

Early Childhood Connections - Eaton County's Great Start Collaborative
Great Start Collaborative Council
Minutes: April 27, 2009

Present: Amanda Burch, Lois Cairns, Rachelle Gorton, Kimi Mead, Mike Payne, Joni Risner, Randy Rucker, Ronda Rucker, Heather Sanders, Nikki Selleck, Nancy Sherd, D'Lynn Smith, Donna Turner, Cindy Van Neste, Debra Williamson, Marissa Zamudio

Nikki welcomed everyone and facilitated member introductions. The agenda was approved with Marissa's ECIC report moved to the end of the meeting, as she had not yet arrived. February minutes were accepted with a motion introduced by Heather, along with support from Joni.

New ECIC Star Logo –

Ronda introduced the updated ECIC Star logo. The wording in the star's points now read: Pediatric and Family Health; Social and Emotional Health; Child Care and Early Education; Parenting Leadership; and Family Support. It has been suggested that all GSC work be integrated with this graphic format. Kimi pointed out that the work of the GSC continues evolving, as does any living organism. Using this new format, the meeting continued:

Pediatric and Family Health (health, safety, basic needs):

Health Summit – Heather and Joni reported on a recent Health Summit organized and hosted by the Board of Commissioners and the Health Department. Mark Shauer and other legislative representatives participated in the Summit. The needs of the uninsured and under-insured were addressed. Four strategies were identified and will be worked on during the upcoming weeks. Mike Payne indicated a need for clearer communication from agencies to parents about available health services and application requirements. He said it is very difficult for parents to find out what is required to obtain and maintain insurance coverage for their children. GSC members expressed continued interest in the Health Summit and some advocated for early childhood involvement in this important process.

Family Violence Emphasis -- D'Lynn reported on progress on the October Domestic Violence Awareness Initiative conference at the recent Program and Services Committee meeting. The Committee is coordinating with Nancy Oliver to further develop the project.

Social and Emotional Health:

Toddler Time Summer Schedule – Toddler Time in the Park will meet from June 2 through July 1 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at local community parks throughout the County. A schedule will be sent through the listserv. Cindy indicated that evening

events haven't been well attended in the past. Olivet Library will continue to host Toddler Time through the summer months.

Child Care and Early Education:

Maple Valley Survey -- In collaboration with EISD and Maple Valley Schools, Early Childhood Connections is surveying parents of three and four year old children in the Maple Valley School District to determine if there is a need for increased pre-school programming. Head Start programs in both counties, Eaton and Barry, have agreed to work jointly if a need exists. Ronda requested help distributing the surveys.

GSRP Advisory Meeting – This group met recently to collaborate and examine the needs of the five local GSRP programs. One outcome from the meeting is planned collaborative nutrition programming for GSRP families through the five programs and MSU Extension. Additionally, EISD will include GSRP demographic data in their “data warehouse.” This will connect pre-school programs to the district-wide school record system.

Great Start Child Care and Early Learning Regional Resource Centers -- The grant process for funding, awarded by ECIC, for childcare training and recruitment has been reorganized into a regional system. Marissa said this new system provides the opportunity for more local control.

Literacy Weeks – The book character based Literacy Weeks are scheduled for the last two weeks in October. Information and a registration form will be available soon.

Parenting Leadership:

Star Power Rally – The fourth annual Star Power Rally is scheduled for May 21. GSC members were encouraged to participate in this legislative advocacy event. A bus will be provided, free of charge, from Charlotte, for participants. Registration for the Rally is online.

Post Cards Sent to Legislators – Over 150 post cards were sent from area parents and others to Rep. Jones and Sen. Birkholz asking for their support for funding for early childhood services. D'Lynn's granddaughter played a key role in this community effort.

Parent Coalition – Kimi reported the Coalition is working on increasing parent participation. The main focus of the Coalition at this time is promoting the Star Power Rally.

Family Support:

MOYC Updates – Restaurants throughout Eaton County have utilized purple Month of the Young Child placemats during the month of April. The placemats were provided and distributed by Early Childhood Connections.

Protective Factors – Several GSC members recently attended a, ECIC sponsored video conference on Protective Factor. The outlined protective factors will be used to review the GSC Work Plans, both current and during development. Look for further information at the next GSC meeting.

Family Friendly Businesses – ECC has been recognizing local businesses for their “Family Friendly” efforts. The nomination form is on the ECC/GSC website.

Infrastructure:

Special Education Enrollment vs. Early Childhood Funding – Ronda presented a graph delineating the interface between the incidence of need for early childhood Special Education services and local Early Childhood funding, since 1999. The graph appears to support the hypothesis that: 1. “As we emphasize the importance of early childhood, initially the incidence of need for early childhood Special Education and other services will increase as more children are identified. 2. As we continue to emphasize the importance of early childhood in our community, and families with young children get connected to services at an earlier age, the number of children in need of long term Special education services will decrease.”

The May, EISD Special Education election, to raise funds for local Special Education programs, was discussed in detail.

Fund Mapping – Recommendations from Executive Committee – Joni made a motion that recommended Ronda present some of the data from the Fund Mapping report prepared by ECC intern, Kay Sneyd, to the Human Services Collaborative. Additionally, that Kay be thanked in a media release, also indicating the purpose of the report. The motion was supported and adopted.

Partner Sharing:

1) The next ECC/GSC newsletter will be released the first of July. Submissions need to be received by the end of May.

2) New funding, through a Consumers Energy grant, will provide access to the Imagination Library program for families living in Sunfield and Mulliken. Online registration for the Imagination Library is now available.

3) Lois reported on a joint recruitment meeting she and Ronda had attended. This topic was discussed at the recent GSRP Advisory meeting. The joint project brochure could be used as a joint recruitment tool.

ECIC Updates, Marissa:

1) The kindergarten teachers’ survey has been completed and indicates support for early childhood services.

2) Project Launch, a health initiative, has been awarded to Saginaw County. Similar programs will be funded in the future through the Health Reform Act.

3) A Technical Assistance meeting will be held in June. Eaton County will have five seats at this meeting.

4) ECIC has hired a Parent Leadership employee to support local parent coalitions.

Nikki encouraged members to attend the Star Power Rally, May 21, and adjourned the session.

Next meeting: June 29, 2009.