



Inclusion Work Group
October 13th, 2015; 9:30 AM
Early Learning Coalition Board Room

Board Attendees: Helene Good, Mara Zapata, Abilio Rodriguez, Philip Gassman (via conference call), Gladys Montes (via conference call), Dr. Tina Carroll-Scott (via conference call)

Staff Attendees: Anabel Espinosa, Lisa Sanabria, Pamela Hollingsworth, Lucy Schrack

General Attendees: Jackie Romillo (Citrus), Rachel Spector (The Children's Trust), Alex Lopes(MDCPS)

I. Welcome and Introductions **Helene Good**

II. Approval of Minutes **Helene Good**

- H. Good called for the approval of the meeting minutes from October 13th, 2015.
 - M. Zapata moved to approve the minutes.
 - P. Gassman seconded the motion.
 - Motion was passed unanimously.

III. Inclusion Work Group **Helene Good**

- H. Good gave a brief summary of the last meeting. H. Good stated that there seems to be general agreement that the ELC is not really providing inclusion services but is mainly focused on assessments. H. Good asked whether the ELC is serving any children with special needs, and if so, how many. A. Espinosa stated that the list is being generated.
- A. Espinosa stated that there are three things to focus on:
 - Identifying children with special needs, especially those that have not been assessed or touched by any services.
 - Verifying that these children are receiving support
 - Educating providers
- The following question was raised for discussion: Is the ELC's focus on screening or inclusion? M. Zapata stated that providers understand that assessments need to take place but they do not understand the need have inclusion in their centers. H. Good stated that



there is a need to educate providers, inform them of their legal obligation to allow these children into their-centers, and educate families of their rights.

- F. Hicks stated that eligibility workers are able to write on EFS if the child has an IEP. He will create a list on active children with disability and where they are (providers), and bring it to the next meeting.
- H. Good stated that there are many schools for children only with special needs, parents have segregated them.
- P. Gassman asked, once a child is identified, what is the push back from providers to make changes to educate these children? H. Good responded that since they are being identified at such a young age it is easier to allow them to participate and incorporate them into the regular curriculum. P. Gassman stated that if teachers would need to purchase items or hire an assistant to help this child participate, then the ELC should offer these providers extra funding.
- M. Zapata stated that once identified there is a need to educate providers on how to educate these children. A. Espinosa stated that providers need this knowledge and that it is the responsibility of the ELC to increase this education opportunities. Once educators understand that they can do this they will have less push back.
- A. Rodriguez stated that even when staff knows the child needs extra help due to special needs it becomes difficult to implement due to ratio guidelines. Once a child is diagnosed with special needs most providers want the child out immediately and they do not have the financial resources. Reimbursement to these providers should be the first thing the ELC puts in place.
- A. Espinosa stated that there are funds available but there are no providers receiving it at the moment. P. Hollingsworth stated that the board approved a differential for providers that have special needs.
- F. Hicks stated that children with disabilities can be identified through CCRR. When a parent calls in reference to a child with special needs, CCRR should warm transfer to the warm line. CCRR manager will be present at next meeting to address.
- R. Spector agreed with A. Rodriguez on the fact that a differential must be offered as well as extensive training so providers will accept the children with special needs. H. Good expressed concern that money is available and not being used.
- J. Hernandez stated that a differential has not been implemented because of a concern that providers were getting paid without any proof that they were offering additional services.



There was a lack of consensus regarding how staff would know which providers had the knowledge and skills to offer these enhanced services. Providers needed to be assessed before implementing this differential, the differential will depend on the providers and teachers' qualification. MDCPS has a differential but that comes from their funding.

- A. Espinosa stated that before teachers can attain these qualifications they need the money.
- H. Good stated that there will be children that have an IEP and do not require any special assistance and this will bear no cost. J. Romillo stated that the goal is to identify and educate, which has been done through screening.
- J. Romillo stated that we must identify providers that are willing to participate and offer the training to those teachers. H. Good stated that this system already exists this is not an option it is the law, it is important people to know (ADA). P. Hollingsworth stated that MDC offers these training and licensing.
- A. Rodriguez stated that it should be a requirement that providers inform the ELC once they enroll a child who is on an IEP.
- Next meeting is scheduled for 1:00 PM on October 27th in the ELC Board Room.

IV. Adjourn

Helene Good