



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

222 South Hill Street, Fifth Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: (213) 974-4103 • Fax: (213) 217-5106 • www.lacountychildcare.org

MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2008

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

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 stated that Mr. William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and Mr. Miguel Santana, Deputy CEO, have postponed their participation at the Roundtable meeting due to pressing budget issues. Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu will work on scheduling them for a future meeting.

Mr. Dennis reviewed the materials included in members' meeting packets:

- **County of Los Angeles Organization Chart:** The Organization Chart has been revised as a result of the County's new structure. Ms. Kathy House commented on some of the growing pains associated with the transition to a new structure, including how County Departments are clustered. The Service Integration Branch, which includes the Office of Child Care, is contained within and serves as the administrative piece of the Children and Families Well-Being Cluster. Mr. Santana is the Deputy CEO of this cluster. The is a Deputy CEOs for each cluster are: Ms. Lari Sheehan for Community and Municipal Services; Ms. Sheila Shima for Health and Mental Health Services; Mr. R. Doyle Campbell for Public Safety; and Ms. Ellen Sandt for Operations.
- **Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Stakeholder Delegates Directory and Service Area Advisory Committees (SAACs) Meeting Schedule:** Ms. Michele Sartell, staff to the Office of Child Care, announced that soon the Office of Child Care Web site will contain a navigation button to information on the MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) component. The Web page is designed specifically to facilitate participation by the early care and education community in the PEI planning process. In addition to an overview of MHSA/PEI, the page will link visitors to the Stakeholder Delegates list and opportunities for participating in meetings and community forums. Moreover, visitors will be able to download the concept paper on a vision for the integration of early care and education and mental health services as well as talking points.

Members were encouraged to commit to participating in the monthly SAACs and other meetings (i.e. community forums, etc.) as scheduled to bring attention to the mental health needs of children ages birth to five and their families and the opportunities to reach families through early care and education programs. Members committed to the SAACs as follows:

- Service Area 1: Mr. Dennis will speak with Mr. Michael Olenick regarding possible representation by the Child Care Resource Center
- Service Area 2: Ms. Arlene Rhine will try to recruit someone
- Service Area 3:
- Service Area 4: Pathways
- Service Area 5:
- Service Area 6: Ms. Esther Torrez
- Service Area 7:
- Service Area 8: Pediatric Therapy Network, Mr. Robert Wiltse

Ms. Maria Calix volunteered to serve as an alternate for Service Areas 2 and 8. Ms. Malaske-Samu noted that the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is also hosting meetings around PEI and expressed interest in holding its next meeting in the valley. Ms. Terry Ogawa stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Ms. Lilian Coral of the Children's Planning Council (CPC) added that the Service Planning Area (SPA) Councils are trying to connect with the SAACs. CPC is developing a concept paper and will share their materials with the Roundtable.

Ms. Sartell will prepare packets of reference materials for the Roundtable members. Ms. Malaske-Samu referred members to the fact sheet on child care development services included in their packets as another resource to share in the PEI planning process.

Mr. Dennis closed by commenting on the level of discussions occurring around MHSA/PEI, including at a recent First 5 LA meeting. As a result, Mr. Dennis encouraged members to also talk about how MHSA/PEI funds could be coordinated with existing funding sources for a more coordinated system of services.

- Mr. Dennis referred members to the recently released Roundtable report, *Funding Streams: Child Care and Development Program Operations in the County of Los Angeles · 2006-07* included in their meeting packets. Mr. Dennis acknowledged the challenge at capturing the multiple sources of funds and the complexity of managing multiple funding streams with varying regulations and requirements.
- Ms. Connie Russell met with Ms. Evelyn Martinez, Executive Director of First 5 LA to discuss her representation of the Roundtable on the Commission.
- Mr. Dennis announced that Mr. Craig Lancaster has retired from Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Ms. Holly Reynolds, Director of Fairplex Child Development Center and current Vice Chair of the Child Care Planning Committee (Planning Committee) has stepped into the Chair position. Once paperwork has been completed, Ms. Reynolds will represent the Planning Committee on the Roundtable.

b. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- January 13, 2007

Ms. Carolina Alvarez corrected the minutes to reflect that Ms. Elsa Leal is with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) rather than First 5 LA. Ms. Arlene Rhine made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; Ms. Esther Torrez seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously as corrected.

2. REPORT ON CalWORKs STAGE 1 CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Mr. Dennis asked Ms. Sheri Lewis to provide a brief history of the CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care as a way of introduction to the presentation by Mr. Max Stevens and Mr. Halil Toro of the Services Integration Branch's (SIB) Research and Evaluation Services. Ms. Lewis reported that in Los Angeles County, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) contracts with the 13 Alternative Payment (AP) Program agencies for CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care. Stages 2 and 3 Child Care are administered by the California Department of Education, which contracts with the same 13 APP agencies. DPSS was experiencing a relatively high denial rate in Stage 1. Ms. Lewis mentioned that other counties have been experiencing high child care denial rates as well. To further DPSS's understanding of the issues, SIB was engaged to conduct an in-depth study of issues relating to child care utilization and to provide recommended actions to increase utilization. SIB found participants were largely denied for not returning their paperwork.

Mr. Stevens thanked the Roundtable for the invitation to present a summary of the report, *Stage 1 Child Care Subsidies for Welfare-to-Work Participants in Los Angeles County: An Analysis of Eligibility and Utilization Patterns*. Working from the PowerPoint, Mr. Stevens provided an overview of the monthly trends in child care eligibility and utilization and the dynamics of child care requests. Mr. Toros followed with a presentation of the cohort analysis, predicting utilization and denied requests, and policy recommendations.

Monthly Trends in Child Care Eligibility and Utilization

The research team looked at the utilization of child care offered by DPSS over a three year period from January 2004 through August 2006. The researchers compared the monthly rates of eligibility with the utilization. They found some fluctuation in the utilization rate (between 30 and 33 percent), however the rate of eligibility among GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) increased steadily over the same period of time. Mr. Stevens pointed out a "potential conundrum that participants face is that they must have a Welfare-to-Work component open or be employed in order to be approved for child care services, and yet they may need child care to attend the component". In looking at trends among participants eligible for child care services, Mr. Stevens noted that those found eligible for child care rather quickly (within two months) are more likely to use child care during their eligibility for the services than those becoming eligible after a prolonged period of ineligibility (up to one year) following enrollment in GAIN.

Mr. Stevens mentioned that DPSS has convened a task force to explore how to impact the rates of denial so that more families can take advantage of the child care services.

Dynamics of Child Care Requests

Just over 50 percent of child care requests are denied due to the failure to submit the proper paperwork, followed by 13 percent denied for not being eligible for child care. A small percentage was denied because they were eligible for Stage 2 or 3, child care was not needed, or due to errors. During the study period, approximately 30 percent of clients requesting care were not authorized for child care. Referring to Slide 11, Mr. Stevens noted that with some variability (44 to 69 percent), the APs were denying Stage 1 Child Care requests approved and referred by DPSS.

Cohort Analysis

To look at patterns of participation, the research team selected two cohorts of CalWORKs participants: those who entered during the first half of 2004; and those who entered CalWORKs during October and November of 2006. The findings show that child care supports ongoing participation in GAIN and continuation with child care services once they leave the program.

Predicting Utilization and Denied Requests

Among the factors contributing to the utilization of child care services include:

- Language, race and ethnicity: participants with English language competency are more likely to use child care services than are certain ethnic groups;
- Age of children: participants with children from one to two years of age are more likely to use the services than with infants;
- Marital status: single parents were more likely to use child care services
- Rapid eligibility

Factors associated with child care denials were most often due to language barriers, Welfare-to-Work noncompliance, delayed eligibility, or person-level barriers.

Policy Recommendations

Mr. Toros and Mr. Stevens briefly reviewed the policy recommendations, as follows:

- Simplify the paperwork
- Enhance outreach efforts and concentrate on participants with past child care request denials
- Address language barriers
- Increase access to participants receiving Specialized Supportive Service for substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health concerns
- Conduct study to resolve issues relating to establishing eligibility and gaining approval for child care requests

Member Questions and Comments

- If a participant is denied due to paperwork problems, can they resubmit paperwork? Who is available to help the participant complete their paperwork correctly? DPSS does not help with paperwork, however there are AP Program representatives co-located at the Regional Offices available to help participants. For teen parents participating in Cal-Learn, contractors (Adolescent Family Life Program staff) help with paperwork. Legal advocates may also help participants navigate the system. According to Ms. Lewis, most participants do not complete or return their paperwork. It was also noted that early in CalWORKs history, clients were more compliant. CalWORKs is now faced with a population experiencing multiple issues that challenge and compound their abilities to comply with rules and follow through on paperwork. As a result, efforts call for tailoring outreach that provides participants with the help they need to meet the requirements. Ms. Laura Escobedo, staff to the Office of Child Care, added that the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL) gives priority to families most at risk and therefore most difficult to reach. It was added that the most needy children and families are those that have the most to gain from child care.
- It was suggested to look at other models, such as “express lane eligibility” in which children and families already eligible for a program with similar criteria are identified and receive a proxy that automatically enrolls them in, for example, Stage 1 Child Care.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED STATE BUDGET FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Ms. Sartell referred members to copies of the PowerPoint presentation, *Governor’s 2008-09 Proposed Budget on Child Development Services*. On January 11, 2008, the Governor released his proposed 2008-09 State Budget. He proposes implementing 10 percent across-the-board cuts to most General Funds departments. The Governor also called a Special Legislative Session to make mid-year cuts to address the anticipated budget deficit of \$14.5 million.

Among the Governor’s proposed cuts, the impact to child care and development services are as follows:

- Reduce funding to the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division (DSS/CCLD), which would result in 14 percent of licensed facilities (including but not exclusive to

child care) receiving random inspections annually, which would equal visits to each facility every seven years;

- No cost of living adjustment or growth for California Department of Education, Child Development Division (CDE/CDD) child care and development programs;
- Reduction of \$198.8 million in 2008-09 for child care and development through attrition, resulting in a loss of thousands of existing child care slots;
- Cuts of between 6.4 and 25 percent across all CDE/CDD funded child care and development programs (see one page handout, *California Department of Education Child Care and Development Programs: Comparison of Workload and Governor's Proposed Budgets – 2008-09*);
- Reduction in the reimbursement rate for free and reduced meals;
- Maintain current reimbursement rates;
- Freeze State Median Income (SMI) at the 2007-08 level;
- Eliminate allocation to the Child Care Facilities Revolving Fund;
- Decrease allocation of funds to school age programs;
- Reduce funding to Cal-SAFE.

CalWORKs Child Care is exempt from the reductions.

Ms. Coral reported that the CPC is interested in working with others to develop a common agenda across issues relating to children and families. Mr. Dennis supported the offer and encouraged Roundtable members to think about all services that impact children and families. Ms. Malaske-Samu will ask Victoria Evers, Intergovernmental Relations, to meet to discuss how child welfare, probation and others are responding to the budget proposals. Ms. Kathy House said Mr. Santana has met with Department Heads and now plans to convene a group of folks to figure out the impact of the budget on children and families. Ms. House is the coordinator and will make sure the Roundtable is represented in the effort to create a children and family well-being impact statement. Ms. House added upon request of Ms. Coral that community partners also supporting families should be at table.

Mr. Dennis closed the discussion by urging members and guests to speak with their legislators as they will be in session over next four to six weeks.

4. REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD CARE TRAINING INSTITUTE

Ms. Jan Isenberg directed members to their meeting packets for a copy of the Child Care Training Institute (CCTI) brochure and fact sheet. She is requesting a letter of support to the Board of Supervisors from the Roundtable to maintain the CCTI. As background, Ms. Isenberg stated that CCTI has been funded to provide trainings to family child care providers for the past nine years. The CCTI offers 155 workshops per year in various languages on over 50 different topics. To date, they have reached over 30,000 family child care providers.

Ms. Rhine made a motion to submit a letter of support to the Board of Supervisors; the motion was seconded by Mr. Matt Rezvani. After some discussion, it was determined that clarification is needed regarding the source of funds, the holder of the contract, and who provides oversight. Consequently, the original motion was tabled on a motion by Ms. Rhine and seconded by Mr. Wiltse. The motion to table passed with one abstention.

5. STEPS TO EXCELLENCE PROJECT (STEP) UPDATE

Ms. Helen Chavez, STEP Project Coordinator, provided an update on STEP implementation in the following three areas: outreach, quality improvement grants, and STEP training calendar.

a. Outreach

Ms. Chavez reported that to date she has received 150 STEP applications. The complete list of participants enrolled in STEP is pending postage on Web site. In related activities, per the timeline STEP should be at 25 percent of its targeted recruitment level, but Ms. Chavez said that STEP is short of that goal. To achieve it, Ms. Chavez solicited help recruiting from following communities in the order of priority: Wilmington, Pasadena, Palmdale, Inglewood, and Florence/Firestone.

Ms. Terri Chew Nishimura asked Ms. Chavez to bring the marketing materials to the next meeting.

b. Quality Improvement Grants

Ms. Chavez directed members to their packets for a copy of the Board letter filed last week. The Board letter lists of all STEP participants that applied for a mini-grant. The Board letter requests approval of the CEO to distribute the quality improvement grants. Unfortunately, the release of the grant monies has been delayed due to some legal matters, which are now resolved. All total, it is taking six months to issue the mini-grant monies. A mailer has been sent to STEP participants and the date for implementing their proposals has been extended. The cap for the grants is \$5000, which has been a big incentive for participation.

c. STEP Training Calendar

Ms. Chavez distributed copies of the training catalogue sent to STEP participants this week. Some of the trainings are already underway, such as the Environment Rating Scales and the Program for Infant Toddler Care in Practice. The trainings are helping to maintain the momentum for participation in STEP. The catalogue includes additional training resources.

As a next step, Ms. Chavez will be turning to Roundtable members to help brainstorm strategies for providing technical assistance and support. She will be looking at established models to help guide the brainstorming sessions.

d. Alignment with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)

Ms. Carolina Alvarez reported that there has been a meeting with LAUP to discuss alignment. She stated that both tools are relatively consistent. She expects more information to be shared at the March meeting. Ms. Alvarez added that a next step is to provide information on STEP to the LAUP technical assistance coaches so they can provide ongoing support to their sites that are also participating in STEP.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Malaske-Samu distributed an article from the Los Angeles Times published on February 8, 2008 regarding the District Attorney's office cracking a child care fraud scam. She mentioned the challenge of balancing child care between those needing it, services to improve quality, and the big publicity issues that counter this work.

7. CALL TO ADJOURN

Ms. Russell adjourned meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Ms. Carolina Alvarez
Ms. Maria Calix
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
Mr. Matt Rezvani
Ms. Arlene Rhine
Ms. Connie Russell
Ms. Esther Torrez
Mr. Robert Wiltse
Ms. Mika Yamamoto

Guests:

Ms. Evelyn Aleman, First 5 LA
Ms. Sally Anderson, City of LA Commission on Children, Youth & Families
Ms. Lilian Coral, LAC Children's Planning Council
Ms. Leila Espinosa, UCLA/Early Developmental Screening and Intervention
Ms. Sandra Hong, UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality
Mr. Ricardo Hernandez
Ms. Terry Ogawa, Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council
Mr. Max Stevens, Service Integration Branch
Ms. Connie Sullivan, Service Integration Branch
Mr. Halil Toros, Service Integration Branch

Staff:

Ms. Helen Chavez
Ms. Laura Escobedo
Ms. Kathy Malaske-Samu
Ms. Michele Sartell