

# Minutes

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

**QUALITY COUNTS**  
Early Care and Education Continuous Quality Improvement

10/13/2010  
10:00 a.m.  
6301 NW 5th Way, Suite 3400  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

**Attendees:**

Howard Bakalar, Penny Bernath, Ellen Breslow, Willie Cameron, Nicole Carter, Sharon Cohen, Mark Dhooge, Eleanor Fuhr, Ilene Gevirtz, Joy Gordon, Evelyn Grooms, Sande Gruskin, Jayne Hafer, Maria Hernandez, Mildred Hightower, Lola Jordan, Bethany Marcusson, Josie Maymi, Ilene Miller, Dee Nevares, Anita Platt, Nurit Sheinberg, Chris Sieber, Wendi Siegel, Mahalia Solages, Melissa Trentham, Thomas Walker, Khalil Zeinieh

**Staff in Attendance:**

Lisa Feeney, Sr. ECE Program Specialist; Leticia Strasser, ECE Program Specialist; Inez Webb, Administrative Assistant

**Presenters:**

Jane Robinson, All 'Bout Children, Inc.  
Khalil Zeinieh, Family Central, Inc.

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Lisa Feeney

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 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 – 9/15/10

The minutes were approved by consensus, with no corrections.

V. Presentation

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|--|---|
| (1) Trauma & Play Therapy Program Overview | Jane Robinson, ED<br>All 'Bout Children, Inc. |
| (2) Holiday Discussion                     | Khalil Zeinieh., VP<br>Family Central, Inc.   |

**(1) Trauma & Play Therapy Program Overview**

All' Bout Children, Inc. and Florida Association of Play Therapy was developed from working alongside Mental Health Professionals who needed hands-on skills to work with young children, and to train therapist, who will train teachers. Their vision is that "At Risk" children and their Caregivers will build potential as productive and resilient members of the community.

All 'Bout Children, Inc., places staff in child care community Social Emotional Wellness centers to provide therapy for "At Risk" families. Their mission is to empower the child to thrive mentally and educationally. Therapists have worked with this format for 11 years in the Community Capacity Building (CCB) Program which is funded by grants from foundations. Research is conducted in Play Therapy Academy, on-site working with children during day programs. Every program is outcome driven.

Programs are Fee-Based and do not accept Medicare. Grant funding allows consistent, daily therapy offering small groups; help teachers to become therapeutic and includes 5-days a week intervention. The program started with the typical model of an hour per day, every day; however, grant funding allows for more consistent intervention, with the teachers becoming natural helpers, learning on the job. CCB staff are present in the centers; they develop a relationship with parents, who are more apt to accepting services.

Recruitment efforts began when surveys were sent to various centers in Palm Beach county to determine the number of children being suspended because of disruptive behavior: Centers inquired about the services offered; in response applications were sent. A video clip from one of the classrooms demonstrated how children learn to exercise control in their environment.

**Questions and Comments**

- (a) **What if the child care center has limited space?** Space is created in closets or pack up kits are used to convert areas appropriately for use.
- (b) **What will it take to get the program in Broward County?** ABC is exploring additional funding resources.
- (c) **What percentage of children is being expelled?** Nationally, children in the 3 years old age group are

more likely to be expelled.

**(2) Holiday Discussion Family Central, Inc.**

In the past years, Family Central, Inc. (FCI) “adopted” child care centers and provided gifts and holiday donations to families in need. Over the past several years, donations have decreased and so has FCI staff’s ability to coordinate this volunteer effort. Last year, FCI could only adopt thirty-four (34) child care centers: Reduced donations, staff workload and the increased need of children and families throughout Broward County require that Family Central consider a direct family adoption model, rather than adopting child care centers for the holidays.

Broward County presently has over 1,100 legally operating child care providers. There are over 10,000 children receiving financial assistance for child care and almost 11,000 more on the wait list. Literally hundreds of child care centers and thousands of families are in need of assistance for the holidays; because of these factors, FCI will adopt families who are directly receiving case management, social services, home visitation, parenting classes or other Family Central Family Support programs.

This change was first presented through the FCI Provider Insider newsletter sent in September; was discussed at the Provider meeting on September 29, 2010, and shared with providers by e-mail in early October. Providers were encouraged to contact Khalil Zeinieh at [kz@familycentral.org](mailto:kz@familycentral.org) or 954-724-3895 or Mary Monahan at [mmonahan@familycentral.org](mailto:mmonahan@familycentral.org) or 954-724-3859 with any questions.

Action Items:	Person Responsible	Deadline
None		

**VI. System Celebrations and Update**

**Professional Development**

Ms. Penny Bernath was presented with an award at Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAEYC) annual conference. She was cited as an outstanding member giving valuable service to the Broward AEYC.

**Department of Education (DOE) Assessment Tool**

The tool was developed by DOE in response to VPK providers asking for a valid assessment during the VPK school year, and not 30 days into Kindergarten. DOE has developed an assessment tool that offers pre and post opportunities, measuring mainly the academic domains of intellectual development; the results are to be analyzed and used to drive the corresponding elements of the curriculum within the VPK programs. VPK Providers should be interested in all the child development domains that provide teachers with information that can be used to guide instructional activities, and promote children’s development of readiness skills; the DOE Assessment tool only addresses a portion on these domains.

A training Webinar was held on Thursday, September 16, 2010. The tool is being reviewed by the training group, who will meet on November 10, 2010 to discuss the outcomes of next steps.

- Penny Bernath agreed to crosswalk the Assessment Tool with the VPK standards;
  - Other members of the group were reviewing the **online access component**; and
- (b) Two centers agreed to pilot the Assessment tool and develop specific Instructional Strategies that can

be used to assist VPK Teachers to *drive instruction, noting* the observable gains seen in the classroom.

### **Discussion Topics**

- Purpose of the Tool: for teachers to learn more about their children
- Great concern for ‘teaching to the test,’ types of questions/pictures used in the tool, use of praise or no praise, and use of ‘keeping a secret’ – confusing
- Concern for teaching **auditory** learners only, rather than **visual** and **kinesthetic** learners.
- Create Literature list to expand knowledge
- Develop legend for teacher use
- Need for a college course that can be developed to assist teachers to assimilate information about children’s knowledge into instructional strategies.
- Develop opportunities to teach VPK teachers to develop Instructional Strategies to teach children a variety of information in their ‘world’ (micro and macro).

### **Questions and Comments**

- (1) How does this tool compare to the Creative Curriculum? The Creative Curriculum tool addresses the whole child, while the DOE VPK Assessment Instrument focuses on academic content.
- (2) Is there a possibility of the assessment becoming mandatory? Providers would already have a handle on the tool in the event it becomes mandatory.
- (3) Ms. Jayne Hafer reported attending a workshop where the assessment tool was discussed. Indications are that the assessment is being used to align with questions that children were asked when they entered Kindergarten.
- (4) The tool is more academic, but not culturally sensitive to letter sounds; however involvement in the process may be helpful in understanding how to make it our own.
- (5) Providers concluded that a great advantage would be getting familiar with the tool.
- (6) Over the past two years there are centers that have made significant gains using the Owl and Creative Curriculum. How can the tool help these centers?

### **Broward County Child Care Licensing & Enforcement (BCCCL&E)**

Handouts were given with new telephone and fax numbers for Child Care Licensing and Enforcement; as changes occur, the information will be shared with providers.

### **Child Care Providers**

- (1) Ms. Wendi Siegel announced the opening of a new building which will house the Early Education Center in Davie, and offer the center additional classroom space.
- (2) Ms. Hafer, N.E. Focal Point Intergenerational Kid Care Center received a \$12,000 grant from A.D. Henderson Foundation. This was used to purchase OWL & Creative Curriculum materials to train staff and fund outreach activities.
  - (c) Deerfield Fire Department visited the N.E. Focal Point center on September 20, 2010, to recognize Fire Prevention week.

### **Family Central, Inc.**

FCI will change the date of the Provider Meeting scheduled for Thursday, November, 17, 2010, to allow providers to participate in the Provider Forum on November 16, 2010. The provider meeting was scheduled to address questions on the VPK Provider Service Agreement and School Readiness; a new date will be announced.

**SREL Workforce Committee Meeting**

Committee meeting will be held October 20, 2010, input is needed from providers on initiatives to help the child care industry connect better with Workforce One around recruiting entry level workers, and utilizing training opportunities. The committee is working on presenting the information to the industry so centers can take advantage of the opportunity.

**Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.**

Palm Beach College/ Palm Beach Center for Excellence will be meeting with Representatives from South Florida Communities at the Coalition on October 27, 2010, 1pm-4pm to discuss the state Professional Development System Roll Out in Broward.

Action Items:	Person Responsible	Deadline
Updates at December Meeting:		
WorkForce Committee	SREL Representative	12/15/10
DOE VPK Assessment Tool Update	ELC Representative	12/15/10
State Professional Development Roll Out	ELC Representative	12/15/10

**VII. New Business** **Partners**

The Children’s Movement of Florida needs support to advocate for early childhood education to be given the highest priority when public resources are being invested.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

**IX. Public Comments**

Why is the importance of reading readiness delayed until VPK? Child Care Providers responded below:

- (1) In a developmentally appropriate program reading readiness would be incorporated in any early childhood program regardless of the age of the child. Turning up the volume in VPK may be an effort to make up for time lost, or may result from parent pressure.
- (2) Many programs are transitioning from “day care” to Early Care and Education and it takes some time for them to have developmentally appropriate infant/toddler programs, once this is achieved the “crunch” may well be eliminated.
  - The addition of the Infant/Toddler Track to the annual Broward Early Childhood Educators conference is a step in solving the issue.

**X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am

Next Meeting: November 17, 2010

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