

MICHIGAN CHILD CARE TASK FORCE MINUTES for June 7, 2006

NOTE: NO MEETINGS in July and August

NEXT MEETING of the Task Force
Wednesday, September 6, 2006
9:30 a.m. to noon
State of Michigan Library
717 West Allegan; Lansing
Lake Ontario Room – 3rd floor

Richard Lower and Jane Zehnder-Merrell convened the meeting shortly after 9:30 a.m. People introduced themselves.

GUEST SPEAKER: RICHARD BEARUP, Executive Director, Michigan Children's Trust Fund

* Questions about the Task Force: Mr. Bearup began by asking about the mission and vision of the Child Care Task Force. Various people discussed the current mission/vision of the task force and also recounted its history, which goes back almost 30 years.

* Questions about the ECIC: Then Rich inquired of the group their experiences and expectations concerning ECIC and divergent viewpoints, varying from high praise to criticism, were shared.

* Some history about the Michigan Children's Trust Fund (MCTF): Michigan was the first state to have a Children's Trust Fund thanks to Public Act 250 of 1982. Now, a trust fund exists in all 50 states. The MCTF will celebrate its 25th anniversary next year, having been started under legislation promoted by, then, State Representative Debbie Stabenow. Stabenow found her idea well supported by Governor William Milliken and, thus, the Trust Fund began in a spirit of bipartisanship. Both Stabenow and Milliken will appear at the anniversary celebration in 2007.

* Mr. Bearup's History with Early Childhood Issues: He worked with Connie Binsfeld when she was the Lieutenant Governor during the first administration of Governor John Engler. Binsfeld took an interest in abuse and neglect of young children and headed a special commission to examine this policy area. Bearup worked with the Commission as it developed and issued a detailed report on abuse/neglect. An important recommendation was forming the Office of Children's Ombudsman. Governor Engler appointed Rich as the first Children's Ombudsman, an office he held during 1995-99.

He had to invent the Ombudsman job in, literally, a few days. He had to make it credible to the public, which meant he had to engage the news media; he had to make it credible to both Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature. He developed a diverse staff: people expected the staff would be primarily professional social workers; he added professionals from law enforcement and the investigatory profession. In his four years, he fielded over 3000 complaints from 79 (of 83) counties. In dealing with these complaints, 46 of the children involved died; he has a picture of each child to remind him of the seriousness of the Children Ombudsman's office. He brought these experiences to the Michigan Children's Trust Fund.

* At the Michigan Children's Trust Fund: A board of directors appointed by the governor runs The MCTF. By law, the Board must include people with backgrounds in business, law enforcement, government and parenting. The main task of the MCTF is to administer grants related to child abuse and neglect prevention. It develops granting programs, awards grants

and monitors them. The central office in Lansing has eight FTEs, mostly involved with grant monitoring. The office also hires six regional coordinators who primarily interact with local child abuse/neglect councils. Its annual budget is about \$4.3 million. The office also monitors a program called "Zero-to-Three Collaboration Grants"; these grants, totaling about \$4.5 million, are supported by appropriations through Michigan's human services state agencies. Statutorily, the CTF is permitted to fund the following three categories, in priority order: (A) direct service grants; (B) local CAN councils; (C) model or demonstration projects.

* Funding the Trust Fund

In 1982, the main funding source was a MCTF check-off on the state income tax form. This allowed the MCTF, within a few years, to accumulate an endowment fund of \$20 million, the interest from which supports Trust Fund activities. Once that fund reached \$20 million, the tax form check-off ended. In addition, the MCTF has always done fund raising. In addition, it manages grants with funds donated from various sources; it hopes to obtain additional granting funds of \$170 thousand this year.

Efforts to reinstate the Trust Fund check-off failed under Governor Engler, who opposed the notion of tax form check-offs. Now, the check-off has returned as of 2005 and has raised about \$350 thousand in its first year. The MCTF will market this check-off option aggressively for next year.

Other sources of funding include: (1) Revenues from the "children's" license plate; this is the second highest selling plate and delivers \$200 thousand per year; (2) "Cherish the Children" auction, held the last four years in the spring and grosses about \$100 thousand annually; (3) Interest from the endowment fund, about \$1 million annually; (4) A \$1 million federal grant.

Fund raising never stops and two programs are in the works: (1) An anonymous donor may give \$1 million; (2) Muhammed Ali may work with the MCTF in promoting a fund raising drive.

* Specifics of the Trust Fund's Work: The Trust Fund handles 37 grants that typically run for three years. It also administers 36 "Zero-to-Three" grants funded by the human state agencies. It works with 72 local abuse and neglect councils and gives small to modest size grants of \$5 thousand to \$70 thousand per year.

The MCTF is very bi-partisan and, indeed, must be so since much of its funding passes through the legislature.

* The Future of the Trust Fund: Muhammad Ali will hopefully headline MCTF work in the near future; He likes to remind us that "Children are living messages we send to times and places we will never see."

The Trust Fund has demonstrated a great return on the money it spends to prevent child abuse and neglect. It wants to become less reactive and more proactive because prevention of abuse/neglect is far preferable to treating the aftermath. The office has become more efficient and now all grants are done on-line. The staff in the field have become better aligned with programs in local communities and their work is based more on understanding local realities. Much remains to be done to become more nimble and effective with the resources the Trust Fund has.

QUESTION: Will Trust Fund grants ever be able to support direct services, something that is not permitted now?

ANSW: That issue is often raised and is under consideration now; things might change.

QUESTION: MCTF grants seem to go to places that vary in their ability to prevent abuse/neglect; what can you do to tie funding to success in dealing successfully with abuse/neglect.

ANSW: MCTF has not been results/outcomes-based in its work, and that has to change. MCTF now seeks a business plan as part of the grant application and seeks measurable goals. The Michigan Department of Human Services is now pushing accountability much more than before. MCTF plans to become more "business-like"; we need more than big hearts; Trust Fund staff will present a proposed business plan to the Board at its July meeting.

QUESTION: Can the Child Care Task Force play a role in helping shape the future of the check-off?

ANSW: On July 19, 9:30 a.m., a meeting will be held at the Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health office in Lansing (contact Paul Shaheen); it will be a strategy session on early childhood funding. The Child Care Task Force should find a way to participate.

QUESTION: You want to be "pro-active" in grant making; what does that mean?

ANSW: The MCCTF needs to market itself better; it needs to provide computer training so that more people can seek grants on-line; we must become better at encouraging other agencies to give us advice.

BUSINESS OF THE TASK FORCE

* Mich Dept of Educe, Early Childhood and Parenting Programs – Connie Robinson

* Proposed legislation:

The State Legislature will set budget targets soon with the intention of finalizing the entire 2006-07 State Budget by June 15th. Everything is in "play." Contact state representatives NOW regarding crucial investments in children. (NOTE: the June 15 deadline is now set for June 30.)

MSRP teacher and paraprofessional qualifications, and funding parity between MSRP State Aid and Competitive programs continue as major areas of debate.

The results of the Even Start competitive application process are posted on the website at www.michigan.gov/evenstart.

Three of the 12 applicants who competed were awarded grants. Several grantees currently operating Even Start projects will not continue next year. Thanks go out to any of the task force members who have contacted their congressional delegates regarding restoration of the funding for Even Start! The mark-ups will occur soon, then go to the appropriations later this month, so there is still time if folks want to lobby for continued funding beyond this year.

* Early On Redesign – The Early On Redesign continues to move forward and many of you have been involved with the activities so far, whether in person or via the website, which people can reach at www.earlyonredesign.com.

A "State Interagency Coordinating Council" acts as the Core Team for the Redesign process. In an effort to share accurate and current information, the Council produces updates on this process. Go to the website for progress information or contact the Council with your questions or comments at earlyonredesign@michigan.gov.

* Department of Human Services, Child Development and Care Kathi Pioszak

* ANTI-FRAUD PROGRAM — The CDC Program Office, in conjunction with a CDC Fraud Workgroup, has developed a new "STOP CHILD CARE PROGRAM FRAUD" poster as part of a campaign to increase public awareness of child care fraud. Child Day Care Licensing Consultants have received copies. A laminated copy of the poster will be distributed to each

DHS local and district office in June. Copies of the poster will also go to 4C offices and Community Action Agencies. Posters are available upon request.

* HEAD START STATE COLLABORATION OFFICE — Thirty mental health representatives from Head Start, Child Care Expulsion Prevention, mental health contractors and ISD school social workers/psychologists met recently at Dickenson/Iron ISD to learn more about the Head Start Mental Health PROTOCOL and do networking. The Child Care Expulsion Prevention staff will conduct four trainings in the U.P. This coming year and hope to attract other mental health consultants to these trainings. For more information contact Nancy Willyard, Director of the Head Start-State Collaboration Office, at 517-241-5091.

* INFANT, TODDLER, YOUNG CHILD CONFERENCE — Mark your calendar—"Supporting Families with Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children" conference, November 13-15, 2006 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids.

The Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) will provide some scholarships for child care providers to attend. If interested in a conference brochure and scholarship application, e mail your request to Deborahjensen@childcrt.org or visit www.childcrt.org and look for "Supporting Families" conference link. Conference material will be available AFTER August 1, 2006.

* EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENT CORPORATION - The ECIC is working to retain \$1 million in the School Aid budget that, if obtained, will leverage a \$6.5 million Kellogg Foundation grant. This funding would allow the ECIC to fund additional Great Start Collaboratives and allow an examination of NEW early childhood initiatives.

The ECIC is quickly developing a CLEARINGHOUSE of early childhood information and technical assistance for communities through Michigan. The clearinghouse will feature the essential components of the Great Start System: physical health; social/emotional health; basic needs/economic security/child safety; early care and education; parenting education; family support; and infrastructure. The ECIC seeks your input. Judy Samelson, Mike Foley and Joan Blough are meeting with various individuals and organizations to facilitate this work. A major focus is DIVERSITY in Michigan: how do we reach and communicate with our diverse populations.

The following has happened and will happen with the Great Start Collaboratives
++ ECIC has issued contracts to all collaboratives

++ A "Childhood System Assessment" template has been distributed to all GSCs. Technical assistance on using this assessment tool was held in late May, with Jane Zehnder-Merrill helping to lead the sessions.

++ ECIC staff is attending GSC meetings and related community meetings, providing support and information to the local assessment work.

++ The ECIC will sponsor a parent focus group for parent members of GSCs on June 30 with a resource document for GSC members as a product of the focus group. Quarterly technical assistance for parent members of GSCs is planned.

++ The ECIC will work with Michigan's Children and the League for Human Services on pre-release briefings on the National Kid's Count Data book, which focuses this year on young children – specifically, the importance of family, friend and neighbor care in the lives of low-income children and ways to support and strengthen the quality of that care.

++ GSC coordinators from Wayne and Dickinson-Iron will participate on the Michigan team that will attend a BUILD Initiatives meeting on state-local partnerships for early childhood system building. (The BUILD Initiative is a national organization that helps selected states build such systems.) Judy Samelson and Joan Blough will attend as well.

++ The ECIC will establish a website that will provide access to information, news and data, along with ways to communicate among GSCs and other communities.

++ The ECIC will develop new publications to showcase its accomplishments and highlight key points on early childhood for various audiences.

** MDCH Mental Health Services to Children & Families — Deb Marciniak Ms. Marciniak was unable to attend this meeting but provided notes that Richard Lower shared with the group.

* The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment to be available soon – Many people in the early childhood field are familiar with the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) Program - a strength-based assessment and planning system for children ages 2-5. Based on resilience theory, this system is made up of 5-steps designed to support early childhood teachers, mental health professionals, and parents in their goal of helping children develop healthy social/emotional skills and reduce challenging behaviors. Central to the DECA Program is the DECA, a standardized, strength-based assessment of within-child protective factors and a screener for behavior concerns.

The Devereux Early Childhood Initiative is now in the process of finalizing the DECA for Infants and Toddlers (DECA-IT). Child Care Expulsion Prevention consultants will be providing training on the DECA-IT for interested parents and early childhood practitioners in Michigan in the coming year. We'll let you know the dates as soon as they are scheduled. In the meantime, if you would like more info on the DECA-IT or want to take a brief online course on the DECA, go to <http://www.devereuxearlychildhood.org/>.

* Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior The Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior web site includes an online toolkit titled, "Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior." Go to: <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/tools.html>

The Teaching Tools aim to assist preschool teachers in problem-solving a plan to support young children with challenging behavior. The User's Manual explains how to use the tools and all of the technical information needed to access the hyperlinked visual supports and materials.

Included within the Teaching Tools is the Routine-Based Support Guide. The Guide accompanies all of the tools and is organized in routines and activities that typically occur in early childhood programs. It will assist teachers in support plan development.

* Division of Child Day Licensing, DHS - Don Vita (vita2@michigan.gov)

* New Staff at the Division – Six new staff have been allocated and four have been hired. The other two will be hired soon. Training of new staff will begin late in June.

* Training Continues – Training for providers continues with about 70 sessions completed; over 1500 people received their three hours credit.

* Child Care Center Rules Progress – The proposed center rules revisions are near the end of the promulgation process. The Division has made preliminary arrangements to write new technical assistance manuals for use ASAP after the rules pass the final hurdle. The proposed rules have been sent to the legislature where they now reside with the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). The joint committee can refuse to approve the rules and enormously slow down the process. Most observers expect JCAR to do nothing. Once the rules are with JCAR for 15 legislative days, and the committee does nothing, the rules are submitted to the Secretary of State and they take effect 180 days later. (NOTE: JCAR's 15 legislative days lapsed a few days after the task force meeting; the Secretary of State enrolled them and they will take effect on December 7, 2006.)

QUESTION: A standing House Committee held hearings on child care policy and discussed, among other things, the center rules; does this pose a threat to the rules?

ANSW: That committee meeting was outside the rules promulgation process and has no official bearing on these rules; indeed, the new rules were a small part of the committee deliberations. It seems rather likely that the proposed revisions will be finalized in the next few days.

QUESTION: Some people perceive a drop in the number of family- and group day care homes; is there a drop in the number of home providers and did the new home-based rules create this problem?

ANSW: Don has not noticed any drop in the number of home-based providers, but he will look into it. DHS believes there is a very small drop in homes, but nothing that indicates a problem. One of the local 4C offices said it had seen a substantial drop.

* TANF Reauthorization — Jackie Broughton, Michigan League for Human Services

* Federal Policy – This month (June), the federal government will release new guidelines on what constitutes "working" for welfare recipients. By October 2007, states must meet a 50% work participation rate for their welfare recipients or face a penalty.

* State Policy – On the state level, the appropriations bills for the upcoming fiscal year are in conference committee. They are designed to save the state money as well as prepare the state to meet the new participation requirements and, thus, avoid sanction. Discussions have been taking place between the Senate, House, and DHS, and a final budget may soon be released.

The House bill makes major changes to the Family Independence Program, including time limits, family sanctions, and a family cap, among many others. This year sees efforts to punish entire families for the deed of individuals within the family unit. This poses particular problems for children.

In the Senate bill, sanctions are also included, as well as a provision for more funding for daycare for welfare-to-work, but this will not increase the daycare payment rates.

There is also a House supplemental bill that includes additional changes such as a citizenship requirement and stipulations that people convicted of certain felony offenses cannot receive FIP money. A complete analysis of TANF is available on the Michigan League for Human Services website at: <http://www.milhs.org/>

* Head Start Reauthorization — Richard Lower

There is no real work underway in Congress and expectations of reauthorization until 2007. Discrimination in staff hiring that would permit Head Start to hire people only of some preferred religion continues to be a sticking point.

* Changes in the Meeting Schedule for the Task Force

Today's meeting marks the end of this year's cycle; the new cycle will begin in September, with no meetings scheduled for July and August.

The task force will MEET ONLY IN ODD-NUMBERED MONTHS beginning in September (the 9th month). The individuals on the task force steering committee found the burden of holding monthly meetings growing too large. In particular, finding quality speakers each month was becoming difficult.

Beginning in September, the task force cycle for 2006-07 will have meetings in September, November, January, March and May. The task force will evaluate how well this has worked next spring.

The meeting adjourned shortly before noon.

Meeting notes compiled by Steve Manchester, Michigan AEYC, with assistance from many of the people who made reports.