



Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee
Minutes - April 4, 2012
12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Location: The California Endowment
1000 South Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Members in Attendance: (29) Ofelia Medina, Lisa Wilkin, Kathleen Pompey, Peggy Sisson, Karla Pleitez Howell, Patrice Wong, Peter Huffaker, Andrea Joseph, Sandra Parvis, Kathy Schreiner, John Berndt, Joanne Shalhoub Mejia, Deborah Gatti, Julie Taren, Rocio Bach, Norma Amezcua, Nurhan Pirim, Vanessa Mendez for Mary Helen Vasquez, Emily Aguilar for Ofelia Aguilar, Dianne Philibosian, Holly Reynolds, Adrienne Schoen Gunn, Eileen Friscia, Terri Hess for Tara Henriquez, Sam Kirk, Diana Pinto, Judy Sanchez, Atalaya Sergi, and Fatima Capinpin for Deborah Coleman

Guests and Alternates: Ed Sudario, Ellen Cervantes, Sam Chan, Carol Hiestand, Ana Rosa Najera, Elaine Waldman, Alan Wu, Barbara Holtwick, and M. Alquijay

Staff: Laura Escobedo, Helen Chavez and Michele Sartell

I. Welcome and Introductions

Karla Howell, Chair, opened the meeting at 12:15 p.m. She read the opening statement and then asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes from March 7, 2012

The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes for March 7, 2012. The motion was made by Dianne Philibosian and seconded by Lisa Wilkin. The Chair called for the vote. The motion passed with no abstentions.

III. Update from the Office of Child Care

Laura Escobedo reminded current members to complete and submit their membership applications for next year and to encourage others to apply.

Karla Howell reported on the response from the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) to the Child Care Planning Committee's (Planning Committee) recommendation that it forward to the Board of Supervisors an oppose position to the Governor's proposal to restructure child care and development services. The Roundtable voted the motion down by one vote. Roundtable members argued that more detail on impact was needed before they could support the motion. The Roundtable organized a stakeholders meeting the following week to examine all the issues, gather more data and develop consensus on a few recommendations that they would take action on at the April meeting.

IV. Presentation - Partnering Early Childhood Education and Early Mental Health in Los Angeles County

Dr. Sam Chan, District Chief of the Birth to Five Program at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health said that his unit's focus this year is on improving the connections between early childhood education and early mental health. It is not just about services, but about strengthening the capacity of staff, programs, and systems to promote appropriate social/emotional development. The secondary focus is on identification and therapy. He hopes the field can move from a "problem orientation" to understand and support the social/emotional context for all children in the early childhood education setting. Unfortunately so much emphasis is placed on the cognitive and "school readiness" rather than social/emotional foundations that undergird all development.

Currently there are very few financial resources devoted to early mental health consultation. Early mental health providers are using traditional medical/psychological funding such as Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSTD) to get in the door and then trying to cover more capacity building work with those limited funds. Mental health consultation in and of itself is not funded well. It may be possible to expand the funding if more of the activities known to be effective are documented and become part of “evidence based” practice.

Another issue facing both fields is a shortage of trained professionals. Most in the field of early mental health have some training/experience with three to five year olds, but not with the youngest children. ICARE, the network of early mental health professionals coordinated out of Dr. Chan’s office, provides regular training to grow the population of well trained and capable early mental health professionals. Dr. Chan shared that the University of Georgetown is the current center of much activity around early mental health and the Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning has many resources.

V. Presentation - Update on the Steps to Excellence Program (STEP).

Helen Chavez, Director of STEP, provided an update on STEP including the potential through the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Fund (RTT/ELCF). First 5 LA funding through the Workforce Consortium will enable a modest expansion to five more communities each year for four years bringing the STEP Quality Rating and Improvement System to a total of 36 communities. The RTT/ELCF funds will enable expansion into additional areas that meet specific requirements related to child and family needs.

The expansion must consider geographic diversity aligned with the five Board of Supervisor districts, socio-economic diversity, the supply of homes and centers, and other projects/activities that could support recruitment of early care and education programs. RTT/ELCF requirements will focus on areas with high need children relating to poverty, special needs and the percent of Dual Language Learners. STEP staff have been advocating at the state level to include family child care and Title 22 programs. STEP staff have been working with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), which also received RTT/ELC funds to have a single quality rating and improvement system for Los Angeles County, which would align with one of the Planning Committee’s draft strategic plan goals.

Lessons learned from the pilot include the fact that the economy plays a large role on effective implementation in terms of business stability and the number of children enrolled in any one family child care home or center. In addition, the rating guide developed through the pilot will now be available on the website. Preliminary observations have been added before the final onsite evaluation to help the programs prepare for the observation that will result in their ratings. The current plan is to conduct renewal evaluations within two to three years after the first evaluation to give programs sufficient time to upgrade and because the cost of having the evaluation is the most expensive part of the quality rating and improvement system. In addition, STEP will be working with the Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Agencies, who are providing coaches to work directly with providers and programs in preparing for the STEP evaluation and to make improvements following the evaluations.

STEP is moving forward as a program (not a pilot) in three phases: 1) to reconnect with the first 100 providers evaluated for further support and follow-up evaluations; 2) to reconnect with about 120 providers who were in the pipeline to participate; and 3) to recruit and work with approximately 400 new programs and providers in the expansion areas.

Meeting participants provided a number of ideas to Ms. Chavez and some raised concerns about the way ratings are calculated and that they stand for so long before a re-evaluation can take place.

VI. Breakouts for Strategic Planning

Those in attendance divided into four reconfigured groups: Quality, Access, Role of Planning Committee, and Workforce. The groups were charged with reviewing goals and building on the strategies.

VII. Announcements

- Staff from the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) announced that the CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care services formally provided by Children's Home Society will now be handled by Crystal Stairs. As appropriate, folks were asked to inform the families with whom they work to inform them of the change.
- A rally to oppose the Governor's proposals will be held on Saturday April 14, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in downtown Los Angeles at 4th and Hill Streets. Wear red t-shirts.
- Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start's annual health fair will take place at Exposition Park on May 19th.

VIII. Adjournment

Karla Howell called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Andrea Joseph. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:04 p.m.