

# The Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care in RI

June 13, 2011 Meeting Minutes

## Attendees:

Representative Grace Diaz, Chair  
Charlotte Boudreau  
Chas Walker  
Esselton McNulty  
Rachel Flum  
Heidi Flynn  
Joseph Morra  
Kathie Sandberg  
Leanne Barrett  
Mike Burk  
Pam Hall  
Susan Libutti  
Tammy Camillo  
Tracy Cheney  
Maryanne Miller

## Minutes:

There were two changes made to the May 9, 2011 meeting minutes. The minutes were accepted with the changes.

Leanne Barrett from RI Kids Count spoke about Rhode Island's Draft Federal Plan for the Child Care Development Fund. The plan is a report of the current status of where we are as a State. What's new federally is that they are asking states to set two year

goals. Goals around access, administration of CCDF funding, quality, workforce, and so on. States will have to report back about progress towards achieving their goals. Leanne suggested the commission take some of the priorities that have already been identified and officially send them to DHS. Maybe DHS could take them and put them in the goal section and say we understand these are identified priorities from the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care in RI and the Early Learning Council priorities.

There is an Early Child Care Conference in town. The Director of the Federal Office for Child Care, Shannon Rudisill, who is in charge of the billions of dollars that the Federal Government spends on child care, was in town for the conference. She visited a BrightStars participating program, Smith Hill. Shannon Rudisill personal priorities is around continuity of care. The entrance/exit, extending the length of time families can retain child care while they are unemployed are other areas that she speaks about child care. She also visited DHS.

Members looked over the Early Learning Letter that was dated, December 1, 2010. Are there some goals the commission wants to recommend from the letter that DHS can include in their two year goals? Leanne Barrett suggested revising the letter, saying she would focus on, not the big expansion, but maybe the entrance/exit strategy. She also suggested emphasizing the 12 month certification again, instead of 6 months. Leanne explained that legislation would need to pass for the entrance/exit strategy. They could request legislation. Extending the period you can retain child care if you are laid off-----RI is at the lower end of the range. In RI you can retain child care for 3 weeks, some states

it's 6 months, another a year. Leanne suggested asking for 6 months; maybe they'd give 3 months.

Rachel Flum from the Poverty Institute stated a few things they would like to see accomplished: they would be interested in eliminating the asset test; they have to prove they don't have assets over \$1000.00. The pending time would be another area, eliminate or reducing the pending time frame. Also the child support requirement, people cooperate with child support for all the children in the family whether or not they are receiving child care assistance, that they eliminate that additional requirement, because the child support requirement for other programs is just for the child itself, not for all the other children in the family. Another would be improving reimbursement rates for providers, tying increase reimbursement rates to quality.

Chair Diaz spoke about her meeting with Director Sandra Powell about certification waiting time. She met with her to talk about how some providers have cared for children while they are waiting for approval and then find out they do not qualify and the provider loses money. Director Powell is going to look into it and see how the department can address reducing the waiting time. Why is this happening and why do some have to wait almost a month? Kathie Sandberg stated that some people find employment, but can't get child care because they haven't been approved; it's in that waiting period.

Chair Diaz spoke about the status of a Senate bill, it is a DHS bill. Rachel Flum said it was a clean up bill, statutes were old and the definition of public assistance wasn't defined well.

Mike Burk (DCYF) told the commission that the Violation Disclosure bill passed the Senate, in the Sub A version, S-0647 Sub A. This act would provide that DCYF would authorize the disclosure of violations of regulations by a day care home, group family day care home, day center under certain defined criteria provided that the identity of the victim or day care center employee is not released. Mike met with Kevin Savage, met with the Child Care Director's Association Executive Committee about a week ago and clarified some of the concerns raised about the House Bill, which is to be considered by House Judiciary. One of the concerns was around the change that was made to findings and violations of statute and regulations, in accordance with sub paragraph 32 etc. 32 is the access to public records law which currently allows any regulatory body to provide information regarding a final action taken by an agency. They are defining final action as licensing administrator or the director, but usually it comes from the licensing administrator who sends out a notice of violation. That only happens after there has been a very, very, very, serious infraction that immediately endangered the health and safety of the children, you might send out an immediate notice of violation, but usually it happens after DCYF goes out on a complaint or a regular site visit, the monitors do their check list, they identify to the providers what the concerns are, the provider has the opportunity to correct them within a certain time frame. There could be more time given, but if they find that the provider is not willing or able to correct the violation, a formal letter would be sent out that you are put on probation, your license is put on probation, you can't take any more children, your license is on hold. Suspension is when your license is suspended and you have a specific time to fix the violation. Termination is when you are not getting your license back.

Leanne asked about the State Plan. A public meeting will be held to consider the proposed Child Care and Development Fund State Plan on June 15, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. at the Arnold Conference Center. Leanne suggested that the Commission send a letter with feed back on the State Plan. It was discussed that Rachel had it on her computer, she will redraft the letter. The commission can send a written statement to the Department by June 24, 2011.

Maryanne Miller from DOH: RI Department of Health and Bradley Hospital are having a Child Care Health Consultant/Nurse Networking Meeting on Thursday, June 16, 2011 from 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m. at the Warwick Public Library at 600 Sandy Lane, in Warwick. They have about 30 people attending. They will be talking about lead and immunization updates, and what is pertinent for good quality child care. Everyone is welcome to attend. Kathie Sandberg stated that they have been trying to find an answer to: a for profit child care, do you have the right to not enroll a child who does not have immunizations???? Kathie said they are trying to find out where it is in writing. Maryanne asked that Kathie send her an email, she would forward it to the immunization people immediately, and get a response for everyone. Chair Diaz stated that HEW passed legislation to authorizing pharmacies to provide immunizations. Maryanne spoke about Kids-Net. It keeps track of immunizations of the children and lead screening.

Meeting is adjourned.