



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

**RDC Committee Meeting Minutes**  
July 16, 2019 10:00 a.m.

**Members in Attendance**

Mary Ann Winstead (Co-Chair)  
Sharon Vecchio

Roger Thompson (Co-Chair)  
Hitomi Wright

Shawn Jennings

**Members Called In**

Mary Ann Bickerstaff

**Staff**

Vicki Pugh

Melissa Stankard

Jamie Phelps

**I. Welcome, Call to Order, and Approval of Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Thompson. Upon a motion made by Mr. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Winstead, the Agenda was accepted and approved without objection.

**II. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**III. Approval of Minutes for May 21, 2019**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Jennings and seconded by Ms. Winstead, the Minutes of the May 21, 2019 meeting were accepted and approved without objection.

**IV. Program Reports**

a. **Nursing Services Report**

Ms. Jennings shared that in May, the ELCEC Medical Support team conducted 66 screenings and made 9 vision and 8 hearing referrals and in June, the team conducted 80 screenings and made 3 vision referrals and 8 hearing referrals. In May, there were 13 site visits conducted and in June, 12 site visits were conducted bringing total site visits to 193 year to date. CPR and First Aid classes were conducted in May and June. Note was made that the DOH staff are contracted to conduct 1,200 screenings and that we have already conducted over 2,400 screenings. 3,834 children have been served year to date. Ms. Shawn Jennings also noted that the DOH Health Tech, Meishen Blalock, has resigned and that interviews to fill the position are pending.

b. **CCR&R Update**

In the month of May there were 79 CCR&R interviews with 54 new interviews and 47 were single, one-adult households. Ms. Melissa Jennings noted that due to the MOD going live effective June 1, 2019, some of the June numbers are missing and/or inaccurate so a Staff Weekly Report is being created in order to capture the numbers. So far, 88 interviews have been conducted in June. Transportation and location remain the number 1 and two issues for persons seeking childcare.

Ms. Stankard reported that the CCR&R lobby has been set up to be more community friendly. Information regarding our community involvement as well as tools and tips that may



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be used to facilitate learning are being offered. Staff members are also visiting with Providers on attendance day. A summer theme is currently in place in the lobby. As part of the summer theme, we are offering summer safety tips and car safety tips, as well as coloring pages to go out with all the books. Next month, the lobby will be updated to reflect a Super Hero back-to-school theme.

c. **Program Summary Report**

Ms. Pugh advised that some of the June numbers are missing from the report. Note was made that there were no events or activities to report for the period and that 14,540 books have been distributed year to date. The Coalition had two Media Units in the month of May, bringing the year to date total to 5, and Facebook likes are going up. Ms. Pugh also reported that the Coalition recently received guidance from OEL regarding having a family outreach plan in place and that social media will be a big part of the outreach effort. Ms. Pugh further reported that there were 25 Expulsions/Suspensions year to date and that the Coalition will tighten up the data gathering process for this measure.

d. **SR/VPK Status Report: Wait List and Contract Summary Reports**

Ms. Pugh reported that the Coalition still has a little uptick on the duplicated number of children in care under SR funding. Ms. Pugh further reported that only 16 children are on the Wait List and that the Coalition is not sure why the numbers are down. She noted that we have five computers available for applicants to use and that staff members are available to provide assistance. Ms. Stankard commented that the Coalition may have an opportunity to increase the number of children enrolled if Providers are enlisted to help inform parents. Ms. Pugh mentioned that Achieve Escambia has an Escambia Enrolls initiative going on. Ms. Winstead commented that parents tend to focus on enrolling school-age children first and only after that process is complete, do they typically begin to focus on pre-school enrollments.

Ms. Pugh reported that the Coalition has 83 active SR Providers and that SR Contract signing has been completed. There are six new Providers. Ms. Pugh further reported that there are 77 active VPK Providers and that signing of the VPK contracts will start next week. In addition, she mentioned that most contract terminations this past year were self-terminations and that there are no active fraud cases at this time.

## V. **Old Business**

a. **Grow with Me /LENA Update**

Ms. Pugh reported that there are two sites this year and that was considered a good number. She noted that one of the sites is in a center and the other site is in a home. She further noted that a new curriculum has been developed for Grow with Me and that Providers have been strongly encouraged to put an appropriate age group in Grow With Me.

b. **SR Program Assessments/PFP/QPS/Stars Over Escambia**

Ms. Pugh reported that SR Program Assessments (SRPA), Performance Funding Program (PFP), Quality Performance System (QPS), and our local Stars Over Escambia QRIS are all interrelated. The PFP has ended only to be replaced by the QPS which is depends upon the SRPA to determine its rate incentive levels. She also noted that Providers are now required to register on line via the QPS portal. Related to this, there are three Providers that are on a QIP (Quality Improvement



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Program) this year. Most Providers that receive low composite CLASS scores have lower scores in their infants and toddler classrooms.

Our own local program, Stars Over Escambia, has been changed significantly to be compatible with the new OEL program. Providers can receive up to a 5% rate incentive and almost all our Providers qualify, however, only 9 providers have applied.

c. **EFS Modernization Transition Update**

Ms. Winstead reported that they have not experienced problems with EFS MOD and that things have gone smoothly for them. Ms. Stankard indicated that many small glitches in the system often combine to cause much larger problems.

## VI. **New Business**

a. **Gulf Power Grant 2019/2020**

Ms. Pugh indicated that this grant is to be used across the Panhandle and she asked how the Providers would feel about the idea of holding a one or one and half day conference in Destin for the five Coalitions. She indicated that we would offer a Director's Track, an Infant and Toddler Track, and a Fiscal Track. She further noted that attendee costs would be kept minimal and that CEUs will be available.

b. **Grade Level Reading (GLR)**

Ms. Pugh reported that GLR is a national drive to get children reading at or above grade level by the time they reach third grade. Note was made that the state of Florida is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and that a literate population is critical to the state's economic success. Ms. Pugh went on to note that we have written a letter of intent indicating our focus will be on improving early learning and that some of our strategies will be to focus on attendance and summer slide. She indicated that there will be more to come on this matter and that there will be events that staff and families may attend. A needs assessment for our community is due by July 2020. There is no money involved in GLR but there is a library of best practices available. The state of Florida has 17 GLR cities that are gaining traction and starting to see results. The city of Delray has adopted all the elementary schools within their city limits and over the last ten years they have seen a 28% improvement with third-grade reading levels and attendance along with a correlated reduction in tertiary concerns, such as juvenile delinquency.

## VII. **Community Partner Updates**

a. **Achieve Escambia**

No representative was available to report.

b. **ARC Gateway**

Ms. Bickerstaff reported that on June 28<sup>th</sup>, the first two groups of children started a new program called Taste Buds which is a program designed to help children with severe eating challenges. She reported that at the end of the first day of the intensive feeding program, a five-year old little boy said that, "Therapy with friends is FUN!" and that they were very pleased with the positive reaction. Ms. Bickerstaff also reported that she is collaborating with Achieve Escambia and that the group is preparing an Early Screening Matters slide show which is to be presented to physicians at Sacred Heart Children's and Women's Hospital. She further indicated that a



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community outreach initiative is in progress for upcoming screenings and open houses as well as fall, winter, and spring festivals. She noted that the goal is to get out into the community and identify children earlier. Ms. Bickerstaff also mentioned that they are starting to participate with the Baptist Hospital health initiative and that they are looking forward to merging the concepts of both education and health needs because the topics overlap so much.

c. DCF Outreach

Reporting on behalf of Ms. Gonzalez, Mr. Thompson noted that she has connected with the Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast to identify child care homes and facilities with infant and toddler space. She is also working on identifying foster families on their waiting list, and that space for the birth to 11-month age range is the tightest. Ms. Bickerstaff suggested going through the DCF search process and she highly encourages considering home day care.

Ms. Stankard indicated that we have asked Providers to notify our Coalition of vacancies and that has helped facilitate making placements. Mr. Thompson mentioned that the affordability of providing infant and toddler day care can be very challenging. General discussion was held regarding the impact Providers' perception of the regulation process has on their willingness to become licensed or registered. Mr. Thompson indicated that many Providers are reluctant to connect with DCF or the Coalition is because they are reluctant to become involved in and subject to the state regulatory process.

d. DCF Regulation

Mr. Thompson reported that the Childcare Facility Rule is being held up at this time. He also reported that the After School Rule and the Day Care Home Rule both went through. Mr. Thompson went on to note that renewal packets are due back within 45 days and that this year, hard copies of the packets will not be mailed. Instead, renewal packets will be routed via email. Mr. Thompson expressed concern that Providers are now expected to monitor their renewal dates and general discussion ensued regarding facilitating the ease, or lack thereof, of accessing on-line resources for the renewal process. Ms. Pugh indicated that she would follow up to see about including links to renewal resource materials on the ELC Escambia County web site. Note was made that within the next year, the entire renewal process will be done exclusively on line.

e. Department of Health 5-2-1-0

No representative was available to report.

f. Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH)

No representative was available to report.

g. Gulf Coast Kids House

No representative was available to report.

h. Pensacola State College

No representative was available to report.

i. School District Education Career Academy

No representative was available to report.



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- j. School District VPK  
No representative was available to report.
- k. Western Panhandle Early Steps  
No representative was available to report.

**VIII. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.**

**Next Meeting: September 17, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 210, Pensacola, Florida 32505**