



Minutes

Provider Services Committee and Monroe County Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes of February 11, 2011 Meeting

St. James Children's Center 87500 Overseas Highway
Islamorada, FL 33036
Via call in number 1-888-813-8477 / pass code 143130

Provider Services

Committee Attendees: Gina Cortes-Suarez, Ed.D. (ELC Board Member, Committee Chair), Shaleen Fagundo (ELC Board Member, Provider Representative), Alan Eckstein (ELC Monroe Board Member)

Monroe County Advisory Committee Attendees:

Alan Eckstein (ELC Monroe Board Member, Committee Chair), Lisa Barry-Toth (Childcare Licensing Rep., DCF), Sue Ellen Bennett (Child Care Provider Rep., St. James Children's Center)
Participating via conference call: Rob Porcaro (Special Needs Rep., Easter Seals), Doug Blomberg (Child Care Central Agency Rep., WHFS), Dan Dombroski (After School Rep., Boys and Girls Club)

Staff Attendees:

Evelio Torres (President and CEO), Angelo Parrino (Senior Director of Administration and Finance), Jackye Russell (Director of School Readiness), Leeana Pena (Board Liaison), Mary Williams (Managing Director-Monroe Co.), Amber Keller (Classroom Mentor-Monroe Co.), Cori Johnson (Administrative Assistant-Monroe Co.)
Participating via conference call: Blythe Robinson (Senior Director of Programs), Trina Rodriguez (Classroom Mentor-Monroe Co.)

General Attendees:

Val Taylor (VPK/SR Coordinator, WHFS), Aileen Cardoso (Provider Services Specialist, WHFS), Jeanne Askins (Head Start Education Disabilities Coordinator, MCSD), Kim Ellis (Director, St. Justin's Martyr Preschool), Jorge Barrios (Director, Dolphin Montessori South), Sylvie Turner (Director, Montessori Island School), Jennifer Flores (VPK Instructor, Montessori Island School)
Participating via conference call: Laurie Dunn (Provider Services Coordinator, WHFS), Kathy Snyder (Child Care Services Director, WHFS), Jeanne Cisco (Director, Lighthouse Christian Academy), Amalia Casanova (Director, 1st Baptist Jack Hill Child Care Center), Iris Coe (Director, Grace Jones Community Ctr.), Aminah Abdullah (Training & Curriculum, NAS Key West CDC), Karen MacCroy (Director, Kreative Kids Christian Academy), Michele Morgan (Assistant Director, Inez Martin Child Development Center), Christine Patterson (Director, Inez Martin Child Development Center), Alison Heymann (Director, Key West Preschool Co-op)



I. Welcome / Introductions / Additions to Agenda

**Gina Cortes- Suarez, Ed.D.
Alan Eckstein, Esq.**

- Gina Cortes-Suarez welcomed the committee members and attendees.
- Alan Eckstein asked everyone to introduce themselves.
- Alan Eckstein asked for an amendment to the agenda to add Jeanne Askins to provide the MCSD VPK Update (on behalf of Angela Whidden).
 - Motion to approve the agenda with the addition noted was made by Lisa Barry-Toth; seconded by Sue Ellen Bennett.

II. Approval of 11/23/10 Provider Services Committee Meeting Minutes **Gina Cortes-Suarez**

- Gina Cortes-Suarez called for the approval of the minutes from the November 23, 2010 meeting.
 - Motion to approve the minutes by Shaleen Fagundo; seconded by Alan Eckstein

III. Approval of 12/3/10 Monroe Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes **Alan Eckstein**

- Alan Eckstein called for the approval of the minutes from the December 3, 2010 Monroe County Advisory Committee Meeting.
 - Motion to approve the minutes by Lisa Barry-Toth; seconded by Sue Ellen Bennett.

IV. Coalition Update

Evelio C. Torres, CEO

- Evelio Torres provided the ELC Update.
 - The Governor's proposal included the full budget for School Readiness and VPK as well as additional dollars for VPK to pay for the anticipated increase in children, who will be coming into the VPK program next year.
 - The base student allocation under the Governor's proposal remains the same.
 - The legislature will set the final budget, but the coalition is currently in a good place.
 - The phone calls and letters to the legislators do count.
 - The Child Care Standards and Improvement Workgroup will be bringing their recommendations to the legislature this year:
 - Licensure for everyone that provides services to children.
 - Create one Office of Early Learning.
 - There is some discussion about moving the Agency for Workforce Innovation to the Department of Commerce and move all early learning programs under the Department of Education with one Office of Early Learning.
 - Evelio recently met with the County Administrator and Commissioner Murphy. If licensing is required of every provider in Monroe, including the family child care homes, it will have an implication which could add costs to municipal governments.
 - They may have ordinances that require them to monitor licensed providers or provide special permits, which will come at a cost to the municipalities.
 - The Board set a policy that takes affect July 1st In Miami-Dade, which requires every provider that accepts School Readiness payments to be licensed.
 - This will include the enrichment providers and the summer programs.



- The only exceptions are faith-based providers and public schools.
- A child safety policy will be put into place July 1st for Miami-Dade County. The board has recommended that providers who have one Class I or two Class II licensing violations will receive a letter from the ELC with intent to suspend.
 - The provider must file an appeal which will be heard by the Provider Services Committee.
 - Based on the circumstances, the committee will make a decision which could mean that the provider would be suspended for a one year period from the School Readiness program.
- The Board of Directors has started a strategic planning process for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.
 - Final recommendations will be made at the Board Retreat on February 26th.
 - Based on the strategic planning retreat with the Board of Directors, Monroe County will begin a very specific planning process which will deal with issues, such as licensing, afterschool programs and quality rating systems.
- Starting in April 2012, there is going to be a series of rotation of board member seats between Miami-Dade and Monroe County.
 - Positions scheduled to rotate to Monroe include: School Superintendent, County Commissioner, Community College President and Central Agency.

V. Child Care Provider Update

Sue Ellen Bennett, Provider Representative

- Sue Ellen Bennett gave the Child Care Provider Update.
 - The providers seem to have some of the same issues which includes enrollment.
 - Some are losing children due to families moving out of the area.
 - Some families are having a more difficult time paying for childcare than in the past.
 - Providers in the Upper keys are having an issue with the new finger print policy that went into affect August 1st.
 - Currently, the only choice for new hires is going to Key West or Coral Gables.
 - Kathy Snyder said Doug Blomberg is making arrangements with Wesley House office in Tavernier so providers can go to that location for finger printing.
 - Sue Ellen shared that one of the ways to get attention for childcare would be for the providers to go on a one day strike.
 - The business world would pay attention to how serious it is.
 - It would call attention to how little childcare providers are paid.
 - Evelio Torres said there is work being done on a proposal to create a brand new insurance pool or allow for joining an existing pool in order to provide low cost insurance for childcare providers and staff.
 - The proposal will be given further consideration as to whether it is feasible to find some dollars to pay for the beginning of an insurance pool for childcare provider staff.
 - This stems from a discussion that childcare teachers should be treated the same as public school teachers.



- We are running a system that is not equitable, because the teachers in the childcare centers are not receiving the same benefits as the public school teachers.
- Gina Cortez-Suarez commented that a statement could be made by counting the number of children being cared for in centers and how many people who are employed that it affects.
 - She also shared that the conversation at the state level with the new governor is all about jobs; therefore, in this business of early care and education we should determine how many people have jobs because of us.
- Shaleen Fagundo suggested a campaign along the lines of “100 parents working; 50 children receiving loving care” to emphasize that while parents are working, children are getting care and education because of School Readiness funding and VPK funding.

VI. Registered FCCH Licensing Update	Lisa Barry-Toth, DCF Child Care Licensing
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| VI. Registered FCCH Licensing Update | Lisa Barry-Toth, DCF Child Care Licensing |
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- Lisa Barry-Toth gave an update on the status of the registered family child care homes.
 - She reported that there was very positive feedback at the home provider monthly meeting regarding registered home providers transitioning to licensed providers.
 - Some concerns were brought up regarding the start up fees and monthly operating costs for a licensed home compared to a registered home.
 - The majority of the home providers are renters, and there are concerns about the landlord allowing them to continue operating a business out of their home.
 - Lisa expressed a concern about the timeframe to become licensed should it become mandated.
 - She explained that she is the only counselor that covers the county, and all of her files are approved out of Miami which requires more time.
 - There is also a question as to how the city and county ordinances will come into play with licensed homes and will the mandate include all unlicensed providers.
 - Alan Eckstein said it looks very positive, but it sounds like there will be issues that need to be dealt with along the way.
 - Lisa said she feels all of the issues will never be resolved so it is going to need to be a yes or a no and then we should move forward.
 - Lisa explained that currently Monroe County is not mandated to be licensed so some providers can choose to maintain their registered home and take private pay.
 - Lisa stated that there are a total of forty-one registered homes in Monroe County.
 - Out of the forty-one, thirty-four are contracted School Readiness providers.
 - Out of the thirty-four contracted, twenty-six have School Readiness children enrolled.
 - Lisa feels that there are at least five homes who would not qualify to be licensed.

VII. Wesley House School Readiness/VPK Update	Val Taylor, School Readiness/ VPK Coordinator
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| VII. Wesley House School Readiness/VPK Update | Val Taylor, School Readiness/ VPK Coordinator |
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- Val Taylor provided the WHFS Update.



- For the month of January, there were 747 school-readiness funded children being served in Monroe County.
 - 421 - Lower Keys
 - 139 - Middle Keys
 - 187 - Upper Keys
 - By funding category, 616 were funded through the low income/working poor families.
 - 119 were protective service children at-risk.
 - Nine families are receiving assistance through TANF.
 - Three families are in transitional childcare.
 - Ten are enrolled in the teen parent program.
 - Sixteen children are enrolled in the CCEP program.
 - Applications are being accepted, because there is no wait list for School Readiness.
- Evelio wanted to know why the number of at-risk children as a percentage of a population being served by School Readiness was so much higher in Monroe County than Miami-Dade.
 - Doug Blomberg stated that the numbers coming in from Community Based Care and DCF have remained constant for the past six months.
 - Evelio expressed concern that the number of referrals have dropped in Miami-Dade.
- 479 VPK certificates have been issued.
 - January recorded 399 VPK children enrolled and 437 served year-to-date.
 - Total capacity is 563.
 - In January there were twenty-four providers, and on February 1st Dolphin Montessori Children's House South was added to the number of active providers.
- Monitoring of the VPK providers is currently underway.
- There were six providers in the Monroe County with a perfect score on their readiness rate this year.
- Evelio acknowledged the great work of Wesley House.

VIII. Monroe County School District VPK Update	Jeanne Askins, Head Start Disabilities Coordinator
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- Jeanne Askins provided the Head Start/VPK Update.
 - At Reynolds School, there are three Head Start classrooms with fifty-four children.
 - Sixteen of the fifty-four children are Head Start/VPK.
 - There is one stand alone VPK classroom with ten students.
 - At Gerald Adams, there are two Head Start classrooms.
 - Fourteen of those students are using their vouchers.
 - There is one stand alone VPK classroom with eighteen students.
 - At Poinciana, there is one classroom which is double session and has twenty-eight students.
 - At Sigsbee Charter School, there is one classroom which is double session and has twenty-eight students.
 - At Sugarloaf Elementary, there is one Head Start classroom with eighteen students.
 - Ten of the eighteen students are using their vouchers.
 - There is one stand alone VPK classroom with nine students.
 - At Big Pine Academy Charter School, there is one classroom with seventeen students.



- At Stanley Switlik, there are two Head Start classrooms.
 - There are fourteen students using their vouchers.
 - There is one stand alone VPK classroom with eleven students.
- Treasure Village Montessori has one classroom with fifteen students.
- Plantation Key School has one classroom with eight students.
- Key Largo School has two Head Start classrooms.
 - There are sixteen children using their vouchers.
 - There is one stand alone classroom with eighteen students.
- There are ten Head Start classrooms with 180 students.
- There are ten blended classrooms with seventy Head Start/VPK students.
- There are ten stand alone classrooms with 162 VPK students.

IX. Monroe ELC Update	Mary Williams, Managing Dir.-Monroe Co.
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| IX. Monroe ELC Update | Mary Williams, Managing Dir.-Monroe Co. |
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- Mary Williams provided the Monroe ELC Update.
 - Monroe County is starting to receive calls regarding VPK registration for the fall.
 - The dates for registration in Monroe County will be announced shortly.
 - Everyone should have received the new VPK re-enrollment policy.
 - It will be discussed further at the next directors meeting on March 12th.
 - The new VPK form 10 and 11 for the 2011-12 school year will also be discussed at the meeting.
 - The first round of School Readiness child health screenings was completed between October and January by our partner, Florida Keys AHEC
 - Seventeen centers and twenty-six family child care homes participated.
 - A total of 334 School Readiness children and eleven private pay children were screened.
 - There were a total of 101 referrals:
 - 17 - vision
 - 18 - hearing
 - 29 - physicians
 - 37 - dental.
 - There will be a second round of screenings to follow up and include any newly enrolled School Readiness children.
 - There will be a quarterly provider meeting with Wesley House on March 12th at San Pablo Church.
 - There will be a School Readiness birth to three standards training.
 - Alan Eckstein will be presenting an advocacy training.
 - The Monroe office is continuing the year-long focus on Pyramid Model trainings, which promotes the social and emotional development of young children and preventing and addressing challenging behaviors in the classroom.
 - The first training took place in September.
 - There will be a series of trainings in March for the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys.
 - The final training will be held at the “mini conference” in May.
 - The Monroe office is currently working in partnership with the Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition.
 - Healthy Start received a grant from the Department of Transportation to provide child passenger safety inspections and also provide low cost car seats to families.
 - Safety inspections will be conducted through September at scheduled locations Keys-wide.
 - The ELC will incorporate the “Look Before You Lock” campaign materials into the safety inspections.



- Healthy Start is also looking for volunteers to be trained and certified as child safety seat technicians.

X. Provider Recoupment

Jackye Russell, Director of School Readiness

- Jackye Russell gave the Provider Recoupment update.
 - There are some providers, primarily after-school programs, which were serving children who were younger than school age.
 - School-age children are defined as kindergarten and older.
 - Some providers were serving children who were not in kindergarten, but rather four years of age.
 - Many were VPK children who went to the after-school program after the VPK hours ended.
 - The issue for the providers is that if they are not licensed, they cannot take care of children who are younger than school age.
 - It is believed that this is a carryover from when the VPK program began, because in Miami-Dade the school system is not required to be licensed, and they are allowed to take care of the younger children who are in their VPK program.
 - What often happens is that the school system contracts their after-school programs out to different entities. It was these entities who were caring for these children and being paid School Readiness dollars to serve those children.
 - AWI has advised that those charges are not allowed and those funds would need to be recouped.
 - Miami-Dade is working with the providers to recoup the funds by setting up a payment plan so it does not create a burden for the providers.
 - There were not any providers from Monroe County in this situation, but it is important to remember that a provider is required to be licensed or license exempt if they will be serving children younger than kindergarten age.
 - Gina Cortez-Suarez asked if the school system was the original provider, and they contracted out the services, then who is at fault.
 - Evelio Torres responded that the provider assumed the exemption for the school system would apply to them as well. The law states that the services must be provided by school personnel. If the decision is made to contract out, the exemption is lost.
 - Evelio said that AWI expects 100% recoupment going back to July 1st.
 - Jackye Russell said Miami-Dade has instituted a coding system to make sure this does not happen going forward.
 - The ELC is requiring the providers in Miami-Dade to be licensed by July 1st, which will prevent this from happening in the future.
 - Gina Cortez-Suarez asked what would happen if a provider says that they cannot pay.
 - Evelio explained that the providers are still being paid, but some dollars are being withheld over a period of six to twelve months.
 - The state was willing to write it off if the providers became licensed to provide care. DCF was willing to put them on the fast track for licensure as well, but the providers have not been interested for some legitimate reasons.

**XI. Public Comment****Gina Cortes- Suarez, Ed.D.
Alan Eckstein, Esq.**

- Alan Eckstein announced that he will be providing an advocacy training at the director's meeting on March 12th at the San Pablo Church hall in Marathon.
 - There is a Children's Movement meeting on February 18th at Wesley House in Key West.
 - Evelio Torres commented that it is believed the fact that the Governor included the entire budget in his proposal has something to do with the Children's Movement of Florida.
- Doug Blomberg announced the Valentine's Day Gala at the Curry Mansion, which is Wesley House's signature event.
- Alison Heymann announced that Key West Preschool Co-op will be having their annual Spring Fair on April 9th.

XII. Adjourn**Gina Cortes- Suarez, Ed.D.
Alan Eckstein, Esq.**

- Alan Eckstein called to adjourn the meeting.
 - Motion to adjourn the meeting by Doug Blomberg.