



## Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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### **MEETING MINUTES**

**November 12, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. – noon**

**Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration**

**500 West Temple Avenue, Conference Room 344**

**Los Angeles, California 90012**

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#### **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura, Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable), opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Members and guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.

##### **a. Comments from the Chair**

Ms. Nishimura reported that Mr. Nick Ippolito of Supervisor Don Knabe's office invited Ms. Ruth Yoon, Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu and her as representatives of the Roundtable to a meeting with Ms. Diane Ujiye and Ms. Sally Jue of the Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network in mid-October to discuss early care and education issues. As a result of that meeting, Ms. Malaske-Samu is preparing a motion requesting the Board of Supervisor's endorsement of the Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Initiative (LA PAI) Priority Principles. In addition, the motion is requesting Board support for the Federal Early Learning Challenge Fund, a provision of the Student Aid and Responsibility Act of 2009 (H.R. 3221). A copy of the Priority Principles will be included in the meeting materials next month.

##### **b. Review of Minutes**

- October 14, 2009

Ms. Charlotte Lee offered a correction to her comments listed on page 5. The second sentence should read "She relayed that most of the homeless families receive CalWORKs."

*Ms. Arlene Rhine made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Ms. Maria Calix seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a unanimous vote.*

##### **c. Review of Committee Structure and Assignments**

Ms. Nishimura directed members to their meeting packets for a copy of the Roundtable committees. She noted that Ms. Arlene Rhine has agreed to serve on the STEP Public Awareness Committee, so will be added.

Ms. Nishimura invited members who have not yet signed up for a committee to do so. She then charged each committee to meet prior to the December meeting of the Roundtable to select chairs/facilitators and develop some goals and objectives, action plan, or at least a couple of action items. She would like the committees to give reports on their action items at the full

Roundtable meeting in December. Mr. Duane Dennis asked Ms. Lee to join or assign a member of her staff to the Licensed Exempt Care committee.

## 2. POLICY FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVE

*Increase the percentage of CalWORKs clients with children three through five years of age using licensed child development services by five percent by 6/30/10.*

By way of introduction, Ms. Nishimura reflected on her reaction to the October meeting, stating that she found the presentation and discussion on the Head Start and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) partnership invigorating. She noted it as an example of how the Roundtable is aligning the monthly agenda with the objectives of the Child Care Policy Framework. Ms. Nishimura relayed that Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey was particularly excited about the meeting, which she raised at her afternoon meeting with representatives from the Probation Department. Not wanting to be left behind, one of the Probation representatives agreed to convene a meeting between Probation staff and Head Start and Roundtable/Office of Child Care staff to explore how to connect their client families with child care and development services. Dr. McCroskey, Ms. Sarah Younglove, Ms. Malaske-Samu, and Ms. Michele Sartell participated in the meeting held on Friday, October 30, 2009. Probation is now proposing a joint effort to investigate child care and development connections related to their gang initiative projects, pregnant & parenting foster youth, and family resource centers in Juvenile Hall. Ms. Sarah Younglove echoed the momentum, stating that materials have been sent and are being shared with their managers; Head Start will soon be conducting a training. Ms. Malaske-Samu invited Mr. Michael Gray of DCFS to join the conversations, particularly around their joint clients.

Reflecting again on the October meeting, it was noted that the discussion focused on actual strategies for connecting families in the DCFS system with child care and development services, particularly the collaborative work between DCFS and Head Start. Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that the discussion veered away from the complications of the system and its funding streams. This approach is being used in working with the Probation Department. Mr. Matt Rezvani asked if the work is similar to First 5 LA efforts to identify family needs and help link with resources. Ms. Malaske-Samu explained that DCFS and Head Start are working together to actually enroll families in programs. It was mentioned that 211 LA County in partnership with the Early Identification and Intervention Collaborative of Los Angeles County is administering by telephone the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) to help families determine if their child is on track developmentally and guide them to resources as needed.

Ms. Nishimura then stated that in keeping with the spirit of thinking differently and helping families make as direct a child care connection as possible, Ms. Lee has graciously offered to provide an update on CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care.

### **a. What are the changes to the law regarding exemptions from work activities for CalWORKs participants?**

- What does this mean for CalWORKs Stage1 Child Care participants?

Ms. Lee distributed copies of the section of the trailer bill (SB 4, Chapter 4) to the Budget Act of 2009 signed by the Governor that describes who is temporarily exempt from the welfare-to-work program. The law exempts families with young children – one child under 24 months of age or two or more under six years of age - from mandatory welfare-to-work requirements. The law is effective through July 31, 2011. Ms. Lee was clear in her emphasis that the intent behind the

change is to cut costs. This population of families was identified for exemption due to the high cost of child care for very young children.

- What impact does DPSS estimate this will have on Stage 1 participation?

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) has been crunching numbers to determine the impacts on caseload. Ms. Lee noted that in addition to the change in exemptions, the DPSS caseload has increased over time and is expected to continue growing. DPSS has some idea of the number of families – current and newly enrolling - who will choose to be exempt. By the beginning of the year, DPSS estimates that 5,000 families with young children will opt not to participate in welfare-to-work. By the time the law sunsets, they estimate that 7,000 families will be exempt. Estimates are based on the following assumptions: people working will continue to work; people in self-initiated programs will continue in those programs; and people in training programs will continue. Those families with young children volunteering to participate in welfare-to-work will have access to Stage 1 Child Care.

Ms. Lee clarified that the 5,000 families could be a combination of new applicants and those already participating in welfare-to-work activities, such as Job Club. The savings will derive from what the DPSS would have spent if 5,000 to 7,000 families accessed Stage 1 Child Care before the change in law.

Discussion ensued on how the exemption for families with young children impacts access to services, including child care and development. Families opting out of participating in welfare-to-work and therefore not eligible for Stage 1 Child Care are still eligible for other services, such as Early Head Start and Head Start, the California State Preschool Program (CSPP)-Part Day, and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP). The question is how to make families aware of services not provided through CalWORKs. Ms. Lee stated that DPSS could help notify clients receiving cash aid and other services through a mailing.

Ms. Ellen Cervantes of the Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) mentioned that the Child Care Resource and Referral (R&Rs) Agencies have staff co-located in most DPSS offices and provide enhanced referrals by calling a child care and development program to ensure there is an opening. In addition, R&R staff make presentations to GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) workers. Ms. Lee responded that the exemption presents challenges as new clients will not see GAIN workers or participate in Job Club or other like activities. Ms. Cervantes added that there has been an increase in families' use of license-exempt care (73% of their caseload) to supplement their extended family income. Dr. Richard Cohen suggested that the Roundtable consider its role on helping fully enroll other programs, such as Mommy and Me that work closely with families by focusing on activities that nurture bonding and attachment between parent and child. Mr. Matt Rezvani raised his concern of the increased isolation that families may face by not enrolling their children in any type of program, increasing the risk of abuse and neglect.

In answer to a question regarding families with young children "choosing" whether to participate in welfare-to-work, Ms. Lee replied that families currently enrolled will be offered the option of opting out. On the other hand, new families enrolling in CalWORKs will be told they have the option to participate in welfare-to-work. If the family opts out, they cannot access Stage 1 Child Care. Ms. Kathy House clarified that CalWORKs eligibility stays intact and families participating in activities due to substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health can still access Stage 1 Child Care because these are allowable welfare-to-work activities. Ms. Lee added that while families are exempt, the 60 month limit for receiving cash aid has been waived

unless they participate in welfare-to-work activities. The bottom line, according to Ms. Lee, DPSS officially is not encouraging families of young children to enroll in welfare-to-work. If DPSS does not realize enough savings through this effort, they may need to cut back on other programs, most likely their support of homeless families. The premise of the budget item is to save money. She added the Governor is proposing additional cuts to deal with the ongoing budget deficit and he has stated that no program should expect to be exempt.

**b. Outreaching to CalWORKs Families Regarding Child Development Services**

- Connecting exempt families to subsidized child development services

Ms. Nishimura asked “what can we do to connect families to quality programs?” Ms. Lee suggested the Roundtable as the forum take up the issue. DPSS could be in a supportive rather than leadership role. Ms. Malaske-Samu commented on the size of the issue given the number of families, and then asked if DPSS could help in locating where families are geographically as a way to formulate a targeted approach. Ms. Lee answered that the number crunching conducted by DPSS has not been so scientific as to define projected caseload changes by geographic boundaries. However, every current recipient and new applicant is assigned a case carrying worker. On the other hand, DPSS does not have the ability to allocate resources to any effort as they are significantly understaffed and expect their staffing issues to worsen. As such, little opportunity exists for DPSS staff to engage with families in a discussion about their options other than distributing a fact sheet on the importance of early education. Ms. Sarah Younglove recommended identifying a common denominator to facilitate reaching families.

A couple of members referred to First 5 LA establishing a priority targeting families in the DPSS system. An initiative is to be piloted in Norwalk that includes giving information on early childhood opportunities to welfare-to-work clients. It was added that Supervisor Knabe’s office is interested in the initiative. Recent conversations have stalled, however, due to dealings with budget issues at DPSS. Ms. House referred to other county initiatives, such as the motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas for school based health centers and opportunities to connect with the gang initiative. Ms. Ruth Yoon added that First 5 LA funds 42 school readiness locations designed to increase access to early childhood education.

Mr. Dennis went on record with his concern that the most at risk families are not and will not be accessing child care and development services. In essence, he continued, families with other issues such as domestic violence will now stay at home and their children will be most vulnerable of not receiving the services they need. He commented that this is not in alignment with the policy framework brought forth by the Roundtable. It requires families to self declare that they have a problem with domestic violence, mental health or substance abuse and volunteer to participate in services. Ms. Younglove added that people are often in denial about their problems. Mr. Dennis then commented on the larger implications for California from its 15 year history.

**c. Outreaching to CalWORKs Special Populations**

- Convene a meeting of service providers
- Connect with homeless case managers

Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that the job performance with the three populations in the past has been weak. She suggested returning to First 5 LA to discuss the exemption and possible next steps. DPSS can identify the populations that will be in need of services. First 5 LA can help refine messages targeted to families and think about how to make the connections in a meaningful way. DPSS needs to be part of the communication and dissemination; DPSS is willing to help disseminate the messages. Mr. Michael Gray added that a good number of children also may be served by the DCFS and suggested some work to mitigate the impacts of the new law.

Ms. Lee offered another DPSS population to consider - connecting homeless families with Early Head Start and Head Start. DPSS has direct connections to homeless families on CalWORKS with a dedicated staff person assigned to conduct activities, including but not limited to identifying resources. The Norwalk office would be a great place to pilot an effort and then quickly implementing the effort countywide. She added that Skid Row families are very much in need of services.

Ms. Malaske-Samu will approach First 5 LA to discuss strategies for reaching the 5,000 to 7,000 families (some with two or more children) that may take the exemption. Ms. Lee can continue to participate in conversations, especially with how DPSS can help efforts reach families. Mr. Gray has committed to also participating in the conversations. Ms. Lee noted that while the law became effective on August 1, 2009, instructions from the State only arrived this week and the County's computer system was changed as of November 1<sup>st</sup> so as not to automatically refer families to GAIN. However, some families are already opting out or choosing not to participate.

Ms. Malaske-Samu also suggested working with DPSS to convene special projects providers to talk about making connections between families and child care and development programs. She will continue to explore this with DPSS and report back.

### **3. JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION REPORT**

#### **a. Update on State and Federal Legislation**

Mr. Adam Sonenshein, Co-chair of the Joint Committee, relayed that not much with legislation is happening at this time. He reported that on Tuesday, November 9th, the Governor by Executive Order established the California State Advisory Council on Early Childhood and Care. This Advisory Council will coordinate the early childhood efforts and is a step towards ensuring California's eligibility for new federal funding, i.e. the Early Learning Challenge Grant if the Student Aid and Responsibility Act of 2009 is passed. The Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee will become a part of this new Advisory Council, which will meet the requirements of the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. Mr. Sonenshein referred members and guests to the copy of the press release, which includes a list of representatives to be appointed to the Advisory Council by the Governor. The Governor's Web site (<http://gov.ca.gov>) posts applications for appointments to various commissions.

As mentioned in last month's meeting, H.R. 3221, which contains the Early Learning Challenge Fund provision, has been assigned to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension. No action has been taken since the assignment as the Senate is now focused on the health care bill recently passed by the House.

Mr. Sonenshein reported that the Governor called a 5th Extraordinary Session, in part to address ways to make the State more competitive for Race to the Top, which will provide \$4.35

billion in federal discretionary funds for education. Two bills, SB 1 5X (Romero) and SB 2 5X (Simitian), have been introduced and hearings have been held. SB 1 would make changes in current law to allow California to compete for the Race to the Top funds. SB 2 establishes a statewide data system to inform the development of education policy and improve instruction. California's efforts to craft a proposal for Race to the Top funds are posted at <http://www.caracetothetop.org/>. A number of events across the state have been hosted to solicit stakeholder input. Dr. Cohen asked the status of Los Angeles Unified School District's efforts to change the requirements to allow localities to apply. Apparently, a group of counties are pursuing strategies for direct grants rather than relying on the State.

Mr. Sonenshein mentioned briefly the projection by the Department of Finance (DOF) that California continues to face budget challenges. The DOF is projecting a \$7.4 billion gap for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010.

#### **b. Policy Framework**

*Identify opportunities for Los Angeles County to promote collaboration among service providers and advocates on behalf of needed legislative or regulatory changes.*

Mr. Sonenshein announced that the Joint Committee on Legislation, on behalf of the Roundtable and the Child Care Planning Committee, is planning to convene a meeting of stakeholders to brainstorm and prioritize common policy goals for 2010. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Hall of Administration in Room 739. Letters of invitation will be sent electronically by the end of the week. The invitation letter and agenda has been included in members' packets.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Mr. Dennis reported that Supervisor Knabe has asked Dr. McCroskey to continue with the First 5 LA Commission of an additional year. *(Since the announcement made at the Roundtable meeting, Supervisor Knabe withdrew the effort for Dr. McCroskey to continue on the Commission.)*
- Ms. Malaske-Samu referred members and guests to the Strengthening Families handout included in their meeting packets. This is an approach that has been adopted by the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP). She sees this approach as putting early care and education programs in the center of helping families with issues of abuse and neglect. Instead of asking programs to do more, Ms. Malaske-Samu sees the approach as a way to look at how a program is doing with family engagement and build upon it. The Office of Child Care is working with First 5 LA to conduct a training targeted to the child care and development community on March 19, 2010 at The California Endowment. It will be a full day event with multiple breakouts. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) will facilitate the presentations. A follow-up meeting will be held in September to ask participants to report on their work since the event.

Ms. Younglove stated that Head Start, using discretionary funds, offers a similar training for which participants receive family credential units. The curriculum, developed by Cornell, is an approach that helps determine families' needs. Ms. Cervantes mentioned that CCRC case managers are trained in the family development model. Ms. Malaske-Samu invited Ms. Younglove to participate in the planning to look at overlap and strategies for moving forward.

- CCRC is hosting their 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Forum at the Odyssey Restaurant in Granada Hills on Friday, November 20, 2009 at 7:30 a.m. Panelists include Secretary of State Glen Thomas, Senator Carol Liu, Assembly Member Julia Brownley, Assembly Member Paul Krekorian, and Supervisory Zev Yaroslavsky.

## 5. CALL TO ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

### **Commissioners Present:**

Ms. Maria Calix  
Mr. Duane Dennis  
Ms. Ann Franzen  
Ms. Kathy House  
Ms. Charlotte Lee  
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura  
Mr. Matt Rezvani  
Ms. Arlene Rhine  
Ms. Connie Russell  
Ms. Ruth Yoon  
Ms. Sarah Younglove

### **Guests:**

Ms. Ellen Cervantes  
Dr. Richard Cohen  
Mr. Michael Gray, Department of Children and Family Services  
Ms. Emily Harding-Morick, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality  
Ms. Terry Ogawa  
Mr. Adam Sonenshein, Los Angeles Universal Preschool  
Mr. Eric Kroskirty, UCLA Public Policy

### **Staff:**

Ms. Kathleen Malaske-Samu  
Ms. Michele Sartell