

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE COMMISSION
2009-10 SECOND QUARTER MEETING MINUTES

November 5, 2009

Division of Child Development
319 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
Raleigh, NC
Conference Room 300

Commission Members Present

Margaret Anne Biddle	Lorrie Looper
Magdalena Cruz	Lynn Policastro
Angela Boyce Davis	Deanne Smith
Connie Harland	Lois Stephenson
Julia Baker Jones	Claire Tate

Commission Members with an Excused Absence

Vickie Ansley, Penny Davis, Connie Harland, Laurie Morin, Dr. Mary-Cassie Shaw, Jennifer Svenstrup

Division of Child Development (DCD) Staff Present

June Locklear, Regulatory Services	Melissa Stevenson, Regulatory Services
Kathy Shepherd, Workforce Standards	Tammy Barnes, Director's Office
Ron Byrd, Subsidy Services	Alexi Gruber, Division Attorney
Laura Hewitt, Regulatory Services	Dedra Alston, Director's Office
Anna Carter, Regulatory Services	Kimberly Mallady, Director's Office
Mary Lee Porterfield, Workforces Standards	Nicole Wilson, Director's Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Claire Tate issued a general welcome and called the NC Child Care Commission meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Members of the audience wishing to address the Commission were asked to sign-up for public comment and, if interested, on the Commission mailing list at the back table. Chairperson Tate also reminded members to complete the appropriate motion form when making motions. Ms. Tate asked if any members had known conflicts of interest concerning today's agenda items, and none were mentioned. Nicole Wilson called the roll. The Commission members who were absent from this meeting all requested and received excused absences.

Ms. Tate briefly went over today's agenda and the member's meeting packets.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – April 23, 2009 draft minutes were reviewed by members with no comments or revisions.

Commission Action: *Deanne Smith moved that the meeting minutes be approved as presented. Lois Stephenson seconded. There being no further discussion, Chairperson Tate called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.*

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – September 10, 2009 draft minutes were reviewed by members with no comments or revisions.

Commission Action: Margaret Anne Biddle moved that the meeting minutes be approved as presented. Angela Boyce Davis seconded. There being no further discussion, Chairperson Tate called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT – DEB CASSIDY

Dr. Deb Cassidy welcomed the Commission and visitors to the meeting and the Anniversary Celebration of the North Carolina Rated License.

Budget Update – Dr. Cassidy shared that DCD had received notification about some budget changes for our agency. DCD had an additional \$4 million dollar reduction in subsidy, however, there are \$56M in ARRA for subsidized child care this year. There are now 41,000 children on the subsidized child care waiting list. This is up from around 26,000 this summer. We believe the increase is due to many families coming in to apply as counties are starting to work their waiting lists. Ms Tate expressed concern about the impact of reduced funding that is available for school age children.

We are working hard to document our ARRA dollars and how they are impacting the communities. DHHS determined that we would track the funds down to the level of the child care center and new jobs that are created. This is a big task, and our staff is working on this diligently.

Subsidy Update:

We have hired a project director to move the EBT Swipe Card System along as well as explore combining with other agencies to possibly combine with other benefits that citizens serve. We are committed to not letting this process slow down.

Consolidation

The Task Force for Consolidation for Early Childhood Education and Care appointments are final. From the Senate, members are Senator Swindell from Nash County, Senator Blue from Wake County, and Senator Bill Purcell from Scotland. They join members of the House: Representative Rapp, Representative Insko, and Representative Glazier. Additional appointees by the Governor are Dr. Olsen Huff, M.D., Stephanie Fanjul, and John Pruette. There are five members of the ad hoc committee. They are DHHS Secretary Lanier Cansler, Bill Harrison of the NC School Board, Khari Garvin from Head Start, Sue Russell from CCSA, and Linda Piper from the Licensed Child Care Association. The first meeting date has not officially been scheduled. There is a growing momentum for a new department for early care and education of some sort. At this point, we don't know how that will play out. There is a requirement that a decision be in place by July of 2010.

Dr. Cassidy shared that the QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement System) advisory committee has had their first meeting. The group is discussing how our system will look like for early care and education in North Carolina 10 years from today. Many individuals from around the state participated in making this meeting a success. Dr. Cassidy mentioned the DCD staff who are represented on the committee. They identified hopes and goals for improving the current system as well as some of the goals of the group. Anne Mitchell, a nationally known expert on QRIS and its systems around other states will be coming to join the group at their next full meeting on December 2nd.

Dr. Cassidy wanted to update the Commission on ARRA dollars available for activities to improve quality. . DCD has \$11 million dollars to use for quality activities. We have been very judicious in making decisions

on how to use that money. Dr. Cassidy described some activities to be funded, including a new workforce study. Another project is to provide grants for local professional development planning. There will be 18 focus groups helping us plan for the state, running thru the 18 regional resource and referral offices around the state. A third activity is the Early Childhood Certification project. We hope to certify approximately 9,000 teachers and providers.

Dr. Cassidy shared that DCD is particularly concerned about the quality of care for infants and toddlers across the state. DCD will be sending our Lead Consultants to specialized I-T training and they will then come back to train the 107 consultants around the state on quality I-T care.

Another use for the ARRA dollars is to help support the technical assistance grant we received from CSEFEL. This system of improving the social-emotional atmosphere of programs is critical because of the increased expulsion rates of children in childcare.

Dr. Cassidy explained that there is a new group of temporary employees that have been hired to help expedite the processing in the education unit. These individuals, Sue Creech, Becky Porterfield, Jan Kellar, Margaret Guess, are DCD retirees and together, they have 89 years of experience with the Division and 116 years of experience in early childhood. They work about 20 hours a week and are processing about 200 files per week.

Ms. Tate mentioned that there is a CSEFEL corner in the Child Care Bulletin publication that was passed out. Dr. Cassidy shared that DCD does fund this bulletin, but the resource center lost their funding as of last week. They have contacted DCD to request any additional help, and we are working toward trying to help, but any ARRA dollars that we are able to use for projects are temporary. This money is going to go away.

Ms. Maria Spaulding, Assistant Secretary from DHHS greeted the group and recognized several providers who were invited to attend, honoring them with a plaque from the Division, congratulating them as the first providers to receive a Star Rated License 10 years ago. These are the facilities and owners that were recognized: Stepping Stones Home Day Care Center (Helen Moshfegh), Guilford Tech Community College Children's Center (Guildford Technical Community College), Sugar 'N' Spice Day Care Home (Mrs. Jeffrey Johnson), Hattie Daniels Day Care Center (Wilson Education Opportunities, Inc.), Loving Care (Mary J. White), Praise Child Care Center (Glenn and Belinda McCray), Susie's Friends Day Care (Mrs. Pamela Bowers), Home Away From Home Day Care (Cynthia D. Rackley), Luv-N-Stuff Home Preschool, Luv-N-Stuff Too Child Development, and Luv-N-Stuff Preschool (Shirley Finger).

The Commission took a break for lunch, returning at 1:45 p.m.

Presentation by Jim Wellons – Attorney – Share the role of the Commission and the job in rule making.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Tate moved the meeting into Public Hearing and briefly explained which rules were to be considered for the Hearing today and explained the way the hearing would take place.

Linda Piper, with the North Carolina Rated License Child Care Association, shared some background on the association's position on the key issues. She stated, "We are not against the concepts of more outdoor time and less screen time, etc. The issue that they have is when you write the rule, write it so that it's clear and unambiguous so that we can implement it. Do not add to the confusion." She stated that she liked that the Rules Committee was on the same day as the Commission meeting, because more members were able to attend. Providers feel passionate right now. She asked that the commission members keep in mind that there are over 9,000 providers, so when you make decisions, spend time with them. When it comes time to

vote, be comfortable with it. Not just the intent, but that it will be implemented correctly because you've worded yourself well.

Jennifer Verella, Director of Creative Day School in Wilmington shared that she felt that more energy should be focused on the rules already in place. She questioned how this would be monitored. In regards to homework, was there a limitation on computer usage? Regarding rule .0501, about staff child interactions, she questioned whether or not this belongs in rule book, since it is a training and education item. Since the environmental rating scale already monitors for this interaction, she feels that the training should be left up to each center and their rules about it. She also felt that there should be more work done on facilities that are not licensed, especially drop in facilities.

Lorien Gilliland, Director of Creative Day School in Wilmington (a different site) shared from the perspective of the director on how overwhelming this can be to a center and to teach staff about it. Because the licensing consultant comes once a year, different times for different centers, implementing new rules at different times for multiple centers is confusing as to when the rules are in place because rules come all thru the year. She would like to know who programs are to call when they have questions? She expressed that she would like to see more of a focus on the current rules before we keep pushing more and more new rules.

Vernon Mason, director a center in Wilson, NC expressed his concern on how long it takes to mandate new rules and the additional work that is placed on teachers for things like screen time logs. He believes that the best time to get medical information for children is when it's relevant to them, not just a random annual date. The term "substantial portion of the day" overlaps with centers and outdoor time. This is against the intent of the rule which is to encourage gross motor movement. Regarding screen time for school agers, he believes that for the summer, kids should be allowed more time than 2.5 hours per week. He also does not feel that each child needs to be specifically tracked with their screen time. He also told the Commission about the death of a child in an Apex facility. After three years of having no violations, the consultant showed up after the death and found seventeen violations. He believes that this shows the consultant covering herself for letting things go in the past. He encouraged the Commission to be sure that rules are passed without ambiguity.

Annette Gentry from Creative Day School operations director spoke concerning the rule making. She said, "You cannot write rules for people who don't follow the rules already." Providers are feeling overwhelmed and constantly unable to keep up. She would like to see all track out programs be licensed. She does not agree that less than four hours of care means they are any safer than a full day program. Regarding screen time, providers do not need one more rule that's going to require documentation. She believes that emphasis should be on safety. She feels that quality rules are hard to write, and providers already have the ERS to guide them on quality, so the Commission should leave the rules for rules – not things that can't be easily monitored.

Laura Siffer has three centers in Wake County. She's been in the field for ten years. She wanted to share that sometimes, when the Commission passes rules, you are putting a rule out for something we are already doing because it is "best practice" for early care and education. She said that she feels the staff-child interaction rule worries her a lot. She believes that it is subject to interpretation. Even if a program trains their staff, it is still up for interpretation. These rules show providers that they aren't being trusted. Regarding the weather-permitting rules, who decides what this term means? This is too broad of a term. With the rules regarding screen time, she feels that when there are tvs in programs, it makes it difficult for school agers who are there for their summer vacations or those who cannot go on field trips.

Barbara Cameron from the Carolina Breast Feeding Institute at UNC-CH came to speak about the breastfeeding rule. Specifically, there is one component in the law to provide a chair for mothers to

breastfeed their children. She listed some of the benefits of breastfeeding. Working in families causes mothers to go back and this reduces chances that children would be breastfed.

Jonathan Kotch, a pediatrician and professor, as well as the Director of the Health and Safety Resource Center. He expressed that the rules regarding health and safety are all consistent with American Academy of Pediatrics, and he would like to encourage the Commission to adopt the rules.

Betsy Peters with the YMCA came to ask for clarification on Special Provisions for rule .2502, centers providing care on a seasonal basis, and does this mean that anyone who runs a summer day camp is going to have to be licensed.

Danielle Williams, came to speak as a taxpaying citizen. regarding rule 10A NCAC 09 line 20, which is the definition of owner. They are not required to go through criminal record checks and she would like for the Commission to reconsider this as well as requiring stockholders to complete. Pedophiles are creative, and if a corporation has a childcare center, then she believes that companies should be doing criminal record checks on their investors because they would be allowed access to visit.

Nancy Haddock with Child Development Center, a developmental day program in Wilmington, shared that if there are limitations on screen time, you potentially put limits on learning capabilities. She agrees that there should not be any cartoons, of course, but kids with delays, who may use screened devices are learning tools, so the Commission should consider "screen time" in the larger context.

Committee Reports

School Age Committee:

Ms. Lois Stephenson shared that Laura Hewitt from the Division had provided information about building after school quality. The committee is working on what constitutes a quality program, so this presentation was very helpful. At the next meeting, the committee plans to look through this information in regards to the school-age rules we currently have and propose any changes.

Rules Committee:

Ms. Claire Tate shared that the committee reviewed the set of rules for Developmental Day Programs.

RULE MAKING UPDATE AND ACTION

Dedra Alston presented the revised Developmental Day rules. Attorney Jim Wellons expressed his opinion that these should be published as the next step.

Anna Carter with the Division went over the few changes that were made to the rules.

Commission Action: Julia Baker Jones moved to publish the rules with minor amendments. Deanne Smith seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairperson Tate called for a vote, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commission Action: Lois Stephenson moved to adjourn the meeting. Lynn Policastro seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairperson Tate called for a vote, and the motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

The next meeting of the North Carolina Child Care Commission is scheduled
for Thursday, February 4, 2010.