



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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MEETING MINUTES

February 11, 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 10:05 a.m. Members and guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.

a. Comments from the Chair

Mr. Dennis announced that the Children's Council of Los Angeles is holding their first meeting this morning at The California Endowment since initiating restructuring in July of 2008.

Mr. Dennis commented on the opportunity for California to expand and enhance the quality of child care and development services under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. With respect to \$2.1 billion in additional funding proposed for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), California is anticipated to receive the largest share. He added that the Senate version of the economic recovery package reserves 12.75 percent of the funds for quality improvements, above and beyond the current four percent set-aside. Mr. Dennis will be participating in Capitol Hill visits as part of the National Child Care Resource and Referral Association next month. It was suggested that their advocacy efforts underscore the importance of federal funding to sustaining quality rating and improvement systems.

b. Review of Minutes

- January 14, 2009

Ms. Arlene Rhine made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Terri Nishimura seconded the motion. Approval of the minutes will be held to the March meeting due to lack of a quorum.

2. UPDATE ON THE CHILD CARE POLICY FRAMEWORK

a. Implementation of the Child Care Policy Framework

Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu referred members to the Status Report on Implementation of the Child Care Policy Framework included in their meeting packets. She reviewed the status on the following items:

- **Goal 1, Objective A, Item 2:** Ms. Malaske-Samu recently met with Mr. Harvey Kawasaki of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to discuss next

steps towards achieving the contract for the training of licensed child care programs to prepare them for meeting the unique needs of children and their families engaged with the child welfare system.

- **Goal 1, Objective A, Item 4(c):** Ms. Laura Escobedo, staff to Office of Child Care, presented to the First 5 LA Partners in Prevention an overview of the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL) and a proposal for a case management approach to helping eligible families' access subsidized child care and development. Staff were very receptive. The next step is to train the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) partners on the LACEL and a case management approach to helping families manage the LACEL record.

Members expressed support for including a representative of a community-based organization as a secondary contact on a family's LACEL record to help facilitate reaching families as space becomes available. To achieve this, the information needs to reach the PIDP line staff. It was further mentioned that a large percentage of children are placed through foster family agencies (FFAs), therefore strategies to reach them are needed. Ms. Malaske-Samu thanked members and guests for their suggestions, stating that their comments will be helpful in structuring the presentation. Lastly, it was suggested that thought needs to go into how the PIDP networks identify a liaison for child care and connecting them to their local child care resource and referral agency (R&R).

- **Goal 1, Objective B, Item 1:** Ms. Malaske-Samu is working with Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey on the overall strategy for connecting Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) clients with quality child care and development services. DPSS will soon be brought in as a partner to work on the development of materials.
- **Goal 1, Objective C:** Ms. Malaske-Samu is preparing the initial report on the employee child development centers that will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors. See next agenda item for presentation.
- **Goal 2:** Ms. Malaske-Samu has prepared in draft a memo to the Board of Supervisors summarizing current policies that impede the full utilization of State funding for child care and development services, recent initiatives that may have some positive impact on reducing unspent/unearned funds, and other recommendations that came out of two meetings with community stakeholders. The memo is under review by Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Office of Child Care is closely monitoring federal proposals for expansion to the CCDBG, Head Start/Early Head Start, IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Title I, among others as well as proposals in the State budget for reducing funding for child care and development services.

There was further discussion on the LACEL and strategies needed to improve that system in order to more quickly fill spaces as they become available. Mr. Dennis asked for the convening of a work group to examine the LACEL and suggested that the work group be comprised of stakeholders representing the R&Rs, centers, consumers, etc. Ms. Malaske-Samu will try to convene such a meeting prior to the March Roundtable meeting. She asked Ms. Holly Reynolds and Mr. Dennis to help organize.

b. Employee Child Care Issues Related to Access and Quality

Ms. Malaske-Samu's PowerPoint presentation provided an overview of the 11 county child development centers, including a brief history that dates back to 1988 when the first center was opened on the campus of LAC+USC Medical Center, grew to five additional sites in 1992, then between 2001 and 2006 five more sites were opened. She then offered the following five key questions with recommended answers:

- 1) Should the target audience for the employee child care centers extend beyond "hard to recruit" classes?

Recommendation: Yes – intentionally extend participation to employees beyond hard to recruit classes. "Hard to recruit" classes tend to have greater resources to purchase care.

- 2) If the intent is to serve employees from across a range of incomes, can parent fees alone support a truly high quality child development program?

Recommendation: Consider alternatives to subsidize the cost of care for up to 5% of each sites capacity.

Three centers have developed scholarship programs:

- Difference between fees paid by County employees and the public support a scholarship program
- Operational funds from participating county departments have been set aside for a scholarship fund
- Revenue generated from leasing a classroom to a community based program is supporting a scholarship fund

- 3) Should the County adopt a common mechanism to ensure access to families across incomes?

Recommendation: Yes – the challenge will be to identify resources.

- 4) What should the minimum standards be for all County employee child care programs? What incentives should be provided to help programs meet and sustain those standards?

Recommendation: Give programs the option of NAEYC accreditation or participating in the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP)

- 5) Should the County adopt a common standard to support program quality?

Recommendation: Yes – minimum standard should be STEP.

3. UPDATE ON STEPS TO EXCELLENCE PROJECT (STEP)

Ms. Malaske-Samu announced that the Board of Supervisors has identified additional money that will allow for the awarding of 80 more mini-grants.

Site observations of centers and family child care homes are underway. Ms. Helen Chavez and the staff at UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality have worked intensely to ensure alignment between STEP and other programs, however, there is no blanket acceptance simply based on having a California Department of Education contract, National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, or participating in Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP). Ultimately, the Roundtable will sign off on the ratings.

Mr. Dennis posited his thinking around who is responsible for rating and potential perceptions of impropriety given that some of the Roundtable members work for R&Rs and child development programs. He mentioned that all other states implementing quality rating and improvement systems are government entities that award the ratings. It was noted that Colorado's system is implemented through a private/nonprofit entity. One suggestion is to look at NAEYC's model in which applicants receive an identification number. The raters do not see applicants name or the program location. Ms. Malaske-Samu reminded members that the Roundtable members are not conducting evaluations. The process has received considerable thought around the signing off on the ratings and an appeal process signed off by County Counsel has been established. Another suggestion was to establish a sub-committee of five Roundtable members, none of whom are tied to an agency or center. Ms. Malaske-Samu will check in with Ms. Chavez, and discuss possible next steps. Ms. Malaske-Samu also offered a very thorough walk through of the process at the March meeting.

Ms. Sandy Hong of UCLA and some others expressed a sense of urgency given the timeline for having programs rated by the end of the fiscal year. It was stated that, in the meantime, resolving the issues should not hold up actual assessments of programs. Furthermore, STEP participants were not promised immediate notification of their rating. Some programs are reported to be in no rush for their assessments as they need more time to prepare their portfolios.

Ms. Malaske-Samu announced the date for the Week of the Young Child event as April 14, 2009. There will be a breakfast reception on the 8th Floor Conference Room of the Hall of Administration. Supervisor Knabe will attend. Early in the Board of Supervisor meeting, scrolls will be presented in honor of Week of Young Child. Ms. Malaske-Samu is preparing letters of invitation to celebrity types to speak. The goal is to create a media event and a person of significance would help. Ms. Nishimura is working with Mattel for gift items.

4. JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION REPORT

a. Governor's Proposed Budget for 2009 – 2010

Ms. Michele Sartell referred members to the copy of the PowerPoint presentation, which outlines the budget proposals for both the current (2008-09) and budget (2009-10) year. She mentioned that negotiations on the budget have not been open to the public, however rumor is to expect revenue solutions and deep, deep cuts. She referred members to the State Controller Web site (www.sco.ca.gov) for postings on payments scheduled for February and February payments to be delayed for 30 days. Among payments delayed are those to CalWORKs including support services and Stage 1 Child Care. Child care and development programs and CalWORKs Stages 2 and 3 Child Care will receive February payments.

Mr. Dennis received an e-mail just as this agenda item was underway. There are reports that the Big 5 conference committee has reached agreement on a budget that includes revenue increases, and deep cuts. While limited information is available, the revenue solutions include

temporary tax hikes in the state sales tax, vehicle license fees, gasoline tax, and a surcharge on personal income taxes. Program cuts announced thus far are aimed at public schools and community colleges, state colleges and universities, and public transit.

b. Proposed Reductions for 2008 – 2009

See above summary.

c. Federal Update

Ms. Sartell referred members to the PowerPoint presentation entitled *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – Proposed Early Care and Education Investments*. Also included in members' packets are materials from the NAEYC and Zero to Three with matrices comparing the House and Senate versions of the economic recovery package. Refer to the PowerPoint and the articles for the proposed investments to the CCDBG, Head Start/Early Head Start, IDEA Part B and Part C, Title I, and more.

5. COLLEAGUE AGENCY REPORTS

Due to the time, colleague agency reports are postponed to the March meeting.

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. Charlotte Lee
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura
Ms. Holly Reynolds
Ms. Arlene Rhine
Ms. Connie Russell

Guests:

Ms. Candace Allen, Office of Assembly Member Ted W. Lieu
Ms. Sally Anderson, Commission on Children, Youth & Their Families
Dr. Richard Cohen
Ms. Susan Cooper, Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Ms. Leila Espinoza, UCLA Early Developmental Screening Initiative
Ms. Sandy Hong, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Education Coordinating Council
Ms. Kate Sachnoff, First 5 LA
Mr. Steve Sturm, Department of Children and Family Services

Staff:

Ms. Kathleen Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell