

Children's Services Council  
**PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, September 22, 2011 - 5:00 p.m.

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**1. Call to Order**

Chair Alvarez called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Present: Judge Ronald V. Alvarez, Frank Barbieri, Dari Bowman, Vince Goodman, Rod Macon, Bill Malone (arrived 5:13 p.m.)

Excused: Greg Langowski

**2. Minutes of August 11, 2011 PRC Meeting**

**On motion of Goodman/Macon to approve the Minutes of the August 11, 2011 PRC meeting was approved by unanimous vote.**

**3. A. Consent Agenda:**

- a) Additions, Deletions, Substitutions
- b) Items to be Pulled from Consent Agenda – Agenda items 3A(2) and 3A(3) were pulled for discussion purposes.
- c) Adoption of Consent Agenda

**On motion of Macon/Bowman to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of agenda items 3A(2) and 3A(3) was approved by unanimous vote.**

- 1. Warrants List-Program Reimbursements – Approved by Consent
- 2. Resolution #11-018 Authorizing an Extension of Agreement with United Way for the Continuous Improvement Initiative

Vince Goodman asked for clarification of continuous improvement. Kim Maxwell, Program Officer stated that the Continuous Improvement Initiative was a grant opportunity and was a partnership between the United Way and CSC providing supports for nonprofit agencies. She stated that the supports were around agency infrastructure, agency certification, information technology infrastructure, and was about building capacity within those nonprofit agencies. Tana Ebbole stated that it was available to the CSC-funded agencies so that they had access to data systems, computer systems, and other technical supports to improve their infrastructure.

Mr. Goodman asked whether the agenda item was asking for additional funding. Ms. Maxwell stated that there was funding available in the current budget and the agenda item was to extend

the time period of the contract in order to utilize such funding. She stated that \$124,000 was remaining.

**On motion of Bowman/Barbieri to approve Resolution #11-018 authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to extend the existing Agreement between CSC and United Way of Palm Beach County for the Continuous Improvement Fund, effective October 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, or until all funds are fully expended, whichever comes first, was approved by unanimous vote.**

3. Resolution #11-019 Authorizing an Addendum to Contract (increase) for the Jerome Golden Center to provide additional mental health services

Vince Goodman asked for clarification of specific mental health services because they were not outlined. Yualanda King, Program Officer stated that mental health services provided by the Jerome Golden Center had in previous years been under utilized, but due to the success of Healthy Beginnings and the entry agencies identifying clients, utilization had increased beyond the amount anticipated. Tana Ebbole stated that the specific services included support to families and couples counseling, including infant mental health therapy and Triple P services.

Mr. Goodman asked what would happen should the Council not approve the request. Ms. King stated that the families currently being served would not be able to continue being served. Mr. Goodman asked what services were provided. Maria Chiodo from Jerome Golden Center stated that the services were mostly in-home counseling services for pregnant women experiencing stress related to the pregnancy, and post-partum women experiencing maternal depression, and/or anxiety. She stated that they helped the mother and baby bond and create a productive relationship, and helped give the mother the skills needed to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression she may be experiencing, trying to reduce and eliminate any instances of abuse and neglect. She stated that they provided up to 20 sessions per participant.

Mr. Goodman asked how the additional funding would be used to help the clientele. Ms. Chiodo stated that the funding would specifically pay the contractual therapists their hourly rate to go into the homes to provide services. Mr. Goodman asked whether the therapists ever volunteered or provided free services. Ms. Chiodo stated that they were licensed, Masters level therapists, trained as specialists in infant mental health, and were highly-trained, highly-skilled therapists. She stated that they saw deep-end clients with very serious situations. Tana Ebbole stated that CSC had funded infant mental health training in order to have a cadre of mental health therapists to work with women who were depressed and not bonding with their young children. She stated that the therapists provided interventions that were critically important and delicate, because the women were experiencing significant depression which could possibly lead to maltreatment or even deaths of children.

Mr. Goodman referred to Judge Alvarez, stating that he experienced stressful situations. Judge Alvarez stated that in his courtroom he saw the results of what happened when mental health services had not been provided, and not only were there mothers with problems, but the children went from the dependency system into the delinquency system, with the children suffering from a detachment disorder with no conscience or trust.

Frank Barbieri asked whether the contract had already been renewed for 2011/2012. Ms. Ebbole stated that it had been accommodated for in the budget.

**On motion of Macon/Barbieri to approve Resolution #11-019 authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to execute the necessary addendum to contract (increase) for the Jerome Golden Center to provide mental health services in an additional amount not to exceed \$20,000 for the remainder of the current fiscal year was approved by unanimous vote.**

4. Resolution #11-020 and Exhibit 'A' Authorizing a Contract with SRI International for Community Impact Evaluation of the Bridges Initiative – Approved by Consent

**B. Business Agenda:**

1. Resolution #11-021 Authorizing a Reallocation of Unexpended Initiative and Program Dollars to the Early Learning Coalition

Andy McAusland, Program Officer stated that the agenda item was to reallocate unexpended initiative and program dollars to the Early Learning Coalition's Continue to Care contract. He stated that the Continue to Care program had provided scholarships for child care and after school funding for up to 5,000 children (in peak months) in four different categories. He stated that very few children left the system by result of attrition, and the growth had been huge due to the economic times, and due to the expansion of the Healthy Beginnings system. He stated that they had frozen enrollment in May, 2011, but had not dis-enrolled children. He stated that they had created a utilization committee to regulate what came into the system, and a committee would now review applications for the scholarships. He stated that if there were more successful applications than what could be regulated in, they would have to create a waitlist.

Vince Goodman asked whether feedback was shared with the School District of Palm Beach County. Tana Ebbole stated that there were two different categories: early care and education (ECE), and after school programs. She stated that the ECE assessment (school readiness) was conducted by the school district. She stated that the data was received from the school district through the Early Learning Coalition in order for them to crosswalk the children to VPK programs, and continue to care quality programs. She stated that after school programs were not evaluated in terms of academic data through the school district.

Mr. Goodman asked what happened as a result of receiving the data. Ms. Ebbole stated that the data helped them determine what did and didn't work, which allowed them to go back and fix, change, and adjust a program in order to come closer to achieving the established child outcomes. She stated that after working to adjust the programs, and in reviewing the data and finding that the child outcomes were still not being met, they would then bring it before the Council and recommend that the resources no longer be allocated to a program that was not working, and that the dollars should be reinvested into a more effective program.

**On motion of Macon/Bowman to approve Resolution #11-021 authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to enter into the necessary contract amendment (increase) with the Early Learning**

**Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$2,132,282 for the Continue to Care FY 10/11 Contract #489 effective immediately was approved by unanimous vote.**

**C. System of Care Update:**

Robert Kurimski, Director of Information Management stated that they would shortly decommission the FOCiS data system and move to the new HBDS system. He stated that it was the first data system within CSC with the ability to track families in the system, instead of disparate individuals. He stated that it also would allow them to manage various capacities in order to allocate the correct resources to the appropriate intake agencies. Tana Ebbole stated that the design of the system and moving all the data was a monumental task, and that many hours of work had been undertaken by CSC staff in addition to Providers in the planning and preparation.

**D. Evaluations:**

1. Supporting Low-income Parents of Young Children, Final Report of the Palm Beach County Family Study – Laura Fleischman, Ph.D., Research & Evaluation Team Lead; Julie Spielberger, Ph.D., Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Laura Fleischman, Research & Evaluation Team Lead stated that Julie Spielberger was a Research Fellow with a background in child development and early childhood education. She stated that the Longitudinal Study was undertaken almost 8 years previously to study the characteristics and needs of children and families, asking who the families were and what the services were that they were using. She stated that at that time the Maternal Child Family Health Alliance (MCFHA) provided services to families, and the system was very different to what it currently was. She stated that they had drawn from lessons learned from the study, which had provided CSC the opportunity for framing its approach to the current work.

Dr. Spielberger stated that the study had been a very rich, intensive, difficult study, and they had worked with many agencies in the community, including the School District and the Department of Health. She stated that the study was unusual in that it was not a study of one particular program, but rather it looked at a system of services, those that were in place in 2003/2004. She stated that in order to understand the range of services and the impact of the services on the families, it was important to take a broad view, and also to follow the mothers over time. She stated that the study had been most valuable in understanding how low income families used a range of services in the community, understanding the factors that facilitated their use of services, and what barriers kept them from services. She stated that they also were able to determine outcomes that could be attributed to services, but which could also be attributed to other factors, the importance of early parenting, mental health, early care and education programs, etc. She stated that the Healthy Beginnings System went live in 2009, and the study contributed to its formation.

Dr. Spielberger stated that they looked at service records from the Maternal Child Family Health Alliance (MCFHA), from Vital Statistics, child abuse and neglect records, and school readiness records. She stated that they also conducted annual interviews from sample families which gave them rich data on their living circumstances, services use, and a variety of other factors.

Dr. Spielberger stated that the most important factors were related to child development and school readiness, and that at the end of the study the children's school readiness was significantly related to the parenting practices they experienced throughout their development, especially those practices within the first year. She stated that the type of child care arrangement children were in the year before they entered Kindergarten made a difference in their school readiness. She stated that health characteristics also made a difference, specifically whether or not a child was born at low birthweight.

Dr. Spielberger stated that at the beginning of the study 2/3 of the families were below the poverty level, and while it decreased somewhat, at the end of the study over one half were still living in poverty. She stated that maternal functioning right after birth, which research showed was critical, played a part in a child's school readiness five years later. She stated that the service system in place did a good job of identifying mothers with service needs, and engaging them in services.

Dr. Spielberger stated that they had deliberately recruited mothers that were screened at high-risk because they wanted to ensure they would access services in order to understand the impact of those services. She stated that 17% of mothers in the study were teen mothers, compared to 9% of mothers in the county being teen mothers. She stated that 57% of mothers in the study were foreign-born, compared to 41% of mothers in the county being foreign-born. She stated that 59% of mothers in the study had not graduated from High School, with 72% not being married. She stated that 72% of mothers in the study received WIC, compared to 35% of mothers in the county receiving WIC. She stated that the risk factors of mothers in the study were higher than those in the county in general, and also higher than the average mother in a targeted geographic (low income) area.

Dr. Spielberger stated that children in the study, for the most part, were born healthy, with only 9% low birthweight compared to 8% for the county. She stated that the MCFHA served about 85% of the mothers in the sample, with services provided by healthy mothers/healthy babies and Healthy Start. She stated that mothers were more likely to receive services if they had certain risk characteristics such as being a teen, being unmarried, mothers with less education, a child with special needs, or were below the poverty level.

Dr. Spielberger stated that the services were valuable within themselves, but also made the mothers aware of other services they were eligible for such as prenatal care for subsequent children, Medicaid, food stamps, and educational programs such as HIPPPY. She stated that families used health care and food necessities at high levels. She stated that in the last several years of the study they had seen a decline in mothers accessing parental education which was to be expected with the age of the children, with only 10% of the mothers continuing to receive formal services in this area.

Dr. Spielberger referred to a graph showing service use, with an increase in mothers getting services for children's language and speech and child care subsidies, although less than 40% of the children were in child care in the fifth year of the study, and 20% were getting help with language and speech problems.

Dr. Spielberger stated that maternal functioning, a contributing factor to children's development, health and school readiness, was pinpointed back to how well a mother was doing soon after the birth of her baby. She stated that in the study, Black, foreign-born mothers were much more likely to have depressive symptoms soon after birth and was statistically significant. She stated that mothers who lived below the poverty level were functioning less well than other mothers, and were engaged in less positive parenting practices.

Dr. Spielberger stated that children developed fairly normally, although the Hispanic foreign-born mothers were less likely to say their children were achieving high levels of development compared to other mothers. She stated that by comparing a mother's assessment to a teacher's assessment (of the same children), the teacher did not report a lower level of development, so it was attributed to the mother's perception and their ability to assess their children.

Dr. Spielberger stated that 96% of children in the study were eligible for the free and reduced lunch program compared to 57% of children in the county.

Dr. Spielberger stated that the FAIR assessment which showed a child's probability to be a successful reader in Elementary school showed that 65% of children in the county (screened by teachers) were assessed positively, compared to 38% of children in the study. She stated that it could be attributed to poverty or language differences of the study children, in addition to other factors.

Dr. Spielberger stated that children whose parents were involved in more positive parenting practices in year one of the study were more successful in school. She stated that children cared for at home the year before Kindergarten did not fare as well in school readiness assessments as those children in quality child care settings. She stated that mothers who were unemployed with low poverty levels were less likely to have children ready for school. She stated that Black foreign-born mothers did much better than Hispanic foreign-born mothers in school readiness. She stated that they were continuing to explore the reasons behind this because they did not know the whole story.

Dr. Spielberger stated that the main conclusion was that parenting mattered and that early intervention was a key factor. She stated that good birth outcomes, access to high quality early childhood programs, and positive home settings with practices supporting children's literacy were important for children's school readiness.

Dr. Spielberger stated that in conducting the study it had been very difficult to measure true service use, and that the new data system would help to alleviate this roadblock. She stated that they had relied often on a mother's own recollection, and so the information regarding the length of service use, or the full range of services may not be as informative as it could have been.

Dr. Spielberger stated that the outcomes of the study showed that the service system not only identified mothers who had needs, but was focused on the critical areas where research showed was most important: improving parenting skills by home visiting, access for more children to high

quality early care and education, and improving the quality of care – all of these factors were critical to improving a child’s school readiness and thus school outcomes.

Dr. Spielberger stated that findings showed that children who were involved in high quality early childhood programs (Quality Counts) were more likely to do better in school, and parents who interacted in positive ways with their children from the beginning were more likely to have children ready for school. She stated that one recommendation was to have screening for maternal depression and mental health issues early on, and to continue to screen maternal health throughout the preschool years, perhaps involving pediatricians, medical providers, as well as child care providers, making them more knowledgeable about the mental health of parents. She stated another recommendation was to improve the data system (this recommendation was nearing fruition.) She stated that a further recommendation was to continue to follow the children after then entered Kindergarten, because what they would experience after entering school would make a difference for long-term success.

Lance Till, Program Officer stated that the Research Division had been able to use the information provided by the study to restructure some services offered, in addition to expanding some services in maternal child health early childhood development and education services. He stated that with regard to increasing low income children’s access to high quality early childhood learning programs they had been able to increase the number of quality child care sites, with more than 180 child care facilities participating. He stated that over 90% of those facilities were at a rating of 3 stars or higher. He stated that the Continue to Care program was a way to link children in the Healthy Beginnings system to quality child care.

Mr. Till stated that they had been able to link evidence-based or promising programs in to the system; as Healthy Beginnings had been restructured they had introduced the Triple P program (Positive Parenting Program) – the study had shown that parenting was of major importance in the early childhood years. He stated that another means by which the recommendations of the study were being implemented was the Parent Child Home program which focused on emerging language and literacy skills with families who were not using child care. He stated that a program with the agency The Arc entitled First Steps to Success addressed the needs of children who were not scoring low enough to be eligible for services with Child Find or Early Steps, but did have a developmental concern.

Mr. Till stated that they had been working on their screening and assessments, and that there were two different screens that could be used to identify depression in both the perinatal period, in addition to any period by identifying parenting stress. He stated that other programs that had been implemented around birth outcomes were the Nurse Family Partnership program, and the Centering Pregnancy program which had helped to reduce pre-term birth. He stated that they had implemented the Community Voice program in West Palm Beach, Riviera Beach, Delray Beach and the Glades which helped get the community involved by helping them understand many of the different factors that could impact births.

Mr. Till stated that the data systems had been redesigned to ensure that they could get the data that was needed to help them progress, and show that they were meeting the outcomes that they were striving towards.

Frank Barbieri asked what kind of interaction they had with the elementary schools when the child started school, for them to be able to pass on the information they had about the children in the study. Mr. Till stated that they had two programs: School and Family Support Services, in addition to the Primary Project. He stated that they operated in over 60 different elementary schools throughout Palm Beach County, and helped to address the needs of children who had been screened using the F82 which identified children with behavioral concerns.

Tana Ebbole stated that they were working through Quality Counts in the transition from early care and education settings to the schools themselves. She stated that they were working on how to communicate from the child care center to the Kindergarten the child's dynamics, so that the schools had that continuity. She stated that at the present time it was not a smooth transition of information, but they were currently working on its improvement. Mr. Barbieri asked what could be done from the side of the school system to help. Ms. Ebbole stated that it was a matter of structuring formal arrangements between elementary schools and relative child care centers and parents, and CSC, school district, and Early Learning Coalition staff were working on it. She stated that in time they would bring specific recommendations how to better address it. She stated that they enjoyed a remarkable relationship with the school district.

Ms. Ebbole thanked Dr. Spielberger and Chapin Hall in their eight year relationship and for providing remarkable information that had significantly impacted and changed how CSC worked.

**E. Presentations: - N/A**

**4. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.