

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

May 8, 2008 Meeting Minutes

9-11am, 154 W. Clark St.

Members Present:

- Gino Balcita, Parent Coalition
- Sharmaine Balcita, Parent Coalition
- Mary Belknap, Jackson Community College
- Lori Bush, Child Care Network
- Chlorita Conner, Lilly Mission Center
- Mary Cunningham-DeLuca, CAA
- Jessica Embury, Parent Coalition
- Kathy Hoszkiw, ABC Academy
- Paige Girard, Foote Hospital
- Jeanette Lamphere, Parent Liaison
- Jeannie Nichols, MSU Extension
- Bill Rayl, Jackson Area Manufacturers Association
- Diana Rickman, Child Care Network
- Mike Shore, Community Member
- Gloria Smith, Jackson County Intermediate School District
- Sara Tackett, Jackson District Library
- Ann Thompson, Parent Coalition
- Bethany Timmons, United Way
- Jenny Wren, Foote Hospital

Agenda Items:

Parent Coalition Update — M. Cunningham-DeLuca

Jeanette Lamphere was introduced as the new Parent Liaison, replacing Lisa Warren.

The recent Love and Logic seminars were attended by 75 parents combined over two sessions. Seminar surveys revealed that parents strongly desired additional training of this nature, particularly specific parenting strategies. It was noted that Head Start is in the process of certifying three trainers in conscious discipline and positive behavioral support so ongoing training can be offered in the near future.

Legislative Breakfast Report & Discussion — M. Cunningham-DeLuca

The Collaborative shared their enthusiasm and appreciation regarding the Legislative Breakfast, feeling well pleased in particular with the diverse audience and the level of legislative participation on the State and Federal level. Additionally, the group felt extremely positive regarding the press coverage the event received and is eager to capitalize on this publicity within the community. It was noted that positive seeds were planted that day with legislators who may be on the fence regarding early childhood issues, the children of McCulloch School who were in attendance, the 4th grade students who wrote essays for the event, and the children/teachers who were presented with the floral table arrangements from the breakfast by Representative Griffin.

Imagination Library – M. Cunningham-DeLuca & J. Lamphere

It was noted that the library has 98 children enrolled since its announcement on May 1st. The group was briefed on the specific workings of the Imagination Library. The primary location to register any child age 0-5 who lives in Jackson County is online via the link on the Great Start website (www.greatstartjackson.org). Many expressed pleasure over the ease of registration. It was suggested that a link be added to the Great Start website that would provide program specific information along with the link to register. For those who do not have access to a computer, brochures are being placed at various locations throughout the community that individuals may fill out and mail to register their child. Collaborative members were encouraged to begin promoting the Imagination Library in the community and to contact J. Lamphere or S. Butters for any assistance or materials.

Fundraising for the Imagination Library was also raised as a point to begin thinking through, as the dollars provided by Consumers Energy were going to be sufficient to support the program for the first 1.5-2 years. It costs \$28 per year to sponsor a child (provide 1 age-appropriate hard-cover book per month mailed to their home). An

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endowment fund is being established through the Jackson County Community Foundation for the purpose of supporting the Imagination Library and donation envelopes will be made available shortly for fundraising efforts.

Child Care Scholarships – M. Cunningham-DeLuca

Ten child-care scholarships will be made available with the \$60,000 Consumers Energy has donated for this purpose. Similar to the Imagination Library, these dollars are being placed in an endowment fund that is presently being established through the Jackson Community Foundation. M. Kanser and the Value Committee will assume responsibility for the longevity of the fund and has already began fundraising efforts with local business leaders to support additional scholarships. A recent meeting was held with the Child Care Network to discuss the administration of the scholarships. Presently, Child Care Network will administer and facilitate the program, reporting quarterly to the Ready to Learn Committee. The selection process is still being finalized but will include the Ready to Learn Committee evaluating the applications and Consumers employees evaluating the applicants either through interviews or written essays.

Coordinator Report – M. Cunningham-DeLuca

S. Butters submitted a written report of her activities for Collaborative review and will be doing so on a regular basis.

Subcommittee Reports

Awareness Committee — B. Timmons

The committee presented an updated version of their work plan which included additional specificity within the Action Steps and Measurement categories. The group is ready to move from the planning process to assigning budget to the work plan. Committee membership is small and an invitation for new members went to the collaborative.

Value Committee — D. Rickman

The committee submitted a revised work plan for the Collaborative to review which included a new distribution of materials action item along with additional points of specificity within their measurements.

Ready to Learn Committee — M. Cunningham-DeLuca

The committee has been working on the evaluation piece of the new child care scholarships provided by Consumers Energy. The group will propose that a minimum of two scholarships be targeted for infants or toddlers and that the scholarships be awarded proportionally to county vs. city residents.

A strategy for identifying researched based curricula to recommend to area preschool and child care providers has also been added to the committee work plan.

Co-Chairs's, Mary Cunningham-DeLuca and Kathy Hoszkiw, were elected.

The committee is working on a strategy for offering on-line as well as face-to-face parent and provider training.

Voting — M. Cunningham-DeLuca

G. Balcita made a motion to approve the committee work plans as presented which was seconded by B. Rayl. This motion was carried without dissent.

K. Hoszkiw made a motion to approve the Ready to Learn Committee proposal to reserve two of the child-care scholarships for infants/toddlers and to award the scholarships to a representative cross section of both city and county residents; this was seconded by M. Shore and carried without dissent.

New Business

The Intermediate School District reported there is a coordinated health model being adopted in Jackson Public and Northwest School Systems with other districts ready to come on board.

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Of the County school districts willing to participate in a recent survey, their data showed that 345 out of 581 2007/08 Kindergarteners came from “at risk” homes and only 34 arrived in the Fall without a prior pre-school experience.

CCN has hired a new Director.

Foot Hospital is working to develop a newsletter for expecting parents through their first year of parenthood.

ECIC Corporate Board held a recent conference call to discuss the roadblocks holding up \$31.5 billion in early childhood dollars. Senators M. Schauer and Randy Richardville are the State targets for the group.

JCC is presently redesigning and reformatting their early childhood curriculum; this program has not been cancelled. All were encouraged to support the redesign within the college if the opportunity arises.

The ISD is wrapping up the last of four training sessions for child care professionals. Eight sessions have been scheduled for next year (four in the Fall & four in the Spring) and will be held throughout the county.

The Library reported on the success of their Early Learning Room and Storyfest.

M. Shore is working with the Library to find a grant to fund books and bring storytelling into Partnership Park.

J. Embury encouraged everyone to participate with the Star Power Rally on May 21 and found the online pre-training very helpful. The training takes only one half-hour and prepares participants to speak effectively with lawmakers about issues related to early childhood.

The next meeting will be held on August 14, 2008.

Meeting adjourned.