



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

222 South Hill Street, Fifth Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012

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MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2010

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

Ms. Ruth Yoon, Vice Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable), opened the meeting at 10:10 a.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

a. Comments from the Vice Chair

Ms. Yoon relayed that a number of members were attending the Water Cooler in Sacramento and others were in Washington, DC attending the National Child Care Resource and Referral Association Conference.

Ms. Yoon recognized Ms. Kathy House for her service to the Roundtable for the past three years and as a powerful “internal” advocate for both the Roundtable and the issues it champions. On February 22, 2010, Ms. House was appointed Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer for the Children and Families Well-being Cluster. On behalf of the Roundtable, Ms. Yoon congratulated Ms. House on her well-deserved promotion.

Ms. House thanked members and guests for the recognition and provided a brief overview of her scope of work, which encompasses oversight of the Service Integration Branch. She also will continue her work on the homeless initiative. Ms. House continued by stating that it has been her pleasure to serve as a member of the Roundtable and become more educated on the issues of child care and development. She then offered one suggestion: Ms. House truly believes that the Chief Executive Office (CEO) representative should be the Director of the Office of Child Care - Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu. Ms. House commented that Ms. Malaske-Samu is well known throughout county and is one of the most knowledgeable people with respect to child care and development. She asked for consensus as she recommended Ms. Malaske-Samu as a member of rather than staff to the Roundtable. Next steps would be speaking with the Executive Office regarding the process to make the change and whether it would entail submitting a letter to the Board of Supervisors. Members and guests raised no objections to pursuing the process for appointing Ms. Malaske-Samu as the CEO's representative to the Roundtable.

Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey remarked that significant progress has been made to elevate the importance of child care and development to staff of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). She asked Ms. House, given her new position, that the Roundtable be provided an opportunity to present on its work at a cluster meeting. Ms. House agreed and answered that she sees it as part of a larger piece that speaks to connectivity. Dr. McCroskey

expressed her appreciation and stated her faith in Ms. House's commitment to advocating on behalf of child care and development and its connection to county government.

b. Review of February 10, 2010 Minutes

Due to a lack of a quorum, approval of the February minutes will be held over to the April meeting.

c. Committee Reports

Ms. Yoon announced that the County Child Care Committee will be meeting on March 15, 2010 at noon at the Service Integration Branch located at 222 South Hill Street, 5th Floor Conference Room.

No other committee reports were available.

- 2. POLICY FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVE:** *Mobilize County departments and stakeholders to incorporate access to high quality child care and development services into services aimed at 1) preventing child abuse and neglect; 2) supporting family self-sufficiency; and 3) promoting school and life success.*

Ms. Yoon introduced Ms. Jean McIntosh, Senior Fellow with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. While Ms. McIntosh calls Washington State home, she has deep roots in Los Angeles. Her understanding of Los Angeles County and her familiarity with the children and families and the systems that serve them make Ms. McIntosh a perfect spokesperson for the Strengthening Families Approach.

a. Strengthening Families Approach

Ms. McIntosh introduced Strengthening Families as a new national approach to families that can build upon the work of existing programs and services available to families and one that is focused on family growth rather than identifying problems. Using her PowerPoint presentation as her guide, Ms. McIntosh focused on the Strengthening Families as an approach to prevent child abuse and neglect by using a protective factors framework. The five protective factors are: parental resiliency, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional development. She described briefly each of the protective factors, then talked about how early childhood programs can build upon what they already do to build protective families by adopting intentional strategies. She concluded by reviewing the research that has shown the approach to work and reviewed the national partners in implementation. (See the PowerPoint sent to members and guests via e-mail shortly after the meeting.)

Comments/Questions/Discussion:

- Dr. McCroskey commented that the Strengthening Families approach is integrated into the Policy Framework. She added that the challenge is for county government to embrace the prevention of child abuse and neglect and delinquency into their work. Ms. McIntosh responded by referring to the results of the longitudinal studies conducted under the leadership of Arthur Reynolds from the University of Wisconsin. She suggested helping the Deputies see the benefits. Ms. House added that County Departments are likely to respond to language that focuses on cost avoidance.

- Mr. Michael Gray asked if there was a focus on relative care. Ms. McIntosh responded that three states are working with child welfare departments with a focus on relative care. Specifically, Illinois has found the protective framework helpful with foster families as well as with intact families. Mr. Gray stated that this approach is crucial for kinship care and may be a way to convince them to step up. Ms. McIntosh added that work is underway to adapt the self-assessment tool to relative caregivers and others working with young children and their families.
- The question was asked about how the study addressed the parent engagement piece. Ms. McIntosh recognized engaging parents as the more difficult piece. Illinois has adopted a café process for informal discussions on the protective factors with parents. Thus far, they are finding that bringing parents together with similar experiences is an important piece. First 5 LA also is developing a parent engagement framework.

b. Strengthening Families Conference

Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu referred members to their packets for the announcement of the Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education event scheduled for March 19, 2010 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The event is a kick off to bring the Strengthening Families Approach to Los Angeles County in a focused way. Invitations have been sent to a multidisciplinary audience including Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) participants, DCFS staff, Department of Mental Health (DMH) staff, and early educators from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The hope is to have participants use the event as an opportunity to learn about the Strengthening Families Approach, exchange business cards, and begin building relationships as a means to provide families with support. Ms. Malaske-Samu added that the event is more than a one shot deal. First 5 LA is exploring building a network with a convening tentatively planned for September. The event participants will be charged with taking what they learn and integrating it into their work. For STEP, the goal is to enhance their work with children and families. Ms. House recommended inviting representatives from the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Ms. Malaske-Samu agreed to following up with an e-mail encouraging participating of their local offices and would also target the homeless coordinators. She added that the County Employee Child Development Centers and First 5 LA's Partnership for Families participants were invited. Dr. McCroskey asked that representatives of the Departments attending the event be asked to report on their experience and what they would suggest as next steps.

c. Joint Training of Probation Field Staff

Ms. Michele Sartell reported that the Probation Department is moving towards a family engagement approach in their work with Probationers, which requires their officers to not only address the immediate concerns of their clients, but to also work with each family on identifying their strengths and needs and helping them connect with services that will build upon the family's strengths. To that end, the Office of Child Care in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start-State Preschool Program has been engaged to train all of their Deputies.

The trainings are designed to accomplish three objectives: introduce the strengthening families approach as an intentional strategy for working with families at risk, promote the benefits of high quality early care and education services to the child(ren) and the families; and facilitate the development of strategies for helping families navigate the early care and education system, including access to programs that serve low- to moderate-income families eligible for such programs as Early Head Start, Head Start, and California Department of Education/Child

Development Division (CDE/CDD)-contracted programs. Target populations to be connected to child care and development services include teen parents (mothers and fathers) under the supervision of Probation, siblings of juveniles under Probation supervision, and the children of adult Probationers.

Three trainings were conducted during the last week of February. In total, 65 Juvenile Field Deputies from a diversity of offices participated in the trainings. Each participant earned eight STC (Standards for Training and Corrections) units. Overall, the trainings were very well received, with ratings ranging mostly from very good to excellent and comments were positive. Ms. Sartell has requested a copy of the evaluation data collected from Probation. Ms. Sartell noted the challenge of making the materials relevant to all of the participants as some of the Field Deputies have limited contact with the juveniles and, in some cases, no contact with the juvenile's family. She added that while most of the Field Deputies embraced the family engagement approach and welcomed information on resources for linking families to child care and development services, for some the training was the first time they were introduced to the concept of family engagement. Participants were provided with a packet of materials containing research materials on the science of early childhood development and the contributions of quality child care and development to children's healthy growth and development and resources that they can use to help families navigate the child care and development system.

Staff from LACOE's Head Start-State Preschool Program and the Office of Child Care are scheduled to conduct additional trainings in an effort to reach all of the Juvenile Field Deputies. Three trainings are scheduled for early April, then six trainings are scheduled over two weeks in May.

Mr. Gray asked for a comparable training program for DCFS staff. He plans to schedule a planning meeting for later in March.

d. Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) Update

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that 50 LAUSD sites have attended an orientation to STEP. Ms. Yoon added that the trainings were very well received. LAUSD is using their Title 1 American Recover and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to participate in STEP.

- STEP Materials

Ms. Malaske-Samu announced that the STEP Training Catalogue – Winter 2010 is now available and is posted on the Office of Child Care Web site at www.childcare.lacounty.gov. Click on "Steps to Excellence Project (STEP)", then "Training Opportunities". Next, Ms. Malaske-Samu provided a preview of the *STEP Child Care Quality Rating Guide*, which will soon go to print and will be posted on the Web site by the end of March, in time for Week of the Young Child.

- Plans for April 14 Meeting

Ms. Malaske-Samu, in honor of the Week of the Young Child, has planned the Roundtable meeting agenda to focus the discussion on quality rating and improvement systems in general and, specifically, on STEP. Dr. Gail Zellman of RAND Corp. is confirmed to share the research on quality rating and improvement systems and participate in the discussions on how to use the research with respect to STEP. Dr. Celia Ayala will provide an update on the work of the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee and Ms. Helen Chavez will be available to talk about STEP. Invitations will be sent to other stakeholders.

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported on the first day of the two-day Water Cooler conference sponsored by First 5 California and the Advancement Project and held in Sacramento. Ms. Malaske-Samu was enthusiastic about the presentation of the results from the Educare Centers funded by The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation (The Foundation). There are approximately 10 Educare Centers across the country, with the first in Chicago. The Foundation responds to requests from communities wanting to develop an Educare Center, however to start, they need the local Head Start and at least one business or philanthropic partner willing to commit to the project for the long term. Many of the facilities were started from scratch and are model facilities; however Educare also demonstrates how high quality programs can be established in existing buildings.

Ms. Malaske-Samu described each center as working with intentionality and using data to inform their program operations. All sites have two data collectors and a researcher and every morning they collect data, which includes core sets of information. Parent surveys are a regular piece of data collection as is using the Environment Rating Scale and collecting information on individual children. The data is not collected to substantiate the center's continued being; rather it is used to determine how the program can be improved.

Ms. Malaske-Samu provided examples of how data has been used to work with intentionality and make program improvements. For example, every morning all of the staff, including the director, the mental health staff and more, welcomes families into the program. One of the panelists, a philanthropic partner representing the United Way in Miami-Dade, talked about how they used information from the parent survey to the parents to help identify how to help build connections for parents who scored high for parental depression. And, in Tulsa, a food bank was established due to the high degree of food scarcity in their community. These efforts - providing "concrete supports in times of need" - has helped to build the families' trust.

Ms. Malaske-Samu added that longitudinal research from Tulsa has reported significant growth in the children who have participated in the program, particularly for those children who have participated from their earliest years. While the achievement gap has closed for children in the program one year prior to kindergarten, the earlier children are in the program, the greater the impact the program has shown on reducing the achievement gap. Ms. Malaske-Samu noted that children participating in Educare Centers tend to be from poor families, many of whom are Dual Language Learners. Ms. Malaske-Samu stated her hope that Los Angeles County can adopt pieces of the Educare Center model.

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

- Update on State and Federal Legislation

Ms. Michele Sartell provided the update on behalf of Mr. Adam Sonenshein who was in Washington, D.C. She directed members and guests to their packets of meeting materials for a copy of the matrix summarizing state and federal legislation for 2010. The Joint Committee on Legislation is tracking 32 state bills, of which 22 have been introduced since the beginning of the year. Thus far, a few bills have captured the Joint Committee's attention and have received a priority ranking of 1, including: AB 1979 (Adams), which would require annual unannounced licensing visits of all child care programs; AB 2323 (Torlackson) would allow California Department of Education (CDE)-contracted programs to carryover certain percentages of unspent and unearned funds; and SB 1109 (Cox) would transfer Proposition 10 funds from state and county First 5 commissions to the General Fund for use by Healthy Families and Medi-Cal.

Ultimately, SB 1109 would abolish the First 5 commissions. Ms. Sartell relayed that the County's Intergovernmental Relations and External Affairs Branch is preparing a pursuit of position for the Board of Supervisors. In previous years, the Board of Supervisors has opposed similar legislative proposals.

Ms. Sartell reminded members that the Governor declared a fiscal emergency, therefore calling the Legislature to an 8th Extraordinary Session to narrow the current year budget gap. Nine of the 12 budget bills have made it to the Governor's desk; the Governor has taken no action on any of the bills to date. Education, including child care and development services, and health and human services are absent from the discussions. On the other hand, ABX8 4 would impact regional center funding and foster care eligibility.

As for the 2010-11 budget proposals, Ms. Sartell referred members to page 15 of the matrix for a schedule of the hearings scheduled to date.

Ms. Sartell reported on other items of interest as follows:

- California was not among the first round of finalists for Race to the Top funds. The 16 finalist states are Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia,, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Winners will be announced in April. California will submit an application for Phase 2, due by June 1, 2010.
- Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) Jack O'Connell will term out of office this year. Among the candidates for SPI are: Assembly Member Tom Torlackson (D-Martinez); Larry Aceves, retired educator; Dianne Lenning, public school teacher; and Senator Gloria Romero (D-Los Angeles).
- The latest update on the federal Early Learning Challenge Fund, a provision of the Student Aide and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) (H.R. 3221) – it has not yet been taken up by the Senate, however mounting opposition by banks that grant student loans is growing. The New York Times reported in mid-February that the banks have hired lobbyists and developed an advertising campaign suggesting that if passed, the Act would eliminate jobs and reduce consumer choice. The Act would end subsidies to private lenders as the federal government would directly offer the student loans. The projected savings could be used for the Early Learning Challenge Fund. Mr. Sonenshein mentioned in a telephone conversation with Ms. Sartell that the optimists on the hill believe that health care reform and the SAFRA would be merged and passed through reconciliation by early April.
- Ms. Sartell also relayed Mr. Sonenshein's message that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is moving forward and therefore encourages stakeholders to submit comments to federal legislators.

4. COLLEAGUE AGENCY REPORTS

a. Commission on Children and Families

Ms. Ann Franzen provided a brief report on the Commission's work with the faith based and kinship communities and around wellness in partnership with the Department of Health. Of concern is the rate of obesity and asthma in young children, so program efforts are focused on promoting the preparing of healthy snacks and meals that have included distributing cookbooks and cooking supplies. Ms. Franzen added that of the 5,000 churches in Los Angeles County,

approximately 200 are working to bring families together to help with adoptions, and supportive services. She mentioned that a couple of churches in the Lakewood/Long Beach communities have created living rooms where the DCFS Children's Services Worker (CSW) and family can meet for supervised visits rather than at a local fast food establishment. She described the living rooms as intimate environments that facilitate relationship building; healthy snacks are provided by the "ladies of church".

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ms. Malaske-Samu announced **The Wonder of Learning - The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit** scheduled for Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays, Through April 25. Details are as follows:

Thursdays 4-8 p.m.; Saturdays 10-4 p.m.; Sundays 12-4 p.m.

1129 Second Street, Santa Monica

Free

"From birth, children use many "languages," such as art, music, play, drama and literacy, to learn about and make meaning of the world. The renowned Reggio Emilia approach to education gives visibility to the values of its experience through this interactive traveling exhibit, helping educators and parents understand the powerful learning that occurs in early childhood."

For more information about the exhibition, presentations, and professional development opportunities, visit <http://www.reggioexhibitla.com/> or email reggioexhibitla@first-pres.net

- Ms. Malaske-Samu reminded members and guests that the next meeting of the Roundtable scheduled for April 14, 2010 will be from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

6. CALL TO ADJOURN

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

Commissioners Present:

Ms. Ann Franzen
Mr. Michael Gray
Ms. Kathy House
Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey
Ms. Carolyn Naylor
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Esther Torrez
Ms. Mika Yamamoto
Ms. Ruth Yoon

Guests:

Ms. Sandra Hong, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Jennifer Hottenroth, Department of Children and Family Services
Ms. Jaymie Lorthridge, USC School of Social Work
Ms. Jennifer Marcella, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Jean McIntosh, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Staff:

Ms. Kathleen Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell