



**Program Committee Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.
15506 County Line Road, Suite 102
Spring Hill, FL 34610**

Committee Members Present: Dave Meglay, Chair; Jayne Goldstein, Sonya Jackson, Beth Rawls

Committee Members Attending Via Phone: None

Committee Members Excused: Mary Beth Wehnes

Staff Present: Jim Farrelly, Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas, Betsy Kier

I. Welcome and Call to Order: Mr. Dave Meglay, Committee Chair

Mr. Meglay, Chair, called the Program Committee to order at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Meglay requested a motion to adopt the draft minutes from the November 4, 2009 meeting. Ms. Jackson so moved and Ms. Rawls seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and the motion carried.

II. Discussion, Centers Below Monitoring Standards – Ms. Betsy Kier

Ms. Kier reviewed the following centers that are currently on a Corrective Action Plan:

WCOP – Their six (6) month probation ends in December and a complete program assessment will be scheduled for early January.

LFSH – Coalition staff is continuing to work with this center. This center will be re-assessed in the near future.

HLDC – A review is currently with AWI’s legal department. The Coalition has not received any feedback from AWI to date.

EDC – The center is on-track and a complete assessment will be done soon.

FP – Changes are being implemented and staff have made numerous visits to the center and reported that things are going well.

HDP – They are also on track and the Coalition’s Curriculum Specialist will be meeting with them regarding their curriculum.

SDFCCH – This is a new addition to the list and the provider was extremely discourteous to the staff person assessing the home. When staff returned with the form for a corrective action plan, parents noted that some staff had been inappropriately speaking to the children. A meeting was then scheduled with Ms. Kier, Mr. Farrelly and Provider and Curriculum staff. The provider agreed to order, and has since purchased, a Coalition approved curriculum along with additional equipment for the home and did submit a Corrective Action Plan. This plan was not approved. Staff met with her again and a new Corrective Action Plan will be re-submitted.

Mr. Meglay inquired how the Coalition determines who is assessed. Ms. Kier stated the Provider Specialists have assessments scheduled through the end of the year. When staff compiled their scheduling lists they selected centers that have never been assessed or the last assessment was performed by CDS as priorities. Quality centers are also included on the schedules. She informed the Committee that staff completes at least three (3) assessments per week. Larger centers require two (2) staff members to perform the assessment. Ms. Kier stated that a plan for annual assessments of all centers is in place.

Ms. Kier stated that having providers write their own Corrective Action Plan is working well. A generic format has been created with areas that need to be addressed and the provider submits what they will do to ensure their goals are met.

KSNP – The center’s Corrective Action Plan was received and approved within two (2) days.

KKCP – Coalition staff is working with the center and they have since had a Technical Assistance training.

Ms. Kier informed the Committee that the Coalition has implemented a form for providers who refuse offers of Technical Assistance; a written statement has been prepared for the provider to sign indicating that they were offered and refused the Technical Assistance.

PP – The Coalition is waiting for the center’s Corrective Action Plan.

Ms. Kier informed the Committee that Coalition staff have monitored a number of quality centers and reported their monitoring scores.

Ms. Goldstein suggested that beginning in 2010, the Coalition consider requesting quality centers to begin a mentoring program for low performing centers that would offer advice and suggestions for improvement. The Coalition will also be forming a Provider Advisory Council to benefit centers.

III. ARRA Funding Update

Ms. Kier informed the Committee that as of December 4, 2009, 734 children were enrolled in ARRA funded programs and this number includes the transfer of re-determinations. The break down is as follows:

Unemployment Compensation: 61 in Pasco; 38 in Hernando
Educational/Training: 437 in Pasco; 198 in Hernando (includes re-determinations)

Mr. Farrelly stated that the Coalition may be looking at creating a waiting list prior to January's Board meeting. Because of the dramatic increase in new enrollees, there is a \$600,000 deficit in Pasco slots. A determination will be made after November's utilization numbers have been tabulated.

Ms. Rawls stated that Pasco County Schools will be opening six (6) new classrooms for ages 1-3 as part of Early Head Start. This information will be provided for Resource & Referral.

Mr. Farrelly stated that most of the Coalitions have dropped services for older children, but we are still serving through age 12. The age level may be reconsidered and re-determined by the Board. He informed the Committee that the ELC in Ft. Myers has in excess of 5,000 children on a waiting list. Mr. Meglay agreed that the Board should focus more on the younger age groups. Staff will present information to the Board on the age statistics. Ms. Kier stated that if older children are dropped from the Coalition's rolls, Pasco County has Place Programs in all the elementary schools for before and after care and these programs are relatively inexpensive. Hernando County does not have this program, but the Coalition is working to cultivate relationships with the YMCAs in Hernando to ensure that they offer quality programs.

A brief discussion followed on the large number of children being enrolled and if this increase is a direct result of the economy.

IV. Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)

Mr. Farrelly stated this is a simple concept with complex implementation because the current monitoring system will be directly tied into provider reimbursement with such a system. Under this program, at the end of an extensive evaluation of the center, the provider will be given a quality rating which may directly affect both enrollment and their reimbursement percentage. This is a quality evaluation and incentive system. Mr. Farrelly stated that QRIS will eventually be implemented throughout Florida and while many of the Coalitions have already begun discussing and planning for implementation, 5-6 Coalitions are fully implemented, and only 3-4 Coalitions have just begun to discuss the program. The fully implemented Coalition (Duval County) has been challenged by providers in the courts and has prevailed after two (2) appeals.

Ms. Rawls inquired where the funds would come from to implement this and can we do so without having to incur a waiting list. Mr. Farrelly stated absolutely not and the Coalition would have to hire at least 4-5 new staff members and it would take 4-5 years of planning before this system was fully implemented. He informed the Committee that the Coalition can begin planning to present this system for discussion next year and once created, it would be field tested for at least a year with new staff. The Coalition's administrative costs will go up, leaving fewer dollars for slots. There is a possibility that AWI will mandate the use of this system and utilize ARRA dollars on a statewide basis. Ms. Kier stated that the Coalition's assessment tools are similar to the QRIS tools.

Ms. Kier stated that additional staff training would be required for the ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale) and ECERS (Early Childhood Education Rating Scale) tools at approximately \$3-5,000 per person.

V. Selection of Next Meeting Date

The next Program Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2010 at 8:30 a.m.

Ms. Kier informed the Committee that a new issue involving a home care provider has just been raised by Reimbursement staff in regards to attendance. A family child care home that provides 24-hour care and is licensed for 10 children has 28 children enrolled. Ms. Kier stated that research indicates that the provider is out of ratio by having 14 children during the day and 14 at night. She learned that licensing reports indicated that in August, 6 of 6 files were presented by the provider for review. Ms. Kier contacted a DCF supervisor who then visited the provider with Coalition staff and were told only 6-8 children were enrolled, but Coalition staff had enrollment reports and parent sign-in sheets which indicated additional children. Licensing staff informed the provider she would have to disenroll children immediately or her license would be revoked. As of December 8, the children had not yet been disenrolled.

This provider has been paid dollars she was not entitled to which could be considered fraud. Ms. Kier stated the Coalition does attendance audits, selecting 3-4 days out of a month to verify School Readiness children. The Coalition has the provider's sign in and out sheets for October and November that clearly indicate she was over ratio. DCF will be fining her \$2 per day per child for October and November. The Coalition will not be paying for more than ten (10) children. The provider did submit a list to Eligibility staff of the children she would disenroll. The provider's sign-in sheets do not indicate whether the parent signed in the morning (a.m.) or evening (p.m.). But the provider did tell staff which parent signed when. However, when licensing remarked that the provider was over ratio, the provider stated "you can't prove it because I don't have a.m. or p.m. on my time sheet."

Mr. Farrelly recommended that the Coalition file for alleged fraud with FDLE through AWI. He also recommended going back through the reimbursement files in order to recover the fraudulent funds. Before that happens, however, Mr. Farrelly believes the information should be reviewed by the Coalition's attorney, requesting his recommendation regarding the return of funds.

Ms. Rawls inquired whose responsibility the enrollment issue was and was informed that licensing (DCF) monitors the attendance. Coalition staff does check the attendance rosters for ratios and communicates their findings to DCF. Ms. Kier reported that this provider also had three (3) infants enrolled which made her out of ratio for this age group alone. A brief discussion followed including showing due process for audit purposes. USDA will also be investigating.

VI. Public Input

None

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Meglay requested a motion to adjourn the Program Committee meeting. Ms. Rawls so moved and Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. The Program Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m. with no further discussion.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ramute “Jak” Jakubauskas,
Administrative Assistant