

Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative

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Early Childhood Work Group/IEIC Meeting

10-Noon April 7, 2010

Phelps Mill Room- Government Service Center, Fergus Falls

Attendance: Marion Kershner & guest nursing student from MSUM (OTC Public Health); Stacy Haugen-McAllister (Fergus Falls Area Special Education Cooperative- 4); Beth Achter (Lakes Country Service Cooperative-3) Patty Deery & Jan Herseth (Head Start-100); Karen Hanan (FF ECFE – 2); Sue Ewy (MCSHN-4); Angie Rush (Parent Support Consultant); Brad Vold (Human Services); and Jane Patrick (Collaborative Coordinator).

1. Stacy McAllister welcomed the group. Introductions were made with a special welcome to Marion's guest nursing student from Public Health.
2. Stacy called for a review of the minutes of the February meeting. **MOTION:** Approval of the minutes as prepared and posted to the website. (M. Kershner/S. McAllister/carried)
3. Jane Patrick shared the program invoices which were presented for payment to Otter Tail County. **MOTION:** Approval of payments from March and April in the amounts of \$2,577.50 (March) and \$21,639.99 (April) respectively. (B. Vold/J. Herseth/Carried)
4. Jane Patrick shared a copy of the FY10 budget for the work group. Jane shared a concern that the program is very low on home visiting dollars with a recent payment to Lakes Country Service Cooperative for ECFE visits. However, Jane is confident that we will come very close to being on target for overall home visiting dollars allocated with minor adjustments to the individual line items. Total payments for the work group at this point in the fiscal year amount to \$71,634, including expenses for the Parent Support Outreach Program of \$28,072. The line item for Parent Support Outreach income will be adjusted once quarter 1 grant expenses have been submitted to the State for reimbursement.
5. Jane shared an overview of the discussions of the Caring Connections Home Visitors from their recent team meeting. Specifically the group discussed concerns about a decline in acceptance rates by families. Home visitors felt that one big factor in the decline is the fact that nurses are no longer making the introduction of the on-going home visitor at the transition visits. Some home visitors offered that it was easier to get a hold of families using text messages. The group discussed the option of having home visitors use texting to connect with families. The group discussed options for reimbursing home visitors for cell phone packages and/or texting service on personal phones. The group also discussed the fact that it would ultimately be up to the family to decide if they wanted to be contacted via text. Marion agreed to check to find out how difficult it would be for the nurses to ask this question and record the family's response at the postpartum visit. If this appears to be a primary contact method that families prefer, the group will need to identify options to reimburse home visitors for cell phone and texting costs.
6. Jane share information from Diane Thorson at Public Health about the scenario of "What if Public Health can no longer offer post partum visits." At this time this is not a primary concern and plans are to continue with the current visit structure. However, due to the county wide hiring freeze, staff retirements or position vacancies and/or continued county budget cuts may make this a reality. The group was appreciative of the initial discussion and awareness of the potential issue, but felt that without an eminent threat of this happening and more details, it didn't pay for the work group to spend significant time in focusing on this issue right now. Since the post partum visits are the entrance to the program, this would obviously make a significant impact on the current program structure.
7. Jane asked the group for input as to what they would like to share with the Collaborative partners at the June 8th Annual Meeting in Parkers Prairie. The following ideas were discussed:
 - A short PowerPoint with pictures from each community with local and statewide early childhood statistics, and relevant information about home visiting and about the importance of father's involvement. Karen agreed to send Jane a standard photo release form which Jane will send to the home visitors. Jane will ask that each community send one or two photos of visits with families to be used in the presentation.
 - Marion suggested sharing information about families from the NFP program and the success stories of the graduates.

- The group discussed the fact that it would be important to get families' permission to share their stories, but agreed they could ask each home visitor to share one success story; and well as a list of places that families have been referred.
- The group also discussed inviting Jerry Ness to give a presentation about the new co-located/integrated early childhood program model starting in the Fergus Falls district in the fall of 2010. The group agreed this was the topic they wanted to showcase, if at all possible. Stacy will check with Jerry Ness to see if he is willing to give a presentation on this at the annual meeting. If Jerry is not able, Stacy will ask Nancy Johnson if she will do it. Angie agreed to give the presentation if no one else can do it.

8. IECI Business:

- Stacy reported there were no new developments on the budget and no new information on next year's IEIC budgets from the state level. She will share information when it becomes available.
- IEIC parent support conference funds are available. Jane noted that the LAC and Service Coordination/CTIC work groups also have parent support dollars available each year. The group discussed the need to work together to pool their pots of money to make it more accessible to families. Angie will make mention of this funding source at the upcoming Windmill Retreat, and will mention these dollars could be used for families who wish to attend the MACMHA conference coming up in April.
- Regional training update- Shannon Graves training will be hosted in Fergus Falls on June 10th from 5-10 PM at Lakes Country Service Cooperative. West Central Initiative is looking for additional ITV host sites throughout the region. The group discussed the fact that there are many different things going on at the local, regional and state level with regard to infant mental health initiatives and early childhood training. Beth and Brad noted that the CARE Committee is planning a conference for October 6 & 7.
- Stacy noted that the next IRT meeting is set for April 26th at McKinley.

9. Training by the CARE Committee is being planned for October 6 & 7 with a topic of attachment disorders with Deanna McMahon as the possible speaker. The group reiterated the need to coordinate efforts with all the local and regional groups and agencies so that staff are not being asked to attend too much training. They also need to look at the level of knowledge of our early childhood staff and determine what training is appropriate for staff. Jane will ask the Caring Connections home visitors to keep track of the trainings that they go to throughout the year to see where there are gaps.

10. The group requested that Jane set up a final Caring Connections year end meeting in Fergus Falls on Thursday, May 27 from 8:30 -10 AM. Marion will arrange for the meeting space at the Government Service Center.

11. Marion gave an update on the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) program. NFP families are now graduating from the program. Nurses and families alike have expressed some sadness with the loss of relationships due to the fact that they have been intricately involved in these families' lives for the past 2 ½ years. However, everyone is also feeling a great sense of accomplishment.

12. Brad updated the group on the Parent Support Outreach Program. All of the PSOP home visitors met last week for an informational update and it went well. Referrals continue to be steady with approximately 3-4 new families enrolled each month. Jane will be preparing an invoice for Quarter 1 2010 services to be billed to the state.

13. Patty, Karen and Stacy gave an update on the new integrated Otter Preschool program which will be starting up in Fergus Falls in the fall. Depending upon what parents choose, there is the capacity to serve over 200 families for preschool. The new program also includes a child care option to help eliminate transportation challenges for families. All quality programs are working together including School Readiness, Head Start and ECFE program coordinators to eliminate waiting lists and better meet the needs of families.

14. Partner sharing:

- Training opportunities were shared by Angie for bullying. Angie would like to find out more about what is going on in the community and is also willing/able to give presentations and would like to set up more parent opportunities.
- Angie shared that 92 families attend the sensory theater event in Alexandria on "How to Train your Dragon."

15. The meeting was adjourned by consensus. The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 5 from 10AM – Noon** in the Phelps Mill Room at the Government Service Center in Fergus Falls.