

**Audubon Area Community Services, Inc.**  
**Child and Family Committee**

***MINUTES***

January 9, 2008

Daisy James called the January 9, 2008 meeting of the AACCS, Inc. Child and Family Committee to order at 12:00 p.m. A quorum was established with the following members present.

***Members Present:***

Ms. Janie Drury  
Ms. Daisy James

Mr. Jerry Manning  
Ms. Jeanette Manning  
Dr. Sandra Obilade

Ms. Vicki Tinsley  
Ms. Anna Winkler

***Staff Present:***

Mr. Terry Payne, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr. Aubrey Nehring, Head Start Director  
Ms. Carrie Blackham, Child Care Assistance Program/R&R/Kentucky Works Program Director  
Ms. Amy Rafferty, Executive Assistant Administrative

***General and Program Reports***

***Financial Report.*** Mr. Payne distributed the updated budget summary sheets for the Head Start and Child Care/Kentucky Works and related programs. He explained that for each program, he wrote in the year-end date and the percentage of the year that had passed. This percentage may be compared to the “percentage used” column in the actual report to determine if the programs are on target with their budgets for the year thus far. Ms. James commented that she really liked this format, and the other members agreed. She remarked that it is very straight forward and easy to compare, and that the information is exactly what grantors look at, so the committee is staying well informed of the financial state of the agency.

***NEW BUSINESS & COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT***

***Departmental Strategic Plan Updates.*** The Committee members have received a copy of the agency’s four goals for the Board-approved 2008 Strategic Work Plan. Ms. Blackham explained that each department is preparing a plan for helping the agency meet these goals and that Mr. Logsdon has asked the Senior Staff to present them to the committees. She and Mr. Nehring are working on meeting with all of their staff and preparing the departmental goals for presentation, and she said that the plan will be sent to members once this department-specific information is complete.

***Child Care Assistance Program.***

***Kentucky Works Program (KWP) Updates.*** Ms. Blackham provided the members with two marketing brochures, one for the KWP Wage Subsidy Program and one for the Work Experience Program. She explained that the Wage Subsidy Program is just getting started and is a component of KWP in which the program pays 75% of the client’s salary for four months and 50% for the remaining two, which is all explained in the brochure. Mr. Manning asked what the qualifications are to participate in the program, and Ms. Blackham explained that the clients are classified as low-income and are participants in KTAP, which is where the referrals come from. As for employers, any interested may participate.

Next, Mrs. Blackham talked about the Work Experience Program and its brochure. She explained that participants do community service at any non-profit organization, which is a six-month unpaid placement to help the client transition to the Wage Subsidy Program. From there, if the client is qualified, the employer is expected to hire them. Ms. Drury asked if these jobs were legitimate jobs that would allow the clients to provide quality of life for themselves and their families. Ms. Blackham answered that it depends on the job and explained that clients are provided with a range of placements to choose from. Many are interested in the field of child care, which is notorious for low-wage jobs, but she explained that

if that is where the client's interest lies, then that's where they will be placed. Ms. Drury then remarked that the unemployment rate had recently gone down and asked if that has affected the applicants, and Ms. Blackham said they haven't really seen any changes. Ms. James asked if the clients working in child care centers can earn credentials while in the program, and Ms. Blackham said that they certainly can earn their Associate's Degree or other certificates while working in a child care center and explained that there are scholarships available and ongoing training is provided.

Ms. Blackham distributed the 7-county Green River Area Development District report and informed the members that it represented the numbers from August through December 2007. During this time period, the KWP program had 390 referrals of which 81 now have unsubsidized employment, which is a very positive number. She explained that these people are now close to the end of their six-month benefits, but we will keep in contact with them over the next year and help them with any issues that they may have.

***Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Updates.*** Ms. Blackham distributed last quarter's (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007) report and informed the Committee that it represents all 34 counties that the program serves. She said that if anyone had questions about their particular counties, she would be happy to answer them, and she pointed out that the CCAP program served 8,875 children and paid out about \$5.8 million on their behalf in just the last calendar quarter.

***Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Update.*** Ms. Blackham informed the committee that the program has a new website (<http://ccrr.audubon-area.com>) and briefly walked them through all of its features. One of the features she emphasized was that anyone can search for child care themselves through the website. The members expressed support for the website and seemed pleased with its content.

***Butterfly Program.*** Ms. Blackham told the Committee about a new program, the Butterfly Program, that has started in Christian County. She explained that the staff are working with child care providers to handle the exchange of children between parents for visitation for families involved in domestic violence. The child care providers they are working with have actually gone through training with the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association to handle any potential issues and work with the family court system in Christian County. The family court judge makes referrals to them, and they make the arrangements with the participating child care providers so that the parents don't actually see each other and the children don't have to go to the police station in order to visit their other parent.

It is currently an *unfunded* program, but the staff are hoping to find monies and expand the program. Ms. James asked if the "Bonnie Bill" has had an impact on the program. Ms. Blackham said that there is a possibility that it might have some impact, but as far as grant opportunities are concerned, she hasn't really seen anything yet. She speculated that as time goes on, they probably will see some changes. Ms. James explained that the "Bonnie Bill" came about after a Henderson social worker that was responsible for visitation arrangements with non-custodial parents was killed in a hazardous situation. Ms. Blackham stated that as soon as Daviess County establishes a family court system, she hopes to be able to expand the program to that county as well.

***Early Childhood Training Calendar.*** Ms. Blackham distributed the January-March 2008 *Early Childhood Training Calendar* and pointed out a few specific things included in this issue.

### ***Head Start/Early Head Start Program***

***2008 Self-Assessment Training.*** Mr. Nehring informed the Committee about the self-assessment training and encouraged the members to participate if possible. They will receive more details on the January 23, 2008 training in Madisonville in the mail shortly. He pointed out that they don't have to attend the training to participate, but that it would be a good opportunity to learn the Head Start program in detail.

***Proposal for Reggio Emilia Training.*** Mr. Nehring distributed a handout describing the proposal and gave the Committee a brief overview of what Reggio Emilia is. He explained that we currently have both infant/toddler and preschool classrooms in Henderson and Union Counties that are using the Reggio Emilia approach. Reggio Emilia is a town in Italy known for having developed a very integrated early

childhood program that is extremely unique and different from any other approach. He explained that the children actually plan their own learning experiences and that teachers are actually more like facilitators.

There aren't many Head Start programs in the country that use the Reggio Emilia approach because it tends to be prevalent in more affluent, upper-class programs due to the costs. However, Reggio Emilia is becoming more concerned that low-income children have the opportunity to participate, so they are sponsoring a workshop in Italy that they are inviting Head Start and other child care programs across the nation to attend. Mr. Nehring stated that we already know of a couple other Head Start programs that are sending some staff to that training so that they can come back and train others in the state. He explained that we don't have the money to send staff ourselves, but that the Regional Office does fund some one-time supplements. AACCS plans to request to send seven staff, which will cost about \$29,246 total. We have no guarantee that it will be approved, but we are hopeful, he said.

Mr. Nehring explained that Policy Council approval is needed for the Board to submit the proposal. He asked the Committee for its approval to submit the proposal to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Regional Office. Ms. Drury asked what we hope to gain for the children from requesting this money, and Mr. Nehring explained that we are requesting training dollars so that staff will see where the program originated and possess a much more in-depth knowledge of how to appropriately implement the program and provide the best experience for the children.

Ms. Blackham said that this would be a great opportunity for child care providers as well, and she said that the Child Care Resource and Referral program would collaborate with the Head Start program in providing training through the staff who travel to Italy. Mr. Manning inquired if the agency would be out any money. Mr. Nehring answered that no Head Start dollars would be extended to this because we are requesting money through the Regional Office as well as from banks or other sources. Ms. James commented that we have an excellent program and are always on the cutting edge with the opportunities that we are providing for our children and families. Ms. Manning asked when Union County started using the Reggio Emilia approach, and Mr. Nehring answered that the program was in its second year there.

*Mr. Manning made a motion to approve the Reggio Emilia Italy workshop travel proposal to the ACF Regional Office. Ms. Tinsley seconded the motion; motion carried.*

**Proposal for Reduction in Head Start Preschool Enrollment.** Mr. Nehring distributed a handout describing another proposal for the Committee's approval. He expressed his reluctance in bringing this proposal before them but said he feels that it is a very necessary action to take at this point in time. Mr. Nehring talked about the minimal additional funding AACCS has gotten over the past few years, especially when compared to how much costs have increased and continue to do so. He mentioned the number of cuts that have had to be made in the program over the past several years to be able to accommodate and balance the program's budget needs and stated that he doesn't anticipate any additional increases for at least the next couple of years. He explained that once a program has exhausted all other options, which this program has done, then the only option left is to decrease the number of children being served but stay at the same funding level.

Through the reduction in cost of serving those children, the program then uses those dollars to offset and increase the quality of the program. Mr. Nehring pointed out that Audubon's funding level per child is actually 20% less than the national average, and he also explained how underpaid his staff is when looked at with comparable agencies. He then called the Committee's attention to the cuts that AACCS Head Start has already had to make in the past to offset the serious under-funding, including cutting funding to the full-day programs. Since 2003, 180 full-time slots have been converted to part-day slots, which can no longer be done because that is an option that AACCS parents need.

Therefore, the proposal is to reduce close to 200+ part-day slots, and Mr. Nehring explained to the committee how these funds would be dispersed. Mr. Manning asked what is going to happen to these children. Mr. Nehring explained that the school district is required to serve Head Start eligible 4-year-olds, so there won't be any of them that won't be served. AACCS Head Start will have to reduce some 3-year-olds, and the state only requires that children in this age group with disabilities, not low-income, be served, so there will be some 3-year-olds who won't have resources available.

Mr. Nehring then pointed out to the Committee that this is just a proposal at this point in time, and that Washington, D.C. must approve it before any action can be taken at all, which means that if they don't think there is sufficient reason to reduce the enrollment, it won't happen. He also mentioned that it is a one-time action and that a program can't reduce the enrollment in small increments, so that is why the proposed number is so large. He also informed the Committee that he knows of several other programs in our region and the nation that have already done this and been approved. He reiterated that he is only asking for the Committee's approval to submit the proposal and not to actually do any of this because Washington, D.C. has the only authority on the action taken.

Ms. Drury asked if the staff are complaining about their wages, and Mr. Nehring answered that they are and explained why and how it is affecting the morale in the agency. Mr. Manning inquired if this will be a monitored process and if there is a possibility that we could get back to where we are now. Mr. Nehring replied that we could add slots if funds are made available in the future.

*Mr. Manning made a motion to approve the proposal. Ms. Obilade seconded the motion. There was one member opposed; motion carried.*

**Head Start Reauthorization Update.** Mr. Nehring reviewed a handout showing an overview of the 2007 Reauthorization and told the Committee there would be more information later. He said there will be trainings held at a later date.

**Proposed Personnel Policy Revision – Section:13.7, Child Development Credentials for Head Start Teachers.** Mr. Nehring went over a the agency policy relating to staff teaching credentials and reviewed the proposed changes, including two major revisions needed to position the AACS program to be in compliance with new, more stringent credentialing requirements in the 2007 Reauthorization of head Start.

*Mr. Manning made a motion to recommend Board approval of the proposed revisions to Section 13.7, “Child Development Credentials for Head Start Teachers,” of the agency’s Personnel manual. Dr. Obilade seconded the motion; motion carried.*

## **COMMITTEE CONCERNS**

**Anna Winkler – Indoor Playground.** A handout describing the “indoor playground” concept was given to all of the Committee members, and Ms. Winkler presented her idea for the indoor playground. A packet was also distributed showing some of the equipment she thought would be beneficial to include, and she asked for the members’ opinions. Ms. James said that it is an excellent idea that needs more development. Ms. Tinsley suggested that a preliminary budget would also help.

## **FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES**

March 12, 2008

May 14, 2008

July 9, 2008

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business...

*The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.*

Daisy James  
Committee Chair