

**FICCIT Quarterly Meeting  
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida  
Meeting Minutes  
April 24-25, 2003**

*Approved at FICCIT Meeting on July 14, 2003*

The meeting was called to order by Ilene Wilkins at 10:10 a.m.

Members present: Mary Bryant, Lori Fahey, Randee Gabriel, Michelle Polland, Pat Grosz, Arthur Guilford, Monica Rutkowski, Nancy Haynes, Wendy Johnston, Paula Kendig, Ernie Kessel, Ann Levy, Gail Martell, John Walker, Ilene Wilkins, Linda Bowers.

Members excused: Beth Albert, Jamie Barr, Marylou Behnke, Donna Fassett, Cynthia Fuller, Carole Green, Barbara Moore.

Guests present: Carole West, Lou Ann Long, Lori Shamroth-Carver, Wanda Baldwin, Jeanette Ramos.

The FICCIT Quarterly Meeting Draft Minutes from the January 30-31, 2003 meeting were approved with one correction- teachers are not employed by the Department of Education but by school districts. Mary Bryant made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Nancy Haynes. Passed unanimously.

**EIP PRESENTATION**

Wanda Baldwin and Lori Shamroth-Carver conducted a presentation on the Palm Beach Early Intervention Program.

**FICCIT Member Update**

There are now 17 officially appointed members on FICCIT. There are 10 applications that are pending appointment in the Governor's Appointments office. The Governor's Appointments Office will notify the recommended appointees of the status of their appointment or non-appointment when an action has been taken. There are several types of appointments that would prohibit a person from being appointed to a second commission, committee or council. All appointments are retroactive and the reappointment date will reflect this.

**Early Intervention Stakeholders Group**

[www9.myflorida.com/cms/InfntToddEIPrg.html](http://www9.myflorida.com/cms/InfntToddEIPrg.html)

Arthur Guilford and Ernie Kessel were the representatives of FICCIT on the Stakeholders Workgroup. There were 30 "dot voters" who were the official members of the Stakeholders Workgroup and about the same number of observers at the Stakeholders Workgroup Meeting. Ernie and Arthur shared their impressions of the Stakeholders process and outcomes and wanted more clarification regarding the next steps.

Monica Rutkowski briefly described next steps:

1. Disseminate summary of meeting immediately.
2. The facilitator will make two reports based on recommendations based on the feedback.
  - a. State agency recommendations
  - b. General recommendations
3. Implementation plan for revisions to the state system.

The Stakeholders Workgroup Members will be involved and informed of the process through the web site.

School Readiness:

- Mary Bryant suggested that collaboration around Part C be a major focus of next year's collaboration project.
- Katherine Kamiya has been contacted about having a representative from the Florida Partnership for School Readiness on FICCIT.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Outcomes Committee**

The committee has met twice since the last FICCIT meeting. The TV link for the last meeting was challenging but saved enormous amounts of funding and will be used again.

Goal 1-Family Satisfaction Survey

Goal 2-Family Assessment Process

The committee is currently working on Goal 2. A Family Assessment Instrument is being developed. The revisions to the FSP have been recommended and the committee will look at alternative forms. Pat Grosz walked through some early changes to the FSP that the committee is addressing.

The committee has established an Outcomes Committee Response Team to give feedback on FSP revisions as they are made. There is also a Service Coordination Response Team that is giving feedback.

The Family Assessment Questionnaire has been borrowed from Indiana. The tool will be useful for training new service coordinators even though the tool may be rather intrusive.

It was suggested that the new FSP document be the Plan of Care but HIPPA may limit the ability of the medical professionals to share information and this may impact the use of the FSP as the Plan of Care.

Ernie Kessel asked whether the committee is anticipating developing an approved list of Family Assessment Instruments. At this point, the individual professionals/EIP will identify the tool to be used. The purpose of the Family Assessment Tool and the needs of the family need to be considered when choosing the tool.

It was suggested that the identification of a Family Assessment Tool be done in a way similar to the Policies and Procedures document that school districts must complete and that the "adoption" of a tool by the state would require a bid process.

### **Program Quality Committee**

Nancy Haynes reported that the committee was still unsure of what their role is in light of the new stakeholder activity. The role of this committee needs to be clarified since the requirements for Regional Policy Councils have changed. A report from the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting was submitted.

RPCs will be optional beginning July 1, 2003. Community Plans will need to be updated if an EIP chooses to not have a Regional Policy Council but have an interagency group and to reflect local family involvement effort.

It is anticipated that:

- The state will continue to fund family involvement.
- A contract may be promulgated to support family involvement at the state level based on the recommendations that will come out of a family involvement study
- Administration of PRO will not longer continue through FARF contract.

Monica Rutkowski shared that Florida scored lower than other states on Natural Environments and other areas. OSEP will re-visit Florida for follow up on the low scores. The Department of Health will be required to establish a steering committee as part of the process. This will become a free-standing committee and will no longer be a subcommittee or activity of the Program Quality Committee.

### **Public Policy Committee**

FICCIT members need to send Randee Gabriel their biographical sketches immediately. Pictures will be taken on Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. The bios and the pictures will be posted on the FICCIT website.

The FICCIT brochure has not been printed since it needed to be distributed prior to session. The brochure is a general information piece on Early Intervention in Florida.

Gail Martell made a motion that a timeline for completion of the brochure be prepared. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Paula Kendig. PASSED.

Parents Educating Policymakers –FICCIT had decided to do an independent grassroots campaign to target early intervention families. There are several models including the Family Network on Disabilities model of adopting a legislator and the PEP Rally (Parents Educating Policymakers). The committee had no recommendations on a preferred mechanism for this. Discussion of the pros and cons of the options ensued.

Paula Kendig made the motion that a plan for the implementation of PEP Rally be developed. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gail Martell. PASSED.

### **Parent Resource Organization Committee (PRO)**

Paula Kendig reported on the status of PRO and the changes that have been made. PRO has proceeded to establish itself as a non-profit agency. They have established a PRO Kids Foundation (501c4) and PRO Network (501c3).

Whether the Department of Health contracts with individual community based parents for services or with the PRO Network as an entity is still unclear and depends on the outcomes and recommendations of the family involvement evaluation.

FICCIT will look at the bylaws and make changes to adapt to the new structure. FICCIT is required to have parents comprise 20% of their membership. FICCIT may wish to establish a family involvement committee that may include PRO Network and other parents.

The meeting was recessed at 5:10 p.m.

### **April 25, 2003**

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Ilene Wilkins.

### **Training and Education Committee (TEC)**

Ernie Kessel shared the status of activities of this committee. The committee has met several times since the last FICCIT Meeting.

The committee has worked on developing the competencies for the Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialist. These competencies have been approved by the Department of Health. The committee has been working on a job description for this position in order to define the work this person will do and will attempt to meet the requirements of Medicaid. It is anticipated that rather than attempting a change in the Medicaid plan, it would be most feasible to develop a community based waiver. Since this position is not a licensed medical professional, it is not an easy fit with the Medicaid plan. While the waiver is more difficult to attain, it fits better with the plans for the position.

Since provider enrollment and tracking is very burdensome, the state office is exploring an entity that can provide online training, provider enrollment, tracking, etc. Contracting with this outside entity may not be feasible due to agency procedures regarding Information Technology. The state office is looking at other mechanisms to support all or part of this activity.

The committee has also been addressing the issue of a career ladder for people working with infants and toddlers.

The ability to enroll providers from other states is another issue.

University Coursework: FSU has submitted a Personnel Preparation Grant to OSEP. Dr. Mary Francis Hanline and Dr. Mimi Graham submitted the grant. The Department of Health was awarded the General Supervision Enhancement Grant in September, 2002 to address training and research-based practices related to birth to kindergarten.

UCF offers the 6 courses to certify the Infant Toddlers Developmental Specialists and has 33 students enrolled. These courses are tuition free and include people working with infants and toddlers who may not be part of the Part C System. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of students are being enrolled for the fall. Additionally, many of the Regional Partnerships awarded the General Supervision Enhancement Grants are also offering the courses to certify the Infant Toddler Developmental Specialist.

MECCT Grant: A presentation by representatives from George Mason University on the MECCT grant was provided at a previous FICCIT Meeting. MECCT approached Ernie again recently to see if Florida was interested. It was suggested that other entities in the state be approached as the coordinating entity for this training. Ernie Kessel will set up a conference call with other interested entities, eg. Children's Forum, to clarify the requirements of the MECCT grant.

### **Strategic Plan**

Ilene asked each committee to look at its goals and strategic plan in preparation for this FICCIT Meeting. The TEC undertook this review and has worked on activities covered by this plan.

### **Budget for Committee Operation**

The committee has determined that they would like to submit a budget for the operation of their committee. Ernie Kessel asked for guidance on the submission of a budget. Monica Rutkowski suggested that the committee actively seek support from the partners who work on the committee rather than relying and coming to the Department of Health for full funding.

Ernie Kessel has submitted her resignation from FICCIT. Wendy Johnston will be retiring as of June 1, 2003. It was suggested that the Executive Committee meet to identify the Chair and Co-Chair for TEC and also for FICCIT representation on the state Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD). The CSPD is required of the state and addresses the training, credentialing, recruitment, retention, etc. of professionals working with children with disabilities and their families. Pat Grosz was asked to represent FICCIT on CSPD until her term ends in January 2004.

### **Agency Updates**

#### **AHCA**

Report was passed out. AHCA has asked the Medicaid Agency Head to appoint someone who can represent AHCA, not just Medicaid. Wendy reviewed the current organizational chart for AHCA and recommended Linda Fagan, Community Resources leader in AHCA, to be the agency's representative.

The Medically Needy Program is still an issue with the legislature. It is the program that provides services to families with large medical bills. Medicaid eligibility is not required to receive services.

*Medicaid Reorganization to be included in minutes.* (Has not been submitted as of date of dissemination of draft minutes.)

### **Department of Education**

A written report had been submitted prior to this meeting.

The Transition booklet has been completed and is available from the Department of Education Clearinghouse. The booklet is also available on the STEPS website at [www.floridatransitionproject.com](http://www.floridatransitionproject.com).

A survey was completed by Pre-K program contacts and the report of the survey findings and recommendations will be distributed in the near future. It was suggested that copies of the survey findings and recommendations be shared with the EIPs.

The Birth to K Collaboration Project has ended. A new project to address transition, natural environments, etc. is being planned.

### **Department of Health**

A written report was submitted prior to this meeting. The new Deputy Secretary, Dr. Elizabeth Ford, is on board. Dr. Ford will be attending the Family CAFÉ Conference.

Monica Rutkowski shared the EIP information by legislative district.

### **Department of Children and Families**

The Department of Children and Families representative was not present. It was suggested that a letter be sent to Eric Handler, the appointed member on FICCIT, expressing concern with the agency's absence from FICCIT Meetings and reiterate the need for their involvement on FICCIT.

### **Task Forces**

The Membership Task Force met on April 24, 2003. Ann Levy is the chair of the Task Force. The assignment for the task force was to address all aspects of membership. An analysis of the membership indicates that there are currently 18 appointees. A 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of appointments is expected. Paula Kendig reviewed the recent appointments by the Governor's Appointments Office. A new chart indicating the appointment and end of term dates is being developed. In the case of FICCIT members who leave prior to the end of their term, the appointing entity (agency head) should identify a representative to complete the term.

*Paula will submit the member chart for inclusion in the minutes. (Has not been submitted as of date of dissemination of draft minutes.)*

There is an issue with several members who are frequently absent from FICCIT Quarterly Meetings that needs to be discussed and action needs to be taken to terminate and replace them.

It was suggested that the FICCIT Chair be the point of contact for the Governor's Appointments Office.

If three names must be submitted to the Governor for appointment, how is it determined which of the three will be the non-appointed member of FICCIT until the appointment is final? It was suggested by the Task Force, that in the case of open seats, the three recommended members would be invited to participate in FICCIT meetings, not vote and pay their own way. When the seat is not an open seat, the one person in the seat currently would continue until the final appointment is made.

Diversity continues to be an issue with FICCIT.

The Member Orientation Packet is not complete.

Some members have difficulty getting the meeting materials electronically. The expense is then borne by the member rather than by the agency. It is suggested that the policy on meeting materials be reconsidered and have hard copies of materials at meetings. It was suggested that the meeting info be posted on the FICCIT website and FICCIT members should be given the opportunity to indicate their preferred method of receiving information.

The Department of Health has been asked to send the FICCIT Chair the applications that have not been acted upon. These will then be sent to the Governor's Appointments Office with a cover letter. Mary Bryant agreed to work with the chair to draft the letter.

## Bylaws

The following changes will be submitted to FICCIT members in writing prior to the next meeting. The vote on these will occur at the July meeting.

It is suggested that:

- The reference to PRO as an automatic appointment to FICCIT be deleted. PRO will no longer be a committee of FICCIT. Families will be appointed to FICCIT without the designated preference of PRO representation.
- A cap on parent participation receiving funding from EIP will be imposed. (not clear needs further clarification)
- The language regarding EIP Director will be “no more than one (1) EIP Director will be a member of FICCIT.”
- The attendance policy is to be strengthened so that continuous absences at FICCIT and/or committee meetings will not be allowed. The suggestion is that language related to missing more than 2 meetings in a calendar year or 3 committee events in a calendar year will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and a recommendation will be made to FICCIT. A notification of the meetings will be established for the purpose of this.
- Terms for officers need to be established. This will include the length of term and the term start dates.
- The requirement that committee meetings be held quarterly in conjunction with FICCIT meetings will be changed.
- The PRO Committee will be eliminated and replaced with a Family Involvement Committee.
- Language referencing defunct state entities be changed to reflect current organizations.

The calendar for future FICCIT meetings will be developed and shared at the next meeting.

The role of FICCIT in the follow up to the Stakeholders Workgroup Meeting was discussed. FICCIT will need to be very involved in the Implementation Plan. As the Department of Health starts to look at the recommendations, FICCIT needs to be at the table.

## Public Comment

Lou Ann Long reported on:

- The Florida Children’s Forum efforts and success at establishing the toll-free statewide resource and referral hot line link to FDLRS Child Find.
- Lou Ann Long is the family member reviewer of items put in the T.I.R.E. Store—a TEAM Florida partnership activity.
- The Inclusion Conference is scheduled for January 2004.
- 75 parties have expressed an interest in the recreation grants for inclusion in recreation activities. These will be whittled down to about 5 pilot projects.
- Community Inclusion Teams are moving.
- The “Understanding Inclusion” booklet has been translated to Spanish and Creole. The booklet is now in the ERIC database. Over 100,000 copies have been printed and distributed throughout the state. This booklet will be updated during the next funding cycle.
- Report of the findings of the Child Care and Day Care Inclusion 2003 Family Survey Summary is available and has been distributed through the EIPs and the FDLRS centers.

Ernie Kessel reported that the Florida Respite Coalition has sponsored a bill in the Florida Legislature, the development of competencies and standards for life-span respite providers.

Mary Bryant reported that the federal government has determined that they will no longer fund the Quality Improvement Centers and Disability Services Quality Improvement Centers to provide Training and Technical Assistance services to Head Start programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Bryant, Acting Secretary.