



Program Policy & Strategy and Provider Services Committee Meeting  
June 26, 2012; 3:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.  
Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe  
Board Room

**Committee Attendees:** The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Ann Karen Weller (via conference call); Lucy Piñeiro; Modesto Abety-Gutierrez; Shaleen Fagundo; Gina Cortez Suarez; Roderick E. Beasley

**Staff Attendees:** Blythe Robinson; Jackye Russell; Mary Williams (via conference call); Karen Bolaños; Fred Hicks; Christina Vila; Angelo Parrino; Milton Silvera; Bob de la Fuente (Board Attorney)

**General Attendees:** Jose Ruiz (J. Ruiz Learning School); Crystal Hammel (J. Ruiz Learning School); Pracellyne Michel (J. Ruiz Learning School); Avery A. Dial, Fowler White Burnett (J. Ruiz Learning School, attorney); Carlos A. Garcia (Department of Children and Families); Yordamis Reyes (RV Little Giant Day Care); Rosa M. Gonzalez (RV Little Giant Day Care); Tachanna Mallary (RV Little Giant Day Care); Claudette Lane (Department of Children and Families); Leo Canton (R.V Little Giant Day Care); Lucy Lovell (Veritext Court Reporter); Gilbert Louis (All Nations Academy); Rev. Jonas George (All Nations Academy); Linda Carmona (Alliance For Early Care and Education); Norma Herdocia (Alliance For Early Care and Education)

#### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

- C. Lederman welcomed the committee staff and attendees.
  - A quorum was established with seven (7) voting members.

#### **II. Approval of Agenda**

- R. Beasley moved to approve the agenda.
  - S. Fagundo seconded the motion.
  - Motion anonymously passed.

#### **III. Approval of May 23 Minutes**

- R. Beasley moved to approve the minutes.
  - S. Fagundo seconded the motion.
  - Motion anonymously passed.

#### **IV. VPK Update**

- J. Russell presented the VPK Update and stated that there are 52 VPK providers who have not submitted their Improvement plans to the Department of Education and as a result, these providers will not be eligible to deliver VPK this fall. The ELC is asking for guidance on whether or not we should reach out to parents to find new providers.
- C. Lederman made a motion to contact the parents.



- G. Cortez-Suarez seconded the motion.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

## V. Provider Appeals

- **Board Attorney** read the notice from the Early Learning Coalition to pursue the School Readiness Child Care Safety Licensing policy because action has been initiated against their license or because they have received one of the following violations: One (1) class 1 violation in a consecutive 12 month period or Three (3) class 2 violations of the same class 2 sub-standard in a consecutive 12 month period; or a health and safety violation for license exempt programs. Today they have the opportunity to present evidence for their violations and possibly reach a settlement with the coalition to continue their funding. The committee will make the decision regarding their contract. They have the right to appeal the committee's decision to the Board but no new evidence will be allowed at the Board level.

## RV Little Giant Day Care

- **C. Lederman** asked provider what has she done to remedy the issues after the hearing last month?
- **Y. Reyes** presented herself as the Director of RV Little Giant Day Care. She indicated that they are having emergency meetings with staff. They make decisions together and no matter what happens to a child, they would never transport on regular transportation, but would use fire rescue. All teachers received a course on safety and health as an 8 hour in-service and they can be updated on the new standards. The name of the course is Advise code 911.
- **G. Cortez-Suarez** asked who provided the training?
- **Y. Reyes** answered, a professional teacher from Miami Dade College. All the teachers from RV Little Giant received this training.
- **R. Beasley** asked what was the curriculum this teacher from Miami Dade provided?
- **Y. Reyes** responded that the course was given by a teacher that came to her center and the course teaches about the state that we need to follow, advice on emergencies, and how to keep the child safe and healthy.
- **S. Fagundo** asked if the former director still works for the center?
- **Y. Reyes** answered that she is the owner of the center.
- **G. Cortez-Suarez:** asked if she included the new rule in a manual and policy on emergencies?
- **Y. Reyes responded that** all the teachers signed the agreement and they have it on the quality board.
- **R. Beasley** asked if this happens again what she will do.
- **Y. Reyes responded she would** call 911.
- **Provider Attorney** explained that when the child was injured they did not call the rescue because the child was calm and taking him to the emergency would be less traumatic.
- **T. Mallary** a teacher of the RV Little Giant who was a witness of the accident explained that the child's parent reaction was calm. She stated that at first there were no issues, later on it became an issue with the parents, because they are trying to sue the child care center. Further, the child is no longer enrolled at the center.
- **S. Fagundo** made a motion for a six month probation and both the new director as well as the owner must both complete the interactive child care course. This is a 20 hour course.
- **M. Aberty-Gutierrez** seconded the motion.
- The motion carried unanimously.



## J. Ruiz Learning School

- **Provider Attorney Avery Dial** presented a video. Mr. Dial explained that the teacher on the video has a relationship with the child and that the child's parent has given the teacher permission to use physical discipline with the child. The first clip in the video shows the teacher hitting the male child in the head. The second clip shows the teacher pulling a female child by the arm. Mr. Dial explained that the female child is the granddaughter of the teacher. He also explained that the reason DCF found out was because of a news story and that Mr. Ruiz was unaware prior to the news story. DCF visited the school and both teachers in the video were sent to a class that teaches how to handle problem children. One of the teachers was also moved to a position where she does not deal with children. The center has added new policies, and also increased intern hours from 10 hours minimum to 30 hours. Mr. Dial noted that the center is in a community that condones physical discipline outside of the program and they also have an in service based on this same topic.
- **J. Ruiz** gave a brief statement supporting what his lawyer said.
- **S. Fagundo** advised Mr. Ruiz that on the policy they should add staff disclosure on relationships they have with the children.
- **J. Ruiz** stated that he did make that change. That he does not have any one that works at the center bring their kids. So that way we don't have that closeness and think that they can physically discipline their kid just because they know them.
- **L. Piñeiro** asked if this case was taken to trial.
- **DCF C. Garcia** explained that they sent the case to administrative complaint for standard number 12, which is improper discipline and they were fined \$100-\$180 for that incident. That case is still pending.
- **L. Pineiro** stated that she cannot believe no one in the school knew about the behavior of these teachers.
- **C. Lederman** indicated that these were two incidents happened in the same day. made a motion to suspend the School Readiness funding, because this behavior cannot be condoned or tolerated in child care centers that receive funding from the Early Learning Coalition.
- **M. Abety** seconded the motion.
- The Motion carried unanimously.

## Ready 4 Preschool

- **Staff** announced that Ready 4 Preschool was absent.
- **C. Lederman** made a motion to suspend funding.
- **R. Beasley** seconded it.
- The Motion carried unanimously.

## All Nations Academy

- **All Nations Academy** is not a licensing violation. They are here to appeal their VPK funding because they were monitored by VPK monitors, it was discovered that they did not have a credentialed director for their program at the time of the monitoring.
- **Rev. J. George** explained that their director announced that she was going to take a different job and she gave them a two (2) day notice. They hired a person whom they thought had some credentials as far as a bachelor degree and who was a former teacher.
- **S. Fagundo:** asks J. Russell if she had a staff credential and met the qualification as a director but it had not been changed on the paper work, would he have the same situation or is it that she did not meet the qualification? J. Russell answered that he did not have anyone on staff that was credentialed as a director. If he had someone who had a director's credential, he could have sent in the change.



- **C. Lederman** asked the Board Attorney to address the fact that there isn't anything the committee can do about this situation.
- **B. de la Fuente** responded that it is a contract requirement with the Coalition that they have a credentialed Director on site. If he is paid, it is an audit finding for the Coalition.
- **C. Lederman** advised Rev. J. George that there is nothing the committee can do.
- **M. Abety-Gutierrez** asked J. Russell if a provider's funding is suspended, how can parents find a new provider?
- **J. Russell** answered that we offer them assistance from Child Care Resource and Referral to find another provider that is VPK certified and is in the area that they would like their child to attend and we can transfer them to that provider.
- **M. Abety-Gutierrez** asked what amount of time is available to the parents to make this transition. J. Russell answered the parents have 30 days to find a new provider.
- **C. Lederman** requested that someone from Child Care Resource and Referral attend the next committee meeting to provide information on the parent referral process.

The committee engaged in a discussion and recommended that staff pre-screens the future cases prior to the committee meeting. Staff will provide the committee with some 'options' to adopt or could make some preliminary decisions prior to the committee's review. Staff agreed to take the suggestion(s) back to ELC leadership for consideration and recommendations.

After discussion the committee decided to continue having the meetings on the last Tuesdays of the month, starting at 2:00 p.m. instead of 3:30 p.m.; they also requested the continued presence of DCF, and an official translator, to be provided by the Coalition.

#### V. Public Comment

Linda Carmona provided a clarification that the state of Florida does allow anyone to provide in-service training. We want to make sure that whoever provides in-service training in the community provides the highest quality and to make sure to get approval by both DCF and Miami Dade College. She stated that is one of the things that her organization does. We have to make sure to submit a syllabus to Miami-Dade College, we need to make sure they review it and approve that it meets the higher standards. Courses and certificates should bear the Miami Dade college logo on them to indicate that it was approved for in-service hours and to make sure that it meets the standard. Our organization does provide a very fine quality training on Health and Safety that is approved by DCF and Miami Dade College.

#### VI. Adjourn

- **C. Lederman** adjourned the meeting.



