



Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee
Minutes: March 2, 2011
12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Location: Department of Public Works
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803

Members in Attendance: (27) Lisa Wilkin, Susan McCombs, Ofelia Medina, Fiona Stewart, Bobbie Edwards, Elvie Matias for Leticia Colchado, Dawn Reid for Jeanette Magee, Michelle Morse, Pam Schmidt for Karla Pleitez, Patrice Wong, Kathleen Pompey, Norma Amezcua, Peter Huffaker for Kate Andersen, Richard Cohen, Deborah Gatti, Judy Sanchez, Joann Shalhoub Mejia, Emilio Sosa, Peggy Sisson, Julie Taren, Jenny Trickey, Tara Henriquez for Randi Wolfe, Rocio Bach, Claudine Avila for Grace Castro, Deborah Colman, Joy Cyprian, and Andrea Joseph

Guests and Alternates: Ancelma Sanchez, Barb Holtwick, Ritu Mahajan, Pamela Kwok, Rosa Ramirez, Carol Gregory, Nadia Varela, Jenny Farrell, Susana Hernandez, Rosa Arevalo, Elaine Waldman, Shelley Spiegel Colman, and Lou Orr

Staff: Laura Escobedo

I. Welcome and Introductions

Bobbie Edwards, Chair, opened the meeting at 12:11 p.m. She welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce themselves. The Chair read the opening statement.

II. Approval of Minutes from the February 2, 2011 Meeting

The Chair called for a motion to approve the February 2, 2011 minutes. Joann Shalhoub Mejia made the motion; it was seconded by Jenny Trickey. The Chair called for the vote. The motion passed with three abstentions.

III. Report from the Office of Child Care

Laura Escobedo presented on a comprehensive report developed by Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) administrators across the state on the issues with the CELs and the recommended best practices and improvements. She noted that given the current budget proposals, which do not include funding to continue the CELs, the report is a post mortem. The CELs were intended to create easier access for low-income families to subsidized child care and development services, to facilitate enrollments of eligible families for the California Department of Education/Child Development Division (CDE/CDD) contractors, and to serve as a reliable source of data for many. The operation of a CEL in each county also highlighted the weaknesses in a complex system of child care subsidies and in some ways added to the complications.

The report highlights four areas where improvements are recommended: income rankings, parent preferences, parent information and preparation for enrollment, and data integrity. Laura Escobedo explained the issues related to each of the areas and shared the recommended practices or policies that could address or eliminate the problems. For instance, under income rankings the report recommends collapsing the ranks in order to create broader income bands for eligible parents.

The report is being vetted by all CEL administrators and then will be submitted to the CDE. It may help inform any future efforts. Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee) members expressed concern that some efforts to inform and support families continue.

IV. Presentation: California Budget Update

Laura Escobedo provided an update based on reports coming from the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees and additional options provided by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO). Both Senate and Assembly Committees rejected the Governor's proposal to cut reimbursement rates by 34.6 percent and instead recommended across the board cuts of 13 percent and 10 percent respectively. The Senate excluded State preschool from the cuts. Both committees applied one time funds to minimize some of the other reductions and both agreed to lower the income level at which families were eligible. However they differed in the percent of State Median Income (SMI) selected as the cap. While the Senate agreed to eliminate 11 and 12 year olds, the Assembly did not. Both agreed to reduce the ceiling for payments to license-exempt providers to 60 percent of the rate paid to licensed family child care homes.

The analysis by the LAO states that neither house met the level of reductions called for in the Governor's budget and that using one time funds would only result in further cuts in subsequent years. The LAO is suggesting that instead of across the board cuts, that income eligibility be reduced to 60 percent of SMI for all program types with a reduction in contracts of \$150 million, elimination of services for 11-12 year olds with reductions of \$41 million, a reduction in the reimbursement ceiling for both licensed and licensed exempt providers (\$79 million); and a reduction in the administration for Alternative Payment Program agencies from 17.5 percent to 15 percent. Regardless of the way the reductions are structured, it means \$450 - \$600 million less in contracts and therefore in dollars to pay for services for children.

The funding for Quality Initiatives would also be reduced again as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds (\$16 million) will not be extended. CDE/CDD staff are prioritizing and restructuring the various programs funded under this heading. It is possible that all programs will experience a cut of 20 percent except those that were seriously reduced last year.

V. Presentation: Head Start Outcomes Update

Peter Huffaker of Child Care Results returned to provide a sequel to their study of Head Start's impact on children's development by applying a Regression Discontinuity research design to already collected Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) data available on each enrolled child. This research methodology is now being used more frequently in evaluating preschool programs. The method helps compensate for selection bias issues related to when families decide to enroll their children in Head Start at three or four year olds. The methodology is able to target the impact in development that is due to program participation as opposed to the normal trajectory of development related to age maturation. The results are pronounced. Children attending Head Start as three year olds have functional developmental levels of three to eight months ahead of their age counterparts who did not begin Head Start until they were four years old. More details about the study and the results are available at www.childcareresults.com and www.caheadstart.org.

VI. Presentation: Californians Together, Bilingual Awards

Shelley Spiegel Colman, Executive Director of Californians Together, provided background on her organization. Californians Together is a statewide coalition of parents, professionals and policy makers who advocate improving our schools to support English Language Learners. The organization promotes the importance of bilingualism as a benefit to individuals (brain development, capacity), for communities, and for our economy. The organization works to reframe the issue of bilingual education away from the perspective of "deficit" to asset. Each year the coalition comes together to review issues and prioritize which ones will be the focus for efforts in the coming year.

One of their efforts is to establish a California Seal of bilingual or multilingual competency. This is modeled on the Glendale Unified School District program established 18 years ago. Graduating

seniors receive awards based on having met specific criteria related to competencies in oral and written expression in more than one language. Californians Together has taken this model a step further and has created “pathways to bilingualism” for elementary and middle schools, which recognizes and awards levels of competency at various ages. Now they are encouraging a preschool “pathways to bilingualism” award. They have created suggested criteria for the preschool level award that includes: age appropriate oral and comprehension language skills and vocabulary in the child’s home language; active engagement with text; and the ability to use some basic English to communicate. Californians Together would like to work with the Planning Committee or any individual preschools to promote the new Preschool Seal. The organization has successfully advocated for the passage of two bills creating a California Seal, both of which were vetoed by the Governor. They will continue to pursue legislation.

VII. Accessibility Work Group Project Update

Pam Schmidt of Public Counsel and Co-Chair of the Accessibility and CEL Work Group informed the members and guests that the Work Group had taken on a new project that was looking to change policy related to interim recertification in CDE/CDD funded programs. Currently enrolled families must report any changes to the program which is then obliged to recertify the family to make sure they are still eligible for the services. In contrast, State Preschool and Head Start require only an annual certification. According to the research from the Urban institute and from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) reviewed by the group, frequent recertification can create instability for families trying to become stable with the help of subsidized child care. A study from Colorado indicated that only three percent of all the recertifications conducted resulted in a change in eligibility, but that staff time required to conduct the recertifications amounted to between 35 and 65 percent of a full-time equivalent (FTE). Further, the requirement often creates unnecessary tension between the child care programs and the family as the family fears to reveal changes because of the possibility of losing the subsidized care. When families fail to comply with recertification requirements or are found ineligible it disrupts not only program enrollment, but also the experience of the child.

The work group will be gathering data on the time and cost involved in interim recertifications (any recalculation of eligibility before the annual recertification). The Fairplex Child Development Center has piloted a tracking sheet with which to gather the information. The Work Group is looking for other agencies to track staff time to determine if this is an inordinate cost to the agency. Public Counsel will continue to review the literature and the legal foundations for state regulations related to recertification to determine if a code or regulation change is required. The Work Group will consider both income and need eligibility in its study.

VIII. Announcement of Membership Recruitment for 2011-12

JoAnn Shalhoub-Mejia and Ancelma Sanchez, Co-chairs of the Policies and Membership Work Group, announced the opening of the recruitment period for the membership of the Planning Committee for 2011-12. Members were reminded that if they want to continue on the Planning Committee, they must complete an application. Those whose tenure would end in 2011 were encouraged to recruit others to apply. Members who were unsure of when their tenure ends should contact Laura Escobedo. Applications are due to the Office of Child Care by May 9, 2011.

IX. Announcements and Comments

- Department of Public Health staff reminded those present that the pertussis epidemic is still going strong. There is a new requirement for middle school-age children to have a booster before entering school in the fall. An information bulletin will be sent out.

- The California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) Conference will be held on March 5, 2011 at the Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena. Last minute registrants have until Thursday to register.
- Día de los Niños will be held in Belvedere Park in East Los Angeles on April 9, 2011.
- The Math and Science Institute will be held March 24-25, 2011 in Pasadena.

X. Adjournment

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. JoAnn Shalhoub-Mejia made the motion; Peggy Sisson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.