

**Riverside County Children and Families Commission
Meeting of the Advisory Committee to the
Riverside County Children and Families Commission
Wednesday, July 15, 2009 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Riverside County Children and Families Commission Office
2002 Iowa Avenue, Suite 100 – Conference Room A
Riverside, California 92507**

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:33 p.m. by Committee Vice-Chair, Georgann Koenig in absence of Dr. Carla Lidner.

Advisory Committee Members Present: Chair, Dr. Carla Lidner (arrived at 1:34 p.m.); Vice-Chair, Georgann Koenig; Judee Cox; Betty Folsom; Donna Johnston for Supervisor Tavaglione (arrived at 1:37 pm); Dr. Touraj Shafai; Nancy Wood (arrived at 1:41 p.m.); Donna Greene; Judith Wood (arrived at 1:37 pm); Debbie Franklin

Absent: Lynne Craig

Vacant: I District IV

Staff Present: Stella Smith, Deputy Director; Lynn Stephens, Commission Secretary, Laurie Schoenberg, Administrator Early Care & Education, Jamie Ayala, Public Information Specialist, Sherry Watkins, Facilities & Operations

II. Chair and Committee Member Comments

Introductions took place with Advisory Committee members and staff. New Advisory Committee Member, Debbie Franklin provided a brief overview of her relative background and experience.

III. Approval of April 29, 2009 Advisory Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

Advisory Committee Member Dr. Shafai moved to approve the April 29, 2009 Advisory Committee regular meeting minutes. Advisory Committee Vice-Chair, Georgann Koenig seconded the motion. Following is the vote of the Advisory Committee members present: [Seven (7) in favor (Lidner, Koenig, Greene, Franklin, Shafai, Folsom, Cox) Zero (0) abstention, Three (3) Absent (N. Wood, J. Wood and Johnston were absent during the vote Zero (0) opposed]

IV. Approval of May, 27, 2009 Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes

Advisory Committee Member Dr. Shafai moved to approve the May, 27, 2009 Advisory Committee special meeting minutes. Advisory Committee Vice-Chair, Georgann Koenig seconded the motion. Following is the vote of the Advisory Committee members present:

[Seven (7) in favor (Lidner, Koenig, Greene, Franklin, Shafai, Folsom, Cox) Zero (0) abstention, Four (4) Absent (Craig, N. Wood, J. Wood and Johnston were absent during the vote Zero (0) opposed]

V. Advisory Committee Member Site Visit Reports

1. Dr. Shafai reported he has been doing site visits at the hospitals breastfeeding programs everyday.
2. Advisory Committee Member Franklin reported she has received comments from child care provider associations that child care centers are concerned that F5R funds not being available may impact their centers. Ms. Smith replied the state budget has not been finalized and the impact to providers who participate in subsidy programs is not yet clear.

VI. Staff Report – Stella Smith, Deputy Director

1. Ms. Smith reviewed the Child Care Need Analysis presentation presented by the Advancement Project at the last Commission meeting. Geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged areas were highlighted as high need. Low capacity in high need areas and affordability for parents were also discussed. Ms. Schoenberg provided a brief overview of the study. The baseline is based on 2008 data. There are approximately 30+ maps that can be updated as demographics and other factors change in Riverside County. Based on literature around early childhood education and research on ways to define need, specific demographic data indicators were selected to form the Child Care Need Index. The report brought together existing data to contribute to the analysis.

Initial Recommendations

- 1) Invest in research and evaluation to be able to better identify need and measure affects of programs.
- 2) Develop place-based solutions for more subsidized care in high need areas.
- 3) Develop a strategic resource allocation plan to leverage funding with collaborative partners and help build capacity of existing child care providers.

Ms. Smith stated that advisory committee members would be approached to sit on a sub-committee to assist with and provide feedback on recommendations to the Commission. Recommendations are expected to be finalized and presented over the couple of months. Ms. Schoenberg noted there are over 8,000 children on the centralized (CEL) waiting list for child care services. The parents of these children are either in a training program or working. Ms. Cox noted she is worried that F5R is spending money on information that already exists locally from other sources but was glad that the mapping component was obtained because they have never been done. Dr. Lidner added that the research has been done repeatedly and funds should be directed to assist parents who cannot afford to pay their portion for child care.

Dr. Lidner noted her concern with the decision not to fund the Murrieta Valley Unified School District (MVUSD) proposal at the previous Commission meeting. Ms. Smith clarified that staff recommendation was based on there not being a programmatic impact. The district has presented a new proposal that includes information not previously shared. The new information will be shared with the Commission for consideration.

Ms. Smith noted that a lot of work has taken place and information provided around child care approaches. Staff will bring all information together to see how to best use it. She

noted F5R has been working with RCOE, Child Care Consortium and the ABCD taskforce.

Ms. Smith reminded the Advisory Committee of their advisory role to the Commission. She noted the Commission has expressed that they value the committee and their input and that there is time set aside at each Commission meeting for the Advisory Committee to provide a report and any formal recommendations.

Ms. Koenig expressed her frustration around the continued discussion of quality child care when there are already established levels of quality in place. Ms. Smith stated that recent discussions focused on determining minimum/acceptable levels of quality. Ms. Judy. Wood noted the minimal quality of standards in health and safety are in Title 22. The range of quality can be substantiated in the ECERS (Environmental Rating Scales) rating in each area of the classroom environment; with a score between 1-7. She suggested F5R use them for the Commission to decide what standard they want to use.

Ms. Smith advised in discussion around how to best utilize available funds should take into consideration that once the fund balance is depleted, the funding that remains available is the annual allocation. She also noted F5R is funding a significant amount to child care related programs. She recommended Advisory focus their discussion and considers providing a base recommendation considering staff recommendations that will be provided over the next couple of months.

Ms. Franklin reiterated concerns over the inability of staff to provide a timeframe of when money would be available for RFPs. She also noted concerns with the Central Eligibility List (CEL) process and suggested that the Advisory Committee look at the process to see if it is the best way to serve children.

Ms. Cox suggested looking at currently funded programs to see what works, what doesn't work and establish maps of F5R programs. She proposed that program specialists' knowledge of programs be utilized to determine the agencies performance levels to contribute to whether ongoing support should be provided. She expressed that she realizes once fund balance monies are depleted the funding level cannot be sustained.

Dr. Lidner expressed her concern about 11 million being funded for the Mental Health Initiative when mental health needs were not requested by parents. Ms. Greene agreed parents may not have requested mental health services but child care providers as stakeholders expressed the need to assist with servicing children who have difficult behaviors and socialization issues. Dr. Lidner commented she is not concerned with sustainability, she is concerned with available funds being distributed now to help children 0-5 in need of child care services now so the window of opportunity is not lost.

Ms. Greene suggested F5R establish an ongoing application of emergency funds in between RFPs. Ms. Smith stated that the Commission adopted staff recommendations at the last Commission meeting around responding to agencies with emergency funding requests. Staff is currently incorporating suggestions made by the Commission and developing the process for submitting and evaluation requests. Ms. Cox informed Ms. Smith that she will provide her with a copy of her agency's guideline on emergency and mini grants. Ms. Smith noted mini grants are being looked at with F5R management team.

The discussion concluded with the Advisory Committee detailing a recommendation to the Commission around the issues and concerns discussed. Dr. Lidner recommended F5R not research anymore on child care, set up the minimal standards and fund to make a dent in the 8,000 children on the CEL and disperse the funds within a couple of months. She added she does not think sustainability for these children is an issue. She asked that other members present the recommendation at the commission meeting.

2. Expansion Requests: Ms. Smith provided a brief history on expansion recommendations adopted by the Commission in 2008 and the subsequent hold due to the threat posed by Proposition 1D and concerns of agencies needing to ramp down when the contract period concluded in 2011. The impact of the State budget is not yet known and these requests will be considered in context of this and the other considerations discussed. Previous and new expansion requests will be considered as part of broader funding recommendations.
3. Ms. Smith reported First 5 California has rolled out a new public education campaign, including billboards, radio spots and online advertisements statewide. In addition the State Commission has enhanced its website with a parent resource section (<http://www.cfc.ca.gov/parents/>). The plan is to work with local Commissions to provide referrals to local services. Ms. Smith commended Ms. Ayala on her diligence in expanding knowledge of F5R.

(Dr. Shafai left at 2:33 p.m. and returned at 2:35 p.m.)

VII. Re-organization Update – Stella Smith, Deputy Director

1. F5R is officially under the umbrella of DPSS as of July 1. Details are still being worked out, but there is no significant change expected with regard to F5R relates to the public and funded agencies.
2. The revised Local Ordinance was adopted in June. Applications for Commission vacancy and Alternates were available on July 2. July 17 is the closing date for submitting applications. The Clerk of the Board will send the applications to F5R for internal review and comment. F5R will return to BOS for final review and appointment. Ms. Johnston noted in response to a concern raised by Dr. Lidner that staff is conducting a technical screening of the applications to record the applicant category. This will be helpful to the BOS when they review to assure broad representation and coverage.

VIII. Discussion Items

The committee confirmed the items to be included in the report to the Commission. Members requested that the recommendations be placed in the Commission meeting packet for the July 22, 2009 meeting.

Child Care

1. Use a portion of available funds to subsidize a percentage of care slots for families on current wait lists. (to be address by Ms. Cox)
2. Clarity, transparency and program delivery purposes, adopt minimum child care quality standards to be used in granting Commission funds. (Judith Wood/Georgann Koenig)

Requests for Proposals

Reserve a portion of funds for to:

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Final Approved by Advisory Committee

3. Develop an ongoing user friendly mini-grant process to address current and continuous needs that contribute to achieving the goals and objectives contained within the strategic plan. (Donna Greene)
4. Develop an annual funding cycle for larger operational grant awards.(Donna Greene)

For clarity and transparency purposes suggest minimal standards required for all child care providers and include that there will be a plan developed to assist them to increase their levels as they are working through their grants.

After a brief discussion on whether or not quality guidelines have been adopted for child care standard, Ms. Smith advised that she could provide previous child care RFPs to Advisory Committee that had guidelines in them.

Dr. Lidner added that the audience at a previous Commission meeting interpreted one of Ms. Schoenberg's presentations on child care as turning into a defensive discussion due to the topic shift around defining quality and delaying decisions on funding. Ms. Cox suggested staff look back and review policies adopted previously and adopt a policy with the most current standards and establish a minimum level of quality criteria. Ms. Smith noted guidelines have been previously addressed in each RFP.

(Betty Folsom left the meeting at 2:56 p.m. and returned at 3:00 p.m.)

IX. Public Comments

None

X. Future Agenda Items

XI. Adjournment at 3:18 p.m. to the regular meeting of the Advisory Committee scheduled for Wednesday, October 21, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. at:

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All public record documents for matters on the open session of the agenda are available for inspection at the meeting listed in this agenda, and at the following location beginning three (3) working days prior to the meeting date:

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