

Minutes

Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. ECE System Community Partners Gathering

QUALITY COUNTS
Early Care and Education Continuous Quality Improvement

1/19/11
10:00 a.m.
6301 NW 5th Way, Suite 3400
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

Attendees:

Robin Barber, Cherie Benjoseph, Ellen Breslow, Nicole Carter, Willie Cameron, Sharon Cohen, Marjie Cohn-Dolan, Colleen Gannon, AnaMaria M-Garcia, Ilene Gevirtz, Jill Gelman, Joy Gordon, Yanick Goutier, Evelyn Grooms, Jayne Hafer, Mildred Hightower, Deborah Hill, Debbie Kay, Ilene Miller, Jill Mosovich, Julia Musella, Anita Platt, Layne Polakoff, Chris Sieber, Michelle Sponder, Derek Tillman, Melissa Trentham, Carol Wasserman, Mary Jean Woika, Andrea Zabel, Khalil Zeinieh

Staff in Attendance:

Penny Westberry, Chief Executive Officer; K. Lee Tirpak, Chief Program Officer; Leticia Strasser, ECE Program Specialist; Gordia Ross, ECE Program Specialist; Carmen Nicholas, ECE Program Specialist; Inez Webb, Administrative Assistant

ELC Board Members:

Jeffrey Dwyer, Chair; Mason Jackson; Deborah Hill; Julia Musella

Presenters:

K. Lee Tirpak, Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.
Khalil Zeinieh, Family Central, Inc.

I. Welcome and Call to Order

K. Lee Tirpak

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

II. Introductions

Self-introductions were made: Attendees announced their name and agency or organization.

III. Review and Approve Agenda

The agenda was approved by consensus.

IV. Review and Approve Minutes – 12/15/10

The minutes were approved by consensus, with no corrections.

**V. Presentation: ELC 2009/2010 Annual
Review**

**Facilitators:
K. Lee Tirpak, ELC**

ELC2009/2010 Annual Review

Several service providers work together to deliver the services that the Coalition purchases with State and Federal funds. Recognizing that all partners present have a role to play in the early care and education system, the Coalition welcomed the Board members who were present. The Coalition worked with Children's Services Council staff to look at the Early Learning System through the Results Based Accountability framework, and to present the Annual Outcomes of the contract for Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

Overview of Contracts

ELC 1 – Resource and Referral and Family Education and Supports

ELC 1 Contract focuses on providing information and referrals to raise the level of quality child care in the community and educate families to be better consumers of child care, regardless of income. The front door to our system, Resource and Referral provides information for families to make informed childcare choices through prescreening and linking them to community resources. Ms. Penny Westberry commented that family needs assessment and service delivery creates strong families in the community.

ELC 2 – Eligibility Determination, Application Processing, Slot Management and Provider Payment

ELC 2 Contract uses funds to ensure eligibility determination, redetermination and application processing of families receiving financial assistance from School Readiness funds and VPK funds.

ELC 3 – Quality Improvement Supports

- (1) ELC 3 - FCI provides Quality Improvement Supports for early care and education providers participating in the Broward County quality initiatives, including technical assistance, scholarships and the early care and education resource library. Providers participated in the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) pre-assessment process, formulated Quality Improvement Plans and received mini-grants upon reaching set benchmarks. The Coalition faces the challenge of involving Family Child Care Homes in the Quality Improvement Supports project. Retention rate of staff who utilizes Scholarships is phenomenal. It was noted that sites receiving Technical Assistance are making true improvements in quality.
- (2) ELC 3 - School Board of Broward County: In 2009/2010, coaches visited 70 child care providers: Centers were pre-assessed under the Environment Rating Scale (ERS), from which an improvement plan was put together by the Director and Mentor. Throughout the year – providers worked to reach their benchmark(s). Mini grants were available once providers reached their benchmark(s); many received full rating from the Quality Rating System protocol.

ELC 4-1 & ELC 4-2 Quality Assurance Services

The Quality Assurance contract ensures quality Early Care and Education Services are provided.

ELC 4-1: Quality Rating and Improvement System Protocol (QRIS): Services are delivered around the Quality Rating Protocol, which is in the process of being re-evaluated.

ELC 4-2: Monitoring of Approved VPK and Informal child care providers serving children whose families receive assistance through School Readiness. The Coalition's role is to ensure that all children are in a healthy and safe environment when they are enrolled in VPK or in child care using School Readiness funds. Broward County Child Care Licensing and Enforcement inspects child care facilities for Health and Safety standards; however, VPK and Informal providers are not governed by the Broward Ordinance. This contract addresses situations that are not addressed by the Broward Ordinance.

ELC 5: Child Screening and Assessment Services

ELC 5 focuses on Child Developmental Screening and Child Assessment Services for young children of families receiving assistance from School Readiness funds. FCI used the BRIGANCE Developmental Screening Tool to ensure children are developing appropriately and used the BRIQANCE Assessment Tool with a selected group of child care providers to assist providers to determine the ongoing development of children in their classrooms. Much success was achieved in Child Development Screening as FCI worked to link the tool with the antiquated EFS System so that newly enrolled children have their developmental screening within the designated 45 days of enrolling in a program. Children with developmental delays are referred to Child Find for further assessment. In 2010-11 changes were made to this delivery system to conform to the State's system for Developmental Screening of children receiving School Readiness. Providers serving these children are trained and supported to use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Form, and report results to FCI.

ELC 6: Florida First Start

Early care and education Home-based services delivered the Florida First Start Program model to low income families with children birth to 5 years of age. In 2009/2010, two hundred and forty (240) families were involved in the program. Para-professionals and Social Workers provide home-based programs to support parents to be their child's first teacher, using the Parents as Teachers (PAT) curriculum, and offering parent/child play groups and field trips. Parent educators assess the children's development and provide lessons to improve educational outcomes and parenting skills.

Input from Mr. Khalil Zeinieh: Family Central, Inc.**ELC 1**

- FCI provides services to two mandated customer groups as well as those who are income eligible:
 - Parents and guardians to determine and maintain eligibility and referrals from Child Net and Broward Sheriff Office; also partners with Workforce One to process families that need educational training and employment.
- The School Readiness Provider Agreement has at least 40 elements to maintain contractual relations with over 700 child care providers. Thirty counselors work directly with clients and child care to provide courteous, professional service to execute the provider agreement and ongoing enrollment of over 7,000 families on the waiting list (11,000 children). Recently, through actions of the Coalition FCI served an additional 300 children on the waiting list.

ELC 3

FCI partners with 140 providers to build quality improvement plans for their centers. Coaches guided many newly accredited centers, and worked with others to increase quality, and maintain accreditation. The Inclusion Specialist works one-on-one with teachers to focus on classroom issues. The community Resource Library provides educational materials for parents and teachers; offers music and movement classes, and story-time. In 2009/2010, 2,063 individuals visited the library.

ELC 5

Children of families receiving financial assistance, receive developmental screening and assessment when flags identified certain development delays. Staff administered over 6,000 screens last year and were able to make linkages with the approximately 7% of those identified. Tangible activities are shared with families. Successes included working with eligibility counselors to help parents understand the importance of screening.

Input from Dr. Ilene Miller: Broward County School Board**ELC 3: Quality Improvement Supports 2009/2010**

2009/2010 the School Board partnered with Nova Southeastern University to provide Quality Improvement Support services. Nine Mentors each had a caseload of seven schools. Staff worked collaboratively with Anita Platt of Broward County Licensing to monitor quality ratings. Objectives were met. There were four successful quarterly meetings. Topics included Safety for infants, Child Find, Brain Development in the Early Years and Transition to Kindergarten.

ELC 6

Parent Educators visit homes daily to demonstrate hands-on activities and help Families connect with community resources such as parent training. The end of the school year, on Transition Day, families get help to prepare them to go on to a different program. 2009/2010 Child Find presented information sessions.

Comments: Ms. Penny Westberry, Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc

- ELC 2: The Coalition is proud of the high eligibility percentages, which means funds are being used most efficiently. Participation in School Readiness and VPK are high in Broward, indicated by the numbers in the penetration rate; overall, parents have a wide variety of choices and providers meet the parameters to meet the needs of the community.
- ELC 3: The objectives on retention rate for both contracts indicated that those who received Scholarships completed their course work; both contracts had pre- and post Environmental Rating Scales. Objective measures showed an increase after Technical Assistance. The Coalition, with better data, will be able to crunch numbers to identify exactly what is making the difference.
 - One of the challenges is difficulty getting family child care providers to become a part of Quality Counts; strategy meetings are planned to encourage more child care homes to participate.
- ELC 4:
 - Informal providers and VPK providers are not governed by the Broward Ordinance.
 - The Coalition is developing this part of the system by looking at Accreditation and QRS; Ms. Carmen Nicholas is on staff to crosswalk our QRIS system with the other Accreditation agencies. Next step is to continue to develop the system we are now using and create parent awareness of the penetration rate.
- ELC 5:
 - Development screening: Over the years, parental consent has increased. Links are now being made to further assess developmental issues. Children on the Waiting List also have opportunities to participate in developmental screening; the challenge of educating families continues.

Input from Ms. Anita Platt: Broward County Child Care Licensing & Enforcement

Quality Rating Services portion of the Quality Counts program have been operating for 5 years; initially it was a challenge to get providers' participation; but by 2009/2010, significant changes have occurred where we now have a waiting list for participation in the program. Licensing contracted with the Children's Forum to conduct the pre-assessments for the centers that were waiting to enter Quality Counts program when staff were not able to serve them. Satisfaction rate is high and overall reputation in the community has significantly improved.

Input from Mr. Willie Cameron: Broward County Child Care Licensing & Enforcement

The Child Care Licensing Contract includes monitoring of a small number of informal providers, but as Health and Safety standards became more consistent, the number of approved informal providers were

reduced from a few to none. Much more time was spent and continues to be spent on VPK monitoring. During the first year of the ELC 4-2 Contract, CCLE utilized all field monitoring staff to conduct Informal/VPK provider inspections. Subsequent years have involved one child care personnel to make unannounced visits to inspect VPK providers.

Child Care Licensing has developed a better and timely system of communicating with the ELC 2 Service Provider, related to VPK providers and non-compliance issues; thus, actions to be taken within the established time frame of the VPK contract with FCI and to make sure the necessary elements are being monitored according to the ELC 4-2 Contract.

Comments from Ms. Jayne Hafer: NE Focal Point Intergenerational

Quality Rating system educates providers and helps providers to share with families.

Turn the Curve Report: ELC 1 – ELC 6

Ms. Sharon Cohen, Children’s Services Council

Result Based Accountability (RBA) focuses on what can be done and the impact. Turn the Curve Reports maintain how much can be realistically achieved to improve the system by making incremental changes; refer to hand-outs: The Report focuses on the ELC contract Population Results: Children are ready to learn and succeed in school:

- RBA Reports are also being used by the School Readiness Early Learning committees.

Ms. K. Lee Tirpak, Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

Turn the Curve presents alternative ways of looking at the 2009/2010 ELC system; including performance measures and outcomes. The elements of the contracts that reflect the results of what the Coalition is achieving.

Comments: Mr. Jeffry Dwyer, Chair – Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

Mr. Dwyer addressed all partners who were present, stating that the ELC Boards’ balancing act is to put funds in the community and follow through, maintaining a balance between quality and the number of slots. He expressed support for every early learning educator to be paid a Teacher’s salary and benefits, and informed the group that this message is carried to the Early Learning Advisory Council meetings. He expressed thanks to all the partners who are involved in the early learning system in Broward.

Comments: Ms. Penny Westberry – Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

ELAC: The current ELAC Chairperson was the former Chair of the Broward ELC and together, both the former and current ELC Chair advocate for family/children and provider issues and the importance of early care and education in Tallahassee.

Question: How does Broward’s data compare with other counties?

Answer: Each Coalition designs their outcomes differently; Broward has different performance measures.

Comments: Ms. Julia Musella

- The Coalition partners with providers who interact with parents and the community; Board members partner with the community to get others involved.
- Providers are asked to call the County Commissioner and send letters of recommendation to keep local Licensing in Broward County.

Comments: Mr. Khalil Zeinieh

FCI appreciates and looks forward to this forum of partnerships that we have as we continue to grow. Partners do make tremendous outreach efforts to providers, as we continue to work on increasing their participation.

Comments: Ms. AnaMaria M-Garcia

Various groups work with providers on Quality Improvement, and all providers inter-relate in their goal and mission, but not all providers get Technical Assistance to improve their quality. What will it take to bring providers together to mentor each other in quality improvement, using their expertise to collaborate?
 Answer: It may take an open discussion for providers to focus on common component and mentor centers who are willing to accept assistance. Interested providers can send an email to the Coalition.

Comments: Ms. Jayne Hafer

- Ms. Hafer participated in an excellent webinar on Provider network and quality.
- Ages & Stages training was beneficial to teacher’s ability to better evaluate the children.

Questions and Comments: Ms. Nicole Carter

Question: Is it mandatory for children to have developmental screening?

Answer: Part of School Readiness service to families is child screening. Families that decline this component of the service, are to note why and the name of the organization where their child has already received the annual developmental screen.

Question: If the participation rate has been high: 2008/2009–97%; 2009/2010–97%, why change while there is an increase in the outcome?

Answer: Across the state of Florida, 28 of the 30 Coalition used Ages and Stages. The desire of the state is to standardize screening; therefore, the Coalition decided to resume using Ages and Stages. The state is offering training and support and embracing an electronic system for gathering data.

Comment: FCI has made excellent system improvements over the years and will continue to be proactive to address errors.

Action Items:	Person Responsible	Deadline
Focus discussion on common component for providers to mentor each other.	Providers	

VI. System Highlights Partners

Broward Early Childhood Educators Conference Committee

- The committee is waiting for Piper High School to confirm dates for the conference.
- The committee has commitments for funding from PNC Bank and Henderson Foundation; however, information for possible grants is needed.
- The committee is working on theme and workshop framework and reworking sponsorship levels.

Family Central, Inc.

- VPK training for directors regarding contract/program changes will be held at Soref JCC, Fort Lauderdale, January 20, 2011 at 9:30am; online registration is available.
- A request was made from providers for the Coalition to cover the cost of the VPK Assessment Tool-kit for providers.
 - There is concern in the community whether providers want to use the new assessment tool, since

many of the VPK providers already have an assessment tool in use.

- Broward providers chose not to participate in the DOE pilot; however, in January the Coalition offered 6 overview sessions for VPK directors and lead teachers to understand the specific domains included in the Assessment Tool, and the importance of planning curriculum using the VPK standards rather than the Assessment Tool.
- Providers can use the free tool-kit to make a decision regarding what to use in the future.
- Feedback from the training will help the Coalition to make a decision regarding the use of the Tool.
- FL VPK Assessment Tool inter-relates with some of the objectives of the VPK standards and creates awareness to expand children’s mind to understand life outside of their everyday surroundings.

Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

- ECE Scholarships are now available for Child Care Providers in Broward County from the Children’s Forum:
 - Policies and procedures are the same for ELC scholarships as they were in prior years; for more information visit: <http://broward.flchild.com>
 - Communication will occur through email; providers were asked to contact FCI Resource and Referral at 954-724- 3976 to ensure email addresses are correct.
 - Qualified providers who paid for eligible class and successfully completed between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011 will be eligible for reimbursement as dollars allow.
- State of Florida Professional Development Registry Component is looking for 30 teachers who are interested in participating in the Early Learning Registry Pilot project conducted by Palm Beach State College. An orientation session will be held in February and a 16 hours on-line course will occur free with CEUs, in March.
- FCI offers a computer lab for providers who are interested.

Broward Association for the Education of Young Children (BAEYC)

Andrea Zabel was elected President of BAEYC; she mentioned and encouraged BAEYC as the organization where provider networking can take place in Broward.

Action Items:	Person Responsible	Deadline
VII. New Business		Partners
None.		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

VIII. Public Comments

None.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:42pm

Next Meeting: February 16, 2011

These minutes contain the action items of the Community Partner Systems Gathering. They do not contain all items discussed. A tape recording of the meeting is held in the Coalition office. Submitted by: Inez Webb