

Chatham County- Partnership for Children
Focus on Child Care
June 13, 2011
Minutes

Members Present: Julie Mashburn, Co-Chair, April Alexander, Kathia Ennett, Patsy Meacham, Kathryn Vitaro, Edna Williams, Barbara Burton

Members Absent: Debra Bright, Kathi Gibson, Lara Kehle, Cindy King, Angela Leonti, Angela Murray, Carly Pedrotty, Rojalyn Phillips, Denise Pickett, Amy Rabb

Staff: Genevieve Megginson, Marianne Nicholson, Deborah Day, Camelia McCandies

Welcome/Adopt Agenda/Approve Minutes

At 6:40, Julie Mashburn called the meeting to order. *By consensus, the June 13th minutes were approved and the agenda was adopted.*

Announcements & Updates

The committee reviewed the 2010 National Institute for Early Education Research report, which rates North Carolina as one of the top 2 states in providing pre-K education, noting the More at Four program as a key aspect in providing high quality education to children throughout the state.

Patsy announced that after 38 years, Patsy's Babyland will be closing as of July 1st. The committee thanked Patsy for all her tremendous service and support both to the children and child care community of Chatham County.

Genevieve and the committee thanked the Masonboro Group for their service to Chatham County in the past two years. The current Smart Start contract with the organization, providing the Professional Development & Education program, will be ending July 2011.

Funding Updates

The legislatures recently recommended a state budget which reduces the Smart Start and More at Four (MAF) budgets by 20%. This legislation also includes significantly new regulations to both programs, as well as moving the MAF program from the Department of Public Instruction to the Department of Health & Human Services.

It is expected that Chatham County will experience a funding reduction of 25%. Due to these projected reductions, both programs will experiences significant cuts in funding. The Partnership is currently working on plans to reduce expenses to help offset this reduction, such as decreasing office space. As of July 1st, the Partnership will only be operating in the downstairs offices.

It is currently under consideration for reducing the allocation to the WAGE\$ program by 50%. The committee discussed the impact that this would have on providers, noting that it would greatly decrease their commitment to staying in the early education field (especially those with higher educational attainment) and diminish their ability to pursue professional development activities.

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With all of the changes that the child care field is experiencing, the committee agreed that this group should be used to share critical issues that the community is experiencing, and offer information, networks and possibly solutions.

Finalize 2011-2012 Schedule & Planning

Due to the severe reductions in the budget, the committee agreed that they must be more judicious in scheduling committee meetings, as well as training and outreach events. They discussed that the Partnership's child care development activities should focus on the priority concerns and issues in the child care field today, which continues to be maintaining quality care options with significantly less resources available to both providers and families.

The committee decided to initiate this conversation with providers, by holding a Summer Child Care Forum, which allows providers to openly discuss the issues that they are experiencing, the changes that are occurring and how to best proceed within the field.

It was agreed, by consensus, that the Summer Forum should be held on July 18th, 6:30pm at Loves Creek Baptist Church in Siler City.

The committee agreed that with Partnership staff work reductions, it will be important for committee members to actively participate in the planning and implementation of these vents. To help with the Summer Forum, Kathy Vitaro, Julie Mashburn, Barbara Burton and April Alexander volunteered to form a steering committee, to head the planning efforts for this event.

By consensus, it was agreed that the dates and topics for the Fall Forums will be reviewed at the August meeting, after feedback from the Summer Forum has been received.

Committee meeting dates for FY 11-12 were reviewed and agreed as submitted.

As there were no further agenda items, by consensus, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.