



Policy Council Meeting
March 16, 2021 (Español)
March 17, 2020 (English)
5:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

Ms. Edeline Fleurant presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:43 p.m.

II. Roll Call

The following participated in the meeting:

2020-2021 Members	Representing Centers
Alegina Lora	Children of The Sun Academy
April Williams	Miami Gardens Learning Center
Camelia Page (Treasurer)	The Carter Academy I
Crystal Davis	Sheyes #3
Daiby Martinez	Springview Academy (Spanish Meeting)
Domonique Reardon (Secretary)	It's a Small World II
Edeline Fleurant (Vice Chair)	Step Above
Hervelyne Jean	LORD's Learning Center, Inc.
Lizette Fontilus	Little Red School House
Michelle Toledo	Lincoln Marti - 905
Priscilla Vazquez (Parliamentarian)	New Aladdin
Sandra Rodriguez Funes	Kids Small World (Spanish Meeting)
Shonquita Williams	Shores School
Yaselly Prado	Kiddy Academy (Spanish Meeting)
Tranae Davenport	America's Little Leaders
EHS Staff	Position
Belkis Torres	VP for EHS
Cathrine Pollard	Administrative Coordinator
Cecilia Narzinis	Mental Health Manager
Lucretia Jones	Director of Child Development and Education Support Services
Otilia Gonzalez-Varese	Disability Manager
Salvatore Martorano	EHS Compliance Manager
Sandrina Seraphin	Director of Family and Community Engagement
Tatiana Larionova	Nutrition Manager
Vanessa Bongiorno	EHS Finance Manager
Kytaina Gabriel	FA Intern

III. Action Item:

A. February 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Fleurant asked for a motion to approve the February 17, 2021 meeting minutes.

- Dominique Reardon moved to approve
- April Williams seconded the motion
- No discussion
- Motion passed 14 in favor and 0 opposed



B. School Readiness Goals Updates

School Readiness Goals are the expectations of children's progress across domains that will improve readiness for kindergarten. Each of the five domains have one goal and at least one target objective for each age group the program serves. The progress is determined based on teacher observations and feedback provided by families who are enrolled in virtual services. The observation data was analyzed and resulted in the following for each goal:

1. Social Emotional: The following percentage of children met or exceeded expectations related to developing and engaging in positive relationships:
 - 0-12 months: 94%
 - 13-24 months: 87%
 - 25-36 months: 86%
2. Language: The following percentage of children met or exceeded expectations related to demonstrating receptive or expressive skills:
 - 0-12 months: 83%
 - 13-24 months: 82%
 - 25-36 months: 73%
3. Approaches to Learning: The following percentage of children met or exceeded expectations related to demonstrating interest in exploring their environment:
 - 0-12 months: 99%
 - 13-24 months: 95%
 - 25-36 months: 84%
4. Cognition: The following percentage of children met or exceeded expectations related to using senses to investigate objects, people and things in their environment:
 - 0-12 months: 90%
 - 13-24 months: 96%
 - 25-36 months: 85%
5. Perceptual, Motor, and Physical: The following percentage of children met or exceeded developmentally appropriate expectations in objectives related to developing control of large and small muscles for movement, navigation, manipulation, exploration and balance:
 - 0-12 months: 93%
 - 13-24 months: 83%
 - 25-36 months: 84%

Ms. Edeline Fleurant asked for a motion to approve submission of the School Readiness Goals Update as part of the grant application.

- Priscilla Vasquez moved to approve
- April Williams seconded the motion
- No discussion
- Motion passed 14 in favor and 0 opposed

C. Annual Report

Ms. Torres reviewed the different sections of the annual report.

Ms. Edeline Fleurant asked for a motion to approve submission of the Annual Report as part of the grant application.

- Alegina Lora moved to approve
- April Williams seconded the motion
- No discussion
- Motion passed 14 in favor and 0 opposed



IV. Reports

A. **January 2021 Expenditure Report**

Total monthly expenses for the month of January 2021 were \$719,428.74. Thirty-four percent (34%) of total monthly expenses were used for salaries and fringe; A total of \$ 413,388.49 or 57% went to contractual services (\$408,241.69 went to providers and \$ 5,146.80 to other contractual services), 1% was used for supplies; and 8% covered other expenses, which include rent and utilities. The program has used 45% of the budget to date and has \$ 5,924,468.69 remaining.

B. **January 2021 Credit Card Report**

There were no credit card charges for the month of January

C. **February 2021 Meal Report**

Number of meals served in **February**:

- Breakfasts - 9,269 (99.3%)
- Lunches - 9,322 (99.8%)
- Snacks - 9,283 (99.4%)
- At four schools none of the meal services reached 100% for the following reasons:
 - Miami Gardens Learning Center - children were either dropped off late or picked up early
 - Precious Moments - several children were picked up early
 - Rainbow Intergenerational - children were either dropped off late or picked up early
 - Step Above - 3 children were picked up shortly after breakfast due to feeling unwell, and one child was dropped off after lunch after doctor's visit

D. **February 2021 Enrollment Report**

During the month of February, there was a total of 718 children enrolled in the program and 6 vacancies. The 6 vacancies stem from children who have moved or transitioned out of EHS. The program is actively working on recruiting children for the current vacancies. All six of the vacancies have been vacant for less than 30 days.

E. **February 2021 Attendance Report**

During the month of February, the program's monthly attendance average was 94%.

- The breakdown for the attendance:
 - Offsite- 12% of children received offsite/ virtual services
 - Present- 85% of the children received in-person services. Of these children:
 - 50.8% were present more than 85% of the time.
 - 35.6% were present 50 to 84% of the time
 - 13.6% present less than 50% of the time.

The main reason for absences were children being sick, attending appointments, transportation concerns, or a family member being sick.

V. Board Meeting Updates

The Board meeting was held on March 1, 2021 via Zoom. The following were discussed:

- The Nominating Committee interviewed candidates to fill two vacant Board seats.
 - Dr. Daniel Armstrong from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine was nominated by the committee and approved by the Board to fill the seat that represents programs for children with disabilities under the federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 - Ms. Stephanie Scuderi from Centennial Bank was nominated by the committee and approved by the Board to fill the Monroe County Board Member seat.



- The owners from four childcare agencies (Interamerica Learning Center, Liberty Academy Daycare and Preschool, Wynwood Academy and Sheyes of Miami) shared the current status and challenges they have faced as a consequence of COVID-19. Some challenges shared included the imposed classroom size restrictions and parent's inability to pay the fee for centers to cover costs. Mr. Villa from Wynwood Academy shared a cost analysis that he performed of how much the cost per child would be to sustain a center. The amount that he calculated was an average cost of \$50.10 per child a day.
- Michelle Watson, President and CEO of the Florida Children's Council and former Office of Early Learning employee, did a presentation on the impact the minimum wage will have on the childcare business. In essence, the increase of minimum wage will impact the amount providers will need to charge in order to stay in business. This does not only impact School Readiness rates, it will impact the private rate as well. Parents paying privately may have to decide to pay more for lower class ratios or centers that are accredited versus paying the same amount for classrooms with higher ratios or that are not accredited.
- The Board approved the following resolutions presented by the finance:
 - Resolution 02252021-01 – Authorize the President and CEO to send a letter to Department of Education's Office of Early Learning requesting authorization to use surplus funds to grant a one-time special additive for the pandemic relief to qualified providers.
 - Resolution 02252021-03 – Authorize the President and CEO to release an invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for Outreach Services to promote ELC programs.
 - Resolution 02252021-02 – Authorize the President and CEO to increase the Coalition's maximum provider reimbursement rates.
 - Resolution 02252021-05– Authorize the President and CEO to release an RFP to purchase Personal Protective Equipment and Disinfecting Equipment to mitigate the spread of germs in EHS classrooms.
- The Board approved an equipment surplus notification authorizing the Early Learning Coalition to appropriately dispose of the identified equipment.
- On the reconciliation process, the Early Learning Coalition is working with less than 40 providers to establish a repayment schedule that is comfortable for the providers.
- There are no children on the School Readiness waitlist in Miami-Dade and Monroe. Children are being enrolled from the waitlist every 2 weeks in Miami-Dade County and daily in Monroe County.
- Policy Council report for the February meeting was given by Ms. Kisline Timothee to the Board via a video recording.
- The Programs and Policy Committee Chair reported the following:
 - An update on Early Head Start meals, enrollment, and School Readiness Goals was provided.
 - Monroe's Community Need Assessment is underway. Nolo is the organization that will be conducting the assessment and the results should be complete within a couple of weeks.
 - The Children's Trust scholarship program is funded for 8 million dollars and there are currently 150 participating child care centers, 909 children enrolled, with 121 children on the waitlist.
 - The Early Learning Coalition is proposing to pay a special needs rate, 20% above the approved rate for children receiving inclusion support. Currently, there are 789 children with special needs enrolled in 425 providers in Miami-Dade and Monroe. To qualify the provider must submit a list of special needs services they are providing, the child's special need condition must be validated by a licensed health, mental health, education, or social service professional.



- The Professional Development Institute provided an update on the trainings being made available to the childcare centers; this included the Monroe County Early Childhood Conference scheduled for April 23rd and 24th.
- The Early Learning Coalition is continuing their work on equity.
- A report was given by the Monroe Advisory Committee:
 - Currently there are 351 children receiving School Readiness funds and 363 with a VPK voucher.
 - Monroe County has a Facebook group for childcare providers. Efforts are being made to recruit additional members.
 - 65 contracted and 11 non-contracted providers submitted application for CARES Act grant in phases 1-4 for a total investment of \$317,332.00.

I. Updates:

● **Center Incidents**

- Policy Council members were informed of two incidents that had been reported to the program administration. Each incident occurred at a different center.
 - The first incident involved a child being left alone in the playground. According to the center's accounts the child did not want to return to the classroom after playing outside. The teacher returned to the classroom with all of the children and left one child outside. Upon returning to the classroom, she asked the other teacher to go outside and get the child. The school reported that as the Early Head Start teacher was going in with her other children, the VPK teacher crossed the EHS classroom in the hallway. Upon seeing the child outside, she stayed with the child a couple of minutes until the other teacher came out to get the child. The teacher in this incident was terminated. The center has now implemented a process where teachers will be taking walkie talkies outside to contact the office if they run into trouble while outside.
 - The second incident was an accusation made by a non-Early Head Start (EHS) teacher. The non-EHS teacher contacted the owner alleging the EHS teachers were abusing the children. When the owner inquired about the specifics (which child, when the incident occurred, who was involved), the teacher could not give any specifics. The owner questioned parents if they had seen anything unusual marks on their kids. She also questioned the teachers. No one indicated having seen anything. The owner contacted Department of Children and Families, who according to the owner told her to continue looking into the matter. The owner had all teachers take a child abuse training. A few days later the non-EHS teacher resigned from her position. A few days after resigning from her position, the non-EHS teacher approached a parent a block from the school and informed the parent that the EHS teachers were abusing their child. The parents were upset and called the police. A police report was taken and the DCF child abuse investigator visited the center to conduct their investigation. The center is waiting for the written results from the investigation.
 - Child Abuse allegations are reported to the Regional Office located in Atlanta which represents the Office of Head Start. Child Abuse allegations put the program at risk because they can become deficiencies. A program that receives 2 deficiencies, during a 5-year project period can lose their grant which would result in the funds being released to the community for other agencies to apply for the funds.
- **Li'l Foodies Cook-Along Virtual cooking Demo for the Entire Family** took place last Friday, March 12th at 4 pm. There were total of 20 participants - 16 parents and 4 staff. The class featured roasted sweet potatoes, crepe with turkey, spinach and cheese, and a crepe with strawberries and sweet cheese. There was a lot of positive feedback, parents and children enjoyed the class. At the end, participants were asked 5 questions related to the content of the session for a chance to win a \$50 Publix gift card;



5 parents won gift cards and will be receiving them at the beginning of next week. The next class will take place on April 16th.

- **Common Threads** 2-part parent workshop took place on March 16th and 17th (today). There were 8 parent participants. The 1st part of the workshop was dedicated to the topics of healthy eating and smart grocery shopping. The 2nd part featured a cooking demo demonstrating knife skills and strategies on introducing children to cooking. Featured recipe was *Sweet Potato, Black Bean & Corn Tacos*. Participants will receive complimentary boxes of groceries, featured in cooking demo.

VII. Adjournment

Ms. Edeline Fleurant asked for a motion to adjourn.

- Lizette Fontilus moved to adjourn
- Hervelyne Jean seconded the motion to adjourn
- Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.