

# The Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care in RI

## October 18, 2010 Meeting Minutes

### Attendees:

Representative Grace Diaz  
Bonnie Larson  
Channavy Chhay  
Charlotte Boudreau  
Esselton McNulty  
Rachel Flum  
Rachel Gribbin  
Katherine Begin  
Khadija Lewis Khan  
Kim Maine  
Larry Pucciarelli  
Laura Mason Zeisler  
Michele Palermo  
Tracy Cheney  
Vladimir Ibarra  
Marybeth Young  
Charlotte Moretti

### Minutes:

The minutes were approved.

Representative Diaz welcomed everyone. She informed the Commission that Blythe Berger and Tammy Camillo would be unable to attend today's meeting.

Representative Diaz welcomed new representative from the Poverty Institute, Rachel Flum.

Also visiting today is Charlotte Moretti, chairperson of the RI Child Care Directors Association and the Director of The Academy for Little Children.

The Step up for Kids event was rescheduled to Tuesday, October 19, 2010 from 3-7 p.m. at Roger Williams Park. There will be over 33 agency's set up there with materials. She asked that the Commission spread the word.

Blythe sent a hand out to Roberta so that the Commission members could have an update on the, Child Care Health Consultation Model Update. (See attached) The dates and times of the trainings begin on November 16, 2010 and run for 3 or 4 consecutive Tuesdays.

Representative Diaz announced that the web site is up and running. There is a delay in the language link, the Data Department is working on the issue and it should be resolved soon. Representative Diaz asked that members contribute information and send comments regarding what they would like to see on the web site.

Michele Palermo: Early Learning Council met on September 29, 2010. The Council's next meeting is in December. The work group is meeting this week and on the agenda is discussion about kindergarten assessment and discussion/brief overview of the data project and the pieces the Council will be trying to move forward with some of the ARRA Funds. The State will be receiving approx. \$666,000, total. Those funds will be used to promote the work of The Early Learning Council over the next three years. The \$666,000 is the total; it will be divided up over the course of three years. Kids Count is working on creating a web site that will live as the Council's web site. RIDE Approval: RIDE is in the last stages of the initial pass through the application for RIDE approval. There are about 140 programs working to meet the new standards by July 2011. Core Competencies: The Department of Ed is providing leadership to develop core competencies for the early care and education field, what teachers should know and be able to do and what teacher assistants should know and be able to do. RI Early Learning

Standards Project: There is a waiting list for RI Early Learning Standards training. RIDE is looking at their budget for training and anticipates adding additional sessions of Early Learning Standards Training. Currently, multiple sessions of RIELS training are underway. RIDE: A lot of professional development is going on. A lot of internal work at the Department of Ed is underway, specific to Race to the Top. Some of that work will impact early childhood, such as; data system redesign, comprehensive assessment, the funding formula implementation, website/info works. The early childhood work is integrated in to the strategic plan at the Department. Also, in the future there will be a lot of development work around the RI Early Learning Standards because RI has recently adopted the Common Core Standards K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>

Kim Maine's comments/question to Michele Palermo: With regard to the RIDE approved standards. Is it an all or nothing scenario? If a program has difficulty achieving even one of them should they stop the process or should they still continue to try to move forward? Some programs have some limitations, even physical limitations. There is frustration over some of the standards. Michele's Response: Programs can make any decision they want, RIDE staff are available for consultation if a program is considering pulling back their application. There are many other standards that programs could be working on even if there are some barriers to achieving full approval. People should not anticipate RIDE's position without talking to us. RIDE staff will think and plan with programs that have substantial issues that are of concern to RIDE. There are some barriers that need to be addressed and RIDE is keeping track of that information. That information will be considered in terms of the number of programs with particular barriers and the evidence supporting the standard. These standards will not have the same shelf life as the old standards, which were 40 years old, when they were revised. The Regents have some guidelines about when standards and regulations get reviewed. These standards are on a three year cycle. They were approved in January, so they will be reopened again in three years. At that time, RIDE will look at the data and evidence and make determinations about revisions to the standards. There is not a process for awarding exemptions to specific standards. There is an option for a variance. It would give programs a period of time, up to five years, to

meet one or two standards which might require additional time, funds, etc.

Kim Maine question to Michele Palermo: Concern about professional development, teachers and directors having access to appropriate college bearing courses that are going to meet those standards in a timely fashion. Biggest barrier, trying to work full time, student teaching piece, field placement. Accessibility is limited, Mr. Hatfield from CCRI has been sitting at the table listening to this very openly, URI has been there sometimes, and RIC very limited. Michele asked what table? Kim explained that this is at professional development meetings at Ready to Learn Providence where it's been discussed a lot. Kim explained it's a very real issue as you go through those standards. 40 hours of professional development for a director level, administration level, just isn't out there.

Michele Palermo: A state wide professional development system needs to be in place. There has been an announcement about DHS funding for this new professional development system. The people leading that work should be made aware of the barriers and concerns stated. As well, one of the required responsibilities of the Early Learning Council is to address the issue of a comprehensive professional development system.

Khadija Lewis Khan: There's no way program's that serve low income population can meet those standards, without supplemental income. Michele stated that there are definitely some standards that that's true for, but I think there are other standards that don't have a cost, that have to do with how your program is organized, with systems in place. Khadija stated that the programs serving low income kids are going to fall out of the system unless we get some kind of support. Laura Mason Zeisler mentioned that it will affect the turn over rate for staff. If you can't afford decent wages they'll have to leave. So many pieces tied into that reimbursement rate. Khadija mentioned a teacher in her program, was planning on staying, but if she goes back for four classes and gets her certification, she's not going to stay here because of the pay rate in child care doesn't compare to schools if she was teaching K, 1<sup>st</sup>, or 2<sup>nd</sup>. Michele pointed out that you can only teach K, with that certification.

Ess McNulty spoke about the private market. Public government is trying to build this Bright Stars and this new education formula for us to follow is built on the premise that these kids will be there. They can't be there if government doesn't recognize that the reimbursement rate has to come up. The general population can't afford the rates. Jobs aren't paying at a rate that they can afford it.

A Commission member stated that the Commission should be thinking about, what is our message to the General Assembly this year? What is our message? Possibly having a marketing person come in and help with marketing a message was suggested.

Larry Pucciarelli: There have been conversations; we should look at how we structure our rates. As funds become more available there will be discussion about how to spend those dollars and should it be across the board.

Michele Palermo: The standards that the Pre-K programs are operating under are the RIDE Standards. There are expectations. That's what we are paying for. Of course we have programs that aren't there, it's a high bar. When we go to the Regents and say we did what you told us to do. In RI these are the programs that can do it on their own, these are the programs that are just there, they've done everything they can, but they can't take the next step without additional funds, because they can't hire a teacher with a Bachelor's degree, they can't lower their class size to 18. Then you have a platform on which to say to make a clear argument about investing in very specific ways as apposed to just getting more money. RIDE is clear about their expectations.

Representative Diaz suggested that we continue this conversation. To think about how the Legislative body can help with this. The State budget is still in difficult shape, but Representative Diaz is hopeful that the State will see child care needs on another level. It will depend on what kind of leaders we have and what kind of people we have with the ability to understand child care on all levels.

Katherine Begin: Part of the Early Childhood Systems Planning work that's happening with the Department of Health there is a work group looking at the social, emotional well being of children. Dr. Susan Dickstein has been the chairperson of that work group. She has brought forth the discussion on the infant/toddler mental health endorsement system that comes out of the State of Michigan. The RI infant mental health association has pretty much made up its mind that they are going to recommend to the steering committee, a recommendation that the State of RI would take this Michigan endorsement for infant/toddler competencies and adapt it for our State. They have determined there is a lack of credential experts in field of mental health for infants and toddlers.

Kids Count tracks all data.

Larry Pucciarelli: The Information Exchange with DHS had a meeting a couple of weeks ago. Some discussion was about the mechanic's of subsidy, how it's working and not working.

Meeting adjourned, next meeting November 8, 2010