



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 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 10:12 a.m. Members and guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.

- Mr. Dennis announced that the California Department of Education (CDE) has proposed new draft regulations with respect to children under the jurisdiction of child protective services and children determined “at risk” of abuse, neglect or exploitation and their eligibility for subsidized child care services. The Public Hearing on the changes in the regulations will be held in Sacramento on January 22, 2008. Written comments will be accepted up to 5:00 p.m. on the same day. Ms. Michele Sartell provided a brief summary of the proposed changes, which include clarifying language regarding children at risk, changes in the length of time the children will be eligible as a priority population for subsidized child care and development services, and the timeframe for the imposition of fees for the services.

Ms. Jennifer Hottenroth, staff with DCFS, stated that her office is concerned about the impact the changes may have for children referred to DCFS, but not resulting in an open case. Participating in a child care and development program may prevent the family from entering the system. Other issues that were raised include needing clarification on who makes the determination that the child is at risk for purposes of child care and development services and the breadth of the language to allow for more up front services to the families. It was added that early intervention reduces the need for special education services, particularly for children engaged with the child welfare system.

Mr. Dennis proposed that the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Roundtable review and report back at the January 14, 2008 meeting with a recommended response to the proposed changes. The Office of Child Care and DCFS will work together to set up a meeting to fully review the proposed regulation changes and prepare recommendations to present at the January meeting. The draft regulations and supporting materials will be sent to the membership.

- Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) on-site program observations will begin in January 2009. To that end, the STEP Review and Rating Subcommittee will be activated. Additionally, notices will be sent soon to re-convene the STEP Promotion Committee.

a. Review of Minutes

- November 12, 2008

Ms. Maria Calix made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Esther Torrez seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

b. Meeting with Camille Mabin, Director of Child Development Division, California Department of Education

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported on the visit by Ms. Maben to the Office of Child Care that occurred just before Thanksgiving on November 25, 2008. Ms. Maben was appointed as the Director of the Child Development Division (CDD) about nine months ago and has an extensive background in child care and development – among her experiences, Ms. Maben is a protégée of Bev Boz having worked in her child development program. The Office of Child Care presented Ms. Maben with a binder to help her understand some of the state contracted program work going on in Los Angeles County. As an aside, Ms. Malaske-Samu noted that 97% of the Office of Child Care funding is from CDE. Ms. Maben was provided with an overview of the Child Care Planning Committee, the Roundtable, our policy and legislative work, the Stipend Program, and the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL), including improvements made to the system. She also was introduced to the LACEL's expanded reporting and mapping capacity as the result of a grant award from the County's Information and Technology Fund under the Chief Information Office. The LACEL staff are able to create maps of various configurations, ultimately making the numbers of children eligible for care and not receiving it much more meaningful.

Ms. Maben mentioned some of CDD's priorities and interests. Her office also is looking at the amount of dollars returned by contractors to the State. In addition, they are considering collapsing the 62 ranks of families on the centralized eligibility lists into more manageable and meaningful groupings. Ms. Maben is aware of the challenges in reaching families in the lowest ranks, families' often in transition and less stable, therefore harder to locate. She also mentioned energy statewide around the Steinberg bill and the work that will soon be underway to plan for an early childhood quality and improvement system through an advisory committee. Ms. Maben is particularly interested in STEP and asked to be invited for another visit to accompany a rater conducting an on-site observation. Lastly, she is working on forging strong relationships with the Department of Finance and already is working closely with the Superintendent of Instruction.

Mr. Whit Hayslip mentioned that Ms. Maben will be visiting the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Early Care and Education office on January 16, 2009. He plans to share how the LACEL is working for them and the challenges of using the LACEL to ensure that they are fully enrolled, therefore expending their funds fully. He mentioned that one of the challenges LAUSD faces is based on the size of their system and using it effectively while also needing to stretch their staff resources and their availability to manage enrolling families off of the LACEL. Ms. Malaske-Samu noted the ethical challenge of those most in need of the services having highest priority (after CPS children), yet the challenge of implementation. She echoed others' comments that it is much easier for a stable family to respond, while harder for families with limited resources to gather documents to verify eligibility, show proof of immunizations, etc.

Members and guests agreed that further discussion is needed on how to make the LACEL work more effectively for programs and families. It was suggested that the Roundtable convene a work group of stakeholders including contractors and representatives from DCFS and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to discuss issues relating to the LACEL and compile a set of recommendations to submit to CDD. The recommendations should address how to make the system work, with targets for demonstrating progress. Ms. Holly Reynolds suggested inviting representatives of organizations that may serve as alternative contacts on behalf of families and in a position to help them navigate the child care and development system.

2. UPDATE ON THE CHILD CARE POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Status of Framework and Efforts to Date:

Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that the Policy Framework has been shepherded to the Board of Directors under the signature of William Fujioka, Chief Executive Office. Mr. Nick Ippolito, Deputy to Supervisory Don Knabe, is drafting a motion to go in front of the Board of Supervisors as early as January 2009 for adoption as County policy. Ms. Malaske –Samu relayed that work is underway on the ambitious list of action items and there are early accomplishments to report.

i. Training support for Steps to Excellence Project (STEP)

Ms. Malaske-Samu related the plans underway for additional upcoming trainings in conjunction with STEP. The Office of Child Care is collaborating with DCFS, which has agreed to provided funding for the trainings for this fiscal year. The collaboration includes recruiting STEP participants willing to serve DCFS families. The trainings are:

- **Environment Rating Scales (ERS):** Trainings will be offered on how to enhance the quality of the child care and development environment using the Early Childhood, Infant/Toddler, and/or Family Child Care ERS.
- **Adult Involvement Scale (AIS):** The AIS, developed by Dr. Carollee Howes of UCLA's Center for Improving Child Care Quality and a Roundtable member, is a relatively new and unfamiliar tool to the child care and development community. The focus of the training will be on the nature of interactions between adults and children, teaching staff how to build more positive relationships with children and being thoughtful about how they work with children.
- **Developmental Screening Tools:** This training will provide program staff with good tools for identifying children with delays as well as reassuring parents that their child is functioning within the normal range of development. In addition, information will be provided on the referral process and navigating that system, and creating accommodating environments based on the individual needs of children.
- **Strengthening Families:** This curriculum is designed to teach staff on the strengthening families approach as a means for supporting families in stress and preventing child abuse and neglect.

ii. Resource materials developed for DCFS staff and contractors

Ms. Malaske-Samu referred members and guests to samples of the draft resources developed as tools for DCFS staff and Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project and Partnership for Families partner organizations. The materials are intended to help persons working with children and families engaged with or at risk of engagement with DCFS understand and navigate the child care and development system. The materials will be field tested with representatives from each of these groups, then modified accordingly.

iii. First report on the County Employee Child Development Centers

Ms. Malaske-Samu began her report by reminiscing about the recent fires in Sylmar. Unfortunately, the Olive View-UCLA Infant/Child Development Center operated by the Child Development Consortium of Los Angeles was a victim of the fires. Very quickly, efforts were organized to identify a temporary location, and obtain a licensing visit and fire inspection so that families could continue to be served. On December 2nd, the Center doors re-opened in their temporary location. Ms. Malaske-Samu remarked that this center was the first county employee program, opening 20 years ago and initially designed to serve hard to recruit classifications of staff, i.e. nurses. When the center first opened, cost of care was not a major consideration for employees. As costs of child care and development services have increased, more attention is needed to assure that families in job classifications with lower salaries have access.

The first report on the county employee child development centers has been sent to Mr. Miguel Santana and distributed to the Board of Supervisor Deputies. Each site raises unique issues, however those with respect to lease arrangements, affordability and quality should be addressed as first priority items. Ms. Malaske-Samu commented on one vendor who has stated that their center cannot meet the staff qualifications and ratios of Title 5; this center was given two years to meet the standards, but has not stepped up. This raises some additional questions about how to handle current vendors as well as potential vendors with expectations relating to quality.

Ms. Holly Reynolds noted that Fairplex Child Development Center while not included on the list has a long history of serving County employees. Sixty percent of Fairplex's enrollment is set aside for families qualifying for subsidized child care; County employees receive second priority. Ms. Reynolds provided a brief history that dates back to Supervisor Pete Schabarum who was instrumental in the expansion of Fairplex that resulted in more children receiving services, including county employees. Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that Fairplex will be added to the list of County Employee Child Development Centers.

iv. Results of November 6, 2008 meeting on legislative remedies

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported on the meeting, which brought together representatives of child care and development programs holding contracts with the CDE/CDD. The purpose of the meeting was to brainstorm legislative remedies to the problems resulting in contractors returning unspent funds to the State. Mr. Ippolito also participated in the meeting, offering Supervisor Knabe's desire to introduce legislation that would allow the County flexibility to use funds allocated to the County that may otherwise go unspent to meet family needs. Mr. Ippolito gained a much better understanding that there is not one big thing that will make the contracting process better. Rather, it will take a lot of small things together. Mr. Ippolito was intrigued by the complexity of the problem and encouraged more thoughtful discussion to find real, longer term solutions.

v. December 8, 2008 meeting to develop common legislative agendas

Working in partnership with Los Angeles Universal Preschool and First 5 LA, the Office of Child Care convened a variety of stakeholders to develop a common legislative agenda in Los Angeles County. Mr. Ippolito participated in this meeting as well. Of major concern for this year is preserving the current level of funding for child care and development services and using the time for planning. Dr. Celia Ayala added that the meeting was a first big step that brought key players together and to discuss messaging to legislators to reduce the appearance of fragmentation. She also found it informative to learn agency processes for taking action on policy issues. Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura mentioned that the Office of Child Care has volunteered to host on the Web site information on efforts underway by organizations and links to their materials. She thinks have access to this information will help track priority issues of others and learn what kind of support they need.

Ms. Malaske-Samu announced that both groups will be combined and a follow-up meeting has been scheduled for January 21, 2009 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. Announcements will go out in the next few weeks.

Ms. Malaske-Samu directed members and guests to their packets for information from the President-elect Obama Web site. His proposed stimulus package was mentioned as a possible opportunity for child care and development during the December meeting of stakeholders given that child care both generates work and supports parents ability to work.

Mr. Dennis requested that a list of deliverables be created to help facilitate the Roundtable's oversight of implementation on the Policy Framework. He added that the document would serve as a reporting mechanism to the Child Care Planning Committee and other stakeholders.

Dr. McCroskey suggested that there be an opportunity to offer prepared comments when the Policy Framework is presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The child care and development community's participation would be an important signal of support to the Board and highlight the significance of effort. Ms. Malaske-Samu will work with Mr. Ippolito on the timing and the structure of the hearing. Other members spoke to the amount of work that has been accomplished in a short period of time and how the Policy Framework serves as a public relations as well as a policy agenda.

3. JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION REPORT

a. Governor's Budget: Special Session of Legislature 2008-09

Ms. Michele Sartell provided an update to the Governor's convening of the special session of the legislature and his budget proposal to deal with the revenue shortfall. She referred members to an article released by Reuters on December 5, 2008. According to the article, California is due to run out of cash in February or March of 2009. If the budget shortfall is not addressed, the State may not be able to pay its bills beginning in March, resulting in delayed payments or paying in registered warrants. To address the budget shortfall, the Governor has called for a combination of spending cuts and revenue increases, including increases in sales taxes. News sources, including this one, continue to report a stalemate between the Democrats and the Republicans with the former opposing spending cuts to vital services, while the latter opposes tax increases. However, some news sources have alluded to hushed support by some Republicans for raising revenues through tax increases.

b. Adoption of County’s Federal Legislative Platform

On November 25th, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted the recommendations for the 2009 Federal Legislative Agenda (Federal Agenda). Ms. Sartell directed members to the cover memo and section 7, Children and Family Services, from the proposed Federal Agenda. Child care and development is addressed in Items “o” and “p”. Ms. Sartell and Ms. Malaske-Samu, after a lengthy discussion with Mr. Mark Tajima of the Chief Executive Office Intergovernmental Relations Branch, agreed to the broad language in item “o” that would allow the County flexibility to take positions at the federal level on child care and development funding that supports activities relating to enhancing access to and the availability of high quality services for children and their families. Item “p” ensures that child care and development programs as well as school districts are eligible for funding to address the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children and families they serve.

4. COLLEAGUE AGENCY REPORTS

a. Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee)

Ms. Holly Reynolds, Chair of the Planning Committee, reported that the Planning Committee has endorsed Policy Framework.

b. Commission for Children and Families

Ms. Ann Franzen had no report.

c. First 5 LA

Ms. Connie Russell announced that First 5 LA has a strategic planning meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2008.

d. Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)

Dr. Celia Ayala reported on the following:

- LAUP participated in a committee meeting held by First 5 LA on December 4, 2008 to look at performance-based contracting
- On December 11, 2008, LAUP is co-hosting with KCET a satellite program on pre-kindergarten and access to quality
- In partnership with DPSS, LAUP is conducting a toy drive that will culminate in an event at the El Monte office on December 20, 2008

5. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- It was suggested that a meeting be scheduled with newly elected Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and his staff to introduce him to the Roundtable.
- There was a brief discussion regarding Los Angeles Unified School District’s (LAUSD) financial contribution to child care and development services to augment their contract dollars from the CDE/CDD. Mr. Whit Hayslip’s office is working with the Deputy Superintendent on ways to minimize the cost to the District. One of the challenges is the significant staffing costs. Resulting from collective bargaining, child care and

development educators earn worthy wages as do teachers, however the state reimbursement rates for child care and development services do not meet the cost of these relatively speaking higher salaries. It raises the question: “can the system maintain itself and pay a worthy wage?” Ms. Malaske-Samu relayed that this issue is not unique to the district, adding that fees vary across the employee centers, which is reflected in the salaries and qualifications.

Ms. Ogawa responded by emphasizing the importance of representation by the child care and development at First 5 LA meetings, especially as they establish their priorities for next five years. She suggested bringing the issues of worthy wages and its implications.

- Ms. Sartell provided an update to the planning process for the Mental Health Services Act/Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative. The Community Forums held at the Service Area Advisory Council (SAAC) levels will soon come to a close. The SAACs have received instructions from the Department of Mental Health for forming Ad Hoc Steering Committees with broad representation. The Committees will prepare their plans based on the information that was collected at the Community Forums. Membership on these committees will be posted on <http://dmh.lacounty.info/MHSA/plans/peires.html>. Ms. Sartell encouraged ongoing participation in the process to ensure attention is paid to birth to five and the vision for an integration of mental health services with early care and education.

6. CALL TO ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Dr. Celia Ayala
Ms. Maria Calix
Mr. Duane Dennis
Ms. Ann Franzen
Mr. Whit Hayslip
Ms. Kathy House
Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura
Ms. Holly Reynold
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Esther Torrez
Ms. Mika Yamamoto

Guests:

Ms. Senat Admessu, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Ms. Sally Anderson, Commission on Children, Youth & Their Families
Ms. Leila Espinoza, UCLA Early Developmental Screening Initiative
Ms. Jennifer Hottenroth, Department of Children and Family Services
Brenda Ingram, Pacific Oaks College
Ms. Charlotte Lee, Department of Public Social Services
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Education Coordinating Council

Staff:

Ms. Kathleen Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell