

Report of the Early Childhood Work Group and Coordinator January 30, 2012

Integration and Collaboration

The Early Childhood Work Group collaborated with Lakes Country Service Cooperative and the Fergus Falls Early Childhood Initiative in arranging and hosting a meeting with Mike Brown from the Minnesota Department of Education, Office of Early Learning on January 19th in Fergus Falls. With the help of Superintendent Jerry Ness and other Fergus Falls Early Childhood Program staff, and a collective group of early childhood advocates from across the county, they painted and delivered a very complete picture of the current programs and overall early childhood system within our region. Needless to say, the group's guests from the state were duly impressed with what they saw, heard and learned.

It is ultimately the hope of the Early Childhood Work Group to continue to work toward quality, integrated early childhood programming throughout Otter Tail County such as the Otter Preschool in Fergus Falls. By implementing similar models county-wide, it would help ensure that every child has access to experiences which will help prepare them for kindergarten, regardless of their socio-economic status.

As referenced in the group's report last August, and in their on-going quest to reduce duplication, the work group is sharing a document today which was created by the Fergus Falls Early Childhood Initiative. This document is called the "Early Childhood Experiences Checklist," and it was referenced in August but inadvertently not attached to the report. The document is attached today for all partners to review and can be considered as an ***Opportunity for Collaboration*** related to the topic of school readiness. This document is completed during Kindergarten Round-up each spring and then used to help balance the number of children in each classroom based on their early childhood experiences.

Caring Connections Program Highlights

Visits continue to go well with home visiting staff from ECFE, ECSE, Head Start, Public Health and Child Care Resource and Referral delivering information and resources directly into family and child care homes. A summary of visits through November is provided below for each component of the program. Thanks to the oral health grant provided by West Central Initiative, toothbrushes and other oral health information have enhanced the program, as well as strengthened overall health components of the visits. Staff met jointly in November, and is again scheduled to meet in March or April for their final gathering of the school year.

Budgets – ACTION REQUESTED

Under the umbrella of Otter Tail County Human Services, the Early Childhood Work Group was successful in securing additional grant funding to continue the Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) in 2012. With the help of John Dinsmore and Tamra Jokela, a grant award of \$25,000 has been allocated for the current year.

ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation by the Early Childhood Work Group and the CEO Group for the Executive Council to accept the PSOP grant award of \$25,000.

Universal Home Visit Report:

Fiscal Year	Total Births	Families eligible for on-going visits	Total Postpartum Visits	Total 1 Month Visits	Total 5 Month Visits	Total 12 Month Visits
2008-09	643	196	276	62	76	100
2009-10	439	160	118	76	64	44
2010-11	567	169	129	95	75	68
2011-12 ytd	242	76	58	37	32	28

Child Care Provider Visit Report:

Fiscal Year	Total Providers Served	Total Visits to Providers	Total Children Enrolled in Care
2009-10	16	117	197
2010-11	14	112	88
2011-12 (YTD)	10	48	n/a

Caring Connections - Parent Support Outreach Program Report				
Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2011				
Total Number of Families Referred	Total Number of Children Served	# of families accepting services	# of families declining	Rate of Acceptance
29	100	20	9	63%
Families Assigned by Agency				
ECFE	Public Health	Head Start	PSOP	
16	2	0	11	
55%	7%	0%	38%	

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Early Childhood Experiences Checklist

Fergus Falls is an Early Childhood Initiative Community. In an effort to evaluate the resources available to children and their families, and also what experiences students have had before entering kindergarten, please complete this form.

Please check all of the following activities and programs that your child has participated in before entering kindergarten.

_____ Fergus Falls Public Library Story time How often: _____

_____ Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Licensed In-Home Child Care Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Licensed Child Care Center Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Early Head Start Programming Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Head Start Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) How long? _____

_____ Family, Friend or Neighbor Child Care Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Private/non-public Pre-school Where? _____ How long? _____

_____ Otter Preschool (Fergus Falls) How long? _____

_____ Sunday School How long? _____

_____ Other: (examples: YMCA, gymnastics, music, dancing, skating and other community programs) please specify: _____

On average, how often do you read to your child? (circle one)

- a. daily b. occasionally c. rarely d. never

Children entering kindergarten should learn to make friends, solve problems with others, show empathy and negotiate. Please fill out this section to give your child's kindergarten teacher a better understanding your child.

Is your child able to (check all that apply):

- Join one or more children in play
- Interact easily with familiar adults
- Begin to recognize and respond to others' emotions
- Use words and phrases, such as "Can I play with you?" or "Please stop. I don't like that."

Children entering kindergarten should be able to take care of themselves and their personal things and work independently.

Is your child able to (check all that apply):

- Hang coat on a hook
- Put on and take off shoes
- Handle toileting needs
- Pick up toys and put them in appropriate places
- Follow a daily routine
- Separate from caregiver and adjust to new settings
- Choose activities independently

Children entering kindergarten should have a growing sense of self to take risks as a learner.

Is your child able to (check all that apply):

- Show increasing self direction and independence
- Begin to have a sense of family and tradition

Please provide us with any other information you would like your child's teacher or the school administrators to know when placing your child for kindergarten: