

Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative

Minutes: April 28, 2008

Members Present: Lois Cairns, Peg Cameron, Charlene Cunningham, Kim Estes, Fran Jozefowiz, Kelsey McDonald, Kimi Mead, Jamie Nixon, Joni Risner, Ronda Rucker, Brenda Sears, Nikki Selleck, Nancy Sherd, Pat Simmons, Katie Southward, Donna Turner, Cindy VanNeste, Debra Williamson, Jackie Wood.

1. Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative met in regular session on April 28, 2008 at the Charlotte Assembly of God Church. Nikki Selleck, GSC Co-chair, opened the meeting at 12:00 noon with introductions from members in attendance.
2. The agenda was accepted by consensus as presented.
3. Minutes from the March 2008 Great Start Collaborative meeting were accepted as printed. D'Lynn made the motion to accept the minutes, Kimi supported the motion.

4. Great Start Collaborative Coordinator Report and Updates:

Legislative Updates: Ronda has been providing all GSC members *Capitol Corner: An ECIC Legislative Update*. She encouraged members to keep current with this informative legislative summary of issues pertaining to the early childhood community and to use it as a resource when advocating for early childhood concerns. She sends out *Capitol Corner* by email to the GSC membership on a regular basis. The current issue includes: 1) an explanation of legislative efforts to increase funding for daycare through the Department of Human Services, this proposal also addresses issues of quality care; 2) information regarding the Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force, which will drive reform of Michigan's child welfare system; 3) proposed legislation mandating an all-day kindergarten model in public schools; and 4) a description of the new Booster Seat regulation, which goes into effect on July 1, 2008. Ronda noted that families will need to be made aware of this new regulation.

Star Power Rally: This annual advocacy event at the State Capitol is scheduled for May 21. Early Childhood Connections is making arrangements for bus transportation for participants traveling from Charlotte to the rally. Child-focused activities and lunch will be provided in Lansing. Registration for the event is available through the world wide web at www.ecic4kids.org. To register for the bus, members were encouraged to contact Kimi Mead.

Caregiver Training: A meeting was recently held to discuss local training opportunities for area child care providers. As a result of this discussion, a common calendar of training opportunities will be developed for the GSC website. Caregivers are mandated to attend ten hours of training annually for licensing requirements.

Juvenile Justice Millage: Members were invited to share their recent requests for funding through the Eaton County Juvenile Justice Millage revenue.

Community Mental Health - Fran reported that CMH has requested both continuation

and expansion funding for the home-based Parent-Young Child behavioral treatment program. The expansion request includes funding for an additional .5 FTE therapist for Eaton County families.

MSU Extension - Donna reported that MSUE has requested funds to use as a local match to a larger Children's Trust Fund grant request for increased home-based educational services. MSUE is hoping to provide more flexibility in their program by having the options of longer visitation schedules and follow-up visits with families. The two grants will fund a second MSUE parent education position through the Eaton County MSU Extension office.

Early Childhood Connections: ECC has requested continuation funding for the Community Coordinator positions.

It is anticipated that the Juvenile Justice Millage Proposal will be presented to local voters as an August ballot initiative.

Peg Cameron presented the following motion for consideration:

The Eaton County Great Start Collaborative supports the placement of the Eaton County Juvenile Justice Millage renewal on a countywide August 2008 ballot. The GSC further supports a level of requested funding within the proposal at levels adequate to provide for the continuation and expansion of services for Early Childhood prevention and intervention services, including the proposals recently submitted by Early Childhood Connections, Community Mental Health, and Eaton MSU Extension.

Pat Simmons supported the motion, which was approved unanimously by Collaborative members.

5. Committee/Group Reports:

Communication Committee - Cindy: This committee continues to work on the GSC Communications Plan, recently by identifying key contacts for distribution of early childhood education and advocacy information.

Early Care and Education Committee - D'Lynn: The Caregiver Recognition Dinner has been a major under-taking for this committee. The keynote speaker will be Lindy Bush. The event will also include a training for participants on the ECC Benchmarks Document. Additionally, this group communicated Child Development Accreditation, CDA, credentialing requirements through the April issue of the Early Childhood Connections newspaper insert.

Executive Committee - Ronda: The Executive Committee approved the development of a letter of support to be included with the MSU Extension application for a Children's Trust Fund grant.

Parent Coalition - Kimi: The Parent Coalition is currently working through a visioning and goal setting process. They are also developing a logo for the group. Kimi also addressed the upcoming *Star Power Rally* and encouraged attendance at the event. Donna noted that Kimi's enthusiasm is a great asset to the efforts of the Collaborative.

Program and Services Committee - Peg: At their recent meeting, the Program and

Services Committee helped develop the Benchmarks training for the Caregivers Recognition evening. They have also begun work on developing a conference on family violence to be held next fall.

School Readiness and Kindergarten Transition Committee - Ronda: The SR & KT Committee is working on an Eaton County 0-5 Book List and is working with local libraries to promote use of libraries by families with young children. They are also developing a uniform “transition summary” format to be used for transitioning to public school kindergarten enrollment.

Website Committee - Debra: This committee hasn’t met since the last GSC meeting, however, many updates have been added to the website over the past month. The website is receiving approximately 45 “hits” per day.

6. Other Community Reports:

Summer Head Start - A pilot summer Head Start program has been funded through Strong Families/Safe Children (DHS). One home visitor will be working with six children and their parents.

Summer Early On - Eaton Early On will be instituting a summer session for the first time this summer. All Early On eligible children will be able to participate in the expanded program.

Summer Toddler Time - The Grand Ledge Toddler Time program has a new facilitator and also a new assistant. They will continue programming throughout the summer months. The popular Toddler Time in the Park series will again be implemented throughout the county.

March Program Updates - Ronda reported that over 90 children attended the Leslie Helakosi literacy events. Families reported thoroughly enjoying the activities provided at the events, in particular the chicken foot spats from MSU Extension. Donna reported that the *Numbers to Know, For HealthiER Kids* event received very positive feedback from participants.

7. In closing, Nikki reminded GSC members that the Collaborative will return to a every other month schedule, with the next meeting scheduled for June 30, 2008 at 12:00 noon.

8. The April meeting was adjourned by consensus of members present.

Calendar for future meeting:

June 30, August 25, October 27, and December 15, 2008. Meetings will be held at 12 noon, at the Charlotte Assembly of God Church, directly across from Meijers, located just east of exit #60 off I-69.