

Follow-up For Next Meeting:

- 1. Jean, Katy, and Nikki were to bring a tentative agenda and plan for the Director's Meeting that would be scheduled in early fall.**
- 2. We may want to follow-up with Marsha Moore on a tentative date for the Early Childhood Summit which would be held later in the fall.**
- 3. Stacey was going to compile research in relation to the economic impact of the early learning industry-as well as other relevant data that would help us to market the importance of early learning including the need at each age group, the capacity, and possible costs. This information would include long-term social costs resulting from inadequate quality early childhood.**
- 4. Jean was going to provide the group with the various funding sources that are currently available for early learning-both public and private.**

Early Childhood Implementation Team June 1 Minutes

Present: Bob Carson, Katy Arrowood, Nikki Baker, Don Bower, Ovita Thornton, Tabitha Green, Victoria Hawkins, Stacey Pritchett, Jean Gowen, Tim Johnson, Angie Moon deAvila, Jim Geiser

Tim opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and had introductions.

Tim gave an update on a couple of meetings that were held last week. He reported that a small group had visited with Marsha Moore who is the State Commissioner for the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. It was reported that there was some very positive discussions about possible ways that their department could help us in Athens to achieve the goals of our initiative. Ms. Moore agreed to be a keynote speaker for our Early Childhood Summit scheduled for the fall.

Tim also mentioned that a small group had visited with a representative from Burton and Burton. They have a program that helps pay up to \$5000 in child care costs for their employees. He mentioned that this benefit apparently has helped the company by increasing retention, decreasing absenteeism, and improving morale. They are able to take advantage of the child care tax credit.

It was mentioned that there are many ways for employers to help their employees with child care. Often employers are concerned that they would have to build a child care center on site. There are other ways they can provide this support such as vouchers.

The importance of involving employers continued to be emphasized. Jean mentioned that her office is going to go to Thornton Brothers and do an assessment of the child care needs of his employees. This service and this information will help us to determine the need and potential solutions. This program could also serve as a pilot program for accessing the particular child care needs of individual employers.

It was discussed that a Director's Meeting would be held in early fall to get the input and involvement of the providers, particularly the private providers. The focus of this meeting would include engaging these providers in the discussion of how to improve quality in relation to early care and learning. Another part of this meeting would focus on educating the providers on the role of OneAthens, and how OneAthens could help in developing a community-wide summit on early learning. Jean, Katy, and Nikki agreed to put together an agenda for this meeting.

Some programs/groups that may need to be included as this issue is discussed are Healthy Families, Babies Can't Wait, Informal care programs, Latino families, Church programs.

It was mentioned that there is a wide range of quality that currently exists in the early childhood industry in Athens. The possibility of developing mentoring programs for some of the lower quality programs was mentioned as well as developing incentives for providers to improve quality. It was mentioned that perhaps if a rating system was established that outside funding (public and private) could be provided to centers that have reached a certain standard for "subsidy slots".

It was mentioned that it was important for our team to understand various data on the child care needs including private and public child care capacities, as well as the economic impact of the child care industry in Athens and the long-term costs savings that quality early care could provide. Stacey agreed to work on this information.

Jean agreed to outline the various funding sources that help provide for child care.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 13 at 2:00 at the Chamber.