

Commission for Child Care

October 23rd, 2009

Attendees: Jan East, Meghan Moyer, Deborah Murray, Randy Fishfader, Rosetta Wangerin, Janice O'Malley, Carla McQuillan, Gary Taylor,

Guests: Barb Whiddon, Kitty Lake, Teresa Stevenson, Heidi McGowan, Tom Olsen, Pam Deardorff, Ruth Crawmer, Russ Crawmer, Gaila Bold Adams, Pat England-Marshall, Pam Deardorff, Bill Fink, Janelle Welker, Mark Anderson, Family of Lynne England

Introductions

Business

Bill Fink, Deputy Director, Employment Dept. – started career in ECE and formal training. Had Tom's job in Minnesota and understands how tough it will be to recruit an administrator to fill Tom's shoes. From conversations with stakeholders, Bill has come to recognize that this system is built on partnerships. Within the next couple of weeks, Laurie Warner will announce an Interim Director.

See attached memorandum from Bill Fink describing the process to fill the CCD Administrator position.

Carla asked what the rough timeline is. Bill said he plans to have the next Administrator on board sometime in March. Randy asked if there is any opportunity for Tom to help train or transition. Tom said he will retire on the 13th and will be on the road to Texas on the 14th. Bill said Tom has done has a good job in training his staff and he is confident in his leadership team. Bill will continue to listen and has appreciated being here yesterday for the forum. Bill will provide the Commission updates as the process moves along.

Minutes

Meghan moved to accept the minutes as written. Randy second. Approved.

Community Forum Overview Highlights

Heidi reviewed highlights from last evening's community forum on preschool legislation. There were several ideas discussed about what to include in the information sent to providers such as a resource sheet on where to get background checks and cost and guidelines about what to look for. A barrier surfaced around how to reach the exempt population. The other issue that surfaced is the concern about background checks and how to ensure providers are getting good background checks. This issue will likely need to be looked at in the future.

Deborah noted that this is a population that has not had a need to tune into the CCD and it will take repeated messages statewide. After hearing the results from both forums it is clear that the local providers know where to put information at the local level. Randy said we should try to get clear on the issues if we need to propose new legislation in the future.

Rosetta noted that we had a workgroup to lead the after school changes and thinks that we may need to pull together a workgroup for the preschool exempt.

Tom recommended getting in touch with Regan Grey who is proposing a bill that enables school age programs that operate on school districts be exempt from licensure. This may be an opportunity to change some of the legislation.

Gaila noted that exempt providers likely don't want contact with the state and Russ affirmed that from his conversation with several providers, there is a fear of the state and want to stay under the radar. Ruth said there is a lot of distrust. She contacted providers on Craigs list to invite providers to a forum to address issues between CCD and providers. She said she is sad when providers are afraid to go to the state to ask for help. Carla asked if there is a local provider group that has no connection with CCD. The AFSCME group is weak and they are terrified of CCD. Gaila said that she has experienced troubling issues between cross agencies in Deschutes County that is impacting local providers.

Rosetta asked Kitty if she would be willing to help us with a workgroup. Carla volunteered to be part of the workgroup. Janice O'Malley volunteered. Kitty noted that we should work hard to get some preschool exempt providers. Rep. Mauer had expressed concern so it would be good to contact him to include the preschool in his area.

It would be good to look at systems that aren't functioning well for providers in order to improve relationships. Deborah noted that it might be good to put out on next months agenda to tease out some themes and get more information. Heidi noted that like last meeting, the school age folks in Portland are addressing some issues and have formed a workgroup that they asked the commission to sponsor. There are some Commissioner's involved and this will be a process that we can be helpful in.

EQUIP update –

Pam presented that the Oregon Registry has given out 780 total awards for \$259,400. Gary shared that people at the YMCA are really excited about the ed. awards and talk about moving up to the next level on the Oregon Registry. Everyone from a 17 year old, to providers who have been there a long time, have received the award. Jan noted that the energy from this award is unbelievable and it is encouraging education.

Oregon Program of Quality (OPQ) pilots are starting in the next week. There is a logo. The second phase of the pilot will accept nominations from programs interested in becoming OPQ in Jan.

Gaila asked if the educational awards will be annual and that Idaho and California are able to do this. Pam explained that the EQUIP Steering Committee is working on this but for now it is one award per milestone.

Deborah noted that it's encouraging to see providers think of themselves as teachers.

Carla commented that the Federal HB 3221 is offering grants for ECE and asked what is happening in Oregon to draw down those grants. Tom explained that it is part of the Head Start Act in the Dept. of Education. Under the Head Start Act a council has to be appointed by the Governor who is appointing an ECE Policy Advisor. Dawn Bonder, Senior Policy Advisory, Governor's Office, is appointing the Council. We had a conference call a couple weeks ago with the new Director of the Child Care Bureau and Joan Lombardi. Carla said

that she is concerned that the money will only go to Head Start. Heidi noted that she met with Dawn and discussed linking Head Start and child care. Dawn will attend a Commission meeting in November or January. Heidi expressed that Dawn is doing some great work and that we look forward to working with the Council.

Tom noted that the OPQ will enable a facility to achieve a certain standard that promotes readiness to partner with Head Start.

Janelle asked if we knew how many providers currently work with Head Start for community placements. Barb said that she licenses a program in Douglas County that has resulted in an amazing collaboration between Head Start and child care facility. The child care providers have identified a fear that their identity will be gobbled up in the Head Start model and this partnership has resulted in positive changes for the child care facility and activity we don't typically see in Head Start. Deborah noted that in Portland the universal pre-k model is happening at schools. Deborah described that her child care center has lost 12 families this fall due to the free preschool. If one stream gets funding and others don't then we weaken the system overall.

Meghan noted that the changing needs of family have surfaced often in this group and hopes the new Council can include that conversation to their work.

Child Care Contribution Tax Credit

Heid gave an overview of the tax credit which funds 2 pilots. The research has been used in the formation of EQUIP. Four changes need to be made to the legislation: extend the sunset, change how the funds are used based upon the research and use it as sustainability for EQUIP, change the procurement process and increase the amount that can be contributed.

Rep. Kotek recommends putting it in the Governor's budget. Meghan and Janice agree with Rep. Kotek. Rep. Barnhart will likely move to the Senate. Rosetta said we have some things in our corner with EQUIP that we didn't have last time we asked for an increase in contribution. Tom recommended that lifting the cap is the best idea. The CCCTX program now can receive stock options and we have CPA firms and individual investors who contribute and would be good to bring to the legislature.

CC Tax Credit Advisory noted changes need to be made by 2011. If we can get this in the Gov. budget, the deadline is spring and fall if we are going to work through the legislature.

Deborah motioned that we support changes in the Governor's budget. Janice second. Meghan said that it would be helpful to have specific information so that we can truly vote. Rosetta recommended that Sonja come to the Commission next month and table the motion until we can have a further conversation.

Union Update

SEIU – Meghan Moyer

The SEIU contract is settled and members are in the process to ratify it. One result of the contract was to maintain the current rate structure for the employment related day care. There were some improvements around training. The legislature adopted mandatory orientation for DHS listed providers. A health insurance plan will be available through SEIU

to utilize the FIAT program that helps subsidize people who have access to a plan but can't afford it. This program has been frozen but has started reenrolling. The program would require that you have eligibility for FIAT and there will be a sliding scale up to 95% of subsidy. It will be a comprehensive insurance plan.

SEIU has a fight on their hands to preserve the eligibility for employment related day care. It is scheduled for reduction for July, 2010. They are working closely with AFSCME, Children's First and other advocacy groups. It will cost 16M to fully restore this in the biennium. They first must win the ballot measure in January. Information is available on www.defendoregon.org. Gaila noted that it will destroy her business if this does not pass. It will increase C corporation's tax from \$10 to \$150 per year.

The second issue is how to build a winning team for ERDC. It needs to be bigger than SEIU, AFSCME. Feel free to contact either Union to facilitate getting people active

AFSCME – Janice O'Malley

Janice said they are struggling to stabilize funding for childcare providers and they need to think outside of the box. Janice said she is seeking information from other states to identify other creative ways. There is a consideration to use the Employment Trust Fund but AFSCME will only support this if it is temporary. Some unions are against any diversion of the funds.

Tom said the Employment Dept. will move to a different tax schedule. **Employment is the 3rd leading agency because of how much money is put into the economy due to how much unemployment is paid.** Tom noted that we didn't get an increase in the President's budget this year because we got 19M in stimulus funds for ERDC. The President has promised in the 2011 budget to continue to the stimulus fund which will maintain the program at the current level. This gives some hope. The best effort would be to ensure Congress passes the President's budget.

SEIU has 52,000 members, AFSCME 25,000, and American Federation of Teachers is joining the partnership who organizes non-profit centers. AFSCME's contract was ratified. The biggest thing that may be heard in the field is that regarding fair share- which means providers who are in the union or not - receive substantial benefits. All family child care providers that are licensed that care for children on subsidy will be on fair share which is \$25 a month. AFSCME members will now have access to a low cost \$59-\$99/month for basic health care plus dental.

Rosetta noted that if there is ever an opportunity to combine insurance programs to have better offers for providers. Meghan explained that they would have loved for the insurance to be state sponsored but it wasn't possible so the unions had to turn to their own resource.

Child Care city business fees – Kitty Lake

Kitty said at the state territory meetings she heard a presentation from an economist. She said administrators need to be talking to city planners. CCD has contact periodically with city planners. There is a significant lack of understanding from city government about child care and they see it as a business. Kitty said her first experience was in the 1980's when certified child care providers were required to go through a business zoning permit. The cost could range from \$600 to \$2000. System development fees are designed to fund the infrastructure

that child care business are charged yet are part of the infrastructure. It would be beneficial for cities to see that child care is what cities need to get local people to work.

CCD has run interference with city government in some situations. Janice said that AFSCME would love to work with us on this. Before the economy took a downturn they were looking at a bill to prevent homeowners associations from stopping providers from doing child care.

Mark noted that Jeanne Lemieux, Multnomah County CCR&R and providers, met with city planners and have started a dialogue. Deborah said that the city of Portland is directly involved with the children's levy that is investing in child care. Rosetta noted this surfaced in one of the Portland forums.

Rosetta said that we'll send an email to Jeanne L. and Mayor Piercy to summarize this conversation and identify possibilities. Janelle recommended that AFSCME and SEIU could start educating people from within because of their membership. Rosetta said that we'll communicate with the Union folks. Kitty said that down the road we could work with the counties to reduce sanitation fees that have increased significantly.

Brainstorming Discussion

Barriers for providers & parents for odd hour care, infant/toddler, children with special needs. Rosetta framed the issue that as parents lose their jobs are doing whatever they can to keep roof over their heads. Parents are trying to find any job they can which is often swing shift. Families can receive a little extra subsidy if they access odd hour care or for children with special needs.

Gaila noted that she does not receive additional assistance for odd hour care though she is open from 6:00am to midnight 7 days a week and could not get help from the local field agency. Rosetta referred Gaila to Rhonda Prodzinski for assistance. Is getting additional subsidy, is it the same process for odd hour care and special needs? No, perhaps we could recommend local caseworkers receive additional information about how to inform providers.

Pam recommended that this could possibly be a strategy to provide Rhonda that they send out education and information to the field office. The education could include that providers are entitled.

Barb noted that she observes centers that have many infants and toddlers don't survive as a business. Licensing specialists often provide information and resources to providers.

Meghan noted that we are basing our rate structure on the market study but not what it costs. Parents can't afford to pay at a high enough level which is reducing the entire market rate.

Deborah noted that looking at it from the other side that a 4 to 1 infant/toddler ratio is not realistic for a business. Pam referenced the project funded by OCF that encourages those who are retired to volunteer in child care facilities. It is piloting in a few counties and will hopefully expand to more counties. Barb encouraged the Commission to use history to look at ideas from programs such as from the Deschutes program. Janice expressed that we need to look at solutions other than volunteers to ensure stability for children.

Friends, Families and Neighbors (FFN) often provides infant, toddler and odd hour care because it works with a family model. Unless we do something to fund infant/toddler it is not economically viable.

Strategies:

Look for money to subsidize infant/toddler care

Education for these categories for caseworkers in the field

Strategize ideas on how to inform providers that there is additional funding for odd hour care or children with special needs who receive DHS funding. Two ideas are through the overview and orientation.

Challenge how the market study determines rates but there are challenges due to the federal regulations. Could the state subsidize differently?

Look for strategies to reduce the infant/toddler ratio

Recommend to DHS that reimbursement is based upon the slot or monthly rate vs. hours (infant gets sick and providers don't get paid)

Look at how infant toddler dollars have been spent and what can be done to improve upon that and build upon successes

Direct subsidy for slots

Tax credits for parents to help pay for child care

How do we encourage FFN who care for this population, especially during a recession

How can we give a voice so parents can be heard regarding this population

Hiring people to do odd hour care increases the need of their children which often results in a tuition reduction (look at pretax for employees)