

Early Childhood Cabinet

Family Involvement/Home Visitation

Notes January 5, 2012

9:00-11:00 AM

Trish Torruella-co-chair		Patti-Keckeisen-PLTI Danbury	
Elaine Zimmerman – co-chair	x	Darcy Lowell-Child First	x
Sherry Linton – staff	x	Tawana Bourne-CT Parent Power	
Pam Langer-PAT		Christina Morales Smith-Compass	x
Karen Foley-Schain	x	Grace Whitney-HS Collaboration	
Doug Edwards-Real Dads Forever	x	Louis Tallarita-SDE	x
Amos Smith-NHCAA		Jennifer Carroll-FSN	x
Donna Maselli-DPH	x	Dawn Home- Bouthiette.-COC	x
Mary Peniston-ChildFIRST	x		

Topics of Discussion	Recommendations	Action Steps
<p><u>Cabinet Updates</u></p> <p>Members were informed that CT is not a recipient of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding, yet the process of developing the application resulted in plans that the Governor is committed to moving forward on.</p> <p>The Group informed that the Cabinet workgroups are currently looking closely at the plans of the application and Cabinet work plans to identify opportunities to link those plans for enhanced outcomes.</p>	<p>Workgroup members encouraged to access the full RTT-ELC application on the Cabinet website.</p>	

The Project Director provided the group with a brief overview of the current work and status of the Professional Development, Data Systems, and Early Learning Standards workgroups. Group also informed that plans are being developed to expand workgroups to include Health, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), and a workgroup on Public/Private Partnerships.

Zero to Three Home Visitation Systems Request for Application

Chairperson (Elaine) informed the group that CT will be a recipient of the Zero to Three technical assistance grant.

Participants received copies of the grant application submitted to Zero to Three, with time allotted for review and comments.

Elaine reviewed key areas of the grant with special reference of the Vision and Section 5. A rationale for selecting the participants on the team to go to Washington D.C. was also provided.

There were repeated recommendations from group members to have Cabinet discussions and plans, especially in the areas of Data Systems and Professional Development, (in the case of this discussion, as it is related to those performing Home Visitation), be as open and transparent as possible to ensure those “on the ground” doing the work have an opportunity to contribute to the planning and implementation.

The point was also made that as we look to develop competencies for the early care and education workforce, including home visitors, significant attention should be paid to what currently exists in our state.

Elaine also clarified that the plan is to inquire with Zero to Three about possibly adding another two participants to the team, at our expense. Those additions would be Linda Goodman, Birth to Three and Doug Edward, Real Dads Forever.

<p>Visitation Advisory Committee that oversees the DPH Home Visitation grant.</p> <p>DPH representative provided a brief overview of the implementation of the Home Visitation grants in local communities. The focus of the Home Visitation Advisory Committee was said to include, revision of benchmarks, enhancing policies and standards for home visitors, including the need for thorough background checks and assessment of cultural competence.</p> <p>Question also arose as to the vision of the Cabinet on systems building. The Chairperson and Project Director spoke to the vision of the Cabinet to create a comprehensive early childhood education and development system, with Data Systems, Professional Development, Early Learning Standards and Family Engagement/Home Visitation as pillars to guide that vision.</p> <p>The point was made that Connecticut must improve in the area of bringing models and programs together to share strategies and truly collaborate, while capturing the value of informal relationships.</p>	<p>The importance of linking systems was again stressed. The point was made that while Connecticut will probably not be able to create a new statewide data system, it is imperative that we determine ways to match up data, with consideration given to what is going on locally with data systems development.</p> <p>This discussion led to the recommendation of joint trainings across the home visitation models at the table. Joint topics of concern that immediately elevated to the surface were Families with Special Healthcare Needs, Literacy and Fatherhood.</p> <p>Additional discussions led to drilling down into topics that included, connecting families to specialty care services, the importance of respite, private in-home care, adult systems of care, and connecting families to peer supports. Other cross cutting topics that were discussed included</p>	<p>Louis Tallarita volunteered to assist in planning the development of such trainings. These trainings would be in line with the workgroup's strategies in the work plan to train professionals to more effectively engage families.</p>
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<p>A guided discussion took place to instigate some thinking into framing our position on key policy issues relevant to home visitation.</p> <p>The following question was posed, “How can home visitation strategies be intentionally implemented to reduce the preparation gap and achievement gap of young children?” The participants were broken into two small group to collect responses.</p>	<p>low birth weight and brain development.</p> <p>Recommendations included,</p> <p>Early identification of the developmental needs of young children through universal screening, with tools such as the Ages and States Questionnaire should be a focus of all home visits.</p> <p>Written agreements outlining a tiered approach on what is doable across programs and agencies.</p> <p>Training of home visitors on core issues such as teen pregnancy prevention, early brain development, postpartum depression and family literacy should be a prerequisite.</p> <p>Proper attention to be given to the disparities with services to children living in undocumented families. For example, undocumented expectant mothers may receive insufficient healthcare due to lack of insurance, which in turn leads to poor birth outcomes, and a cascade of negative outcomes for the child(ren). The overarching message of the recommendations is the need have home visitation be a proactive vehicle to assist families in creating stable nurturing environments for young children that promote strong relationships, language, and healthy development.</p>	
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