



Minutes

Program Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting
April 27, 2010; 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe
Board Room
2555 Ponce De Leon Blvd Suite 500
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Committee Attendees: David Williams, Jr., Co-Chair; The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman, Co-Chair; Elizabeth Bezos; Modesto Abety; Lucy Piñeiro; Roderick Beasley; Ramiro Moreno (via conference call); Dr. Silvia La Villa (via conference call); Ann Karen Weller (via conference call)

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres (President/CEO); Blythe Robinson; Angelo Parrino; Tabatha Cullen; Sandra Ampudia; Jackye Russell; Nicole Bardin; Roseline Philippe; Bethany Sands; Sandy Cuevas; Trina Rodriguez, via conference call; Kristina Alonso

General Attendees: Linda Carmona (AECE); Dorit B. Weintraub (TATS); Dasiely Ana (Sunset Christian Academy); Ardene Estrada (Miami-Dade County); Joan Farr (Miami-Dade County); Daisy Hensley (Miami-Dade County); Alejandro Villibord (DCF)

Via Conference Call: Alan Eckstein; Connie Chappell; Doug Blomberg (Wesley House); Kathy Snyder; Dan Dombrowski (Boys and Girls Club-Key West); Kerry Cosme (YMCA of Key Largo);

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| I. Welcome and Introductions | David Williams, Jr. Co-Chair |
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- D. Williams welcomed the committee, staff and attendees.
- A quorum was established with six (6) voting members.

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| II. Approval of Agenda | David Williams, Jr. Co-Chair |
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- D. Williams called for the approval of the agenda.
 - R. Beasley moved to approve the agenda.
 - Motion was seconded by L. Piñeiro.

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| III. Approval Mar 22nd Minutes | David Williams, Jr. Co-Chair |
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- D. Williams called for the approval of the meeting minutes from March 22nd.
 - R. Beasley moved to approve the minutes from the March 22nd Program Policy and Strategy Committee meeting.
 - Motion was seconded by L. Piñeiro
 - Motion was unanimously passed.



IV. CEO Update

Evelio Torres, CEO

- E. Torres discussed the bill proposed by Senator Steven Weiss. An agreement was reached with all concerned parties that ended up with a bill that was substantially different than what was being worked on last year. The bill does not contain all of the language that we wanted but it does contain some of the provisions that other parties wanted included in the bill.
- E. Torres shared that The Children's Services Council bill was defeated in the House. It was passed in the Senate and then it was added as an amendment to the Early Learning Bill. We will end up with a hybrid bill that includes Early Learning and The Children's Services Council. This would require some Children's Services councils to be reauthorized in 2012. The Children's Trust would have to reauthorize in 2020.
- E. Torres shared that we are following Senate Bill 724 very closely. There are six counties in Florida that have ordinances that require family child care homes to be licensed. Miami-Dade is one of these counties while Monroe is not. Senate Bill 724 proposes passing the cost of licensing of family child care homes to the counties that have these ordinances in place. We are asking for these six counties to be grandfathered in. If we stop requiring licensing for family child care providers, it is a step backwards and it will create a financial burden on the counties.
- The VPK budget was restored and the difference was only 0.5%. The class size stayed the same.

V. Miami-Dade Update

Jackye Russell

- J. Russell shared the highlights of the Miami-Dade performance report.
- E. Bezos asked if we are still on the managed enrollment where siblings are able to be added on to which J. Russell responded that we are.
- D. Williams asked how often the individuals that conduct the Ages and Stages (ASQ) screenings are trained.
- A. Estrada of Miami-Dade County replied that there are monthly trainings as well as on-site technical assistance for the providers and their teachers. They are required to attend these trainings, especially in the cases where a trend is identified which demonstrates that the individuals are not qualified to conduct these screenings.
- E. Torres added that it is not a requirement for them to attend training. However, if a lot of red-flags are identified these providers are targeted for training.
- E. Bezos shared that providers were asked to attend the ASQ training. If a lot of false positives are not identified they are not required to go to training. Teachers answer the questionnaire and if the child has red-flags then the county will double check for accuracy. If a provider receives too many false-positives then the county will retrain staff. While it would be wonderful if all teachers were trained, as an employer, if having teachers attend trainings puts them above forty hours for the week, she must pay them overtime. She proposes that providers get two days marked, similar to teacher planning days, for professional development and get reimbursed for those days.
- D. Hensley of Miami-Dade County added that free ASQ trainings are offered every quarter all over the county to make it more convenient for providers.

VI. Child Enrichment Service Providers

Jackye Russell

- J. Russell discussed the Child Enrichment Programs. These programs provide afterschool services to children such as karate, music, etc. There are also other



afterschool programs that may or may not be on public school property that offer an educational or tutorial activity.

- J. Russell provided a list of Child Enrichment providers detailing a breakdown of how many children they serve, how much they were reimbursed in March and whether or not they also receive funding from The Children's Trust.
- J. Russell shared that this has become an issue because some of the licensed providers have an issue with the fact that some of these enrichment providers are not regulated nor licensed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). They are not subject to background screening requirements and are also paid for 5.99 hours of care regardless of the actual amount of time they are providing. These licensed providers feel that they have a lot more requirements to meet for the same amount of reimbursement and have asked the committee to consider other options for the limited dollars that are available which could be better spent on slots for other children that are younger.
- J. Russell added that programs such as YMCA, YWCA and Cool Kids Learn programs are located on public school property and are required to submit to the same requirements as school staff such as background screening and must adhere to the health and safety standards.
- L. Piñeiro added that the real issue concerns safety. She feels that unlicensed providers that operate off of school property that are not screened are an issue. As a board, we need to reassess whether we want to continue to fund the over 2,000 children that are enrolled in places where we don't know who is caring for them. Do we want to apply standards to these providers at the time of contract?
- C. Lederman asked if these providers are required to have a curriculum approved or if they have to adhere to a teacher-student ratio to which E. Torres replied that they do not. She expressed that she does not see how this is part of our mission if these providers are not required to do anything for quality.
- E. Torres added that this is a good time for the board to look at our priorities now that there are a lot of children on the waitlist.
- R. Beasley expressed his concern for what the liability might be for unlicensed programs. He asked if we are able to require licensing of these programs to which E. Torres replied that this is a local decision that the board can prioritize the age of the children and funding categories.
- A. Eckstein expressed that the situation in Monroe County is a bit different in that YMCA and the Boys' and Girls' Club are both organizations where background screenings and an educational component are required. They have no other means of funding these afterschool programs. He suggests that the committee and board look at both counties separately when making this decision. There would be no other place for these children to go
- L. Piñeiro stated that there the three issues that need to be looked at are: risk management, the equity issue from providers, and whether or not this falls within our mission concerning an educational component. She expressed that the biggest issue to address is risk management. If we are going towards mandating that those in charge of our most vulnerable are to be background screened, how could we justify it if something happened to a child in one of these places that does not require it.
- M. Abety added that everyone the Children's Trust funds requires background screenings, curriculums, quality and they have set outcomes related to all programs that they fund. The issue that is being struggled with comes from the nature of the funding which is from the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) whose purpose is to provide a place for children so that parents can work. Licensing, monitoring, curriculum and quality all cost money. Do we serve more children so that parents can work or do we serve fewer children in order to



increase quality? He added that in Orange County they have decided that as a coalition they will not fund any organization that does not meet their standards, including accreditation.

- J, Russell clarified that as of July 1, 2010 the provider agreement requires that anyone receiving School Readiness funds is required to submit background screenings for staff.
- C. Lederman stated that we are the Early Learning Coalition and our job is to provide quality care for very young children to have them ready to learn by the time they get to school. We should not be funding this at all especially since we have a very long waiting list of young children who need to be in early childcare centers. This is not consistent with our mission.
- C. Lederman moves to have the board consider to stop funding these programs as they do not reflect the mission of the Early Learning Coalition.
 - Motion was seconded by R. Beasley.
 - M. Abety requests an amendment to include the consideration of adding criteria that promotes the safety and development and children and result in higher quality programs to these providers as there is a need for these programs.
 - C. Lederman does not accept the amendment.
 - R. Beasley asked how this would impact Monroe County.
 - C. Lederman accepts an amendment to have Monroe looked at differently.
 - M. Abety stated that the statute for funding covers children ages zero through twelve.
 - E. Bezos asked how we would reconcile the motion with the funding from AWI that is intended for families to be able to work. The statute states zero to twelve. How does this transfer, practically, to families where one child is under five years of age and the sibling is over five years old? She stated that if this is the decision of the committee to recommend to the full board, we take into consideration how this affects families. If we choose not to serve older children as other coalitions have done, there must be a transition plan in place.
 - E. Torres detailed the transition process that took place when funding for children ages nine through twelve was cut.
 - R. Beasley requested to hear feedback from staff as to what their recommendation is in order to get some direction as to where to go next before this goes to the full board.
 - E. Torres recommended that we look at the impact that eliminating some of these programs will have. We need to come up with a minimum set of standards to see how many of these programs meet these requirements. We also need to consider the cost of compliance.
 - E. Bezos added that some of the children attending afterschool programs are enrolled in licensed centers. Some providers could not afford to operate if they did not have afterschool programs. This would cause several centers to close and would impact the availability of childcare to those under five years of age. She recommends that this not be taken to the next board meeting in order to have further discussion.
 - R. Beasley requests to see the fiscal impact of these programs, the ages of the children being served by the programs and what the potential liability would be.
 - E. Torres added that the legislative intent is that under AWI, we would provide care to allow parents to work. While there is nothing that prevents us from lowering the age or adding requirements, this is something to keep in consideration.



- M. Abety recommends that we vote against the motion. Six, seven and eight year olds cannot take care of themselves at home after school. He strongly believes that this organization has a responsibility to these children and their families.
- J. Russell added that every Miami-Dade County public school has an afterschool program operated by either the school system, YMCA or YWCA and we do fund these programs currently.
- E. Bezos stated that what needs further discussion is the issue concerning the ages of the children we will serve.
- L. Piñeiro expressed that she has a big concern with having a category of schools that are exempt from everything.
- After a vote of the committee, the motion dies.
- R. Beasley stated that there are two separate issues going on. One issue covers the ages of the children being served. The other issue covers whether or not to fund afterschool programs.
- D. Williams states that we need to set a date immediately to convene as a group to discuss these issues before going to the board. The issues are too important to wait until the next meeting a month away.
- M. Abety recommended asking staff to come back with recommendations that address issues of safety and quality child development.
- Committee requested the following data for next meeting:
 - List of both licensed and unlicensed providers that provide services for children over 5 years of age.
 - Financial impact and the number of children 0-5 that can be served if we did not fund afterschool care.
 - The cost of compliance.
 - How this would fiscally affect providers
- D. Williams expressed that while he likes the public comment section at the end of the meetings, we need to include other agencies such as the County and DCF who deal with the providers every day, in the discussion in order to make these important decisions. He asked C. Lederman if the format of the meeting can change in order to include discussion from these agencies.
- C. Lederman stated that the discussion of the committee is for committee members only. However, if a question should arise that would require the assistance of these individuals, they can be included as part of the discussion.

VII. Public Comment

- Dorit Weintraub introduced herself as the co-chair of a workgroup that is part of the Young Children with Special Needs and Disabilities Council. She asks that they be added to the next agenda.
- Linda Carmona clarified that on the issue of the enrichment providers, because we are talking about afterschool providers of children that are already in school, there really is no curriculum for that age group in afterschool care. L. Carmona added that beyond the issue of not requiring background checks for anyone other than the director of the program, most of these programs are operated by either high school or college kids with no training in CPR, first aid or child development. They are also not required to have insurance coverage. There are no ratio requirements.
- Linda Carmona stated that we understand that the professional skills of the adult in the classroom is the most important indicator of quality. She requests that the committee consider that a professional development day or holiday pay be



included in the framework for School Readiness so that providers can get reimbursed eliminating the disincentive.

VIII. Adjourn

**David Williams, Jr.
Co-Chair**

- David Williams, Jr. adjourned the meeting.