

**Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative: Programs and Services Committee**  
Minutes: August 23, 2007

Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative Programs and Services Committee met in regular session on August 23, 2007. Ronda Rucker, Collaborative Coordinator, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Lois Cairns of Head Start was introduced. Lois is replacing Karen Woodman. Karen will continue to work for Head Start, but in a different capacity.

The agenda was accepted as presented by group consensus.

Program Updates and Information presented:

Cindy VanNeste provided information about an upcoming free car seat check-up event scheduled for September 28, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. in Charlotte. The event is co-sponsored by Early Childhood Connections and Office for Young Children, as well as Michigan Department of Community Health, through a grant from the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning.

Ronda presented information about the upcoming Kinship Care event, scheduled for September 20, from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. This event will be held at the E.I.S.D. building and is sponsored by Eaton County Strong Families Safe Children and MSU Kinship Care Resource Center. Ronda asked that Committee members assist with promotion of this event.

The Michigan School Readiness Program funding has not as yet been approved through the State budget process, reported Ronda. However, plans are underway to hold MSRP classes in Grand Ledge (this program includes Potterville, and will be taught by Ann Kramer), Charlotte, Maple Valley, Olivet, and Bellevue.

Karen advised that Head Start is currently enrolling four-year-olds and will soon be enrolling students from the three-year-old wait list. Orientation is scheduled for Head Start on September 10 and 11. These classes will be held in Eaton Rapids, Charlotte, and Windemere School in the Waverly District.

Donna reported that the Building Strong Families program has received full funding for fiscal year 2007-08. BSF's educational services will now be available for parents of children ages zero to five years of age. However, reported Donna, the Healthy Families program, implemented by the Barry Eaton Health Department, will be discontinued for Eaton County residents as of October 1. Heather Sanders, of the Health Department, will provide the Committee information regarding the Health Department's rationale for the discontinuance of this program.

Following up with the group's discussion at the July meeting, about activities for *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, Nancy reported that a sub-committee has met to develop an upcoming training for childcare providers and interested others. Topics for the training will include: awareness regarding family violence, the local legal response to family violence, and communication skills to use with children who have experienced trauma. This two-part event will be held at the First Lutheran Church in Charlotte on October 9 and October 16, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Childcare providers will receive five hours of professional development credit for participation. More information will be upcoming.

The next ECC newspaper insert is scheduled for November. Ronda will need articles by mid-October. This month's insert will be available on August 26.

Data from the parent survey administered at the Eaton County Fair was reviewed. The majority of responding parents indicated that they read to their children and also have books in the home. Respondents indicated utilizing various programs and services available to the zero to five-year-old population. One or more additional surveys could be administered, perhaps through the OYC newsletter and/or at the *Literacy Week* event scheduled for the Lansing Mall, it was suggested.

A report on *Toddler Time* participation was reviewed. Of the 246 children participating in a twelve month period, over 12% had previous contact with Child Protective Services.

The next GREAT START Collaborative meeting is scheduled for August 27. One order of business will be to select a chairperson.

The “Mr. AI” Rasso presentations are scheduled for September 29. *Music for the Mind (and Soul)* will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and a family-focused concert will be begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center in Charlotte. Some complimentary tickets for the concert are available by contacting D’Lynn Kowalk. These two events are sponsored by a wide variety of local businesses and groups.

Eaton Rapids Early Childhood Advocates are presenting Marybeth Hicks on September 27. Her presentation is entitled *Raising GEEKS: Genuine, Enthusiastic, Empowered Kids*.

*Fun to Be Four* events are being scheduled for September. Dates will be announced.

Ronda presented the schedule for *Literacy Week* events. An orientation meeting for participating agencies will be held in the near future.

It was reported that the Carrie Wilson storyteller event was very well done, but not well attended.

Donna and Mona Ellard requested that the Committee develop a detailed listing of current home visitation services available in Eaton County, as well as information about services no longer available, or functioning at reduced capacity. The Committee listed information on services, funding sources, target populations, intent of service provision, and observations regarding the availability of service to families with children ages zero to five. Donna will have the information formatted for presentations explaining the county’s services profile.

The new GREAT START website and the draft Community Report were briefly discussed.

Work on the “Priority Framework for a Comprehensive Early Childhood System” was suspended until the next meeting due to lack of time.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for Thursday, September 27, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Williamson