

**Oregon Commission for Child Care
Salem, OR**

7/11/03

Members Present: Kitty Piercy, John Sandusky, Katherine Criswell, Lisa Kopetski, Gabriela Downey, Cheryl Reece

Members Absent: Vicki Sarazin, Martha Young, Rep. Pat Farr, Rep. Wayne Scott

Guests: Tom Olsen, Mary Nemmers, Rosetta Wangerin, Rhonda Prodzinski, Dell Ford, JaNell Welker, Tamara Brickman, Diana Pickett, Becky Vorpapel, Jeanette Ewald, Jeannie Suihkonen

Staff: Claudia Grimm

Chair Kitty Piercy called the meeting to order at 9:15 am. A quorum was present.

NOTE: *Text in bold italics denotes Commission action.*

I.) Introductions

A.) Kitty introduced Claudia Grimm, the new Executive Officer. Commissioners and guests introduced themselves. Rosetta welcomed Rhonda Prodzinski, who is a new Program Analyst at DHS. Rhonda will be taking Bonnie Chalmers place.

B.) Kitty asked Commissioners to tell Claudia one thing they would like to staff to pay attention to:

Kitty: Pay attention to details and keep things moving, so that she can fulfill her role as Chair the Commission.

Kathy: Orient new Commissioners to “who’s who” in child care (***Mary volunteered to orient Kathy on R&R; Kitty requested staff institutionalize new Commissioner packets and orientation.***)

Gabriela: Organize Commission’s library and data, so that there is a history.

John: Educate herself on the issues.

Mary: Keep website current.

Rosetta: Create a priority list for the Commission after the retreat this fall. Staff helps the Commission move forward, and assists to increase the visibility of the Commission.

Lisa: Communicate with Commissioners on a regular basis between meetings and know what form of communication is most effective for each Commissioner. Commissioners need to be aware of changes that affect early childhood education between regularly scheduled meetings. Commissioners then have time to act or provide input in a timely manner.

Mary: Would like to see the Commission continue to be an active advocate for R&R.

II.) Dell Ford; Oregon Department of Education

Dell gave Commissioners an overview of Oregon's broad vision of Head Start and early childhood education. She began with an update on what's going on in Oregon. Oregon technically has two Head Start programs. One is federal Head Start and the other is Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, which is administered by general fund dollars via the Department of Education. Through a collaborative agreement with Region X Head Start, Oregon has blended these into one comprehensive early childhood program, with two funding sources.

Oregon is legislatively mandated to serve all eligible Head Start children by 2004. According to current census data, there are 15,952 three and four year olds eligible for Head Start in Oregon. In January, 2003 the program was serving 61% of eligible children. In 2002 the state lost \$700,000 of general fund, which did not reduce the number of children served, but decreased the number of weeks that programs were in operation. The defeat of Measure 28 brought another 2 million dollar budget cut; this time the number of children served was cut by 350. The current operating budget for Oregon Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start is \$53.5 million, which means Oregon can now serve only 58% of eligible children.

Dell explained that many of Oregon's programs are predicated on collaborative partnerships. There is a fear that many of these innovative models will disappear in the face of further funding cuts. Dell is in the process of documenting these creative collaborations.

The Department of Education decided not to fill Anita McClanahan's position when she retired. The Department decided to combine the early childhood function with special education. There is concern from the early childhood community that housing this function with special education may bias public perception that Head Start is a special education program, instead of a comprehensive early childhood program that serves income eligible children regardless of ability. Kitty asked Dell if there was an avenue for the Commission to advocate on behalf of Oregon's Head Start/Pre-Kindergarten programs. Dell said she would let Kitty know.

On the federal level, President Bush wants to dismantle the Head Start program and block grant it to the states. Federal Head Start performance standards, which all Oregon Pre-Kindergarten programs utilize, would not be part of this transition. States would have the latitude to decide how to administer the Head Start program. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) have been advocating at the national level that this is NOT a good idea, especially given the budget crises that

many states are facing. With such intensive competition for funding, the concern is that the quality and consistent Head Start program that we currently know would be lost.

III.) Tamara Brickman; Legislative Update

HB 2191: *Adds Director of the Employment Department, or at the Governor's direction, Chairperson of the Commission for Child Care to the State Commission on Children and Families.* Signed by the Governor on June 11, with an emergency clause: effective immediately.

Either Debbie Lincoln or Kitty Piercy will participate on the State Commission on Children and Families. JaNell said that child care is already represented on local commissions by participation of the R&R's, Head Start or both.

HB 2190: Gives rule making authority to the Employment Department for the Child Care Division. Signed by Governor on 6/4/03.

HB 3066: (Oregon Cares). *Directs State Commission on Children and Families in coordination with the Commission for Child Care and in consultation with other child advocacy groups to develop strategies to improve child care and assist child care providers.* Tamara reported that this bill is waiting for Sen. Schrader's approval to be heard.

Kitty Piercy agreed to contact Sen. Schrader and explain the child care system to him (workforce issue, family self sufficiency, and healthy child development).

HB 3184: *Modifies working family child care tax credit refund payments.* Signed into law 6/24/03.

SB 534: Child care regulation regarding exemption for "extended family members": to be determined by the Child Care Division on a case-by-case basis. Signed into law 6/19/03; effective 1/1/04.

HB 2783: *Requires state agencies, boards and commissions that issue certain licenses, permits or registrations to record an applicant's social security number on their application,* in order to check whether applicant is current on child support payment. Still in committee; expected to pass and be signed by Governor.

Tamara concluded by stating that Oregon's unemployment rate is 8.5%--the highest it's been in 17 years.

IV.) Tom Olson; Child Care Division/Coordinating Council Update

Tom distributed 2003 data (broken down by county) on the number of registered family child care homes, certified family homes and certified centers. *Please refer to attachments to the minutes if you were not present at the meeting to receive the reports.* Tom stated that the number of centers increased last year, but they have been declining during 2003. Tom speculated that this is due to Oregon's economy and that family child care is a less expensive option for families. The number of registered family child care homes has decreased slightly to 5200, while the number of certified family homes is on the rise. Lisa noted that in Umatilla County there are now 4 additional certified family homes!

Tom also passed out data on the number of Health and Safety Reviews conducted by the Child Care Division, and the number of complaints received and investigated. Tom noted that the Child Care Division follows up on 100% of the serious complaints it receives. Lisa inquired about a recent incident about a child in care. Commissioners expressed interest in having a presentation on how law enforcement and child protective services work with providers to ensure safety. ***Rhonda will work with Claudia to arrange a presentation on this topic at the next Commission meeting.***

Oregon's federal child care plan has been filed, and Tom does not anticipate any problems with it being approved. Tom Olsen, Rosetta Wangerin, Dell Ford and Sonya Svenson recently returned from the Region X Child Care Administrators meeting in Seattle. Conference attendees were very interested in Oregon's Child Care-Head Start Collaboration Project. Tom and Claudia will be attending the national Child Care Administrator's conference in Washington, DC next month. Kitty requested the Commission receive as much advance notice as possible of these conferences so that Commissioners can attend.

V.) Mary Nemmers, Becky Vorpagel, Jeanette Ewald; Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (OCCRRN)

Mary began by giving an update on Washington County's effort to become its own SDA (Service Delivery Area). The Metro SDA was previously comprised of three counties: Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington. Washington County requested that it become its own SDA and Mary reported that this process has received unanimous approval every step of the way. Washington County is the second largest SDA in the state. Metro SDA is now composed of Multnomah and Clackamas Counties, and is served by three agencies.

Becky Vorpagel, OCCRRN Data Manager, gave Commissioners a review of the Network's new website. The redesign of the website has been in progress for about a year and it now addresses all core services of R&R, including a parent search module and a training database. Becky updates the provider database monthly. The R&R's update the training database.

Kitty requested a link to the Commission's website, inviting the public to send their child care issues/comments directly to us. Becky will coordinate this with Claudia.

Discussion moved to the parent search module. Becky said that certified centers are automatically added to the database unless they request otherwise in writing. Exempt centers, as well as certified family child care homes and family child care homes need to request to be added. Parents can search by county or zip code, as well as by type of care, age of child(ren), language desired, CCD registration status, and full or part time status. The number of hits to this section of the website is tracked by SDA. Cheryl said she has gotten many more calls from parents since she added her name to the website. Tom hoped the new website would encourage providers to register with their R&R. Gabriela noted that employers should link to the OCCRRN website so employees can find child care assistance.

Jeanette Ewald, OCCRRN Contracts Manager, reported that she has just finished the first 18 month cycle of R&R reviews. She distributed parent provider and community stakeholder customer satisfaction surveys that are collected by the Network. One of the Network's biggest accomplishments in this process has been the standardization of procedures, forms and materials for R&R's across the state. Overview curriculums have been revised and standardized, as have many R&R processes and procedures.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) has developed a Quality Assurance Program for consumer education to parents. In September, the Network will begin implementation of the program in all R&R agencies. It is the Network's goal that by September, 2004 all of Oregon's R&R's will have successfully completed the Quality Assurance program. Jeanette concluded by saying that the Network's standardization process has created a baseline level of service across the state and will hold SDA's accountable to maintain that level of service.

VI.) Approval of April, 2003 and May, 2003 minutes

Lisa noted corrections to the April, 2003 minutes. A motion was made to accept the minutes with Lisa's changes. The motion was seconded and approved. A hard copy of the revised minutes will be mailed to Commissioners.

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VII.) Cheryl Reece and Jeannie Suihkonen; Oregon Family Child Care Network (OFCCN)

Cheryl introduced Jeannie Suihkonen, Chair of the Oregon Family Child Care Network. The OFCCN was formed in 1994 as a voice for family child care providers. The OFCCN gained non-profit status in 1996. The Network is an advocacy organization that informs providers about legislation affecting them, and communicates providers' concerns to legislators. The OFCCN is now funded via the Child Care Division. Applicants registering to be family child care providers in Oregon can check a box to have \$5 of their registration fee go to the OFCCN.

Kitty invited the OFCCN to share family child care provider issues with the Commission. **Mary Nemmers offered to have a link to OFCCN on the Network website.**

VIII.) Diana Pickett; Healthy Child Care Oregon

Diana introduced herself as a nurse consultant with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Family Health. The goal of the Healthy Child Care Oregon initiative is to strengthen partnerships between health care and child care. Partners in the project include DHS, Child Care Division, Oregon Child Care Network, Department of Ed (Head Start/Oregon Pre-K), Oregon Commission on Children and Families and the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. Over the past two years the partners have revised the Health and Safety Handbook, held an Early Childhood Mental Health Summit (including recommendations for action) and began a child care health consultant program. California is assisting Oregon develop an evaluation component for the program.

In the fall of 2001, DHS received a federal Healthy Tomorrow Partnership grant. In addition, the Child Care Division provided matching funding to establish four demonstration project sites. The four sites are located in Lincoln County (Newport), Jackson County (Medford), Baker County (Baker City) and Multnomah County (E. Multnomah County). Child care providers in the demonstration sites, primarily family child care providers, now have access to specialized health care and resources. Health care providers will assess provider strengths and needs, and provide individual health consultations on site. Health assessments are holistic and include physical health, behavioral health, dental hygiene and environmental health.

IX.) Commission Appointments

Kitty asked Claudia what the current vacancies are:

Governor
R&R

(Nina Roll submitted app 7/17)

Speaker
Labor

State Gvt.

Senate
Senator

Local Gvt

Medical (Rosetta Wangerin app submitted)
(Astrid Newell app submitted) Business
Consumer
Legal/tax Consumer
(Vicki would like to be replaced)

One consumer slot needs to be someone who is receiving a child care subsidy or is eligible to receive a child care subsidy. Claudia will meet the appointment staff and the Governor's, Speaker's and Senate's offices and try and push pending appointments through. Kitty suggested contacting David Barenburg and checking if he has any ideas for a local government candidate. Kitty hopes that we can get these positions filled prior to the fall retreat/strategic planning session. If not, the Commission may want to consider scheduling the retreat at a later time.

Commissioners expressed a desire to have people recruited who are leaders that others will respect and listen to. **They would like Claudia draft a job description/position expectations document to review.** Kitty told the group that Claudia's primary functions in the near future are to get the Commission back on solid ground, fill vacant Commissioner positions, plan the retreat and attend partner planning meetings. The Commission will also be convening a group of people that will take the recommendations from the Financing Child Care Task Force and develop a strategic plan for financing child care in Oregon. Kitty stated that the plan will address how to bring new resources into the system, and prioritize funding streams.

Claudia asked how she should disseminate the Commission's *Report to the Governor and Legislature* to legislators, who may be leaving Salem in the near future. **Kitty said she will write a cover letter, and in the mean time Claudia will solicit Tamara's opinion as to whether we should send the report to legislators' district offices or Salem offices.**

There will be no meeting on August 29th, as that is the Friday of Labor Day weekend. **Claudia will poll Commissioners to see whether Friday the 15th or 22nd works best for an August meeting.**

*****NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO AUGUST MEETING. THE COMMISSION WILL MEET IN SEPTEMBER TO DEVELOP AN AGENDA FOR AN OCTOBER RETREAT!!**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm by Chair Kitty Piercy.