



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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MEETING MINUTES

December 9, 2009

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. Terri Chew Nishimura, 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.

a. Comments from the Chair

Ms. Nishimura noted the USC victory over UCLA and thanked members who brought treats to enjoy during the meeting.

b. Review of Minutes

- November 12, 2009

Ms. Michele Sartell, Office of Child Care staff, pointed out that the minutes distributed at the meeting were revised somewhat to improve upon comments made during the presentation on CalWORKs.

Dr. Celia Ayala asked for clarification on the announcement made at the November meeting pertaining to Supervisor Knabe's efforts to continue Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey's on the First 5 LA Commission. A note will be added to the minutes to reflect that since the meeting Supervisor Knabe withdrew his efforts.

Ms. Holly Reynolds made a motion to approve the revised minutes. Dr. Celia Ayala seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a unanimous vote.

c. Committee Reports

Ms. Nishimura reminded members to join a work group, select a chair and begin creating work plans. In addition, she encouraged members representing Supervisorial Districts to touch base with their Supervisors share the work of the Roundtable.

2. REPORTS FROM LOCAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE PROJECTS

d. Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)

Ms. Nishimura introduced Ms. Randi Wolfe, Director of LAUP's Workforce and Professional Development division. She described Ms. Wolfe as a welcome addition to the local early care and education talent pool, mentioning that Ms. Wolfe has operated child care and development programs in Illinois and taught child development at the University of Illinois.

Ms. Wolfe provided an overview of LAUP's Workforce and Professional Development, a summary of its workforce (those early educators working in LAUP classrooms), and an outline of their projects and activities including their stipend program, professional growth advisement, and workforce initiative. She touched upon the work her area is doing to leverage community services and work collaboratively, and concluded with next steps. For details, see a copy of her PowerPoint presentation.

e. First 5 LA

Ms. Terri Nishimura next introduced Ms. Leanne Negron, the Program Officer overseeing First 5 LA's Workforce Development portfolio in the Planning Development Department. After providing a brief overview of First 5 LA, Ms. Negron focused on two of their major work initiatives: Best Start LA Workforce Development Project and the Early Care and Education Workforce Development Initiative. The goal of Best Start is to ensure that the workforce sectors targeted to the prenatal to five year old population has the knowledge and skills needed to meet the developmental needs of young children. The workforce sectors include early care and education, physical and mental health, child welfare and social services, and early intervention. Best Start, in its second of five years, consists of three main strategies: identifying core competencies needed across all sectors; identifying professional development approaches that support the implementation of the core competencies; and developing plans to address sustainability of professional development approaches to achieve core competencies.

The Early Care and Education Workforce Development Initiative is designed to provide career opportunities in the field while concurrently increasing the supply of providers, promoting policy and advocacy activities that impact the long-term capacity of the workforce, and promoting public education activities to build awareness. The initiative consists of three components: increasing training and education levels of families, friends and neighbors (license-exempt); recruiting high school students to the workforce; and identifying and implementing policies and practices that increase the training and education levels, and supply and diversity of the workforce. See the PowerPoint presentation for additional information.

Responding to comments regarding the life of the projects given strategic planning activities, Ms. Negron expects that the strategic plan is likely to build upon current efforts.

3. 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.

f. Innovative Programs to Serve Homeless Families

Dr. Ayala introduced Ms. Dion Jackson, Vice President of Business Development, to talk about LAUP's work to target homeless children and their families. Ms. Jackson focused on a program located in the Fourth Supervisorial District – Children Today, which benefited from LAUP support for startup/facility development of their newest program. Children Today offers free services to homeless families by providing the children with a safe, stable and nurturing environment while their parents take steps toward rebuilding their lives at two sites – Play House West and Play House North located in Long Beach. Notable are its small group sizes of 10 to 12 and its staff to child ratios of one to five.

Children Today approached LAUP with a desire to expand their program services and enhance their expertise in working with children. With the help of LAUP, Children Today established a classroom specifically designed to prepare children for kindergarten. Ms. Jackson described Children Today's unique approach for working with children of homeless families, many of whom are developmentally delayed due to their life circumstances. For example, the program allows the children to participate in gently shaping their environment in realistic ways that contribute toward building trust and respect. The program also has designed a system that allows for observation of the classrooms by visitors in a way that is not disruptive to the classroom and the children. A camera system has been set up around the classroom so observers can watch on a screen located in a separate area. Among its uses are as teaching tools and to conduct quality observations. While the centers provide a full day of services, LAUP funds the morning portion for the four year olds. Mr. Whit Hayslip commented that Children Today's approach could apply to lots of children in addition to those who are homeless, such as children with disabilities.

DRAFT BOARD REPORT ON THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD CARE

Ms. Malaske-Samu distributed the latest draft of the report with the attachment. The draft letter highlights the critical elements, while the attachment provides greater detail on activities resulting from the Policy Framework. Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that some adjustments need to be made in light of her conversations with First 5 LA and their role in some of the activities.

Dr. McCroskey commented on the progress made to date and efforts currently underway. Among the efforts, she referred to the relationship that has evolved between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Head Start that is now resulting in actual enrollments of children. Consequently, she continued, the juvenile side of the Probation Department has stepped up to explore how they can connect the families of their clients with high quality early care and education services. Beginning with pregnant and parenting teens and other sub groups, they intend to build connections between their clients and child care and development services. Training will be provided to Probation Officers in late January/early February. Work is starting with the juvenile branch given the more manageable size than the much larger adult caseloads.

It was noted that more work is needed to explore strengthening the nexus between the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and child care and development services. First 5 LA has been exploring a partnership with DPSS to reach CalWORKs families with some messaging. The challenge in this budget climate is the shortfall of funding and an uncertain future, as Ms. Charlotte Lee made clear. According to Ms. Lee, DPSS cannot dedicate staff time away from their current focus of delivering benefits to clients, which also precludes them from participating in any training.

Dr. McCroskey proposed using the Roundtable's leverage with the Board of Supervisors to engage County Department in conversations. She suggested that the Roundtable convene a meeting with DPSS, First 5 LA and others to discuss options and to identify the resources needed to implement a plan. She added that First 5 LA's Public Affairs department has expertise in developing strategies for delivering messages to families. Ms. Lee added a caution that DCFS and Probation are staffed with social workers that interact with families while DPSS staff are eligibility workers with very limited experience interacting with families other than focusing on their benefits.

Ms. Malaske-Samu said that she would revise page three of the letter to reflect the Roundtable's ongoing intent to work collaboratively and focus on the public relations component. She will send it soon for comments to the Roundtable members. Mr. Hayslip noted that Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is working collaboratively and quickly with DCFS to enroll children in their Head Start as they will have lots of openings all at once.

4. JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION REPORT

g. 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. Adam Sonenshein reported that a meeting of stakeholders in early care and education was held on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 with 25 people in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to explore opportunities for collaboration on joint legislative goals for the coming year. The following legislative goals were identified: 1) protecting existing funding for early care and education and working collaboratively with other programs serving the same children given upcoming budget woes; 2) addressing the inadequacy of licensing; 3) pursuing opportunities to impact the reauthorization of programs at the federal level; and 4) working with providers and the families they serve to become advocates. Meeting notes will be prepared and distributed. Ms. Malaske-Samu noted a change in that there seems to be a stronger desire to work with other service sectors to communicate how they are connected and how reductions in funds can devastate families.

h. Update on State and Federal Legislation

Mr. Sonenshein announced that letters to Senators Feinstein and Boxer would be sent after the meeting urging their consideration and support of the Early Learning Challenge Fund provision included in the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (H.R. 3221). He referred members and guests to their meeting packets for calls to action to President Obama and his administration of their commitment to early care and education as the budget is prepared. Mr. Hayslip stated that greater clarity in Title 1 funds for early care and education is expected.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None were offered.

6. CALL TO ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Dr. Celia Ayala
Ms. Ann Franzen
Mr. Whit Hayslip
Ms. Charlotte Lee
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura
Ms. Holly Reynolds
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Mika Yamamoto
Ms. Ruth Yoon
Ms. Sarah Younglove

Guests:

Mr. John Banberg, First 5 LA
Ms. Ellen Cervantes, Child Care Resource Center
Ms. Emily Harding-Morick, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Dion Jackson, Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Ms. Jennifer Marcela, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Leanne Negron, First 5 LA
Mr. Adam Sonenshein, Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Ms. Lena Ward, Department of Children and Family Services
Ms. Randi Wolfe, Los Angeles Universal Preschool

Staff:

Ms. Kathleen Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell