



Early Care & Education Committee
Bridge to Success
Preparing Waterbury Youth for Life: "A Birth to 21 Initiative"

Tuesday, February 9th, 2010
1:00p.m.-2:30p.m.

Minutes

Present: Evelyn Rodriguez, Linda Janowitz, Paul Bisnette, Laura Hadder, Debbie McCusker, Tiffany Murasso

Staff: Barbara Tacchi & Nicole Porto

Introductions: Debbie McCusker, co-chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:20 PM. Brief introductions went around the room of those present. Debbie asked members to review the January minutes. Linda Janowitz noted that she was not listed as present on the minutes and would like to be added.

Paul Bisnette made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and also to add Linda Janowitz as present during the January meeting. Evelyn Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

House Keeping:

Preschool Announcements: Debbie McCusker passed around the Waterbury Public School Pre-School 2010-2011 Registration flyer. Debbie noted that she particularly liked that it was in color and in both Spanish/English.

Focus Groups: Debbie passed around a flyer from the Connecticut State Department of Education whom indicates they need volunteers to participate in focus groups relating to preschool. In particular, they are looking for input on ways to support community preschool programs in planning, choosing and/or implementing high quality curriculum in preschool classrooms.

School Readiness: Barbara Tacchi noted that SRC has a flyer for preschool registration. Nicole will contact Barbara to get the flyer to distribute to members.

Born Learning: Nicole noted that the Born Learning Initiative comes in both English and Spanish languages. Nicole passed around the list of communities in Connecticut that supposedly are involved with the Born Learn Initiative. Nicole also came across the Born Learning Trail which offers multiple levels of engagement: awareness, education, action. The trail is interactive, playful, is visible and has a permanent impact. It gives caregivers ideas on how to interact with young children as they pass through the trail. Nicole thought this was an interesting component of the Born Learning Initiative and plans to meet with someone from United Way of Greater New Haven to visit the site.



Resource Mapping: Nicole brought a copy of the resource mapping document (just the ECE section) for the committee to see. Debbie McCusker brought the whole document along.

Documents: Nicole mentioned that at January's meeting there was discussion about having all documents present that we are referring to in the event that we have a newcomer. Nicole brought a copy of the Bridge to Success plan, Blueprint, Resource Mapping document, minutes/materials from all previous ECEC meetings.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9th, 2010 from 1:00-2:30PM at WYSS – 4th Floor. There were concerns that parking was an issue. The committee will spread the word to try parking in the Phoenix building. If that does not work, we will look into a different location for April's meeting.

Status Report Form: Nicole stated that the status report form needs to be completed and finalized at the next meeting. The report will list two objectives, activities to be performed to meet objectives, individuals responsible for activities, expected outcomes of activities, and date range for activities. The report will be brought forward to the Bridge to Success Management Committee.

Implementation: Tiffany Murasso reminded the committee that they had decided on implementing the Born Learning Initiative as well as Pre-K Registration & Orientation. The committee agreed that it's crucial to reach families in the community that are not connected. Also, it is critical to go door to door in the neighborhoods where no resources are available.

The committee felt they need to go to places where children are. Examples included:

- Saint Mary's (Dr. Gertsma)
- Pediatricians
- Home Day Cares
- Community Centers (North End, South End, etc.)
- Laundry Mats
- Malls

Barbara Tacchi mentioned that there are 2,500 pre-k spaces available in the city and at least 20% of parents will chose not to send their child.

The committee felt it would be beneficial to look at the resource mapping document and determine which agencies/organizations would be the most beneficial to send flyers to about Pre-K Registration/Orientation and Born Learning Initiative.

Debbie McCusker asked if School Readiness accepts special needs children. Barbara Tacchi indicated yes they do. Debbie stated that that information is not out in the public and people do not know.



Next Steps: The committee agreed that in terms of implementation, they need to target high needs neighborhoods. Page 12 of the Blueprint provides a map of the city where the high needs are.

For the next meeting, the committee needs data on the following:

- % children living in poverty
- % children attending Pre-K

From the information, the committee will develop a survey and distribute throughout the city in the neighborhoods with highest needs.

At the next meeting, the committee will chose target neighborhoods, create survey, and complete status report form.

Thank you to Debbie McCusker for providing drinks and Linda Janowitz for snacks!

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:35PM