

**Wyoming Early Childhood Development Council**  
**September 27, 2005**  
**Minutes**

**Members present:** Deanna Frey, Joseph Henry, Joan Gaston, Rita Walsh, Bill Moore, Senator Jim Anderson, Noamie Niemitalo, and Joyce Kennedy,

**State Agency Representatives:** Bev Campbell Department of Family Services, Joan Gaston, Department of Education, Rodger McDaniel, Department of Family Services

**Guests:** Susie Scott Mullen, Scotty Ratliff, Sandy Barton, Maggie Viani, Joseph Henry and Michelle Buchanan

Meeting called to order at 1:06 pm

**Welcome/Introductions:** Joe Henry's term has expired and he has re-applied and is awaiting re-appointment. Michelle Buchanan has applied for a position and is awaiting appointment. Susie Scott Mullen was invited to attend and present an update on the Early Childhood Comprehensive System Grant. Scotty Ratliff works part time for Senator Enzi and attended to find out what we are doing with Early Childhood, because he feels that "no child left behind" has brought out the issue of how early childhood has been left out. Sandy Barton is a member of the State Board of Education, representing early childhood education. Maggie Viani, represented Ready to Learn for Wyoming Public television,

**Membership update:** Three council member's terms expired July 1, 2005. Steve Nelson and Joe Henry have applied for reappointment and the third member, Chris Frude did not request reappointment

**Minutes:** After review of the April 2005 minutes a motion was made by Joyce Kennedy and seconded by Joe Henry that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved as written.

**Future meetings:** Discussion was held about where to have meetings. Maggie suggested having a meeting in Laramie to take a look at the new center at the University of Wyoming. Bill suggested a meeting in Riverton/Lander to look at the new things happening there. It was suggested to have 2 centrally located meetings in Casper and 2 in specific locations around Wyoming. The next meetings are as follows:

- January 3 & 4 in Casper,
- April 3 & 4 in Riverton,
- July 10 & 11 in Casper and
- October exact date to be determined TBA

**Early Childhood Coordinator:** Applications have been received and a new coordinator will be hired prior to the next council meeting.

**Raising Readers:** Bill Moore provided an update on the Raising Readers program. At this time they have formed an independent 501 C 3 and are awaiting notification from the IRS of their status. They are planning to raise \$250,000 to help continue supporting the program

**Children and Families Initiative:** Rodger McDaniel: He believes that we have a wonderful opportunity to help support Children and Families. He is very excited about the process that has gone into the Children and Families Initiative. 30,000 surveys were sent out with a 10% return rate. The advisory and sponsor committees developed the proposal going in front of the Governor and legislators. House Bill 33 instructed that the study examine the role of schools, courts, parent and local communities in meeting the needs of children and families. The number one priority within the study will be the development of a high quality early childhood development system.

The second priority will be Healthy Living – Healthy Schools which is modeled after a program in Macomb, Mississippi. There are currently 6 pilot projects in Wyoming and it is recommended that we expand this project to 16 pilot sites.

The third priority recommendation is problem solving courts which address the needs of the whole family, not just the child.

The fourth priority is housing. The proposal will ask the Legislature to provide general funds for families to obtain low interest loans for housing and to provide rental assistance for families with low income.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Study/Early Care and Education Committee: Susie gave us a brief history on how the grant originated and its intentions. The five focus areas and their corresponding committees are:

- access to health insurance and medical homes, (committee system of care)
- Social emotional development, (committee child development training system)
- parent education, (committee Project Parenthood)
- family support, (committee 2-1-1) and
- early childhood care and education. (committee quality rating system)

The early childhood group has been working on the development of an early childhood development system that has the following components:

- Quality rating system- ratings based on learning environment, child/staff ratios and group size, program management, staff qualifications and education, and family partnerships.
- Quality incentive payments- financial support
- Professional development- scholarship, education, compensation, & commitment
- Quality supports-(technical assistance and grants)
- Parental education, professional services will be contracted through a competitive bid process

The council adjourned for the evening at approximately 4:45 pm.

The council reconvened Wednesday September 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 am

Members present: Joe Henry, Naomi Niemitalo, Joyce Kennedy, Joan Gaston, Bev Campbell, Bill Moore and Deanna Frey.

Guests present: Susie Mullen and Maggie Viani

The second day was used to develop recommendations to present to the Governor. Bev and Deanna will be sending out a draft copy for all of the Council to comment on. They would like to receive feedback by next Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. At this time Bev, Deanna and Noamie will be meeting with the Governor at 3:15 on October 13, 2005. If any other member is able to join them please let Deanna know as soon as possible as the Governor's office would like to know how many will be present. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.