

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission

July 15, 2014 – 10:00am

Minutes

Members Present: Evelyn Bass, Ava Coleman, Jackie Govan, Amy Denton, Nickie Hammontree, Debbie Malone, Kathy Pillow-Price, Shirley Pulliam, Dr. Chad Rogers, Jody Veit-Edrington, and Dr. Haley Vo.

Member Absent: Rhonda Ahrent, Janice Dancer, Glenda Ezell, Dr. Jill Fussell, Diane Green, Patricia Lucas, Marsha Masters, Kelley Smith, Dr. Tracy Tucker, and Barbara Warren.

I. Call to Order/Reading of Mission Statement

- a. Jackie Govan called the AECC meeting to order at 10:03am on 7/15/14.
- b. Jackie Govan started the commission meeting by reading a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King. The quote illustrated the need to strive for perfection, no matter what job, you have.
- c. A quorum was not present.

II. Approval of Minutes from June 14, 2014

- a. The minutes from the April 15th meeting were approved with one minor change requested by Debbie Malone.
- b. Motion to approve came from Vicki Mathews and was seconded by Amy Denton. The motion carried, 7/15/2014.

III. Old Business

- a. Standing Committees: Nominating and Finance. Jackie asked for volunteers for Finance and Ava Coleman

volunteered. Shirley Pulliam volunteered to chair the committee.

- b. Better Beginnings/QRIS: Vicki Mathews gave the Better Beginnings update. David Griffin introduced the new director, Jackie Cole. Ms. Mathews presented those in attendance with a number of materials useful in understanding the work that has been accomplished by Better Beginnings this summer.
- c. Health and Nutrition: Buster Lackey provided an update on new procedures requested by USDA. The request to put rules in writing could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum.
- d. AECC: Paige Cox gave an update. Paige Cox did not have a report for the AECC goals and measurable but, she shared the changes in the Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways (TAPP) program following the security concerns that have been addressed and corrected. TAPP will be replaced by the ECE Professional Development Registry. The new program will be, according to Paige Cox, more user friendly and should be released by the end of August or in early September. Until that time TAPP should continue to be utilized. There will be a demo of the new system at AECA in the Fall. Paige Cox went on to acknowledge Micca Burris for her work.
- e. Fatherhood Initiative: Jackie Govan gave an update on the Fatherhood Initiative, to be held on the state capitol grounds on November 1st. She shared that the Fatherhood Initiative has been included in the following social media: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to help spread the message of this initiative. Jackie shared that the by-laws for the initiative, vision, and pledge cards for the Fatherhood Initiative would be complete by July, 29, 2014.

f. Early Head Start: Jackie Govan went on to provide an update on the Early Head Start/Head Start programs in Arkansas. She shared that the Arkansas Early Learning Program was the new grantee for AHDC. Jackie shared that only one stand-alone program remains in the state. A general discussion of the programs and how counties are served led to questions from Jodie Veit-Edrington concerning the programs and UAMS. All questions were answered.

IV. New Business

- a. Kellogg Grant: Tonya Williams gave an update on the Race to the Top Grant. Arkansas was successful and received a one million dollar Kellogg Grant, which will focus on three components. The first is parent engagement, combining B-5 early learning standards to one document and commissioners working with the Department of Education on an appropriate KEA kindergarten entry assessment. Ava Coleman is very involved in this program.
- b. Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Grant: Tonya Williams explained this grant will provide money to serve infants and toddlers, \$500 million from the federal government for local programs. Jackie Govan noted in the program-partnering does not mean contact, it means real interaction.
- c. Universal Pre-K grant: This money is available to expand high quality Pre-K (ABC) to additional four year old children. Arkansas living within 250% of the poverty level. A state application may be required. The grant will help four year old children living within 200% of the poverty level.
- d. The 2014 Outstanding Early Childhood Professionals: Paige Cox presented the four nominees for consideration. There was no quorum present; therefore a vote could not

be taken. The four nominees considered are Frankie Edwards, Janet Smoot, Tolisha Shatswell and Paula White.

- e. Licensing Promulgation: David Griffith spoke to the importance of the impact on families and the increased stress levels that are a possible side effect. David reminded the meeting the first rules were written in 1969 and need to be updated as soon as is possible. There is, according to David, a very high cost for doing nothing. The first step in amending the rules was a series of public meetings held across the state. 222 people attended the meetings:
 - Bentonville- 59
 - Texarkana- 17
 - Monticello- 27
 - Jonesboro- 50
 - Little Rock- 69

In addition to the meetings David has responded to over 200 emails and letters. David explained in the letters, emails and to those in attendance most of the changes are clarifications of existing rules. An online petition with 265 signatures addressed the staff on the changes. Some of the changes David mentioned were FBI background checks unnecessary for everyone; annual inspections for sites using wood or gas heat and smoke detectors; and playgrounds should go back to the original fall height of 18". Other suggested changes David mentioned included an expansion of qualifications for child care center directors. Experience should be more in order to allow for more qualified people to act as day care center directors. Other changes focused on home based centers such as kitchens inspected by nutritionists and health officials and more time spent in physical activities. The

times range from 5 hours each week, to 30 minutes each day, to 20% of time spent at the center.

The discussion of the licensing promulgation led to a spirited discussion starting with comments from Karen Marshall. Karen offered an idea on the ratios that should be utilized in day care centers: B-6 months 1-5

6 months-1 yr. 1-12

1yr-up 1-20

Karen went on to suggest changes should be instituted gradually for the benefit of the parents and the centers. The change can be helped with quality dollars. Karen said a degree in Childhood Management should be allowed as a substitute for a CDA. This degree is available from ASU in Jonesboro.

Debbie Malone spoke to the need to keep some flexibility in thinking before setting the ratio for each class. The idea is to consider if the rules for 6-year olds might be better served to include 5 year old children.

Jodie Veit-Edrington questioned how many centers will have enough rooms to handle the new set of rules. What will be done for sites without enough rooms to implement fully the new set of ratios?

Debbie Mays wants to make certain the providers are included in the decision making process. She spoke of how helpful a dialogue proved to be in working with the center in Siloam Springs.

Dr. Chad Rogers urged all the commissioners to read the proposals, study them carefully and to then vote wisely. He spoke to the need for a thoughtful approach to this significant step in improving child care in Arkansas.

Tonya Williams emphasized the desire of everyone in attendance to provide the very best for children, to track progress better, and to end the practice of warehousing

children. Tonya said there is a clear and direct correlation between ending warehousing and improving outcomes for children.

V. Summary/Announcements

- a. Jackie Govan announced the spring, AR Head Start Association Institute will be held at the Little Rock Marriott 3/17/15 to 3/20/15. Head Start will be celebrating 50 years of serving children and families.
- b. Headstart will hold the B.A.M. book drive and needs some assistance
- c. School Readiness Summit will be 11/18/14. There is a fee of \$75 per team and a \$10 per member registration fee.
- d. Jackie Dedman is now Jackie Govan after a wedding and a wonderful honeymoon in Minnesota.

VI. Approve or Disapprove

- a. Jackie Govan shared that there would be an email sent out to approve or disapprove all action items from today's meeting since we did not have a quorum.

VII. Next Meeting

- a. Will be October 21, 2014

VIII. Request for Adjournment

- a. The motion to adjourn came from Shirley Pullian. Jodie Veil-Edrington seconded the motion. The motion carried at 11:59am on 7/15/2014.