



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2009

10:00 a.m. – noon

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

500 West Temple Avenue, Conference Room 739

Los Angeles, California 90012

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

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

- Mr. Dennis noted that Ms. Charlotte Lee of the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) will be replacing Ms. Sheri Lewis on the Roundtable. Mr. Dennis and others thanked Ms. Lewis for her service. Although Ms. Lewis has taken on new responsibilities with DPSS, she still provides oversight to some CalWORKs child care components and so assured the Roundtable that she would continue her relations, although on a limited basis. Mr. Dennis welcomed Ms. Lee to the Roundtable.
- Mr. Dennis announced that Governor Schwarzenegger has appointed Dr. Celia Ayala of Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) to the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee. Mr. Dennis commented that the Roundtable has a unique opportunity to provide Dr. Ayala with information and recommendations to take to the Committee. Likewise, Dr. Ayala will be in a position to provide the Roundtable with regular updates.

a. Review of Minutes

- December 10, 2008

Ms. Holly Reynolds made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Jan Isenberg seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

b. Representative to First 5 LA

Ms. Connie Russell announced that she is stepping down as the Roundtable's representative to the First 5 LA Commission (Commission) due to other commitments. Mr. Dennis thanked Ms. Russell for her representation, acknowledging her commitment and the level at which one can become involved in Commission activities.

Mr. Dennis reflected on critical areas to consider and bring to the table as a representative to the Commission. First, he suggested that the Policy Framework should inform the Roundtable representative's participation on the Commission. Second, Mr. Dennis recognized Supervisor Knabe not only as the new chair of the Commission, but also as a champion of the work of the

Roundtable, particularly relating to his commitment for ensuring that child care and development dollars allocated by the State to serve Los Angeles county children and families are fully spent to meet their needs. Third, Mr. Dennis touched upon the current tough economic times and the significance of First 5 and the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) initiatives in meeting the needs of children and families. Lastly, he mentioned briefly the partnership between the Roundtable and First 5 with respect to implementing the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) as a quality rating system and a means for enhancing the quality of child care and development. Dr. McCroskey concurred with the importance of the participation and added that there are implications for the Roundtable's role in policy discussions.

Ms. Nishimura moved to appoint Mr. Dennis as the Roundtable's representative to the First 5 LA Commission; Ms. Arlene Rhine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dennis thanked the Roundtable members for their confidence in his capacity to serve as their representative, commenting that he would as a whole represent the field of early care and education as well as the Roundtable. Ms. Russell will continue to serve as the Roundtable's representative to the Commission pending the appointment of Mr. Dennis by the Board of Supervisors.

c. Upcoming Agenda Items

Ms. Malaske-Samu invited members to bring issues that the Roundtable should be addressing to her attention. She suggested follow up reports on two items presented to the Roundtable previously. The first is an updated on the PIDP. Ms. Jennifer Hottenroth, staff with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), stated that her office could provide a report at the next meeting. The second item is a report back on CalWORKs child care utilization. Ms. Charlotte Lee suggested that a significant portion of time be allocated to allow for the report and full discussion.

2. UPDATE ON THE CHILD CARE POLICY FRAMEWORK

a. Board Action on January 6, 2009

Mr. Dennis reminded members that at the December meeting, they requested a format for tracking the status on implementing the Policy Framework. Ms. Malaske-Samu directed members to their packets for a copy of Supervisor Knabe's original motion and the reporting document. On January 6, 2009, Ms. Terri Nishimura and Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey presented the Policy Framework to the Board of Supervisors. Although late in the agenda, the Board members appeared engaged during the entire presentation. Ms. Nishimura commented on media coverage in some of the local papers. Dr. McCroskey remarked on Supervisor Knabe making the connection between Sheriff Lee Baca's presentation to the Board on gang prevention and child care policy. Dr. McCroskey believes that the presentation to the Board helped raise the visibility of child care and development issues in the County and the role of the County as a leader on child care and development in partnership with other County Department and community stakeholders.

b. Implementation of the Child Care Policy Framework

Ms. Malaske-Samu asked members to comment on whether the status report on implementation meets their needs. The document is formatted as a matrix organized as in the plan, listing each of the goals and objectives with brief descriptions and status of completion, in

process/on time, in process/delayed, or not started and indicates the Office of Child Care lead staff. Members indicated that the format works. Next, she reported on activities currently underway:

- Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that a meeting will occur soon with Ms. Lee, DPSS, to discuss the employee child development centers that are leased from DPSS. Paying attention to these centers raises the larger question relating to how to provide cost effective child care and development services that are sustainable over time. Participating in the meeting will be representatives from Real Estate and Budget. Hopefully, efforts to address the employee child development centers will lead to recommendations of models and expanding on child care and development services available to County employees in the future.
- On January 21, 2009, a second meeting will be held to further explore the development of a common legislative agenda and focus on strategies to fully expend California Department of Education (CDE) contracts. Ms. Malaske-Samu has prepared a draft memo from Mr. William Fujioka to the Board of Supervisors summarizing the status of exploring solutions to underearned/unspent contracts in Los Angeles County. The memo outlines efforts at the state level to address CDE allocations to child care and development services, including implementation of the Jones bill (AB 2759) that allows programs serving three and four year olds to collapse contracts, budget trailer bill language charging the CDE to look at underearnings and unspent funds, and CDE's plan to examine potentially collapsing the Centralized Eligibility List ranks in order to speed enrollment of eligible families. Consequently, the idea of proposing legislation is on hold for at least this year. On the other hand, regulatory changes may be explored, such as advocating for annual eligibility for all CDE contracted programs to relieve families of reporting changes and reducing administrative burdens.

The issue of annual eligibility certification raised discussion among members. Ms. Holly Reynolds stated that a change of philosophy occurred with the Bush Administration. Historically, the emphasis was on providing services to families rather than policing them. With the Bush Administration, child care and development programs became accountable as stewards of state money, therefore required to question families about changes in their circumstances. Ms. Reynolds noted that the requirements for documentation also increased with the Bush administration as did the concern for improper payments and fraud. While some members questioned whether this is the right strategy, this is one of the items on the table requiring further discussion.

Ms. Malaske-Samu will send the draft memo to membership for comment by the end of the day. Mr. Dennis closed by inviting members to speak up regarding direction and moving forward. Ms. Malaske-Samu will be presenting the Policy Framework to the Commission for Children and Families next month. Mr. Dennis suggested a similar presentation to the Children's Council of Los Angeles.

3. PROPOSED REGULATIONS RELATED TO SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN RECEIVING OR AT RISK OF RECEIVING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Mr. Dennis reminded members that this item was introduced at the December meeting. A meeting of Roundtable representatives and the DCFS was held to examine the proposed changes in late December. Ms. Malaske-Samu referred members to two documents: the draft letter responding to the proposed regulations; and an analysis of the proposed changes that

was sent by e-mail. The proposed regulations make clear distinctions between children at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and children with open Child Protective Services cases, and then address the documentation required for each group of children to be eligible for child care and development services, the length of child development services allowed, when fees are assessed, and siblings' eligibility for services.

Dr. McCroskey and Ms. Hottenroth summarized their concerns with the proposed regulations that would potentially limit access to child care and development services to children determined at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The proposed regulations reduce the length of service from six to three months with no possibility of renewal. Furthermore, families of children at risk would only be eligible for a fee waiver for up to three months. For children under Child Protective Services, verification is required certifying that the child has an "open case". Families are to recertify every 12 months (extended from six months), and may be exempt from fees for up to 12 months.

Dr. McCroskey and Ms. Hottenroth focused on the concerns relating to whether the child has an "open child protective services case" and how this might impact access to child development services, particularly for children determined at risk. Ms. Hottenroth briefly informed members of the process leading up to DCFS opening a case on a child and what this means for a child with a voluntary open case without court supervision versus a child that becomes a ward of the state and therefore is under the supervision of the court. She continued by stating that DCFS has 30 days to make a determination on whether to open a case. Ms. Malaske-Samu added that children on the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL) given a CPS designation wait an average of eight months before a space becomes available.

Members agreed that the regulation changes may have a profoundly detrimental impact on children at risk, particularly given the goals relating to prevention and early intervention. Ms. Hottenroth noted that 70 percent of the time an investigation does not make a finding of substantial abuse or neglect, however decisions are made on the level of DCFS involvement with the family, referring to services, or closing the referral without further action.

Members agreed that given the size of Los Angeles County and the impact the regulations are likely to have on families that engage with the DCFS, a strongly worded letter commenting on the proposed regulations is needed. It was also suggested that comments could delay implementation of regulations. A copy of the letter in final will be sent to Assembly Member Karen Bass as well.

4. UPDATE ON STEPS TO EXCELLENCE PROJECT (STEP)

a. Program Observations and Rating

Ms. Helen Chavez, using a PowerPoint presentation as a visual aid, provided the STEP update organized around three goals: 1) enrollment of programs in STEP; 2) incentives and supports for programs to meet and maintain higher program standards; and 3) infrastructure development.

- Enrollment of Programs

To date, 200 applicants are participating in STEP. The participation goal at the end of the three years is 646. Ms. Chavez focused on the graph showing the percentage of participation by the target goal for each pilot community. Enhanced outreach strategies to increase enrollment in

the pilot communities that have not achieved at least a 33% target rate - Pasadena, Palmdale, San Pedro, Wilmington, and Pomona – are being explored.

- Incentives and Supports to Meet and Maintain Higher Program Standards

Ms. Chavez emphasized the importance of offering incentives and supports to enhance the quality of child care and development programs. Mini-grants have been awarded to 153 STEP applicants for a grand total of \$695,000. Most applicants have used the funds to improve their classroom environments. In February, the Office of Child Care will seek approval for an additional \$432,000 for mini-grants as a means for recruiting child care and development programs from those pilot communities mentioned in the previous section.

The offering of trainings also has generated lots of interest among programs. For Fiscal Year 2007-08, 641 individuals attended 31 trainings. Thus far for Fiscal Year 2008-09, 23 trainings have been held, with 211 individuals attending. Ms. Chavez announced that the catalogue of trainings is updated quarterly, with the revised catalogue due for release by the end of the week.

- Infrastructure Development

Ms. Chavez referred members to the STEP process map, which charts the steps from submitting an application to awarding a rating and posting it. Currently, a number of programs are preparing their portfolios in preparation of their site visits by UCLA to be initiated the end of January/early February 2009.

Ms. Chavez concluded by announcing that the Research Advisory Committee will convene on January 21, 2009. She referred members and guests to the Office of Child Care Web site (www.childcare.lacounty.gov) for the Step Training Catalogue and the Directory of Participating Programs.

Mr. Whit Hayslip commented that a number of programs are part of multiple opportunities that require close monitoring and evaluating of their programs to ensure that they are maintaining quality standards, including National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation projects, LAUP, the CDE, and the Early Developmental Screening Initiative (EDSI). As such, he requested that STEP rely on documentation that is already required by these other opportunities in their existing formats rather than adding additional burdens to programs with already limited resources. With respect to training, the question was raised on how resources are being shared in a coordinated way. Ms. Malaske-Samu responded by stating that the Child Care and Development Resource and Referral Agencies are organizing their trainings by the STEP domains. It was acknowledged that more needs to be done to open up the trainings to all programs.

Mr. Dennis commented that 36 other states undergoing quality rating systems and are much further ahead than California. He added that quality rating and improvement systems will be a requirement with new dollars that may come from the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and then asked how California will be prepared when there are additional funds. Ms. Nishimura asked Ms. Chavez how the Roundtable could help with STEP. Ms. Chavez suggested help with promoting STEP to the public that reaches beyond the STEP pilot communities. Ms. Chavez added that Roundtable representation will be important to the appeals process for programs that contest their quality ratings. Ms. Malaske-Samu noted that County Counsel has reviewed and approved the processes. Lastly, Sandra Hong of UCLA's Center for Improving Child Care Quality stated that the STEP matrix is in line with other quality rating and improvement systems

and NAEYC accreditation and discussions are ongoing on how to best streamline the process to make it as easy as possible for providers.

b. Week of the Young Child Event

Ms. Malaske-Samu announced that the Promotion Committee has been reactivated and would meet immediately following the close of the meeting to plan for Week of the Young Child. For background, NAEYC's week is scheduled for April 19th through 25th; the California AEYC honors the Week of the Young Child throughout the month of April. The Roundtable plan is to set a Board agenda item for the week of April 19th to provide an update on STEP, focusing on rates of participation, trainings, and the mini-grants. The goal is to recognize the STEP programs, emphasizing quality improvements rather than the granting of particular ratings. The proposed schedule includes a breakfast reception on Tuesday morning, a luncheon on the weekend to allow for greater participation, and photo opportunities for the programs and their Board members. The committee will be seeking sponsorships and materials to make attractive goody bags. If a luncheon is a component of the celebration, invitations would be extended to dignitaries, including Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, County of Los Angeles Sheriff Baca and the Board of Supervisors. The Promotion Committee will present its full plan at the February meeting. Ms. Malaske-Samu invited donations for goody bags.

Ms. Malaske-Samu added that the Children's Council of Los Angeles County (CCLAC) has asked the Office of Child Care to take the lead on addressing the goal of children and families well-being. Connecting with the CCLAC as a partner could help STEP with launching the STEP public relations campaign targeted to parents. The CCLAC has expertise in developing messages that are effective with parents in various languages in different parts of county, for example.

5. JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION REPORT

a. Governor's Proposed Budget for 2009-10

Ms. Michele Sartell referred members and guests to their meeting packets for the following reference materials: PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Governor's General Fund Proposals for 2009-10 and impacts on child care and development services, a draft document charting detailed funding proposals for child care and development services as contained in Assembly Bill 105 (Evans): Budget, and materials relating to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start and Early Start and the Economic Recovery Package.

Ms. Sartell briefly reviewed the PowerPoint presentation, pointing out that the Governor has proposed a mix of solutions to the projected budget gap of \$41 billion, including major spending cuts, revenue increases and cash management strategies. Among his revenue solutions are a sales tax increase, an oil severance tax, an increased tax on alcoholic beverages, and a reduction in the tax credit for dependents. The Governor also has proposed increasing annual vehicle registration fees and the driver's license fees. Ms. Sartell pointed out, however, that the largest category of solutions is the Governor's proposed spending cuts to Education and Health and Human Services.

Looking to spending cuts that would directly impact children and families eligible for and/or participating in child care and development services, Ms. Sartell relayed that the Governor has proposed to eliminate the California Children and Families Commission and redirect all state funds and 50% of local funds to support children's programs administered by the Department of

Social Services. Furthermore, he has proposed to fund Mental Health Managed Care with Proposition 63 funds. Both options require voter approval. For Community Care Licensing, the Governor proposes an increase in funding of \$3.5 million to the Technical Assistance Fund for the investigation of registered sex offenders and of serious crime arrests of licensees. The increase is expected to be offset with increases in licensing fees.

Additional proposals are as follows:

- Increase of \$736,000 from federal funds for next phase of implementation of Child Care Provider Accounting and Reporting Information System (PARIS)
- Reduction of \$42 million to reflect expected savings in CalWORKs Stage 2 Child Care (\$27 million) and CalWORKs Stage 3 (\$15 million) caseload-driven programs
- Permanent reduction of \$55 million for General Child Care and Preschool programs based on savings in prior years
- Reappropriation of an additional \$108 million of anticipated savings in prior-year child care programs to address shortfalls in the one-time sources used to partially fund CalWORKs Stage 2 and Stage 3 in current year
- \$18.9 million increase for 1.23% growth based on age 4 and under population change
- No 5.02% cost of living adjustment (COLA), consistent with all Proposition 98 programs
- Reduce Regional Market Rate (RMR) from 85th percentile to 75th percentile of 2007 RMR survey
- Revise family fee schedule as follows:
 - Retain flat fee per family
 - Begin at income levels where families currently pay fees
 - Increase fees by \$2 per day at low end and increase fees thereafter on sliding scale up to 10% of income which occurs at lower point on income eligibility spectrum when compared to current schedule

In closing on the state budget proposals, Ms. Sartell mentioned that the Governor has reintroduced budget cuts from the past, for example ultimately eliminating the safety net for families to continue to receive cash assistance for child-only cases if they do not meet the work requirements.

b. Proposed Reductions for 2008-09

Ms. Sartell said that there is not much to report in terms of firm proposed reductions for 2008-09 other than to say that the Governor chided the legislators during a press conference last week for not fully addressing his proposals outlined in his budget for 2009-10. He vetoed the budget proposals for mid-year 2008-09 framed primarily by the Democrats. The Governor planned to convene the Big 5 last week to continue negotiations.

Ms. Sartell used her remaining time to provide a brief summary of activities by advocacy groups working at the federal level to influence shaping of the federal recovery package. Communications are focusing on increased funding for Head Start and the Child Development Block Grant. In a recent conference call, approximately 36 people sat in and participated in the call, including representatives from the Advancement Project, the Child Care Law Center, First 5 California (and some locals), Los Angeles Universal Preschool, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Preschool California, Children Now, California Head Start Association, Zero to Three, Fight Crime Invest in Kids, Pre-K Now, and other interested folks. Ms. Giannina Sophia Perez of Children Now moderated the meeting, with Mr. Ed Condon providing the focus on Head Start/Early Head Start.

Overall, the meeting was a call to immediate action to shape President-elect Barak Obama's proposed Economic Recovery Package by urging support for increased investments of \$3 billion for Head Start/Early Head Start and \$3 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

More specifically, Head Start has an additional ask for a total of \$4.3 billion, of which \$1.3 would provide one-time funding for facilities, including maintenance and renovations to existing, older buildings and playgrounds, etc. The remaining \$3 billion would be slated to cover programmatic operating costs and quality enhancements, including professional development of staffing and alignment of staff salaries with the marketplace to reduce turnover. Increased funding would also result in increased numbers of children receiving Head Start and Early Head Start services. Included in the meeting packets is the fact sheet, *Head Start & Early Head Start Economic Recovery Package* prepared by the California Head Start Association, which provides funding detail.

Reference was made to the Child Care, Early Learning Coalition, an ad hoc collection of national and state organizations advocating for increased investments in child care and development services. Noted during the call are a couple of items:

- The CCDBG has not been reauthorized in over 10 years, which has resulted in fewer children receiving child care assistance.
- Head Start and Early Head Start experienced a 13% cut in funding from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2008, resulting in cuts to staffing, hours and other services. Furthermore, it was noted that less than half of the eligible preschool children received Head Start services and only 3% of eligible infants and toddlers are enrolled in Early Head Start.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

7. CALL TO ADJOURN

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

Commissioners Present:

Mr. Duane Dennis
Ms. Ann Franzen
Mr. Whit Hayslip
Ms. Kathy House
Ms. Jan Isenberg
Ms. Sheri Lewis
Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura
Ms. Holly Reynolds
Ms. Arlene Rhine
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Esther Torrez

Guests:

Ms. Senat Admessu, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Ms. Sally Anderson, Commission on Children, Youth & Their Families
Mr. John Berndt, LACOE Head Start
Ms. Leila Espinoza, UCLA Early Developmental Screening Initiative
Ms. Sandy Hong, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Jennifer Hottenroth, Department of Children and Family Services
Ms. Brenda Ingram, Pacific Oaks College and NAMI
Ms. Aleece Kelly, First 5 LA
Ms. Charlotte Lee, Department of Public Social Services
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Education Coordinating Council
Ms. Kate Sachnoff, First 5 LA
Ms. Lena Ward, Department of Children and Family Services

Staff:

Ms. Helen Chavez
Ms. Kathleen Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell