



Program Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting
November 30, 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.; The Hon. Cindy Lederman; Shaleen Fagundo; Ramiro Moreno (via conference call); Lucy Piñeiro (via conference call); Ann Karen Weller; Dr. Jesse Leinfelder (on behalf of Modesto Abety)

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres (CEO); Blythe Robinson; Tabatha Cullen, Jackye Russell; Mary Williams (via conference call); Kristina Alonso; Leana Pena; Fred Hicks; Milton Silvera

General Attendees: Ardene Estrada (Miami-Dade County); Linda Carmona (AECE); Edith Humes-Newbold (Miami-Dade County); Laurie Dunn (Wesley House-via conference call); Suzette Frazier (Department of Children and Families-Licensing); Joan Farr (Miami-Dade County); Susan Tucker (YMCA); Irela Suarez (Watch Me Grow Learning Centers);

I. Welcome and Introductions

- C. Lederman welcomed the committee, staff and attendees.
- A quorum was established with five (5) voting members.

II. Approval of October 26th Minutes

- D. Williams, Jr. moved to approve the October 26th minutes.
- S. Fagundo seconded the motion.
- Motion was unanimously passed.

III. Child Safety Licensing

- J. Russell discussed the Child Safety Licensing Policy Statement that the Provider Services Committee will be recommending to the full board on Monday, December 6th to adopt as a policy,
 - The policy would require any provider that contracts with the Early Learning Coalition to provide School Readiness services to be licensed with the exception of Miami-Dade County Public School programs operated by school personnel, religious exempt providers, and informal providers.
 - In conjunction with this policy, staff was asked to come to the Program and Strategy Committee and provide an analysis of the impact in terms of the number of providers with Class I and II violations.
 - From October 2009 through October of 2010, 18 providers with Class I violations would have been affected by this policy which is less than 2% of the total number of School Readiness providers.



- While there is a significant number of providers with Class II violations, there are very few that have two or more violations on record.
- In looking at the violations themselves, all of the violations did classify as affecting the health and safety of the children in their care.
- J. Russell stated that at the last Program and Strategy Committee meeting, the committee moved to support the Provider Services Committee's recommendation which was to be brought to the board. Since the motion had not been brought to the board, it is requested that the Program and Strategy revisit its motion to support.
- D. Williams Jr. moved to support the Provider Services Committee's recommendation.
 - S. Fagundo seconded the motion
 - Motion passes unanimously.

IV. Provider Suspension

- J. Russell discussed the Provider Suspension Policy.
 - The Provider Suspension Policy states that any provider with one (1) Class I violation or two (2) or more Class II violations would be suspended for one year and not be eligible to provide School Readiness services until the year following compliance of those violations.
 - The Provider Services Committee will be recommending to the Board that this policy be implemented beginning July 1, 2011.
- E. Torres shared information from a December 2009 OPPAGA report.
 - Based on information from Department of Children and Families (DCF) 96.34% of licensed child care facilities had no Class I violations for that year.
 - The report looked at licensed child care facilities across the state.
 - Most licensed child care providers would not be affected by the Provider Suspension Policy.
- S. Fagundo moved to support the Provider Services Committee's recommendation
 - A. K. Weller seconded the motion
 - Motion was unanimously passed.

V. School Age Provider Repayments

- J. Russell stated that there are providers that have been identified as serving children that were not school age in a school age program. A school age program is for children that are in kindergarten or older. These school age providers are not licensed and are not authorized to serve children under 5 years of age. The Coalition in conjunction with Miami-Dade County has notified these providers that they are not authorized to serve these children and must repay those funds reimbursed to them.
- In response to a question from D. Williams, Jr. about how the Coalition found out that these providers were serving children they were unauthorized to serve, J. Russell responded that during a payment audit this information was discovered.
- D. Williams, Jr. asked how we can ensure that these funds are returned.
- E. Torres responded that those providers would be placed on a payment plan and funds would be deducted from their monthly reimbursement for school age children.



- E. Humes-Newbold added that Miami-Dade County has not begun to take back the funds as of yet as research is still being done.
- E. Torres added that the signed Provider Agreement does state that these providers are not authorized to provide services to non-school age children.
- In response to J. Leinfelder's concerns regarding this decision and how it would affect children in a VPK program at a public school who go into an unlicensed after school care program, E. Torres explained that this is not a decision that the Coalition chose to make. It is Florida law that states that unlicensed providers may not serve children under five. These funds that are returned by these providers will go back to the state.
- E. Torres added that in terms of licensure for some of the school age providers, the challenge is that they are operating on school sites. Although the public schools are exempt from licensure, they would have to be licensed in order to serve children under five. It is possible for a public school to obtain licensure.
- J. Russell added the clarification that several programs on the list do not operate in school facilities who were serving children under five.

VI. Committee Schedule

- J. Russell stated that the 2011 Program Policy and Strategy Committee meeting schedule would need to be agreed upon.
- Members of the committee agreed to continue to meet on the last Tuesday of each month.

VII. Old Business

- J. Russell stated that at the last meeting, the Committee made a recommendation to the Board to implement a moratorium on new providers coming in to the School Readiness program which the Board adopted. It is requested, pending the decision to adopt the Child Safety Licensing Policy and the Provider Suspension Policy, that the language of the moratorium be revised to address these policies. J. Russell stated that the moratorium should be kept in place for the unlicensed providers for the time being.
- S. Fagundo stated that what was seen in the interim were a few licensed providers who had circumstances such as a change of ownership or change of locations who were affected as a result of this moratorium.

VIII. New Business

- E. Torres stated that at the December 6th Board meeting, a recommendation of the Finance Committee would be presented to the Board requesting a rate realignment to try to bring provider rates up to the maximum approved by the Board, effective January 1st.
- D. Williams, Jr. asked what the anticipated cost would be for this to which E. Torres replied that it would cost approximately \$400,000 for a six month period.

X. Public Comment

- L. Carmona asked, in regards to Miami-Dade County Public school-operated child care, what assurance will there be that they will have teachers over age 21 with credentials in their programs. There is concern that perhaps they will not have the kind of personnel that would be ideal for that setting.
- E. Torres responded that this decision would be left up to the superintendent.
- L. Carmona further stated that if we have staff with no experience or background in early childhood, then the problem is not solved. There should be no loopholes



that allow the hiring of unqualified personnel. L. Carmona stated that she encourages the committee and staff to look at this more closely to build in some assurances.

- E. Torres stated that he would share these comments with Magaly Abrahante, MDCPS Board Representative.
- L. Carmona asked how the children that were under five and attending school age programs were ever eligible to be enrolled there to begin with and why this was caught months down the line.
- E. Torres stated that the only way to catch this was on the payment side and it had not been discovered until now because this was not one of the audit areas.
- L. Carmona thanked the Coalition for remembering its commitment to providers to realign the reimbursement rate. E. Torres stated that the Board still had to vote on it.

XI. Adjourn

- C. Lederman adjourned the meeting.