

Commission for Child Care  
November 21st, 2008  
Roth's West Salem Conference Center

**Attendees:** Randy Fishfader, Rosetta Wangerin, Gary Taylor, Deborah Murray, Cheryl Reece, Nina Roll

**Guests:** Pam Deardorff, Tom Olsen, Beth Unverzagt, Teresa Stevenson, Kathleen Hynes, Kim Cardona, Heidi McGowan, Rhonda Prodzinski, Dawn Norris, Sue Mackey, Faye Zepeda, Sonja Svenson, Swati Adarkar, Alisse Brown, Laurie Warner, Bobbie Weber

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## **No Quorum**

### **Introductions – Held for Children's Institute presentation**

#### **Other Business:**

Exempt care – Kitty, Kathleen and Heidi had a great meeting with Directors of the Boys and Girls Clubs (BGC) and received feedback regarding the proposed exempt care for school age programs. If the Commission approves the document then Rep. Kotek can start drafting legislation. There is still work that will need to be done regarding clarifying some pieces such as the difference between facility and program and how the criminal history check would be implemented and enforced. One thing Nina noted was that we need to be careful with terminology so providers and parents are not confused as to the provider status in the licensing system.

Senator Courtney's office has said that he will appoint a Senator to the Commission in January when he does all of his commission appointments.

Rep. Kotek will follow up with Rep. Flores regarding legislation of the Clean Box. Rep. Flores did not win her election and unfortunately will not be able to continue on the commission in that role. This is a huge loss as Rep. Flores was a significant advocate for child care in the legislature.

#### **Governor Report ideas:**

The RFP is complete and Sheridan McCarthy has been awarded the contract. She was the contractor for the previous report and brings great experience. She is excited to begin work.

Rosetta reminded us that the report from four years ago brought forth the strength of the system and partnerships and was working to educate the legislature. Two years ago, we focused more on our priorities and our work with partners. The exec summary focused on the work we have done and our priorities moving forward. TQC recommends promoting the training needs of the system as part of this report.

The Brain research chart from the conference Deborah went to was recommended in the previous Commission meeting.

Cheryl recommended including Bobbie's literature review and recommendations, specifically regarding training. Randy added that we need an infrastructure for training

and education and that the training of providers is not just going enhance quality on it's own. We need facilities where directors are educated to mentor their staff to become educated employees. Though it is not a good time to ask for money to support the child care infrastructure we have money going out the window by training providers who may not remain in their jobs very long. Looking at how the current structure can be improved is important.

Cheryl recommended inviting PRO to a Commission meeting to try rekindle a role for them in advocacy. Family child care providers no longer have a statewide advocacy group other than unions.

Heidi reported that Rep. Kotek recommended focusing on protecting the gains in ERDC given the critical role child care has in keeping people at work. Nina agrees that she has been working to alert people that this is infrastructure the way that transportation is. The recent Oregon budget projection is a 1.3 billion shortfall in addition to the 1 million shortfall during this biennium.

Deborah noted that we can't lose the commitment to quality and shift to accessibility and affordability. In hard economic times, families need not just child care but really good child care, because the stresses that happen to families is mirrored in their kids and child care providers are supporting children. Provide quality and continuity for children for families while they are trying to sort out things in this economy.

Faye from AFSCME said that from a union perspective, training is one of the most important and they will have health insurance soon. She will have more details on that shortly.

Rhonda noted that if families aren't working then there are more funds going out in Child Welfare. We have only realized gains in the last year. Nina noted that it is a trickle down. If there are fewer funds available, then the result trickles down to the providers. Deborah noted that we have just seen the impact of the additional money and that if this is taken away it will be really detrimental to the system.

Tom said that the whether or not it is done in the Governor's Report, the Commission could take a lead in educating the freshman legislators. There will be people who will ask 'why isn't child care in one place?' again. We need to do a concise thing that we need to place in every Governor's Report that explains the child care system. That it is in one place and pieced of it are contracted out.

## **Introductions**

### **Children's Institute – Swati Adarkar, Alisse Brown (lobbyist – Ready for School)**

Children's Institute (CI) has evolved since it began in 2004. Duncan Campbell founded CI to create a research and action organization to focus on systemic change to look for strategies that can impact many children. The organization focuses on the first five years and they are looking for opportunities to increase investments in high quality strategies during these crucial years. They are currently looking at their priorities for the next three to five years, as well as the upcoming legislative agenda.

The strategy has been to look at target approaches each year to build a broader agenda. In addition to looking at best practices, they are looking at polling and other

data to look at where they can push and see advances. This year's agenda will look at high risk infants and toddlers. Though the CI strategic plan is 0-8, CI does not have a focus on school age because other partners are working in this area such as Stand for Children and the Chalkboard project. The focus of CI has been on the Pre K Head Start and Early Head Start. We know that Head Start is not touching all children so are increasingly looking at strategies on how to create better bridges between child care and Head Start to reach more children and stabilize families. There is an opportunity to focus on access to quality programs and professional development. CI hears that child care settings want to bring in Head Start eligible children in programs but lack the resources to meet the performance standards.

Adam Davis and Tim Hibbitz worked with CI to conduct 4 focus groups to understand experiences of low income families. The interviews were with low income parents to hear in their own words about the key struggles of access, quality and affordability. Swati presented a video of the interviews with the parent groups to the Commission.

Swati noted they are getting ready to release a focus group report. CI just released a report on professional development and next year will be on facilities and quality spaces for children. CI will release a report on testing and evaluating for kindergarten readiness.

Alisse Brown is the campaign manager for the Ready for School Campaign. Last session was a great success with 39 million win for Head Start. CI is asking for 24 million with 10% set aside included in that for the 0-3 years of age in the next session. The Ready for the School Campaign brought together 3<sup>rd</sup> party voices to Salem about the importance of expansion for Head Start.

CI recently met with the Governor regarding the request for 24 million and there are no promises but he did state that there would be new money. CI is prepared for a lower number but will need to fight hard to make sure that the legislature does not tear apart this in the Governor's budget. House Speaker Dave Hunt is a huge fan of Head Start and will be a supporter of Early Head Start. House Democrats supported it as part of their campaigns so there is optimism. However, they know that they will have their work cut out for them in this economy.

Deborah noted that she and Swati have had discussions on how to bridge Head Start and child care. She stated that there is a danger of moving Head Start forward and leaving behind child care in funding. At the CHIF allocation committee yesterday there was discussion to hold Head Start funding harmless separate from child care, which would need to go to a competitive process, to align Head Start with the state and federal priorities. If they hold Head Start funding harmless when they already have received the lions share of allocations in the last round and they cut back the total for early childhood, it leaves behind and shortchanges child care and reinforces stereotypes that hurt everyone. Swati noted that CI can't possibly address all of the issues and are trying to figure out where they can move based on their mission which is to expand early childhood education. Swati feels that we have to help the public better understand child care's role in early childhood education. The focus groups underscored the amount of work that needs to be done. Swati said CI works to focus on the short term and long term goals and find ways to gain some movement. One of the conversations with federal partners on the Buffet Early Childhood Alliance is to address some of the

problems pushed from federal to state that we have to deal with. The President elect's agenda looks at weaving child care, Head Start and Early Head Start funding streams in ways that we have not seen.

Swati noted that One Voice for Child Care is an organization to work on child care and Deborah noted that One Voice does not have the list of support that CI does. Deborah recommended noting that an addendum that would note the goal to bridge child care with Head Start that would not dilute their message. Otherwise, the gap just keeps getting bigger and bigger and on a statewide campaign child care should be included. Swati noted that we are working with state partners to do this. Strategy is focused on research and polling to decide when to move on things when they have legs. To just suddenly come out with a statement that is not connected to a strategy that they are behind would go against their mission. The messaging has already started within CI and the board is already hearing about quality child care and work behind the scenes to bring people up to speed so that when it is on the flyer it is well down the road with support. As Dick Alexander discusses, this is a stake in the ground and the crack in the door is getting wider and wider.

Swati noted that the Oregon Community Foundation, Tom and Bobbie and others have been discussing how to partner and move common issues forward.

Rosetta noted that years ago DHS and Head Start worked together and may be a good model for child care/Head Start partnership. Swati noted they are looking at a demonstration project to figure out how to document and show how this could be done successfully. They do not currently have the resources. Rosetta noted that this was originally difficult because it was new and that now it would be a good model to show that we could use these funds. If only one or two children are "Head Start" within a facility, all the children benefit from the standards.

Pam asked if entities are going in with separate agendas and if we are competing or going in with a shared agenda? Swati noted that CI's agenda will have a focused agenda on expanding Head Start and Early Head Start, and will continue to be a part of One Voice and partners to identify how to support each other. We build collaborations with organizations with different agendas because not one organization can do it all.

CI takes position on broader initiatives and the Ready for School Campaign is a public information campaign to eliminate the waiting list for kids to get into Head Start. The organization is tightly focused. If you have an issue that you would like CI to support or endorse, please contact them.

### **Break for R&R Advisory Committee**

#### **Laurie Warner –**

Laurie handed out a list of Employment Department proposed legislative concepts. If there are any questions, please speak to Tom Olsen.

There is a new make up in the house with about half of the representatives newly elected which will create a challenge. Laurie is in the process now of working with the new legislators.

Budget issue – Governor’s office will release Gov. budget on Dec.1<sup>st</sup>. Legislative revenue committee presented this week on Wednesday that stated the state has less revenue for this and next biennium. Governor asked agencies to reduce general fund expenditures by 1.2%. We are now three quarters of the biennium done. Child Care is the only division in the Employment Department which receives general fund dollars. Tom’s budget has to decrease by \$200,000 between now and the end of the biennium. Close to a million dollar reduction over the two biennium. This will impact 09-11 budget and we will need to submit a proposal to the fiscal impact office explaining how we’re impacting the budget reductions. Staffing for health and safety are the priority.

One might think that given the house and senate with a democrat governor that the priorities would align but it is not necessarily so. We will still have to fight for the existing general fund dollars for the child care budget.

The Commission has been a strong advocate of child care to support the system. This has been helpful for having voices in place to speak up for the system.

Rosetta asked her perspective about the role of the Commission and advocacy so that we are clear. Laurie stated that the issue is that we report to the Governor. The obligation to the agency is to support what is in the budget. Our task as a Commission is to support the Governor’s budget. It can get touchy with this commission because legislators are on the commission as well as agency staff and there is always a balance that we are striving for. If there is an issue where the commission does not support the governor’s budget then that needs to be talked through prior to a legislative session. Timing is everything. We each have individual positions, agency position, commission position and we just need to be clear which vantage point we are speaking from.

What can be helpful to the Employment Department? Support as we go into the legislative session. The general fund conversation would be helpful for not just the Child Care Division but for all human services that support children and families. Be aware of what is happening in other arenas and how that might impact child care at the local level. DHS may be impacted by the reduction as well.

The Governor has said he would like to hold education harmless which is 60% of state general fund. DHS and state police take a significant piece of general fund. CCD receives a small amount. DHS has been in a hiring freeze since November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Rebecca Nance is the legislative coordinator who informs the agency on related issues and will keep the Commission informed. There is a concern about maintaining the gains made last session that ensure subsidies for low income children. Not finding appropriate child care can impede working or returning to work after a period of unemployment.

### **School Age Exempt Care Concept**

Need general concept to move forward with the school age exempt care. Kathleen described that the background checks would be self-regulated and employers would be responsible for conducting their own criminal background checks but possibly could access CCD’s background check process for a fee.

Would this be clear to parents that they are going through a different background check than licensed? Kathleen stated this would be up to the parent to ask the provider what

type of background check it is. CCD could offer an option which they could make available at cost which would be higher than what is offered to licensed facilities.

Tom noted that the clean box has a couple of policy issues that need resolved. Will it require an FBI check? It will depend upon how this is drafted in legislative council. The clean box would be a voluntary step which would enable but not require people to enroll in it. The clean box is for individuals who want to work in multiple types of child oriented programs.

The clean box is not necessary for the exempt care proposal to go forward. Rosetta asked, in concept, can the Commission support moving forward with the exempt care issue? We can continue the conversation with Rep. Kotek regarding enforcement and if there should be any further statements in the legislation.

### **PD Concept – Tom Olsen**

Tom has been working on a project with the Oregon Community Foundation to create a public/private investment fund to invest in child care quality. Bobbie did a literature review and the Oregon Community Foundation is interested in moving forward on the recommendations.

The training and education database is in process. Also looking at creating a certification as an Oregon “Center of Excellence” which would be a path on the way to NAEYC accreditation and would incorporate Head Start Standards to support child care centers prepare to get ready to take Head Start children. As an incentive to facilities, one idea would be to purchase infant toddler slots. The proposed timeline is fast to prepare for 2011 to go to legislature to remove the cap from the tax credit. The infrastructure would be in place with the private sector leading. This incorporates the mentoring program as well.

See draft concept paper for further details.