

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



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DRAFT KCFCCC Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2003, 12:00pm – 1:30pm

Kent County Health Department
700 Fuller Avenue, NE

Members/alternates present: Candace Cowling, Sandra Davis (for Tom Czerwinski), Beverly Drake, Debra Holmes-Garrison, Paul Ippel, Mark Lemoine, Marvin McKenzie (and Donna Abbott), Sharon Loughridge (for Patti Nussbaum), Christine Nelson (for Susan Broman), Mary O'Hare, Carol Paine-McGovern, Cathy Raevsky, Diana Sieger (and Wendy Jackson), Mary Alice Williams, Andrew Zylstra,

Members absent (with no alternate present): Nanaruth Carpenter, Paul Cartwright, Lynne Ferrell, William Forsyth, Mike Weiler

Others present: Bethanie Archbold, Laura Hutzal and Mary Swanson (staff); Nick Koster (on behalf of Nanaruth Carpenter and Jack Roedema), Kathy Humphrey, David Schroeder

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Diana Sieger opened the meeting and asked the participants to introduce themselves. Paul Ippel moved to approve the minutes from the previous Council meeting. Mary Alice Williams supported. Motion carried.

II. Approval of Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

III. Kent County Prevention Initiative Perspective 21! Early Impact

Ms. Sieger presented the review committee's recommendations for Perspective 21! Early Impact funding. She stated that the recommendation was to award FIA the full amount of the funding available, \$450,000, to expand Perspective 21! Early Impact services as outlined in FIA's proposal. She stated that the recommendations also outline the need to use data from the University of Michigan evaluation and from other sources to look at continuous program improvement.

Debra Holmes Garrison moved to approve the recommendation, Sandra Davis supported.

Andrew Zylstra stated that FIA considers Perspective 21! Early Impact to be a community project. He stated that such community and County support for such a project is unequaled elsewhere in the state. He expressed thanks to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation for its leadership in the project, and to the rest of the community for making Perspective 21! Early Impact a priority. He stated that it would be important to keep the community involved throughout the process.

The motion carried.

IV. Health, Human, and Education Services Integration

Ms. Sieger stated that the Grand Rapids Education Reform Initiative was developed through a partnership of the Steelescope, Frey, and Grand Rapids Community Foundation to develop a plan to improve the Grand Rapids Public Schools. She stated that one of the recommendations that came out of the initiative was to realign community health and human services with K-12 education. She stated that this recommendation was born from the work done by FIA to provide services through the schools, an effort being piloted at Harrison Park Elementary.

Mary Swanson stated that the County had been asked to provide support in implementing this recommendation. She stated that the County is already doing an evaluation of its facilities, and to do a county-wide look at services would fit in well with the process. She stated that the County is exploring the possibility of working with community planners to look at current client distributions with GIS, see how those relate to school boundaries, and identify opportunities for service integration.

Beverly Drake asked whether the work being done at Harrison Park is the model.

Mr. Zylstra responded that school-based services is a priority of the Governor's Children's Action Network (CAN). He stated that the Governor's vision for "school-based service centers" may not be cost effective for bring the service to scale. However, he noted that the strength of the Harrison Park model was the relationship developed between the worker and the school personnel. For example, the FIA worker at Harrison Park has developed a relationship with school personnel to identify children with needs. The worker can then conduct an assessment, identify needs, and work to bring in other services. He stated that the goal is to find ways to develop these relationships.

Ms. Swanson stated that there was a lot of existing data available. The first challenges will be technical – compiling data from several different sources and presenting it in a way that it useful for analysis. The next step will be to figure out what the data means, and how to use it to develop ways to integrate services.

V. Committee Reports

A. Early Childhood

Bethanie Archbold reported that planning for early childhood services through the Connections for Children grant was ongoing. She distributed copies of the "Quality Services" brochure developed by the Early Childhood Committee. She stated that the document was the synthesis of many pages of quality indicators for different services. She stated that the purpose of the document was to provide parents with a guide for determining for themselves what a quality service was. She stated that the brochure was developed entirely through inkind effort, and she requested Council members' help in copying and disseminating it. The brochure is available to download off the Connections for Children website, www.playsmartfromthestart.com/pdfs/qualityservices.pdf.

Mr. Zylstra asked whether the committee was looking at data related to access to early childhood education.

Candace Cowling responded that there was workgroup that was doing an environmental scan and gap analysis for early childhood services, including early childhood education and care.

Ms. Sieger asked whether this data will be part of the early childhood plan.

Ms. Cowling responded that it would be.

Ms. Williams stated that the early childhood committee is also looking at ways to measure developmental progress by child, using the ASQ project.

Ms. Cowling stated that they were also looking at ways to sustain the data collection, so that it can be more than a one-time look.

B. Elementary School Years

David Schroeder presented data from the Families Food for Thought (FFFT) pilot project implemented over the summer. He stated that the number of families participating in the pilot was somewhat lower than anticipated – an average of 82 participated on a weekly basis, versus the 200 anticipated. However, as fundraising had been lower than expected as well, this worked out well. He reported that based on the data collected through the pilot project, the project was successful in reaching families that did not normally participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) of government food project in general – in fact, 85% did not participate in the SFSP, 31.5% did not participate in free or reduced lunch during the school year, and 59.9% did not receive food stamps.

Mr. Schroeder reported that the project had demonstrated some anecdotal evidence of success. Of the 72 participants responding to a survey about the program's impact, 87.5% reported that their family's eating habits had changed as a result of the project, and 87.5% reported that their family now ate more fruits and vegetables. 51.4% reported that they used new ways of preparing foods, and 58.3% reported that they now read nutritional information before buying food.

Mr. Schroeder stated that the committee was now working to convince Congress to include language in the upcoming Child Nutrition Act reauthorization to establish the project as a pilot project for the SFSP, allowing existing SFSP funding and resources to be used for this model.

Mr. Zylstra stated that he appreciates the direction that this committee is going, in terms of developing a family-friendly method of food distribution. However, he stated that he was concerned that there is a lot of money for site-based programs through the SFSP which is not being utilized by the community. He asked whether the committee was neglecting increasing participation in site-based services.

Ms. Archbold replied that the committee had attempted to increase participation in the site-based SFSP program through a massive outreach effort in 2002. This year, the committee was taking a two-pronged approach: 1) continue outreach efforts for the traditional SFSP, 2) test an alternative model. She stated that the evidence is there that this model does reach children that are not currently using SFSP.

Ms. Drake asked whether a formal study could be done to determine why SFSP utilization continues to drop. She asked whether GRPS would be the appropriate entity for such a study.

Wendy Jackson responded that there had not been a formal study done locally.

Mr. Zylstra stated that GRPS is not required to provide the SFSP, but has done so voluntarily for years. He stated that the committee's efforts are good efforts, because this is no one's responsibility.

Mr. Schroeder stated that there are national studies showing decreased utilization in each state and nationwide.

Ms. Archbold added that the committee had done focus groups with community members and parents. The focus groups identified several problems with the existing model – parents did not think their kids would be safe walking to the site, there was a stigma attached to kids standing in line for a handout, parents were not allowed in the building, kids did not like the food, and that kids were without supervision during the summer and would not readily take the initiative to get food during the brief timeframes that it was available. She stated that the first year, the committee thought that these topics could be addressed through education. When that effort failed, the committee went back and considered what the focus groups were saying, and developed a model to address those issues.

Ms. Drake stated that if the community is not utilizing these federal dollars fully, then they are lost to the community. She stated that the community needs to conduct a formal study about why the program is not being used. The data can then be used as evidence to encourage policy or program change, if necessary.

Mr. Schroeder stated that he would bring the Council's request for a formal study back to the committee.

C. Middle & High School Years

Marvin McKenzie reported that the committee was working to pull together all of the mentor programs working with kids ages 10-18 for a mentor mini-summit. He stated that the committee was especially looking at one-to-one mentoring, which is supported by research as being the most effective model. He stated that one barrier to these types of programs is that they can be costly. He stated that the committee is hoping the mentor organizations will provide some great insight into other barriers, and well as some suggestions for solutions.

Mr. Zylstra asked who would be attending.

Mr. McKenzie responded that invitees included Arbor Circle, Wedgwood, YMCA, Steepletown, Bethany, SECOM, Kids Hope, and Invictus.

Ms. Drake asked about the FACTS program. The committee will issue an invitation to United Way to send a representative for FACTS.

Mr. Zylstra stated that it would be critical to talk about the structure of mentorship programs. He stated that for example, Kids Hope works with churches and requires them to hire a .5 FTE coordinator. He stated that mentors must belong to the church. He stated that looking at the structures of existing models will help the committee identify what works, and what the parameters are for a successful program.

D. Ongoing Family Support

Sandra Davis reported that the committee was continuing its current efforts to train caseworkers in identification of substance abuse and how to engage families in seeking treatment. She stated that the committee was thankful to the Council for granting it SF/SC funds to provide this training.

She reported that the committee is also looking at academic requirements related to substance abuse training for social work and counseling studies.

Sharon Loughridge reported that several of her staff had attended, and that the word of mouth is that it is excellent training.

VI. Other Community Information & Updates

A. ENTF

David Schroeder distributed the ENTF report brochures, and reported that the full report was available via the web at www.accesskent.com/government/publications.

Ms. Drake complimented Mr. Schroeder on the design and content of the brochures.

Mr. Schroeder extended thanks to United Way for funding the design of the brochures.

Mary Swanson thanked the ENTF for its willingness to work with the Friend of the Court through the child support conversion.

Ms. Cowling asked whether there were any major issues identified by ENTF for this year.

Mr. Schroeder responded that all ENTF partners have reported that business has skyrocketed, and that resources are challenged. He stated that a lot of the new clientele are layoffs, where it is the first time that some of the people are dealing with the system.

Ms. Drake stated that ENTF add a lot in terms of collaboration for agencies in this community. She stated that the result is that agencies are better able to serve clients.

B. Other

Ms. Sieger stated that she wanted to clarify the difference between community foundations and recent newspaper reports regarding private foundations. She stated that there is legislation being proposed requiring private foundations to pay a certain percentage of their assets. She stated that this legislation is meant to address allegations that some private foundations are in fact tax shelters, and concerns about high trustee fees and high director salaries. She stated that community foundations are not private foundations, are not experiencing these types of allegations, and will not be impacted by the legislation. She

stated that she is concerned that some of the publicity over the legislation will affect community foundations.

Mark Lemoine reported that there is also legislation that has increased the level of tax deductions that businesses can take for charitable contributions. He stated that this is good policy for business and for non-profits.

Ms. Holmes-Garrioso reported that there is a 211 Act introduced by Senator Clinton to set aside \$200 million for 211 expansion.

Ms. Cowling reported that the Family Resource Guide is now available. She stated that the guide has been reformatted, and is included in the Family Magazine, which is distributed at local food stores and other locations.

VII. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30pm. **The next Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council meeting will be November 4, 2003, from 12:00pm – 1:30pm at the Kent County Health Department, 700 Fuller, N.E.**