

Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative

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Serving families

...Improving lives

Early Childhood Work Group .Meeting

10-Noon November 2, 2011

West Battle Lake Room- Government Service Center, Fergus Falls

Attendance: Beth Achter (Lakes Country Service Cooperative-2); Jan Herseth & Patty Deery (OTWCAC Head Start-110); Angie Schmitz (The Arc-90); LuAnn Harris (CCR & R-3); Karen Hanan (Fergus Falls Public Schools ECFE-2); Mary Phillipe (United Way of OTC-2); Marion Kershner (OTC Public Health) and Guest Anna (nursing student); LuAnn Harris (CCR & R-3); Tamra Jokela (OTC Human Services); and Jane Patrick (Collaborative Coordinator).

1. Mary Phillipe agreed to be chair for the day in the absence Stacy McAllister. Mary welcomed the group.
2. Mary called for a review of the October minutes and the day's agenda. **MOTION:** Approval of the October minutes as posted to the website and of the day's agenda as prepared. (B. Achter/K. Hanan/carried)
3. Jane Patrick presented the monthly bills as paid for the Caring Connections program for the month of November in the amount of \$5,005.86 **MOTION:** Approval of the bills as presented. (L. Harris/K. Hanan/carried).
4. The group reviewed the draft of each of the advisory committee roles and responsibilities. Changes were suggested. Jane will finalize these documents and they will be shared with all new work group members upon joining and will be reviewed annually to ensure the group is accomplishing their intended goals.
5. The group held a follow-up discussion of the early childhood referral processes from the last meeting. It was noted that there is quite a difference in the processes on each side of the county. The group felt it would be a good idea for Jane to arrange a team meeting with training attached which would be open to all early childhood staff from across the county to learn about the different referral processes. They requested that CCR & R help to arrange training for child care providers to include topics of the screening process, early childhood screening (Public Health) and school readiness. The group also discussed the question of how to grow another branch to this work group to include child care providers so that they are as closely connected as our other partners.
6. The group discussed ideally what they would like to share with local legislators when the CEO Group meets with them in December. Beth, Mary and LuAnn will be at the meeting on December 5, and Davis will be at the meeting with Sen. Hoffman on December 1. The group discussed that fact that early childhood has had no funding increases for the past several years including ECFE, School Readiness and Head Start. (The group was not sure about special ed.?) Basically there have been no funding increases, but a huge increase in the number of families that need significant interventions. It seems there is always a waiting list to get children in for in-home services. The group also discussed how many families have been served by PSOP and wondered if Human Services could track to see if they are seeing a decrease in involvement with this families down the line. Jan gave an example of funding cuts with Head Start cutting the bus service to families. Services such as these are cut because they are not mandated, and in tough

financial times transportation is an “extra.” Families are now paying bus service or gas instead of buying groceries and it takes away from access to “free” Head Start services. Families are calling in wanting to enroll in Head Start but decline when they learn that they can’t get transportation. Can we display a list of cuts from each agency involved with EC for the last five years? Jan to share what has been cut from HS, Marion to show cuts to PH, Tamra to show cuts from Human Services; ECFE programs to show cuts. Ask each school district how much they get for school readiness and come up with a total amount allocated to OTC school districts for the number of pre-school aged children from their census.

7. Meeting with Mike Brown from MDE – meeting on January 19th at McKinley School gym at 10 a.m. A joint meeting with the Fergus Falls Early Childhood Initiative and the Early Childhood Work Group. Topics of discussion:
 - Show him our collaborative programs and successes
 - What are the problems? Ask each partner to highlight their key issues: (space, etc.)
 - Beth will send me what Mike sent to her showing what he wants to discuss.
 - Tour of McKinley
8. The group discussed the Fergus Falls Area Special Education Interagency Agreement with Head Start and the agreed upon child find activities. Jane will work with Stacy McAllister to turn this document into a generic one that could apply for all agencies involved with early childhood. It helps to outline who is responsible for what components of child find activities and special ed services. The work group will recommend this as a tool and resource to all early childhood programs once completed. The work group will review this document at a future meeting when Stacy McAllister can be there to participate in the discussion.
9. Jan shared a Memorandum of Understanding between Sebeka School Readiness Program and Head Start. Specifically, the group talked about how to use the school readiness goals outlined in the document and asked if examples of activities could be listed to show parents, providers and early childhood staff specific examples of activities that would support these goals. The group would like to make this tool very simple. Jane will check with LuAnn to see if she has this already for child care providers, and if not, Patty will help me with creating this new resource.
10. Patty provided a braided funding grant update from the “Otter Extra” program at McKinley School this summer. Patty shared many great stories and the group felt that the data collected from the program would be very valuable for the legislators and others to hear. Patty will share some of the Brigance scores which can be shared with other Collaborative partners and legislators. Head Start plans to follow these children into the future so longitudinal study information will also be available at some point.
11. Mary shared the Women’s Leadership Council brochure for the Reach Out and Read program. The Leadership Council is doing a fund raiser to support this program which will allow local doctors to give out board books to families as part of well child exams. Specifically, they will give them as a “prescription” for parents to read to their children. Book bags can be purchased for \$35 each. 19th and 20th of November for shopping.
12. The meeting was adjourned by consensus. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 19th from 10AM – Noon** at McKinley School in Fergus Falls.