



Minutes

Program & Strategy Committee Meeting
September 30, 2009; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
City of Miami Gardens Council Chambers
1515 N.W. 167th Street
Building #5
Miami Gardens, FL 33134

Committee Attendees: David Williams Jr., Chair; Elizabeth Bezos, Co-Chair

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres (President/CEO); Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen; Alina Soto; Jackye Russell; Leeana Pena; Fred Hicks, Milton Silvera; Yvette Medina

General Attendees: Olivia Hughes, Libby's Kiddie Care; Quadeera Teart and Betty Teart, Betty's Preschool Academy; Betty Brindon, New Horizon Learning Center; Linda Pulanski, The Learning Tree Pre-School; Suzette Frazier, DCF; Maritza Ruiz, Jose Ruiz, Britney Ruiz, Vanessa Ruiz, J. Ruiz Learning School LLC; Theslyn Brown, Maranatha Child Development Center; Matty Loret de Mola, La Petite Academy; Edith Humes-Newbold, Miami-Dade County; Maria E. Delgado, Victoria's Playhouse; Gloria Delgado, Kid's Love Day Care; Edwin Perez, The Biltmore School; Arleen Lambert, Arleen's Home Day Care; Lillyann Jordan; Beverly James, New Horizon Resource Learning; Nardine Rene, Arising Child Academy; Cherise Gause, The Children's Place Child Care Center; Linda Florez, Starlite Learning Center; Maurice Brazier, Liberty Academy; Alejandro Villabon, DCF; Nelly Palma, Marian Center; Ana Barimo, Royal Kids Academy; Jody-Ann Smith, Parkway Baptist Church Wee Care; Hader Mahmoodi, Little Tigers; Ireal Jackson-Gordon, Small Kids Academy; Barbara Forde, Vision to Victory/Christine Curry; Mireya Verez, Precious Smiles; Georgina Lopez, Granada Day School; Katherine Delgado, Kid's Love Day Care; Nelly C. Garridon, True Colors After School Age Program; Elena Guerra, Small Wonders of Miami; Armando Guerra, Small Wonders of Miami II; Sara Morales, Miami-Dade County DHS; Alain Zamorra, Miami-Dade County DHS; Elizabeth Sanchez, Pro-Kids Learning Center; Harley Lewin, Small Fry; Cynthia Colquhoun, Skipper Chuck's # 2; Felisha Faust, Skipper Chuck's #1; Katherine Mitchell, Skipper Chuck's #4; M. Loret de Mola, La Petite Academy; Roxana Besu, La Petite Academy; Carlos Arrastia, Silvia's School; Claudia B. Gray, Independent Preschool Organization/Sparks Day Care; Joyce Da Costa, Sunshine Day Care; Ginette Rigaud, Our Child Care/Our Little Ones; Judy Zarzycki, My Child's Dreams Inc; Iris Gerena, Kids Adventure Learning Center; Juanita Walker, Sheyes of Miami Learning Center; Hazel Young, McDonald's Playworld; Miriam Jimeno, Alphabet Soup Learning Center; Angel Silva, Fantasyland I & II; Jane Lindley, Alliance for Early Care and Education; Patricia



Snell, Love Thy Kids Academy I & II; Dr. Carrie Keys, Celebrity Kids Club; Elena Espinel, The Early Education; Collene Brown, Collene A Brown FCCH; Barbara Viera, Genesis Children's Academy; Rosa Viera, Genesis Children's Academy; Marva Bates, Mt. Calvary Daycare; Sharon Frazier Stephens, CFCE, Inc.; Joseph Cool; Lillian Marerro, World of Kids Academy; I. Suarez, Watch Me Grow Learning Centers; Lisette Rodriguez-Diaz, World of Kids Academy; Carmen Franco, Bamby's Day Care; Cynthia Hereford, Shining Light Childcare Development Center; Barbara Ortiz, Kidz City Learning Center; Alina Cuza, Bambi Land Day Care Center; Janet Lopez-Mesa, My Child's Dreams Learning Center; Samuel Or, Childcare Training; Terry T. Rutherford, TOUCCH/Christ Children Academy; Errol James, Christ Children; Sharray Caro, Caran's Learning Nest; Linda Carmona, AECE.

Via conference call: Matt Guse, AWI and Mary Williams (ELC Monroe)

I. Welcome and Introductions

**David Williams, Jr.
Committee Chair**

- David Williams, Jr. welcomed the committee members and attendees to the Program Policy and Strategy Committee.
- Evelio Torres introduced the members of the Early Learning Coalition, Miami-Dade County and Department of Children and Families staff.
- David Williams recognized and thanked the City of Miami Gardens for their hospitality.
- Co-chair, Elizabeth Bezos thanked the providers in attendance for the large turnout.

II. Approval of Agenda

**David Williams, Jr.
Committee Chair**

- David Williams, Jr. requested that the approval of the agenda be revisited due to lack of time.
 - Due to no quorum, motion was tabled.

III. Approval of August 29th and September 9th Minutes

**David Williams, Jr.
Committee Chair**

- David Williams, Jr. requested that the approval of the minutes for August 29th and September 9th be revisited due to lack of time.
 - Due to no quorum, motion was tabled.

IV. Market Rate Survey

**Matt Guse, Program Manager,
Office of Early Learning**



- Evelio Torres introduced Matt Guse from AWI, who attended via conference call.
- Matt Guse discussed the current federal and state requirements associated with the market rate survey process, provider annual survey process and the provider participation rate for the past year. The purpose of the market rate survey is to keep AWI informed of the cost of childcare in the community.
- Mr. Guse explained that the federal government recommends that states pay at the 75th percentile of a reasonable frequency distribution of private pay rates ensuring that school readiness families have access to childcare services. Coalitions may not reimburse the provider at a rate higher than the private pay rate. Mr. Guse explained that Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies are responsible for collecting these rates annually to update program information. The Office of Early Learning calculates this rate every 2 years. Stressing the importance of completing this survey, attendees were informed that if a provider fails to respond, after verifying the status of the provider with licensing, there will be 2-3 written and/or verbal attempts to obtain information
- Mr. Guse pointed out the excellent response rate in both Miami-Dade county and statewide. Overall provider participation increased 10% statewide. Miami-Dade and Monroe county participation increased by 23%.
- Elizabeth Bezos inquired about the breakdown of provider types (private, registered, licensed, etc.) as well as the accuracy of the number of providers included in the survey. The specific number of providers in each category as well as the number of responses in each category, are requested. Edith Humes-Newbold clarified that all providers, whether reimbursed by school readiness funding or not, are included in the market rate survey. Mr. Guse agreed to provide a more detailed breakdown as requested by Ms. Bezos.
- Linda Carmona of the Alliance for Early Care and Education also requests further clarification explaining that the providers attending want to know why they do not get paid at a better rate. She expressed that the providers want to deliver good quality programs, but that good quality programs cost money and they are unable to do so with the rate that they are being paid. She requests to show the individual rates per center, reminding the committee and Mr. Guse that if the information is in EFS it is public record. Ms. Carmona asked the providers in attendance to assume the responsibility of learning how to adequately access the information in order to come up with fair rates.
- Maria Elena Delgado of the Alliance for Early Care and Education and of Victoria's Playhouse inquired as to the reason why \$250 was the cap for rates considered in the market rate survey. Mr. Guse replied that this is the highest recorded rate in the state across all categories. Ms. Delgado asked the committee why there are no providers amongst voting members of the committee. David Williams, Jr. explained that there are opportunities for members of the provider community to share their voices with the committee. Ms. Delgado suggests that there be a formal collection of information on whether providers would prefer a lower enrollment and a higher rate of pay or maintain the current rate with a higher enrollment..
- Armando Guerra of the Alliance for Early Care and Education inquired as to why there is no minimum pay rate established by the state. Mr. Guse responded that comparing minimums across counties would reflect drastic differences as individual communities would vary too much.



- Mr. Torres explains that with continually shrinking budgets and 23,000 children on the waitlist, provider pay increases are proving to be more and more difficult, without having to serve fewer children.
- Ms. Bezos inquires as to how soon reimbursement will change after submitting a rate change to CCR&R that is still within the parameters of the approved rate of pay. Jackye Russell responded that an increase only takes place when the board moves to approve an overall increase. Ms. Carmona expressed that this was not the way the increase policy was explained and there was a general understanding that as soon as a rate change was reported, the change was effective.
- Ms. Bezos relayed to the attendees that according to the bylaws, the recommendations regarding provider issues needs to come through the Provider Services Committee. **A recommendation was made to have a formal collection of information throughout the provider community in regards to more children served vs. a higher rate of reimbursement..**

V. Sub-committee Report

Elizabeth Bezos, Committee Co-Chair

- Elizabeth Bezos explained that at the last Program Policy and Strategy meeting it was agreed that a subcommittee to look at the completion of school readiness provider agreements and child enrichment programs would be formed.
- Ms. Bezos reminded the attendees that the completion of a school readiness provider agreement was a state requirement in order to receive funding from the state to execute school readiness services. Ms Bezos also addressed that there were 247 providers seeking retroactive payment for services rendered in June that had not turned in a completed provider agreement by the 7/1/09 deadline. Originally, the board had decided that there would be no retroactive pay for providers that did not meet the deadline.
- Ms. Bezos explained that one of the reasons for the proposed 2-month retroactive pay policy was that the subcommittee felt that there was sufficient notice given by the Coalition to the providers through certified letters, news alerts and regular mail, detailing that a new agreement would be necessary every year. The 2-month retroactive payment policy is consistent with policies for other programs such as Gold Seal.
- **The recommendation from the subcommittee is that providers would only be entitled to a maximum of two months of retroactive pay from the time they submitted the late provider agreement and would forfeit any reimbursement for services rendered beyond that time frame.**
- Edith Humes-Newbold added that after reading AWI's monitoring report, it is unclear whether or not this policy can be put into place and must be verified with AWI for an official policy regarding retroactive pay before this motion is brought before the board.
- Evelio Torres explained that for this instance alone AWI did authorize retroactive payment as long as an amendment to all agreements meeting this criteria is executed in order to maintain compliance. This will not be allowed going forward and payment is only authorized to providers with signed provider agreements such as is the case with VPK provider agreements and other contracts that must be executed.



- Elizabeth Besos requests that there be further discussion and exploration of this topic again, as there is some clarification of the conditions necessary.
- **Ms. Besos also indicated that the recommendation from the sub-committee was to reconvene the provider agreement workgroup in order to modify the provider agreement specifically to address the issue of funding child enrichment providers and summer camps.**
- **An additional recommendation from the sub-committee was to implement a waiver process to allow providers who submit a provider agreement with a missing Gold Seal certificate to receive reimbursement at the standard payment rate. The provider would receive the Gold Seal differential once the Gold Seal certificate is submitted to the Coalition. The waiver is only for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. The sub-committee recommends that the provider agreement workgroup revisit the waiver process for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.**

VI. Monroe Update	Mary Williams
--------------------------	----------------------

- Due to lack of time, the Monroe update was not discussed. The report will be posted on the Early Learning Coalition website.

VII. Miami-Dade Update	Jackye Russell
-------------------------------	-----------------------

- Due to lack of time, the Miami-Dade update was not discussed. The reports will be posted on the Early Learning Coalition website.

VIII. Monitoring Reports	Yvette Medina
---------------------------------	----------------------

- Due to lack of time, Monitoring Reports were not discussed in full detail. Yvette Medina did ask the providers in attendance to please insure that all documents submitted to the coalition and to Miami-Dade county are filled out correctly, signed, etc.
- Linda Carmona requested a copy of the monitoring reports
- Evelio Torres informed the attendees that if they would like copies of any reports not posted on the website, they may e-mail the Coalition and it will be sent to them, since this information is open to the public.

IX. Old Business	David Williams, Jr.
-------------------------	----------------------------

- Due to lack of time, old business was not discussed.

X. New Business	David Williams, Jr.
------------------------	----------------------------

- Due to lack of time, new business was not discussed.

XI. Additional Public Comments	Attendees
---------------------------------------	------------------

- Linda Carmona asked for clarification of the ARRA survey that was mailed. Tabatha Cullen of the ELC explained that the goal of the survey was to collect information on whether or not a staff position was retained or added because of ARRA funding.
- Elizabeth Besos wants to know how the children supplemented by ARRA funding were determined. Edith Humes-Newbold explained that these children were not pre-selected. It was a mass move within EFS that was "X" amount of children equating to "X" amount of dollars. There were no specific children chosen for any specific reason
- Evelio Torres further explained that with a \$6 million loss in funding, the ARRA dollars replaced the lost funding. In clarification, if ARRA dollars were lost there



would not be sufficient funding to maintain the number of children currently enrolled and children would have to be disenrolled.

XII. Adjourn

David Williams, Jr.

- Meeting was adjourned by David Williams, Jr.