



Minutes

Program Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting
May 11, 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 (via conference call); The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman, Co-Chair; Elizabeth Bezos; Jacqui Colyer; Ramiro Moreno (via conference call); Dr. Silvia La Villa (via conference call);

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres (President/CEO); Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Angelo Parrino; Jackye Russell; Yvette Medina; Sandra Gonzalez; Pamela Hollingsworth; Fred Hicks; Mercy Castiglione; Mary Williams (via conference call); Leeana Pena; Kristina Alonso

General Attendees: Linda Carmona (AECE); Thelma Bennett (YWCA); Susan Tucker (YMCA); Graciela Piñeiro (YMCA); Marielena Delgado (AECE); Elena Espinel (The Early Education); Elena Guerra (AECE); Armando Guerra (AECE); Silvia de la Torre (Town Center Pre-school); Sandra Rodriguez (Lago Mar I & II); Irela Santamarina-Suarez (Watch Me Grow Learning Center); Olivia Hughes (Libby's Kiddie Care); Luisa Sanchez (YWCA); Isolina Souto (Tutor Me Day Care); Vic Ferrante (MDCPS); Silvia Arrastia (Silvia's School); Maria Aguirre (Silvia's School); Migda Navarro (Three Flags Academy); Blanca Mesa (World to Grow); Angela Ortega (Jean Piaget Academy); Edith Humes-Newbold (MDC); Sue Loyzelle (YMCA); Carmen Franco (Bamby's Day Care); Steve Gimenez (YMCA); Alfred Sanchez (YWCA); Maria C. Rodriguez (Just Kids Centers); Diana Susi (Happy Kids); Paola Margary (Kingdom Academy); Amanda Silva (Fantasyland Center); Maria Alcazar (Great Discoveries); Hader Mahmoodi (Little Tigers);

Via conference call: Alan Eckstein; Dan Dombrowski (Boys and Girls Club-Key West); Claudia Arias (DCF)

I. Welcome and Introductions	The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman Co-Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ C. Lederman welcomed the committee, staff and attendees.	
II. Approval of Agenda	The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman Co-Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ C. Lederman called for the approval of the agenda.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Due to no quorum, motion was tabled.	
III. Child Enrichment Service Providers/After School Programs	Jackye Russell



- J. Russell presented information that was requested of staff concerning after school and enrichment providers.
- J. Russell shared the Early Learning Coalition's core mission:
 - To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten and after school programs, thus increasing all children's chances of achieving future educational success in becoming productive members of society. The Coalition seeks to further the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of Miami-Dade and Monroe County children with a priority toward the ages before birth through age five.
- J. Russell described the different categories of providers including licensed, religious exempt, child enrichment, unlicensed after school, and summer camp providers.
 - Religious exempt providers are those affiliated with either a church or temple. The vast majority of religious providers in Miami-Dade are licensed by DCF if they serve younger children. There are very few who are not licensed and generally serve older children.
 - Child Enrichment providers are those that provide activities such as ballet, karate and boxing and largely serve children five years of age and older.
 - Programs such as the Miami-Dade County Public Schools after care program, Miami-Dade County recreational programs, YMCA and YWCA are unlicensed after school providers.
- J. Russell explained the different curriculum, background screening, student/teacher ratio, inspection and payment requirements for each of the provider categories.
 - In addition to licensed providers and religious exempt providers who are required by DCF to have level 2 background screenings for all staff, child enrichment and unlicensed centers will also be required by the coalition to submit level 2 background screenings as well in order to provide services.
- J. Russell stated the monthly amounts paid for the month of March to each of the provider categories.
 - Licensed facilities were paid \$8,111,610.78
 - Religious exempt programs were paid \$36,973.00
 - Child enrichment providers were paid \$134,616.54
 - After school providers were paid 275,215.33
 - Summer camps were paid \$576,960.00
- J. Russell presented the different recommendation options that were requested of staff.
 - Option "A" would fund only licensed child care centers serving children birth to five. The impact of this recommendation would be that \$20,891,291.00 would be saved annually which would allow approximately 5,223 new children ages birth to five to receive care. This would mean that children ages five and older would no longer be served by licensed providers. If the committee decides to select this option, the transition plan would be that all children would be served through the summer months and families would be given a 60-day notice in order to locate a licensed provider for their children birth to five and to make other arrangements for their older children. An alternative transition plan would include that all children would receive a 60-day notice and would continue to be served until their next redetermination period. Children older than five would not be redetermined eligible.



- Option "B" would allow only licensed providers, religious exempt providers and unlicensed after school programs to provide care. The coalition would no longer contract with enrichment providers and after school programs who are not either school-based or a school-run program. The impact would be a savings of \$1,597,014 which would allow 420 new children to receive services. The transition plan for this option would be that all children would be served through the summer months. Families would be given a 60-day notice to locate an approved after school program provider.
- Option "C" would limit the reimbursement to three hours maximum to all school age programs and summer camps. The impact would be a savings of \$2,856,078 which would allow approximately 735 new children to receive care. The transition plan would provide a 60 day notice to families explaining the change in reimbursement hours.
- Option "D" would terminate after school care and summer camp funding for all children at age 9, including children in the At Risk, TANF, and Transitional Child Care categories. The impact would be a savings of \$2,656,505 annually which would allow approximately 699 new children to receive care. The first transition plan would notify families 60 days in advance to make arrangements for children older than 9. A second alternative plan would notify families 60 days in advance and children would be served until their next redetermination period. Children older than 9 would not be redetermined. The third alternative transition plan would continue to fund children currently enrolled in care until age 13. No new children older than 8 years would be enrolled in the At Risk, TANF or Transitional Child Care categories.
- J. Russell stated that staff recommends option "B" for the following reasons:
 - Increased availability of providers allows for greater parental choice.
 - Level 2 background screenings are already required for these programs.
 - Programs are subject to DCF licensing or Department of Education requirements which include academic components as part of the program.
- J. Russell shared what the board has approved as the local childcare eligibility funding priorities for bringing in new children for enrollment.
 - Priority 1 is funding for the BG3 category which are children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF.) By mandate, these children, ages birth to 12, must be served. These children do not go on the waitlist and enrollment is always open for them.
 - Priority 2 is funding for BG1 or At Risk which is for children who are involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) either through protective services or through protective investigation, ages birth to 12. These children also do not go on the waitlist and by mandate, must be served as they are subject to the Rilya Wilson Act.
 - Priority 3 is for children whose families are eligible for the Transitional Child Care (TCC) program. These families are involved with South Florida Workforce and are a priority so that these families do not end up back on TANF and are able to have childcare in order to maintain their employment.
 - Priority 4 is for families in the BG8 category who either are income eligible at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), children of teen parents, or families with children with special needs.



- J. Russell stated that AWI requires funding for infants, toddlers, preschool children, school-age children younger than 13 and children with special needs. AWI also requires that there be parental choice among a wide range of providers.
- J. Russell presented a report by OPPAGA covering afterschool programs in Florida. OPPAGA looked at how these programs are funded, what services are available and what information is available to assess the demand for school programs and the effectiveness of these programs. Most counties have the same types of programs that we have here in Miami-Dade County. OPPAGA concluded that while there are a wide variety of programs around the state, there are not currently procedures in place to assess the effectiveness of these programs.
- J. Russell presented the AELC School-age Care Survey which asks coalitions across Florida if they serve school age children and what the maximum age they serve is. Many of the coalitions prioritize their enrollment for children zero to five and continue to serve children up to age 13. Some have set a cutoff and only serve ages birth to five.
- J. Russell addressed the committee's concern with risk management and liability issues with unregulated and unlicensed providers. The coalition sought the opinion of the Board's legal council who responded that the greatest potential for exposure to liability is if the ELC negligently selects a provider. Through the provider agreement process, the coalition verifies that providers have either a license or accreditation when applicable and will be making sure that this year everyone who has signed a provider agreement is aware that they are required to have background screenings and will be monitored.
- E. Bezos asked if the minimum requirement to receive School Readiness funds for enrichment and after school providers is a level 2 background screening. J. Russell responded that they must have a level 2 background screening and a daily schedule of activities and they must meet all other requirements of the agreement with the exception of licensing.
- E. Bezos asked how do coalitions like Duval and Sarasota get around the statute for funding in the mandatory categories such as BG1 and BG3 and apply a cutoff for older children. J. Russell responded that the only category with an age requirement is the At Risk category.
- E. Bezos asks the committee to consider two separate recommendations for this issue being the issue of the age range and the requirements for providers receiving funds.

V. Public Comment

- Hader Mahmoodi stated that he feels that all providers receiving funding should be licensed.
- Marielena Delgado asked why on the report it appeared that child enrichment providers were serving children under five. J. Russell responded that the report reflects what the providers have indicated as their enrollment and that they are not allowed to provide services to children of this age. These providers have been reported. Ms. Delgado also echoed the sentiment of Mr. Mahmoodi that providers receiving SR funds should be licensed. It is unfair that licensed providers are required to adhere to regulations that enrichment providers do not.
- Irela Santamarina-Suarez stated that most parents are not aware that the individuals working for enrichment providers are not background screened. They are also not aware that these providers are not regulated by DCF, the health department and the fire department. These providers should be adhering to these requirements and parents should be made aware of this.



- Linda Carmona stated that parental choice has always been respected but at what point does the program become a babysitting service which is not what School Readiness dollars were intended for. There is a place for the karate schools and the ballet schools but there is no way of monitoring if the people delivering these services have any credentials in the field that they are proposing.
- Thelma Bennett of the YWCA After School Program stated that their programs were licensed by DCF, They operate on MDCPS property and are running a very good program that they monitor constantly. The employees at their sites do have Level 2 background screenings as well as CPR and first aid training. There is constant training, staff meetings and updates provided to parents. Ms. Bennett asks for the support of the community and CDS. She stated that we need support for our nine year old children that may be dropped because of funding. We seriously need programs that keep these children in school and prevent them from becoming latch key kids that could get involved in drugs and crime. YWCA is about higher learning and education.
- Armando Guerra stated that he also agrees with his colleagues. He stated that we cannot forget the crime in this city and that these older children cannot be dumped out in the streets. History shows that these children will be exposed to crime. We have a strong moral responsibility to these children. We keep hearing about quality but how does limiting the responsibility of the providers going to accomplish that. Mr. Guerra asked if enrichment providers are required to have liability insurance. J. Russell responded that they are not required to do so.
- Alfred Sanchez of the YMCA of Greater Miami introduced his program and thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak. He stated that we need to look at the fact that there is a various range of qualifications among the different provider types. He stated that his program's 59 sites serve about 3,500 children each day. YMCA's outcomes are measured by the school board, The Children's Trust, etc. where they are held accountable in order to continue to receive funding for these children. He stated that he believes that the issue of liability insurance is huge. Without liability insurance we are weakening and exposing the entire system. He asked if option B included summer camp to which J. Russell responded that unless the provider was licensed or school based they would not be funded.
- E. Bezos stated that those providers that do not have a license should still meet the requirements of licensing such as background screenings, credentials, in-service hours and liability insurance. We know that DCF is not able to do this so this will take QA personnel to monitor and collect all the documentation that indicates that providers meet this criteria. This would eliminate the possibility of the coalition being held liable for negligently selecting a provider.
- D. Williams asked what the significance of a recommendation without a quorum is. E. Bezos responded that historically the reason why the committee polls its members is to get the input of non-voting members who are generally the ones at the table discussing the issues. In order to not waste any more time and move business forward, this would go to the board as a recommendation from the committee instead of a formal motion.
- S. La Villa suggested that the issue gets moved forward as a recommendation in order for the board to have enough time to review the information.
- D. Williams stated that he feels a recommendation should be sent to the board at some point with enough time for the full board to review the information before the meeting. However, the committee needs more time to digest this before making a recommendation.



- C. Lederman stated that the committee should be responsible and discuss it further at the June 1st meeting before putting this through to the board.
- The Committee discussed option "A":
 - E. Bezos did not agree with this option and stated that there are a lot of facilities out there that supersede the requirements of licensed centers.
 - C. Lederman stated that the problem she has with this option is that we are not a compliance agency. If we move into a more active monitoring and compliance role we are subject to much more liability. Both D. Williams and S. La Villa agree.
 - J. Colyer asked about the financial impact of this option which would allow 5,223 new children to receive care. She stated that if we selected this option then the whole idea of what the coalition wants to do could become a possibility in terms of ensuring that children zero to five are ready for school. She asked if selecting this option would eliminate the waitlist.
 - E. Torres responded that it would eliminate the current waitlist for the zero to five age group.
 - E. Bezos asked if as a coalition we are going to disregard the intent of the funding which is for parents to go to work and impose stricter regulations on the funding. At \$2.11 an hour for infants at a ratio of 4:1 you are subsidizing your zero to five program with after school children. She stated that she understands that the coalition is not in the business of keeping an industry alive. However, parental choice and available options will be very limited because of the impact on small centers relying on the higher ratios of afterschool children to subsidize the very weakly funded zero to five programs.
 - J. Colyer stated that sometimes a community makes priorities based upon where we want to see children end up five years down the road. The thought of being able to move children zero to five off of the waiting list is appealing.
 - D. Williams stated that the current subsidies do not equate to anything near what the current national rate is.
 - E. Bezos stated that the board voted to pay Miami-Dade county providers 60% of what the rate which is 75% of the maximum reimbursement rate from the state. If we are really going to focus on zero to five we will need to discuss whether or not the rate can be raised to the 75% maximum. We cannot provide quality and enrichment on \$2.11 an hour.
- Diana Susi of Happy Kids stated if we remove funding for after school children these children will end up in bad company. Five years from now we will have lost a large number of children. She states that we currently have the right age groups in the centers right now and she supports option "B." If you cut services at age five, we would be enriching the lives of children in Pre-K and three year old classes but providers would have to eliminate infants and toddlers from their programs due to ratios. Afterschoolers will suffer immensely because there are no parks that will take them in,
- Edith Humes-Newbold stated that from her perspective, working with parents and providers, option "B" looks most attractive. However, looking at information from other coalitions, the Early Learning Coalition of Gateway had an interesting option that allowed children that are in care to continue to receive care but they do not add any new children to after school care.
- Alfred Sanchez stated that while serving 5,000 new children zero to five sounds attractive, we will be losing an equal or higher number of school age children. If we don't pay for their care now, we will end up paying for it later, several times



over. He stated that his concern with option "B" is that providers such as some of the YMCA and YWCA sites that are not necessarily on school property like their award-winning marine biology camp that helps build math, science and literacy skills would not be eligible to participate even though the quality of the program is probably even better than the quality of those sites that are located on school property.

- Irela Santamarina-Suarez stated that we have a moral question to ask. When did these children stop being children because they are six years old? We serve low income and TANF families. She asked if there are any statistics available regarding teen crime in those counties that have stopped serving children older than six.
- C. Lederman responded that this question would be better directed at the Children's Trust who is supposed to be funding these children. This is the Early Learning Coalition whose job is to have children ready to learn when they first go to school. We are not responsible for every child in the community.
- J. Colyer stated that there should be no waiting list for babies.
- E. Bezos stated that the definition of early childhood education is for ages birth to eight according to NAEYC.
- J. Colyer asked to see what the impact would be if we included after school care for six year olds. She requests a breakdown of how many children would be able to be added into care if it was done this way. She stated that her true concern is that there are so many babies that are not getting the kind of enrichment that they could because we have strayed away from the focus of early childhood. E. Torres stated that from 0-2 there are 6,867 children on the waitlist. From 0-5 there are 14,204 children on the waitlist.
- E. Bezos added that pediatrics.com defines early childhood developmentally as zero to eight.
- J. Colyer stated that we as a community make priorities and it has nothing to do with what the definition of early childhood is.
- E. Bezos stated that it is a very scary situation where an educational and medical definition of early childhood development can be tossed out because a group of people decide that they will only fund zero to three. She stated she does not speak for anyone else in the room but she woefully regrets having fought for the existence of this coalition in the last legislative session when the coalition is going in this direction.
- J. Colyer stated that she is leaning towards focusing on zero to five but still would like to see more information.
- Linda Carmona stated that the National Association for the Education of Young Children defines early learning as zero through eight. Even discarding that for the purposes of the discussion, the purpose of the Early Learning Coalition is to administer CCDBG funding which is for children zero through thirteen. We continue to ignore that. We have made decisions because of shortage of funding, but at what point does this board take responsibility for the poor quality of early childhood education and childcare in this community because we underfund the system and choose to ignore what AWI recommends as the 75th percentile of the fair market rate. We leave the burden on the providers to figure it out and pay their employees minimum wage with no benefits and no health care. The childcare industry is a partner of the coalition in the delivery of childcare services. While we all believe in quality, we cannot deliver it with the way the coalition is trying to making it happen. There are increased requirements every day which are all unfunded mandates. The Board needs to be better informed of the consequences of its decisions. The purpose of CCDBG funding is to enable parents to work. It does not talk about academic outcomes for children.



- Sue Loyzell with the YMCA stated that it was referenced that they would go to the Children’s Trust for funding. While YMCA does receive funding for enhancement The Children’s Trust does not fund slots. There is no money to pick up any of the children that will be cut from the program. It is a critical issue that we would have to put these children back out on the street by choosing option “A.” She stated that option “B” would be the best choice and would like to see summer camp added for non-school sites. She asked how many school aged children were on the waitlist. E. Torres replied that there were approximately 3,000 children on the waitlist for school age services.

V. Adjourn

**The Hon. Cindy S. Lederman
Co-Chair**

- C. Lederman adjourned the meeting.