

WYOMING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
Parkway Plaza - Casper, WY - April 28, 2004

PRESENT: Jim Anderson Bev Campbell Deanna Frey
 Chris Frude Joan Gaston Tiernan McIlwaine
 Steve Nelson Noamie Niemitalo Bill Moore
 Karen Merklin

ABSENT: Trent Blankenship Nancy Freudenthal Jo Ann Fulton
 Joseph Henry Rodger McDaniel Jill Ruiz
 Rita Steinbrech Rita Walsh

- Chair Deanna Frey welcomed everyone to the meeting, and welcomed Dr. Steve Nelson to the Council for his first meeting. Attendees at the meeting then participated in a group activity to get to know each other better. The January 5, 2004 meeting minutes were approved with grammatical changes recommended by Chris Frude.
- The Annual Report to the Governor meeting was reviewed for those members who were unable to attend, as well as getting members' impression of the meeting, quality of the report, changes, etc. Everyone felt the meeting had gone very well. The Governor has challenged us to bring evidence-based funding recommendations back to him.
- Deanna and Tiernan reviewed the recent Smart Start Conference they attended. Workshops they attended included information on the economic impact that child care has on the state, family day screening and service accessibility process, and Building Bright Futures information from the state of Vermont. We will be looking into ways to incorporate and use this information here in Wyoming.
- Tiernan gave an update on the Early Intervention Council. There is a Sub-Committee working on infant mental health, and discussion is centered around increasing access through workforce development, practice models currently functioning, services to parents to promote infant social/emotional development. Funding for developmental preschools is dropping per child, while the number of students is rising. The Council tried to look at any items that are overlapping. Dr. Steve Nelson recommended looking into cross-council committees when work efforts overlap councils.
- The Early Childhood Summit met recently in Casper, and Tiernan handed out their Strategies information sheet and Indicators sheet, and reviewed the council's role with the early childhood grant. Tiernan also talked about how the early childhood grant will be integrated with the Children and Families Initiative. Council members will be receiving information about presentations and discussions associated with the Children and Families Initiative around the state.

- Deanna and Tiernan recently represented this Council at the Board Training that the Governor's Office put on in Cheyenne. Items of interest included engaging communities, coordinating work travel and publicity efforts between councils, issuing press releases, and meeting minutes. Tiernan asked Council members how they felt about the current format of our meeting minutes - were they too detailed, just right or not detailed enough. Group consensus was that they were fine in the current format and highlighted the need for enough detail to contain an accurate history of discussions and decisions.
- Bill and Deanna gave an update on the Raising Readers program, since this Council is the group who helped bring this program to Wyoming. Cheyenne recently held an event at the Library to kick off the program in Laramie County, and First Lady Nancy Freudenthal was in attendance and read a book to the children. Fifteen counties are currently participating in the program in Wyoming. Sustainability is going to be a key issue for this program to continue beyond 2005 when the Pacific Corp funding runs out.
- The Governor's Roundtable meeting will be held tomorrow here at the Parkway Plaza in Casper, and some of the Council members will be attending. This is the second Roundtable meeting, and will cover how far we have come in Wyoming on children and family issues during the last year.
- Tiernan gave an update on the Early Childhood Comprehensive Study/Children and Families Initiative, including strategies and indicators, as well as advisory and sponsoring committees for the initiative, and early childhood specifics and across the age range.
- Dr. Karen Williams, from the University of Wyoming, gave an overview of the proposed Institute for Children, Youth and Families. She is looking for support across the state, and hopes the Council will utilize their services in the future. She also handed out a copy of her Concept Paper for the Institute.
- Tiernan handed out a draft of the WECDC Work Plan, and members discussed this in detail.

Parking Lot Issues:

- ✓ Members recommended that council meetings be "hosted" by council members in the community where the meeting takes place. Bill Moore and Chris Frude agreed to host the next meeting in September. These hosted events will:
 - include a forum for community input,
 - allow council members to visit local early childhood programs,
 - facilitate communication between council members, stakeholders and providers in the communities to develop a greater knowledge of promising practices in Wyoming's communities,

The next WECDC Meeting will be held on September 28, 2004 in Casper at Paradise Valley Elementary School.

- Council members were asked to participate in the Children and Families Initiative survey, which can be found online at:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=72134467994> -
- Council members were also encouraged to view the Kindergarten Readiness Survey for 2003-04 at: <http://www.k12.wy.us>

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Merklin
Wyoming Department of Family Services