

Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative

Minutes: October 27, 2008

Members Present: Dale Barr, Lois Cairns, Charlene Cunningham, Kim Estes, Rachelle Gorton, Fran Jozefowiz, Kelsey McDonald, Kimi Mead, Shelly Miller, Joni Risner, Ronda Rucker, Heather Sanders, Nikki Selleck, Nancy Sherd, D'Lynn Smith, Donna Turner, Cindy VanNeste, Debra Williamson.

1. Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative met in regular session on October 27, 2008 at the Charlotte Assembly of God Church. Nikki Selleck, GSC Chairperson, 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 August 25th Great Start Collaborative meeting were accepted as printed. D'Lynn made the motion to accept the minutes, Dale supported the motion.

4. Coordinator Updates - Ronda Rucker:

- Member Participation Agreement - Ronda requested that attending GSC members fill out and sign the annual GSC Membership agreement,
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- Updated Infrastructure Review - An updated copy of the Infrastructure review was distributed.
- Fund Mapping Update - The Fund Mapping project is well under-way. Some information is still needed for completion.
- 2008 GSC Action Agenda - Two versions of the Action Agenda were addressed. One notating recent additions and changes in red, the second a condensed version, were distributed for informational purposes.
- Safe Sleep Project with MSU Nursing Students - Ronda has recently learned that of six infant deaths within the past year in Eaton County due to unsafe sleep practices. She suggested that an addition be made to the Action Agenda, #19, which would address the prevention regarding infant sleep practices. She said that the class of MSU nurses currently working in Eaton County are developing a training curriculum and resource packet for use by educators and others. Heather suggested pursuing a grant to purchase "sleep sacks" for distribution to families with new infants. Kim E. offered that this project may already be addressed in item #20 of the Agenda. Nancy S. said that the Office of Young Children already does trainings on this issue and would be willing to present one in Eaton County.

Fran offered a motion to place education on "safe sleep" practices on the GSC Action Agenda. Support for the motion came from D'Lynn. The question was called and the motion passed.

Following the acceptance of the action, Heather indicated a need to address safely sharing a bed or the “family bed” as many families co-sleep with infants, especially while breast feeding. A sub-committee was formed to address the issue of safe sleep and to report back to the larger Collaborative. Heather, Fran, Nikki, Donna, and Ronda offered to serve on the sub-committee. Fran shared that the Ingham County Expectant Parent Organization has training modules on this subject. Debra will share an article with the group about a review of research completed by Dr. Margot Sunderland.

- Connect Kids Backpacks Project - Nine completed backpacks have been delivered to DHS. In one week’s time, thirteen Eaton County resident children were placed in foster care after being removed from parental homes. Members were encouraged to promote the Connect Kids Backpack project.
- Poverty Summit - This meeting will take place on November 13 at Cobo Hall in Detroit. Ronda asked members if anyone would be interested in attending. Funding to cover travel expense is available and the GSC can cover some of the cost for some Collaborative members' attendance.
- Presentation to the HSCC - Ronda is scheduled to make a report to the Human Services Collaborative and asked the membership what they would like included in the presentation. A number of topics were offered for inclusion, including: the Action Agenda, statement of community need, brochures, funding source outline, recent endeavors taken by the GSC, items from the “make it happen” list compiled during the meeting, attendance and service data. It was suggested that Ronda develop a power point to go along with the presentation.

5. Parent Coalition - Kimi Mead:

- Health Insurance - The Parent Coalition has been gathering information about health insurance options for families. It has been difficult to get current information, she reported, as many programs are undergoing transitions. It was suggested that once the information is available, rather than producing a brochure, which would need to be updated on a regular basis, that the information be posted on the website and kept updated. A discussion followed about the process that the 2-1-1 service uses to keep information current and reliable. It was noted that not only are insurance programs changing through DHS, but so are requirements for families involved with caring for family members (kinship care).
- Delta Township Candidate Forum - Kimi and Ronda attended this ECC jointly sponsored League of Women Voter’s Candidate Forum. LWV of Greater Lansing hopes to have more events like this in Eaton County, reported Kimi.
- DHS Child Daycare Audit - Kimi attended the Audit meeting and learned that kinship care homes will soon need to be licensed as daycares.
- Strategic Plan - The Parent Coalition continues to work on the development of a

long-term strategic plan.

6. Conference Reports:

- Continuum of Care - D'Lynn Smith: D'Lynn and Jaimie Nixon attended this conference. D'Lynn says she learned a lot about what the St. Joseph County ECIC does. One thing is that every new baby gets a visit. Ronda shared that this used to be part of the Eaton County initiative as well, prior to loss of funding. Another program she learned about is a central GSRP/Head Start/Pre-school registration system.
- MiAEYC Infant Toddler Conference - Kimi Mead: This conference, reported Kimi, focused on Standards of Quality. She said it was very educational and she learned a lot about brain development.
- Dropout Prevention Summit - Debra: This meeting provided information on the high school dropout problem and the impact to individuals, the State and to local communities. A work group is being organized for Eaton County to further address the issue. Ronda and Debra attended.
- No Child Left Inside - Debra: Author Richard Louv has been a leader in focusing worldwide attention on the rapid decrease in time children spend interacting with the natural world. This decrease is related to the increase in technological activity and the current "culture of fear". Michigan has begun an initiative to increase opportunities for children to experience the natural world.

7. Subcommittee Reports:

- Communications Committee - Cindy VanNeste: Cindy reported the following Communications Committee initiatives:
New professional publication of the ECC brochure; the development of an ECC program brochure; a newly published Early Education Book List; the Fall ECC Newsletter/Insert; an ECC promotional packet; a survey developed to determine where young families gather information; the re-starting of a "family friendly" recognition award for businesses
- Programs and Services - D'Lynn Smith: Recent initiatives:
Home safety pamphlet; upcoming Sensory Integration and Regulation Training; recent Family Violence is Child Abuse Conference
- School Readiness and Transition - Ronda: This committee may be integrated into another group. They have developed the Book List mentioned above.
- Website Committee - Ronda: The website has experienced a huge increase in the number of "hits". Kelsy McDonald offered to send information for the activities page.

8. Nikki reminded GSC members that the Collaborative will meet every other month,

with the next meeting scheduled for December 15, 2008 at 12:00 noon.

Calendar for future meeting:

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.