

NIH CHILD CARE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 13, 2003

Building 31 – Conference Room 6

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Corliss Taylor, Janet Austin, Susan Huntley, Valerie Hurt, Susan Koester, Juanita Mildenberg, Barbara Murphy, Kim Plascjak, Susan Reider, Mary Ellen Savarese, Wendy Thompson, Tim Tosten

Members Absent: Deborah Chew, Maureen Gormley, Qin Ryan

Liaisons in Attendance:

ChildKind, Inc.: Lee Ettman, Gerhard Hummer; POPI: Mary Haas; Tracy Rankin, Martina Vogel-Taylor; ECDC: Anne Schmitz, Beth Levy

Guests:

Lynn Hudson, Women Scientist Advisors (WSA) for Christiane Robbins; Rona Buchbinder, CC for Maureen Gormley; Savitha Sathyasheelappa, Intern for the NIH Work/Life Center

I. Welcome and Introductions: Corliss Taylor welcomed members and guests.

II. Approval of Minutes: Members voted upon and approved the minutes from the December 13, 2002 meeting.

III. Committee Reports:

- **NIH Parenting Festival** - Wendy Thompson shared with members the draft text that will be included in the publicity flyers. She has been working with the Medical Arts and Photography Branch (MAPB) in designing the flyer, posters and a large banner. Additional advertisements will include an article in the R&W newsletter, an announcement on the NIH Work/Life Center's website, NIH Parent LISTSERV, and a NIH-wide global e-mail. The event, titled the "NIH Parenting Festival" has been scheduled to take place on May 14, 2003 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Building 50. The following exhibitors have been confirmed to date:
 - NIH Work/Life Center
 - Worksite Enrichment Programs Branch
 - NIH Child Care Board
 - NIH Child Care Resource and Referral Service
 - NIH Child Care Programs (will have hands-on experiential tables with child development learning activities)
 - NIH Lactation Program
 - Two (2) Parenting Experts
 - Adoption & Foster Care
 - Employee Benefits Branch (will talk about the new dependent care pre-taxed set aside accounts)
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - NIH Federal Credit Union
 - Office of Science and Education
 - NIAMS

- NIDCD
- NLM
- NICHD
- NIMH

There will be lots of great give-a-ways, drawings and prizes. At the April meeting members will be able to see the final flyer design and will be asked to volunteer to assist at the event. Another activity Wendy has asked MAPB to take on is to design a logo for the Board. Samples of proposed logos were set up for members to review and provide comments.

- **Membership Committee:** Susan Reider has approached current members whose terms are soon ending and asked them to reapply. Any remaining vacancies will be advertised at the Parenting Festival and then through out the NIH community. She apprised members that in their Work/Action Plan for 2003, the Board was to have selected its new officers at their March meeting. With the Board soon to be appointing new members, Susan recommended that the Board modify its Work/Action Plan to move the election of new officers to either June or September. She suggested that the Board wait until they receive new applications to decide when the elections will occur. Susan also shared with members a draft position description for a voting member. The position description clearly outlines the Board's expectations and will be used as a recruitment tool. It is also an opportunity for people to really consider is this something that they can do and also be an active participant on the Board. The Board voted and approved the position description.
- **Child Care Subsidy Proposal:** Susan Koester provided members with a draft NIH Child Care Subsidy proposal to review. When the Board met in January, they had looked at several examples of other HHS and Government child care subsidy plans. This pilot program began in 2000 and became permanently authorized in 2002. Agencies are allow to obligate any portion of appropriate funds to assist parents with child care in the form of tuition vouchers that they can use at any licensed child care or family registered care provider. As it turns out, the NIH is the only major HHS agency that is not participating in this program. The committee would like to propose that the NIH participate in a 3-year pilot program starting in FY04. The program would be capped starting at \$25,000.00 in FY04, \$100,000.00 in FY05 and \$200,000.00 in FY 06. Employees with a total family income of up to \$65,000.00 would be eligible to apply for the child care subsidy. Participation in this program will allow the NIH to expand the support it is giving to families for access to child care, and eliminate the perception voiced in the 2001 Child Care Needs Assessment, that the NIH Child Care Programs are only available for higher grade/level employees. The Federal Employees Education Association (FEEA), an outside non-profit organization who manages several other HHS agencies' program, would manage the program. Other agencies have found that about 1/2% of their employees qualify and fill out the paperwork. Using the NIH census at approximately 18,000 employees, we would expect about 90 – 100 employees would qualify. Members briefly discussed the follow related topics:
 - Employees affected by A-76
 - The State of Maryland has cut its FY04 budget for their Purchase of Care Program for child care subsidies by 25 million dollars.
 - The Working Parents Assistance Programs' waiting list for child care will continue to grow as a result of this budget cut.
 - Polling attendees at the Parenting Festival of their interest in an NIH subsidy plan.
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The Board will continue to work on finalizing the proposal and include this recommendation in its Annual Report to the NIH Director. The next step will be to schedule a meeting to present the report to the Executive Officers during the summer to get their buy-in and support.

IV. Presentation – Child Care for Children with Special Needs: As part of its Work/Action Plan, the Board wanted to become more educated about child care issues. One of the subjects the Board had requested more information about was care for children with special needs. Mary Ellen Savarese shared with members a report from the Maryland Committee for Children Locate Child Care, a brochure from The Americans with Disabilities Act for child care ADA compliance, a copy of the Montgomery County demographics for 2003, and a copy of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network Child Care Demographics 2003. She also contacted people who are involved in special needs care locally and state-wide. Individuals she contacted included LifeWork Strategies, Inc., who provides our NIH child care resource and referral service; the local child care resource and referral center which receives calls from the general public looking for child care or having issues with child care, and they also provide the technical assistance to providers of child care; the Director of Locate which is the state-wide child care resource and referral system which supports the network that is in all of the counties in Maryland. Locate collects child care demographics each year and publishes its findings in January. In reviewing their findings for Montgomery County, the demand for child care remains high for infants. This verifies what NIH found to be true in our child care survey and the statistics on our current wait list. The reports also found that the primary demand for child care is because parents are working. There are an increasing number of people who are working part-time and are looking for part-time care. Another finding shows a decline in the number of family child care providers. In 1997, there were about 1,300 family child care providers in Montgomery County; Locate projects that by 2006, there will only be about 550. The report from the Maryland Committee for Children identified that there is serious issues (particularly in Montgomery County) related to language and culture in the caring for special needs children. There are a lot of family child care providers for whom family child care is an entry level job in this country. Many of these individuals might not have the language skills or other skills found within the private sector. Often times there is language issues in understanding what is meant by special needs or having the provider understand what the family needs are and be able to respond to those needs. Many cultures do not believe in having a provider care for their special needs child and will care for the child themselves or have a family member care for the child. Locate will conduct phone calls to providers to find care for special needs children and have become disheartened to hear center providers indicate that they do not provide such care. Statistics show that in Montgomery County, Locate has received many calls for special needs care because of the proximity of many medical facilities that care for special needs and medically fragile children. Statewide data from the past 12 years has shown a major increase in 1998 to present in child care services provided for children with social-emotional disorders. Another Statewide statistic showed the same increase in child care services provided for children with special needs. This increase can be a result of more awareness and diagnosis by physicians, as well as early evaluation and intervention. In a 2001 report, the Maryland Committee conducted a survey of the providers throughout the State of Maryland and found that although providers say they want to help special needs children, the survey reveals that providers felt very challenged by this obligation to be inclusive in their child care. If providers could receive one-on-one training and a hot line was available to call, and have someone visit their centers would relieve some of the concerns. LifeWork Strategies, Inc. reported that they have received about 3 phone calls from NIH parents seeking care for their special needs child. One possible reason for so few calls may be that parents are afraid/hesitant to say that their child has special needs and will not mention this when they call.

Mary Ellen concluded by asking for Board comments or ideas to improve this situation. The Board suggested the following:

- Include this information about special needs children at the upcoming Parenting Festival.
- Continue to make sure that the NIH Child Care Programs have the resources they need to care for special needs children.
- Continue to provide mental health consultation to the staff workers of the NIH Child Care Programs.

V. Updates:

- Mary Ellen Savarese shared with members a brochure from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) announcing the upcoming celebration of the “Week of the Young Child” (April 6 – 12). Posters along with children’s art work will be on display in the NIH dining centers.
- She also shared a flyer announcing the upcoming Worksite Wellness seminar series sponsored by the NIH Food Services, WEPB
- Tim Tosten announced that the Advisory Committee has approved his budget for FY04-FY05 to request funding for a child care center in the Rock Springs/Fernwood cluster.
- Mary Ellen Savarese thanked the Center Directors for providing WEPB with quick turn around answers to questions asked by the ORS.
- The Child Care Office and Center Directors have been working with LifeWork Strategies, Inc. on revising the on-line registration form to make it more user friendly and creating an information page explaining the wait list procedures and process. By the April meeting, members will be able to visit the test website and have an opportunity to provide feedback.

VI. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2003

Prepared by:
Pamela Jenkins
April 15, 2003