

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

May 13, 2011

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

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

The Lied Lodge and Conference Center; Nebraska City, Nebraska

Heather Gill, chair, opened the meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council. on May 13, 2011 at the Lied Lodge and Conference Center in Nebraska City, Nebraska. The Open Meetings Act was posted and addressed. Heather welcomed the members and facilitated introductions. Heather thanked all the committees for the work they do before, after, and during meetings.

Members present: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler, Annie Bruns, Pam Dobrovolny, , Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, J.P. Holys, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Carol McClain, Julie Middendorf, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Leisha Suckstorf, and Salene Ulrich.

Members absent: Eric Dunning, Heather Krieger, Senator Pete Pirsch, Todd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Deanna Schulze, Joyce Thomas, Cristen Witte, and Linda Zinke

Also in attendance: ECICC Staff: Terry Rohren, facilitator; *Technical Assistants:* National Child Care Information Center–Rae Anderson; Administration for Children and Families, HHS– Betty Lammle, Pat Brown and Les Thierolf; Head Start State-based Training and Technical Assistance–Mary Finney-Afrank; PTI-Nebraska–Connie Shockley; Munroe Meyer Institute –Mark Smith; NDHHS–Lynne Brehm, Amy Bunnell, Paula Eurek, Shirley Pickens-White; NDE–Pat Frost

Presenters: Jim Adams, Ellen Cair, Joan Fedoris, Sally Giittinger, and Lisa Othmer.

Working sessions met from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. before the opening of the regular Council meeting.

MEETING AGENDA:

Eleanor Kirkland provided the minutes of this meeting.

1. Opening and Announcements:

i. Approval of minutes

Motion, J.P Holys; seconded, Jane Happe: To approve the ECICC minutes of February 11, 2011, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet.

The motion as passed 20-0 by roll-call vote; there were no objections or abstentions.

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler, Annie Bruns, Pam Dobrovolny, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, J.P. Holys, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Carol McClain, Julie Middendorf, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Leisha Suckstorf, Salene Ulrich

Absent: Sue Adams, Eric Dunning, Heather Krieger, Senator Pete Pirsch, Rodd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Deanna Schulze, Carolyn Thiele, Joyce Thomas, Cristen Witte, and Linda Zinke.

ii. Election of Vice-Chairperson

Pam Dobrovolny was elected vice-chairperson of the ECICC by a majority vote through written ballot of nominees. Nineteen ballots were cast with votes recorded as follows:

Pam Dobrovolny–8, Jane Happe–7, Deb Ross–2, Christy Pelton–2.

2. Overview of the Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Who Have Visual Impairments

Guest, Sally Giittinger, Administrator for Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired (NCECBVI), and Jim Adams, Outreach Director, presented an overview of the NCECBVI. A brochure was distributed to all members. Sally invited members to stop in

when in Nebraska City to tour their facility. The Center has been in Nebraska City since 1875. The Center contracted Educational Service Unit 4 to take care of hiring staff and personnel issues. There is no other school for the blind in the country that has a formal partnership and collaboration with and ESU and State Department of Education. A new plan opened up the door for more services statewide.

The Instructional Resource Center is housed within the Center—a statewide lending library provides numerous resources for all Nebraskans. These materials can go out to children and families at no cost. The resource center provides a huge cost savings to school districts as well. Sally indicated if a child is verified, they should be registered with the American Printing House for the Blind.

Over 800 children are served out of the Center. The Center houses many items and resources for children who may be visually impaired. The school at the Center provides day services and/or residential services—children range from 5 to age 21. Some have severe disabilities and others are highly intelligent without cognitive delays. The Center averages an enrollment of 20 students, with some kids moving out and others moving in throughout the year. Student and family support programs are also provided – the Braille Challenge, is an international program that Jim Adams coordinates. The center hosts a family weekend in the summer for children birth – age 21. Families and kids come in for the entire experience. The Center tries to give parents networking opportunities. Camps, speakers, other activities are also available for family involvement and participation. Assessment and consultation services are also available. Sally and Jim travel out to support IEP and IFSP team meetings to help determine the learning medium most appropriate for the child. Low vision clinics are offered each year by a pediatric ophthalmologist. Consultation services have evolved over the years to provide initial assessment and ongoing technical assistance to children around the state. Schools must have a teacher who is certified for serving verified visually impaired learners as part of the IEP/IFSP Team meetings if the child is verified for visual impairments or blindness.

The Center provides professional development in partnership with the University of Nebraska and to help recruit teachers. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Center work closely together. The center offers professional development opportunities and a statewide fall conference essentially targeted to vision teachers. Children must have a verification to receive the services provided by the Center.

3. Listening Session

The ECICC includes a panel of local early childhood providers as part of its May traveling meeting. The panel provides the Council and opportunity to hear from local providers some of the successes and challenges people experience in trying to provide services to families. Terry indicated to Council members that the Listening Session Questions provided to the panelists were in their meeting packets. Panelists for the listening session were: Jim Adams, Ellen Cain, Susan Johnson, and Lisa Othmer.

a. Lisa Othmer—preschool teacher at Johnson County Public Schools

Lisa indicated that several schools offer preschool within the public school system. This program does not charge tuition as some districts may do. The program Lisa works with has 55 preschoolers in the program with 3 sessions (18 to 20 children; one teacher and one para-educator). The biggest challenge in offering early childhood services through the school districts is the financial aspect of the program. In the coming school year the school district will likely have to charge tuition of \$165/semester to offset budget constraints. The district does provide transportation for preschoolers and will need to charge a transportation fee. The district struggles with finding the qualified para-educators. Early childhood programs in the district struggle to meet the needs across the age range of children, some of whom are turning 3 in June

and others turning 5 in November or December. Administration within the district have other budget constraints and priorities that do impact adding staff to the classroom to meet the range of children's needs. Lisa indicated that state aid is not available for 3 year old children and this district does serve more than 50% of three-year old children. The district would like financial incentives to continue to serve them. Rule 11 requires that districts offer a minimum of 450 hours in the public school-administered early childhood program. This requirement can also be a challenge, especially with services for younger children. Mental health services are needed for children across the birth-age 8 age span. The ability to consult with a mental health therapist would be very helpful to develop social-emotional plans (i.e., approx. 5% of children have these significant needs). Parents may not know what to do and the program tries to meet the needs. Lisa would like to have a mental health consultant at least 2 hours a month to help the child be more focused on their academic goals as they move into Kindergarten and meet the first grade standards. Lisa finds the program extremely rewarding and does not like the idea that financial constraints might compromise the continuation of these important services.

b. Jim Adams—coordinator statewide services, Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Jim provided an early childhood vision workshop and would be happy to provide that workshop to other areas of the state. The purpose of the workshop was to help providers identify the red flags for children with visual impairments. Often the consultation with regard to one child in an early childhood setting may provide opportunities to observe and refer other children in that setting. The Nebraska Center for Children with Vision Impairments indicated one of the greatest challenges they face is when a child moves from one school district to another school district, there can be a long time period where a gap in services occurs – sometimes as long as a year. In the western part of the state a referral may come in without any contact information, which makes it very difficult for the Center to make the connections with children and families who really need help. The Center only operates during the school year. This can create a gap in services for children and families. There are opportunities to contract with teachers during the summer; for example, a teacher directory is developed and updated in the summer and the Center can find teachers that may be able to help children during the summer. Working with the local teachers is crucial. A child's brain is always developing and vision occurs in the brain so the experiences a child has determines how effective the child will be able to manipulate and process that information, so ongoing stimulation to support good vision is important.

c. Susan Johnson—Southeast Nebraska Community Action, Early Childhood Coordinator, youth mentoring, and foster parent program

Head Start programs in Southeast Nebraska have implemented the CLASS tool in the classrooms. Three staff along with Susan are certified to conduct CLASS observations. The Head Start programs in Southeast Nebraska have enrolled, supported and monitored five teachers as they worked toward their bachelors in early childhood education. Susan is also CDA (Child Development Associate) advisor and has helped eight staff receive their CDA this year. In the past two years, teachers were being training to teach young children sign language. Now that staff can use Spanish, English, and sign language training, children are more able to express themselves through one of the various languages. The state-funded preschools serving four-year olds has created some hardships in enrollment competition with the Head Start program. There are challenges in utilizing state and federal funding effectively to serve low income children. At times there can be competition between Head Start and school districts. Keeping partnerships working can be difficult. Head Start programs are sometimes struggling to meet the 45-day deadline for getting children enrolled in special services. It is sometimes difficult to get all of the assessments and evaluations completed in that time frame.

d. Ellen Cain–Co-chair of Region IV Planning Region Team

The Planning Region Team is supporting the early intervention team in Routines-Based Interviewing (RBI) approach. They have developed a “script” for staff that answers the phone to facilitate the referral as it comes in. Team self-assessment is completed and in August the team will be participating in additional training in this approach. The greatest accomplishment this year is that more parents have joined the Planning Region Team. The greatest challenge the Planning Region Team is experiencing meeting the requirements of CAPTA. The services coordinators struggle to get the correct contact information on the referral so that they can take appropriate steps to follow through. The Planning Region Team sometimes finds it difficult to get the families to follow through with help that is offered. The Planning Region team struggles to have DHHS representatives attend the meetings. Services coordinators spend time supporting parents as they work to access waivers; this can take a great deal of time. Planning Region Teams and services coordinators are finding it increasingly difficult to determine who the contact is for children that are wards of the state. There continues to be gaps in accessing respite services for families, especially for families who have children with significant health or medical needs. Finding mental health services for children is difficult. More training is being offered to address children’s mental health. Some mental health professionals are coming to Nebraska City but would like to explore their availability in other areas of southeast Nebraska. The Planning Region Team continues to look for specific ways to help in the social-emotional development arena and are working hard to promote best practices in the region.

Questions from the Council for panelists:

- Shirley Pickens White asked Ellen to clarify issues regarding the CAPTA referrals. While the form is standard for all referrals, what information is missing? Ellen indicated that the problem is mostly identifying who the contact person is for the referral. Sometimes the contact information for the family is inaccurate or missing altogether. Families who are transient do pose challenges and the protection safety workers may not have the most current information. Shirley also asked about obtaining DHHS representatives on the Team. Services Coordinators talk to DHHS offices and to workers there to help strengthen communication. The meetings with families work best in the evening after work hours and this may pose difficulties for the DHHS schedules.
- Eleanor Kirkland asked Susan Johnson to clarify comments regarding enrollment. Susan indicated that the four year olds are the ones that the districts want to serve. In SENCA centers, there are more 3 year old children being served so the Head Start programs struggle with the age-balance of children. Schools receive school aid for the 4 year old participation. Melody Hobson asked about the option of dually enrolling children. As long as the school district meets the Head Start Performance standards, then the children can be dually-enrolled. In collaboration sites, they do sometimes dually-enroll eligible children. J.P. Holys asked where the Head Start/School district collaboration sites in Southeast Nebraska are located. The locations Susan identified were Falls City, HTRS; District 29. Pam Dobrovolny asked about whether or not they have a partnership agreement and asked if the agreement specified enrollment issues, processes since schools have to submit an agreement each year. Head Start also has a MOU for providing the special education services. Julie asked about what dual-enrollment really looks like. Melody Hobson responded that the idea is that the most children are being served in the best way possible. In rural areas, logistics sometimes compromise access and it may also offer more fiscal stability. NDE wants to help programs to be more robust and the enrollment issues can be resolved in many communities.

4. Working Lunch (12:15 p.m.)

During the working lunch, a family story was provided by Joan Fedoris, Nebraska City. Joan shared about her experiences in accessing and navigating early childhood services for her adopted son.

5. Public Comment

- Betty Lammle, Regional Office, Administration for Children & Families, Child Care asked members to promote asset development for families with young children. Betty distributed a flyer in this regard as well as promotional materials for fatherhood initiative.
- Eleanor Kirkland distributed a one-page report that highlighted general changes in the scope of work and goals for Head Start-State Collaboration Offices.
- Leisha Suckstorf commented that she felt there should be a stronger voice of parents and that a parent should be in the position of vice-chair. Heather checked to see that all members received the ballot and notice of vice-chair ballot. Terry clarified that the ECICC By-laws indicate that any member of the Council (whether a parent or any other member) may serve as the vice-chairperson of the Council. Terry did indicate that most recently the vice-chairperson was a parent representative. She also indicated that the Steering Committee always has 3 parent members seated on the committee.

6. Reports from working Sessions

a. Family Leadership Team

Christy Pelton reported on behalf of the group. Family Leadership Team members expressed appreciation to be a part of the Council and glad to serve. Leisha indicated it is important for family members to offer their perspective. The Family Leadership Team discussed the Report to the Governor, the vice-chair position, and reviewed family issues pursuant to the Munroe-Meyer Leadership Team training. Munroe-Meyer has offered to provide a retreat for the Family Leadership Team.

b. Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC)

Pam Dobrovolny reported on behalf of the group. The committee discussed Head Start/Early Head Start enrollment and eligibility criteria. The committee discussed the need for parents to be equal partners in the IFSP/IEP development. The committee wants to keep this on the radar screen and see what the GBC can do to address this concern. The Transportation Task Force "next steps" would be to create a guidance and best practices document. Eleanor Kirkland and Lynne Brehm will reconvene the group to discuss this potential. Carol McClain and Amy Bunnell provided a brief Part C update. Federal regulations will be coming soon. They also shared numerous activities that have occurred through federal stimulus (ARRA) funds. Highlights from The Annual Performance Report were discussed. The Part C Co-Leads (NDE and DHHS) are preparing for the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) visit this fall.

c. Legislative and Communications Committee (LCC)

Terry Rohren and Jane Happe reported out on behalf of this committee.

- The LCC reviewed the bills that are updated as of May 9, 2011. The Council's priority bills to follow were highlighted. Many of the bills moving this session have to do with foster care and adoption related to best practices, e.g. adoption, adoptive families. LB464 requires DHHS to conduct a market rate survey for child care. The bill was amended, and amendment said that they would establish rates not less than 50% rate of the market rate survey. The amendment ensures that child care providers/subsidy rates would at least stay even. Signed on May 4. LB 468, regarding DHHS needing to promulgate rules related to Medicaid that they needed to have an impact report and clauses about co-payments, amendments, etc. This bill has passed and the DHHSt can establish co-payments without having to report those to the Legislature. LB601, Senator Campbell's bill, to establish quality measure in child care subsidy rates, will not go forward this session but will likely be reintroduced next session with some amendments. LB 575 – The Military Child

Education Opportunity Act ensures that children have secure educational services that are not held up when children transfer from one school district to another.

- The Executive Summary of the Governor's Report–Terry Rohren indicated that a draft of the Executive Summary was provided in the meeting packets. A few copies of the complete report, *The 2010 Strategic Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood*, were available at today's meeting as well as on the ECICC website. Draft talking points for the meeting with the governor to discuss the 2010 report were reviewed by the Legislative and Communications Committee today. A copy of the draft talking points were provided to all council members. The talking points will be revised based upon the input of the Legislative and Communications Committee. The LCC recommended that Heather Gill, Jane Happe, Leisha Suckstorf, and Mike Adams attend the meeting with the Governor.
- The U. S. House of Representatives has drafted their 2012 Budget plan called, "The Path to Prosperity" Terry provided the Council with a two-page handout from the Center for Budget and Public Policy regarding the Plan. Terry will also be sending out the link to the full plan. The LCC had some guests from federal ACF, Region VII Office. Pat Brown shared that federal agencies are doing much more collaboration at the federal level. Betty Lammle indicated that Region VII representing Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri – will be bringing state stakeholder together to formalize collaboration.

d. Early Childhood Systems Team (ECST)

Amy Bornemeier and Eleanor Kirkland, co-chairs, reported out on the last meeting of ECST.

- The Team reviewed the draft of the Report to the Governor and addressed activities in the State Advisory Council grant. Minutes of ECST are now posted on the ECICC website and meeting dates are included.
- The February ECICC invitation extended to family members to join ECST has not yet been acted upon by any of the family members although a representative from PTI-Nebraska is a member. The co-chairs of the Early Childhood Systems Team have agreed to meet with the Family Leadership Team at each ECICC meeting to keep them apprised of ECST activities and issues in order to garner family members' input.
- The ECST completed a process to prioritize eight recommendations to be included in the Governor's biennial report. Lastly, ECST revisited and affirmed that the Team's goals are incorporated and aligned in the Together for Kids & Families work plan as it is the adopted plan of ECICC.

7. Discuss Possible ECICC Retreat

Heather Gill introduced the idea of the ECICC having a retreat. Heather suggested the purpose of the retreat would be to discuss ways of improving Council member engagement around the goals and recommendations of the ECICC. She also thought it could give the Council a better understanding of the early childhood system work of state agencies and ways the Council can support that work. Heather provided a set of questions that the Council members might respond to as part of the retreat to improve the working committees of the council. Dr. Jones-Jobst asked why we would need an additional meeting to have a special retreat. Dr. Jones further inquired why a retreat would be different than a regular meeting. Heather would like it to be a facilitated semi-structured opportunity to allow for interactive dialogue among members and staff. Mark Smith suggested that the family Leadership Team could possibly add on a family retreat as a part of this proposed event. Carol McClain said that due to the Council meeting federal ICC requirements, there would have to be a formal meeting and that a retreat could not take the place of this. A retreat might provide less structured agenda/format in a relaxed atmosphere.

Motion, Pam Dobrovolny; seconded, Christy Pelton: That the ECICC host a retreat for members and technical assistants. The motion as passed 19-0 by roll-call vote; there were no objections or abstentions.

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler, Annie Bruns, Pam Dobrovolny, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, J.P. Holys, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Carol McClain, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Leisha Suckstorf, Salene Ulrich

Absent: Sue Adams, Eric Dunning, Heather Krieger, Julie Middendorf, Senator Pete Pirsch, Rodd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Deanna Schulze, Carolyn Thiele, Joyce Thomas, Cristen Witte, and Linda Zinke.

- In discussing dates for the retreat, it was noted that it could conflict with a Husker game if the retreat was held on the day after an ECICC meeting.
- Terry Rohren asked for a planning committee to address the retreat goals and objectives, location and arrangements. Carol McClain offered Part C funds to support facilitation. Eleanor suggested the funds from the State Advisory Council grant could also be redirected if ECICC wishes to use that funding source to support a retreat. The recommendation is that the Steering Committee serves as the Planning Group. A Doodle Poll will be sent out to select a date and time for convening the planning committee.

Motion: Melody Hobson; seconded, Leisha Suckstorf: That the Steering Committee serve as the planning group for the retreat. The motion was approved 19-0 by roll call vote:

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler, Annie Bruns, Pam Dobrovolny, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, J.P. Holys, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Carol McClain, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Leisha Suckstorf, Salene Ulrich

Absent: Sue Adams, Eric Dunning, Heather Krieger, Julie Middendorf, Senator Pete Pirsch, Rodd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Deanna Schulze, Carolyn Thiele, Joyce Thomas, Cristen Witte, and Linda Zinke

8. Report from Public Hearing of 2010 Strategic Report to the Governor on the Status and Vote on Final Approval for the Report

The public hearing was held and there was no comment on the report. In reading through the report, Mike Adams indicated that there is no mention of the Family Leadership Team. Response from Terry Rohren was that the By-laws do not speak to the fact that the Family Leadership Team is a chartered team. The only committee specified in the By-laws is the Steering Committee. The Council has opportunity to form new committees. The Family Leadership Team is not a standing committee but is mentioned in the minutes of the Council as a "committee." Terry Rohren raised the question about why this suggestion regarding Family Leadership Team was not brought up during the official ECICC public hearing and public comment period which was recently held. A notification was sent out to ECICC members and the broader public/constituent groups. Connie Shockley clarified that what was at issue was a requested correction to the Report. There was also a question about whether or not an additional public hearing would have to be held if there were changes made to it after the official public hearing had been held. The assumption according to procedures was that, "yes" there would likely need to be an additional public hearing which would push back the timeline. Eleanor Kirkland suggested that perhaps the Council approve the Governor's Report with an addition of the Family Leadership Team paragraph.

Motion: Carol McClain; seconded, Carol Fichter: That the Governor's Report include an additional paragraph describing the Family Leadership Team. Carol McClain offered a friendly amendment to have Terry work with the Family Leadership Team to draft the paragraph. Friendly amendment supported by Carol Fichter. The motion with the friendly amendment was approved 19-0 by roll call vote:

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler, Annie Bruns, Pam Dobrovolny, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, J.P. Holys, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst, Eleanor

Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Carol McClain, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Leisha Suckstorf, Salene Ulrich

Absent: Sue Adams, Eric Dunning, Heather Krieger, Julie Middendorf, Senator Pete Pirsch, Rodd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Deanna Schulze, Carolyn Thiele, Joyce Thomas, Cristen Witte, and Linda Zinke

Chairperson Heather Gill indicated that the Council needs to follow the *Roberts Rules of Order* and that members need to become more familiar with those to help with processing of meeting.

9. State Advisory Council Grant Update

- Eleanor Kirkland provided status update on the unified data priority. Data Summit will be held on June 1st in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Hotel. The position for addressing this priority is not yet able to be posted pending further details and decisions from the legislature regarding budgets. If we cannot post, we will move forward to enter into a contractual arrangement to address this.
- Amy Bornemeier, School Readiness Project Coordinator provided an update about the status of her work thus far. She is researching what “school readiness” initiatives and activities exist across the state and has been scheduling opportunities to meet with various groups and stakeholders to get input about what school readiness is and what it means. Amy provided a Power Point Presentation to define her work since February. There is a national definition that she offered for reflection and an ecological model with “ready children” at the center. She also indicated that a full service community school approach to help support ready schools and ready families is equally important as a focus on attributes specific to children entering kindergarten. Amy referred to the panel presentation earlier in the day that supported the notion that readiness issues cut across all ages, perspectives, and environments. Through Amy’s research, she has found there is a need for strategies to be used in schools to support ready children. Leadership in schools and programs is important to help successful processes and developing policies and activities that are meeting the school readiness needs from all perspectives, including those external to the school district’s work. Ready families also need supports to help their child to prepare for school. It’s cheaper to “pre-prepare rather than re-pair.” Successful community transitions is a process—an example was a recent Lincoln Public Schools visioning event in which the community was engaged to improve continuity for all children. Engaged families produce multiple benefits to positive child outcomes. Parents often feel like they have been inadequate in preparing their child for kindergarten when increased expectations for kindergarten classrooms may compromise developmentally appropriate practices. “Ready children” equals an approach that is comprehensive – more than academic preparedness; social-emotional factors are also equally important to cognitive development. The Center for Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning defines the link between social emotional development and school success.

Amy shared the questions she is using to solicit input about school readiness: What does school readiness mean to you? How do you support/promote school readiness? What do you do to help children transition? What would you like to do? What resources do you need?

Some anecdotes that parents are looking for information online to know whether or not their child is meeting the skills needed to enter kindergarten. Some states do have such ‘checklists.’ Amy proposed that there might be some resources developed with this project to help parents and teachers have better understanding about what and how services can be developed for preparing children for kindergarten, preparing families, and preparing teachers and school administrators. Many kindergarten teachers may feel caught in the middle. Jump Start model was suggested as a possible model to help with summer pre-kindergarten opportunities so that all children have the same option. Next Steps are to connect with other key stakeholders for advisory and decision making about final messaging and delivery. Amy may be reached at amy.bornemeier@nebraska.gov; 402-471-0348.

Question – how does this fit or contradict with what schools experience and decisions that are being made related to the kindergarten entrance age law? Melody clarified that kindergarten is an entitlement for kindergarten age eligible children although there are varying expectations across the state. Dr. Jones also shared her experience with kindergarten ready school exams – many parents are saying they do not plan to send their child to kindergarten. Next year, 2012-13 school year, the kindergarten entrance age will change to July 31st. Family groups that have been approached by Amy are those who have children with disabilities. There may be fears regarding the appropriate approaches needed for that child. J.P. Holys also said that by calling this “school readiness” is not a good way to engage families because they see that their child may not meet all the criteria in a ‘checklist.’ Feedback indicated that it would be good for Amy to also emphasize that schools need to be ready for the children. There was a lively discussion as it was apparent this is a hot topic with all members.

10. Affordable Care Act (ACA) Home Visitation – Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Update

Paula Eurek, Administrator, DHHS Lifespan Health Services, provided the Council with an update regarding Nebraska’s Affordable Care Act (ACA) Home Visiting Program. Paula requested concurrence from ECICC as required by the federal law. The work to develop this plan has been ongoing for over a year. The Act included a grant program for implementation of an evidence-based program for home visiting. Nebraska did indicate in July 2010 that they would apply and implement; the preliminary needs assessment was submitted shortly thereafter. In February, 2011, the federal guidance was sent out to states. Since then the state has been working feverishly on the state plan which includes the selected evidence-based model. The second part of the required needs assessment was also completed and decisions were then made on the targeted communities. The conclusion of this process identified Scottsbluff County as meeting the highest level of need. A meeting with community stakeholders was held to determine if this was feasible and if the county was ready to do this. There was strong agreement that the counties in western Nebraska work together. Therefore, it was determined that Box Butte and Morrill Counties would be included in the target area to maximize resources and implement to scale. There has also been work with the stakeholders to select the evidence-based model out of the 7 federally-approved models: Nurse Family partnership, Early Head Start, Healthy Families America, etc. The consensus was to choose Healthy Families America as the model. Work is ongoing to determine appropriate assessments, curricula, screening processes, enrollment and eligibility criteria. Paula will be in Scottsbluff next week to meet with stakeholders to further develop the state plan and proposed start up procedures. A memo of concurrence is required from the state advisory council, ECICC, for the funds as federally-defined. Paula asked that ECICC approve or grant permission to allow the Chair to contribute a signed letter of concurrence.

There was a discussion regarding the selection of the counties. Paula responded by identifying the amount of funding that was available, the number of families with potential need, bringing the model to scale and also with input from the community regarding their readiness to implement. The culture in the western part of the state is highly rural and distance between communities may be a barrier to access resources. For efficiency of implementation, it became clear that the 3 counties would be folded into this together. he required memo of concurrence is to support the home visiting state plan.

Motion: Eleanor Kirkland, seconded, Melody Hobson: That ECICC submit a signed memorandum of concurrence to support the ACA Home Visiting Program state plan.

- Further discussion ensued. Since the plan is not finalized some members had additional questions about what was in the plan. One onsite meeting and numerous conference calls have been held. Some of the agency partners include community action agencies, hospitals, behavioral health, federally-qualified health centers, Head Start/Early Head Start, the Early Development Network; schools have been invited but very busy and not as engaged at this time. Health departments and representatives of the local DHHS offices are also engaged. The budget is a work in progress - \$750,000 for first year with approximately \$250,000 to be used

for data systems development, tools, resources, training by the model developer, the continuous quality improvement processes and supports. The remainder will be used for the designated area – 2010 money right now through 2014. Congress is heavily engaged regarding budgets and also the ACA's future. HFA suggested costs per family approximately \$5000. Newborn outreach and other unmet needs are evident according to the stakeholders. The target age range is services for mothers in pregnancy for children birth up to kindergarten age.

- A draft of the plan will be available for ECICC in next couple of weeks. Terry Rohren will send out to the Council.

The motion was approved 17-0 by roll call vote:

Voting yes: Mike Adams, Rebecca Bimler, Pam Dobrovolny, Carol Fichter, Heather Gill, Cheryl Hammond, Jane Happe, Melody Hobson, J.P. Holys, Dr. Sian Jones-Jobst, Eleanor Kirkland, Diane Lewis, Dawn Mollenkopf, Christy Pelton, Julie Rother, Leisha Suckstorf, Salene Ulrich
Absent: Sue Adams, Annie Bruns, Eric Dunning, Heather Krieger, Carol McClain, Julie Middendorf, Senator Pete Pirsch, Rodd Reckling, Roger Reikofski, Deb Ross, Deanna Schulze, Carolyn Thiele, Joyce Thomas, Cristen Witte, and Linda Zinke

11. Next meeting

There was a brief discussion to elicit possible agenda items for next meeting. The Steering Committee will be getting contact from Terry Rohren regarding retreat planning.

With no other items to be discussed, the Council adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Next meeting: August 26, 2011, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.; Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln, NE

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ ECICC Updates, May 13, 2011
- ✓ Draft: Executive Summary–ECICC 2010 Strategic Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood
- ✓ Minutes: ECICC Steering Committee, April 11, 2011 Conference Call
- ✓ Minutes: Early Childhood Systems Team, April 13, 2011
- ✓ Roster: Early Childhood Systems Team
- ✓ ECICC Listening Session Questions
- ✓ ECICC Retreat proposal
- ✓ Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for ECICC Members
- ✓ Simplified Robert's Rules of Order for Meetings of the ECICC
- ✓ 2011 Nebraska Legislation Addressing Early Childhood Issues
- ✓ Draft: Talking Points for Meeting with the Governor
- ✓ Report–Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 20, 2011: “Chairman Ryan Gets Nearly Two-Thirds of his Huge Budget Cuts from Programs for Lower-Income Americans”
- ✓ Update: Head Start State Collaboration Office–ECICC Update, May 13, 2011
- ✓ PowerPoint presentation: School Readiness
- ✓ Web-based report: “Nebraska's ACA Home Visiting Program
 [http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/LifespanHealth/Home_Visitation/Home-Visiting-Needs-Assess...]
 5/13/2011
- ✓ Report: Healthy Families America–HFA/s 12 Critical Elements
- ✓ Early Childhood Report, June 2011: Volume 22, Issue 6
- ✓ Brochure: Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired
- ✓ Sample materials: ACF/Region VII