

## **DRAFT**

**There were several specific follow-up items from this meeting:**

- 1. Katy, Jean, Tabitha, Tim, and Bob are planning to get together to develop an agenda for a meeting this summer with the providers. The purpose of this meeting could include the issues that we have discussed including quality, employer involvement, etc.**
- 2. Part of that agenda would be to discuss a community-wide “summit” on early learning at which time we would invite businesses, politicians, providers, parents, community leaders, etc. to launch a comprehensive community effort to achieve universal high quality access for all children in Athens. This meeting would likely occur in September and Marcia Moore would be asked to speak at that meeting. Initial goals for this meeting could be developed by the committee.**
- 3. Jim would meet with Stacey to begin putting together the numbers and ideas for the marketing/education presentation.**

### **Early Childhood Implementation Team Agenda May 16, 2007**

**Present: Tim Johnson, Ovita Thornton, Jean Gowen, Bob Carson, Dr. Stacey Neuharth Pritchett, Nikki Baker, Tabitha Green, Katy Arrowood, Jim Geiser**

**INITIATIVE: Provide access to quality child care and other school readiness programs for all children age 0-5 by August 2010.**

Tim welcomed everyone to the meeting and since there were some new members, introductions were made. The minutes to the previous meeting were accepted.

It was mentioned that the ultimate goal of the initiative is to provide universal accessible and affordable early learning for all children in Athens. Some general brainstorming as to how to accomplish this followed:

- We need to know how many children do not have affordable high quality early learning.
- What is the cost?
- There is grant money for low income students. There is a lot of money that is not being accessed.
- We must improve the quality of programs and find incentives. Baby-sitting is not what we need.
- If the business community provided child care vouchers for parents to use in high quality centers—that could be an incentive. If your facility meets the standards you could qualify for parents to use these vouchers.
- CCRR cannot recommend facilities, but they can tell parents their level of quality if they are labeled.

- The Directors need to be brought together to discuss quality issues. Perhaps reconvene the Directors Roundtable.
- The Community needs to get behind this effort. There was discussion as to who should convene this meeting. CCRR? OneAthens? Both?
- There are two major groups that work on standards.
- It's important that UGA and employers are actively involved in this effort.
- It needs to be seen as more than an early childhood issue. It needs to be seen as an economic development issue.
- Perhaps we are talking about 2 events—one for the providers and a bigger meeting involving providers and the business community.
- Civic clubs could be a source for scholarships.
- The state is moving toward a quality rating system; 0-5 stars.
- There is a need for a paradigm shift among some providers as to the importance of quality.
- Develop a core group of providers to set the standard.
- Quality costs.
- Advocate for policy changes when necessary.
- The importance of educating parents about the importance of quality early learning was emphasized.
- The community at all levels needs to understand the importance of quality child care; staff of these centers also need to be trained; there must be buy-in by staff and administrators about the importance of quality.
- Let the marketplace decide. Poor centers need to close.
- Employers and other community leaders are much more aware about the importance of early childhood.

It was suggested that a Director's Meeting be convened in collaboration with OneAthens. The focus of the meeting could be on quality, incentives for quality and how to engage employers.

It was also suggested that a marketing plan be put together which would include:

1. **The numbers.** How many kids are we talking about? What are the costs to serve these children with quality care? What are the costs to employers for employees quitting or being absent as a result of child care issues? What are the costs to the community in regard to education, criminal justice, etc. as a result of students not having quality early learning? (Stacey indicated she had data on this.)
2. **The shift.** This marketing tool must clearly show the imperative importance of early childhood as it relates to the individual child as well its importance to the sustainability of our society.

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4. Katy, Jean, Tabitha, Tim, and Bob were going to get together to develop an agenda for a meeting this summer with the providers. The purpose of this meeting could include the issues that we have discussed including quality, employer involvement, and planning for the community meeting.

5. Part of that agenda would be to discuss a community-wide “summit” on early learning at which time we would invite businesses, politicians, providers, parents, community leaders, etc. to launch a comprehensive community effort to achieve universal high quality access for all children in Athens. This meeting would likely occur in September and Marcia Moore would be asked to speak at that meeting.
6. Jim would meet with Stacey to begin putting together the numbers and ideas for the marketing/education presentation.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 1 at the Chamber.