



**Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education**  
*Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative*

**AECCS PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL**

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 15, 2009. 1-2 p.m.

**Members Present:** Aimee Berry, Patti Bokony, JoAnn Bolick, Alisa Carter, Jan Cox, Judy Eddington, Christin Harper, Charlotte Hicks, Cindy Hogue, Nancy Holder, Tereasa Holmes, Pam Jenkins, Michelle Justus, Dennis Kuo, Bonnie Limbird, Chris Lloyd, Cheryl Lindly, Sherri Jo McLemore, Richard Nugent, Sheena Olson, Ann Patterson, Sandra Reifeiss, Robert "Scotty" Smittle, Kathy Stegall, Tracy Turner, and, Lisa Weaver

**Staff:** Martha Hiett and Paula C. Watson

The meeting was called to order by Martha Hiett who welcomed everyone. Self-introductions were made by those in attendance.

**Agenda Item #1: Updates: ABCD III and QRIS**

**Discussion:** Martha Hiett provided the following updates:

**ABCD III**

The grant application for ABCD III was submitted on August 31. Arkansas was one of 12 states invited to send in an application; only five will be selected. The grants will be awarded by the end of September or early October. The proposal was for \$59,800. If the grant is awarded to Arkansas, Medicaid will receive the grant, but the members of the Council will have a critical role as stakeholders and advisory group. The maximum that could be requested was \$60,000 with matching funds from Medicaid. ABCD III focuses on linkages between primary care providers and other providers.

**Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)**

"Better Beginnings" is the new name for QRIS, with the theme line, "Every Child Deserves our Best." The system is projected for roll out in July 2010. Instead of referring to the rating system as QRIS, we can now begin using Better Beginnings. The Logo is still being developed and will be finalized in the next few weeks. A contract has been awarded to the *Communications Group* to support the outreach campaign.

In response to the selected pilot projects, many changes were made in the system from the original design. Group meetings are now being held around the state to introduce "Better Beginnings" in its present form to larger numbers of child care providers and other interested parties.

**Agenda Item #2, Update -- Reports by AECCS Co-Chairs**

**Discussion:**

**Social Emotional Health Work Group**

Patti Bokony reported that the first meeting of the Work Group was held on August 17. The scheduled meeting date is the third Monday of every month. Remarks included the following:

- There are 104 trainers for Pre-K SE Learning training. Since June 2008, 1823 teachers have been trained. There are trainers in all but three counties of the state.
- Chris Lloyd, a Social Work professor at UALR, is going to assist in surveying Specialty Day Treatment Providers to identify barriers and problems they face in participating in Better Beginnings and consider ways to help them meet the standards.
- Chuck Romig, a professor at John Brown University, and his assistant are going to conduct a survey of efforts to certify early childhood mental health professionals in the United States. This is also one of the work group objectives.
- Chris Lloyd also has a new class in "Evidenced Based Practices."

**Early Care and Education Work Group**

Sandra Reifeiss reported that the Work Group met at the library in July, reviewing goals for the new grant and determining whether the completion dates were realistic. One focus of the Work Group will be on quality care for children in the home, looking at parent centers or children who stay home with Mom and Grandmother, etc. The scheduled August meeting date was changed and dedicated to the updating of all Work Groups on the Quality Rating Improvement System, Better Beginnings. The next scheduled meeting is October 7.

**Family Support and Parent Education Task Force**

Sherri Jo McLemore indicated that the scheduled meeting for the Work Group was also changed because of the need for the updating on Better Beginnings. She reported that:

- One goal is to help families have access to better services. The Task Force members were hoping the 211 number would serve their purpose, but the funding was lost. They are still looking at the situation and may plan to advocate with the Governor's office.
- The Task Force is working with "Community Cafés" to bring teams of parents and child care providers together to work with other parents, "Changing the Lives of Children through Conversations that Matter." This unique project is a partnership with the Division, Arkansas Children's Trust Fund, Head Start, and Even Start in the Department of Education. The project began in March, but did not progress very far before the Summer recess. Refresher training will be held at the Arkansas Parenting Education Network (APEN) Conference, November 16-18-, 2009, in Hot Springs.
- The Work Group is also working on Core Competencies for professional persons who work with parents. A draft document will be presented to the full committee at the next meeting.

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**Agenda Item #2, Continued Update -- Reports by AECCS Co-Chairs**

**Medical Homes Work Group**

Martha Hiatt reported on behalf of the co-chairs that the Work Group has been meeting almost monthly since January 2009. She reported that:

- The Work Group has been focused on the task of identifying a standardized definition for Medical Home and developing a tool kit related to Better Beginnings.
- The American Association of Pediatricians' definition was modified to include specifically the word Arkansas.
- At the September meeting, the group discussed modifying the TIPS Project (Teaching Important Parenting Skills) materials developed by Patti Bokony, Dennis Kuo, and a few others. Comments were referred to Dr. Bokony.
- Two or three years ago Arkansas Children's Hospital brought together various group representatives interested in child health to learn and understand the problems facing Arkansas' young and created the Natural Wonders Partnership. The AECCS Medical Homes Work Group was asked to talk to the Partnership Group about what they are doing towards Medical Homes.
- The Work Group agreed that they want to focus on parents and encourage them to take their children to a doctor and establish a "Medical Home".
  
- There were many questions and comments on the following subjects:
- What is Medicaid doing around Medical Home? Sheena Olson indicated that Medicaid is planning for various pieces of Medical Homes: Care Coordination and Medical Records (24 hour access and a "live" person). Medicaid's goal is to look at what areas Medicaid can impact such as working with the Foster Care population.
- Dennis Quo remarked that the school setting can be used as an opportunity to encourage having a "Medical Home."
- H1N1. The Health Department is preparing for mass clinic sessions for the state. Information will be put on the website. School vaccinations will begin October 19 and continue through mid-December. Health Department and the school systems are jointly working on providing flu vaccines in schools. About 99 percent of the school systems have scheduled at least one day for school vaccinations. If the H1N1 vaccine is ready in time, it will be given at the same time as the standard flu vaccination. Child care centers will be included depending on how the community wants to handle the situation. There will be electronic flu surveillance. School nurses will be able to go into the system once a day to input data and the Health Department will be able to monitor any program areas.

**Agenda Item #3: Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health (AAIMH)**

**Discussion:** Chris Lloyd reported on the AAIMH. A handout was distributed and is included with the minutes. The Mission of the Association is to promote the healthy social and emotional development of infants, toddlers, and their families. The Association hopes to serve by disseminating information about evidenced based practices. The group plans to apply for 501.C3 status. Chris has agreed to help the group produce a video so that consistent information can be disseminated.

**Partnership Council**

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**Agenda Item #4: Division of Developmental Disabilities' Stimulus Funds**

**Discussion:** Tracy Turner distributed copies of the Proposed Budget for the Division's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The first project will be to update the Information Technology system. This will help keep a good, accurate count of children serviced. Other projects include: Child Find Assessment, Rural Demonstration Grants for Service Delivery, Comprehensive Systems Evaluation, Quality Rating System Collaboration, Family/Professional Training, and Grants to Providers for Upgrades (Updates).

**Agenda Items #5: AECCS Indicators/Performance Measures**

**Discussion:** Attached to the agenda is a list of proposed indicators for AECCS developed by the National Center for Children in Poverty. The Council was asked to review this list for potential indicators of success and/or recommend others that could be used by AECCS. At the next Council meeting, the group will discuss and select 2-3 indicators for Arkansas. This effort will be coordinated with the School Readiness data project at UALR.

**Agenda Items #6: Miscellaneous Items**

**Discussion:**

**Project Launch.** A reply has not been received on the grant proposal. The Partnership Council will serve as the advisory group if the grant is approved.

**Head Start State Based Training and Technical Assistance Office:** Ann Patterson reported that Special Quest was originally developed for early Head Start programs within Arkansas. DDS and DCCECE are collaborating with Head Start and the Head Start Collaboration Offices on providing training in Arkansas. Ann indicated that Pam Jenkins, Jan Cox, and Donna Alliston have visited 15 areas within the last four weeks. They are focused on looking at communities through Head Start, offering training through Early Head Start 101, the Start Up.

**NEXT MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2009, 1 - 2:30 p.m. Conference Room B, DHS Offices**  
(Please note: The meeting time has been extended to allow for discussion on indicators of success.)

The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.