

EARLY LEARNING NH Annual Advocacy Planning Meeting Notes

Thursday, June 12, 2008 - Noon to 2 PM
Two Delta Drive, Concord NH 03301

A) Review of the Past Year's Advocacy Efforts: Accomplishments

- 1) Quality & Compensation Task Force:
 - a. A task force was successfully created and met monthly thanks to the direction of Jim Doremus.
 - b. As a group they looked at Business Plans & Models nationally and came to the conclusion that ELNH needs a facilitator to lead this effort.
 - c. States that have implemented a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) have been successful in raising quality and staff compensation.
 - d. Both NHAEYC and the Child Development Bureau support this.
 - e. A grant was submitted to the Nellie Mae Foundation
 - f. Anne Mitchell will be available to help us in the fall of 2008.

- 2) Collaboration / Early Childhood System Building: The goal is to create a unified system of all organizations and agencies that support families with young children. Actions that have taken place to bring this about include:
 - a. Creating a group similar (or the same as) the Kids Cabinet that included the head of state departments meeting to discuss children in NH and how the state can support the systems that help families and children.
 - b. Implement the ECCS Plan (Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems) with the help of the newly formed group of department heads
 - c. Continue to support the NHCCAC Five Year Plan. One
 - d. Work with the Department of Employment Security to craft a state wide survey exploring the economic impact of child care on the state. Jackie Cowell, Julie McConnell and Janine Lesser have already met with Com. Brothers and he has agreed to use the "Cornell Method" for the study as recommended by Louise Stoney, a recognized national leader in this type of research.
 - e. Move forward with the Born Learning Campaign with the help and support from a statewide United Way Network. The purpose of this campaign is to get the knowledge out about how important the early years are for brain development and how is it possible for everyone to support children's ability to learn.

- 3) Unplanned events which ELNH (Jackie) is currently involved with:
 - a. Health Insurance for Small Businesses: Insurance Commissioner is looking into creating a product for all small businesses that any insurance company doing business in NH will have to offer.
 - Someone from Franklin Pierce is researching what other states are doing.
 - NH Voices for Health Community is holding a meeting in Concord on June 29th from 4:00 - 6:00 and is looking for community input. RSVP's are required. Call Nikki at 978-1032 if you would like to attend.

 - b. Budget Deficit: revenue versus cuts: Thanks to Mary Jane Wallner, word went out about the state budget cuts providers responded by contacting legislators and coming to Concord. As of 6/12/08 there were no known budget cuts for child care. This could change...

 - c. Stopgap Rates (July 2008): this has been a very time consuming project and was brought about by the rejection by the Federal Government of the state's tuition reimbursement system. Ellen Wheatley and a team of representatives – with statewide input from people in the early care and education business – have come up with a "stopgap" plan that will (probably) be in effect from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Once the state budget cuts are final, we will know if this is going to be implemented.

 - d. CCDF Redesign (July 2009): The plan mention above will be replaced by a more permanent system next summer. A task force with statewide representation and input is continuing to meet to work on this. NH Child Care Advisory Council strongly recommended that rates be increased significantly for licensed providers so that working families could access affordable care. We all

know that the current rates often make quality care unavailable to many families because they can't afford the co-pay. With this recommendation, a plan is being designed that will include more steps and a higher rate. The challenge will be that there is currently no more funding going into the system so it is expected a waiting list may have to be created since resources won't be available to meet the needs of working families. More information will become available during the next few months.

B) How Can We Engage More Early Childhood Professionals in Advocacy? (Thank you Mollie Mulligan!)

- 1) Ask them to thank you notes to all who advocate for the early care and education field. To both politicians and others.
- 2) Create an e-mail list among direct providers – teachers, assistants, etc. – sharing events and advocacy concerns.
- 3) Continuing to provide the text to use when calling or writing members of our legislature. People are more comfortable advocating if they know what to say.
- 4) ELNH could create literature/flyer to hand out to parents and communities explaining what providers do and the results as they relate to child development as well as health & safety.
- 5) Create regional phone trees statewide so that time-related information can get out to everyone; especially when there is a need to advocate and support legislature.
- 6) Other thoughts presented at meeting: Could these activities be counted as professional development activities to meet credentialing requirements?
- 7) Could ELNH offer some scholarships to our conference to those who actively initiate and participate in the about activities?

C) Setting Early Learning NH's Advocacy Priorities for 2008/2009: It was decided that the group attending the meeting would make recommendations and then vote on priorities. These priorities would be sent out electronically so that all members of ELNH could vote. If you have any questions as to why these seven were selected please feel free to call Jackie or any of the members attending. Names and contact information is listed on a separate page. The priorities receiving numerous votes were:

- 1) Child Care Development Fund Plan – This has to be developed and presented to the Feds every two years. Part of this plan that outlines how money is spent to improve quality in our field which to date has included: consultation to child care (PTAN, for example), College scholarships to people working in the field, Child Care Resource & Referral, Afterschool program support, Infant & Toddler seminar, parent tuition assistance.
- 2) Continue with the QRIS initiative.
- 3) State Budget :continue to be proactive making budget impacts, not only for ECE field but for staffing in the agencies that support our field: CDB, BCCL and the District Offices.
- 4) Build relationships with public and private funders to support the ECE and afterschool field by funding health care consultants and other support systems/programs
- 5) Health Care Insurance for the ECE and afterschool providers
- 6) Born Learning Campaign hopefully to be implanted by ELNH with the help of statewide United Way help.

Attending the meeting:

Helen Schotanus	Dept of Education		
Jackie Howe	North Conway Daycare Center	jackiehowencdaycare@fistbridge.net	
Carol Michael	PlusTime NH	cmichael@plustime.org	800 462-5851
Barb Loughran	Franconia Children's Center	fcckids@verizon.net	823-5643
Chris Casserly	Rochester CCC	rccced@metrocast.net	
Annette Hope-Ross	Great Bay Kids	gbkcahr@verizon.com	
Tracy Pond	R&R Rockingham County	tracypond@rcaction.org	800 310-8333
Brooke Stebbins	DHHS Maternal & Child Health	bstebbins@dhhs.state.nh.us	271-4667
Debbie Rosato	Community Partners for Children		524-8811 x176
Anne Grassie	Dover Children's Center		742-3332
Janet Clement	R&R – Strafford County	jclement@RCaction.org	
Marianne King	OCC Childcare Center (Ossipee)	kingm@hughes.net	539-6772
Nancy Coville	BVS & CC	bvs@worldpath.net	323-8300
Jim Doremus	White Birch Community Center		
Ellen Wheatley	DNNH/DCYF/CDB	ewheatley@dhhs.state.nh.us	271-8153
Mary Jane Wallner	Merrimack Valley DC	MJWallner@Juno.com	
Jack Lightfoot	Child & Family Services	lightfootJ@cfsnh.org	
John Nimmo	UNH/CSCD	j.nimmo@uhn.edu	
Jackie Cowell	ELNH	jcowell@EarlyLearningnh.org	226-7900