

**Louisiana Advisory Council on Child Care and Early Education
Advisory Council Meeting – March 18, 2011
Iberville Building 10:00 am to 12:00 am**

Members Attending: Patricia Crocker, Rev. Tommy French, Tiffany Hinton, Lois Jordan, Brenda Leonpacher, Tonia Loria, Carrie Prochaska,, Cindy Rushing, John Dupre (represented by Carolyn Trivette), Capt. Leland Falcon, Rhenda Hodnett (represented by Willene Griffin), Dr. Mary Louise Jones, Gail Kelso , Guy Sylvester

Unexcused Absence - Members Not Attending/Without Advance Notification: Todd Battiste, Barbara Pickney, Steve Gogreve

Excused Absence – Advance Notification: Gilda Duplessis, Carey Foy, Al Mancuso, Mary Sciaraffa, Ph.D.

Interested Parties: Marci Brewer, Gina Forsman, Delores Gordon, Dr. Ashley Lucas, Sherrel Pointer, Cindy Ramagos, Greg Waddell, Brenda Butler Aiken (for Kahree Wahid), Leslie Lewis, Berry Trascher, Pam Romero, Catherine Robin, Charlene Jenkins

Others: Susan Delle Shaffette (Facilitator), Dorothy Jones (Recorder)

I. Introductions and Welcome

President Pat Crocker called the meeting to order at 10:00 am on the 9th floor of the Iberville Building. Attending Advisory Council members introduced themselves and the organizations they represented. Those persons attending as interested parties were also invited to introduce themselves.

Minutes from the Advisory Council meeting on December 10, 2010 were introduced by Cindy Rushing, Secretary. A motion was made by Rev. Tommy French to approve the minutes and seconded by Dr. Mary Louise Jones. Motion passed.

II. Old Business

a. Website Information

At the September, 2010 meeting, the Advisory Council had accepted the suggestion of the Communications Committee and requested a page on the DCFS website. This page would be allocated to the Advisory Council with a member listing, information links and a place to submit comments/questions. A motion was passed at the last meeting requesting Susan Shaffette to do research on the matter and provide further information on costs involved to obtain and host a website for the next meeting.

Information was gathered on four options:

Google Page	Go Daddy – Website	Yahoo Small Business	Intuit Websites
Free Simple to maintain \$0 for domain	12 months \$53.88 (\$4.49 per month pre-paid for one)	12 months \$111.93 (\$7.46 x 3 mos., \$9.95 x 9 mos.)	12 months \$104.88 (\$4.99 x 3 mos., \$9.99 x 9 mos.)

	\$8 for domain Their web builder is not easy to use	\$9.99 for domain Their web builder is easy to use.	\$0 for domain Their web builder is easy to use.
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The various arrangements were briefly discussed. Susan Shaffette would set up the page and maintain it. There would not be an email for the site, but links to appropriate contacts. A motion was made by Cindy Rushing that we utilize the Google Page and have the state web site linked to it. It was seconded by Carrie Prochaska. Motion passed.

b. Election of Officers

According to the original legislation and the Advisory Council’s operating guidelines, the officers will serve one year terms. They are eligible for up to three consecutive terms. The following slate was established:

- Chair: Patricia Crocker
- Secretary: Cindy Rushing

Nominations were accepted from the floor for the position of Vice Chair. Lois Jordan nominated Rev. Tommy French. No other nominations were made. A motion to accept the nominations as the 2011 officers was made by Tonia Loria and seconded by Tiffany Hinton. Motion passed.

c. Administrative Contract

Pat Crocker introduced a discussion on the facilitation contract that provides administrative support/facilitation services for the Advisory Council. This contract was funded as an ARRA Stimulus project and will expire in August, 2011. Concern was voiced that funding may cause the contract to not be renewed. A committee was formed to discuss funding matters and the contract renewal issues. They will obtain a list of deliverables and the current contract information from Susan to begin exploring alternative means for funding. Those volunteering to be on the committee are:

- Pat Crocker
- Lois Jordan
- Cindy Rushing
- Tonia Loria
- Rev. Tommy French

III. Updates from DCFS

a. TOTS/CCAP

Gail Kelso, DCFS, presented information on updates in the TOTS/CCAP program. The Department is 8 months into using the new system and feels that it has gotten past the major bumps. Gail thanked all those present for the input and comments as they implemented the program. As budget issues are real, the TOTS program has achieved a cost savings for the state from both policy and automation changes.

There will be a public meeting on March 29th in the Iberville Building in Room 129 to talk about the CCAP budget. There will be discussion concerning policy changes and a reduction to the median income level.

b. ARRA Projects

All projects that were funded with ARRA (Americans Rev... and Recovery Act) must be completed this fall and the fund balance completely liquidated by September, 2011. The bulk of the DCFS ARRA money was used for children and child care assistance. The Feds required a portion of the projects to be used for Quality Initiatives and to improve infant and toddler care. None of the programs are slated to end before Sept. 2011.

Some of the projects were:

- Advisory Council facilitation
- Beginning with Babies training program, materials enhancements, and Summit
- Revisions to the Early Learning Guidelines and Core Knowledge Competencies
- Infrastructure Changes
- Pro-Direct Provider Directory
- TOTS
- Training on proposed new regulations (it will be online and free)
- Evacuation planning and respite sites

c. Cost Savings Discussion

Pat Crocker stepped down from chairing the meeting briefly so that she could ask questions from the standpoint of CCAL. CCAL has noted potential places that they see for cost cutting/savings and wanted to know how to present the ideas. It was suggested that a meeting be set up to discuss it further with Gail Kelso. Suggestions for cost savings are welcomed.

IV. CCDF Re-application

The renewal time for the Child Care Block Grant funds is approaching and Gail Kelso will be working with the re-application process. It must be done every two years. The key points in the document are the ways the funds are planned to be used, the amount they anticipate receiving, and how they will safeguard the funds through program integrity, error control, and fraud/recovery. A copy of the past state plan is available by request.

The state is required to hold consultation with groups across the state to gather input and comments. Gail reviewed the application sections with the attendees and showed key points of the application form via a PowerPoint presentation. Key sections included:

- Child Care Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Health & Safety – Child Care Resource & Referral Services
- Professional Development
- Licensing

In December they will be required to prepare a Quality Performance Report to document progress on goals. There was discussion about what the goals of licensing and training should be

and what they should include in the future. They will look at implementation of knowledge from training and how to continue to move centers up in the Star Rating System.

V. Update on Class A Regulations Revision – Final Format

Guy Sylvester was present to provide an update on the Class A Regulations Revision work that has been going on for the last year. The project has been working with Judy Collins, a child care consultant. Draft sections have been placed on the website and comments collected. In July of 2010 the stakeholder meetings were held across the state to gain comments. Those comments were reviewed and in January, 2011, the executive team met with Judy Collins to review the final version. This version was sent to Ruth Johnson, Secretary for her approval. On March 28th at 9:00am in Room 129 of the Iberville Building, a public hearing will be held to review the final version of the Class A regulations.

A contract has been issued to have an interpretive guide to the regulations developed. It will go through each standard and the intent. There will be training in June for all state staff members to review the new regulations. There will be a link on the website to ask questions.

The process after March 28th will consist of a review of comments and determination if there is minimal change or substantial change. If the changes are considered substantial, the process of revisions could start over.

Class B revisions will begin the week after this meeting and Judy Collins will be serving as the group project leader. A draft is on the website and comments are accepted. The monthly meetings are for the workgroup and not an open meeting.

Background Checks: This topic was added to the agenda during the meeting. It was noted by several members of the Advisory Council that further clarification was needed concerning the new criminal background check guidelines. A request was made for a letter or flyer with clarification in layman's terms of what is required, what expires, when it expires and what does not expire. It was suggested that an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) format and a list of definitions would be helpful. There remain many questions concerning the school service providers, therapists, contract workers and visitors. Some centers have turned away service providers rather than risk a deficiency, but then the service providers are getting cited for not providing care. School clearance letters need further clarification on who generates the letters and when they are acceptable.

It was noted that there were 1048 citations during the past year for criminal background check matters. The main issue was putting people to work before they had background checks.

It was determined that a list of questions would be compiled and submitted to Guy Sylvester for him to work on the FAQ/Definitions and general clarifications.

It was suggested that they encourage potential applicants and contract workers to obtain the portable background check that you can get at the LA State Police (soon to be offered by Parish Sheriff's Offices). It is good for 12 months from date of issue. It works well for substitute and multi-center staff.

VI. Public Comments, Announcements and Department Updates

Marci Brewer – Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition: The Breastfeeding Coalition would like to offer training and information to Child Care Workers concerning breastfeeding rights, regulations and safety matters. It was suggested that a coordinated effort be made between the coalition and DCFS to get information to the centers. CCAL will put an article in their newsletter.

Tonia Loria – Louisiana Community & Technical College System: The current education budget cuts may affect cutting programs, such as child care training and essentially will eliminate the ability to have entry-level workers with skills. Tonia encouraged members to advocate against training cuts to child care training providers.

Jonathan Pearce (via memo): Asked DCFS to consider a review of summer camp policies. If a permit to operate were considered, the camp fee would support the DCFS staffing to implement. It would help provide a safety net for children who are in unlicensed care settings. Before and after school programs were not included as it would require legislative changes.

Cindy Rushing – Louisiana Early Childhood Association: State Conference is scheduled for October 22nd in Alexandria. Training with child care clock hours will be available. www.laeca.org.

Willene Griffin – DCFS Child Welfare: In the agency consolidation, there will be one central abuse and neglect hotline established. It will be easier to report matters of abuse and neglect.

Mary Louise Jones – LA Department of Education-Pre-K: Kindergarten Readiness guidelines have been updated. There are 9 goals for children entering kindergarten to be ready to learn. They will also be tracking where children attended at least 6 months of preschool (parish – not site). It will help determine where professional training is needed. The new guide will be online in January.

Mary Louise Jones – LA Department of Education-Pre-K: January 24-25, 2012 will be the annual Department of Education Pre-K Conference at the Baton Rouge River Centre.

Mary Louise Jones – LA Department of Education-Pre-K: The Department of Education is working on two pilot projects. One with Head Start and a classroom literacy observation form in Iberville Parish. They will share the form when it is complete. The second pilot involves seven districts who are working on Pre-K revisions based on the Common Core Standards and federal regulation changes.

Carolyn Trivette – LA Department of Education-Food: The new federal regulations have been increased in the area of snacks for at-risk children. There may be an option in the future to allow for supper funding. Breastfeeding issues – there are workshops that are considered mandatory for centers that are on the food program. There will be a breakout session at the Head Start conference.

Other announcements:

- Office of Public Health: Obesity Committee is working on tying activity to child care centers – Let's Move Campaign.

- Office of Public Health: Project NAPSACK – Nutrition and activity program will expand this fall. Current partners are Maternal Child Health, OPH, and Agenda for Children.
- VOA is offering Infant Toddler Training on March 26th. It is \$5 to attend.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Advisory Council will be on June 3, 2011.

VIII. Adjourn

Pat Crocker adjourned the meeting at 12:10pm.