

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) November 13, 2009

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

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

The Cornhusker Hotel, Lancaster Rooms 1-2-3; Lincoln, Nebraska

The Family Leadership Team, the Gaps and Barriers Committee, and the Legislative and Communications Committee met in working sessions beginning at 8:00 a.m. before the 11:00 a.m. opening of the regular Council meeting.

Ruth Miller, chair, opened the meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council at 11:00 a.m. on November 13, 2009 at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska. Ruth noted the posting of a copy of the Open Meetings Act. Those in attendance made self introductions.

Members present: A.Kathryn Anderson, Sarah Briggs, Pam Dobrovolny, Eric Dunning, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Laura Good Buffalo, Cheryl Hammond, Melody Hobson, Eleanor Kirkland, Susan McWilliams, Michelle Merrill, Ruth Miller, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Amy Pair, Janet Staehr, Leisha Suckstorf, Joyce Thomas, Carey Winkler, and Linda Zinke.

Members absent: Maya Chilese, Chris Hanus, Jane Happe, Sara Johnson, Carol McClain, Nancy Montgomery, Carrie Rasmussen, Stephanie Rau, Todd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, and Deb Ross.

Also in attendance: *ECICC Staff:* Terry Rohren, facilitator; Susan Dahm, secretary; Martha Gadberry, facilitator, Gaps and Barriers Committee; *Technical Assistants:* National Child Care Information Center–Rae Anderson; Administration for Children and Families, PTI-Nebraska–Connie Shockley; Munroe Meyer Institute –Mark Smith; NDHHS–Amy Bunnell, Shirley Pickens-White, Pat Urzedowski; NDE–Pat Frost, Joan Luebbers, Carol Puffer; *Guests:* Beaky Veak, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.

MEETING AGENDA:

1. Opening and Announcements:

i. Approval of minutes

Motion, Laura Good Buffalo; seconded, Janet Staehr: To approve the ECICC minutes of August 28, 2009, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet. There was no discussion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions.

ii. Updates

- New members: Sarah Briggs, Pam Dobrovolny, and Cheryl Hammond were recognized.
- Notice and information was given about changes in the State reimbursement process that will affect ECICC members.
- Notice was given of the address change to the ECICC website. The new address is: <http://www.education.ne.gov/ecicc/>

2. Reports from Working Sessions

a. Family Leadership Team

- Tammy Mittelstaedt reported that the Family Leadership Team had reviewed proposed revisions to the charter of the Gaps and Barriers Committee and were happy with the proposed revisions.
- A new focus of the Family Leadership Team will be way to promote parent involvement with local Planning Region Teams (PRTs). Heather Gill spoke to them about strategies to support involvement of parent representatives that have been successful in ESU 15. The

team also is discussing the possibility of supporting a PRT/parent retreat that would include training from Munroe-Meyers. Amy Bunnell noted that this activity would have to be decided by the Co-Leads if funding support from the state was required.

- Mark Smith and Connie Shockley, who are family partners with the Co-Leads, have been asked to make a presentation along with four other states at the annual Part C conference in Washington, DC, on December 9, 2009. They will work with the Co-Leads in developing this presentation.

b. Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC)

- Heather Gill, newly appointed chairperson of the GBC, reported on the proposed revisions to the GBC charter, which comprised the majority of the time during the GBC meeting. She explained the reasons for the proposed revisions in the committee's purpose, scope, and definitions in the charter. The GBC will ask for approval of the revised charter at the next ECICC meeting. The proposed revisions, as agreed by the GBC, will be provided to ECICC members in the next pre-meeting packet.
- Heather brought the GBC recommendation that the ECICC chair, Ruth Miller, sign the certification form for the Part C Annual Performance Report (APR), due February 1, 2010, as required by OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs).
 - *Motion*, Carol Fichter; second Laura Good Buffalo: that the ECICC give approval to chairperson, Ruth Miller, to sign the Annual Report Certification that the ECICC is using Nebraska's 2008 Part C APR in lieu of submitting the ECICC's own annual report [to OSEP]. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote; there were no abstentions.

c. Legislative and Communications Committee (LCC)

- Terry Rohren reported on the LCC meeting held before the opening of the regular Council meeting. Terry announced that Jane Happe was recently appointed chair of the committee. In their meeting, the committee discussed implications to early childhood that might be impacted by the projected state budget shortfall and issues that might be addressed in the special session of the State Legislature.
- Terry briefly reviewed the variety of legislation affecting early childhood that the LCC will track in the next legislative session. These include funding for kindergarten, eligibility for child care subsidy, eligibility for the Katie Beckett waiver program, and mental health services for young children. The LCC suggested that early childhood mental health services might be an issue for the Gaps and Barriers Committee.
- Terry also updated the group on the Early Learning Challenge Fund and the considerations about match that is required from the state and whether Nebraska will be able to meet those requirements.

d. Early Childhood Systems Team

Amy Pair and Eleanor Kirkland are serving as co-chairs for the newly formed Early Childhood Systems Team. The EC Systems Team is being formed to work across agencies and organizations to support decisions about early childhood systems planning. ECICC members are represented on the EC Systems Team, which will also include individuals outside of ECICC. Eleanor distributed copies of a draft charter in which the relationship of the EC Systems Team to ECICC is outlined in the scope. Council members asked questions and provided input on the draft charter. The charter will be updated and presented to the Council again at the February 12, 2010 meeting for approval.

3. Family Story: Helping Babies from the Bench

During the Council working lunch, Amy Bunnell provided a handout and presented a video illustrating the work of the Helping Babies from the Bench program. The program was started in Nebraska by Judge Johnson of Douglas County. Amy Bunnell and Joan Luebbers are working with the program to provide information to personnel in the court and justice system about services available to families of infants and toddlers through Part C (infants and toddlers with disabilities) and CAPTA (Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act). The Nebraska Helping Babies from the Bench program is entering a second phase that will implement additional training for court and justice system personnel on issues related to young children's mental health and development. The Co-Leads are designating some ARRA funds to support the program. Amy noted that currently Nebraska has no source to fund mental health services for children under 5 years old.

4. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

5. Child Care Licensing Update

Pat Urzedowski, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), provided a handout listing changes and briefly reviewed proposed changes in the Child Care Licensing Regulations. She informed the Council on the process of approval and the required public hearings, which she hoped would be completed by February, 2010. Pat answered questions and responded to comments from meeting participants.

6. Early Childhood Advisory Council Grant Application

Melody Hobson and Eleanor Kirkland presented an overview on the Early Childhood Advisory Council Grant application. The federal grant would provide \$500,000 for the state's early childhood council, but requires a state match of \$1.1 million. The Governor's Office has approved moving forward to identify eligible match. Melody noted that they are trying to identify "clean" match, i.e., funding sources that are not duplicated as match for other purposes. Eligible match may come from Head Start grantees and school districts as well as state agencies. Melody is positive about the ability to do so, but the process demands critical detail. Melody and Eleanor asked members to inform them of other areas of potential match, for example, participation in the Council or the grant writing may be included as match if it is not federally funded. Next steps will be to determine priorities for a proposal and designate a grant committee of ECICC members and others to coordinate, write, and submit the application. The application deadline is August 1, 2010.

7. Prioritizing Areas for Early Childhood Advisory Council Grant*

Terry Rohren provided a list of eight topics and outlined the process for members to indicate their preferences for priorities that would become the focus areas of the Early Childhood Advisory Council grant application (discussed above). Members each chose two items from the list; the three topics receiving the highest numbers were:

- Develop a unified early childhood data system.
- Promote school readiness for children from birth through school entry.
- Further enhance existing early childhood education and development programs and services.

Volunteers for writing team: Lynne Brehm, Heather Gill, Melody Hobson, Eleanor Kirkland, Ruth Miller, and Terry Rohren.

* See Chart Notes, Attachment 1–page 5

8. Discussion and Report from Small Groups*

Meeting participants broke into three groups to discuss their perceptions of what currently exists and what they would like to see happen. Each group summarized their discussion to the Council; some expressed desire to continue working on the topic.

- *Develop a unified early childhood data system.*
Issues: lack of longitudinal data from early childhood into the school years; the need for centralization and compatibility among data systems; how to collect data to avoid duplication; how data drives decision making; the availability of data in real time; and the infrastructure necessary to build a system. Volunteers: Eleanor Kirkland, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Leisha Suckstorf, and Lynne Brehm.
- *Promote school readiness for children from birth through school entry.*
Issues: preparing families, readiness of schools, and related services; need to improve access across the board (eligibility for programs for underserved children); community resources; kindergarten entrance age; early evaluation practices; models to support transitions. Volunteers: Persons interested in pursuing this topic should let Terry Rohren know.
- *Further enhance existing early childhood education and development programs and services.*
Issues: Environmental rating scales; funding and sustainability; improving child care quality for readiness to learn; identifying and implementing mental health supports; expanding family crisis line; dissemination of available information; providing therapy through Telehealth. Volunteers: Melody Hobson, Ruth Miller.

* See Chart Notes, Attachment 1–page 5

9. Planning Ahead

Council proposed agenda items for the next meeting on February 12, 2010 and/or future meetings, which included: charters for the Gaps and Barriers Committee and the Early Childhood Systems Team; updates on match for the grant, hearings on child care licensing, the kindergarten position statement, and Rule 11; Head Start grantees expansion under ARRA and other competitive funding (to be covered in HSSCO report); and, implications of proposed changes in DHHS for privatization of services.

10. Adjournment

Motion, Janet Staehr; second, Laura Good Buffalo: to adjourn the meeting.
The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Next meeting: February 12, 2010, 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE.

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ ECICC Notes and Updates, November 13, 2009
- ✓ Roster: ECICC Membership 2009-2010 (as of 11/13/09)
- ✓ Minutes: ECICC Steering Committee, October 13, 2009
- ✓ Minutes: ECICC Gaps and Barriers Committee, August 28, 2009
- ✓ Report: Head Start State Collaboration Office, October-November 2009
- ✓ Update pages: “Laws, Statutes & Regulations supporting the Work of ECICC” – index page, pages 29/30 and page 37.
- ✓ Draft: Early Childhood System Team–draft charter (November 13, 2009)
- ✓ Handout: “Helping Babies from the Bench–Using the Science of Early Childhood Development In Court”
- ✓ Handout: “Proposed Child Care Regulations” (November 13, 2009)
- ✓ Handout: List of priority topics for the Early Childhood Advisory Committee grant application.

Attachment 1**CHART NOTES
November 13, 2009****Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council
Early Childhood Advisory Council Grant
– Priority Setting and Discussion –**

Priority Areas	Number of ECICC Members Selecting
Increase participation in child care and early education especially by underrepresented populations.	5
Develop a unified early childhood data system.	6
Further develop an early childhood professional development system.	3
Improve state early learning standards and develop high-quality early learning standards.	1
Improve institutes of higher education efforts to develop early childhood educators.	4
Promote school readiness for children from birth through school entry.	8
Further support professional development, recruitment of people to the early childhood field, and retention of those teachers in the early childhood field.	5
Further enhance existing early childhood education and development programs and services.	6

Top Three Priorities for Discussion Groups

- Promote school readiness for children from birth through school entry.
- Further enhance existing early childhood education and development programs and services.
- Develop a unified early childhood data system.

Volunteers for writing team include: Melody Hobson, Ruth Miller, Terry Rohren, Heather Gill, Eleanor Kirkland, and Lynne Brehm.

Discussion from Small Groups**■ Promote school readiness for children from birth through school entry**

What is currently in place related to promoting school readiness for children from birth through school entry?

- NDE Statement on School Readiness-Kindergarten Position Statement
- Early Childhood Education Grants for three and four-year olds
- Early Learning Guidelines
- Early Childhood Education Endowment Grants for children birth-age three
- Parent Educational Support-Born Learning, United Way
- Child Care Subsidy
- Early Childhood Professional Development Partnerships/Regional Training Coalitions/ECTC
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- Part C and Part B Services including 619 Services
- PBIS/FRIENDS/CSSEFEL
- Library programs-Literacy programs

- Mental health consultation with child care programs

What needs to be developed to ensure school readiness?

- Make sure that schools and families are ready for children to come to school.
- Help for at-risk and underserved children who are struggling with behavioral (social and emotional) issues.
- Reaching out to families that are English language learners.
- Developing parent support for those children not currently served through early intervention or Head Start.
- Still many children who do not have access to high quality preschool programs.
- Develop more extensive nature education programs and engage cities as partners.
- Some low-middle income families are the ones who are not able to afford the costs of high quality early childhood programs so they must put their children in programs with undetermined quality.
- Develop more co-training bringing the full range of training for early childhood professionals to address children from birth to age eight.
- There are variations in expectations for what school readiness means from one school district to another school district.
- There is inconsistency in transition activities depending on what preschool program you participate in. (Head Start and Early Head Start could help inform how we handle transitions for children moving into kindergarten.)
- Better communicate expectations for school readiness to parents. (Maybe we need to register kids for kindergarten at age 4 and provide an orientation for parents on what is expected for school readiness.)
- Open Houses are not necessarily helping parents and children transition into school.
- Preparing children and parents for school should involve a fun time for families. (Time for parents and children to be together and play together at school.)
- Need to further develop the idea of “community schools”—where schools are seen as a resource hub for services for children and families.
- Preschool is still seen in school districts as something that should be separate from “school events”. Need to better integrate preschool into school activities.
- We still have schools that are putting together a long school supply list and having children pay for those schools supplies despite the state law that requires school districts to provide those supplies.
- There are issues related to age cut-off dates for assessment instruments.
- Toys in children programs need to be developmentally appropriate.
- There continues to be inequality in preparation for preschool children. (There are times when a six year old might have attended a fabulous preschool (he enters school developmentally ahead and academically ahead of other children who didn’t get that experience.)
- How do we make sure everyone is ready for school?
- Parents should be supported in their decisions for when their children start school. We should listen to parents.
- We need to create more opportunities for children to become school ready.
- There need to be more before and after school supports to help children become ready for school.
- Offer more all day plus everyday early childhood education programs.
- Stop offering two years of kindergarten based upon testing conducted as they enter kindergarten.

- We need to ensure that children who are supported through child care subsidy are participating in high quality programs. Currently we have no idea of the variations in quality for those programs who receive child care subsidy payments.
- There are serious social and emotional issues for children under the age of five. Student teachers are in classrooms with children that are very physically aggressive (i.e. throwing things, hitting, etc. Kindergartners are also running away from school).

■ Enhance Early Childhood Programs and Services

What is currently in place to enhance early childhood programs and services?

- Funds from early childhood education grants, state aid and the early childhood education endowment.
- Concerns that there are no new dollars for services.
- We have information on the quality of early childhood environments through the Environment Rating Scales.
- We have information on child outcomes for those children assessed through Results Matter.
- Need to improve child care quality so children are ready to learn when they come to school.

What needs to be developed to enhance early childhood programs and services?

- Need to expand FRIENDS demonstration projects—Needs to be expanded. Do we need to develop a training of trainers to build capacity?
 - Scale up trainings
 - Develop a pool of substitutes that can work in programs while they go to training. Pay the substitutes while the early childhood providers go to training.
 - Create a hotline for providers to call that provides them help in working with children with behavioral problems.
 - Develop a network of mental health coaches.
 - Train coaches.
 - Connect a network of mental health professionals to the hotline.
 - Finding a mental health provider for toddlers in rural areas is difficult.
- Need proper training and endorsement of early childhood education providers including teachers and child care providers.
- Develop CD's with training programs so that training is available at any time. Offer more webinars and develop a feedback system where you can check to make sure training participants understand what is being presented. (Move away from training events where travel is required.)
- Offer more evening classes.
- Provide training by closing child care center for the day and bringing the trainer into the program so that entire center staff is trained at the same time.

■ Develop a Unified Early Childhood Data System

What do we know is currently in place for an early childhood data system?

- Current data system is fragmented.
- Data system is not centralized and there is no communication between systems.
- Access to data is limited.
- Lots of systems currently (Head Start, school data systems, service coordination system) each system cannot be accessed by others.
- Different funding streams have lots of information but so what? What does it tell us? Is it prospective and does it contribute information that informs child outcomes? Does it tell us whether the interventions that people are using are effective?

- Information may not follow the child as they grow and are served across systems. (Examples: immunization information).
- Do we have longitudinal data currently?
- There is not child specific data in some systems.

What needs to be put in place to create an early childhood data system?

- Capacity to aggregate data for on-line access (centralized reports—“go to” points).
- Data system tied together (such as vital statistics and newborn hearing screening).
- Need to create unique identifier for child or student.
- Medical data (ex. Genetic disorders) and education.
- Data should be used to drive decisions (early childhood to school) reports that connect to progress over time.
- Eliminate duplication of survey or other data collection efforts.
- Need for coordination of collection and reporting. Need state level data decision-making. (We currently have an Early Childhood Data Coalition that is emerging, doing some data mapping; now have an MOU, preparing guidelines, agreements, etc.)
- Real time data available as is possible.
- Ability to aggregate, disaggregate, etc. ability to query, sort, etc.
- Thoughtful consideration of what we need.
- Technical assistance.
- Look at the Pelican (PA)