

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

August 28, 2009

Working sessions: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Council Meeting: 11:00-3:00 p.m.

The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lancaster Rooms 4-5-6; Lincoln, Nebraska

Ruth Miller, chair, opened the meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council at 11:15 a.m. on August 28, 2009 at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska. A copy of the Open Meetings Act was posted. Those in attendance made self introductions.

Members present: A.Kathryn Anderson, Kimberly J. Chase, Maya Chilese, Eric Dunning, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Laura Good Buffalo, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, Sara Johnson, Eleanor Kirkland, Carol McClain, Susan McWilliams, Michelle Merrill, Ruth Miller, Amy Pair, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Janet Staehr, Lisa Suckstorf, Joyce Thomas, Carey Winkler.

Members absent: Chris Hanus, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Nancy Montgomery, Lynn Mruz, Carrie Rasmussen, Stephanie Rau, Todd Reckling, John Street, Linda Zinke.

Also in attendance: *ECICC Staff:* Terry Rohren, facilitator; Susan Dahm, secretary; Martha Gadberry, facilitator-GBC; *Technical Assistants:* National Child Care Information Center–Rae Anderson; PTI-Nebraska–Connie Shockley; Munroe Meyer Institute –Mark Smith; NDHHS–Lynne Brehm, Amy Bunnell, Shirley Pickens-White; NDE–Carol Puffer; *Guests:* Deanna Schulze, parent; Beaky Veak and Jen Hernandez, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation; Heather Fox, Head Start State-based Training and Technical Assistance.

The Family Leadership Team, the Gaps and Barriers Committee, the Legislative and Communications Committee, and the Transportation Committee met in working sessions beginning at 8:00 a.m. before the opening of the regular Council meeting.

MEETING AGENDA:

1. Opening and Announcements:

i. Approval of minutes

Motion, Laura Good Buffalo; seconded, Roger Reikofski: To approve the ECICC minutes of May 8, 2009, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet. Maya Chilese requested a correction: to change reference for LB 603 from “Safe Haven” to “Children’s Behavioral Health.” The motion was amended to include this correction. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions.

ii. Report on meeting with the Governor

Ruth Miller reported on the June 18, 2009, meeting with Governor Heineman that she attended with Kim Chase, Tammy Mittelstaedt, and Carey Winkler. Ruth and the others reviewed the content of the meeting and commented on the Governor’s responses. A summary was sent to Council members in the pre-meeting packet.

iii. Results of Steering Committee election

Ruth reported that Jane Happe and Laura Good Buffalo had been elected by ballot to the Steering Committee.

Ruth also announced the resignation of Derek Weimer and asked for recommendations for parent representatives that could be forwarded to the Governor’s Office.

iv. Alternatives for February meeting

Ruth reviewed the discussions about using distance technologies to conduct the February meeting in order to avoid weather issues as in the past two years. The conclusion is that due to the variety of legal and logistical barriers in using distance technologies, the February meeting will be held at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln as originally planned.

v. New funding opportunities

- Eleanor Kirkland reported on new funding opportunities that will come available for early childhood initiatives through federal ARRA funds (federal stimulus–P.L. 11-115), particularly grants for the [Head Start Early Childhood] State Advisory Council (SAC), which Governor Heineman named as a function of the ECICC, and other proposed federal legislation for competitive early childhood challenge grants. Eleanor used a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the responsibilities of the SAC and the content of the ARRA application. She invited Council members to access the Early Child Learning and Knowledge Center – www.ECLKC.org – for more information and responded to questions. Currently, a decision to apply for the funds is pending until determination of what state match is available. If application is made, it will then become the work of the Council to develop the grant proposal. The grant would cover activities the Council is required to do.
 - *Motion*, Eleanor Kirkland; second, Heather Gill: To charge the ECICC Steering Committee with preliminary planning for the ARRA funding proposal. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- Terry Rohren called attention to two handouts on the federal legislation pertaining to the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibilities Act, and the Early Learning Challenge Fund. She briefly explained the source of funding and what the Challenge Fund would address. Carol Fichter noted that the grants require unusual collaboration across systems.

The Council broke for a working lunch that included the family story.

2. The Family Story

Heather Gill introduced Deanna Schulze and Deanna's daughter, Jasmine, from Grant, Nebraska. Heather spoke highly of the family and their contributions to the Planning Region Team. Deanna began her family's story by describing Jasmine as a person who gives happiness, smiles, and laughter and lives up to the meaning of her name—"gift from God." Deanna went on to describe the many challenges that Jasmine and her family face that are related to Jasmine's condition, which includes congenital spastic dysplasia and other physical issues including a very high metabolism that requires Jasmine to eat a large number of calories each day. Deanna described her uneventful pregnancy, the situation immediately following Jasmine's birth by C-section and the life-flight to the NICU of Children's Hospital in Denver. When Jasmine came home to Grant, her doctor referred the family to HHS, which sent them information about the Early Development Network (EDN). The EDN put Deanna in touch with services coordinator, Heather Gill, who immediately started the family on the path for Early Intervention services. Deanna described the support she received through Early Intervention and also the challenges of finding services in a small community. She noted that caring for a child with disabilities is "a whole family struggle" and she recognized the support that the family has received through the assistance given by her mother, school personnel, and Shriner's Hospital in Minnesota. Jasmine is currently in second grade, which presents the family with new issues related to her development and finding services in a small community. Deanna commended the school district for the help they provide, but she continues to look for ways to get "peoples' voices heard" for families of children with disabilities.

3. Reports from Working Sessions

a. Family Leadership Team

- Carey Winkler reported on topics discussed by the Family Leadership Team during their 8:00-9:00 meeting that morning. Discussion included:
- The parent representative's perspective of the meeting with the Governor.
 - Leisha Suckstorf's upcoming attendance at the Heartland Newborn Screening Conference in Arkansas.

- A FRIENDS (previously PBiS) program update, with the suggestion to invite a parent in the program to talk about it from the parent’s perspective as a family story segment in a future meeting.

The team will encourage Planning Region Teams to send families to the Early Childhood Mental Health conference and to report back to the PRT.

b. Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC)

Carey Winkler reported that the GBC had discussed several issues during their meeting prior to the opening of the Council, including:

- Updating the GBC charter. A small group will work on drafting revisions.
- Reviewing Rule 11 proposed revisions to ensure all early childhood groups are included and that the rule is easy to understand.
- Rewriting of the NDE Kindergarten Position Statement, a draft of which is on the NDE Office of Early Childhood webpage (<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ECH/ECH.html>). Input will be sought from groups across the state.
- Other reports and updates included:
 - FRIENDS (PBiS)
 - Training events for early childhood professional development
 - Part C and Rule 51 revisions
 - Planning Region Team: merger of PRT 2 and 25, now named PRT 225; review of PRT grants, issues of parent participation and accessibility to information
 - ARRA funding plans for Part C, Title 1, and Results Matter.
 - Transportation Task Force progress (see report below).

c. Legislative and Communications Committee (LCC)

Kim Chase reported that the LCC had also discussed the meeting with the Governor as well as the Legislature’s Interim Study on Kindergarten, noting the complexity of issues that the LCC wants to look into further. Becky Veak, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, reported on communication with the Legislature on LB609 and building an early childhood coalition to communicate with a unified voice on priority issues.

d. Transportation Task Force

Eleanor Kirkland highlighted recommendations from the task force status report. The focus is on pupil transportation issues including current and emerging standards, best practices supported by research-based findings, professional development and training, aligning regulations, and funding. Lynne Brehm reminded the group that there are no regulations that cover children younger than 5 years old (i.e., typically developing children) other than Head Start federal transportation regulations, which often make collaboration with school districts and others difficult to fit together.

Carey Winkler brought a recommendation from the Gaps and Barriers Committee to adopt and disseminate the task force status report and to continue to receive reports on progress and actions recommended by the Transportation Task Force.

- *Motion*, Carey Winkler; seconded, Deb Ross: to accept the recommendation of the Gaps and Barriers Committee (above). The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

e. ECICC Multi-Agency Standing Committee

Amy Pair and Eleanor Kirkland will co-chair the ECICC Multi-Agency Standing Committee that was approved at the May 8, ECICC meeting. The first meeting will be in early October.

4. Public Comment

Janet Staehr asked for more information about how the Immigration Reform Bill–LB403–might impact delivery of health services, particularly immunizations. The bill, which takes effect October 1, 2009, requires persons receiving benefits provided by state funds to sign an attestation of citizenship form. Council members provided suggestions for more information sources regarding compliance. Deb Ross asked that the Council be kept abreast of clarifications and developments regarding this measure.

5. Child Care Regulations and Public Hearings

In her absence, Pat Urzedowski provided a written update on the status of proposed child care regulations, which Terry Rohren reviewed for the Council. Public hearings on the regulation changes are expected this fall. Proposed changes in the regulations include a new chapter for school-age providers, changes regarding professional development, and changes related to safe sleep practices. Pat asked for Council support for the proposed regulations. Carol Fichter noted that there are “expectations for trepidation” regarding training for licensure. Carol noted that materials are being developed describing options that may ease some of the concerns. She will provide these to the Council when the materials become available.

6. Babies from the Bench

Joan Luebbers and Amy Bunnell were not available to present on Babies from the Bench, so the presentation was postponed until a future meeting.

7. Update on Together for Kids and Families Funding (T4K&F) and Project LAUNCH Grant

Lynne Brehm reviewed the creation of the multi-agency standing committee of ECICC that will serve as a comprehensive group to cover early childhood issues. She announced that the good news is that Nebraska was awarded the T4K&F grant, but the bad news is that the amount of funding requested to support the proposed activities was reduced. This presents concerns for meeting all the requirements proposed in the grant; however, they may find additional funding from prior carry-over to support the work. Currently, groups are meeting and reviewing past work, making updates, and compiling a large strategic plan. Lynne also briefly discussed Project LAUNCH, which is funded out of SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and a partnership with Public Health, to build capacity of state and local systems to promote child health. The grant, if awarded, should start before October 1, 2009.

8. Kindergarten Position Statement and Early Learning Guidelines Development

Melody Hobson reported that a draft of the Kindergarten Position Statement is available for comment on the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) webpage (<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ECH/ECH.html>). The draft updates the 1984 Kindergarten Position Statement to reflect changes based on research and current kindergarten practice. Jen Benson, NDE/OEC, researched and wrote the new statement with input from individuals across the state who are involved in different capacities related to early childhood. In addition to asking for feedback on the draft from individuals, 12 input sessions are planned across the state in the next few months. One of the situations surfacing is that research around kindergarten issues and practice does not seem to match public opinion. In response to a question about the status of the position statement, Melody responded that it does not mandate practice, but it is a public declaration and stance regarding what schools do. The position statement is being distributed to early childhood teachers and administrators, it is available to the public on the webpage, and the Office of Early Childhood is working through the early childhood professional development network to get information out to communities and Planning Region Teams. She asked that Council members bring the information to local early childhood personnel. Melody provided a handout showing the timeline and activities for work that the OEC is doing related to kindergarten.

Carol Fichter discussed the development of early learning guidelines for kindergarten, which will be similar to the *Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to Age 3*, and *Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5*. She noted that these are not standards, but a supplement to the standards that suggest activities, environment supports, and observations for evidence. Carol reported that the State Board of Education recently adopted standards for language arts that include kindergarten and they are expected to approve proposed math standards that include kindergarten at their next meeting. The standards are posted on the NDE website: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Assessment/Standards.htm>. Eventually, kindergarten standards are expected for all seven domains—the next will probably be for social studies. Carol also noted that issues about transition will be integrated into the Kindergarten Position Statement and the early learning guidelines for kindergarten.

9. ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) Funding Updates

- **Part C** (children with disabilities, birth to age 3)
Before discussing ARRA funding for Part C, Carol McClain announced that OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs) had given Nebraska the highest determination for the IDEA-Part C 2007-2009 Annual Performance Report (APR). She acknowledged the work of Amy Bunnell, Joan Luebbers, and Susan Dahm in preparing the report on behalf of the Co-Leads (NDE and DHHS) and ECICC, which signs approval of the Part C APR.

Regarding ARRA funding, Carol reported that Nebraska will receive about \$3 million for Part C initiatives. The funds will be divided for state priorities and for local school districts. Some of the funds will go to Educational Service Units to fund initiatives in districts having fewer than 10 children in Part C. State priorities are to support use of technology, Child Find, parent leadership training, technical assistance, and supports in underserved populations. Carol noted that these will be short-term investments with long-term results.

- **Head Start/Early Head Start**
Eleanor Kirkland said that all Nebraska applications for ARRA funds for Head Start have been submitted. Early Head Start grants are competitive. Awards are expected by late September and local programs will be informed by the regional office. Guidance policy has not been finalized. The awards will go directly to local programs. Deb Ross reported on what her agency has heard, which was minimal.
- **Title I**
Pat Frost said that NDE-Title I is also waiting for guidance, but they have submitted an application and been approved. Their goals are similar to those for NDE-Special Education. Some school districts have started middle school programs or summer schools programs that have hired/retained staff using ARRA funds, but are concerned about the funding “cliff” when the ARRA money is no longer available. Some schools are using their funds toward programs for delinquents and/or incarcerated youth.

10. Supporting Children’s Social and Emotional Development

Carol Fichter distributed a new brochure for “Early Childhood FRIENDS: Using the Teaching Pyramid to Support Social and Emotional Development.” FRIENDS (Fostering Relationships and Emotional [health] to Nurture Developmental Success), previously identified as PBiS, “promotes using framework of the Teaching Pyramid to support young children’s social and emotional development in Nebraska early childhood settings.” Carol noted that while the name of the approach had changed, the Teaching Pyramid had not and still promotes: an environment that is nurturing for all children, an effective work force, nurturing relationships, socio-emotional strategies and intensive interventions. Additionally, self assessment has been added to the guidance. The state leadership team for

FRIENDS will hold a retreat in late September to regroup and evaluate the work. Carol invited ECICC members to participate and to let Eleanor Kirkland know if interested in attendance.

Carol used a PowerPoint presentation to further define the key skills the approach seeks to develop in young children: confidence, capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults, concentration and persistence on challenging tasks, ability to effectively communicate emotions, ability to listen to instructions and be attentive, and ability to solve social programs. The team is receiving guidance from CSEFL (Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) that is being used at Nebraska demonstration sites in Plattsmouth; Cedars Youth Services, Lincoln; Merrick County Child Care Center, Central City; and the Child Saving Institute, Omaha. A self assessment process is available online or via CD for program providers regarding implementation of the Teaching Pyramid. Heather Gill reported on local experiences with the program in her region. Carol and Heather responded to comments and questions from meeting participants.

11. Other

- The venue for the May 14, 2010 ECICC meeting will be in Chadron, Nebraska.
- Agenda items for the November 13, 2009, meeting were proposed, which included new Early Head Start programs (ARRA), FRIENDS retreat, Child Care Licensing, status update from the multi-agency committee.

With no other items to be discussed the Council adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Next meeting: November 13, 2009, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ ECICC Updates, August 28, 2009
- ✓ Table: Representation of Members on the Nebraska ECICC as Required in Federal and State Statutes, 2008-2009
- ✓ Minutes: ECICC Steering Committee, July 23, 2009
- ✓ Status Report: Nebraska Head Start-State Collaboration Office (HSSCO), June-July 2009
- ✓ Information sheet: Possible Early Childhood State Advisory Council Grant
- ✓ Update on Status of Proposed Child Care Regulations (Pat Urzedowski)
- ✓ Fact sheet: The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, House Education and Labor Committee, July 2009 (<http://edlabor.house.gov>)
- ✓ Fact sheet: The Early Learning Challenge Fund, July 2009 (<http://www.ed.gov>)
- ✓ Timeline: Kindergarten Work [NDE] Office of Early Childhood, July 2008 to July 2010
- ✓ Brochure: Early Childhood FRIENDS—Using the Teaching Pyramid to Support Social and Emotional Development