

ECAC Membership Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2011

Participants

Members:

Stacy Alvord	Evelyn Blanck	Sherry Cleary (Co-chair)
Pedro Cordero	Nancy Cupolo	Christine Deyss
Denise Dowell	Andre Eaton	Robert Frawley (Co-chair)
Dana Friedman	Doris Fromberg	Denise Harlow
Liz Hood	Mark Jasinski	Jackie Jones
Ira Katzenstein	Kristen Kerr	Nancy Kolben
Lee Kreader	Linda Landsman	James Langford
Patti Lieberman	Dina Lieser	Karen McGraw
James McGuirk	Mary McHugh	Meg McNiff
Anne Mitchell	Janice Molnar	Sophia Pappas
Sandra Rybaltowski	Carol Saginaw	Meredith Wiley

Guests:

Marsha Basloe	Kate Breslin	Kimlee Marquise
Maggie McGlynn (Facilitator)	Iwona Ostrowska-Sheedy	Melanie Porres
Amy Rudat	Sam Stephens	Rebecca Valenichis
Sara Vecchiotti		

Staff:

Liz Belsito	Regina Canuso	Barbara Hogan
Jeff Luks	Renee Nasadoski	Jenn O'Connor
Susan Perkins	Patricia Persell	Bridget Walsh
Stephanie Woodard		

Introductions/Welcome

Sherry Cleary began the meeting by welcoming the newest ECAC member- Stacy Alvord, Representative, New York State Public Welfare Association. Sherry also acknowledged two authors among the membership: Doris Fromberg (*The All-Day Kindergarten and Pre-K Curriculum: A Dynamic-Themes Approach*); and Meredith Wiley (*Scared Sick: the Role of Childhood Trauma in Adult Disease*) due to be released in January, 2012.

Maggie McGlynn began by asking each participant to introduce themselves and, using a single word, answer what do you offer to the young children in New York?

Early Learning Challenge Grant

Bob Frawley presented a brief overview of the Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELCG) process and timeline. He underscored the significance of the work of the ECAC and member agencies and individuals in the collaborative work that undergirds the creation of the system that is being developed further through the grant. In the last four weeks, through the process of collaboration in writing the grant, we have made further gains that will continue even without the ELCG. Other points Bob made include:

- State Education Department (SED) is the lead agency and the Governor’s office is very involved.
- Nicolas Storelli-Castro, former NYC Department of Education Legislative Coordinator, is providing coordination.
- Sarah Mead of Bellweather Associates, an educational consulting firm, is guiding the grant-writing process.
- The process is very competitive – 35 states are in the running.
- Sherry, Bob and Janice Molnar are on the leadership team.
- The grant is largely for infrastructure, although some services are being proposed.
- Deadline is October 19th.

Sherry Cleary then led a discussion about the need for stakeholder support letters and participants developed a list of categories of support letters and provided names of individuals. Two types of letters are being requested: letters of intent, and letters of support. Participants created a list of categories of stakeholders. A discussion was also held to answer the question: What are the best ways to engage a broad base of parent support for the application?

Answers included:

Online petitions
Groups of parents
Winning Beginning NY
Mother Centers
Parent Leadership Institute
Parents As Teachers
Parent/Child/Home
NYSAEYC
CCR&Rs
NYS PTA

Parents in Field Test
Virtual Public Hearings
Social Media
Letters to elected officials
Parent Information Resource Centers
Early Care and Learning Council
Rural and Migrant families
Linguistically and culturally diverse
Foster Parents
Grandparents raising children

The following ideas for Talking Points were also generated:

- Tailor to each audience
- Use information from the Heckman Study
- Economic development aspect
- Improving access and outcomes for children
- Parents as first teachers
- Workforce / Family Engagement
- Competition for federal funds
- Make better use of dollars we're spending
- Inter- agency, -disciplinary, -generational
- Develop systems
- Target high-needs children, applicable to all

Next Steps:

- Sherry and Bob will contact members and others to give further information and direction regarding the process for soliciting, and the content of, letters.
- A small group of ECAC members will be brought together to design talking points.

Update on the Cost Model System

Stephanie Woodard, ECAC staff to the Finance Work Group, provided an overview of the Early Childhood Cost Estimation System, which includes current allocations for many of New York State's public investments. The model will help identify funding sources for programs and services and assist policy makers in making informed decisions in the future. A copy of the written overview is available at the ECAC temporary website:

<http://www.ccf.state.ny.us/TempPosting/ECAC.htm>

The Finance Work Group is sponsoring a series of webinars to review and discuss the model. All webinars are from 10:00am to 11:30am. Topics are as follows:

Model Overview and Organization	September 22
Early Learning and Cost of Quality	October 6
Healthy Children (Health and Mental Health)	October 13
Strong Families (Family Support)	October 20

People interested in attending any webinars or would like the link to the recorded versions should e-mail Stephanie Woodard at stephanie.woodard@ccf.state.ny.us.

Decisions from Retreat – Advocacy and Governance Issues

Maggie shared the four areas of inquiry by the Steering Committee and staff at the retreat (see below) and highlighted the conversation about Advocacy and the agreed upon decision-making model from the Governance discussion.

1. Leadership: how are we doing to produce results? Workgroups at different stages; Regina's role to enhance staffing and coordination
2. Governance: decision-making: levels of commitment and decision-making process/protocol
3. ELCG: strategies for leadership and influence
4. Advocacy: strategies for alignment

Advocacy - Maggie reviewed the notes from the Advocacy portion of the Steering Committee Retreat. Those are available at the ECAC temporary website: <http://www.ccf.state.ny.us/TempPosting/ECAC.htm>

She reiterated the following points:

1. The basic framework in which we operate is that there are internal and external advocates, as we all play a role in advocating for children and families.
2. Each individual is responsible for their communication – behaviors, manners, self-responsibility.
3. Greatest result comes from how everyone relates to this and carries it out: the process could create the positive voice.
4. When a topic will be covered at a meeting, send information out ahead of time.

Governance – Maggie highlighted several points from the Steering Committee Retreat.

1. The ECAC Strategic plan and Work Group work plans are foundational.
2. The current structure has been successful in getting a broad cross-section of Work Group members involved but there are challenges of different staffing patterns for work groups. The ECAC Co-chairs play a leadership role in overseeing and supporting Work Group Co-chairs in meeting the requirements of the work plans. Regina's role is particularly important to lead the staffing assignments and coordination and she will lead the clarification of responsibilities, priorities and parameters and timelines as needed.
3. A process for decision-making was discussed at the retreat and further refined afterward. Maggie reviewed the written decision-making process, which is available at <http://www.ccf.state.ny.us/TempPosting/ECAC.htm>.
 - The process for decision-making is usually group agreement. Maggie offered a tool called the Commitment Arrow for quickly affirming group agreement.
 - Changes in policy or structure or areas of controversy may warrant a need for voting. Where it is appropriate for taking a vote, the ECAC process will be transparent: it will be recorded, only Governor's appointees can vote in the meeting (and there will be a process for the vote electronically as well). When it is appropriate, the voting will go from the Steering Committee to the ECAC Membership, with designated representatives of members being able to cast a vote and, when needed, absent members may respond electronically.

The decision-making process was tried out for the first time by Marsha, Evelyn and Mary for the Parent Involvement in ECAC discussion that is summarized below. These process questions were raised and enhancements were suggested by the membership:

1. Clarify items for Steering Committee vote and subsequent ECAC vote. It will call on us 1)to foster the level of coordination and trust among the workgroups, Steering Committee and full ECAC membership, 2)to emphasize how we use the strategic plan as our guide, and 3) to enhance feedback loops among and between groups.
2. Prior to calling the question on a full ECAC membership vote, allow time for discussion first. Clearly articulate all elements of the recommendation that are part of the vote.
3. Look at paper ballot and roll call procedures. Check realism of 2/3 for quorum – do we typically have that attendance?
4. Reconsider the separate tables for guests and staff and to make it easy for taking votes without creating the sense of a “division” among categories of participants.

Parent Involvement in ECAC

Marsha Basloe, Evelyn Blanck and Mary McHugh presented on the work of the ad hoc parent engagement group. The ECAC has a mandate to include parents, so this group was created to determine how to engage them most effectively, focusing primarily on structure and composition.

The group sent a Survey Monkey survey of 11 questions to ECAC members and received 25-30 responses. There was great consensus on structure.

Three main areas emerged:

- Roles/Responsibilities
- Qualifications
- Support

Roles/Responsibilities: Parent members should attend meetings, participate in at least one work group, be knowledgeable about issues, and be able to solicit and provide information to other parents.

Qualifications: Parent members should have expertise in leadership and advocacy, have currently or recently had a child under age five that is involved in the early care and learning system, be willing to be an active participant, have a broad perspective, and be committed to and interested in the goals of the ECAC.

Support: The ECAC should provide travel and child care compensation to parent members, as well as an orientation and clear expectations for their participation.

The original language put forth by the ad hoc group for adoption was as follows:

The ECAC will have a Parent Representative Group comprised of approximately 6 persons who sit directly on the ECAC as “ex officio” members, and also participate in a work group of their choice. Two of these parents will also sit on the Steering Committee in the same “ex officio” capacity.

There was debate concerning the charge to the ECAC. Members expressed the following concerns:

- Is it of value to a parent to be an “ex officio” member with no voting rights? (Parent members should have more than token membership.)
- Would the appointment process (including background checks that might turn up CPS involvement, etc.) serve as a barrier to their involvement?
- Could they sit on the ECAC in an “ex officio” capacity until such time as they are appointed by the Governor’s Office (like some other current ECAC members)?
- Could the ECAC help them through the appointment process?
- Could the ECAC allow them to choose their own status—“ex officio” or voting member, depending on their comfort level?
- Language that read “approximately 6 persons” was unclear.

The language was amended to read as follows:

The ECAC will have a Parent Representative Group comprised of a range of no fewer than 4 and no more than 6 unrelated persons who sit directly on the ECAC as “ex officio” members, with the option to become an official member, and also participate in a work group of their choice. Two of these parents will also sit on the Steering Committee in the same “ex officio” capacity.

The body adopted this language by show of hands in its first official vote.

Next Steps:

- The ad hoc group will develop an application, review applications as they are submitted, and bring recommendations of parent members to the Steering Committee.
- The group appealed to ECAC members to join them in this work.

Partner Updates

Medicaid Redesign Team - Kate Breslin

The Medicaid Redesign Team was created in January by Governor Cuomo to reduce costs and improve quality in the Medicaid System. Phase I was completed in March and made many changes in how the system is run. Phase II began over the summer and will run until the end of the year.

There are seven work groups in Phase II (work groups and charges in handout). The work groups are a way to get a foot in the door to improve the Medicaid program, especially for organizations who don’t usually get involved in these issues. Anything that happens in Medicaid this year will come through this process.

Proposals need to be focused. Need to identify the policies to be changed and then get the information to the correct workgroup. The benefits work group is taking an evidence-based approach and then considering how changes should be made.

The website can be found through www.health.state.ny.us – look for Medicaid Redesign. There is information on all the workgroups, their materials and their membership. The children’s behavioral health work group has already submitted their recommendations. If you have evidence, this is your chance to weigh in.

SCAA is coordinating phone calls with information among advocates. Contact Kate or Bridget at SCAA.

Overview of publication, *Promoting Mental Health of New York’s Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers* – Evelyn Blanck

The report was issued by the NYC Early Childhood Mental Health Strategic Work Group. The report models cross systems perspectives on early childhood mental health. The co-morbidity between mental health and development means systems have to look at the whole child, including mental health. There is a lack of funding for programs, they are not integrated. There needs to be a systems-wide approach for ages birth to 5 and early childhood mental health included in all systems. The public health framework is: promotion, prevention and intervention.

Key Recommendations include:

- Early screening and identification
- Early intervention
- Early Care and Education involvement
- Child Welfare training
- Better outreach to high risk families and enrollment in programs
- Reduce stigma
- Build capacity to serve families

Early Childhood Mental Health Tool - Dina Lieser spoke briefly about the Early Childhood Mental Health tool developed by the National Center on Children in Poverty. New York has been asked to pilot the tool and the Promoting Healthy Development Workgroup will take the lead.

The full ECAC membership will receive the tool to fill out. Participants are encouraged to reach out to contacts and constituents. There will be a national webinar in November featuring 3 states, including New York, to discuss their use of the tool.

Next Step:

- Regina Canuso will place the chart on the ECAC Temporary website <http://www.ccf.state.ny.us/TempPosting/ECAC.htm> and will send it out electronically to all ECAC members.

CSEA Efforts to Improve the Role of Family Child Care - Denise Dowell spoke briefly about CSEA, the union which represents 300,000 public and private sector workers in NY State. The union was approached in 2002 by family day care providers who requested their help.. CSEA created two new union locals in the state (excluding NY City): VOICE/CSEA includes over 6,800 registered family and licensed group family child care providers and Child Care Providers Together/CSEA includes over 15,000 enrolled legally-exempt providers. In 2007 the Governor signed an Executive Order allowing for collective bargaining.

Negotiators for CSEA Family Child Care Unit met with OCFS and reached a first agreement in 2010. It calls for:

- Maintaining the 75th percentile standard for reimbursement rates
- Automated time and attendance (upstate)
- Legislation that created flexible ratios
- Health insurance money (still trying to work through that)
- Quality program grants
- Professional development fund

Other issues being worked on:

- Licensing and payment issues
- Restore subsidy fund in counties
- Classification of centers for tax purposes
- Keeping counties from passing more restrictive regulations
- Lobbying in New York and Washington for additional child care funding.
- Inequity in eligibility determinations at the county level.
- Member resource center to be opened soon to provide information and help identify emerging problems early.

Wrap-Up

Next ECAC Membership Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6th, 2011, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Next Step:

- Members are encouraged to send ideas for agenda topics to Sherry and Bob.

