

**Minutes**  
**Home Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**April 28, 2009**

**Members Present:** Noel Hanson, Chairperson/President; Debbie Sampson, Bureau; Melanie Brizzi, Bureau (Intermittently Present); Tamela Hunt; Monica Boyer; Jennifer Delucio; Bill Powell; Bev Lozier; Karen Burnside-Strack, new member; Tammy Dunn, new member; Jaime Jones, new member; Amy Baker, new member

Guest: D'arcy Maher, Association of Christian Schools International

Guest: Jennifer Whiteford, Association of Christian Schools International

Guest: Melissa Chalman, Indiana Association Childcare Resource and Referral

**Absent:**

Ranee Armstrong; Diana Skomp; Heather Colglazier

**Approval of Minutes:** Approval of minutes from January 28, 2009 meeting approved and posted online.

**Past Business:**

It was discussed at the previous meeting that Melanie would seek new members to represent those areas of the state not represented on the Home Advisory Committee. This effort was successful and the four new representatives were welcomed. Each new member provided a brief introduction of herself to the committee. Debbie pointed out that all areas of the state are now represented on the committee and that, going forward, efforts would be made to recruit one additional committee representative for each area, for a total of two per area.

**FSSA Business/Legislative Concerns:**

- Amy asked about the proposed new legislation that was presented around the state about two years ago. Debbie responded that said regs were still moving through the various legislative bodies and that their progress was impeded by the elections, financial-impact studies, and other bureaucratic procedures and practices and have, therefore, moved forward at a very slow pace. Debbie further stated that there would be more public hearings with providers prior to any new legislation being approved, that providers' input would be documented by a court reporter, that no responses would be provided at said public hearings by bureau reps, and that provider input would be seen by the state prior to any legislative action. When asked if a new interpretation guide would be issued for new legislation, Debbie responded that there would be new guides and further stated that home providers would be notified *immediately* of any new legislation and would be given a full year to comply with same.

- Amy expressed her concern that she had only one day's notice on a new childcare home regulation, which short notice prevented her from being able to notify her families of the policy change or to incorporate the policy change into her parent handbook. Debbie responded by emphasizing the one-year time period allowed by the state for providers to comply with new interpretations and clarifications. Amy asked if the consultants are aware of this grace period. Debbie responded affirmatively and added that all consultants also know to not do a write-up on providers during this grace period.

Jennifer expressed concerns from providers in her area that they could be written up for being non-compliant to regs they just learned about. Again, Debbie emphasized the one-year time frame for compliance and the fact that consultants will not do write-ups during visits or inspections until that grace period has passed. As an example, Jennifer discussed the challenges presented to providers and parents

by the regulation that requires an adult to be physically present to receive a child the age of first grade or under from a school bus – that the bus driver must see the adult present at the point of drop off -- and to escort that child to the door of the childcare home. Amy stated that she is unable to leave her childcare home to go to the bus stop/drop-off location. Bev interjected that she cannot imagine any state regulation that cannot be met by providers within a generous one-year time frame. She also responded to Jennifer's concern about not being able to be present at the bus stop according to state reg., expressing the opinion that meeting this requirement should be the responsibility of the parent, and that the child's safety should not be jeopardized just because the adults involved in his/her care have difficulty being present. Bev went on to give the example that a child could be hurt or kidnapped while walking from a distant drop-off point/bus stop to the childcare provider's door and stated that, in her opinion, the regulation should be met regardless of the inconvenience and challenges faced by the adults involved – that the safety of the child should be primary to all other concerns and inconveniences. Tammy suggested that the parent or childcare provider of a child whose parent or provider is unable to leave the childcare home to meet the bus at the bus stop should speak to the transportation department of their school district to see if they could adjust the drop-off point, since she was successful in gaining the cooperation of her school district. Amy responded that her attempt to do so was unsuccessful (i.e., varies by school district). Amy went on to ask, if her childcare contract states that she will not meet children at the bus stop and escort them to her childcare home, and her parents sign this contract indicating their acceptance of this policy, how would this fall under the new interpretation of the regulation. Debbie responded that the provider would not meet this regulatory requirement if the child is not supervised in transit from the bus stop to the provider's childcare home, regardless of the contract. Debbie further suggested that the children's parents attempt to gain the school transportation's assistance in moving the drop-off closer to the childcare home.

- Amy expressed that she and other providers in her area were never notified of the regulations on water temperature. Debbie responded that checking providers' water temp was not a new regulation, only that consultants were given a tool for use in checking the temperature. Thermometers were given to consultants several years ago so that they didn't have to guess whether the temperature was too hot or not. Others present at this meeting interjected that their water temp has always been tested.

- Amy commented that she believes that the post cards sent out by FSSA announcing new regs should emphasize that we have a year to comply. It was stated that this information is, in fact, on these post cards.

### **New Business:**

- Suggestion to hold combined-committee meeting (home, centers, ministries). Noel introduced discussion regarding a previous proposal that has been made to hold a meeting of combined committees, including home advisory, ministries and centers to determine if we might share any common ground, common concerns or common challenges. Monica responded with the warning that we be cautious of committees or individuals who may use such a joint meeting to seek "uniform codes" which could disregard the differing needs of each type of provider (home vs ministry vs center). She stated that this seems to happen with legislators who tend to want to merge the various types of providers into one group and legislate as if we are all the same type of service with the same needs. Melanie stated that this same concern was expressed at a center's board meeting and, while she's not sure this type of meeting would work, and doubts have been expressed by various members of each committee, she would like to meet at least once to see if there might be commonalities and benefits. Monica re-stated her concerns and expressed that she is somewhat fearful of the potentially-negative outcomes of such a meeting. Bev commented that she thinks it's worth the effort to meet at least once to determine if there are benefits to cross discussions among the various types of providers and that there should be no fear of meeting with any group of individuals to determine if it's a worthy use of our time or of any benefit. Melanie stated that she will continue to pursue this idea and will advise us of a specific date and time for such a

meeting should one be set up and that it may or may not happen. She also emphasized that today's discussion was just an introduction of the concept of a joint-committee meeting and that the sole purpose of such a meeting would be to determine if we do share any common ground (e.g., insurance, parenting issues, staff salaries, child interest). Debbie suggested that each of us give some thought to any topics or issues that may be of interest to all types of providers (i.e., homes, centers and ministries).

- One of the new committee members asked for a brief history of our home advisory committee and was referred to the childcarefinder website for such information, as well as to see past meeting agendas and minutes.
- Another committee representative asked if swing-gates are approved exits. Debbie responded that they are approved exits, but that said gates cannot be locked to cause exits to be blocked.
- Karen wanted to know, specifically, which areas of the state (cities and counties) she represents to our committee. We, therefore, discussed how to contact those we represent and Debbie offered to send out the e-mail list of the providers for each area to anyone who is interested so that each of us may make contact if we so choose. Noel further suggested that we be cautious in giving advice to other providers and to be prepared to get calls asking for our advice – from people expecting us to “know it all.” She recommended that we not hesitate to refer them to licensing or others who have expertise in certain areas of interest to providers.
- Guests D’arcy Maher and Jennifer Whiteford of the Association of Christian Schools International spoke briefly about their reason for joining today’s meeting, which is that they had received inquiries as to the possibility of their organization being one source of accreditation for home providers as they are for ministries. D’arcy gave a brief history of how they came to become involved with home providers, which was that, in the Summer of 2007, a family home provider contacted them to ask if their accreditation instrument could be applied to a “family group home” (not residential home childcare providers). Since then, their accreditation documents have been approved by state of Indiana for “home-care situations” (not home childcare providers). They were asked if they were interested in creating an accreditation process for home childcare providers and subsequently learned that there are over 3,700 home childcare providers in Indiana. As a result, they are giving some consideration and attention to the possibility of partnering with the state to service family home providers. D’arcy stated that their agency participated in today’s meeting in order to learn more about whether this is an option they would want to consider further. She also stated that her agency shares our committee’s value of high-quality child care and said they will do more research relative to working with our group of providers but that, currently, their best fit is for faith-based providers. She then asked our members if any had an interest in faith-based services. Monica and Karen said they operate faith-based programs and would welcome said support. Tamela stated her concern that, because she has multiple home daycare sites, she would be required to pay multiple fees and to have each site accredited versus being personally accredited, which requirement is too costly. D’arcy responded that they accredit what happens with the children at each site, rather than accrediting the person/provider and further stated that, possibly, if research should reveal enough interest in the State of Indiana for home-center accreditation, their agency may craft a (accreditation) tool to fit our needs. She then asked our members what percentage of Indiana’s home daycares have multiple sites, to which Debbie responded that she would have to check with the bureau’s “computer people” to obtain that information. D’arcy stated her understanding that their agency’s services would have to be affordable to providers, that their agency is familiar with working with multi sites, that they understood they would have to work with state guidelines, and that they understood the challenges of multi-sites. Our members were invited to e-mail D’arcy regarding this topic to [Jennifer\\_whiteford@acsi.org](mailto:Jennifer_whiteford@acsi.org) (underscore between first and last names). This discussion closed by Debbie telling D’arcy that she will provide our committee members’ e-mail addresses to her so she can send a summary of their association’s findings to us. D’arcy invited our

committee members to visit their website to learn more about their agency and their benefits while also cautioning that their benefits are not currently geared to our group.

**Paths To Quality:** This discussion opened with Tamela expressing her concerns re: obtaining memberships of a nationally recognized early childhood organization for each site (adding another \$70+ to each site) and the challenges to that, including changes in staff/leadership at a site and the costs and challenges associated with such a change. Jaime asked if IAEYC helps to fund accreditation of multiple sites. Noel responded that IAEYC accredits one site at a time, which means that accreditation of 11 sites would take 11 years. (!) The role of CDA renewals as pertains to PTQ was also discussed. Amy shared that she was “grandfathered in,” but chose, regardless, to obtain her CDA, which CDA expired in 2005. She was told she didn’t have to renew the CDA, but this contradicts the PTQ manual. Debbie stated that some took/are taking “non-formal CDA” programs versus those with college credits. Tammy said that, like Amy, she was grandfathered in but decided to get her CDA which also expired. She was told she would have to go thru the whole CDA program all over again, having two years from expiration date to complete the program, or to meet the educational requirements versus renewing the CDA. Nonetheless, according to the PTQ manual, in order to move up in levels in PTQ, providers are required to have their CDA or 12 hours in early-childhood educational credits. The issue of having to remain at each PTQ level for six months was also discussed – missing out on rewards due to this requirement. Several expressed that their concerns were more on the economy and struggling with enrollment/business survival than with PTQ. Amy asked if the state gives, or will give, any grant money for PTQ to childcare homes because she had heard that ministries have received state grants. Tamela responded that the state does have money for accreditation. Several expressed their support of the PTQ program. Others stated that they simply felt the various obstacles to PTQ should be discussed and made known. Noel pointed out that this is a topic that will probably not be finished in this discussion – that as more providers come on board, more concerns and questions will arise – that PTQ will be an ongoing issue.

**Future Meeting Topics:** Debbie welcomed suggestions for topics and guests for our next meeting. Monica proposed a need to address CCDF (voucher) concerns and the bureau’s lack of support to provider’s in dealing with parents who are uncooperative in using the voucher machines and in paying their co-payments. She would like the committee to brainstorm with BCC for possible policies where they could back the providers up. (Melanie re-enters meeting at this point.) While this topic has been put on the agenda for the July, 2009 meeting, a lengthy introductory discussion was held at this meeting, as well. One committee member stated that she would like to have more support from the state/bureau in such things as, possibly, limiting how many times a parent can switch childcare providers while on the voucher system. She stated that many parents who fall behind on their co-payments simply switch providers rather than catch up on their portion of the childcare fee, leaving providers unpaid and moving on to another provider. The suggestion was made, too, that the bureau should not continue to allow parents to get as far behind as 13 days on clock-ins and outs, since parents take advantage of that leniency and refuse to keep current. One committee rep/provider expressed her fear of requiring her parents/clients who receive CCDF vouchers to stay current on the clock ins and co-payments, because they might get angry and quit, which problem she believed could be remedied by the state/bureau being more restrictive in these areas. Bev commented that the state cannot and should not logically or reasonably be expected to enforce each provider’s individual policies, contracts or accounts receivables – that the state/bureau doesn’t have that duty or the manpower for same. Bev further commented that every provider has different payment and contract expectations and that she believes it to be the responsibility of each provider, rather than the state/bureau, to run his/her own business and to enforce his/her own rules and policies, including that of being paid co-pays by CCDF voucher clients or payments from any other parent/client, and to require timely clock-ins and outs – that fear of losing clients should not dictate policies or involve the state/bureau. Debbie stressed the importance of putting contracts between parents and providers in writing so as to be enforceable and agreed that the state/bureau cannot enforce individual provider’s policies or contracts.

Debbie stated that she will try to have a CCDF rep at our next meeting and suggested that our members present, via e-mail to her, Noel or Melanie, any concerns, questions or suggestions we may wish to have presented to the CCDF reps prior to our next meeting so the CCDF reps will have sufficient time to prepare their responses to us.

**[CCDF to be put on agenda for July, 2009 Home Advisory Committee meeting.]**

**Next Meeting:** July 28, 2009, 1:00 to 3:00, same location. Bill reminded the committee that all meetings are to be held on the last Tuesday of each month (i.e., July 28, 2009; October 27, 2009; January 26, 2010). Debbie reminded the committee that availability of the conference line is also a factor in scheduling the meetings, but that with such advanced planning, there should not be a problem in that regard.

Motion was made and meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

*Minutes taken by B. Lozier*