

## **Early Education/NC Pre-Kindergarten Committee**

**Wednesday January 20, 2016**

**10am**

The Early Education/ NC Pre-Kindergarten Committee met on Wednesday January 20, 2016 at the office of Cabarrus Partnership for Children. Ann Benfield led the meeting that was attended by Sue Aschenbrenner, Tanisha Jones, Wendy Brandon, Lora Lipe, Carmen Morrison, Debbie Johnson and Elizabeth Albright.

### **Welcome**

Ann Benfield welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Approval of December 16, 2015 Minutes**

Minutes from the December 16, 2015 meeting were distributed. Lora Lipe moved to approve the minutes as presented. Carmen Morrison seconded the motion.

### **Information/Updates**

#### **NC Pre-K**

**Site Selection:** Elizabeth informed the committee that the site selection process for NC Pre-Kindergarten will begin soon for the 2016/2017 school year. This process will now be her responsibility this year and she is currently working on a timeline. She will be reaching out to possible Selection Committee members shortly. More updates will be provided to the group as she gets guidance from NC Pre-K staff on the state level. Carmen noted that the list of NC Pre-K sites in Cabarrus County are not current on the DCDEE website. A Partnership staff member will attempt to get that list updated.

**Monitoring:** Elizabeth informed the committee that she and Jamie Clark are in the middle of classroom and program monitoring for NC Pre-K. Classroom monitoring will be complete by the end of January and an additional program monitoring tool will be due to NC Pre-K by mid-February.

**Applications:** Elizabeth updated the committee on the current progress in preparing for the upcoming 2016/2017 school year applications for NC Pre-K, Head Start and the Bilingual Preschool. Currently, no applications are being accepted for the 2015/2016 school year, as staff is busy updating forms and the universal application for preschool. Ann mentioned that staff is anticipating the One Portal project should be launching in February, and that will provide additional ways for parents to get connected to preschool and child care subsidy services.

#### **Head Start**

Ann informed the committee that Kendra Britton has settled into her position with the Head Start program and was absent from the meeting today because she is providing training and TA for Head Start employees. Since beginning in her position, Kendra has been working with Head Start to provide some self-assessment of the program and work on an improvement plan for changes. There has been a review of ERSEA records and process, CLASS assessments, a health and safety review and activity on

both the Policy Council and Parent Committee. Ann noted that the bulk of Kendra's work to date has been focused on determining 'where we are and where we are going'.

### **Smart Start**

The outcome of the Program Oversight Committee meeting in two weeks will determine if the Partnership will be accepting bids for new programs for the 2016/2017 year. Currently, the Partnership is in the middle of a 2 year grant cycle, but there could possibly be an opening for applications for programs that address emerging needs in the community. Ann noted specifically that there is very little help in the community to address Mental Health needs for children 0-24 months.

Ann updated the committee on the continuing Smart Start programs. The PCIT program now has 7 providers fully trained and ready for referrals at Turning Point, Daymark and Creative Counseling. The Celebrating Families program is set to begin in February through Families First in Cabarrus. This is a 16 week parenting program that focuses on families who have been affected by drug and alcohol abuse. The Smart Start Scholarship program is currently full and due to the limited number of spots, the wait list is also full.

### **DHS Subsidy**

Lora informed the committee that in December 272 families (445 children) were on the wait list for Child Care Subsidy. 97 children were added and 98 were removed. 47 of those removed were served through the subsidy program. The show rate increased to approximately 50%. Current families being served from the wait list were applicants from the month of September. To date in January, 36 children have been added to the list and 38 removed, 17 of which were served in the program. Appointments have been heavily scheduled in the next two weeks. Any applicants who cannot be reached by phone get a 'No Contact' letter in the mail with 10 days to respond. Child Care Subsidy is fully staffed.

Spending in the subsidy program is at 93.45% as of December with \$16,000 in outstanding contracts with providers. That amount is due to providers not returning attendance reports or contracts that have been returned. \$40,000 is still set aside for fraud. 18 special needs children are being served which equals about \$18K per month. The program avoided the reversion/reallocation process and can request additional money in March if they have the required match.

NC FAST is moving forward. DCDEE sent the first provider bulletin out and it will be emailed to providers this week. A provider web portal will handle all business including electronically based vouchers, signatures, etc. Providers are being advised that if they do not have internet capabilities, they should be prepared to use the library for all electronic communication. The live dates for this program are being projected as September 2016 for the Western district (which includes Cabarrus County) and October 2016 for the Eastern district. Pilot counties are currently working through the issues and DCDEE is rolling out webinar trainings.

Lora is working on training in-house Lead Workers and Management on Day Care Policy. The trainings being provided to staff looks at streamlining the Daycare/FNS (Food Nutrition Services) program and how to process reviews for families who receive both services.

## **Cabarrus Partnership Family Support**

Elizabeth provided updates to the committee on the progress of the Cuddle Up Coat Drive and the Family Support Training for teachers that took place on January 12.

The Cabarrus Partnership for Children is supporting 3 new parenting programs that are beginning in January. The very popular MODELS Teen Parent Support program is splitting off into two groups, one for the teen parents and one for the parents who are aging out of the teen program but still need support. This new 'Young Moms' program will be facilitated by Yolanda Haywood and will include a mentoring component to connect the younger teen parents to the older group. This new group will continue to use the Circle of Parents curriculum and will be open to new members, not exclusively to MODELS teen parents who are moving up. Another Circle of Parents group is being implemented in the Cabarrus County Jail for inmates. Andrea King is facilitating this group that started the first week of January. This is a collaborative effort between the Partnership and the Cabarrus County Sheriff's office. The group will be similar to the other Circle of Parents groups and mothers will be provided with resources they can connect to upon release.

The last of the new programs that will be offered this year is a Triple P Seminar series. This is a set of 3 parent group meetings that focus on the power of positive parenting, raising confident and competent children, and raising resilient children. This is a collaborative effort between the Partnership and CHA and will be offered to parents in late spring.

Lastly, Elizabeth is working on preparing information for the NC Pre-k programs for the upcoming Transition to Kindergarten process. Workshops for parents will be offered to NC Pre-k and Head Start locations, along with requested community locations.

## **Community Updates**

The Coming Together for Children Conference is on February 6<sup>th</sup> at Crossroads church. New trainers are scheduled to present, along with a keynote speaker. Registrations will be taken until Feb 3.

Innovative Approaches is offering the Resource Café on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 8:30a-2:30p. Attendance for parents and community members is free. The focus of the speakers is on trauma of children ages 0-5. Dr. Betty Rintoul will be speaking on the Effects of Trauma and Behavior.

The meeting adjourned at 12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Albright