



## Screening & Assessment Committee

November 5, 2008

**Members Present:** Ms. Peggy Campbell, Ms. Marie Carlberg, Ms. Nancy Allison, Dr. Joanne Greata, Ms. Michele Rawls, and Cindy Winkle

**Staff Present:** Ms. Lesha Buchbinder and Ms. Laura Close

These minutes summarize the key issues of the Screening and Assessment Committee. They do not include all issues discussed. An audio tape recording of the meeting is available to all interested parties upon request.

Ms. Close opens the committee by welcoming Dr. Greata to the committee. Ms. Close stated first on the agenda was to approve the minutes for May 19, 2008. Ms. Allison asked for clarification on the notes about dollars spent on a request for VPK. Ms. Close shared that the question was raised during a conversation about quality dollars spent on ERS mini grants and that the funding comes from the School Readiness dollars. VPK could not be considered under the SR money. Ms. Allison motioned to approve and Ms. Rawls second the motion. No changes, no further discussion and the minutes were approved.

Ms. Campbell asked about the timeline on procuring vendor contracts. Ms. Close stated that the Coalition was currently looking at the process and hoped to have more information at the next meeting.

Ms. Close addressed the committee as to the agenda to be discussed. Ms. Close started with the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) and the training being provided. Ms. Close shared how the previous trainings occurred and the difference in the current training. The trainings are now broken down into the subscales to assist teachers in understanding what is expected for the ERS assessment and how it relates to standards as well as their curriculum. Ms. Close shared information from the two trainings that had already occurred. Ms. Close mentioned that Misty Leistikow from First United Methodist Church has offered her facility as a training site for future trainings. Ms. Allison shared that her staff brought back information about what had happened the night of the Personal Care Routines training. The teachers acknowledged they learned the importance of greeting each child and parent.

Ms. Buchbinder addresses the committee on the status of the Education Specialists' training since their arrival at the Coalition on July 1, 2008. The Education Specialists at this time had not received any formal training from the authors of the ERS at FPG in North Carolina. It was noted that Ms. Close had attended training in Orlando in June 2008 with the authors. A subsequent training held in July and August in Pinellas County provided training to 2 staff members as well as Ms. Close. Though Ms. Close had passed the testing for the training, the two staff members had not. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the challenge this poses is that the scores need to be valid if the School Readiness (SR) contract requires a minimum score to continue to qualify. Ms. Buchbinder wanted the committee to be aware of the challenges including the cost associated with the FPG trainings. The goal would be for all staff to be formally trained on at least one tool. Ms. Buchbinder made the committee aware of the status of training for staff and that Ms. Close is the only one at this time that would be able to complete assessments. This means that ERS assessments would not be complete for the year.

Ms. Winkle agrees that the staff would need to be formally trained in order to be assured that the scores are valid, this being the first time that the SR contract holds a provider accountable. Previous to this, the ERS scores were used to determine how to spend ERS mini grant dollars. Ms. Buchbinder agreed. Ms. Buchbinder restated the need for the formal training and assured the committee that it would happen.

Ms. Buchbinder moved on to the ERS scores of 4.5 or higher. The committee discussed that providers who scored a higher score would not necessarily be put on the schedule to be assessed. We would work with the providers who have scored lower than the 4.5 and provide technical assistance to achieve a higher score on the next assessment.

Ms. Buchbinder reviewed the process for the Intent to Contract for all providers including out of county. Ms. Buchbinder shared a situation involving a provider in Barberville which is in Volusia County but has parents wanting to send their children to that center from Lake County. Ms. Buchbinder described the situations for two families and how this center holding a Lake County contract benefits the children needing care.

Dr. Greata asked about the centers that scored a 4.5 or higher. The question was to whether or not they would be assessed each year. Ms. Buchbinder stated that the committee will be determining if a facility would have to be assessed again if they attained a higher score deemed by the committee. Ms. Close introduced the Provider Growth and Development Committee that was formed to work with providers in growing their business. Ms. Buchbinder described the tiered program that is being developed through that committee. The role that

this committee would take on would be to decide based on the validity of the ERS scores what the minimum score would be to be considered for the Provider Growth and Development.

Dr. Greata shared the importance of continued education for teachers and asked if there are dollars earmarked for this with PG&D. Ms. Buchbinder reviewed the Professional Development program that the Coalition carries for continued education. Dr. Greata shared the plans that she has for the courses she is developing at Lake Sumter Community College.

Ms. Close shares with the committee the importance of technical assistance on the ERS tool. Ms. Close stressed how it should be carried out. Ms. Winkle pointed out that not only that the technical assistance occurs but the documentation of the technical assistance with each provider. Training of staff will be a priority to assure reliable and consistent information is given to providers. Ms. Allison asked about technical assistance for low scoring providers. Ms. Buchbinder assured the committee that Ms. Close is overseeing all assessments by working with staff in scoring and completing assessments personally.

Ms. Buchbinder started the discussion about the FSAT assessment tool. A brief overview of how the tool was developed and how it became the tool that the committee as well as the board approved for the pre and post assessment of children was given. Ms. Buchbinder addressed the challenges the with the FSAT tool. The first challenge was that the providers did not fully understand how to implement or score the assessment. Though Ms. Carol Hoban stated to Coalition staff that CCCS had trained providers, the FSAT tool score sheets proved otherwise. The second challenge was the tool was to be presented as Level 1 for 3 year olds, Level 2 for 4 year olds and Level 3 for 5 year olds with domains separated by the colors. What was found is that skills for a 3 year old could actually be in the Level 3 section and skills for a 5 year old could be in the Level 1 section. This presented a concern with a teacher having to look through standards to determine the reason the 3 year old was not able to perform a skill which was meant to be a 5 year old skill. Ms. Buchbinder stated that she contacted professionals in the Education field as well as other Executive Directors for guidance. Ms. Buchbinder shared that she was warned about the validity to be norm referenced and what the results would say about a child. Ms. Hoban was questioned about her credentials to create such a tool. Ms. Allison expressed her concerns over the results for the child. There was no way to determine where to proceed for the child. It was more of a checklist of items not a true assessment.

Ms. Buchbinder questioned the committee as to where we should go from here. The state is asking for the Coalition to meet the requirement for pre and post assessment for children. Though the state is in a process of determining a statewide approved assessment tool, the Coalition

Ms. Winkle expressed her stand that she looks to the Coalition and other agencies to build her facility standards. But this tool is one standard that she did not adopt for her facility. This tool was not providing the information to assist children in their needs.

Ms. Campbell motioned that we do not continue to utilize this tool. The committee agreed. We have tried it and it did not give us the results we were hoping for.

The committee discussed ways to improve training, how to utilize the potential tool and how the Coalition would gather data from the providers with the assessment tool that the committee and Board approve. The committee determined that Ms. Close and Ms. Buchbinder were to determine the requirements from the state to guide the committee in making an informed decision on approving a new assessment tool. Ms. Close confirmed that an amendment will be made to the Coalition plan. Part of the plan would be to attain a random sample of children's assessments from providers who use an assessment tool.

The committee adjourned with the plan to meet once information was attained from the state.

Submitted by Laura Close, Quality Operations Manager