



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 2008

10:00 a.m. – noon

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

500 West Temple Avenue, Conference Room 743

Los Angeles, California 90012

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Duane Dennis, Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable), opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. Members and guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.

a. Comments from the Chair

- Mr. Dennis referred members to the “Meeting Transcript of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors” from March 4, 2008 during which Supervisor Don Knabe offered a motion for consideration in one week addressing the amount of child care and development funds returned to the State each year. Supervisor Knabe would like to propose State legislation to address this issue by seeking flexibility to retain the child care funds locally to meet family needs. Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu distributed copies of the memo to the Board of Supervisors entitled “Report on the Allocation and Use of State Child Care and Development in Los Angeles County” dated March 4, 2008 that is referenced in the motion. The final motion states “I therefore move that the Chief Executive Office report back within the next 60 days with a recommendation for structuring childcare policy that cuts across County Departments as well as First 5 LA and LAUP and brings a more integrated focus to this critically important issue. I further move that we instruct our legislative advocates in Sacramento to explore possible legislative solutions regarding the issue of retaining unspent childcare funding locally, including the possibility of a pilot program similar to those currently underway in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.” The motion was seconded by Supervisor Molina and passed.

It was suggested that a portion of the April meeting be allocated for a discussion on this motion and next steps.

Ms. Victoria Evers, County of Los Angeles Intergovernmental Relations/Chief Executive Office (CEO) suggested looking at the Legislative Analyst Office’s (LAO) report, *Analysis of the 2008-09 Budget Bill, Education Chapter* in which the LAO provides recommendations on using unspent funds. Ms. Ogawa requested clarity on the Board of Supervisors’ ask. Is the intent to figure out how to handle unspent funds and to look to the Local Planning Council (e.g. Child Care Planning Committee) to help identify priorities? Ms. Malaske-Samu suggested considering a child care policy for the county by taking a macro perspective that involves First 5 LA and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) in the discussions. She added that work could be done to better align programs and maximizing local resources with state resources. Mr. Dennis offered that the Board of Supervisors may consider a block grant approach that would allow the local level to determine how moneys are allocated based on need. Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey agreed that the County does not have a current policy stating that child care is necessary to the well-being of families or a policy on what is necessary for families. Ms. Ogawa offered the April meeting of the Education Coordinating Council as a place to also

propose this discussion since child care is on agenda as a primary item. She mentioned that schools and others are grappling with how to go about enrolling Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) children in child care and development programs. Ms. Ellen Cervantes of the Child Care Resource Center asked that Early Head Start and Head Start be included in the mix and Ms. Malaske-Samu agreed.

- Ms. Stephanie Fricano of the LAO is visiting the Office of Child Care on Friday, March 14, 2008 at 9 a.m. Joining the meeting will be Ms. Evers, and Mr. Nicholas Ippolito, Deputy to Supervisor Knabe. All of the Board Deputies have been invited. The meeting is scheduled as an opportunity to inform Ms. Fricano of projects and work undertaken by the Office of Child Care. She is most interested in the implementation of the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP). Staff will also provide her with an overview of the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL) and the Investing in Early Educators Stipend Program.
- Mr. Dennis asked members to check their calendars for the summer retreat. The retreat is scheduled for July 9, 2008 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Ms. Malaske-Samu will secure the location.

b. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- February 13, 2008

Ms. Sheri Lewis provided Ms. Michele Sartell with written corrections to her introductory remarks to the presentation on item 2, the CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care Report. In essence, the corrections reflect that the study was on the utilization of CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care in which the findings included issues of denial. Ms. Arlene Rhine also made a correction in that she is recruiting someone to attend the Service Area Advisory Committee in Service Area 2. Ms. Arlene Rhine made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; Ms. Connie Russell seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously as corrected.

c. Draft Policy Regarding Requests for Support Letters

Per last month's meeting, Mr. Dennis directed staff to develop a draft policy outlining the criteria for providing policy or programmatic endorsements for review by the Roundtable. The following are comments made regarding the draft policy:

- Is the Roundtable authorized under ordinance and, if so, does County Counsel need to review? The draft policy is being presented for discussion, then will be refined before it is submitted to County Counsel for review.
- There was discussion regarding the role of the Roundtable and its purpose to bring policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Maybe the larger discussion is the role of the Roundtable and the draft policy within the context of the Roundtable's role.
- The policy tells people that if they want a letter of support, the Roundtable is where they should come. Should the Roundtable entertain letters of support? Does the ordinance that authorizes the Roundtable address this? Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that the ordinance is silent on this. She also explained that the draft policy addresses both funding and policy issue requests.
- The ordinance may be silent, but need to look at intent. Roundtable was intended to inform policy. There could potentially be a high demand for letters of funding support. Is this a part of achieving the Roundtable's main mission or a side bar of achieving a mission?
- The draft policy is more largely focused on support for funding requests. There are lots of highly political and sensitive issues. The Roundtable could be put in a position of supporting funding or could put the Board of Supervisors in a precarious position that they may not otherwise want to take.

- One of the major limitations of the Roundtable has been not taking on the role of advising the Board of Supervisors in the most positive way. The focus should be on how to improve its advisory role to the Board rather than this issue. While this may be a service to field, it is the not main mission of the Roundtable.
- Ms. Kate Sachnoff of First 5 LA offered that they do not consider letters of support for grant requests.
- It is very important for the Roundtable to state clearly our role as policy body to not provide letters of support.
- Most private foundations do not accept letters of support unless part of collaborative.
- Roundtable members make decisions as a group, however as individuals, each represents a Board of Supervisor.
- Keep it simple. If it is not our function, leave it out.

Mr. Dennis noted that historically groups have come to the Roundtable to request support on various issues. He suggests focusing on the role of the Roundtable and the potential to maximize it. He recommended formulating a motion for the April 2009 meeting. It was further suggested that the greater issue of the role of the Roundtable with respect to the Board of Supervisors be a topic of discussion at the July retreat. The discussion should return to the ordinance and include reviewing activities to date, the Board of Supervisors expectations of the Roundtable, and next steps.

2. UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR PREVENTION AND EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

Mr. Dennis reminded members of the February meeting discussion regarding opportunities for participating in the planning for the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) component to ensure that the mental health needs of young children and their families are met.

a. Materials Available on the Office of Child Care Web Site

Ms. Michele Sartell, staff to the Office of Child Care, provided a quick overview of the efforts currently underway, and then reviewed the advocacy materials assembled to date and included in members' packets. Among the materials are the following: a brief overview of the MHSA/PEI and the planning process, a copy of the concept paper providing a vision for an integrated system of mental health services with child care and development programs, sample talking points, a list of the Stakeholder delegates, the roadmap for planning, and the schedule of Service Area Advisory Committee (SAACs) meetings. Members were also urged to check the Office of Child Care Web site (www.childcare.lacounty.gov) often for updates and future planning meeting dates.

b. Member Updates on Local Meetings

Mr. Dennis asked Dr. McCroskey to report on the meeting with Dr. Marvin Southard, Director of the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health. Dr. McCroskey facilitated a meeting to address how to think about the mental health and early childhood systems as two integrated systems. Each system thinks about evidence very differently. The child care and development system has relied heavily on longitudinal studies and the quality impact. Per Dr. McCroskey, Dr. Southard stated that plan proposals need to represent evidence-based practice. As a result, the child development field will need help framing the issue as such. Dr. Southard will be retaining researchers from the University of California Los Angeles to review proposals that are not evidence-based. Ms. Malaske-Samu, who also attended the meeting, stated her struggle with the planning process that does not look at needs or gaps. She then added that the child care and development field needs to be smart and take on the challenge of evidence-based practice, beginning with assessing who is doing work around mental health and child development. It is proposed that a short summary be prepared and posted on the Web site to help

people think about evidence-based practice, and convene a meeting of mental health and child development folks to strategize.

In answer to the question regarding the purpose of the packets of materials, Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that the materials are intended to help bring the child development field up to speed on process. Ms. Evers relayed that there is also work underway to advocate for the use of MHSA/PEI funds with transitioning and emancipating foster youth. It was added that there has been lots more advocacy for adults than children with mental health issues. Neither transition age youth or young children have been well-represented in the past. Dr. Southard is trying to design proactive process that meets the needs of multiple populations.

Ms. Sachnoff asked if a carve-out by percentages was discussed at the meeting. Dr. McCroskey relayed that Dr. Southard recognizes how large the need is and he is interested in seeking a larger percentage of funds for children and youth, but was unwilling to set one at this time. He recognizes that considering the 0-25 year old population and their families is a huge breakthrough for mental health. He is attempting to convince people to think about a whole family-centered approach and, from there, maybe finding agreement to increase the percentage.

Ms. Rhine attended a SAAC 2. The nearly first two hours focused on adults. The late morning presenter from the Valley Coordinated Children's Services said there are almost no services (no beds) for early childhood, which results in most of the children sent to out of county facilities. A representative of the Los Angeles Police Department reported increased calls regarding children under the age of six years old. These latter presentations raised interest and the importance of getting monies and services to young children through schools and other venues where they are likely to be.

Ms. Laura Leach of Aviva Family and Children's Services attended a SAAC 4 meeting. Every other meeting has addressed children from 0 to five years old and included representatives from Project ABC and Infant, Childhood & Relationships Enrichment Network (ICARE). She believes that children and families are under-represented at the SAACs because they deal mostly with adults. As such, she recommends representation at the SAAC meetings, as DMH has a mandate to begin with input from them.

Mr. Dennis recommended asking members Ms. Carollee Howes and Dr. McCroskey to help conceptualize and develop a document that frames the issue within evidence-based practice. Ms. Malaske-Samu suggested Zero to Three as another partner in this effort. Ms. Malaske-Samu reflected on the potential availability of funds considering that folks have been working for so long with so little. While their hopes are high, the process is challenging and includes questions of who is more worthy – youth or young children? She averred that if we do not advocate, we will not see any money. She and Mr. Dennis agreed that the effort should include advocating for a continuum of services for children and families.

3. FOLLOW-UP ON CHILD CARE UTILIZATION OF CALWORKS CLIENTS

a. Timeline for and Progress of Work Group

Mr. Dennis asked Ms. Lewis to provide the update. According to Ms. Lewis, the study conducted by the Service Integration Branch has resulted in the convening of a work group to address the findings. The work group is chaired by Phil Ansell and includes representatives of both internal and external partners, including the Resource and Referral/Alternative Payment Program (APP) agencies, community colleges, legal advocates, GAIN program staff and line operations, GAIN service workers and child care coordinators, and a former CalWORKs participant who faced difficulty navigating the child care system. To date, two meetings were held in February with the next meetings scheduled for dates in March and

April 2008. The work group has walked through the child care process from point of requesting child care through approval or denial. They are reviewing forms included in the CalWORKs participant packets, have developed a matrix, and solicited input for upcoming meetings for actions to take to address the issues. Input was due on March 11, 2008 and encompasses a variety of recommended actions that will be discussed at the March meeting. Work group members have also suggested looking at the intake processes of other counties, such as San Bernardino, Sacramento, Ventura (good history on child care), and San Francisco.

It was suggested that Mr. Ansell be asked to attend or send a representative to a future meeting of the Roundtable to talk about what the work group discovered and explore how the Roundtable might be helpful. Ms. Grace Cainoy Weltman of Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles asked that a representative of the APP agencies be asked as well to speak from the contractors' perspective.

Ms. Ogawa asked if DCFS is participating in the work group to ensure that there is a communication/link for families that may crossover between both systems. Ms. Lewis reported that since the work is related only to CalWORKs Stage 1 participants, DCFS would not appear to be involved with this process. Also, DCFS administers a separate child care program through a contract with the California Department of Education. In response, Ms. Ogawa offered that many DCFS families are on CalWORKs and may be impacted. There was brief discussion on the linkages between DCFS and DPSS on behalf of families and the need to address child care issues, including supporting family preservation and reunification goals.

b. Connecting CalWORKs Clients with Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse or Mental Health Issues to Child Care

Ms. Lola Nevarez, DPSS Specialized Supportive Services Section provided an overview of the process for CalWORKs participants identified with domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health issues and their needs for child care. CalWORKs participants faced with these issues are identified, flagged and immediately assigned to a specialized eligibility worker/GAIN who facilitates the referral for child care services once the participant agrees to participate in domestic violence services and/or mental health/substance abuse treatment. The question was asked, given the high rate of denial, whether the participants in this category receive assistance navigating the child care system. Ms. Nevarez replied that flexibility is important when responding to participant needs when managing domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health issues. It was stated that the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is designed as welfare to work program, not a social work program, therefore aimed at getting people to work to decrease their dependence on public assistance. Addressing domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health issues requires rethinking the welfare to work piece to incorporate the many issues and barriers participants face in getting child care. The current philosophy may be one of the reasons there is a higher rate of denial with this population than the general population.

In addition, it was stated that children involved in these families are the most vulnerable children in our county. How do we connect these children to quality child development services? Ms. Lewis responded that the issues are numerous and may require policy changes.

Mr. Dennis concluded by suggesting a broader review of policies in the County as it relates to child care.

4. STEPS TO EXCELLENCE PROJECT (STEP) UPDATE

On behalf of Ms. Helen Chavez, STEP Coordinator, Ms. Malaske-Samu provided the report. Copies of flyers and brochures in English and Spanish were included in members' packets. The Board of Supervisors approved the grant agreements on February 19, 2008. Ms. Malaske-Samu passed out the

internal mini-grant process map. All 64 STEP applicants holding contracts with the California Department of Education/Child Development Division (CDE/CDD) have been issued their grant award packages. A total of \$365,620 has been awarded to this first pool using the CDE/CDD one-time only funds. The County allocation will go out to the non-state-contracted programs awarded mini-grants in two phases, one before and one after June 30, 2008.

Ms. Chavez has partnered with Board of Supervisor Districts 1, 2 and 5 staff to conduct additional outreach meetings in the pilot communities with low participation raters (Florence/Firestone, Inglewood and Palmdale).

Trainings have been ongoing in the following areas: developmental screening tools; Program for Infant/Toddler Care; and Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect. Members have been provided with the Training Catalogue and it is posted on the Web site at www.childcare.lacounty.gov.

5. IMPACTING THE COUNTY'S FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Ms. Evers thanked the Roundtable for their comments to the federal agenda. Traditionally the Roundtable provides comments on State legislative agenda; this year was the first time that the Roundtable has commented on the federal agenda. Therefore it seemed timely to speak to the process. The Board of Supervisors does two things: 1) Supports efforts to maximize federal funds to the State and County; and 2) Maintains as much flexibility as possible by keeping policies very broad. The County's Legislative Agenda allows for the Board of Supervisors to take positions on issues that are consistent with the agenda. Ms. Evers reported that during the current "lame duck" session, not much is expected to happen in relation to child care. She also anticipates that the federal budget will probably not be enacted until after the election or sometime in January or February 2009. With a new congress expected, the County will look at how federal legislative policies may change.

6. IMPACT OF VARIOUS STATE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Ms. Sartell referred members to their meeting packets for a copy of the document, *Governor's Proposed 2008-09 Budget Cuts: Impact on Child Care and Development Services for Los Angeles County Children and Families*. Most CDE/CDD programs are proposed to take a 6.4% cut, however the Investing in Early Educators Stipend Program is slated for a nearly 26% cut. For Los Angeles County, CDE/CDD-contracted child care and development programs in the aggregate would be cut by approximately \$52 million for an estimated loss of over 3000 spaces (not including APP spaces). In addition, the California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Child Care is proposed to be cut by 10.9% and the After-School Education and Safety (ASES) Program by 10.89% pending a ballot initiative vote.

Ms. Sartell directed members to the recommendations by the LAO's office regarding the use of underspent or unearned child development funds. For 2008-09, the LAO has recommended allocating 2007-08 unearned funds to the growth, but not fund the COLA. The LAO also suggests the legislature explore and consider long-term reforms that would address the amount of unspent funds, including changing to grant-based contracts rather than reimbursement-based funding.

Lastly, Ms. Sartell reported on the results of the Special Session to handle the looming 2007-08 budget deficit. The Education bill, ABX3 4 approved by the Governor on February 16, 2008 re-appropriates just over \$183 million in child care and development monies to state general funds.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ms. Russell will be attending her initial First 5 LA meeting as a representative of Roundtable this month.
- Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that, based on interest from the second and fourth Supervisory Districts about a year ago, DCFS was charged with studying the feasibility of developing a crisis nursery. Concern regarding family perceptions about DCFS involvement has come to the forefront. There is some possibility that the Office of Child Care will be asked continue exploring the concept.
- Ms. Sachnoff announced that First 5 LA and the Children's Planning Council will be hosting three regional meetings by invitation only to discuss models for the MHSA/PEI component.

8. CALL TO ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Ms. Maria Calix
Mr. Duane Dennis
Ms. Ann Franzen
Ms. Kathy House
Ms. Sheri Lewis
Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey
Ms. Joan McGowan
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura
Mr. Matt Rezvani
Ms. Arlene Rhine
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Esther Torrez
Ms. Ruth Yoon

Guests:

Ms. Sally Anderson, City of LA Commission on Children, Youth & Families
Ms. Grace Cainoy Weltman, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
Ms. Ellen Cervantes, Child Care Resource Center
Ms. Beth Chiaro, Child Care Resource Center
Ms. Victoria Evers, Intergovernmental Relations/CEO
Ms. Sandra Hong, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Kristen Laws, First 5 LA
Ms. Lorne Leach, Aviva Family and Children's Services
Ms. Elsa Leal, Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Ms. Lola Nevarez, Department of Public Social Services/SSS
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council
Ms. Holly Reynolds, Child Care Planning Committee
Ms. Kate Sachnoff, First 5 LA

Staff:

Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell