



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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RETREAT MINUTES

July 11, 2007

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Eaton Canyon Nature Center
1750 North Altadena Drive
Pasadena, CA 91107

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Matt Rezvani, Chair of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable), opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. Members and guests were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.

a. Comments from the Chair

Reflecting on his three years as chair of the Roundtable, Mr. Rezvani thanked Roundtable members for their trust in his leadership and hoped he lived up to the task of amassing their talents collectively to create a legacy for the Roundtable. Mr. Rezvani also thanked Mr. Robert Wiltse for his leadership as Vice-chair of the Roundtable and his work as Chair of the Joint Committee on Legislation. Mr. Rezvani then extended his gratitude to Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu and her staff, acknowledging her contributions to the accomplishments of the Roundtable over the past three years, including the expansion of the Investing in Early Educators Stipend Program to family child care providers and center educators working in programs serving a majority of subsidized children and the launch of the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP). Lastly, Mr. Rezvani thanked Mr. John Wicker and Ms. Mika Yamamoto for hosting the Roundtable Retreat at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center and the members for their contributions of refreshments throughout the day.

Mr. Rezvani introduced the media clip on the launch of STEP broadcast on the 5:00 p.m. news on Channel 4 to introduce the focus of the retreat.

b. Approval of Minutes

- June 13, 2007

Ms. Arlene Rhine made a motion to approve the minutes and Ms. Jan Isenberg seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously accepted as written.

c. Annual Evaluation of Roundtable Operations

Ms. Malaske-Samu directed members to their meeting packets for the form, *Annual Check-up on Roundtable Procedures*. She asked members to complete the evaluation form and turn it in by the close of the meeting.

d. Election of Officers for 2007-08

i. Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Ann Franzen reported that the Nominating Committee was recommending Mr. Duane Dennis as Chair and Ms. Connie Russell as Vice-chair for 2007-08.

ii. Call for Nominations for the Floor

Mr. Rezvani called for other nominations.

iii. Call for Vote

There being none, Ms. Peggy Sisson moved to accept the nominations of the Committee and Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

iv. Comments from Incoming and Outgoing Officers

Ms. Russell accepted the confidence of membership and is looking forward to working more closely with the Office of Child Care staff. Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that Mr. Dennis sent his regrets for missing the meeting due to travel, however is willing to serve the Roundtable in the capacity of Chair. Ms. Malaske-Samu presented Mr. Rezvani and Mr. Wiltse with modest gifts for their leadership and work on behalf of the Roundtable.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE MECHANICS OF THE STEPS TO EXCELLENCE PROJECT (STEP)

Mr. Rezvani urged members to immerse themselves with information about STEP, stating that it will be critically important for everyone to speak with confidence and accuracy on the components of the program. He added that members of the media are requesting to speak with representatives of the Roundtable, an example being a recent request from a reporter with the Daily News. He suggested these requests are opportunities to answer questions and to promote STEP.

Mr. Rezvani noted that the retreat agenda is largely devoted to STEP and its six components. He suggested that as STEP is implemented, new questions will arise. He acknowledged the resources available in the membership and among community partners to build understanding of the individual components of STEP.

a. Regulatory Compliance

State monitoring, results of R&R survey

Ms. Arlene Rhine began her presentation by updating members on the status of Assembly Bill 978 introduced by Assembly Member Benoit that would have increased the minimum number of random visits to licensing facilities from 20 percent to 30 percent. Unfortunately, this language was deleted from the bill due to budget constraints; the bill now addresses violations and the use of civil penalties collected to provide technical assistance training and education of licensees. Ms. Rhine expressed her disappointment by reminding members that licensing visits occur every five years. She referred members to *We Can Do Better: NACCRAA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Standards and Oversight* included in their meeting packets. California

ranks as 47th for meeting state standards and oversight of child care programs. Ms. Rhine stated that it was not long ago when California was looked at as the model for regulating child care programs.

Ms. Rhine highlighted some of the areas addressed in the rankings and how California compares to these standards. Among the items, she noted that California does not require teachers to have an Associate Degree or receive ongoing training. Of the 15 areas addressed in the ranking, California's area of strength is in its fingerprint clearance, which has improved. However, she and others mentioned that problems exist in transferring the clearances when early childhood teachers change programs.

b. Staff/Child Ratios

Title 22, Title 5, NAEYC, Head Start, LAUP, and NAFCC

Ms. Rhine referred members to the document, *Staff and Teacher to Child Ratios*. She highlighted levels of education required by staff working directly with children. All licensed programs are regulated under Title 22 for health and safety. Programs with contracts with the California Department of Education/Child Development Division (CDE/CDD) are additionally held to Title 5 standards. The ratios of teachers to children are higher and the education requirements for teachers in the classroom required to be in the classroom at all times with children are higher. The challenge, Ms. Rhine offered, is whether a center decides to have more children in the classroom with higher quality teachers or less children in the room with teachers with less qualifications. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has even more stringent standards, which have become even tougher to meet. While this is good, programs are opting out of NAEYC because of the costs associated with achieving and maintaining high levels of quality. Incentives/funding are needed to help programs provide the highest quality of care. Ms. Rhine referred to requirements for Head Start ratios. Ms. Carolina Alvarez added that Head Start faces the same challenge of maintaining the standards given the costs, including compensation for higher education requirements.

Mr. Whit Hayslip presented another issue facing programs that are working collaboratively and attempting to meet quality standards in the form of an example that highlights the difference between a licensed space and group sizes. He described two separate groups sharing the same space staffed by highly trained teachers and inclusive of children with special needs. Taken together, the two groups of 10-12 children each are not exceeding the licensed capacity of the space approved for 30 children. The problem is in the quality evaluation that treats both groups as one, overlooking the fact that neither group is brought together.

Continuing with her presentation, Ms. Rhine stated that the burden of paperwork takes time away from working directly with children. Ms. Rhine referred members to their meeting packets for excerpts from the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. California is one of the 10 states with the weakest child care center licensing standards.

c. Environment Rating Scale

Most current versions of the instruments

Mr. Rezvani thanked Ms. Rhine for her comments, and then introduced Ms. Billie Weiser from the UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality. Ms. Weiser has a long history working on both the Adult Involvement Scale (AIS) and the various Environment Rating Scales (ERS). She is working with Ms. Carollee Howes on refining the AIS and most recently honed her ERS skills working directly with Thelma Harms, one of authors of the instruments.

Ms. Weiser provided an overview of the Early Childhood, Infant/Toddler, and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scales (ECERS, ITERS, and FCCERS). Her PowerPoint presentation provided information on the purpose of the tool to measure the overall quality of a child care and how the tool is scored. There are seven sub-scales measuring space and furnishings, personal care routine, listening and talking, activities, interactions, program structure and parents and staff. Ms. Weiser also showed how the scores can be viewed to determine the overall quality of the program and identify areas for program improvements.

d. Adult Involvement Scale

Striking a balance between ignoring and intense communication

Moving to the Adult Involvement Scale (AIS), Ms. Weiser explained that this tool observes the teachers interactions with the children on a seven point scale from the low end of “ignoring” to the highest end of “intense” involvement (e.g. ignore, monitor, routine, minimal, simple, elaborated, and intense). The scale represents increasing complexity and reciprocity in adult-child interactions. The optimal adult involvement includes all seven types of interactions, with the largest portion involving “elaborate” interactions, defined as the caregiver engaged with the children asking and answering complex questions, acknowledging their statements, and soliciting the active participation and extending their knowledge.

e. Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

Understanding the Development status of all children

i. Recognition and Response

Mr. Rezvani turned to Roundtable member, Mr. Hayslip. Mr. Hayslip has dedicated his career to working with young children with special needs. He understands the challenges in meeting those needs – but most importantly – Mr. Hayslip reminds us that if programs are truly sensitive to the special needs of certain children, they tend to be sensitive to the unique needs of all children.

Mr. Hayslip introduced his topic with a bit of history, noting the collision of two events: 1) children being over identified when the regular system should take care of them and the inability of the system not being able to children due to costs; and 2) young children not being identified at a time when they can really use the resources. Mr. Hayslip noted that California is 49th or 50th in the nation of identifying children needing special education services.

Mr. Hayslip asked whether we are looking at good basic education for all children and how children respond, then making decisions about referrals for special education. The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and the National Center for Learning Disabilities has developed the concept of “recognition and response”, a way to look at special needs and services. Referring to page three of the handout, *Recognition and Response*, there is a three tiered approach in the intervention hierarchy. Tier 1 looks at each child in their high quality environment and approaches to intentional teaching. At this tier, children are screened and needs are recognized. This is not a screening for special needs, rather a promotion of developmental screenings of all children. The next question is how to use the results and build a system of support for Tier 1. Tier 2 is focused/targeted intervention based on the results of screening showing concern because the child is not functioning within the range of normal development. Mr. Hayslip noted that the majority of children in special education are there for learning disabilities or delays. The issue becomes how to create a community, in which more targeted interventions occur in the classroom, assessing those interventions for what is working

or not working, and then making decisions about which children to move to Tier 3 for individualized intervention by the regional center or school district.

As example, Mr. Hayslip referred to El Sereno Early Education Center, which began working at Tier 3. As that staff increased their skill and understanding, they were able to reduce the number of children referred for special education and effectively serve children with a range of needs.

The concept of recognition and response involves four components: intervention hierarchy; screening, assessment, and progress monitoring; research-based curriculum, instruction and focused interventions; and collaborative problem-solving for decision-making.

Mr. Hayslip concluded by reading the fifth recommendation for the early childhood field: “Develop (or adapt) existing public policies related to program standards and professional competencies to support the widespread adoption and implementation of the Recognition and Response system throughout various sectors of the early childhood field.”

Comments:

- In California and maybe other states, teachers are discouraged from identifying children.
- There are two issues: the best services are provided in child-based program; and labeling not a positive thing. There is a strong likelihood of staying in the system once the child has entered it. Are systems saying wait and see or how are we providing supports?
- There is an issue of funding for children identified with special needs and how those services are provided as part of an integrated system that includes the therapist’s perspective with school districts and regional centers.
- Child care programs are seeing behavior problems; they are not equipped to provide the necessary supports to the child and family to make a change. Serious emotional disturbances may be the cause of behavior problems. However, less than 10 percent of children are identified with serious emotional disturbances. While meeting the criteria for services under this designation is difficult, many children with varying levels of emotional disturbances are not able to access services.
- Based on attachment theory, the relationship with the teacher can be enormously impactful.

Mr. Rezvani recommended further discussion around this issue at a future meeting.

ii. Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Parent Evaluation of Developmental Status: Developmental Milestones (PEDS:DM)

Ms. Malaske-Samu stated that staff qualifications do not always provide the necessary background needed to serve children with a wide range of needs. Their training and education tends to prepare them for working within the range of normal. This is why the Roundtable has become more interested in screening tools to help pinpoint the development of each child. To discuss the use of screening tools in early childhood programs, Ms. Malaske-Samu introduced the next speaker, Ms. Regan Guasselín of the Child Development Institute (CDI). A graduate of St. Thomas College in St. Paul, Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and a Master’s degree from the Erickson Institute, Ms. Guasselín is a Program Coordinator with CDI located in Woodland Hills. CDI provides services to children, families and programs throughout Los Angeles County.

Ms. Guasselin distributed CDI kits compiled of materials developed by other entities. She mentioned that the CDI works on the early intervention side, working with children up to the age of two years, nine months. She relayed that CDI is seeing more children around issues related to social-emotional development. Their work starts with the child's relationships and circles of communication.

Screening tools are used to identify concerns whereas assessments are carried out to create a diagnosis. Screening tools can be useful tools for parents to take to their child's assessment at the regional center or school district. An important step in the screening process is to provide support to child development programs as to identify and build relationships with their community resource system. Ms. Guasselin recommended that early childhood programs become a collaborative partner with their community resources, not just as a source for referral. She promotes a strength-based model for screening that is done in collaboration with parents to look at their child's development. She suggests that this approach helps build relationships – between caregiver and parent, parent and child, and caregiver and child.

Comment: For STEP, programs can select their screening tool, however we are recommending the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) and PEDS: Developmental Milestones (DM) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and ASQ: Social-Emotional (SE) because the tools are designed to involve parents.

The kit provides basic information on both tools, including information on how to incorporate using the tools into the program, costs, training required, and available languages.

Additional comments:

- Before screening for a typical development, it is important to know typical development.
- Screenings will require a launch with someone well-versed to help guide folks in implementing the screenings. Practice is critical.
- Training needs to happen. It is one thing to have parents use the tool, another thing to have the provider use it. Also important is integrating what programs learn from the screening tool into the curriculum.
- The goal is for all children to receive a screening. Screenings can be used to inform the curriculum and create adaptations to curriculum.
- Screenings also inform discussions with parents. For those who have used the tool, the discussions are typically very positive in terms of how their child is developing and what they are accomplishing.
- One program includes the screening tool in the program enrollment packet.
- The screening tool helps parents to find words to use to describe their child's development.
- For some, "screening" may sound threatening.
- Currently, Head Start is mandated to conduct screenings within 45 days of enrollment of all children.

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that the Office of Child Care thus far has offered basic training on the PEDS and ASQ. The Early Identification and Intervention Collaborative offered training on PEDS. The Office of Child Care plans to conduct more training on how to use the screening tools and how to integrate the findings into the curriculum. Mr. Hayslip noted that the PEDS and others have not been normed on dual language or most other languages. Ms. Malaske-Samu added that Ms. Frances Glascoe is interested in feedback on PEDS.

f. Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions

Attracting and retaining qualified staff

Mr. Rezvani posed two questions to kick-off Ms. Isenberg's walk-through of staff qualification and working condition issues:

- 1) How do we reach the programs experiencing 30, 40, 50, even 60% turnover annually?
- 2) How do we maximize the various workforce initiatives to produce lasting results?

Ms. Isenberg referred to and reviewed with members the handout, Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions, contained in their meeting packets. Data from the handout was taken from the California Early Care and Education Workforce Study: Licensed Child Care Centers, Los Angeles County 2006. The handout provides a summary of the qualifications of persons working in family child care and center-based programs, compensation, and rates of turnover. She added the question, where do folks go when they leave a child development program? She remarked that in California staff seek jobs with the school districts or other programs with the intent of acquiring higher salaries.

g. Family and Community Connections

Promoting "protective factors"

Ms. Malaske-Samu acknowledged the work of Ms. Monica Mathur in using resource materials from Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education (see handout). This approach is based on five protective factors: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children. Good child care and development programs provide those supports; the goal of STEP is to support their efforts in doing it more intentionally. She asked how are we connecting with our families and how can we do better to help our families make connections and foster their children's development. She commented that the child care and development program needs to know community and build relationships with them. It was noted that Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) has community service specialists that help programs make connections that benefit the providers as well as families.

3. DEVELOPING SOUND BITES ON STEP COMPONENTS

Per suggestion, Roundtable members followed lunch with a brainstorm for preparing sound bites on each of the STEP components as follows:

a. Regulatory Compliance

- California ranks 47th in the United States
 - Once upon a time licensing came once a year, now it is every five years (some states four times per year)
 - Licensing, even when done well, only focuses on health and safety, not quality
 - Licensing is the minimum standard
- All programs in STEP 1 **are** meeting legal requirements

b. Teacher/Child Relationships

- Relationships are at the heart of child care
- Positive and responsive relationship supports both cognitive and social-emotional development
- Loving and caring
- Encourage smaller group size and staff to child ratios

c. Learning Environment

- Interactive and developmentally/age appropriate
- Clean enough to be healthy and creative enough to be happy – indoors and outdoors
- Balance between healthy structure and flexible – child-centered
- Playful – challenging environment, not overly restrictive, inviting, innovative
- Family/learning
- Play is children's work

d. Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

- Recognizing needs and having responsive approaches/strategies to meet the learning needs of each child
- Individualizes needs of each child within group
- Intentional
- Welcoming of all children

e. Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions

- Forty percent of centers do not employ any educators with a Bachelor degree
- Encourages teachers and staff to obtain higher education and child development skills
- Encourages lifelong learning – learning never stops
- Develops incentives for teachers to stay in field
- Supports workforce development (stipends and training)

f. Family and Community

- Families are pivotal/central
- Strengthening families through early care and education
- STEPS team effort between family, community and program
- Social connections and support in times of need
- Respect cultural diversity
- Relationship building among stakeholders to connect families and providers and larger community

4. MOVING FORWARD

Ms. Malaske-Samu introduced the discussion by recognizing the work ahead. She reported that the process for interviewing and hiring a STEP Project Coordinator is well underway and she is optimistic that a staff person will be on board very soon.

a. Objectives for 2007-2008

i. STEP Appeal Process

According to Ms. Malaske-Samu, County Counsel will work with Roundtable on developing an appeals process. She added that the experiences of LAUP and some of the State-funded programs could inform the process. She asked for a small group to flesh out the main components to bring back to membership for feedback. Proposed members include Ms. Alvarez, Ms. Isenberg, and Ms. Weiser.

ii. STEP Review and Rating

Ms. Malaske-Samu envisions the work of this group as ongoing. She asked for volunteers not operating programs. Volunteers include Ms. Rhine, Ms. Franzen, and Mr. Wiltse.

iii. STEP Promotion

Ms. Malaske-Samu expressed her gratitude to the Board of Supervisors Public Information Office for all of their help and willingness to provide ongoing support. Roundtable members volunteering to work on STEP promotion include Mr. Rezvani, Ms. Nishimura, Ms. Maria Calix, Ms. Russell, Ms. Ruth Yoon, and Ms. Sisson.

iv. License Exempt Care

While license exempt care has not been addressed in STEP, there is lots of interest. The Committee will be reconvened in the near future.

v. Other Key Issues

Mr. Rezvani opened the floor for members to propose other key issues for the Roundtable to address.

- Mr. Wiltse suggested that the Roundtable take advantage of planning around the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and the component for Prevention and Early Intervention. It will be important to make connections between mental health resources and the early care and education field. Mr. Hayslip commented on a recent conversation with Dr. Sam Chan of the Department of Mental Health and how it is defined as an issue in relationship to special education and early care and education. Members lamented on the lack of state support to sustain funding for the Special Needs Advisory Project (SNAP) given its potential to provide support to programs serving children and families and connecting them with appropriate resources.

Ms. Michele Sartell reported on the Roundtable and Child Care Planning Committee and its Inclusion Work Group-sponsored meeting scheduled for July 18, 2007 at The California Endowment, which is intended to bring together representatives from the fields of mental health and early care and education. The purpose of the meeting is to create a vision and develop recommendations for integrating mental health services with early care and education for submission to MHSA planning efforts for prevention and early intervention. Mr. Wiltse suggested that maybe funds (Prop 63) could be used to supplement the Investing in Early Educators Stipend Program to educate the workforce that provides mental health services. Ms. Nancy Carter emphasized the importance of participating in the stakeholders'

process. She mentioned that the Board of Supervisors has final say on who is seated at delegates table.

- A request was made for a status update on the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL). Ms. Malaske-Samu reported that currently there are 60,000 unduplicated children on the LACEL.
- Child care fraud keeps cropping up. Members suggested that talking points be developed in the event that they are asked about fraud.

5. WRAP UP AND PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ms. Malaske-Samu announced that on July 17, 2007 the Board of Supervisors is expected to approve the appointment of Mr. William T Fujioka as the new County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to become effective July 23, 2007. Other changes include:
 - Ms. Lari Sheehan as the new Deputy CEO responsible for Community and Municipal Services,
 - Mr. Bryce Yokomoto has been assigned as the Deputy CEO over Children and Families Well-Being, which encompasses the Service Integration Branch (SIB), and
 - Ms. Kathy House has been promoted as Manager of SIB.

Ms. Malaske-Samu will provide a new organization chart to members at a future meeting.

- There is no August meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 12, 2007.

6. CALL TO ADJOURN

Ms. Calix moved and Ms. Esther Torrez seconded her motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Ms. Carolina Alvarez
Ms. Maria Calix
Ms. Nancy Carter
Ms. Ann Franzen
Mr. Whit Hayslip
Ms. Jan Isenberg
Ms. Sheri Lewis
Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura
Mr. Matt Rezvani
Ms. Arlene Rhine
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Peggy Sisson
Ms. Esther Torrez
Mr. Robert Wiltse
Ms. Ruth Yoon

Guests:

Ms. Ragan Guasselin, Child Development Institute
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Education Coordinating Council
Ms. Billie Weiser, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Ms. Mika Yamamoto, County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation

Staff:

Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell