

Notes
Early Learning NH Network Meeting
March 13, 2008, 1-3pm

1. Welcome/Attendance:

Samantha Clark, Early Learning NH
Jackie Cowell, Early Learning NH
Katie Brissette, Early Learning NH
Jack Lightfoot, Child and Family Services
Susan Sullivan, Minds in Motion
Ellen Wheatley, DCYF/CDB
Jessica Martin, Barrington Community Child Center
Julie Sackett, Lakes Region Child Care Services
Rachel Kelly, Child and Family Services
Kim Bruneau, New Hampton Child Care Center
Nancy Pynchon, Easter Seals CCR&R
Carol Michael, PlusTime NH
Chris Casserly, Rochester Child Care Center
Lisa Strout, NHAEYC
Debi King, Monadnock Community Early Learning Center
Edna Coates, Monadnock Community Early Learning Center
Nancy Coville, Bearcamp Valley School
Julie McConnell, NH Community Loan Fund
Carol Garhart, Holy Cross Early Childhood Center
Janine Lesser, DFA/DHHS
Laura Scott

2. Update on Next Steps for “Envisioning a Unified Early Childhood System in NH”
(This will be addressed at end of meeting- notes are below to correspond with meeting)

3. Legislative Report- Jack Lightfoot & Jackie Cowell

- A handout was distributed regarding updates
- Discussions- SB0540 Sgambati (estimated savings of 15% on insurance premiums – up to 50 employees)
- Discussion- SB0325 Sgambati (Rates - Waiting for House to take action in March; was amended for technical reasons and has no fiscal impact)
- Discussion- HB1299 Gile (research feasibility of creating a preschool initiative fund- Senate will not hear until end of March)
- A question was raised regarding a proposed bill intended for support of snow removal for low income and child care programs- little information is known about this bill at this time.

4. Child Care System Redesign Team Monthly “Input Questions” – Ellen Wheatley & Jackie Cowell

- These were distributed electronically and handed out at the meeting. Feel free to also contact Ellen directly at the Child Development Bureau.
- Ellen gave an overview of what was currently being covered with CCDF monies including Rates, Quality Initiatives, Child Care Resource & Referral, & Stipends for Professional Development.

- Currently two ELNH members are holding seats on the NH Child Care Advisory Council- Barbara Loughran representing Center Based and Deb Bourassa representing Family Based Early Learning Programs. Information from the meetings will be shared at the Council meetings once a month.
- A Child Care Eligibility Fact Sheet is being drafted and will be distributed electronically when completed.

Question #1- Establish a waiting list for eligible families when funds budgeted for the program are fully expended

- A discussion ensued regarding the spectrum of families being served;
- Step 4 was useful as it helped out a large number of families- a program reported having some families being “too proud” to apply for or accept these funds; Some programs are also reporting some issues with the consistency of the eligibility process for Step 4 families; this has been quite helpful for families who “fall off from” step 3
- A general consensus was made about the need to receive more funding-with a Waiting List of up to 500 children would show legislators the need; However, it was noted that there is already a “virtual” waiting list for quality affordable programs- in addition we have families that are “jumping and leaving programs with bills” .
- A general consensus was made that we need to be compensating at a higher reimbursement rate
- We have a state statute (M. Stuart Gile) that states we will reimburse at no less than 185%

Question #2- What other special circumstances should be considered in eligibility determination

- TANF participation
- Single Parent short-term/medical disability
- Protective or preventive status
 - Single parent long-term/permanent disability
 - Non-working Homeless families
 - Child disability (Katie Beckett level)
- Looking at Katie Beckett /Medicaid Level - children in half day and school year programs; 1,632 children- 300 Infants/Toddlers
- Need to look at coordination of more services with towns and communities
- Short Term and Single Parent w/Long term/permanent disability were also discussed

Question #3- Consider the following possible approaches to shortages of funding and

Question #4- Consider the following questions regarding family co-payments

- Discussion ensued whether we can set the rate a center or family would need to pay; should payment of co-pay be required? In Mass. they have voucher billing system this might help eliminate issues in NH with families “bouncing” from one program to another without paying their bills; Should families with part time care be assessed the entire co-pay? How would this affect the toddler child or the school age 6-12 year old?; should co-pay be a percentage of their income and how much? A question of other states was addressed- PA charges ½ during vacation and full during year; attendees were all over the spectrum with answers

Question #5- Who should be prioritized if NH has a wait list? Participants listed High, Medium, or Low- answers ranged across spectrum

Question #6- How could the disability differential be best used to support providers, families and children?

- A few programs shared how they were using their funds to pay for additional supports; other programs were applying the funds to the families cc bills; Overwhelming responses that funds should be increased regardless of where allocated
 - Question- Keep the Same? Increase from \$4 to lets say \$10? And pool to get more training across the state (ie. More monies to organizations such as PTAN, etc.). Responses were 4 to keep same set up with increased funding and 5 would like to pool resources, etc.
5. Update on Next Steps for “Envisioning a Unified Early Childhood System in NH”
- A. Restarting Cabinet-Level council on Children in 2008- Commissioner is ready to do if Governor Lynch does not
 - B. Commissioner Brothers will do a Statewide Economic Impact of Child Care Study in January 2009- this will resemble the “What if there was no Shipyard”- Louise Stoney has been doing a lot of work on the national level
 - C. NH Public Awareness/Public Engagement Campaign 2008- Early Years/Born Learning is the initiative by the United Way that is being explored
 - D. Establish Funders Collaborative in 2008 to identify & support early childhood system innovations on the state and community level- look at ways to “pool” monies together to create an innovative system building approach to child care in NH.
6. Early Learning NH’s website committee updates/questions. Tabled, but keep on agenda

Next Meeting Date: Thursday April 10, 2008