet stated that Children First has received additional funding, has done outreach to parents and that most of the time when offered free child care parents are going to choose the free care, and may simply be a better option for parents in some cases. Eva stated that everyone in Rock Soup is working very hard.

Dianne asked how we are going to deal with sites that do not send teachers to trainings and their ERS scores drop. Janet stated that there will be a process to put sites on notice that they may not be able to care for School Readiness funded children. Contracts may be pulled and this is happening across the state.

Claudia reported that as the ERS results come in, staff will be scoring and sharing the results and will not be waiting until all sites are assessed before starting this process.

Discussion jumped back to the conference and Candy asked if it would be possible to have PBS information session at next year's conference, so that teachers at sites that are not participating in PBS could become familiar with it. PBS, the DECA and Because It Matters are all programs to build social/emotional skills using many of the same approaches. Kathleen stated that it was her understanding that part of the week long PBS training last year was to train to become a mentor. Janet stated that further training is needed before they can become mentors but then it would still only be at their site of employment. The goals for those participating sites are that when there are children with behavior concerns they can be placed at those particular sites. Janet also stated that a site would not be considered a PBS site without the full PBS training, but could receive targeted training and utilize PBS techniques and approach.

Candy asked what the procedure is going to be if a site chooses to opt out of the Look for the Stars program then decides they want to participate again. The response was that those sites would be put on the bottom of the waitlist.

Mary reported that most sites used their sustaining payments to put the money back into their program.

### New Initiatives:

Janet reported a couple of new initiatives.

- The Greening of Child Care: there is a General Manager within Sarasota County that is currently doing a fellowship involving exposure to chemicals in early childhood setting and creating a green environment. There will be an informational meeting scheduled for providers interested in participating in this project. The Coalitions also sent out and has posted an EcoHealthy check list on its website.
- Focus on Childhood obesity: the County has submitted a grant which would be comprehensive and related to nutrition & health for all ages and tie into outside environments.
- Art Council: In partnership with the Coalition, the Arts Council is looking at new funding for an artist in residence which would tie into the standards and use arts to train teachers on implementing standards.

### Diversity Discussion

Kathleen asked where things stand for diversity training in relations to the core competencies. Mary stated she will speak with Ann Ferrier to possibly present more sessions on cultural sensitivity issues. The committee discussed the need for materials in diversity, mentioning that a lot of sites used their mini grants for diversity materials as required in the ERS tools. However, the issue of supporting diversity is larger than materials in the classroom, it involves working to embrace children and families by means such as greeting parents and children in their native language, learning more about their home culture, and finding ways to encourage parent participation in school that acknowledges and validates their diverse backgrounds and experiences. Supporting diversity also requires that teachers and directors engage in a process of thoughtful examination of their own beliefs, biases, and assumptions.

## **4. OTHER DISCUSSION**

Kathleen asked what the consensus was of the difference between CEUs and Certificates for In-Service hours, which was asked of her from the presenter of the Creative Curriculum training. In order to get CEUs, attendees must complete homework assignments and submit the CEU request form to SCTI. Kathleen asked if they would still get credit for in-service if they don't complete homework. Mary answered that follow up activities must be completed to receive credit for in-service training. Because follow up activities are a requirement, trainers give credit for more time than the training hours, usually 30 – 60 minutes, at the discretion of the presenter. To receive CEUs, the participant must complete and submit the SCTI CEU form along with a check, but does not need to complete the reflective piece, as the trainer submits a form to SCTI verifying that the follow up activities have been completed, which takes the place of the reflective piece.

## **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 11:53. Next meeting set for March 22nd.

Submitted by Valerie Walton