

Chatham County Partnership for Children
NC Pre-K Advisory Committee
September 14, 2011
8:30 – 10:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present: Robyn Allgood, Amber Best, Dolly Huffman Clayton, Linda Foxworth, Amanda Hazen, Cindy King, Carrie Little, Heidi Lineberry, Robin McCoy, Denise Pickett, Erin Suwattana

Members Absent: Charles Aiken, April Alexander, Karen Allen, Sue Boyd, Angie Brady-Andrew, Beverly Browne, Arvelis Byrd, Kaye Clark, Janis Frasier, Debbie Glosson, Dale Minge, Chad Morgan, Christopher Poston, Amy Rabb, Carla Threadgill, Danielle Tyner

Staff: Genevieve Megginson, Marianne Nicholson, Deborah Day

Guest: Jan Lowe

Welcome/Adopt Agenda/ Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:30pm by Co-Chair, Robin McCoy. *Cindy King motioned to adopt the agenda and Amanda Hazen seconded the motion and the agenda was adopted by consensus.*

Amanda Hazen motioned to approve the minutes of the August 18th, 2011 meeting. Denise Pickett seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by consensus.

Announcements and Updates

Genevieve announced that the Chatham Partnership was selected for a Leadership Collaborative grant and a Leading for Equity Initiative. The Leading for Equity Initiative involves a 3 day workshop with national trainers. It has been scheduled for October 19 in the evening, October 20 all day, and October 21 until 2 pm. This workshop will examine the structural conditions that ensure equity, focusing on issues affecting young children, age 0-5. In Chatham, are we serving children equitably across class, race, geography, etc? The organizers recommend that we include people from a variety of perspectives – e.g. decision-makers, parents, and front-line workers with young children and families. Chatham will organize the event and recruit participants. The national training group will facilitate the workshop. Please let Genevieve know if either you or someone else would like to participate in this retreat.

Genevieve also announced that the Chatham Partnership received the Shape NC grant – an initiative to reduce early childhood obesity through increased physical activity, healthy nutrition, and natural learning environments. Robyn’s Nest was selected to be the model early learning center. Genevieve, Deborah, and Amber Best (Robyn’s Nest Director) attended a 2 day Shape NC orientation last week to learn more about the project. This grant is funded by the NC Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation and managed by the North Carolina Partnership for Children.

Fundraising Appeal

Last month, the Chatham NC Pre-K Advisory Committee requested that the Partnership do some fundraising to help sites off-set costs for supplies and the on-line early childhood assessment system - CreativeCurriculum.net. Consequently, staff sent a solicitation letter and fact sheet to local banks and larger businesses in early September. We will also send it to churches and local foundations. Genevieve will make follow-up phone calls. Linda suggested sending it to the mayors.

Program Coordination Report

Marianne presented preliminary data for the children enrolled in the 2011-2012 Chatham NC Pre-K Program. We currently have 215 children enrolled. Of these 215, 209 are identified as at-risk because their family income is 75% of state median income or the child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The other 6 children are considered eligible because they might have limited English proficiency, a chronic health condition, a developmental or educational need as indicated by an approved developmental screening tool, or at least one parent who is in the military. All Chatham NC Pre-K students in school sites are US citizens. The TANF eligible column on the report will help the Committee assign Smart Start subsidy slots.

NC Pre-K awarded 215 slots to Chatham, so we can only enter 215 into the state database, called NC Pre-K Kids. We can enroll and fund the 242 children in our budget. If we receive additional slots, we may be able to serve the remainder that are not in the database (242-215) – 27 plus 40 on our waiting list.

Marianne also reminded members that she needs committee members and principal signatures to submit Chatham NC Pre-K plan for state approval.

DCDEE Updates

DCD-EE requested that all local NC Pre-K sites complete a questionnaire to determine additional capacity to serve at-risk 4 year olds. Chatham completed this questionnaire and has let our state consultant know about our immediate needs. We should hear about additional slots in the next few weeks.

Budget Plan Review Sub-Committee

Dolly presented a report from the Budget Plan Review Sub-Committee. She stated that there was some confusion about this sub-committee's charge and asked for clarification. Did the NC Pre-K Committee want them to review the budget plan to make changes to this current fiscal year or for the next year? Several members said that they believe that any changes made would be for our current year. The August 18 minutes stated the approved allocations and budget would be in place for September with a plan presented by the sub-committee at the Oct 13 meeting.

Dolly said that sub-committee members were concerned about fiscal stability if sites lost TANF eligible children. In order to use Smart Start subsidy funds for NC Pre-K children, we need to meet requirements for both programs. So, the sub-committee thought about leaving subsidy slots as approved – 10 at Robyn's Nest and 8 at CCDC – to ensure stability. At the same time, we would increase the private site's monthly rate to \$600 uniform rate. This budget can work

because we are serving 3 fewer children (240 instead of 243) – 2 at Robyn’s Nest and 1 at Head Start.

The Chatham NC Pre-K Advisory Committee discussed the sub-committee’s proposal. Issues raised include:

- Inequity for Chatham School sites who would receive neither increased rate nor subsidy slots. The School sites receive in-kind donations of space and janitorial services. They also contribute \$280,000 to their Pre-K sites through Title I funds. At the same time, their current rate of \$495 covers just the bare minimum needed.
- If the sub-committee is concerned about fiscal stability and replacing TANF eligible children who leave the program, then the school has 64 children who are TANF eligible.
- If the Committee raised the school’s rate by \$3/month/child from \$495 to \$498, than they would receive an addition \$4,800. We would need to delete CreativeCurriculum.net from our budget, however. If we raised the school’s rate by \$2/month/child from \$495 to \$497, than they would receive an addition \$3,200 and we could fund Creative Curriculum.net from our budget. If the schools received 8 Smart Start subsidy slots for a difference of \$55/month (\$550-\$495) for 9 months, they would receive an additional \$3,960.
- The Chatham Partnership for Children Board has allocated \$116,000 of Smart Start subsidy funds for 18 NC Pre-K children, but there are 95 eligible. If we look at the percent of need versus the percent of spending, could we ask the Board to serve more than 18 NC Pre-K children. The original choice prioritized these 18 because the children are at-risk, while allocating the remaining \$264,000 Smart Start subsidy funds for at-risk 0-4 year olds who are too young for NC Pre-K.
- Robyn’s Nest received only 16 of the 18 slots approved for their site at the August 18th meeting. They have eligible applicants and would like these slots reinstated.
- All sites need additional funding for supplies
- The changes above leave Chatham NC Pre-K with very little cushion if sites lose children. This is an issue especially for sites in Siler City because we do not know whether or not Townsends is closing yet. We could set-aside \$2500 as reserve funds. If the balance looks good later in the year, then we could distribute the funds to the sites.

Erin Suwattana motioned to have a Chatham NC Pre-K Advisory Committee member who also serves on the Partnership Board request two additional Smart Start subsidy slots (20 instead of 18). Amanda Hazen seconded the motion, which was approved by consensus.

The Sub-Committee will meet again and present a revised budget plan to the Chatham NC Pre-K Advisory Committee at the October 13th meeting.

New Site Application

Marianne introduced Jan Lowe, the Owner/Director of Children First Learning Center. This is a 4 star center that has been operating for 5 years. All staff members currently have an associate’s degree or are working toward it. If they become a NC Pre-K site, Children First Learning Center has room for 7 NC Pre-K slots. Their four year old classroom currently serves 11. So, combined with 7 NC Pre-K children, they could serve 18 children in a blended classroom. Jan already has a qualified teacher in mind. Genevieve and Marianne visited the center on September 13 to

assess its appropriateness as a NC Pre-K site. The Committee asked Jan questions. Then Jan excused herself so that the Committee could discuss her application.

Chatham NC Pre-K members who knew Jan said that they had no doubts about her ability to run a quality child care program. Some members expressed concern that adding another site might compromise the sustainability of our current sites, who are already struggling with reduced budgets. Members also expressed concern about approving Children First Learning Center without being able to allocate them any slots. Genevieve said that these were two separate issues. Approving Children First Learning Center would increase our capacity if we received additional slots without obligating the Committee.

Heidi Lineberry motioned to accept Children First Learning Center as a NC Pre-K site with no site allocations at this time. Denise Pickett seconded the motion, which was approved by consensus.

Marianne requested that Committee approve a request to DCDEE for additional slots. Official authorization from the Committee will expedite this process when DCDEE releases the form to make this request.

Robyn Allgood motioned to request an additional 67 NC Pre-K slots from DCDEE. Cindy King seconded the motion, which was approved by consensus.

FY 2011-2012 Meeting Schedule

In July, the committee agreed to the following meeting schedule for FY 11-12:

Thursday, October 13th, 11:30am
Thursday, November 10th, 11:30am
Thursday, January 12th, 11:30am
Thursday, February 9th, 11:30am
Thursday, March 8th, 11:30am
Thursday, May 10th, 11:30am

As there was no further business, at 10:30pm, the meeting was adjourned by consensus.