



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Program Committee (Virtual Meeting via Zoom)

Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2021

9:00 – 11:00 am

Committee Members Present: Chair Michele King (Board Member – Golisano Children’s Hospital); Angela Anderson (Guadalupe Center); Stacie Britton (FDLRS); Rodrigo Gamboa-Dominguez (Challenged Minds Learning Center); Dr. Carol Frink (Lee County School District); JoAnne Fuciu (Lee Memorial); Jodi Garrett (Child’s Path); Megan Greeley-Gibson (The Children’s Community Center); Donna Hernandez (Fort Myers Technical College); Terri Konczak (Office of Early Learning); Joanne Pachiva (Lee County School District); Stephanie Rode (St. Andrews Catholic School); Heather Singleton (Child’s Path); Jami Slack (Open Doors); Char-Nequa Smith (Florida Health Department); Michelle Starr (Collier County Public Schools)

Staff Members Present: Susan Block (CEO); Leona Adkins (Interim Chief Quality & Program Officer); Cheryl Carpenter (Director of Early Childhood Specialists); Bronwyn Gogia (Director of Assessment and Screening); Gayla Thompson (Director of Professional Development)

Committee Members Absent: Rita Dellatore (Board Member – Kid City); Patricia Dominguez (Challenged Minds); Jamie Eskridge (Childs Path); Jenn Faber (Children’s Council); Ashley Houk (First Presbyterian Church, Naples); Tia Knapp (ABC Academy); Donna Killion (Discovery Day Academy IV); Elizabeth McBride (Collier County Public Schools); Marie Liebenson (Lee Memorial); Rachel McIntyre (Open Doors Lehigh Acres and Estero); Marissa Mona (EduCare Academy); Joanne Moran (Lee County School District); Ana Neuhauser (RCMA); Penney Norton (Office of Early Learning); Kelly Roy (Board Member – FSW); Kendra Stamp (Educare); Donna VanTol (Collier County Health Department – ELC); Jesyca Virnig (Learning Tree); Paul Welch (Sonrise Academy); Mandy Willis (Faith Academy)

Agenda Items	Facilitator/Presenter	Comments/Actions
Welcome	The meeting was called to order by Michele King at 9:00 am using the Zoom platform.	

<p>Susan Block - ELC Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Block reported that Matthew Mears, formerly of the Department of Education, is now the Chancellor of the Division of Early Learning (formerly the Office of Early Learning). • There have been many Pandemic relief grants: Supplemental Cares Grant (CRSA) helped pay overhead of programs; Instructor Disaster Relief Grant; VPK closure funding; and American Rescue Plan which will provide quarterly payments to help stabilize providers. The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) staff will let you know when new grants come out and the details about how to apply for them. • Two new board members are needed for the ELC Board of Directors. 1) Faith-based provider moving from Lee County to Hendry/Glades; 2) Private/for-profit provider (center or FCCH) moving from Hendry/Glades to Lee County. The terms are for four years. Names go to the nomination committee and then to the board for approval. The members need to be in place for the November meeting of the ELC board. • Ms. Block expressed her thanks for the hard work and diligence of childcare providers throughout the past 18 months. 	<p>To apply for the ELC board go to this link: https://elcofswfl.org/early-learning-coaliton-board-membership-application/</p>
<p>Approval of Meeting Minutes for June 4, 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft minutes were reviewed for the June 4, meeting. 	<p>Motion to accept minutes as presented made by Heather Singleton and seconded by Michelle Starr. Approved unanimously. Minutes will be posted on the Program Committee page at www.elcofswfl.org.</p>
<p>Danna Breeden, RN - (reported by Gayla Thompson), Health Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 advice from the CDC for childcare facilities is the same as it has been since last year regarding masking, social distancing, and hand washing. • Ms. Breeden advises that facilities not allow adults to come in who are not there regularly. • Foot, hand, and mouth disease is prevalent in the centers currently, especially among infants and toddlers. 	<p>Danna Breeden can be reached at 239-825-5218 or at Danna.Breeden@flhealth.gov. Ms. Breeden requests that this number not be shared with parents.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any childcare provider who needs assistance with questions about COVID or other medical concerns in the childcare setting can call Danna Breeden for assistance. 	
<p>Leona Adkins– Enrollments, waitlist, and grants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 104 children on the school readiness waitlist. The current challenge is the lack of space for children, especially infants and toddlers. There are 5400 children enrolled in the school readiness program. ELC is contracted with 357 active providers. This number has declined from 2020. 24 facilities closed in 20-21 and 4 in 21-22. In previous years, ELC was contracted with about 360 providers. The Division of Early Learning (DEL) has requested that the coalitions help them reach out to providers who have not yet applied for the Disaster Relief Funds for directors and teachers. The goal is to get the dollars into the hands of the childcare workers. School Districts qualify as well as those providers not contracted with the Coalition and the ELC contracted facilities. 	
<p>Cheryl Carpenter – Assessments for CLASS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Carpenter reported that due to the upswing in COVID-19 cases reported in childcare, the Early Childhood Specialists were pulled from the field for a couple of weeks. However, they will be back out to one site a day beginning on Monday, September 13. They will be equipped with PPE and masked. Please let your assessor know if you have experienced COVID in your center, so that they may be protected from exposure as much as possible. VPK will be assessed starting next year. It is in the best interest of teachers and administrators to prepare by taking classes to become familiar with the process of assessing communication in the classroom. Classes are listed on the ELC website as Effective Interactions and are available for Infants and for Toddlers/Pre-K. 	<p>To register for classes, go to www.elcofswfl.org, scroll to the bottom of the homepage, and click on “Click here to register for training”.</p>

<p>Bronwyn Gogia – ASQ: Teaching Strategies Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Gogia reported that 100 school readiness providers chose on their school readiness contracts to receive the assessment differential. However, many have not yet completed the first assessment, and are not in the habit of doing the second assessment or achieving 75% of teachers as inter-rater reliable. These requirements reduced the number of those facilities that qualify for the differential to 49 facilities at this time. • The Teaching Strategies contract is complete and there should be plenty of spaces to enter children. If you have any issues with this, please contact Ms. Gogia. • The portal submits to the ASQ site, but not the other way around. Therefore, information must be entered into the portal regarding children’s ASQs. There was a three-day glitch during which the information did not transfer, however, Ms. Gogia is re-submitting the information so that the ASQ requests will show that they were completed. • It is projected that the ASQ-SE2 will be kept as a requirement, although parents do have the option to refuse it. Parents have the first choice of doing the ASQ. ELC is waiting for the state to make decisions about this second tool; it may be October before the approval is in place. 	<p>You can contact Ms. Gogia at Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org or 239-935-6167.</p>
<p>Gayla Thompson – Early Educator Workforce Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The surveys for the Early Educator Workforce Grant were split into centers and Family Child Care Homes. • Center results: 1) Greatest Impact – Recruit new early educators and retain qualified teachers (tie); 2) Strategies for early educator recruitment – Financial Incentive for completion of 45-hour training upon hire; 3) Strategies for early educator upskilling – Reimbursement for 45-hour training following completion 4) Strategies for early educator retention – stipends based on time worked in center. • Family Child Care Home results: 1) Greatest Impact – provide financial incentives for determining benchmarks (e.g., CDA, AA etc.) 2) Early educator recruitment – Financial incentive for completion of 30-hour training upon hire 3) Early Educator 	

	<p>upskilling – Reimburse the cost of 30-hour training 4) Early educator retention – stipends based on time worked at the Family Child Care Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion within the group of other possible innovative benefits that this money could address pay for background screening, pay \$100/year of employment, tie benefits to training. • The ELC will share more information about this grant when more is known. Currently, there is no timeline. 	
Heather Singleton - Online Memorials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Singleton announced that Darline Pinheiro, beloved early childhood educator for decades and well known to many of us on the call, passed away on Sunday, September 5. • Since there have been many deaths in our early childhood community in the recent 18 months, Ms. Singleton proposes some sort of online memorial where people can share their remembrances and create a lasting remembrance of those who have died. • There are costs involved of about \$71 per year • Angela Anderson and Cheryl Carpenter volunteered to work with Ms. Singleton on this project. • There was a suggestion to check with FLAEYC for possible funding 	
Open Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheryl Carpenter announced that Lastinger Center/Flamingo is offering an 8-month Community of Practice to help directors support teachers in their everyday lives. It starts on the 20th of this month and is free. Contact her if you are interested. • Terri Konczak, our area VPK Coordinator, stated there is nothing new but while we are assuming that the assessment of VPK will be CLASS, this has not yet been determined. There will be two assessments for VPK next year, one will be an assessment like CLASS and one will possibly be the STAR assessment. Both will be done during the VPK year. • We are glad to have Michele King as our new chair of the committee. 	<p>Cheryl.Carpenter@elcofswfl.org or call her at 239-935-6178.</p>
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am 	

Next Meeting	• October 29, 2021	
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All meetings will be held via Zoom until further notice.