

**PARTNERS FOR A PROSPEROUS ATHENS
DEPENDENT CARE COMMITTEE
MARCH 27, 2006**

Following is a report of the Dependent Care Committee Meeting on March 27th. The discussion was led by Dr. Flora Tydings, President, Athens Technical College. After introductions by the group of approximately fifty attendees, Dr. Tydings explained the program and process for community involvement in the work of the Dependent Care Committee. It was mentioned that prior to March 27, the scope of work had focused exclusively on child care. However, the steering committee agreed the scope of work should to be expanded to include care of disabled and elderly citizens. Dr. Tydings emphasized that input from the local community is critical to the success of the project, and continued participation was encouraged. The meeting agenda was modified, and an open forum was used to facilitate uninhibited exchange of ideas.

Key Points Discussed by Participants

- Most quality child care centers have very long waiting lists
- Shift work makes finding child care extremely difficult because the hours change
- Large employers should consider providing daycare on premises
- Large employers should participate in future meetings to help find solutions, and parents should have a voice in the process
- Very little, if any child care is available in the evenings and on weekends
- There is no child care available for sick children. Daycare centers will not accept them, and workers who don't have sick leave may lose their jobs if they cannot make it to the workplace because they must care for sick children
- Many families who need child care cannot afford it even when it is available
- Parents must pay for child care from limited resources for children in foster care
- School age children also need child care and should not stay at home alone
- Parents of disabled children and children with behavioral problems have few options for child care
- There is a need for drop-in care centers
- More should be done to address the issues of teen pregnancy
- Education programs on awareness and prevention are needed for teens
- Parents with several children find it particularly difficult to afford child care
- Legislators should have an active role in future meetings to hear constituents' concerns and help provide solutions
- How do we get more people who are in poverty to participate in future meetings?
- The community must begin to be creative and think outside the box. **Examples:** Could Habitat for Humanity build a daycare center? Could high schools start an intern program in child care?
- Grandparents and older siblings providing child care need training and support
- DFACS has subsidies. However, some who are eligible do not receive the money because they don't know how to access the system