



MINUTES

Early Care Best Practices Study Committee

January 14, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Becky Schmitz, Co-chairperson
Senator Nancy J. Boettger
Senator Robert E. Dvorsky
Senator Dave Mulder
Senator Amanda Ragan

Representative Cindy Winckler, Co-chairperson
Representative Ako Abdul-Samad
Representative Dave Heaton
Representative Mary Mascher
Representative Linda Miller

MEETING IN BRIEF

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Organizational staffing provided
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- I. Procedural Business
- II. Discussion of Draft Recommendations
- III. Recommendations
- IV. Closing Remarks



Early Care Best Practices Study Committee

I. Procedural Business

Convening and Adjournment. The third and final meeting of the Early Care Best Practices Study Committee was called to order by Co-chairperson Winckler at 12:11 p.m. on January 14, 2008, in Room 116 of the Statehouse. Roll call was taken and a quorum was determined to be present. The minutes from the second meeting on November 26, 2007, were approved by a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Overview. A set of draft recommendations prepared at the request of the co-chairpersons was distributed. The draft recommendations are attached and by this reference made a part of these minutes.

II. Discussion of Draft Recommendations

Collaboration. The second and third recommendations provide for the Community Empowerment Office to be assisted by various agencies and others in developing recommendations for a data system and common application form. Representative Abdul-Samad suggested that the wording of the second and third recommendations be changed so that the Community Empowerment Office would work in "partnership" rather than "with the assistance" of the other entities listed. Representative Abdul-Samad believed that the wording would lead to a stronger, more equal relationship between the entities. After some discussion, Co-chairperson Schmitz suggested that instead of "partnership," the words "shall collaborate" be used. The Committee approved the change in wording on a voice vote.

Accreditation. The first recommendation addresses accreditation of home visiting and family support programs. Senator Boettger expressed concern about the wording of the second clause in the first recommendation, which says "and should consider requiring a state or national accreditation using such practices as a prerequisite for such programs." She stated that her concern was that some areas and groups would believe this would be a requirement, not a suggestion. The Committee consulted with two representatives of the Iowa Office of Community Empowerment, Ms. Shanell Wagler, State Empowerment Facilitator, and Ms. Janet Gartin, Family Support Coordinator, about how changing the proposed recommendation might affect the empowerment office's mission. Ms. Wagler stated that the credentialing program currently in place is voluntary, so no groups would be left out whether the wording of the recommendation stayed the same or was altered by leaving the last clause of the sentence out. The credentialing process was tested in fall 2007 and now will be available statewide to the extent resources will permit.

Representative Heaton asked about the consequences of moving toward an accreditation process, specifically who would decide who could fulfill the early care duties. Ms. Gartin explained that the local empowerment areas already work with best practices standards and the peer review credentialing process. She stated that the standards are not so prescriptive as to direct the specific qualifications of who can or cannot perform duties in the empowerment area, but rather focus on the quality of the staff and the supervision of the staff. The empowerment areas will still have the ability to select who does the home visits. Senator Boettger suggested ending the first recommendation after the first clause and leaving the portion about accreditation out. Co-



chairperson Schmitz asked Ms. Gartin and Ms. Wagler if doing so would in any way harm the empowerment office's goals and programs. They replied it would not. The Committee approved the change on a voice vote.

Approval of Recommendations. Representative Mascher made a motion to approve the draft recommendations; the Committee approved the motion on a unanimous voice vote. Co-chairperson Winckler made a motion to allow Legislative Services Agency staff to make grammatical corrections to the recommendations; the Committee approved the motion on a voice vote.

III. Recommendations

The Early Care Best Practices Study Committee approved the following recommendations to the General Assembly:

1. The Joint Appropriations Subcommittees on Education and Health and Human Services should support the work of the Community Empowerment Office to accredit programs that make home visits to families with newborns and other family support programs using research and evidence-based practices and should consider requiring state or national accreditation using such practices as a prerequisite for such programs receiving state funding.
2. The Community Empowerment Office, with assistance from the departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Health, Early Childhood Iowa, and other interested parties, should provide recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly for developing and implementing a data system that can be used with all early care programs receiving public funding.
3. The Community Empowerment Office, with assistance from the departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Health, Early Childhood Iowa, and other interested parties, should provide a recommendation for implementing a common application form for families applying to participate in publicly funded early care programs and services.
4. The Community Empowerment Office, Department of Public Health, Iowa Hospital Association, and other interested parties should be requested to provide a proposal to the Joint Appropriations Subcommittees on Education and Health and Human Services for implementation of a system in which Iowa hospitals secure permission from parents for making a referral for a newborn home visit and for a state office to serve as the clearinghouse for making the referral to a local program in the area where the parents reside.
5. In order to ensure consistent availability of early care programs and services statewide, the state should identify sustainable, regular funding sources to support early care programs and services.

IV. Closing Remarks



Early Care Best Practices Study Committee

Co-chairperson Winckler thanked the Committee for staying on task through the process, and for making the Committee a great experience.

Co-chairperson Schmitz thanked all those who testified at the meetings of the Committee.

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