

**Arkansas Early Childhood Commission**  
**January 19, 2016**  
**10:00am**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Rhonda Ahrent, Michelle Barnes, Ava Coleman, Dr. Glenda Ezell, Jackie Govan, Dr. Charisse Childers, Dr. Matthew Nix (over the phone), Shirley Pulliam, Stacy Smith, Jody Veit-Edrington, Kaye Murry

Members Absent: Evelyn Bass, Amy Denton, Dr. Jill Fussell, Nickie Hammontree, Patricia Lucas, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Debbie Tackett, Barbara Warren, Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price, Kelley Smith, Gene Roebuck, Senator Ronald Caldwell

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**I. Call to Order**

Jody Veit-Edrington called the AECC Commissioners' Meeting to order on January 19, 2016 at 10:18 a.m. Michelle Barnes read the AECC's mission statement.

**II. Approval of Minutes from October 2015**

Jody Veit-Edrington asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2015 meeting. A motion was made by Rhonda Ahrent and seconded by Dr. Glenda Ezell. The motion carried.

**III. Old Business**

**1. Better Beginnings/QRIS Update (Goal #1, Goal #4):**

Beverly Wright presented a handout related to goal #1 and goal #4. The handout provides information on the infant and toddler capacities by quality level and participation by license type. Beverly stated that we are gradually increasing the quality care participation for infants and toddlers. Beverly reported that Better Beginnings participation from 2014 to 2015 has increased 14%. Beverly explained that the numbers for out-of-school license type for December 2014 were unavailable because it is a new license type that was created with the new licensing regulations. The division has been working to get all children who have a CCDF voucher in a quality care setting. There are approximately 150 children who are on the voucher program that are not in a Better Beginnings facility. Currently there are 20 providers who are in pending status (applied but not yet approved) for Better Beginnings statewide. The pending status could be for a variety of reasons. The Better Beginnings team is working with those providers to help achieve level 1 Better Beginnings status.

Beverly Wright and Vicki Mathews presented a document that included maps of Arkansas that show the number of Better Beginnings facilities by level and by county. Better Beginnings Level 2 seems to be our lowest number statewide.

**2. Early Head Start Childcare Partnership Grant Update (Goal #1):**

Jackie Govan and Brandy Ishmon presented the following information. Head Start and the Division on Child Care and Early Childhood Education will host its quarterly meeting

with the EHS/CC grantee and partners on Thursday, February 4, 2016, at the DHS main office. This meeting will focus on infant and toddlers safety procedures, education standards, establishing roles, Child Care Development Fund update, and much more. There will also be a meeting in Dallas, Texas for all EHS/CC grantees and their partners. The ACF Region VI Office in collaboration with the National Center on Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships will host regional training and consultation sessions that will extend the learning that occurred during the orientation sessions held in 2015. The training and consultation sessions for Region VI will occur February 23-25, 2016. The sessions will be highly interactive and participant driven and will include time for grantee team process consultation sessions co-facilitated by regional and national T/TA teams.

Brandy Ishmon presented a document with the following information.

Past:

- There were three Grantees awarded in Arkansas for a total of 376 Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) slots.
- There are 20 Partnership sites located across Eastern, Central, and Southern Arkansas.
- DCCECE worked to remove barriers that would hinder the partnership
- Barriers removed include but are not limited to: relaxing the CCDF eligibility criteria, changing the application process, sharing the CCDF waitlist to aid recruitment.
- July 1, 2015 DCCECE held an EHS-CCP meeting for all grantees and partners. All grantees and most partners were in attendance. Grantees and partners were given procedural manuals, trained on CCDF procedures and Early Head Start topics.

Present:

- DCCECE is presently sharing the CCDF waitlist with all grantees monthly. This is done to assist with recruitment and to continue to remove eligible children from the CCDF waitlist.
- Keying EHS-CCP applications into Kid Care, the DCCECE voucher system.
- Conducting site visits to partners for case file audits.
- Consistently providing technical assistance to grantees and providers.

Future:

- DCCECE will meet with all EHS-CCP grantees and partners on a quarterly basis.
- Partnership sites are being assessed for training needs.

Brandy Ishmon also provided a document with information on the capacity with CCDF. The spreadsheets provide details on how many children are in each facility and their Better Beginnings level. The federal monitoring period for the programs will occur this summer and into the fall.

Tonya Williams recommended adding a column to the spreadsheet showing how many slots were awarded to the partner sites. That way DCCECE can get an idea on enrollment.

### 3. **Attendance Policy**

Jody Veit-Edrington presented on the AECC attendance policy. The attendance policy was provided at the last meeting. Many of the commissioners contacted Sara Norwood stating they would not be able to attend the meeting. Members were reminded they may send a proxy to the meeting. The proxy may vote for you as long as you provide a

statement in writing that you allow this action.

**ACTION ITEM: Sara Norwood to email the commissioners the future AECC meeting dates. Also Sara Norwood to email the commissioners reminders prior to the commission meetings.**

4. ***New DCCECE Staff Updates***

Arlene Rose reported on staff changes in DCCECE. Arlene presented changes to the ABC Preschool Development Grant staff. Krista Langston is the manager of our Preschool Development Grant. She formerly worked at Head Start and UAMS. We will ask her to attend the next meeting. Due to inclement weather possibilities, she was unable to attend this meeting. There are also a few other vacancies within the ABC unit. Please encourage anyone you know that may be interested to apply. DCCECE is very interested in interviewing quality candidates with early childhood backgrounds.

5. ***State Professional Steering Committee and Subcommittee Update (Goal #3)***

Paige Cox shared the following totals for professional development trainings for the month of November and December 2015 in the state of Arkansas.

Number of people attending trainings- 9,840

Number of trainings- 550

Total number of training Hours- 53,399

Number of Technical Assistance Visits- 1,597

Jody Veit-Edrington stated that these trainings are free of charge.

Paige presented that the state Professional Development Steering Committee has added new members including a member from Developmental Disability Services (DDS). DCCECE has been trying to ensure we are looking through an equity lens when looking at professional development system. We have been developing a definition of equity.

Paige reported that the Professional Standards Subcommittee of our steering committee has been working hard on the Arkansas key content areas and core competencies document to ensure that all professionals are equipped with the knowledge and skills to care for our children. The committee has been working with a national expert who has stated that our current document is excellent. The committee is reviewing current key content and core competencies and aligning with the NAEYC and other standards. The committee is discussing any changes to the names of the levels, which are currently basic, intermediate, and advanced. The committee is looking at what other states do and how they define those levels.

Jody Veit-Edrington asked if we are still in the process of transitioning to the new registry. Paige stated that meetings occur with Arkansas State University (ASU) on a weekly basis. ASU is in the process of developing trainings for the registry. The registry is going to be an ongoing, ever improving system. The contractors will be trained in the spring. We are also looking at having some pilot locations so the providers can provide some additional feedback. The goal is to launch the registry in the summer of 2016. Jody suggested that it would be great if Arkansas Department of Education and Early Childhood training registries were able to share data.

**6. CCDF State Plan Status (Goals #1, Goal #2, Goal #3, Goal #4, Goal #5):**

Ivory Daniels reported that the CCDF State Plan draft has almost been completed. The goal is to send it out to the commissioners within the next few days. The following public hearings have been scheduled:

- February 11, 2016, DHS Miller County (10am-2pm)
- February 12, 2016, DHS Crittenden County (10am-2pm)
- February 16, 2016, Main Street Mall, Little Rock (10am-2pm)
- February 19, 2016, Child Care Aware, Springdale (10am-2pm)

The state plan will be on the website for review:

<https://hs.arkansas.gov/dccece/pages/childcareassistance.aspx>

Ivory stated that he looks forward to hearing all of the comments during the public hearings.

**ACTION ITEM: Ivory Daniels to email the CCDF state plan draft to the commissioners.**

**7. Licensing Appeal Review Panel Application Approval:**

Jennifer Williams provided a packet, which included an application from Katina M. Leland to serve on the appeal review panel.

A motion to approve Katina M. Leland to serve on the Appeal Review Panel was made by Dr. Glenda Ezell and seconded by Jackie Govan. The motion carried.

Jennifer wanted to give a special thanks to Marsha Masters for encouraging Katina M. Leland to apply for this position on the panel. This approval completes the 12-member appeal panel. We have a few alternate positions available.

**ACTION ITEM: Jennifer Williams to email a list of the appeal panel members to the commissioners.**

## **IV. New Business**

**1. Early Head Start/Head Start Programs:**

Jackie Govan provided a packet of information to the commissioners. The 2016 Arkansas Head Start Association will host its annual training institute in Hot Springs, Arkansas at the Convention Center on March 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>. Jackie invited all commissioners to come out and attend some of the dynamic sessions. The theme for this year's institute is: "Changes, Challenges, and Opportunities: Building Arkansas' Future." Jackie also provided an updated list of Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the state, as well as their locations.

**2. Statewide Fatherhood Initiative:**

Jackie Govan provided an update on the Statewide Fatherhood Initiative. The Head Start State Collaboration Office received a grant in the amount of \$30,000 from the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. General Improvement Fund (GIF) for the 2014-2015-program year. Jackie provided a copy of the Fatherhood Report that was submitted to the CAPDD with a timeline of activities and events that were completed in the past year. Jackie called attention to the successful outcomes on Page 8 items 1-6. The data charts support the work that has been completed with fathers across the state. Jackie also called attention to the Appendix beginning on page 13. She provided some samples of the

work and activities that were completed and some that are still have in place. Certificates were created for “Fantastic Father” and there will be an announcement in the newsletter going out in March. There were outstanding numbers for Blytheville and Jackie stated that the president for the initiative lives in Blytheville and had a big cookout. Dr. Glenda Ezell stated that the report was great and that they did an excellent job.

Jody Veit-Edrington asked Jackie for an update on the read-a-thon. Jackie stated that the read-a-thon has already started. She stated that they have been doing it for three years. This year it is 6 weeks long and the winners will be announced at the convention in March. Something that is different this year is that only fathers (grandfathers, etc.) can participate. A form was created for them to complete. This will provide good data about how many fathers participated and how many books were read.

Jackie stated that she spoke with Senator Hutchinson and was encouraged to apply for the grant again with a focus on mentoring fathers in the State of Arkansas. Jackie submitted the grant last week on Wednesday and hopefully will receive funding for the 2015-2016 program year.

### **3. *Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN):***

Jackie Govan provided a handout providing the percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at or above proficient in reading by race/ethnicity for Arkansas in 2013 (The National Assessment of Educational Progress). The data shows that as you look across the spectrum for the children who are in our programs, our children are not where they need to be. The Kids Count policy report makes four recommendations based on the 12 indicators developed to measure the impact of a child’s race on his or her chances for success in adulthood. The recommendations made by this committee are to collect and analyze ethnic data, create a plan, implement plan, development and implement promissory and evidence-based practices, and integrate economic inclusion strategies.

The ELAN is a project funded by the Kellogg Foundation, but is a strategy of the BUILD Initiative, which for years has promoted early childhood systems work that identifies and addresses the root causes of disparities and supports state remedies to address them. The ELAN will advance racial equity in early childhood systems. A focused effort across 20 states, the District of Columbia and Guam, the ELAN is composed of 38 fellows with responsibility at the state or county level for early childhood systems. Jackie was selected as the ELAN fellow for the State of Arkansas. Over the next three years, Jackie will work with a team to identify, address, and take action on inequities based on race, ethnicity, language, and culture in our early childhood state system. Jackie shared the equity statement and action steps. Jackie stated she would work to promote equity in the areas of statewide professional development, training and influence state-level policy. Jackie provided a handout that shares more about the BUILD Initiative and the commitment.

A motion to approve Jackie Govan to move forward with the ELAN project and action steps was made by Ava Coleman and seconded by Shirley Pulliam. The motion carried.

Stacy Smith provided a comment encouraging the focus on a “whole child” approach.

#### **4. Kellogg Grant Project- Kindergarten Entry Screener (KES):**

Jackie Govan reported that the past several months, the KES advisory committee has been working closely with the State Department of Education to develop the recommendations to support the procurement of a new KES instrument to replace the Qualls Early Learning Inventory. The recommendations include the following:

- The new instrument must be aligned to the revised Arkansas' Child Development Early Learning Standard (CDELS) to at least six of the major domains. (Language Development, Emergent Literacy, Math, Thinking, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, and Cognitive Development)
- The KES instrument must have sound measurement properties.
- The KES instrument must be culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- The KEA instrument must have strength-based reports for parents, teachers, and administrators.
- The company must be able to provide information on quality training and implementation supports. They must be willing to work with the state to revise training based on the findings from an implementation study that will be conducted in fall of 2016.
- They must include how long the screener/assessment takes to administer on average per child and must state how long it takes to generate and return results to teachers once the instrument has been completed.
- Vendors must complete an alignment matrix to indicate the level of alignment with Child Development and Early Learning Standards.
- It was also recommended that RFP review team include perspectives from a diverse group of individuals with the necessary expertise to ensure accurate scoring of the proposals.

A motion to approve the Arkansas Kindergarten Entry Screener recommendations to be included in the Department of Education's RFP was made by Ava Coleman and seconded by Shirley Pulliam. The motion carried.

#### **5. Kellogg Grant Project- Family Engagement Guide:**

Jackie Govan reported that the Statewide Family Engagement Guide and accessories have all been completed. The purpose of the guide is to assist early childhood programs in building a family engagement system. The guide consists of a state's definition for family engagement, guiding principles, brain development, benefits, pyramid framework, strategies for each of the family engagement outcomes, model for continuous improvement, list of resources, and a list of terms and definitions. Some of the accessories include:

- Family Engagement Assessment
- Family Engagement Parent Survey
- Family Engagement Toolbox
- Family Engagement Toolkits
- Family Engagement Resource List

Jackie shared, through the collaboration with AETN, a process for online training and training on DVD is in the works. Participants selecting either of these methods will receive a certificate once they complete the training. Once approved, we will be able to move forward with training and implementation. Training will begin in March 2016 with a statewide Train the Trainer session, followed by ten family engagement trainings across

the state, which will be conducted by the trainers. Implementation will begin in the fall of 2016.

A motion to approve the Family Engagement Guide and Accessories was made by Rhonda Ahrent and seconded by Michelle Barnes. The motion carried.

**6. Kellogg Grant Project- Child Development Early Learning Standards (CDELS):**

Jackie Govan provided an updated on the CDELS. Jackie stated that she is happy to say that all processes for this document are completed, except for the analysis and integration of the comments from the national experts. There are over 40 pages of great ideas to incorporate into the document from the national experts. There was a meeting last Wednesday to review the comments and to analyze the document.

The CDELS are the revisions for the existing standards that consist of two documents. The revisions include shared expectations for what children birth to five should know, understand, and be able to do at different ages. The revised document consists of:

- A detailed introduction
- Birth to 60 month continuum/age ranges
- Nine domains of development and learning
- Domain components
- Learning goals
- Indicators across age ranges
- Strands that move down the right side of the page

Jackie provided a summary of all nine domains of development and learning. Jackie stated that she will return in April seeking the commissioner's approval for the document.

**7. Proposed Revisions to the Child Care Licensing Requirements:**

David Griffin presented the proposed revisions to the child care licensing requirements. David provided documentation on the proposed requirements and explained that the yellow highlights have been previously approved. The dark green highlights are the requirements the Licensing Unit is requesting to be reviewed and approved.

**Child Care Center:**

**Section 102.6, Page 3**

CURRENT: Falsification of any document or the submission of false information to the Child Care Licensing Unit or any other unit of the Division may constitute grounds for revocation of the license.

PROPOSED: Falsification of any document and/or submission of false information to the Child Care Licensing Unit shall constitute grounds for revocation of the license.

Falsification of any document and/or submission of false information to any DHS Division that results in exclusion, pursuant to DHS Exclusion Policy 1088, shall constitute grounds for revocation of the license. (Falsification means the submission of untrue information, whether by statement or omission.)

Tonya Williams stated that the proposed requirement is to strengthen the language in the requirement to assure that providers who falsify information will not have the opportunity to care for children in Arkansas.

**Section 301.9, Page 17**

CURRENT: The use of cell phones by staff while supervising children shall be prohibited except in emergency situations.

PROPOSED: The use of cell phones by facility staff for personal reasons, while supervising children, shall be prohibited. (This does not prohibit the use of cell phones to call for assistance in emergency situations or to communicate with supervisors or facility management.)

David Griffin stated that the goal of the proposed requirement is to cut down on personal use on cell phones while caring for children during business hours.

**Section 306.5, Page 22**

CURRENT: The Director, Assistant Director/Site Supervisor, and 50% of the facility staff that are on site at any given time shall have a certificate of successful completion of first aid and CPR from an approved organization.

PROPOSED: At least one person must be on site at all times while children are present who shall have a certificate of successful completion of first aid and CPR from an approved organization. Facilities with multiple buildings shall have at least one person who meets this requirement present in each building where children are in care. At least one person who meets this requirement shall also be present with children on field trips and any other situations where children in care are away from the center. A contingency plan shall be on file, listing the names of additional staff members who meet this requirement and who are available in case the designated person(s) is absent.

David Griffin stated that Representative Dan Sullivan requested that we look at the cost and availability associated with this requirement. On average 20,000—30,000 people/slots a year need this training and the state only has the means to fund approximately 2,000 slots per year.

Michelle Barnes stated that she does not agree with the change to this requirement because if something happens to a child we need a trained adult to help the child. She said that proximity could be a problem if there is more than one building. Michelle suggested that the rule stay the same and providers who have not met this requirement could provide a contingency plan to how and when the requirement will be met. She does not feel that reducing the provision is the answer because it puts children at risk.

Several commission members stated that they would like to see more information on this proposed requirement. They would like to see the options for free or low cost CPR trainings options and have more information on the programs that are struggling with this requirement.

**Section 1301.7, Page 52**



CURRENT: Driver may be counted in staff/child ratio, but shall not be the only adult when more than 12 children over three years of age and older are transported.

**Section 1301.8, Page 52**

CURRENT: For transporting children kindergarten and above only, a ratio of 1:18 shall be maintained. Driver may be counted in staff/child ratio. Providers licensed prior to the effective date of this rule will have four years from the implementation of this rule to comply with the revised ratios.

**Section 1302.1 & 2, Page 54 (Infant & Toddler Transportation Requirements)**

CURRENT: (1) In a vehicle transporting infants and toddlers, the driver may be counted in the staff/child ratio but shall not be the only adult. A ratio of one adult for each three infants/toddlers shall be maintained. (2) Infants and toddlers shall not be transported on school buses that are not equipped to accommodate required child safety seats.

PROPOSED: Transportation Staff/Child Ratios

Age Range	Number of Staff	Number of Children
Birth to 36 months	1	3
36 months to Kindergarten	1	12
Kindergarten and above	1	18*

The driver may be counted in the ratio when up to 12 children, age 36 months and above are present, but shall not be the only adult on the vehicle when any children under the age of 36 months are transported.

Infants and toddlers shall not be transported on school busses that are not equipped to accommodate required child safety seats.

\*Providers licensed prior to the effective date of this rule will have four years from the implementation of this rule to comply with the revised ratio of 1/18 for children Kindergarten and above.

David Griffin stated that the proposed requirement is easier to read and will allow the providers to self-regulate this requirement.

**Out of School Time Facilities:**

**Section 1101.7, Page 39**

If the policy of an OST Program authorizes staff to administer prescription medications, staff shall do so only *as directed by the participant's physician*.

David Griffin stated that this requirement was an incomplete sentence. The following was added to the sentence: *as directed by the participant's physician*.

The Commission members agreed that no changes would be made to the current requirement that 50% of facility staff (Section 306.5) must have CPR/First Aid training. The Commissioners recommended that the Child Care Licensing Unit develop a process that would allow providers time to gain full compliance, especially in areas of the state where free or low-cost training options might not be readily available. This would involve listing

specific dates for these facilities to reach set levels of compliance, such as 25% of staff, and would list a final date for the facility to achieve full compliance at 50% of staff. The Commission asked that the Licensing Unit offer technical assistance to providers who may be having difficulty meeting the 50% requirement. David Griffin agreed to present information at the April, 2016 commission meeting regarding the availability of free and low cost CPR training across the state and identifying areas where availability is an issue.

A motion to approve the proposed licensing requirements (Child Care Center: Section 102.6, Section 301.9, Section 1301.7, Section 1301.8, Section 1302.1, 1302.2. Out of School Time Facilities: Section 1101.7) was made by Michelle Barnes and seconded by Dr. Glenda Ezell. The motion carried.

**8. Southern Regional Education Board (SREB):**

Tonya Williams reported on the SREB and stated that there are members from Arkansas on the SREB board. Tonya stated that this executive summary report was published in November 2015. This summary is specific to early childhood and the P-20 system; they have been advocates for high quality early education for a very long time. Tonya will be taking this document and looking at the division's strategic plan that has been developed and comparing where we are in meeting these standards.

**9. Construction and Renovation Grant Application Approval:**

Paige Cox stated that the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education have been working with the Department of Economic Development Commission to provide funding to child care programs for construction and renovation. This year the grant amount available was \$500,000.00. We had four entities apply for the funding and they were all high quality providers. Outside people reviewed and scored the application, including someone from the Economic Development Commission. Northside Elementary Pre-K Expansion in Benton County provided the best application. Upon approval of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, the provider can be awarded the grant.

**Action Item: Paige Cox to provide commissioner's information on the Construction and Renovation Grant, including the application. Please visit this website: <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/AEDC.aspx>**

A motion to approve the Northside Elementary Pre-K Expansion grant application was made by Shirley Pullium and seconded by Michelle Barnes. The motion carried.

**V. Summary/Announcements**

- Action Item: Sara Norwood to email the commissioners the future AECC meeting dates.
- Action Item: Ivory Daniels to email the CCDF state plan draft to the commissioners.
- Action Item: Jennifer Williams to email a summary on the appeal panel members to the commissioners.
- Action Item: Paige Cox to provide commissioner's information on the Construction and Renovation Grant, including the application. Please visit this website: <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/AEDC.aspx>

Future Meeting Agenda Items:

- Jackie Govan requested to put the approval of the Child Development Early Learning Standards document on the April, 2016 agenda for approval.

- David Griffin agreed to present information at the April, 2016 commission meeting regarding the availability of free and low cost CPR training across the state and identifying areas where availability is an issue.
- Arlene Rose requested to put the Expulsion and Suspension Work Group efforts on the April, 2016 agenda for discussion.
- Arlene Rose requested to put the introduction to the new ABC staff on the April, 2016 agenda.
- Tonya Williams will provide a report to the commissioners at the April, 2016 meeting showing Arkansas' progress compared to the Southern Regional Education Board executive summary report.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Jody Veit-Edrington asked for a motion to adjourn. Stacy Smith made a motion to adjourn. Jackie Govan seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

*The next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 19, 2016. The location is 700 Main Street, Conference Room A & B.*