

**Special Services Advisory Committee Meeting
Waukesha County DHHS – Brookfield Room
August 6, 2009**

Members Present: Jennifer Adler, Don Daniels, Dennis Farrell, Nichole Hunkins, Missy Kueht-Becker, Jesus Mireles, Teri O'Grady, Bonnie Siegel and Julie Turkoske

Members Absent: Eve Altizer, Deb DeMaster, Kathy Evans, Sharon Fliess, Mary Jo Foye, Barbara Fredricks, Sheryl Gerstl, Patrick Jauquet, Mary Ann Jensen, Mary Beth Jezo-Sywoulka, Pam Kliner, Stephanie Mauck, Trisha Nepper, Sherry Perez, Ken and Julie Perkins, Ann Shurte, Lora J. Sullivan, Cheri Sylla, and Kate Wallenslager

Meeting began at 1:05 p.m.

Agenda item #1: Introductions

Members introduced themselves and stated where they were from, and whether they were a parent or a professional. Jennifer Adler was introduced as the new Family Support Program (FSP) worker, who was hired to fill the vacancy created when Lori Johnston moved out of State.

Agenda item #2: Approval of Minutes – April 23, 2009

Those in attendance spent a few minutes discussing the minutes from the 4/23/09 meeting. Because there was not a quorum of members present, the formal approval of these minutes was held over to the next meeting.

Agenda item #3: Nomination/Election of new chairperson

Julie Turkoske nominated Teri O'Grady to become the new co-chairperson. Dennis Farrell seconded that nomination. Because of the lack of quorum in attendance at this meeting, a vote was not taken at this meeting. Julie suggested that this issue be put to an electronic vote, so that a decision could be made in this regard. Don Daniels agreed to send that question to all group members for such a vote.

Agenda item #4: Education Segment (What is FSP?/How does it work?)

Don passed out written information that described the Family Support Program, the Children's Long Term Support Waiver and the United Cerebral Palsy respite programs. The group decided there were not enough parents/members present to make this a worthwhile topic at this meeting. Dennis states that people who know nothing about the waiver are not going to be able to understand just by reading this written material. In a brief review of the material, the group suggested that some modifications be made to offer better clarity to the information. Don agreed to revise the written material for the next meeting when there are (hopefully) more parents and members in attendance.

The suggestion was made that the notice of the next meeting include a specific mention that such an educational segment would be presented at that time. It was further suggested that an RSVP be requested, so that we could better anticipate attendance. Finally, mention was made of requesting specific questions in advance as to what members would like to see addressed in the educational component.

Julie brought a spreadsheet that she had created in reference to the parental payment limit (PPL). She hoped this would provide better clarity to families than the one they have been receiving. Julie agreed to send this information to Don electronically. Don will include it in the information that is sent to absent members.

Agenda item #5: Birth-to-Three (Jesus Mireles, Missy Kueht-Becker)

The Birth-to-Three program is again having financial problems. A major reason for this is the increase in the amount of insurance deductibles and co pays. The B-3 program is required to absorb those costs and cannot begin to bill insurance companies until those expense thresholds have been reached. That has resulted in far fewer dollars of revenue coming from the insurance industry. The B-3 program raised about \$10,000 with fundraisers and cost sharing, however they are still working on budgeting to figure out how to provide the services that are needed within the amount of money they do have. It is likely that “stimulus money” will be made available for Birth-to-Three. At this point, the amount is uncertain and its use is still in the planning stages.

The group discussed the State’s proposal of creating a B-3 waiver. Many issues remain unresolved in that regard, however. The functional screen is not sensitive enough to be accurate for very young children. Rather, it requires that a child be older so that their functional deficits are more apparent. The hope remains that a B-3 waiver could benefit children in that program and relieve some of the financial problems that program is experiencing.

Julie stated that she has heard that some other counties discourage families with children under the age of three from even applying for FSP funding because their children will likely not be determined eligible per the functional screen. Nichole agreed that she has heard of this in other counties, as well. Jesse and Don stated that Waukesha county does not do this, although Don did agree that younger children are less likely to be found eligible because of the functional screen-sensitivity issues mentioned above. If a child was found ineligible, the family would be encouraged to apply again in the future, so that a subsequent functional screen could be completed when the child’s deficits became more apparent. Missy stated that families could still benefit from the referral/assessment process, even if their child is found to be ineligible, because they are being connected with resources and becoming more familiar with the system.

Agenda item #6: Client Satisfaction Survey

Discussion on this agenda item had been put off at each of the last two advisory committee meetings. Don began the discussion by reminding the group where the discussion was left – i.e. that the question was raised whether there was benefit in creating a single survey that could be used for the various programs. As things are now, each separate program sends its own survey to parents.

Missy stated that the return rate for B-3 is low, with only about 12 of 800 surveys being returned. Nichole stated her agency’s return rate is very good. She mentioned that they utilize online surveys and offer an incentive to families who return surveys. Jesse pointed out that online surveys leave out families with no access to a computer. Don mentioned that the waiver also gets a good return rate without offering an incentive for completion of the survey. He stated that he makes personal contact with every responder who expresses concerns about the way the program is being managed.

The final decision was to leave the surveys the way they are. It was the group's opinion that, to be useful to the individual programs, the survey would have to be too large if combined into one. Having them all online is not practical for families who do not own computers.

Agenda item #7: Resource Fair

At the last meeting, Don suggested this as an agenda item. That suggestion arose out of the group's desire to provide more education to families who have a child with a disability. Don stated that the county had done something similar to this when the waiver was new. Providers were invited to make a brief presentation about the services they provide, and families were able to talk with them after the presentation to gain additional information.

Missy questioned whether we could link up with resource fairs that already existed in the community, rather than creating our own. The Pro Health and La Casa fairs are two with which the group had familiarity. Without such a linkage, the project of creating a comprehensive resource fair took on planning dimensions that made it a workload issue that would be problematic.

Don stated that the group discussion went beyond what he had envisioned. He brought the discussion back to the possibility of hosting a smaller resource-education meeting, where we put families and providers in contact with one another. Dennis suggested limiting it to a respite/recreation fair for the families. Julie referenced another fair where each provider was able to do a 10 minute presentation and after the presentation the families were allowed to go and talk to the providers they were interested in.

Don suggested that a subcommittee be formed to move this initiative along. Julie stated her own interest in participating, and suggested that Cheri Sylla might be willing to join her. Julie agreed to ask Cheri about that. Don offered the assistance of a new county student, who will begin a field placement in his unit. He also stated a willingness to be part of the subcommittee. The group agreed that a subcommittee is a good idea.

Agenda item #8: Development of agenda for next meeting, scheduled for Oct 22, 2009 – Brookfield Room, 1:00 – 2:30

The following suggestions were made:

- 25-30 minutes on education piece.
- Have people RSVP to next meeting
- Send out letter letting members know what is being addressed so they are aware this will be the topic of discussion.
- Discuss further the subcommittee for fair
- Approval of minutes from 4/23 and 8/6

Dennis moved to adjourn the meeting. Teri seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 2:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Adler, CSW
Children with Special Needs Unit