

**Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council  
May 9, 2014  
Grand Weaver Hotel  
Falls City, Nebraska**

**Council Members Present:** Laura Arp, Mike Adams, Lois Butler, Pam Dobrovolny, Melody Hobson, J. P. Holys, Sian Jones-Jobst, Joan Luebbers, Dawn Mollenkopf, Cathy Mohnike, Tammy Stevenson, Susan Strahm, Nicole Vint, Cristen Witte, Kathleen Zadina

**Council Members Absent:** Sue Adams, Carol Benson, Jennie Cole-Mossman, Barb Esch, Melinda Graham, Emily Kluver, Amy LaPointe, Carol McClain, Julie Mizner, Dawn Murphy, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Salene Ulrich

**Also in attendance:** *ECICC Staff:* Terry Rohren, facilitator, Holly Johnson, secretary; *Technical Assistants:* NDE-Pat Frost, Amy Bunnell; DHHS-Diane Lewis, Tiffany Mullison; ICFI-Mary Finney-Afrank; PTI Nebraska-Connie Shockley; First Five Nebraska-Becky Veak; NCFE-Lynne Brehm, Amy Bornemeier; Munroe-Meyer Institute – Mark Smith

**i. Committee Meetings**

The Family Leadership Team met in a working session beginning at 8:30 A.M. All other committees met in working sessions from 9:30 AM-10:30 AM before opening the Council meeting. The Full Council meeting convened at 10:30 AM.

**Welcome**

Pam Dobrovolny, chairperson of the ECICC, convened the meeting at 10:30 AM. A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available at the front table. Pam welcomed everyone and had all Council members, technical assistants and Council staff introduce themselves.

**ii. Committee Report Outs**

The ECICC committees were all provided with possible recommendations to include in the 2014 report to the Governor. Committees were to review the possible recommendations and prioritize those recommendations.

Possible Recommendations reviewed were:

<b>1. Sustain the current investment of \$4 million in 2015-2016 and \$5 million in 2016-2017 to school districts for birth to three grants through Sixpence.</b>
<b>2. Increase the number of early childhood professionals who utilize the Pyramid Model in early childhood programs in Nebraska.</b>
<b>3. Provide state funding for the regional early learning connection professional development system to expand professional development and technical assistance supports statewide.</b>
<b>4. Expand professional development and service provision using routines-based interviews for children from birth to age 3.</b>

5. Further examine the work being done by the P-16 initiative and strengthen the focus on integration of early childhood data into P-16.
6. Strengthen the Step Up to Quality program to incentivize early childhood programs efforts to improve quality.
7. Expand state support for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA scholarship program.
8. Increase state support for evidence-based home visitation programs in Nebraska
9. Create a toolkit and public information campaign that helps parents and the public better understand what high quality early childhood programs look like.
10. Explore opportunities for further integration of information for parents and families into a single user-friendly website that is easy to read and easy to navigate.
11. Explore the feasibility and costs necessary to train and provide child care health consultants throughout Nebraska's district health offices.
12. Strengthen the early childhood professional development system to include training in critical topic areas: infant-toddler, the pyramid model, inclusion, home visitation, and curriculum and assessment.

### **Family Leadership Team**

Tammy Stevenson reported that the Family Leadership Team had a parent retreat a few weeks ago in Lincoln. The retreat was built from last fall's retreat.

The Family Leadership Team chose the following recommendations as priority recommendations for the 2014 Report to the Governor:

1. Four
2. Nine & ten – combine
3. Twelve

### **Professional Development and Workforce Committee**

The Professional Development and Workforce Committee chose the following recommendations as priority recommendations for the 2014 Report to the Governor:

1. Two – with wording changed, adding to utilize the model to engage...relationships.
2. Four – as is.
3. Nine & ten – combine.
4. Twelve – adding home visitation, add cultural competence.

### **Family Actions Matter Everyday (FAME)**

The Family Actions Matter Everyday prioritized the following recommendations for the 2014 Report to the Governor:

1. Nine & ten – combine.
2. Twelve, three, seven, four & 2 – combine. Add language of “training and coaching”.

## **Early Childhood Services and Systems**

The Early Childhood Services and Systems committee prioritized the following recommendations for the 2014 Report to the Governor:

1. Five
2. Twelve, two, four & three – combine.
3. Nine & ten – combine.

## **Regulations and Standards Committee**

The Regulations and Standards committee prioritized the following recommendations for the 2014 Report to the Governor:

1. Twelve, two, three, four & nine – combine.
2. Six, seven & eleven – combine.
3. One & eight – combine.

The Council held a discussion after hearing all the prioritized recommendations by the committees. The council agreed that the 2014 recommendations should be a combination of the following recommendations:

1. Nine & ten combination.
2. Twelve.
3. Five with adding language.

Terry Rohren will take the notes from the discussion to combine the recommendations based upon the Council's discussion. The revised language and recommendations will be provided to First Five Nebraska to incorporate into the 2014 Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood.

Becky Veak noted that it's great that there is a lot of overlap between topics so that the message can be easily conveyed. Sian Jones-Jobst commented that two pieces that are part of our charge, medical and dental, are lacking in the recommendations. Foster care and child welfare is also missing.

Terry Rohren and First Five Nebraska will work to draft the 2014 Report to the Governor. The draft report will be provided to the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council for review at the August ECICC meeting. The report will then go to public hearing in October, and the final 2014 Report to the Governor will come before the Council for approval at the November ECICC meeting. .

### **A. Approval of Minutes of February 14, 2014 Meeting**

The minutes of the February 14, 2014 meeting had been provided to Council members prior to the meeting. It was noted a change needed to be made to the minutes. The information about a Facebook page for the PRTs is incorrect. It is actually a list serve. Pam asked for a motion from the Council to accept the minutes of the February 14, 2014 meeting with the amendment.

Tammy Stevenson made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Sian Jones-Jobst provided the second to the motion.

There was no discussion. The motion passed by roll call vote: 15-voted yes, 0-voted no, 0-abstained.

*Voting Yes:* Laura Arp, Mike Adams, Lois Butler, Pam Dobrovolny, Melody Hobson, J. P. Holys, Sian Jones-Jobst, Joan Luebbers, Dawn Mollenkopf, Cathy Mohnike, Tammy Stevenson, Susan Strahm, Nicole Vint, Cristen Witte, Kathleen Zadina

**A panel of local providers from the Falls City region of the state presented to the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council. The panelists responded to a set of questions that had been sent to them prior to today's meeting.**

J.P. Holy's began the panel by thanking them all for coming and having them introduce themselves. The panel included Tim Heckinlively, Stacey Vitosh, Rose Peterson, Lorri Harring, Mary Jane Gist, Kathy Martin and Kristy Odanna.

Question One: What has been your greatest accomplishment?

- Having a program in Falls City
- Getting the grant
- GOLD has academically and socially improved kids. They were able to serve 43 kids with IEPs.
- Implementing routine space assessment
- Created an Early Childhood Leadership team
- Serving 146 kids in the southeastern Nebraska area
- Staff development
- Programs working together

Question Two: What has been the greatest challenge you faced to provide Early Childhood services?

- Public awareness
- Parents coming to meetings
- So much to do – not enough time
- CAPTA referrals
- Differences between service models
- Families feel lost after losing coordination
- Helping families prepare for transition
- Parent involvement
- Reaching the kids they don't even know about

Question Three: What 1 or 2 policy changes could improve services for children from birth through age eight?

- Keep the money coming
- Hard for families to get on Medicaid Access Nebraska – not user friendly
- Having a unified system for referrals so no one is missed
- Collaboration
- Seems to be a disconnect with Federal and State on Early Childhood policy.

Question Four: What gaps or barriers do you see in trying to serve children birth through age eight?

- The kids who need the most help are the ones they are not able to reach.
- Parents won't let them in since it's voluntary
- Parents jump state lines when there is a problem. Would like to be able to communicate across state lines.
- A lot of children that could benefit from respite but do not qualify
- Finding quality respite care

Question Five: How do you try to resolve the gap or barrier?

- Checklist and communication
- Get one of the doctor's to sit on the planning region team
- Put information in hospitals and doctor's offices
- Visit with Physician Assistants

Questions Six: What's one thing you want the ECICC to know about the work you do in Early Childhood?

- Cheerleader for Sixpence
- Not just here for the children – here for the families
- PRT continues to find ways to support families
- PRT in area needs more district involvement

### **Working Lunch**

Korey and Alysia Schawang gave their family story during our lunch.

### **Public Comment**

No public comment.

## **New Funding for Early Childhood Grant Program & New Grants to School Districts for Pre-K Programs**

Melody Hobson provided an update on legislations that passed during the 2014 legislative session. An appropriation bill passed that increased funding to the early childhood grant program by about three million dollars. The three million dollars will provide grants to 3 - 4 year olds in public schools. The funding can be allocated either this year or next year. The Office of Early Childhood recommended 19 grant applications be approved at the May State Board of Education meeting. Some of the new grant funding will assist districts in going from part day to full day programs or increasing the number of classrooms available to serve 3 and 4 year olds.

### **Step Up to Quality Update**

Melody Hobson and Eleanor Shirley gave an update regarding Step Up to Quality. Eleanor indicated that the Step Up to Quality program will launch on July 1, 2014. Step Up to Quality is a program that is intended to help child care and early childhood education programs improve quality. There will be a five-step rating that programs received based upon meeting various quality indicators at each step. The program will be primarily voluntary for most child care and early childhood programs. Programs that receive \$500,000 or more in child care subsidy will be required to participate in year one. Programs that receive \$250,000 or more in child care subsidy will be required to participate in year two. Programs will receive training supports, scholarships for staff to return to school, and coaching supports as they work to improve quality. As programs move up the steps of quality they become eligible for quality incentive bonuses, or higher rates of reimbursement from child care subsidy. Nebraska is the 41<sup>st</sup> state in the country that has adopted a QRIS.

Eleanor asked Terry Rohren to provide a little information about the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System. The record system will allow programs to enter information about the number of children enrolled, the rates they charge, the ages of children served, and some of the benefits offered to staff. For professionals the record system will allow them to have a central location to keep their education, training, and credentials. Nebraska benefits by having better data that describes the early childhood services and professionals in Nebraska.

### **Part C State Systemic Improvement Plan**

Amy Bunnell informed the council about the Individual's with Disabilities Education Act Part C State Systemic Improvement Plan. The federal government is requiring all states to establish a focus and goals for improving Part C services in the state. Nebraska is in the process of developing the State Systemic Improvement Plan. The process involves three phases. During Phase 1 states examine their current Part C data and infrastructure. Phase 2 states establish their focus and goals based upon the data and roll the improvement plan out. During Phase 3 states evaluate the impact that their goals and action plan have had on improving Part C services. Part C is moving toward improving implementation of Routines Based Interview (RBI) to improve child outcomes and family engagement in Part C services. Part C will provide more federal dollars and state resources toward implementation of Routines-Based Interviews.

## **Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership Grants**

Joan Luebbbers, Lois Butler and Amy Bornemeier presented information to the council regarding the new federal Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership grants program. The Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership Grants are intended to improve the quality of infant and toddler care across the nation. Local providers, including school districts, can apply for these Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership Grants. Applicants will be required to have a minimum of 75 infants and toddlers in the program in order to apply for the grants. Joan indicated that a webinar is now posted online with more information about applying for the grant. Federal Head Start and Early Head Start programs must served children living in poverty.

## **Agenda Items for August 2014 Meeting**

- 2014 Report to the Governor
- Oral Health Advisory Panel
- Medicaid

The meeting of the ECICC adjourned at 3:00 PM. Council members, technical assistants and staff walked over to the Falls City Sixpence for a tour.

### *Handouts:*

May 9, 2014 ECICC Meeting Agenda

Overview of the May 9, 2014 ECICC Meeting Agenda

Minutes of the April 7, 2014 ECICC Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes of the February 14, 2014 ECICC Meeting

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships (provided by Joan Luebbbers, Lois Butler & Amy Bornemeier)

Children Age 0-5 At Risk of Failing in School: 2008 – 2012 (Joan Luebbbers)

Nebraska Step Up to Quality overview (Eleanor Shirley)

Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council Possible Recommendations